



GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM GUIDE

March 2024 Edition



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1. Gifted and Talented Policy Summary

The Link Community Charter School Board of Trustees recognizes its responsibility to identify gifted and talented students within the school district and to provide these students with appropriate instructional adaptations and services.

Definition of Gifted and Talented: New Jersey defines gifted and talented students as those who possess high ability in intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school to fully develop those capabilities.

Definition of Instructional Adaptation: The New Jersey Department of Education defines instructional adaptation as an adjustment or modification to instruction enabling a student is gifted and talented to participate in, benefit from, and demonstrate knowledge and application of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in one or more content areas at the instructional level of the student, not just the student's grade level.

Identification Process: The school has developed guidelines for identification of gifted and talented students using multiple measures, including standardized tests, teacher recommendations, student portfolios, and other assessments in order to identify student strengths in intellectual ability, creativity, or a specific academic area. The identification process shall include consideration of all students, including those who are English language learners and those with Individualized Education Plans or 504 Plans. The school will ensure that the identification process is equitable for all students.

Gifted and Talented Program: The school will provide appropriate educational programs and services for gifted and talented students. These programs may include enrichment activities, accelerated coursework, specialized classes, and other forms of support to meet the unique needs of gifted students. The school will provide the time and resources to develop, review, and enhance instructional tools with modifications for helping gifted and talented students acquire and demonstrate mastery of the required knowledge and skills specified by the standards at the instructional level of the student.

Professional Development: The school will provide professional development and support for teachers, educational services staff, and school leaders in the area of gifted and talented instruction to ensure they are equipped to meet the needs of gifted and talented students. Teachers may receive training in differentiating instruction and creating challenging learning opportunities.

Parental Involvement: Parents play a vital role in advocating for their gifted and talented children. They are encouraged to work closely with school districts to ensure that appropriate services are provided.

Monitoring and Accountability: The NJDOE will monitor and assess school districts' compliance with gifted and talented education guidelines and regulations to ensure that eligible students receive the services to which they are entitled.

N.J.S.A. 18A:61A-2; 18A:35-4.16; 18A:35-34 through 39

N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3; 6A:8-3.1(a)5

P.L. 108-382, Sec. 10201 et seq.

The complete policy can be found at <https://linkschool.org/gifted-and-talented/>.

2. Gifted and Talented Mission Statement

Link Community Charter School recognizes the need for a continuum of programming services to exist for gifted learners as an integral part of a differentiated instructional program. The school community strives to provide a rich array of learning experiences and ongoing educational programs that identifies, develops, and expands the wealth of gifts and talents of students while monitoring the value and impact of the services provided. These experiences should promote 21st Century Learning Skills that include critical thinking, creative problem solving, creativity, communication, collaboration, and global competencies that exist within and beyond the classroom.

3. Program Overview & Goals

Link recognizes that students come from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, and the goal of the gifted and talented program is to provide opportunities for students to explore their intellectual, creative, and artistic gifts and talents within the classroom and with beyond-the-classroom experiences.

Therefore, Link's Gifted and Talented Program will meet the following goals:

- Provide a selection process for the Gifted and talented Program that is thoughtful, thorough, and equitable
- Develop differentiated instructional materials and programs in the regular classroom for high ability students that will challenge students to perform at advanced levels
- Promote achievement of students' best potentials and increased ability
- Provide opportunities for students to discover and explore areas of interests, old and new, in and outside the classroom
- Foster higher order thinking, critical thinking, and problem solving skills
- Encourage peer interaction, as well as creative, academic, intellectual, social and emotional growth
- Provide students demonstrating exceptional ability with social-emotional affirmation and support
- Provide training and information for teachers to ensure the the needs of the exceptional students are met
- Ensure that parents understand the program and that they have a chance to provide feedback on student engagement

