

Academically or Intellectually Gifted Parent Guide



Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program
Wake County Public School System
5625 Dillard Drive
Cary, NC 27518

<http://www.wcps.net/what-we-teach/services/aig.html>



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Purpose of this AIG Parent Guide

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

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

Information on WCPSS AIG Program services is also available online at

<http://www.wcpss.net/what-we-teach/services/aig.html>

The WCPSS Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program

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

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

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

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

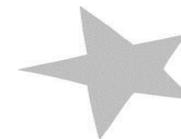


3. If the grievance is not resolved through the conference with the principal, the parent may appeal in writing to the AIG Program Director. The AIG Program Director will:
 - Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue.
 - Review the grievance within five days of the appeal.
 - Respond in writing within ten days following the review.
4. If the grievance is not resolved through the conference with the AIG Program Director, then the parent may appeal in writing to the Area Superintendent. The Area Superintendent will:
 - Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue.
 - Review the grievance within five days of the appeal.
 - Inform the Chief Academic Officer of the grievance.
 - Respond in writing within ten days following the review.
5. If the grievance is not resolved through the conference with the Area Superintendent, the parent may appeal in writing to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will:
 - Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue.
 - Review the grievance within five days of the appeal.
6. If the grievance is not resolved through the review of the Superintendent, then the parent may appeal in writing to the Wake County Public School System Board of Education within ten school days following the written response from the Superintendent. The Board of Education will:
 - Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue within ten days.
 - Offer a final written decision within thirty days after review.
7. In the event that the local grievance procedure fails to resolve the disagreement, the parent may file a petition for a contested case hearing (Article 3 Chapter 150B of the General Statutes). The purpose of the review is to determine if:
 - The local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the student as an Academically or Intellectually gifted student, or
 - The local plan has been implemented inappropriately with regard to the student.

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

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

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



Decision-Making Process for Differentiated Services

Nomination

Referral, Evaluation, and Committee Review

Determination of the Need for Differentiated Services

Annual Review

Decisions regarding differentiated services are made by the School Based Committee for Gifted Education at each school.

I. Nomination

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

Prior to the administration of the CogAT in 3rd grade, students may be nominated for AIG service when they demonstrate consistent performance two or more grade levels above their current grade. The SBCGE will review available indicators for all nominations. If needed, the SBCGE will proceed with the Early Identification process.

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

1. Written nomination by parent based on at least one of the following:
 - Parent observations
 - Private testing results by licensed psychologist
2. Written nomination by a student based on interest, desire, and motivation
3. Written nomination by teacher or other school personnel based on at least one of these:
 - Teacher observations
 - Standardized test scores at or above the 95th percentile
 - Norm referenced testing of grade 3 students:
 - Aptitude-Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) \geq 95th percentile
 - Achievement- Iowa Assessment at or above the 95th percentile.

Students who score at or above the 95th percentile on either measure will be nominated and considered for AIG differentiated services.

Available information is compiled from the formal and informal indicators of potential giftedness. This data is considered by the School Based Committee for Gifted Education. The SBCGE will determine either that the student does not require further review at this time, or that the student will be referred for further evaluation.



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

Procedures to Resolve Disagreements Regarding AIG Decisions

Parents have the right to disagree with the recommendations made at any of these stages. The following procedures for resolution of such disagreements have been established in Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the NC General Statutes and by Wake County Public School System Board Policy 6520 on student grievances.

1. The parent may make a written request for a conference with the School Based Committee for Gifted Education (SBCGE) to discuss concerns about the recommendation for identification or services. At a School Based Committee for Gifted Education meeting:
 - Parents may provide additional documentation for consideration by the SBCGE.
 - The SBCGE will share documentation used to support the committee decision and review additional documentation.
2. If the disagreement is not resolved at the SBCGE conference, then the parent may make a written request within thirty days for a conference with the principal. The principal will:
 - Review the recommendation with the SBCGE chairperson.
 - Grant the conference within five school days of the request.
 - State their position in writing within five school days of the conference.
 - Respond in writing within ten days following the review.



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

In accordance with state law, the WCPSS must develop a procedure for resolving disagreements between parents and the school system when a child is not identified as an academically or intellectually gifted student or concerning the appropriateness of services offered to the academically or intellectually gifted student. These procedures relate to the processes of student referral, evaluation, identification, and the availability of approved service options. Parents have an opportunity for input about their child's specific needs and are informed of the recommendations made by the SBCGE.

Parents have the right to disagree with the recommendations made for nomination, referral or identification. Parents also have the right to disagree with the differentiated services provided through the AIG Program for identified students.

