



Gifted & Talented Programming Handbook

"The goal of talent development in schools is to develop creative, high-performing, happy, engaged students who know their interests and develop their talents to make the world a better, safer, greener, and more beautiful and peaceful planet."

Sally Reis, Renzulli Center for Creativity,
Gifted Education, and Talented
Development

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Mission, Philosophy, Goals



Mission:

Hamilton School District - in partnership with a diverse community - ensures maximum achievement for each student through a respectful and engaging learning environment, a rigorous, relevant curriculum and highly qualified, caring staff.



Philosophy:

The Hamilton School District is dedicated to helping all students realize their potential. Every child is an individual who deserves to have challenging learning experiences.

Our Gifted and Talented programming provides experiences that are directly linked to a student's strengths, talents, and interests. Opportunities for enrichment, acceleration, and integration of curricula are provided within and beyond the classroom. Activities that encourage curiosity, problem-solving, creative and critical thinking, inquiry skills, self-direction, collaboration, and communication are emphasized.



Goals:

- Identify gifted and talented students in any of the five areas of giftedness according to *Wisconsin statute 118.35 (t)*. These areas are: intellectually gifted, academically able, creatively gifted, artistically gifted, and leadership able.
- Provide programming options for identified students to maximize learning in their respective areas of giftedness and to ensure their overall success in school by:
 - * Differentiating instruction to meet the needs of the learner.
 - * Enhancing creative and critical thinking skills.
 - * Developing self-awareness, personal/social skills, learning motivation, decision-making skills, and self-advocacy.
 - * Exposing gifted and talented learners to a variety of social, cultural, academic, and career-related experiences.
 - * Providing opportunities for flexible grouping, allowing students to have the opportunity to work with others of similar ability.
- Develop ongoing communication with parents/caregivers of identified gifted and talented students to allow for input and feedback regarding their child's programming.
- Provide school-wide extension and enrichment opportunities for students at all levels: elementary, middle school, and high school.
- In collaboration with the instructional coaches and school student services team members, provide students with strategies to assist in their transition from grade to grade, elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school.
- Challenge students with leadership potential to become aware of that potential, to develop it, and to appreciate the responsibilities of leadership.

Definition of Giftedness



Definition of Giftedness:

In Wisconsin, “Gifted and talented pupils” means pupils enrolled in public schools who give evidence of high performance capability in intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, or specific academic areas and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided in a regular school program in order to fully develop such capabilities (Wisconsin Statutes § 118.35). Additionally, giftedness can be defined as “a student who has high general ability, regardless of how much academic achievement they may have” (Brulles, Lansdowne, & Naglieri, 2022).

The US Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights estimates that six (6) percent of public school students are enrolled in gifted and talented programs (NAGC, 2025).

There are five areas of giftedness as noted in Wisconsin School Law, Chapter 118.35:



Intellectually Gifted: those children/students who exhibit early and rapid development of language ability, strong powers of reasoning and advanced ability in critical thinking and problem solving. Typically, these students are several years beyond their peers in their cognitive ability.



Academically Able: those children/students who are making outstanding progress in a particular content area taught in school including but not limited to math, science, social studies, reading, or language arts.



Creativity: those students who develop original ideas and products. They express their creativity in oral, written, and/or non-verbal expression. They are flexible and original in their thinking, possess strong visualization skills, and frequently are independent and resist conformity.



Artistic: those students with demonstrated exceptional ability or potential in the field of drama, music, dance and/or visual arts.



Leadership: those students who demonstrate an ability to influence their peers, and have the ability to convince people to act or not act in specific ways. Leaders demonstrate the ability to facilitate group problem solving, group goal achievement, and the ability to delegate responsibility.

It is important to note that gifted children do not possess all of these characteristics. When children consistently exhibit many of the above behaviors, the possibility that they are gifted is very strong. It is rare to find a child who is gifted across all academic areas; most gifted kids are more likely to be advanced in one or two specific areas (Brulles and Winebrenner, 2012).

Additionally, The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) outlines a comprehensive definition of giftedness in its position statement, "A Definition of Giftedness That Guides Best Practice." This definition emphasizes the multifaceted nature of giftedness and the necessity for equitable and comprehensive services to support gifted students. From the position statement, a few key points are emphasized when considering the definition of giftedness:



Performance and Potential

Gifted individuals perform, or have the capability to perform, at higher levels compared to others of the same age, experience, and environment in one or more domains. They require modifications to their educational experiences to learn and realize their potential.



Diversity Across Populations

Students with gifts and talents come from all racial, ethnic, gender, and cultural populations, as well as all economic strata. Underrepresentation in gifted programs often results from assumptions and identification methods that overlook students from diverse backgrounds.



Access to Appropriate Learning Opportunities

To realize their potential, gifted students require sufficient access to appropriate learning opportunities. This includes considering individual contexts and previous learning experiences, not just age or grade-level performance.



Twice-Exceptional Learners

Some gifted students also have learning and processing disorders, such as ADHD, dyslexia, or Autism Spectrum Disorder. These twice-exceptional students need specialized interventions and accommodations to support both their giftedness and their disabilities.



Social and Emotional Development

Gifted students need support and guidance to develop socially and emotionally, in addition to nurturing their areas of talent. Their socio-emotional development may not align with their intellectual abilities, necessitating targeted support.



Evolving Needs Require Varied Services

The needs of gifted students change over time, requiring varied and responsive services to address their evolving educational and developmental requirements.

Gifted Education Plan Guidelines

Guidelines for developing gifted education plans in Wisconsin are anchored in this broad notion of giftedness and are based on three major ideas:

Intelligences are dynamic and fluid.

- Brain research shows that intelligence can change and grow, and intelligence is not set in stone. Additionally, children grow and learn at different speeds. For example, some start walking at eight months, while others wait until fourteen months. But that doesn't mean either one is more or less likely to become an Olympic runner. The same idea applies to learning skills like reading, math, or music. Children develop these abilities at different times, and that doesn't determine whether they'll be at the top of their class or get into a top music school like Juilliard. What matters is making sure all students get the support they need, no matter how fast or slow they develop.
- In addition, students come to school with different learning experiences. Some have already practiced things like writing their name, while others may come from backgrounds with strong spoken traditions. Because of these differences, all students should be taught challenging material and given different ways to show what they know and can do through projects, performances, or other creative work.

Giftedness is inclusive.

- Giftedness is exhibited across gender, race, ethnicity, income level, and exceptionality. To ensure every student has an opportunity to demonstrate their strengths, the Hamilton School District offers screening to all students for possible Gifted and Talented services, as further explained in the "Identification of Gifted and Talented Students" section.

Educational systems should be responsive.