4. Overall Program Structure

- The Gifted and Talented Administrator, following board policy and regulations, will manage the Gifted and Talented Program, under the guidance of the Principal. This includes leading the selection process and planning of the curriculum/activities of the program. The Administrator will work with the classroom teachers, families, school administrators, and most importantly the students to support students along pathways of individualized learning interests and strengths.
- A committee of school personnel including the Principal, Vice Principal(s), Dean of Academics, and Grade level Leaders will review the recommendations of the Administrator and suggest the program participants.
- Students will be evaluated annually for acceptance, and continuation within the School's gifted and talented program. Students entering the school after September will be evaluated within 30 days of entrance.
- Teachers will be asked for recommendations based on their experience with the students. Parents may also recommend.
- All enrollment in Gifted and Talented programming is fluid, and continued participation and/or entry to the program is contingent upon maintaining classroom performance while participating

in additional enrichment learning opportunities. Behavior may also be considered for remaining in the program.

- Students will be evaluated based upon multiple measures including, but not limited to those identified in Board Policy 2464.
- Parents of students identified for participation in the program will be notified of their child's acceptance as well as the program structure and expectations.

5. Student Selection Criteria

Students who are recommended for the Gifted and Talented program will be considered for participation in the gifted and talented program when compared to their peers within their grade levels. A student will be considered for participation in the program for gifted and talented students as follows:

- Performs in the top 10% of the school-created assessments, performance tasks, and other performance and growth assessments and other assessments as compared to grade level peers at Link.
- Exhibits above average abilities, creativity, and task commitment.
- Consistently demonstrates academic performance at least one grade levels above the student's own
- Consistently demonstrates intellectual or creative ability of a nature not readily susceptible to testing.
- Demonstrates a very high degree of motivation.

6. Identification Measures

While tools to measure student performance, achievement, intelligence, etc. may change over time. Link Community Charter School uses the following:

Kindergarten - Grade 2

- Brigance Inventory of Early Development
- School created performance tasks
- NWEA MAP Assessment from prior year
- Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System
- Renzulli Scales
- Referrals from parents/ guardians, teachers, specialists, Grade Level Leaders, Instructional Coaches

Grades 3 - 8

- NJSLA results from the prior year (Grades 3, and 5-8)
- NWEA MAP Assessment from the prior year
- Academic performance from the prior year as measured by summative assessments both school-created and standardized and by grades attained
- Renzulli Scales
- Referrals from parents/ guardians, teachers, specialists, Grade Level Leaders, Instructional Coaches

7. Program Elements

The School's Gifted and Talented program will provide students with opportunities that will challenge them in regular classroom settings, in pull-out sessions, in field trips, or other experiences outside the classroom. The services will span grades K-8 and will be provided through the following continuum:

Kindergarten - Grade 2

- Identified students will be provided with collaborative and individual enrichment opportunities through differentiated instruction. This differentiation will be facilitated daily by the classroom teacher.
- Identified students will participate in out-of-classroom experiences.

Grades 3 - 8:

- Identified students will be provided with collaborative and individual enrichment opportunities through differentiated instruction. This differentiation will be facilitated daily by the classroom teacher.
- Identified students will also have the opportunity to participate in scheduled pull-out sessions with the Gifted and Talented Program Administrator or other certified teaching staff member.
- Identified students will participate in out-of-classroom experiences.

The specifics of the program will be announced at the start of each school year.

8. Program Evaluation

- All aspects and elements of the program will be evaluated at the end of each school year by the Gifted and Talented Program Administrator, along with the Principal and Head of School.
- Feedback will be sought via survey and anecdotes from the students in the program, their parents, and their teachers.

SOURCES

National Association for Gifted Children (<https://www.nagc.org/>)

New Jersey Association for Gifted Children (<https://www.njagc.org/>)

Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act, 2020: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-34 through N.J.S.A. 18A:35-39 (<https://www.nj.gov/education/standards/gifted/legislation.shtml>)

The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (<https://ncrge.uconn.edu/>)