



**WOODRIDGE**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT 68

# Gifted Services Program Handbook





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*This handbook was originally developed in 2014 by Dr. Kelly Neylon, Gifted Coordinator, Woodridge School District 68 Updated 2021-22*

## Philosophy

Students receiving services in Woodridge School District 68 will be provided direction, time, encouragement, and resources to maximize their potential. District staff members will work with parents, students, and community members to identify students from all backgrounds. Woodridge 68 will offer these students the differentiated instruction and support they need to thrive and succeed.

## Definition of Gifted Students

Students who are gifted perform, or show the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These students exhibit high performance capacity in intellectual ability, creativity, leadership, and/or a specific academic field. Gifted students can be identified in any cultural group or within any economic stratum and require special instruction, services and/or activities not ordinarily provided by the general education program.

## Program Goals

- Provide coordinated, continuous district-wide gifted education program. •  
Provide a differentiated, advanced curriculum for identified students which develop problem solving abilities, high levels of thinking, reasoning abilities, and provides for individual growth.
- Provide for mastery in literacy, social science, science, and mathematics skills at a pace and depth appropriate to the capacities of individual learners. •  
Develop high levels of student skills in the inquiry model that includes oral, written, and research skills and methods.
- Develop high levels of advanced mathematical thinking and problem solving. •  
Provide appropriate staff development for faculty and administration in the areas of identification, characteristics of gifted students, and instructional delivery to those students.
- Provide information and support services to parents of students receiving gifted services.
- Evaluate the program services systematically.

## Identification Process

Identifying students for gifted services includes using multiple criteria and multiple measures. The measures used in Woodridge School District 68 include: Cognitive Abilities Test 7 (CogAT), Propensity score from ECRA Group, iReady Percentiles, PETS Observations, and both Home and School Rating Scales.

There are four steps for identification and an appeals process. The following steps occur in grades 2 and 6 in the spring of each school year.

### Nomination

Parents, peers, staff or community members may nominate a student in grades 3, 4, 5 & 7 for gifted services evaluation by completing a nomination form (Appendix A). Nomination forms are available from the gifted coordinator, Advancement Specialist in each building, and on the district website. Completed forms are collected by the building Advancement Specialist. The due date for nomination forms will be on or before **January 31** of each school year.

### Screening

All students in grades 2 & 6 and nominated students take the Cognitive Abilities Test 7 (CogAT 7). Advancement Specialists identify students in grades 2 & 6 with CogAT or propensity scores that meet or exceed at a statistically significant level to move to the next step. All nominated students continue through the identification process. Students who are nominated and those 2nd & 6th graders with a statistically significant score on CogAT or Propensity will be in the screening pool and will continue through the identification process.

### Profile Forms

Information gathered about nominated students is entered on a computer-generated profile form. This form, used by the identification panel during identification, is saved by a 6-digit student identification number by school and grade.

### Review

Data collected on screened students is reviewed and evaluated by the Identification Panel consisting of district staff members trained in gifted education. The panel

determines appropriate need and placement for gifted services. Information regarding the Identification Panel may be found on page 7 of this handbook.

### Placement

Parents and students receive a letter of notification from the gifted coordinator regarding identification of need and placement for gifted services.

Gifted services are described within this handbook.

### Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)

The Cognitive Abilities Test, CogAT, measures the cognitive development of students in three areas. The test reflects the most up to date research on how to best measure cognitive abilities and learning styles.

- Verbal, which measures students' ability to reason with verbal concepts
- Quantitative, which measures students' ability to reason with quantitative symbols and concepts
- Nonverbal, which measures students' ability to reason with geometric shapes and figures

### Propensity Score

The district uses the ECRA Group to develop propensity scores. Propensity scores synthesize the prior year's standardized test score data into a single measure that reflects how a student is expected to perform on the current year's assessments.

### School and Home Rating Scales

The School and Home rating scale is designed to assist in identifying students for gifted services. The rating scale is completed by teachers and parents of students nominated and in the screening pool. The forms will be online and emailed to parents of nominated students. If needed, hard copies are available.

### Norms

The National Association for Gifted Children, Dr. Carolyn Callahan, and other researchers in gifted education, suggests school districts use local and subgroup norms to ensure that underrepresented populations are included and receive gifted services. Woodridge School District 68 uses local norms for CogAT and Propensity scores.

### Appeals

Parents or staff may appeal the identification panel's decision by completing the appeal

form (Appendix B) and returning it to the gifted coordinator. The appeal committee will consist of the gifted coordinator, district administrator, and a district parent. The appeal committee will review all pertinent information and notify parents by mail. The decision of the appeal committee is final. All appeals must be completed between the established appeal window of June and July of any given school year.