- As previously discussed, intelligence is dynamic. Continually identifying student needs and responding to those needs improve the likelihood that potential will be recognized and maximized. This contrasts with the practice of labeling students, a more static model which tends to result in students being "in" or "out" of a gifted program. In a dynamic approach, it is acknowledged that student needs may change over time or be exhibited in a particular context.

Because every child is different, the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) recognizes that there is no "one perfect program" for teaching gifted students, and instead recognizes that a continuum of services must exist for gifted learners at every level.

Additionally, the NAGC believes it is essential "to define giftedness in a way that both reflects best thinking in the field and moves beyond a focus on identification criteria to a deeper understanding of the complex nature of giftedness and the multi-faceted approach to services required to appropriately serve students with gifts and talents."

Identification of Gifted & Talented Students

The National Center for Research on Gifted Education recommends that identification for gifted services be proactive and tailored to local contexts, focusing on recognizing current, unmet learning needs in specific academic domains. Effective systems should assess all students early on, compare their results to national or local norms, and provide temporary, responsive services with regular evaluations to ensure those services continue to meet students' evolving needs.

The NAGC emphasizes that testing offers an objective, systematic approach to identifying gifted students. Ability and achievement tests yield scores that reflect how a student performs in comparison to peers and are often used for program placement or when learning discrepancies arise. However, NAGC stresses that these formal assessments should not stand alone; they are most effective when combined with subjective tools such as teacher observations and performance portfolios.

Gifted identification should never rely on a single assessment. Instead, a comprehensive process is used to create a "photo album" of a student's abilities, rather than a single "snapshot" (Tomlinson & McTighe). This approach gathers multiple types of evidence from varied tools, such as traditional tests and performance-based assessments, to form a more complete and accurate picture of a student's potential (Callahan, Tomlinson, & Pizzat, 1993). Creating this multifaceted pupil profile, as required by PI 8.01(2)(t)2, Wis. Admin. Code ensures that the evidence collected reflects the diverse traits and abilities aligned with our program's definition and goals. Ultimately, this comprehensive understanding allows us to effectively match programming to meet each student's unique needs.

Because no single measure can fully capture a student's abilities, our identification process draws on multiple types of assessment including:

Ability Tests

Ability tests, also known as intelligent quotient (IQ) or cognitive abilities tests, are designed to measure a person's capacity to learn, reason, and solve problems—often described as cognitive or intellectual potential. Unlike achievement tests, which evaluate what someone has already learned, ability tests focus on innate or developed skills such as logical reasoning, pattern recognition, memory, and spatial awareness.

Achievement Tests

Achievement tests determine what students have **already learned** and **if they are more advanced than their grade-level peers**. Achievement tests can be academic specific (i.e. Math or Language Arts) or standardized (such as Wisconsin Forward exam, ACT, SAT).

Performance / Behavioral Data

Classroom observation data, teacher interviews, and student interviews can provide useful supplemental data and show evidence of a broader range of skills as well as student performance over a longer period of time.

Together, ability tests, achievement tests, and performance/behavioral data provide a balanced profile of each learner's strengths and needs.

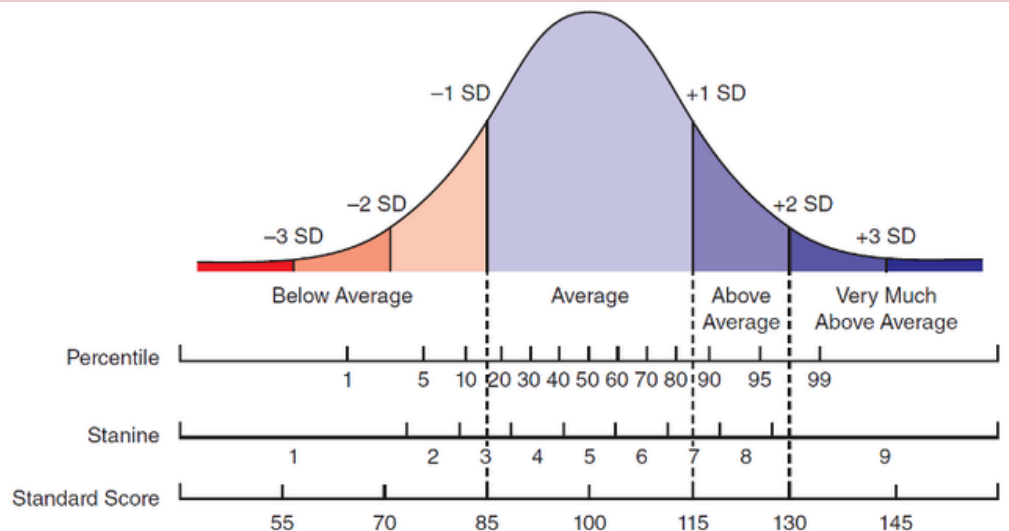
The Naglieri General Ability Tests (NGAT)

In the Hamilton School District, identification of gifted and talented students may occur at any time 4K-12; however, a formal identification process begins in grade 2 when all students take the Naglieri General Ability Tests (Verbal, Nonverbal, and Quantitative). The Naglieri General Ability Tests (NGAT) is an ability test that focuses on measuring how well students think, rather than what they know. The NGAT evaluates a child's ability to think critically, recognize patterns, and solve problems using shapes and figures rather than words or numbers. It typically involves tasks like completing visual sequences, identifying relationships between abstract images, and selecting the correct answer from multiple choices.

According to the authors of the NGAT, students who score between the 15th and 84th percentile are considered typical or average students. These students generally do well in school using the standards-based grade-level curriculum. Students who score slightly higher or lower on both sides of the curve usually require additional support to meet their academic, social, and emotional needs. For the most part, this can be accomplished within the regular classroom with differentiation and/or through flexible grouping.

A standard score of 130 or higher is considered Gifted. Students scoring within the 130-140 range may be sufficiently challenged in the regular education classroom.

In the Hamilton School District, a student score of 140 or above in one or more of the Naglieri subtests indicates that a student may need or benefit from an alternative to the regular curriculum.



Students scoring on the extreme ends on each side of the bell curve represent approximately 2.1% of the student population, respectively. These students typically require an individualized curriculum to address their specific learning needs. Students in the extreme ends of the curve, 0.1% and above and below, require more extensive educational accommodations to meet their learning needs. Learning extensions provided for those on the higher end of the bell curve are commonly provided through gifted programming with modifications and or accommodations to their curriculum and instruction.

Standard Error of Measurement (SEM)

Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) is a way of acknowledging that no test is a perfect tool. It represents the "margin of error" for a test score, and it helps us estimate the range in which a student's "true score" (their actual ability level, free from test-day fluctuations) is likely to fall.

