

Gifted and Talented Program

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Q. Who is responsible for nominating students for the *Gifted and Talented Program* or the *Gifted Fine Arts Program*?

A. Students (grades 2 - 12) may be referred to the *Gifted and Talented Program* for screening by a teacher, administrator, parent/guardian, or community member familiar with the student. In grades 6-12, students and peers may also nominate. Students (grades 2 - 7) may be referred to the *Gifted Fine Arts Program* for screening by a teacher, administrator, parent/guardian, or community member familiar with the student. *One parent nomination per student will be accepted for the duration of the student's enrollment in the district. A student is limited to two academic gifted evaluations during their tenure in the district.*

Q. When are nominations for the gifted programs accepted?

A. Nominations may be submitted any time during the year using the online nomination form. An online nomination form for the *Fine Arts Gifted Program* must be completed by the second Monday in January of each year. The deadlines will be honored in order to allow adequate time for the screening and evaluation process to take place.

Q. What is the difference between the *Gifted and Talented Program* and the *Gifted Fine Arts Program*?

A. The *Gifted and Talented Program* serves academically gifted students. The *Gifted Fine Arts Program* serves students gifted in the arts.

Q. Can a student participate in both the *Gifted and Talented Program* and the *Gifted Fine Arts Program* if they qualify for both?

A. Concurrent participation in both the *Gifted and Talented Program* and the *Gifted Fine Arts Program* will be made on a case by case decision with the school's problem solving team including the parent/guardian.

Q. When will we know if our child qualified for gifted services?

A. Families will receive notification by mail when the screening and/or evaluation is complete. In the *Gifted and Talented & Gifted Fine Arts Program*, evaluations are completed by the end of the school year in which the nomination was submitted.

Q. Is there a minimum IQ score required for a full evaluation for the Academic Gifted & Talented Program?

A. Students scoring at the 95th percentile on the general mental ability assessment will receive a full evaluation to determine if gifted services are needed. The evaluation process is designed to identify students' strengths vs. need for improvement using a matrix system. This system allows us to evaluate various areas of ability instead of reducing the evaluation to an IQ score as a single criteria. Placement is also determined by district performance percentages, which fluctuate over time.

Q. If a child is identified once, is he/she always in the program? Does my child have to reapply when going to (Hixson, High School)?

A. Once a child qualifies for gifted services, the child always remains eligible for gifted services.

Gifted and Talented Program

Q. If a child is tested, but not identified, can he/she later be identified?

A. Yes, the Webster Groves School District has four screenings in 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th grade. Students meeting the criteria on the screening or scoring at the 95th percentile or higher may be considered for a more comprehensive evaluation and/or individual testing for the *Gifted and Talented Program*.

Q. What screenings will my student take? And when?

A. As a result of the 2018-2019 program evaluation, first graders will no longer be administered the universal screening. All 2nd Grade students will take the CogAT screening in the fall (beginning in the 2020-2021 school year). All 4th Grade students will take the CogAT screening in the fall. The NWEA will be used as an internal screening for 6th and 8th Grade students. CogAT is a nationally-normed test that provides a description of the student's own cognitive resources for learning by measuring verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal reasoning abilities.

Q. If my child does not qualify for the *Gifted and Talented Program*, what resources are available to my child?

A. The first person of contact should be your child's teacher to discuss your child's learning needs. The gifted specialist and curriculum coordinators may also be a resource to your child's regular classroom teacher with strategies for working with your child's strengths. In grades 7 -12, additional enrichment opportunities are available through after school programs and clubs.

Q. Can I take my child to a private psychologist for an IQ test? Can I have my child screened by someone other than school district staff?

A. The district has trained and certified testers that are able to administer and interpret various cognitive ability tests. Private testing is not accepted so the district may have equitable practices for each and every student.

Q. How many students will qualify for the *Gifted and Talented Program* and the *Gifted Fine Arts Program*?

A. The Webster Groves School District serves approximately 7% of the total district population in the *Academic Gifted and Talented Program*. Approximately 2% of the total district population can be served in the *Fine Arts Gifted Program*.

Q. What is the average class size in the *Gifted and Talented Program* and the *Gifted Fine Arts Program*?

A. Class or group sizes within the gifted program typically range from 5 to 15 students.

Q. How will my child be assessed in *Gifted and Talented* classes?

A. In the Webster Groves Gifted Curriculum, units are assessed using performance assessments, developed to correlate with the National Association of Gifted Children Standards (NAGC). Each performance assessment defines the unit expectations. Performance assessments are based on the students reaching a set of stated standards including a clear statement of expectations, purpose and desired outcomes.

