

Is my student gifted?

Ohio Revised Code for education states that students are identified as gifted when he or she “performs or shows potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment and who are identified under superior cognitive ability, specific academic ability (mathematics, science, reading or social studies), creative thinking ability and or visual or performing arts ability.” (See the Identification of Gifted Student’s Parent Brochure for the specific code.)

What gifted services do the Ontario Schools provide?

Our program is designed to be flexible, allowing us to best meet the needs for the most students identified as gifted. Students are cluster-grouped in grades 3-5 and honors classes are available in each subject area at the middle school. Our gifted coordinator works with our cluster and honors teachers to ensure that higher level questioning and rigor is embedded within their work in the classroom. High school students are served through Honors classes, Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, PSEO or other college courses.

Ontario also uses leveling and flexible grouping of students within the classroom. These systems ensure that differentiated learning opportunities are provided on a regular basis for each student.

In addition, students who are gifted may have the opportunity to compete in friendly intra and interschool competitions in the areas of spelling, mathematics, creativity, and/or all around academic challenges. These are dependent on outside establishments and may include additional practices.

What if I do not agree with how the identification process was followed for my student?

At any point the parent or guardian can appeal the results of the student for reconsideration. This could be tied to the identification (screening) procedure, assessment instruments (which result in identification), the scheduling of assessments, placement of students in a program, and/or services received.

Parents should submit a letter to the superintendent or gifted coordinator outlining the concern. The person contacted will convene a meeting with the parent/guardian, which may include other school personnel.

The superintendent, or gifted coordinator, will issue a written final decision within 30 days of appeal. This written notice will include the reason for the decision(s). If the parent or guardian requests additional or outside testing, expenses will not be incurred by the Ontario Local School District.

[Note, much of the information for this brochure was taken directly from a document produced by ODE.]

More questions?

Contact your building principal or your Gifted Coordinator:

High School - Mr. Chris Smith,
419-529-3969.

Middle School - Mrs. Sue Weirich,
419-529-5507.

Stingel Elementary - Mr. Mike Ream,
419-529-4955

Gifted Coordinator, Mrs. Jenny Pennell,
419-774-5520, ext. _____

Ontario
Local School
District



Gifted & Talented Program

Q & A Parent Guide to understanding the identification of students who are gifted and the services available within the Ontario Local School District.

How are students identified?

The Ontario Local Schools use several avenues to identify potentially gifted students which include:

- whole grade national standardized testing (grades 2, 5, 8, 10)
- individually-administered assessments
- audition, performance
- display of work, exhibition
- mastery/competency checklists

In addition, students may be referred for further testing to the Gifted Coordinator in several ways:

- teacher recommendations
- parent/guardian request
- self-referral
- peer (student) referral
- other (psychologist, community members, principal, etc.)

Upon receiving referrals (actively sought twice a year), students are screened (or assessed) at that time, or at a minimum of twice a year.

How are students assessed?

Whole grade assessments are provided at several grade levels, otherwise data is collected for all students from various sources (see above). This ensures equal access for all students no matter their background, limitations, etc.

Using data from all available sources (not just test results) students are identified as potentially gifted (using scores lower than what are used to identify students) and additional assessments are conducted.

For specific state approved instruments used and the scores required, see the brochure titled Assessment Instruments Used for Gifted Education. [PB3]

What if my student comes from a different culture or does not speak English as their primary language?

The process of identifying students through multiple sources has been structured so as to ensure all students are given equal opportunities to showcase their talents. In addition, approved written instruments are available in other languages at the request of parents.

How will I know if my student was assessed and what their scores are?

Prior to any formal non whole-grade testing by the Gifted Coordinator, typically the result of a referral, permission to test will be gained from the parent or guardian. In addition, parents (or guardians) will be notified within thirty days of the results of any screening (testing).

What if we just transferred from another district?

The Ontario Local School District accepts all scores on assessment instruments approved for use by the Ohio Department of Education provided by other school districts and or trained personnel outside the district.

Any child transferring into the Ontario Local Schools will be assessed within ninety days of the transfer at the request of a parent to the building principal or Gifted Coordinator. Following this time they will automatically be included in the normal referral process set up within the Ontario Schools for all students.

How do I accelerate my student?

If you believe your student would benefit from whole grade or subject specific acceleration, contact the Gifted Coordinator or your building principal. Upon receipt of your request, a form will be sent to you that upon its return, will initiate a meeting involving your child's teachers, building principal, Gifted Coordinator and the parents to articulate a plan to determine if and what acceleration will be implemented.

Once identified, will my student always receive gifted services?

Once a student has been subject or whole grade accelerated, s/he will continue on that pathway unless it is determined not to be beneficial to the student. Should a student wish to withdraw (or re-enroll within the same year) from (to) a gifted service, the request should be written by the parent or student to the Gifted Coordinator. Should a student initiate the request to withdraw, parents or guardians will be notified and the request will go through a committee for a final decision.

How is student growth monitored once they are in the gifted program?

A written education plan (WEP) is completed for each student being served specific to their area(s) of giftedness. This plan outlines the service(s) provided, goals for the student, methods for evaluating the stated goals, who is responsible for providing the described service, policies regarding any assignments or tests should they be missed while receiving services, and when the WEP will be reviewed. After review with parents or guardians at fall conferences, a copy of this document will be placed in the student's permanent record as well as given to the parents/guardians and to all staff responsible for providing the services.