### Students New to District

Students who move into the district are evaluated by the advancement specialist, the classroom teacher, and the principal for temporary placement in gifted service. These students also move through the identification process during the spring.

## **Previously Identified Students**

Students previously identified as needing gifted services are reevaluated in grade 6 before moving to the junior high school. This is completed through the identification process described within this handbook.

## **Identification Panel**

The Identification Panel is composed of teachers, administrators, psychologists, and advancement specialists. The majority of these individuals have received training by completing the Illinois State Board of Education's Gifted Education Seminar. The Identification Panel reviews and evaluates the data collected on screened students and determines need and placement for gifted services.

### Rationale

Dr. Callahan's evaluation report regarding identification suggested the following:

- Create profile form (NOT a matrix)
- Use local norms, and specifically use local norms for low income & minority students
- Create an identification & placement review panel comprised of
  - Gifted coordinator
  - School administrator
  - Psychologist
  - Advancement specialists
  - Classroom teacher
  - Math specialist
  - Language arts specialist

Woodridge 68 will have the following:

- School administrator
- Psychologist
- Advancement specialists (2)
- Classroom teachers (2)
- Math specialist
- Junior high gifted specialists - 6th grade identification only (2)
- Other Specialists

### Procedures

1. One person provides the digital profile forms.
2. Each individual reviews the profile form for each student.
  - a. Individuals may make notes, indicating recommendation.
3. The group and individuals compare each student to norms for peer group. If a student has more than one peer group, compare to one peer group completely. Then compare to the other peer group. Is there a difference?
4. The group discusses the information on the profile form.
5. The group will determine if there is a **preponderance of evidence** indicating a need for gifted services.
6. One individual completes *Section Three: Placement* on the digital form with the following:
  - a. Indicate *yes* or *no* for need of services at elementary or junior high level. Specifically indicate the service.
  - b. Provide an explanation for recommendation.
  - c. If typical placement is not recommended, the group will indicate suggestions on *Section Three: Placement*.
  - d. Indicate date.
  - e. Initial by one member.
7. If the group is unable to come to consensus, another group will evaluate the information.
8. Another group, and the gifted coordinator, reviews all profile forms.

## Gifted Services

Students are identified as needing services in Social Studies/Science, ELA, and/or Math. Typical placement for these students is described below. Other placement options are available with consultation from the gifted coordinator, principal, gifted specialist, and classroom teacher.

### Elementary Services

At the elementary level, gifted services are provided both in the regular classroom and in the Social Studies/Science content block. Within the classroom, students receiving gifted services have differentiated opportunities provided to them by the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher collaborates with the advancement specialist to provide these services. Within the 45- minute content block, identified students in grades 3-6 are taught by the advancement specialist. The curriculum, developed by district advancement specialists, includes interdisciplinary lessons designed to meet the needs of gifted students. These units focus on higher level thinking, inquiry, and problem-solving skills.

Students identified as needing math services in grade 6 receive opportunities for increased depth and complexity within the advanced math class. These math services are provided by the advancement specialist.

### Junior High Services

Students at the junior high are identified as needing services in Advanced Math, ELA/Social Studies, Science or any combination thereof. They remain a cohort for both 7th & 8th grades. The advancement specialists at the junior high have developed interdisciplinary units that incorporate science, social studies, and English language arts.

Students identified as needing gifted services in math receive service through the gifted math class. The gifted math teacher provides instruction for these students and collaborates with the ELA and science teachers during interdisciplinary units.

## Roles of the Advancement Specialists

Elementary advancement specialists serve as both a teacher of students needing gifted services and as a resource for teachers. The advancement specialist works with the identified students during the Social Studies/Science content block. The advancement specialist teaches 3rd & 4th grade students together and 5th & 6th grade students together. These two content periods include interdisciplinary units developed by the district gifted specialists.

The elementary advancement specialist teaches the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade advanced math classes. This class consists of students who require gifted math services and other students identified, by the district math specialist, as needing advanced math services.

Elementary advancement specialists serve as a resource for the classroom teachers. They collaborate with teachers to differentiate within all curricular areas. They collaborate with teachers who have the cluster of gifted students in their classrooms as well as others who may request assistance.

Elementary advancement specialists also provide staff development for faculty and administrators in the areas of identification and instructional practices for gifted students. Advancement specialists work with 1-2 teachers to deliver PETS gifted and talented search activities to help identify and develop talent. The specialist and teachers complete the whole class activities to provide equal opportunities for advanced behaviors to emerge. Additionally, gifted specialists work with small groups of students to further develop higher level thinking abilities.

Junior high advancement specialists provide instruction to identified students in ELA/Social Studies, Math, and Science. They also serve on the Identification Panel to identify students from sixth grade. All advancement specialists maintain identified students' records in the student information system, Skyward.