Q. Do students get grades in gifted classes?

A. Formal assessments (progress reports/report cards) begin at third grade and are shared with parents and students throughout the year. Three levels of assessment are used in the Webster Groves Gifted Curriculum. Students move across the continuum during their years in the Webster

Gifted and Talented Program

Groves School District. Below is a chart showing which levels are used for each grade: The shaded areas represent the level most students achieve by the end of the year.

| Grades | Beginning | Approaching | Meeting |
|--------|-----------|-------------|---------|
| 3 – 5 | X | X | X |
| 6 – 8 | | X | X |

Q. Are students participating in the *Gifted and Talented Program* and the *Gifted Fine Arts Program* required to make up missed classroom work?

A. Students are required to master the concept/skill presented in their absence, and to make up work that is taken for a grade or a test.

Q. What specific criteria must be met to get into the Gifted Fine Arts program?

A. Selection criteria include:

- Student Interviews/ Group Performance Evaluation Day
- *Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students – Revised*
- Creativity Assessment

Q. How much time do students spend in the gifted pull-out programs?

A. In the *Gifted and Talented Program*, students receive the following approximate minutes of service weekly:

| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Grade 2 | 150 minutes |
| Grades 3 – 5 | 250 minutes |
| Grades 6 – 8 | 250 minutes |
| Grades 9 – 12 | 200 – 300 minutes |

In the *Gifted Fine Arts Program*, students receive the following minutes of service weekly:

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| Grades 3 – 8 | 150 minutes |
|--------------|-------------|

Q. Why is the *Gifted Fine Arts* screening only once a year?

A. The *Gifted Fine Arts* screening process includes a full day of group interviews with professional artists. Due to the expense and extensive nature of this process, the screening occurs once a year.

Q. Are the regular education teachers trained to meet the needs of the gifted and talented students?

A. All school staff are made aware of the nomination procedures and the nature and needs of gifted students at annual staff meetings. Study groups and professional development opportunities related to differentiated instruction are also offered to all district staff.

Q. Does my child need to be identified for the *Gifted and Talented Program* in order to qualify for high school Advanced Placement (AP) or honors classes?

A. No. Students enrolled in high school AP and honors classes have met the Webster Groves School District criteria for placement in those classes. For specific criteria for AP and honors classes, please contact your child's guidance counselor or Sarah McGrath, high school gifted coordinator.

Gifted and Talented Program

Q. What educational training is available to the gifted specialists in the Webster Groves School District?

A. All gifted specialists are certified in the area of gifted education by the state of Missouri. Throughout the school year and during the summer, professional development opportunities are offered to all K-12 teachers. Expert teachers in the district, as well as outside educational consultants and speakers, offer classes and forums for teachers to learn about and reflect on instructional practices. Teachers are encouraged to attend local, state, and national conferences on gifted education and other current educational topics related to gifted education.

Q. Should my child practice for the IQ test that he/she will take for evaluation?

A. Our expectation is that children **do not** practice (study) for this test. The practice effect occurs when past-experience of taking a test or similar problems has an impact on taking that same test again. It usually results in a higher than normal score, and is most pronounced when the interval between the two tests is short. If a student tells the tester that they have practiced the test, we have a re-test protocol that we follow. We can wait one year and give the same test again or give a different test. Achievement tests are a measure of what you have learned (skill). An IQ test measures an individual's ability to understand (problem solving). Test drill is not best practice for preparation for an IQ test. The practice effect makes it difficult to assess a child's true ability.

Q. My child was in a gifted program in their former district, are the qualifications for the Webster Groves School District the same in all districts and is he/she automatically placed in the gifted program?

A. No. Each district has set qualifications that are guided by the state and determined by the district. All students that need to be evaluated for the gifted program must submit a nomination form to begin the process.

Q. Will I be notified of my child's actual testing date?

A. Yes, the testing date will be communicated to the family/guardian and classroom teacher(s) of the student. Note, the testing schedule must remain flexible due to unexpected occurrences (absence, tests, illness, etc.) in the school setting. The actual testing date is subject to change.

Q. If my child is not identified for the gifted program after the district wide screening, when can he/she be tested again?

A. Placement for the current school year is only guaranteed for students that meet the screening/evaluation criteria. Students who are not identified through the district screening process may be nominated for the program immediately. He/she **may** be tested at any time after the nomination is submitted. Based on the child's placement on the testing log, testing could occur the current school year or the early part of the following school year.

Q. Why has my child's test scores changed since they were last tested?

A. In the past, IQ or intelligence was thought to be static and unchanging. In fact, an IQ score derived when a child is young, is likely not as accurate. From age 3 to age 10, two-thirds of children's IQ scores will improve, or drop, more than 15 points. This is especially true among bright children – their intelligence is more variable.

Gifted and Talented Program

Q. If I have further questions regarding the Webster Groves gifted programs, whom should I contact?

A. The district gifted coordinator, Dr. Pam Washington, can be contacted at 314.918.4366 or by email washington.pam@wgmail.org.

Each school site has a gifted specialist who can provide program information and serve as a support to parents and teachers. The district gifted website also contains detailed information and resources.