If a parent has a dispute with the gifted services within the regular classroom or within the AIG teacher's classroom, the following steps should be taken:

1. The parent should meet with the classroom teacher and/or the AIG teacher to seek a resolution.
2. If the meeting does not resolve the problem, the parent should document the issues and the parent's perspective of the situation should be outlined in a letter to the teacher, requesting written response from the teacher within ten working days.
3. If resolution is not reached, the School Based Committee for Gifted Education should schedule a meeting to review the problem and conference with school administration.
4. After the parent receives the teacher's written response, the parent may then request to meet with the school administration.
5. If a resolution is not reached at the school level, parents may contact the following Central Services personnel for review of concerns in the following order:
 - ⇒ Director of Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program
 - ⇒ Area Superintendent
 - ⇒ Superintendent
 - ⇒ Board of Education
6. Upon exhausting these channels of communication, parents may elect to pursue the grievance process as outlined below in Procedures to Resolve Disagreements Regarding Academically or Intellectually Gifted Decisions.

II. Referral, Evaluation, and SBCGE Review

Referral

The SBCGE reviews formal and informal indicators for all nominations and determines if a student should be referred for additional assessment:

- Students referred for additional assessments prior to taking the CogAT and Iowa in 3rd grade will be evaluated by the AIG psychologist.
- Referred students in 3rd grade who score at or above the 95th percentile on either the CogAT or Iowa may receive an individual assessment.
- Students referred by the SBCGE in 4th - 12th grades are administered the CogAT and Iowa during established testing windows.

When a referral is made, the SBCGE may request additional information about the student in the areas of aptitude, achievement, classroom behaviors, performance, interest and motivation. The SBCGE must receive a signed, Consent for Evaluation from the parent prior to the administration of any additional testing. Parents and teachers will each have an opportunity to complete an observation checklist that provides information about the student's classroom behaviors, academic performance, interests, and motivation.

Evaluations-Independent

1. Parents have the right to obtain, at their own expense, an independent evaluation of their child's educational needs at any time. The evaluation must be administered by a licensed psychologist.
2. Independent evaluations are considered by the School Based Committee for Gifted Education as a part of the referral process to determine eligibility for services.
3. Information regarding acceptable tests and requirements for selecting a qualified examiner is available at each school as well as the AIG Program Office. It is the parent's responsibility to review information concerning appropriate tests before securing an independent evaluation.

Evaluations—School Based

Valid and reliable assessment instruments are used to identify students for AIG Program services. Both group and individual measures may be utilized.

1. Testing and evaluation materials are selected and administered in a fair and unbiased manner.
2. The evaluations must be administered by trained specialists.
3. The SBCGE will use multiple criteria including evaluation results for decisions to determine eligibility for AIG service.

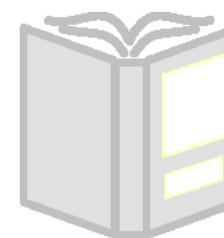
Students in Kindergarten-3rd grade, identified for AIG services, will begin receiving services after the Early Identification process is complete.



Your Rights as a Parent

Access to Student Records and Confidentiality of Information

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



Chain of inquiry regarding Academically or Intellectually Gifted Services

Parent inquiries about AIG service should begin at the school level.

The following sequence is recommended:

- ⇒ General Education Teacher(s)
- ⇒ AIG Teacher at the school
- ⇒ School Based Committee for Gifted Education (SBCGE)
- ⇒ Principal
- ⇒ Director of AIG Program at WCPSS Central Services
- ⇒ Senior Director of Academics
- ⇒ Area Superintendent

Transfer Student Process

Students who transfer from other districts or schools with no prior gifted (AIG) identification must be enrolled and actively attending a Wake County Public School before the student may be nominated. The AIG nomination/ referral procedures will then be followed.

Students who transfer from other districts where they were identified as gifted (AIG) must meet Wake County's identification criteria.

- The Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Program in Wake County identifies students in reading/language arts and/or mathematics.
- Identification in another school system does not transfer as automatic identification in WCPSS.
- The identification criteria must include both aptitude and achievement test scores that follow the Gateways and are WCPSS approved norm-referenced tests.
- The scores used for identification must have been obtained within 12 months of each other.

Transfer students who have been previously identified and served in gifted programs in other districts are only guaranteed a referral to the AIG Program in Wake County.