A student's score can be influenced by many temporary factors that have nothing to do with their actual knowledge or ability:

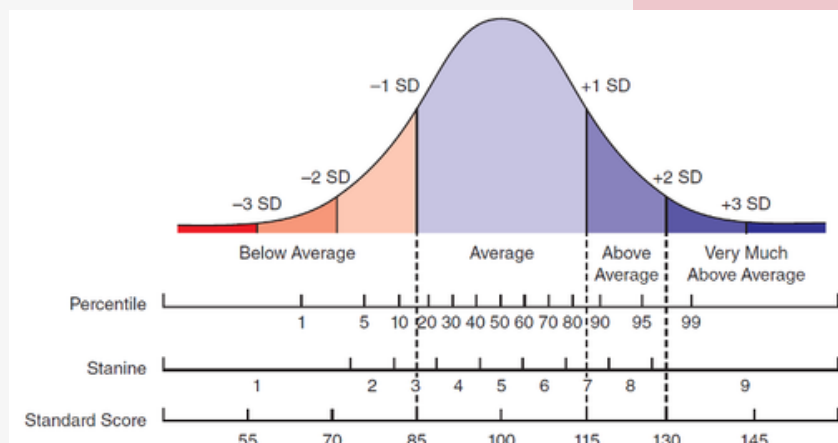
- **Test-Day Variables:** Examples include: the amount of sleep they got the night before, if they were feeling anxious, if they were experiencing hunger, etc.
- **Test Itself:** The specific questions chosen for that version of the test. A student might have happened to study the exact topics that came up, or they might have had bad luck with a few tricky questions.
- **Guessing:** On multiple-choice questions, a lucky guess can bump a score up, while an unlucky one can pull it down.

The SEM combines all these potential sources of imprecision into a single, useful number. For the Naglieri General Ability Test, the testing manual indicates the SEM is + or - 5.

This is critical for gifted identification because it prevents us from making decisions based on tiny differences in scores. For example, our program has a cutoff score of 145 for Tier 3 Gifted and Talented Services. The SEM tells us that this student who scored within a range of 140-145 could very easily have a true ability at or near 145.

How We Use SEM in Practice for Gifted Identification

As indicated above, students with a standard score of 145 or higher in one or more of the Naglieri subtests would qualify for gifted and talented services. When we incorporate the SEM of 5, **this brings our cut score to a 140 for Tier 3 Gifted & Talented Services.**



HSD Gifted & Talented Identification Procedure

PHASE 1

Action Taken: Screen

Students are universally screened using the Naglieri General Ability Tests (NGAT) in March of their second grade year. Families will receive an informational letter before testing (Appendix F) and another letter with their child's results (Appendix G).

Person(s) Responsible:

- Classroom Teachers and/or Instructional Coaches

- Students who score 130-139 in one or more subtests receive Tier 1 and/or Tier 2 extension and enrichment as appropriate.
- Notes in NextPath can indicate additional support these students receive.
- Students who score 140-160 on one or more subtests move to Phase 2.

PHASE 2

Action Taken: Gather

Phase 2 will begin within two weeks of students completing the NGAT. Instructional coaches will reach out to classroom teachers for these students to gather additional information through the Teacher Input Form (Appendix D) and some classroom assessment samples. Coaches will also collect academic achievement data.

Building-level Child Assistance Team (CAT) reviews all students and student data prior to District CAT meeting.

Action Taken: Consult

2a

The District CAT meets to determine whether or not students should be considered for potential subject area/ grade-level acceleration. The consultation will include a review of **Acceleration Criteria** (Appendix E).

- At any point in the process, if students who are identified for Tier 3 services are not identified for acceleration services, skip ahead to 2c.*

Persons Responsible:

- District CAT (All K-4 Building Principals, Psychologists, Instructional Coaches, and District GT Coordinator)

2b Action Taken: Request for Additional Information & Additional Testing

If the student moves forward for consideration for subject area or grade-level acceleration, additional tests will be administered and parents will be contacted to discuss interest in proceeding. **Parent permission for additional data must also be secured.** Following the parent's permission, additional tests will be administered.

- **Subject-area acceleration:** Instructional coach will administer end-of-unit and/or end-of-year assessments to determine placement.
- **Grade-level acceleration:** School psychologists will administer the Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition and/or an additional academic assessment.

Persons Responsible:

- Instructional Coaches
- School Psychologists

2c Action Taken: Placement Options

Following the additional testing, the building CAT will meet to review the results of the additional assessments and determine service options for the student.

Persons Responsible:

- Building CAT &
- District GT Coordinator

2d Action Taken: Parent Meeting

Following the placement meeting, a parent meeting is held to discuss assessment results and placement recommendations. Parents will be provided with the following:

- quantitative tests administered with scores and percentiles;
- qualitative information gathered;
- detailed interpretation of all information collected;
- recommendations for the student

Persons Responsible:

- Building CAT
- District GT Coordinator
- Student's family
- Student (optional)

2e Action Taken: Differentiated Education Plan Created

The District Gifted and Talented Coordinator, in conjunction with the child's teacher, instructional coaches, school psychologist, and school administrator will write a Differentiated Education Plan (Appendix C). The DEP will be viewed and acknowledged by the student's parents/ guardians. A copy of the student's DEP will be attached to the student's profile in NextPath.

Persons Responsible:

- District GT Coordinator
- Instructional Coaches
- School Psychologists

2f Action Taken: Evaluation

DEP's should be reviewed yearly. Families should be aware that future years may require travel between schools for subject-acceleration or the need for independent study and/or online course options.

Person Responsible:

- Building CAT

Identification Criteria

Hamilton School District staff examine screening data regularly to determine whether students would benefit from gifted and talented services. Students in Grade 2 all take the Naglieri General Ability Test, which serves as our Universal Screener for Gifted & Talented services. From there, multiple measures are used, quantitative and qualitative, to determine the best service to match the needs of the child.

Multi-Measure Identification Data:

Domain	Assessment	Type of Measure	Tier 1 & 2 Supports		Tier 3: GT Services
Cognitive Ability	Naglieri General Ability Test (standard score in 1 or more subtests)	Quantitative	131-134	135-139	140+ (incorporates SEM +/- 5)
Academic Achievement	Reading Universal Screener	Quantitative	90-94%ile	95-97%ile on 2+ assessments	98-99%ile on 2+ assessments
	Math Universal Screener	Quantitative	90-94%ile	95-97%ile on 2+ assessments	98-99%ile on 2+ assessments
	State Standardized Tests: Math & Reading (if available)	Quantitative	90-94%ile	95-97%ile on 2+ assessments	98-99%ile on 2+ assessments
Creativity, Leadership, Visual & Performing Arts	Rating Scales Portfolios	Qualitative	N/A	N/A	N/A
Classroom Performance	Teacher Input Form	Qualitative	<i>*For Tier 3 services, refer to checklist of characteristics for areas of talent as well as criteria for acceleration</i>		
	Grade-Level Summative Assessments	Quantitative	3	3.5	4
Parent/ Caregiver Input	Input Form	Qualitative	<i>*For Tier 3 services, refer to checklist of characteristics for areas of talent as well as criteria for acceleration</i>		

*The District will take into consideration other evidence provided by parents/ caregivers during the procedure, such as: EXPLORE, NU-Midwest Talent Search (ACT/SAT), and private evaluations, as long as the evaluation has been completed within the last year.