Additionally, all advancement specialists deliver information to parents of students receiving gifted services. This includes information about student performance and needs as well as program information.

All advancement specialists are responsible for preparing necessary forms for identification and completing Student Growth Plans.

## Exit Procedures

If a teacher, student, and/or parent feels a child has been misplaced in the gifted services program, a problem-solving meeting should occur. The members should include parent, principal, classroom teacher, advancement specialist, gifted coordinator, and if needed the district math specialist.

At the problem-solving meeting, members will discuss the following:

What is the problem?

Why does teacher/parent/child feel child is misplaced?

What actions have been done to help solve the problem?

What actions could still/should be done?

Determine what the action plan is and when the next meeting should be scheduled.

At the follow up meeting, members will answer the following:

What were the results of actions?

Does the teacher/parent/child still think misplacement occurred?

What additional actions should occur?

If exiting the gifted services program is determined to be in the best interest of the student, a timeline will be developed by the team. This will include discussions with the student and progress monitoring schedule.

# Acceleration

Acceleration, also known as double promotion or grade skipping, meets the needs of some gifted students and requires specific guidelines and procedures. The following guidelines and procedures allow for those times that a student's needs would be best met with acceleration.

## Guidelines

Many high-ability students possess unique academic, cognitive and social needs. Acceleration is an empirically validated educational intervention for high ability students (Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004). The research consistently demonstrates the academic benefits to some students and allows the conclusion that most students are not negatively affected in the social-emotional domains. Accelerated students feel academically challenged and socially accepted, and they do not fall prey to the boredom that plagues many highly capable students who are forced to follow the curriculum for their age-peers (Colangelo, N., Assouline, S., & Gross, M., 2004).

Whole-Grade Acceleration is an intervention that moves students through an educational program at rates faster, or at younger ages, than typical. It means matching the level, complexity, and pace of the curriculum to the readiness and motivation of the student. All acceleration requires high academic ability. The student's motivation, social-emotional maturity, and interests must be considered when making decisions about acceleration. The student whose level of achievement and ability significantly surpasses same age group peers is an example of one who might be considered for whole-grade acceleration.

The guidelines and procedures described in this document are not intended to increase the number of requests for acceleration. Rather, they are for the exceptional situation in which on-going classroom accommodations for students with advanced ability are not sufficiently differentiated to make school a challenging place for the individual student to learn.

Classroom teachers in kindergarten through second grades will work with advancement specialists to develop talent within their classrooms. Advancement specialists will provide the PETS experiences to uncover talent in typically underserved populations.

Students of high ability should be observed a minimum of four times by the advancement specialist upon the request of the classroom teacher, parent, and/or principal. These observations may be completed using the PETS observational

activities or Kingore Observational Inventory. The results of the observations will be included in the documentation for acceleration.

## Procedures

### **Step 1 – Request for Acceleration**

After reading over the guidelines, a parent, teacher, and/or principal may request a meeting for Acceleration. A meeting will be scheduled with parents, advancement specialist, gifted coordinator, principal and psychologist.

### **Step 2 – Observations and Data Collection**

Once the Acceleration meeting has occurred, the gifted specialist will observe the student a minimum of four times during different times of day. The Kingore Observational Inventory may be used for these observations. The results will be included in the Acceleration documentation. Additionally, the student's planned experiences will also become part of the documentation. Data from iReady and other assessments, including classroom assessments, may be collected and included in the documentation.

### **Step 3 –Team Formation**

Once the observations are complete, the team meets to further discuss the child's needs. This team should include

- Classroom teacher
- Gifted coordinator
- Building Advancement Specialist
- Social worker
- Psychologist
- Principal
- Parent/Guardian(s)

The team will evaluate the observations and assessments. If it is decided upon by the team that acceleration should be considered, the team will request permission from the parent to complete the Iowa Acceleration Scale, which includes individual achievement and aptitude testing.

### **Step 4 – Iowa Acceleration Scale & Individual Testing**

The Iowa Acceleration Scale will be used to determine if acceleration is an appropriate intervention for the student. The team will complete the Iowa Acceleration Scale.

### **Step 5 – Determination & Next Steps**

The team will meet to complete the Iowa Acceleration Scale and review individual testing. Using all the data, the team will determine if acceleration is an appropriate intervention. The following should be kept in mind:

- Only “Excellent” candidates will be accelerated.
- Acceleration should take place at natural transition points.
- Accelerated students should be placed with the identified gifted students in the new class.
- An effort should be made to combine students who have been accelerated.

If accelerated, the student will be identified as receiving gifted services and the student services team will prepare a Student Growth Plan and a transition plan. The transition plan will include a timeline for implementation of acceleration including dates for classroom visits and for progress monitoring.

