

DoDEA Gifted Education

A Parent's Guide to Identification of Gifted Students

Why do the DoDEA schools provide gifted education services?

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) provides education to the children of eligible military and civilian family members, from preschool through grade 12 at sites in the United States and overseas. Our commitment is to offer an educational program in which students may grow according to their promise. Some students require gifted education services to optimize their potential. Members of the school community work together to find students who may require such services.

How do people in the school community recognize students who may need gifted program services?

Parents often become aware of unusual behaviors in their children, some of them indicative of giftedness. A parent may refer his or her child for committee review.

Teachers and other professionals in the school see signs of exceptional performance in everyday school activities, some of them indicative of giftedness. School staff members may refer individual students.

Students indicate their strengths through daily activities or test performance. Test scores, grades, and rating scales are also used to find likely program candidates.

Which students at our school should be considered for gifted program services?

Students who are recognized as demonstrating intellectual or artistic strengths that are highly unusual for their age or grade are referred to the school's Gifted Review Committee. Referrals come from screening or through individual referrals by parents, teachers, or other school professionals. The school committee looks for students with high potential and unusual performance.

What things are considered when committee members review a student's potential and achievement?

The Gifted Review Committee considers all available information on students who are referred. Assessment data include rating scales, observations, portfolios of student work, grades, test scores, and anecdotal information. Parents are asked to give permission for the review of information about their son or daughter as a potential candidate for gifted education services.

How do school personnel determine that a student is eligible for gifted program services?

Students who are found eligible for gifted program services have profiles that indicate potential and/or performance at the highest levels. A general guideline is performance and/or potential within the top 2-4% of our student population for any particular facet of intelligence. This means that a student's potential and/or performances are rather remarkable for that age or grade.

The school committee members review all available information on each student and recommend eligibility for those students who present extreme profiles of strength in intellectual/academic areas or in artistic areas. No specific score or set of scores can validate eligibility for gifted program services. Students are individually gifted, demonstrating their abilities in a wide variety of ways. It is the quality, intensity, and pattern of strengths that a student displays that provide the identification committee with the information necessary to indicate giftedness to such a degree that the regular education program must be significantly modified for a child.

What happens for students who have been in a gifted program in another school?

Students coming from another DoDEA school are automatically found eligible for gifted program services if they were eligible at their previous school. Students coming from a public or private school outside of DoDEA are referred to the Gifted Review Committee for a determination of eligibility. Parents should provide information related to the gifted services the child received and the child's profile of strengths used for identification at the previous school.

What are the steps in the identification process?

There are four steps in the identification process. First, students are referred to the Gifted Review Committee by a parent, teacher, or someone who knows the student well. Some students are referred as the result of very high test scores. Second, parent permission is sought for the collection of information about a student's strengths and for a committee review. The chairperson of the committee prepares a folder containing all available information about a student's strengths. Third, the committee reviews each student's profile and determines whether or not a child is eligible for gifted education services. Fourth, the committee recommends services for identified students. Parents are notified whether or not their son or daughter is eligible for services.

What about students who are not found eligible for gifted services? Does this mean that they are not gifted?

Intelligence is multi-faceted and every child is quite remarkable in certain ways. All students benefit from enriching activities and educational experiences that recognize their strengths. When a student is not identified for gifted program services, it does not mean that he or she is not gifted but rather that the student's strengths can be accommodated within the regular school program without extraordinary measures of differentiation.

School staff members recognize that classroom experiences and school activities must offer an array of opportunities for students to allow every child to reach for high standards and to participate in daily challenges. Each school offers multiple ways of enriching learning activities, both within and outside the classroom. Ask your child's principal and teachers about the variety of options available at your school.