Tiered Services

Every student in the Hamilton School District receives instruction that utilizes research-based strategies to teach the core elements of each subject. This *universal responsive instruction* benefits ALL students. Teachers use a teaching and assessing cycle to frequently monitor student progress and plan purposeful instruction that is responsive to the needs of the classroom and individual student, ensuring growth for all. If a student is identified as meeting benchmarks for Gifted & Talented services, the team will determine what type of service. Tier 3 services require additional implementation and monitoring, which is explained in more detail later in the handbook.

According to the National Association of Gifted Children, “High-ability students need gifted education programs that will challenge them in regular classroom settings, along with accelerated and enrichment programs to make continuous progress in school. Gifted students are different from their peers both in their potential and in relation to their learning speed, depth of learning, and interests.” Students who are identified as Gifted can be serviced in a variety of ways, depending on their strengths, needs, and learning styles. The table below includes options for services at each tier of gifted and talented programming.

Tier 1: Universal Classroom Instruction and Differentiation

Tier 1 services are universal supports available to all students in the general education classroom. Tier 1 includes differentiated instruction, enrichment opportunities, and extension activities designed to challenge students who demonstrate readiness for advanced content. Tier 1 does not require formal identification and is delivered by the classroom teacher as part of core instruction.

Tier 2: Small Group Enrichment

Tier 2 services are for students whose primary needs may require additional enrichment beyond the regular classroom. Tier 2 supports move beyond whole-class differentiated instruction through small group opportunities that are more targeted.

Tier 3: Individualized Service

Tier 3 services are designed for students formally identified through the district's GT identification process as having the most significant need for advanced academic services, typically the top 3-5% of students on measures of academic ability or achievement. Students receiving Tier 3 GT Services must have a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) on file and at times must meet additional criteria depending on the service.

Tier 1 Instruction

Tier 1: Universal Classroom Instruction and Differentiation

Tier 1 instruction is available to all students in the general education classroom.

Tier 1 includes differentiated instruction, enrichment opportunities, and extension activities designed to challenge students who demonstrate readiness for advanced content. Tier 1 does not require formal identification and is delivered by the classroom teacher as part of core instruction.

What this might look like:

The student's teacher co-plans with the literacy and/or math instructional specialist in order to create opportunities for extension within the classroom setting. The student stays with his/her peers for instruction, and the student engages in differentiated activities. Examples could include, and are not limited to:

Literacy

- Reading texts at higher complexity levels
- Choice board for response to literature or vocabulary concepts (e.g. a menu of 9 tasks at varying depth-of-knowledge levels; students choose 3)
- Open-ended writing prompts with flexible length/complexity expectations

Math

- Tiered problem sets (e.g. basic fractions → multi-step fraction word problems → fraction problems embedded in a real-world design task)
- Math menus or must-do/may-do boards where may-do tasks are higher-complexity
- Extension questions that add depth to a math concept the whole class is learning (e.g., rather than simply counting a set of coins, a student is asked to find all possible combinations of coins that make 35 cents).

Science and/or Social Studies

- Independent inquiry projects or "genius hour"-style research extensions tied to unit content
- Layered questioning during discussion (using Bloom's or Depth of Knowledge to ask some students analysis/evaluation-level questions while others work at application level)
- Choice in product format for demonstrating learning (e.g., podcast, infographic, presentation, written report — same content, different vehicle)

Tier 2 Supports

Tier 2: Small Group Enrichment

Tier 2 services are for students whose primary needs may require additional enrichment beyond the regular classroom. Tier 2 supports move beyond whole-class differentiated instruction through small group opportunities that are more targeted.

What this might look like:

Student engages in special programming within the school day, during advisement/intervention block or an alternative time when staff are available. Special programming can take a variety of forms and are dependent on the student's interests and areas of academic talent/achievement. Some examples may include:

Curriculum Compacting

- Curriculum compacting is an instructional strategy used when a student has already mastered some or all of the content being taught in a subject area. Through pre-assessment or demonstration of proficiency, teachers identify material the student does not need to repeat. The curriculum is then "compacted" by streamlining or eliminating that content, allowing the student to spend time on more advanced or enriched learning opportunities. For example, a student who shows mastery of a math unit may work on extension problems or higher-level concepts, while a strong reader may engage in independent projects or novel studies in place of standard assignments.

Tier 2 Enrichment Group

- Tier 2 services provide targeted, small-group enrichment for students needing depth beyond regular Tier 1 differentiation. Aligned with the district's MTSS framework, groups are flexible: students are identified through data, and groups meet on a recurring schedule to engage in extended, higher-level tasks such as independent inquiry or accelerated content strands. Staff use ongoing progress monitoring to determine whether Tier 2 is meeting a student's needs or whether a different support is warranted.

Tier 3 Services

Tier 3: Individualized Service

Tier 3 services are designed for **students formally identified through the district's GT identification process as having the most significant need for advanced academic services**, typically the top 3-5% of students on measures of academic ability or achievement. Students receiving Tier 3 GT Services must have a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) on file and at times must meet additional criteria depending on the service.

Cluster Grouping

Cluster grouping is a school-based service delivery model in which a small group of identified gifted students (typically 4–8) is intentionally placed together within an otherwise heterogeneous classroom, taught by a teacher who has received specific training in gifted education. This structure allows GT students to learn alongside academic peers daily while remaining part of the general education setting, rather than being dispersed one or two per classroom.

Subject Acceleration

**additional criteria required*

Subject acceleration is defined as promotion to a higher grade level for one or more academic subjects in comparison to their same-age peers, most commonly in math or reading. Student schedules must be taken into careful consideration for this option. Students are also not expected to make-up work for the grade-level class they are missing. This can look like:

Elementary

- Student moves to a different classroom for a portion of the school day (if student is a 4th grader, this may involve traveling to SSI)
- Student receives grade-level ahead instruction by the math/literacy coach or interventionist for that part of the school day
- A middle or high-school math teacher travels to another school to provide instruction to a group of students who perform above grade-level in math

Intermediate / Middle

- Student takes a grade-level ahead class for one or more class period

At the high school level, acceleration options exist for gifted and other learners, provide students meet prerequisites and accept the rigors of such programs. Programming at this level includes:

- Course Acceleration
- University Courses / Dual Enrollment
- Online Advanced Courses
- Early Graduation / Start College Now

Tier 3 Services (continued)

Grade Acceleration

**additional criteria required*

Grade acceleration is defined as promotion to a higher grade level for all academic subjects in comparison to their same-age peers. Students who receive this service must meet additional criteria indicated below.