If not accelerated, the student services team will prepare a differentiation/enrichment plan. The classroom teacher, gifted specialist and principal will work with the child’s classroom teachers to ensure an appropriate level of challenge for the student.

Documentation of the above is provided to the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, and placed in Skyward and the child’s cumulative file.

## Program Evaluation

The gifted services program will be internally evaluated annually. The evaluation will include interviews with the gifted specialists at the elementary level and junior high level as well as with principals. Student data will be evaluated to determine if adequate individual growth is evident.

Evidence from gifted specialists regarding collaboration with classroom teachers will be shared with the team. This information will assist in determining next steps for collaborating with staff on differentiation.

ECRA Group will provide local norms for iReady and propensity for each subgroup each year.

The district will evaluate the need for district-wide renorming on a regular basis. This requires all students grades 2-7 complete the CogAT. The norm information will be requested from Houghton-Mifflin as part of the data package.

## Appendix A

### Woodridge School District 68 Gifted Services Nomination Form

NOMINATIONS DUE TO SCHOOL OFFICE or POSTMARKED BY:

Date:

Student's Name: Date of Birth:

Grade (please circle): 3 4 5 7 School: Parents/Guardians:

Address:

City: Zip Code:

Parent email:

Phone Numbers: (Home) (Mobile)

Name of Nominating Party:

Contact number:

Relationship to Student:

Has student been nominated or evaluated for gifted services in Woodridge before?

Yes No If yes, school year:

Please describe below the specific talent you think this student demonstrates and the reasons for this nomination. Use the reverse side of this form or additional paper if necessary.

Signature of Nominating Party: Date:

**Please return this form to the school office or  
mailto:**

Leslie Loboda, Gifted Coordinator

7200 Janes Avenue, Woodridge, Illinois 60517

**OFFICE USE ONLY** Date Received:

Received by:

6-digit student ID:

## Appendix B

### Woodridge School District 68 Example Gifted Services Profile Form

#### SECTION ONE: STUDENT INFORMATION

Student ID: Ethnicity:

Student Name: IEP Status:

Date of Birth: EP explanation:

Grade Level: Current LEP Status: Gender: Past LEP Status:

Social-Economic Status: Home

Language: Nomination Type: A

#### SECTION TWO: DATA

<b>IReady National Percentiles (Achievement)</b>	
<u>Reading</u> September January May	<u>Math</u> September January May
<b>Propensity (Achievement)</b>	
<u>Reading Propensity</u>	<u>Math Propensity</u>

#### SECTION TWO: DATA (cont'd.)

<b>CogAT (Aptitude)</b>
<u>Scaled Age Score</u> Verbal: Quantitative: Nonverbal: Composite:
<b>Observations &amp; Anecdotal Information</b>
<u>PETS:</u> Dates: Observer: Behaviors Observed:

Activities:

1. Title:

1. Score:

2. Title:

2. Score:

3. Title:

3. Score:

Information from Nomination Form:

**SECTION THREE: PLACEMENT**

IDENTIFICATION PANEL USE ONLY

Student ID:

Recommendation for gifted services:

Explanation:

Identification and Placement Review Panel Date:

Upon identification for gifted services, the gifted coordinator, home school advancement specialist, and when possible the classroom teacher, will develop section four, a student growth plan. The plan will include one or more goals in identified areas and an additional social emotional goal. The goals will be evaluated quarterly and an end of year review will be completed. The growth plan will be revised each school year.

**SECTION FOUR: STUDENT GROWTH PLAN**

Student:

Student ID:

**GOAL #1**

Area of Identification	
Goal	
Indicators of Success	
Approaches & Responsible Parties	
Strategies for Differentiation	
Goal Progress Quarter 1 Date:	
Goal Progress Quarter 2 Date:	
Goal Progress Quarter 3 Date:	
Goal Progress Quarter 4 Date:	

**GOAL #2**

Area of Identification	
Goal	
Indicators of Success	
Approaches & Responsible Parties	
Strategies for Differentiation	
Goal Progress Quarter 1 Date:	

Goal Progress Quarter 2 Date:	
Goal Progress Quarter 3 Date:	
Goal Progress Quarter 4 Date:	

**SECTION FOUR: STUDENT GROWTH PLAN (cont'd.)**

Student:

Student ID:

**GOAL #3**

Social Emotional Goal	
Indicators of Success	
Approaches & Responsible Parties	
Strategies for Differentiation	
Goal Progress Quarter 1 Date:	
Goal Progress Quarter 2 Date:	
Goal Progress Quarter 3 Date:	
Goal Progress Quarter 4 Date:	

**Year End Synopsis:**

**Completed by:**

Date:

