

Academically or Intellectually Gifted

Parent Guide



AIG Parent Guide Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about the following:

- Wake County Public School System Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program
- Decision making process for determining gifted services eligibility
- Services provided for identified AIG students
- Rights as a parent of a student who has been identified for AIG differentiated services or who is being considered for AIG differentiated services

The WCPSS Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program

The Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Program provides an appropriately challenging education for students who perform, or show potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment. Services for AIG students include differentiated curriculum and instruction that extends and enriches the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

Gifted education services are provided for students who consistently perform above grade level and demonstrate need for additional rigorous academic differentiation in kindergarten through 12th grade. Multiple criteria are used for identification and include both formal and informal indicators.

Formal Indicators may include: norm referenced assessments in aptitude, i.e. *Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)* and achievement, i.e. *Iowa Assessments (Iowa)*.

Informal Indicators may include: teacher and parent checklists, performance indicators, i.e. academic grades of 3/4 or A/B in reading/ language arts and mathematics, writing samples, *North Carolina End-of-Grade* and *North Carolina End-of-Course* tests, student progress on grade level standards in mathematics and literacy, student work portfolios, and anecdotal information.

If a student is referred to the School Based Committee for Gifted Education (SBCGE), the committee will review the formal and informal performance indicators to determine the student's eligibility for program service options in reading/language arts and/or mathematics.

The students are assessed on an individual basis and appropriate service options are recommended based on individual need. Students with a need for differentiation will receive services in the regular education classroom and with the AIG teacher. An individual school AIG plan is available for review in consultation with the school AIG teacher.

Decision-Making Process for Differentiated Services

1. Nomination
2. Referral determination by School Based Committee for Gifted Education
3. Evaluation (if required)
4. School Based Committee for Gifted Education Review
5. Central Services Final Review and Approval
6. Decisions regarding differentiated services are made by the School Based Committee for Gifted Education at each school.

Nomination

Students in kindergarten through 12th grade may be nominated by a parent, student, teacher, or other school personnel at any time. Nominations are initiated by:

1. Written nomination by parent based on at least one of the following:

- Parent observations
- Private testing results by licensed psychologist

2. Written nomination by a student based on interest, desire, and motivation

3. Written nomination by teacher or other school personnel based on at least one of these:

- Teacher observations
- Standardized test scores

Wake County Public School System administers the *CogAT* to all 3rd grade students. Students who attain a *CogAT* composite or subtest score at or above the 85th percentile will be eligible to take the *Iowa Assessment*. Students who score at the 95th percentile on either the *CogAT* or *Iowa* will be considered for nomination to the School Based Committee for Gifted Education (SBCGE).

Prior to the administration of the *CogAT* in 3rd grade, students may be nominated for AIG services when they demonstrate substantially high levels of accomplishment in reading and/or mathematics. The SBCGE will review available indicators for all nominations. If needed, the SBCGE will proceed with the Early Identification process.

Testing windows are posted at each school. Nominations received by the school AIG teacher prior to the established testing windows will be considered for referral. If a nomination is received after the testing windows, the nomination will be considered during the next semester testing window.

Referral, Evaluation, and SBCGE Review

The SBCGE reviews formal and informal indicators for all nominations. Parents and teachers will each have an opportunity to complete an observation checklist that provides information about the student's classroom behaviors, academic performance, interests, and motivation. Then, the SBCGE determines either that the student's eligibility does not require further review at that time or that the student will be referred for further evaluation.

If the student is nominated, but not referred for further evaluation, then the following documents serve to inform the parent of this decision:

AIG Parent Guide
Nomination Results Notice to Parents
Individual Student Profile

If the student is referred, but not identified as needing AIG differentiated services, the following documents serve to inform the parent of this decision:

AIG Parent Guide
Prior Notice and Consent for Evaluation
Individual Student Profile
Evaluation Results Notice to Parents

Evaluations-Independent

- Parents have the right to obtain, at their own expense, an independent evaluation of their child's educational needs at any time. The evaluation must be completed by a licensed psychologist.
- Independent evaluations are considered by the SBCGE to help determine eligibility for AIG services.
- Information regarding acceptable tests is available at each school as well as at the AIG Central Services office. It is the parent's responsibility to review information concerning appropriate tests before securing an independent evaluation.

K-2 Early Identification

Prior to the 3rd grade, students are identified for AIG differentiated services when the following criteria are met:

- Portfolio with required documents as specified in the Early Identification Checklist that demonstrates consistent performance above their grade peers *and*
- Aptitude score at or above 98th percentile on approved nationally normed standardized assessments *and*
- Achievement score in reading and/or mathematics at or above 98th percentile on approved nationally normed standardized assessments.

Gateways (Applies only to Grades 3-12)

WCPSS's Board Approved AIG Plan provides multiple gateways for students to be identified for AIG reading and/or mathematics services.

Gateway #1

If students perform ≥ 95 th percentile on the *Iowa* reading and/or mathematics section and on a *CogAT* section (V, Q, QN, VN, VQN)* that is aligned with that subject area(s), the students are eligible for AIG reading and/or mathematics services in the area(s) in which the scores align.**

Gateway #2

If students perform ≥ 95 th percentile on a *CogAT* section but < 95 th percentile on the reading and/or mathematics section(s) of the *Iowa*, then the *WJIV* will be administered. The subject area(s) assessed are determined by the area in which the students earned a qualifying *CogAT* score(s). Students performing ≥ 95 th percentile on the *WJIV* and ≥ 95 th percentile on the *CogAT* are identified in the subject area(s) in which the scores align.

If students perform ≤ 95 th percentile on a *CogAt* section but ≥ 95 th percentile on the reading and/or mathematics section(s) of the *Iowa*, then the *RIST-2* or *NNAT3* will be administered. The test instrument chosen is determined by a student's demonstrated strengths. Students performing ≥ 95 th percentile on the *RIST-2* or *NNAT3* and *Iowa* reading and/or mathematics section(s) are identified in the subject area(s) in which the scores align.

Gateway #3

Students performing ≥ 98 th percentile on the *CogAT VQN* composite are identified for services in both reading and mathematics areas with no further testing. Students scoring ≥ 98 th percentile on *CogAT QN* section are identified for AIG services in the area of mathematics only. Students scoring ≥ 95 th percentile on *CogAT VN* section are identified for AIG services in the area of reading only.

Gateway #4

Students scoring ≥ 95 th percentile on a *CogAT* section and ≥ 95 th percentile on the most recent reading and/or mathematics *EOG* or *EOC* are identified for AIG services if the scores align in one or both subject areas.

Students scoring ≥ 95 th percentile on an *Iowa* reading and/or mathematics section and ≥ 95 th percentile on the most recent *EOG* or *EOC* are identified for AIG services if the scores align in one or both subject areas.

Gateway #5

If students transfer from another school district and have official documentation that the students were identified and served in a gifted/AIG program, the SBCGE will identify the students for AIG services in the areas of reading and/or mathematics. The areas of service will be based on the subject areas in which the students were identified by the previous school district. If the student has evaluation results that are not more than one calendar year old and the student was not identified for a gifted program in his or her prior school system, then the evaluation results may be used to help determine AIG eligibility following pre-enrollment.

Gateway #6

A portfolio of formal and informal assessments and information can be submitted to the SBCGE for students who do not qualify for Gateways 1-5, but still demonstrate substantially high levels of accomplishment in reading and/or mathematics. If the SBCGE determines that a portfolio demonstrates gifted aptitude and/or achievement, the SBCGE refers the student's case to the AIG Central Services committee to determine if further consideration for AIG identification is needed at that time. If the referral is approved for further consideration by the Central Services committee, an evaluation will be completed by the AIG school psychologist, which may include individual aptitude and/or achievement assessments. Once the evaluation results are available, the results will be added to the student's portfolio and used to determine the student's eligibility for AIG identification and services. Gateway 6 will be modified to better meet equity goals as outlined in the Achievement objective of the Strategic Plan. In addition, the need for another standardized test is also being reconsidered.

Gateway Appendix:

Ability Tests:

- *Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)*
- *Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT3)*

Achievement Tests:

- *Iowa Tests of Achievement (Iowa)*
- *Woodcock Johnson, Tests of Achievement (WJIV)*
- *North Carolina End-of-Grade Test (EOG)*
- *North Carolina End-of-Course Test (EOC)*

*CogAT scores considered for AIG eligibility: V=Verbal, Q=Quantitative, QN=Quantitative/Nonverbal, VN=Verbal/Nonverbal, VQN=Verbal/Quantitative/Nonverbal.

**Qualifying scores that align are scores earned on different tests that measure or predict achievement in the same subject areas and also rank ≥ 95 th percentile. The *CogAT* VQN, VN, and V scores align with reading scores. The *CogAT* VQN, QN, and Q scores align with mathematics scores.

Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program Services

Once the evaluation process is complete, the data is recorded on an Individual Student Profile (ISP) and reviewed by the SBCGE. The ISP is a summary of formal and informal indicators indicating a need for differentiation through the AIG program. The decision regarding a student's need for differentiated services is based on the information collected by the SBCGE and recorded on the ISP.

Students in K-2 grades identified for AIG services, will begin receiving services in the semester following their identification. Students in 3rd grade identified for AIG services, will begin receiving services in the second semester of their 3rd grade year. Students in 4th-12th grades identified for AIG differentiated services will begin in the semester following their identification.

Grades K-2

Identified Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade students receive differentiated curriculum and instruction in reading/language arts and/or mathematics within the general education setting. Options may include cluster grouping, flexible grouping, and a variety of extension and enrichment activities. The AIG teacher supports classroom teachers of K-2 students enrolled in the AIG program.

Grades 3-5

Identified 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students receive differentiated curriculum and instruction in reading/language arts and/or mathematics within the general education setting. Options may include cluster grouping, flexible grouping, collaborative teaching with the classroom and AIG teacher, and a variety of extension and enrichment activities. Services vary depending upon a student's need. The AIG Teacher will serve the identified students face-to-face a minimum of 45 minutes per week per area of identification.

Grades 6-8

Identified 6th, 7th and 8th grade students receive differentiated curriculum and instruction in language arts and/or mathematics within the general education setting. Options may include cluster and flexible skills grouping, differentiated units, and collaborative teaching between the classroom and AIG teacher. The AIG teacher consults with the classroom teacher regarding differentiated curriculum and instruction and also facilitates a variety of small group learning experiences. Services vary depending upon course offerings and student performance. The AIG Teacher will serve the identified students face-to-face a minimum of 2 times per semester per area of identification.

Grades 9-12

AIG and other high performing students in grades 9-12 may select courses which offer weighted credit in English and mathematics. Accelerated high school students may select Honors, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate courses, if available. Dual Enrollment: high school students have the opportunity to take approved courses for high school credit at regionally accredited institutions including Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), community colleges, NCVPS, and non-WCPSS secondary schools. Courses taken must provide opportunities not currently available to the student at the high school, including courses of an advanced or expanded nature.

Differentiated Service Description

Students who are identified for AIG differentiated services will receive a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). The DEP indicates how differentiated AIG services will be provided based upon service options specified in the AIG School Plan. An AIG School Plan is developed at each school to determine the available differentiated service options.

Nurturing:

K-2 nurturing opportunities should be available at schools. Please contact the AIG teacher or administration for specifics.

The Wake County Public School System AIG Program also includes a unique nurturing component for all third grade students. Throughout first semester, the AIG teacher works in partnership with all third grade teachers to provide a variety of in-class experiences in language arts and mathematics designed to elicit high academic performance. All third grade students participate in whole class experiences called Explorers.

As the semester progresses, students who demonstrate potential in these in-class experiences receive advanced and enriched learning opportunities. Student groups are flexible and fluid throughout first semester to allow students with varying strengths and gifts to benefit from higher level instruction from a gifted specialist. The Explorers program provides the opportunity for the AIG teacher to develop work samples demonstrating higher-order and problem solving skills, which can be used as part of the student's portfolio to support the need for AIG identification. Data collected during the implementation of the Explorers Nurturing Model are an integral part of the identification process for third grade students. Selected work samples are designated for inclusion in the student portfolio.

Participation in Explorers does not guarantee identification in the WCPSS AIG Program.

Transfer Student Process

Students who transfer from other districts or schools with no prior gifted (AIG) identification must be enrolled and actively attending a Wake County Public School before the student may be nominated. The School Based Committee for Gifted Education (SBCGE) will meet to review all records of transfer students. This meeting should be held within 30 days of receipt of school records documenting previous AIG services. The AIG nomination/referral procedures will then be followed.

Students who transfer from other districts where they were identified as gifted (AIG) must meet Gateway 5 (Reciprocity) criteria to be accepted in the AIG program.

Students who transfer from other districts with no prior gifted (AIG) identification and no qualifying testing documentation may be nominated for the WCPSS AIG program. The AIG nomination/referral procedures will then be followed.

Students who transfer from other districts with no prior gifted (AIG) identification, but have prior identification tests and scores from the previous district that meet WCPSS AIG identification criteria will receive AIG identification in WCPSS.

The scores used for identification must have been obtained within one calendar year of the submission date.

WCPSS Procedures to Resolve Disagreements Regarding Academically Gifted Identification and Service Decisions

Parents have the right to disagree with the recommendations made at any of the following stages: Nomination, Referral, and/or Identification. The following procedures for resolution of such disagreements have been established in Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the NC General Statutes and by Wake County Public School System Board Policy 1740/4010 on student grievances.

1. The parent may make a written request for a conference with the School Based Committee for Gifted Education (SBCGE) to discuss concerns about the recommendation for identification or services. The SBCGE shall make reasonable efforts to meet and consider the appeal within twenty school days after receipt of the request. At a School Based Committee for Gifted Education meeting:
 - a. Parents may provide additional documentation for consideration by the SBCGE.
 - b. The SBCGE will share documentation used to support the committee decision and review additional documentation.
2. If the disagreement is not resolved at the SBCGE conference, then the parent may, within thirty school days of the SBCGE conference, make a written request for a conference with the principal. The principal will:
 - a. Review the recommendation with the SBCGE chairperson.
 - b. Grant the conference within ten school days of receipt of the request.
 - c. State their position in writing within ten school days after the conference.
3. If the grievance is not resolved through the conference with the principal, the parent may appeal in writing to the AIG Program Director. The AIG Program Director will:
 - a. Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue.
 - b. Review the grievance within ten school days of receipt of the request.
 - c. Respond in writing within ten school days following the review.
4. If the grievance is not resolved through appeal to the AIG Program Director, the parent may appeal in writing to the Assistant Superintendent of Academics (Designee). The Assistant Superintendent of Academics (Designee) will:
 - a. Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue.
 - b. Review the grievance within ten school days of the appeal.
 - c. Respond in writing within ten school days following the review.
5. If the grievance is not resolved through review by the Assistant Superintendent of Academics (Designee), then the parent may appeal in writing to the Area Superintendent. The Area Superintendent will:
 - a. Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue.
 - b. Review the grievance within ten school days of the appeal.
 - c. Inform the Deputy Superintendent for School Performance of the grievance.
 - d. Respond in writing within ten school days following the review.

6. If the grievance is not resolved through review by the Area Superintendent, the parent may appeal in writing to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will:
 - a. Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue.
 - b. Review the grievance within ten school days of the appeal.
 - c. Respond in writing within ten school days following the review.

7. If the grievance is not resolved through the review of the Superintendent, then the parent may appeal in writing to the Wake County Public School System Board of Education within ten school days following the written response from the Superintendent. The Board of Education will:
 - a. Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue within ten school days.
 - b. Offer a final written decision within twenty school days after review unless the panel determines that additional time is needed for further review.

8. In the event that the grievance procedure fails to resolve the disagreement, the parent may file a petition for a contested case hearing (Article 3 Chapter 150B of the General Statutes). The purpose of the review is to determine if:
 - a. The school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the student as an academically/intellectually gifted student, *or*
 - b. The plan has been implemented inappropriately with regard to the student.

Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains findings of fact and conclusion of law. Notwithstanding the provision of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the decision of the administrative law judge becomes final, is binding on the parties, and is not subject to further review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

NOTE:

AIG identification for differentiated services does not guarantee a particular service option, program, class assignment, or school assignment.

Your Rights as a Parent

Access to Student Records and Confidentiality of Information

The AIG folder is one of several components in the student's official educational record. These records are considered confidential, and may not be disclosed except in accordance with law. For further information, consult WCPSS School Board policy 6310, which is based on the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Parents may request access to these records and they may ask for an explanation and interpretation of the documents included in them.