*Additional Criteria for Acceleration:

The decision to accelerate a student should be made after a team review of multiple data points, both qualitative and quantitative. The greatest research-supported academic and social effects for grade acceleration seem to be in grades 3-6. Generally, it is recommended that students skip only one grade at a time. However, students may need to skip another grade at a later time.

Factors to Consider:

Hamilton School District requires that the District Child Assistance Team evaluate the student's cognitive ability scores, academic skill level, and social-emotional adjustment needs prior to any type of acceleration decision. To be considered for acceleration, the following factors will be discussed:

- Have scored at or above 140 in one or more areas of the Naglieri Nonverbal General Ability Test
- Demonstrate achievement in the 98th-99th percentile on individual measures of achievement
- Local assessments
- Qualitative evidence of social/emotional maturity, academic motivation, and persistence to task completion
- An intense interest in the specific academic area considered for acceleration
- Attendance
- Consider social impact of accelerating into same grade as an older sibling or additional peers
- Implications regarding future course placement in middle school, high school, and post-secondary
- Transportation regarding programming location

If subject or grade acceleration is **not** recommended for the student, the classroom teacher, building instructional coaches, and school psychologist will continue to monitor student progress to ensure appropriate level of challenge through differentiation and Tier 2 enrichment and/or extension opportunities.

Full Grade and/or Subject Acceleration Implementation

When a student accelerates into a higher-grade level course or a new grade altogether, additional supports are put in place to ensure both academic success and a positive social-emotional transition. The following sections outline how the district monitors student adjustment, manages grading and assessment, and provides transportation when acceleration involves more than one building.

Monitored Transition Period

- In all cases of acceleration, the student's teacher along with the instructional coach(es), school psychologist, and building principal(s) will monitor the student's social-emotional and academic adjustment no later than 30 days after the placement, and sooner if there are concerns about the placement. Monitoring can include:
 - planned check-in meetings with the student and family
 - support for the student provided by the school counselor
- Academically, there may be small gaps in the student's knowledge that require short-term remediation by the student's teacher and/or an instructional coach; students should not be penalized for these gaps.
- **Within the first 30 days of the transition period**, the parent or guardian may request, in writing, changes to their child's Gifted and Talented (GT) services. Written requests can be made for:
 - modifying or discontinuing a current GT service (for example, adjusting the pace of an acceleration plan)
 - requesting an alternative type of GT programming that may better suit your child's needs
- The building principal will collaborate with the HSD Gifted & Talented Coordinator and instructional coach/school psychologist to review the request.
- A written decision will be provided to the parent/guardian within ten (10) school days of receiving the request.
- If the acceleration plan is modified, the Differentiated Education Plan should be updated.

Grading and Assessment

State Testing:

- *Subject-Level Acceleration:* Students will take the grade-level (state mandated) assessment for which they are enrolled and not the grade level of the course they have been accelerated into. For example, a 4th grade student who is taking a 5th grade Math course will take the 4th grade Forward exam and not the 5th grade Forward Exam.
- *Grade-Level Acceleration:* In the event a student is whole grade accelerated, they will be dis-enrolled in the current grade level and re-enrolled into the accelerated grade level and take that grade level's assessment.

Grading and Assessment cont.

Report Cards:

- *Subject-Level Acceleration:* The teacher of the student's accelerated course will be responsible for providing the student's grade in that course. For example, a 4th grade student who is taking a 5th grade Math course will be graded by the student's 5th grade Math teacher for that subject area.
- *Grade-Level Acceleration:* In the event a student is whole grade accelerated, they will be dis-enrolled in the current grade level and re-enrolled into the accelerated grade level and be graded by the current grade-level teachers.

Transportation

When a student accelerates into a higher-grade course located in another building, the Hamilton School District will arrange district-provided transportation to ensure the student can transition between buildings. This may involve utilizing part of the student's bus route in combination with a district van driven by a licensed district employee. When appropriate, students may also walk between buildings.

HSD Math Pathways

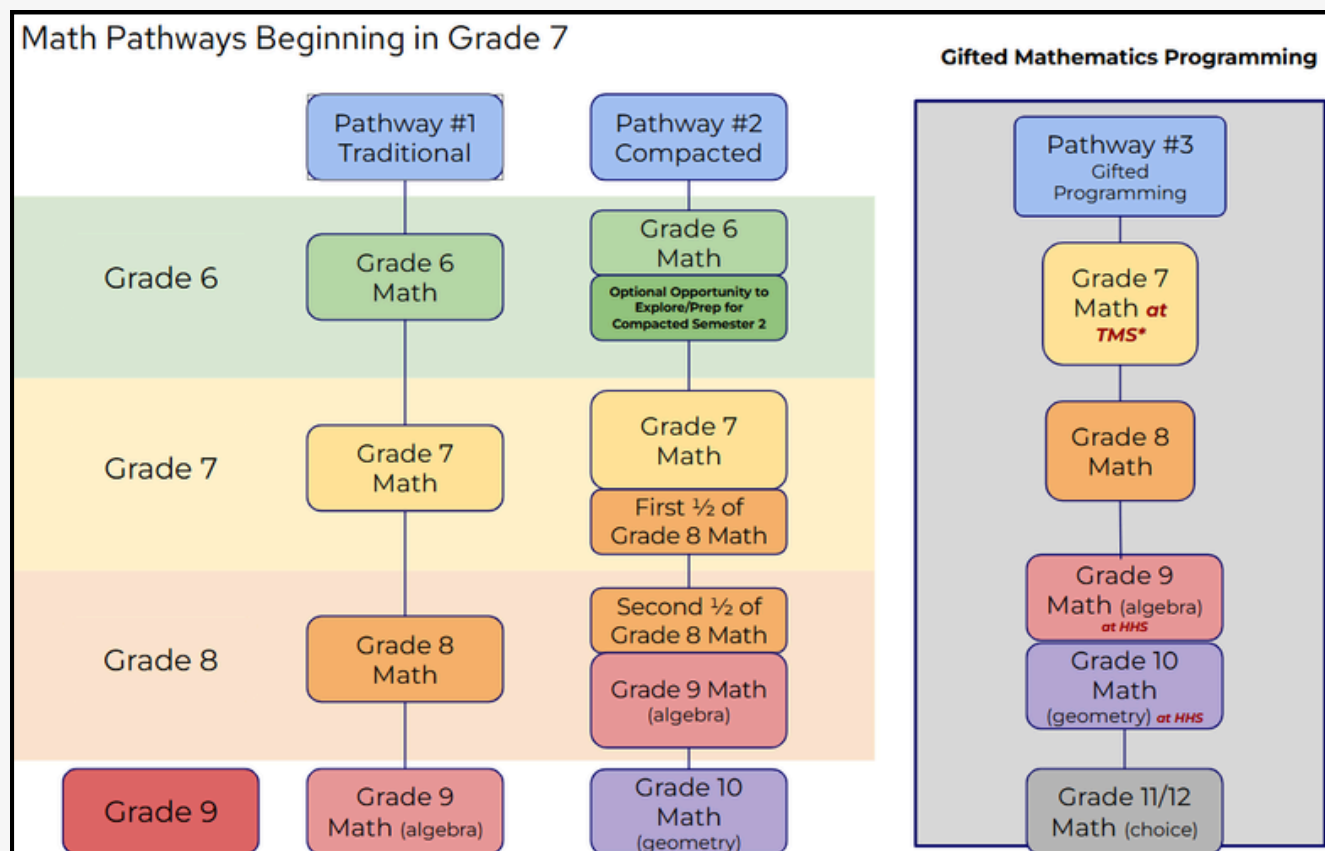
When it comes to math acceleration, the National Council of Teacher of Mathematics states that "although some students may show rapid or early mastery of mathematical skills, such as computation...students with exceptional mathematical promise include those who demonstrate patterns of focused interest; are eager to try more difficult problems or extensions or solve problems in different, creative ways; are particularly good at explaining complex concepts to others or demonstrate in other ways that they understand mathematical material deeply; and/or are strongly interested in the material." Research does not support advancing students in math before high school, or only in instances where giftedness in math has been identified.

In the Hamilton School district, beginning in 7th grade, there are options for all students to enroll in a compacted math pathway or to choose an on-level math pathway.

The **compacted math pathway** is an accelerated pathway designed for students who demonstrate a strong aptitude for mathematics. Compacting offers an accelerated pathway for students without the need to skip content. In this way, we can meet the many diverse learning needs of our students while still ensuring all prioritized standards are addressed. Students who choose this pathway will complete the content of 7th grade math, 8th grade math, and Algebra over the course of two years. This pathway is fast-paced which can make it more challenging, but it also provides students with the opportunity to complete Algebra 1 by the end of 8th grade.

The **on-level math pathway** is designed to provide a traditionally paced approach to math education. Students will take a full year of 7th grade math followed by a full year of 8th grade math, and then begin Algebra 1 in 9th grade.

HSD Math Pathways Visual



HHS Math Course Pathway Examples:

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
Student A	Geometry (1)	Advanced Algebra (1) OR Intermediate then Advanced Algebra (2)	Pre-Calc I & II (2) OR Pre-Calc I & II and AP Stats (2)	AP Calculus (2)
Student B	Algebra (1) then Geometry (2)	Advanced Algebra (1) OR Intermediate then Advanced Algebra (2)	Pre-Calc I & II (2) OR Pre-Calc I & II and AP Stats (2)	AP Calculus (2)
Student C	Algebra (1)	Geometry (1) then Advanced Algebra (1)	Pre-Calc I & II (2) OR Pre-Calc I & II and AP Stats (2)***	AP Calculus (2)
Student D	Algebra (1) OR Algebra A & B (2)	Geometry (1)	Advanced Algebra (1) OR Intermediate then Advanced Algebra (2)	Any of the following: • Pre Calc I & II (2) • Advanced Topics (1) • AP Stats (2) • Business Math (1)
Student E	Algebra (1) OR Algebra A & B (2)	Principles of Geometry (1)*	Any of the following: • Intermediate Algebra (1) • Business Math (1)	Any of the following: • Advanced Algebra (1) • Business Math (1) • Intermediate Algebra (1)

Additional Considerations

New students:

Students new to the Hamilton School District after 2nd grade will be considered for the Naglieri General Ability Test on an as-needed basis.

- When a student in grades 2–5 enrolls, the building administrator, school psychologist, and/or instructional coaches will notify the District Gifted and Talented Coordinator to review the student's historical data and consider testing.
- Students enrolling in grade 6 or higher will not be assessed with the Naglieri, as course selection allows appropriate access to accelerated coursework.

Requests for Retakes:

- Students may be eligible to retest in 4th grade, or two years after their initial assessment.
- Retesting is not permitted in 2nd grade, since the cut score already accounts for the Standard Error of Measurement and the assessment is considered highly reliable at that stage.
- Parents must submit a retake request in writing to the district Gifted and Talented Coordinator by the end of the school year that falls two years after the student's initial assessment (for example, a student tested in the fall of 2nd grade during the 2026–27 school year would be eligible to retest during the 2028–29 school year, with a request submitted by the end of that school year).

Appeals Process

If at any point in the identification process a student's family is not satisfied with the decision, they may submit a formal appeal. The following procedure outlines the steps for submitting an appeal, the review process by district staff, and how a final decision will be communicated in writing.

1. The decision for placement and services will be provided to the family in writing via the child's DEP. Families may appeal procedural issues in writing to the building principal within five (5) school days of the receipt of the notification.
2. Within five (5) school days of receiving the appeal, the building principal will collaborate with the District Teaching and Learning Coordinator / District GT Coordinator, instructional coaches, and the school psychologist to review the request. A second achievement test may be administered at this time, along with a second cognitive ability test if necessary.
3. Following the meeting, a written decision will be provided to the parent and building principal.
4. If parents continue to disagree with the decision of the appeal, parents may appeal the placement decision in writing to the Hamilton School District Superintendent within five (5) school days of the receipt of the notification.
5. Within five (5) school days of receiving the notification from parents, the Superintendent will establish a review committee composed of:
 - a. an elementary building principal who is not the principal of the child's school
 - b. Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning
 - c. Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
 - d. District Teaching and Learning Coordinator / GT Coordinator
 - e. one elementary school psychologist
 - f. an elementary instructional coach who is not an instructional coach at the child's school
 - g. a member of the school board
6. The committee will review all student documentation and evidence and render a final written decision regarding placement to the Superintendent within two (2) school days of the meeting. The decision will then be shared with the family.
7. Parents may submit a request for acceleration for their student once every two years. Students may retake the Naglieri General Ability Test in grade 4, or one additional time within two years of their initial test date.

Gifted & Talented Terms

Advanced / Excelling

A student may be advanced in their understanding while still enrolled in grade-level content. Advanced understanding means exceptional levels of understanding of the content.

Acceleration

When students are accelerated, they are enrolled in a course or grade-level a level or more ahead of their chronological age/grade placement. Acceleration means moving a student into the next year's grade-level course or grade in its entirety.

Achievement Tests

Tests designed to measure what students have already learned, mostly in specific content areas. An example of an achievement test is the Wisconsin Forward Exam.

Cluster Grouping

A grouping assignment for gifted students in the regular heterogeneous classroom. Typically, five or six gifted students with similar needs, abilities, or interests are "clustered" in the same classroom, which allows the classroom teacher to more efficiently differentiate assignments for a group of advanced learners rather than just one or two students.

Differentiation

In education, differentiation refers to tailoring instruction to meet the diverse learning needs and interests of individual students. It acknowledges that students vary in their readiness, interests, and learning profiles, and that instruction should adjust accordingly. Differentiation creates a more personalized learning experience by allowing students to work at their own pace and demonstrate understanding in ways that are meaningful to them.

Enrichment

Enrichment generally refers to activities that go beyond the grade-level core curriculum, providing students with the opportunity to explore subjects, topics, or skills in greater depth, breadth, or complexity. Examples include projects, clubs, and special programs.

Extension

Extensions are activities that extend learning within the established curriculum, often providing opportunities for students to apply their knowledge in new ways or tackle more challenging problems within the same subject area. Examples include choice boards, independent work, challenge problems, etc.

Flexible Grouping

An instructional strategy where students are grouped together to receive appropriately challenging instruction. True flexible grouping permits students to move in and out of various grouping patterns, depending on the course content. Grouping can be determined by ability, size, and/or interest.

General Ability / Intelligence

What “allows people to solve a number of different kinds of problems that may involve words, pictures, sounds, or numbers, and that may require verbal, quantitative, or nonverbal reasoning, memory, sequencing, pattern recognition, insights, drawing inferences, and analyzing simple and complex ideas (Naglieri, Brulles, and Lansdowne, 2009). In essence, the ability to learn, reason, and problem solve.

Appendices

Appendix A: Hamilton School District Gifted & Talented Identification Procedure

Appendix B: Differentiated Education Plan (DEP)

Appendix C: Teacher Input Form

Appendix D: Criteria used for Acceleration

Appendix E: Family Letter - Initial Letter Regarding Naglieri Assessment

Appendix F: Family Letter to Inform Regarding Screening Results of the Naglieri Assessment

Appendix G: Research & Further Reading

Appendix H: Resources for Families

HSD Gifted and Talented Identification Procedure (Appendix A)

PHASE 1

Action Taken: Screen

Students are universally screened using the Naglieri General Ability Tests (NGAT) in March of their second grade year. Families will receive an informational letter before testing (Appendix F) and another letter with their child's results (Appendix G).

Person(s) Responsible:

- Classroom Teachers and/or Instructional Coaches

- Students who score 130-139 in one or more subtests receive Tier 1 and/or Tier 2 extension and enrichment as appropriate.
- Notes in NextPath can indicate additional support these students receive.
- Students who score 140-160 on one or more subtests move to Phase 2.

PHASE 2

Action Taken: Gather

Phase 2 will begin within two weeks of students completing the NGAT. Instructional coaches will reach out to classroom teachers for these students to gather additional information through the Teacher Input Form (Appendix D) and some classroom assessment samples. Coaches will also collect academic achievement data.

Building-level Child Assistance Team (CAT) reviews all students and student data prior to District CAT meeting.

Action Taken: Consult

2a

The District CAT meets to determine whether or not students should be considered for potential subject area/ grade-level acceleration. The consultation will include a review of **Acceleration Criteria** (Appendix E).

- *At any point in the process, if students who are identified for Tier 3 services are not identified for acceleration services, skip ahead to 2c.*

Persons Responsible:

- District CAT (All K-4 Building Principals, Psychologists, Instructional Coaches, and District GT Coordinator)

2b Action Taken: Request for Additional Information & Additional Testing

If the student moves forward for consideration for subject area or grade-level acceleration, additional tests will be administered and parents will be contacted to discuss interest in proceeding. **Parent permission for additional data must also be secured.** Following the parent's permission, additional tests will be administered.

- **Subject-area acceleration:** Instructional coach will administer end-of-unit and/or end-of-year assessments to determine placement.
- **Grade-level acceleration:** School psychologists will administer the Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition and/or an additional academic assessment.

Persons Responsible:

- Instructional Coaches
- School Psychologists

2c Action Taken: Placement Options

Following the additional testing, the building CAT will meet to review the results of the additional assessments and determine service options for the student.

Persons Responsible:

- Building CAT &
- District GT Coordinator

2d Action Taken: Parent Meeting

Following the placement meeting, a parent meeting is held to discuss assessment results and placement recommendations. Parents will be provided with the following:

- quantitative tests administered with scores and percentiles;
- qualitative information gathered;
- detailed interpretation of all information collected;
- recommendations for the student

Persons Responsible:

- Building CAT
- District GT Coordinator
- Student's family
- Student (optional)

2e Action Taken: Differentiated Education Plan Created

The District Gifted and Talented Coordinator, in conjunction with the child's teacher, instructional coaches, school psychologist, and school administrator will write a Differentiated Education Plan (Appendix C). The DEP will be viewed and acknowledged by the student's parents/ guardians. A copy of the student's DEP will be attached to the student's profile in NextPath.

Persons Responsible:

- District GT Coordinator
- Instructional Coaches
- School Psychologists

2f Action Taken: Evaluation

DEP's should be reviewed yearly. Families should be aware that future years may require travel between schools for subject-acceleration or the need for independent study and/or online course options.

Person Responsible:

- Building CAT

Differentiated Education Plan (Appendix B) ***will be created and documented in NextPath***

Student Name:			
District ID:	School:	Grade:	
Date:			
Participants			
Staff member writing the plan:	Classroom Teacher: Parent/Caregiver:	School Administrator:	Accelerated Teacher (if applicable):
Learner Attributes			
Learner's strengths:	Learner's Needs/Challenges:	Learner's Interests and/or Learning Style:	
Summarize data that suggests the student has an exceptional talent: *			
Student Data			
Measure	Metric	Percentile	
Student's present levels of performance (grades, other testing results, classroom performance, etc.)			
Student Educational Programming / Gifted Services provided			
Tier 1 Services	Tier 2 Services	Tier 3 Services	
- Project-Based Learning Opportunities - Academic Choice Boards - Extension Questions or Activities - Differentiated Instruction in the Classroom	- Curriculum Compacting - Specialized Programming Within the School Day (Intervention Block Enrichment Group)	- Subject Acceleration - Grade Acceleration	
Next Review Date: Please indicate the next date to review this DEP			
			Date:

Teacher Input Form (Appendix C)

Hamilton School District Teacher Input Form for Giftedness & Acceleration Consideration

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

Teacher Name: _____

School Year: _____

Date: _____

Section 1: Academic Performance

Please rate the student's performance in the following areas compared to same-age peers:

Academic Area	Far Below Standards	Below Standards	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level	Significantly Above Grade Level
Reading Comprehension					
Vocabulary / Language Use					
Writing Skills					
Math Computation					
Math Problem Solving					
Science Understanding					
Critical Thinking / Logic					

Section 2: Classroom Behavior & Characteristics

Check any characteristics observed *regularly* in the student:

- Reads independently above grade level
- Asks deep or unusual questions
- Learns new concepts quickly
- Enjoys solving complex problems
- Displays strong memory and recall
- Becomes bored with routine tasks
- Demonstrates leadership in group activities
- Prefers older peers or adult conversations
- Shows creativity in projects or discussions

Does the student require curriculum compacting or enrichment to stay engaged?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

If yes, please provide examples:

Section 3: Instructional Needs & Challenges

How does the student respond to academic challenges?

- Eager to take on challenges
- Becomes frustrated or anxious
- Avoids challenges
- Thrives with minimal guidance

Comments:

Does the student demonstrate skills or knowledge well above current grade level in any subject? Please explain with examples or assessments used. (Attach samples if possible.)

Do you believe this student would benefit from grade acceleration or subject-level advancement? Why or why not?

Section 4: Additional Observation

Any social, emotional, or behavioral factors that should be considered?

Additional comments or recommendations:

Criteria for Acceleration (Appendix D)

The decision to accelerate a student should be made after a team review of multiple data points, both qualitative and quantitative. The greatest research-supported academic and social effects for grade-acceleration seem to be in grades 3-6. Generally, it is recommended that students skip only one grade at a time. However, students may need to skip another grade at a later time.

Factors to Consider:

Hamilton School District requires that the District Child Assistance Team evaluate the student's cognitive ability scores, academic skill level, and social-emotional adjustment needs prior to any type of acceleration decision. To be considered for acceleration, the following factors will be discussed:

- Have scored at or above 140 in one or more areas of the Naglieri Nonverbal General Ability Test
- Demonstrate achievement in the 98th-99th percentile on individual measures of achievement
- Local assessments
- Qualitative evidence of social/emotional maturity, academic motivation, and persistence to task completion
- An intense interest in the specific academic area considered for acceleration
- Attendance
- Consider social impact of accelerating into same grade as an older sibling or additional peers
- Implications regarding future course placement in middle school, high school, and post-secondary
- Transportation regarding programming location

If subject or grade-acceleration is **not** recommended for the student, the classroom teacher, building instructional coaches, and school psychologist will continue to monitor student progress to ensure appropriate level of challenge through differentiation and Tier 2 enrichment and/or extension opportunities.

Family Letter: Initial Letter Regarding Naglieri (Appendix E)

Date:

Dear Parent(s) / Guardian (s):

Hamilton School District administers the online Naglieri General Ability Test (NGAT) to better understand students' reasoning abilities. General ability refers to the ways students approach and solve different kinds of problems, including recognizing patterns, making connections, drawing inferences, and analyzing ideas. The NGAT measures these abilities through three sections:

- **Verbal reasoning** (understanding relationships among words and ideas)
- **Quantitative reasoning** (working with numbers and patterns)
- **Nonverbal reasoning** (solving problems using shapes, diagrams, and spatial awareness)

For example, some questions may ask students to choose an item that does not belong in a group, while others may involve completing puzzles or rotating shapes.

In the Hamilton School District, all second grade students will be taking the NGAT between March ____ and March _____. The test will be administered over two days, with students spending no more than one hour on it each day.

The NGAT is **not** an achievement test and does not require studying. Students are not expected to know every answer, and they will have the chance to try a few sample questions before testing begins to feel comfortable with the format.

The purpose of this assessment is to help us better understand your child's cognitive strengths and learning profile. Teachers consider these results along with other information to guide instruction and support. Results may also help determine whether a student could benefit from advanced academic services.

Score reports will be shared with families once results are available, typically within about one month of the end of the testing window.

Thank you for your partnership as we work together to support your child's growth and learning.

Sincerely,

XXXX

Family Letter: Naglieri Assessment Results (Appendix F)

Date:

Dear Parent(s) / Guardian (s):

In an ongoing effort to guide information to guide curriculum and instruction for our students, Hamilton School District tests all second graders each year to determine the need for specialized advanced academic services that best meet students' individual needs.

Your second grade student recently participated in this universal testing and completed the Naglieri General Ability Tests, which measure thinking with verbal, nonverbal, and quantitative test content. The questions on these three tests measure a student's general ability to understand relationships among pictures (the verbal test), diagrams (the nonverbal test), and numbers (the quantitative test). The questions on these tests can be solved regardless of what language a student speaks and the tests do not require knowledge taught in school.

The test scores provided below are standard scores alongside percentile scores. It is important to note that a percentile is not the same as the percent of questions answered correctly. Percentile scores provide a comparison of your child's performance to that of a national sample of students the same age. Percentile scores are used to rank students on a scale of 1 to 99. If a student has a percentile of 71, it indicates that student scored higher than 70 out of every 100 students that took the same test nationally.

Here are your child's Naglieri General Ability Test results:

Test	National Percentile Rank	National Standard Score
Naglieri - Verbal		
Naglieri - Nonverbal		
Naglieri - Quantitative		
Total Score		

In the Hamilton School District, a score of 140 or above indicates a student may be in need of some additional enrichment services. An instructional coach from your child's school will reach out to you regarding next steps. Students who scored below 140 do not require changes to their current educational programming. Hamilton School District's curriculum provides strong rigor and support for all learners, ensuring that each child continues to be challenged and supported in their academic growth.

Thank you for your continued support of your child's education. If you have any questions about these results or how they are used, please reach out to your child's principal, teacher, or instructional coach. We are happy to partner with you in supporting your child's growth.

Research & Further Reading (Appendix G)

- [NGAC Position Statement on the Definition of Giftedness](#)
- [NGAC: Assessments & Tests](#)
- [NGAC Position Statement on Acceleration](#)
- [Myths About Gifted Students](#)
- [Gifted Education Strategies and Best Practices](#)
- [NAGC position statement on the role of assessments in the identification of gifted students](#)
- [NAGC position statement on grouping](#)
- [Overview of Foundations for Gifted Education: Wisconsin DPI](#)
- [Stanford Center for Teaching and Learning: Differentiated Instruction](#)
- [NGAC Serving the Whole Gifted Child](#)
- [Developing Academic Acceleration Policies: Whole Grade, Early Entrance & Single Subject](#)

Resources for Families (Appendix H)

Parent Tip Sheets from the National Association of Gifted Education:

- [Nurturing Creativity](#)
- [Serving the Whole Gifted Child](#)
- [Talking with Your Child About Giftedness](#)
- [Gifted 101](#)
- [Early Childhood](#)
- [Assessments](#)
- [Enrichment](#)
- [Acceleration](#)
- [Perfectionism](#)
- [Making Friends](#)