Temporary AIG placement occurs when:

- All prior identification tests and scores from the previous district meet the WCPSS AIG identification criteria. The student may be placed temporarily in the AIG program while informal indicators and performance data are collected in order to complete the identification process.
- Prior identification data does not meet WCPSS AIG identification criteria and the recommendation is for the student to be referred in WCPSS to determine AIG eligibility.
- After thorough explanation with the parent that the student may or may not be identified in WCPSS
- and the parent still chooses for the student to receive services on a temporary basis, then
- the parent signs the Temporary Placement form and returns it the AIG teacher, so that
- the student may be placed temporarily pending the collection of necessary data.

III. Determination of the Need for Differentiated Service

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

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

- Clear demonstration of need for differentiated services that is two or more grade levels above the current grade level and
- Aptitude Test Score: total score* at the 98th percentile or higher and
- Achievement Test Score: total reading and /or mathematics score at the 98th percentile or higher
- *total score=useable qualifying score



AIG Gateways

WCPSS's AIG Program outlines multiple Gateways for identification into the AIG Program. Following the 3rd grade CogAT and Iowa testing, students are identified for AIG differentiated services when one of the five following identification pathways are met. Students in 3rd grade, identified for AIG services, will begin receiving services in the first semester of their 4th grade year.

Gateway #1

- Students scoring $\geq 95\%$ on both a qualifying CogAT score AND Iowa total reading and/or total math score are eligible for AIG identification in the area(s) in which the scores align.

Gateway #2

- Students scoring $\geq 95\%$ on qualifying CogAT score with Iowa reading and/or math $\leq 95\%$:

The most recent version of the Woodcock Johnson will be administered in reading and/or math. The achievement areas administered are determined by the qualifying CogAT score. The subtests chosen are culturally responsive and determined based upon documented evidences provided through the referral and assessment.

Students scoring $\geq 95\%$ on WJ paired with the qualifying CogAT are identified in the area(s) in which the scores align are eligible for AIG identification in the area(s) in which the scores align.

Gateway #3

- Students scoring $\geq 98\%$ on either a CogAT partial composite or a CogAT composite score are identified in reading and mathematics.

OR

- Students scoring $\geq 98\%$ on Iowa total reading and/or math score AND a score of $\geq 98\%$ on EOG/EOC scores in reading and/or math from the current or the previous school year, which align with qualifying Iowa scores are eligible for AIG identification in the area(s) in which the scores align.

Differentiated Service Description

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

DCP- Differentiated Course Plans (DCPs) specify the recommended instructional methods of content differentiation for reading/language arts and/or mathematics to extend and enrich the Standard Course of Study.

IDEP – An Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) is developed for students in grades K-3 identified for AIG differentiated services.

IV. Annual Review

The SBCGE conducts a yearly review to determine the appropriateness of the current level of service. Decisions are made to maintain, increase, or decrease a student's level of service based upon this review. Student progress for the year will be discussed with the parent as necessary. Students remain eligible for gifted service as long as they maintain a gifted level of performance.

Reevaluation Process

There are three circumstances when a reevaluation of an AIG student is completed. The results of the reevaluation will be used to determine whether or not there is a need for AIG differentiated services to continue. Reevaluation occurs when one of the following circumstances is evident:

- Initial identification and service was implemented prior to the second semester of third grade.
- Initial identification and service was implemented through an Individualized Differentiated Educational Plan (IDEP).
- The Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) service option match no longer seems appropriate to address student needs.

Parents will be notified with the Prior Notice for Reevaluation before conducting any additional testing and data gathering as part of the reevaluation process. Students remain eligible for AIG services as long as they maintain a high level of academic performance.

Grades 4-5

Identified 4th and 5th grade students receive differentiated curriculum and instruction in reading/language arts and/or mathematics within the general education setting. Options may include curriculum compacting, cluster grouping, flexible grouping, co-teaching between the classroom and AIG teacher, and a variety of extension and enrichment activities. Differentiated course plans describe the course goals, content and evaluation. Services vary depending upon a student's need.



Grades 6-8

Identified 6th, 7th and 8th grade students receive differentiated curriculum and instruction in language arts and/or mathematics within the general education setting. Options may include cluster and flexible skills grouping, curriculum compacting, differentiated units, and co-teaching between the classroom and AIG teacher. The AIG teacher consults with the classroom teacher regarding differentiated curriculum and instruction and also facilitates a variety of small group learning experiences. Services vary depending upon course offerings and student performance. Differentiated course plans describe the course goals, content and evaluation.

Grades 9-12

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

Gateway #4

- Students scoring $\geq 95\%$ on a qualifying CogAT score, but $<95\%$ on the Iowa assessment and the individual achievement assessment from Gateway 2:

With $\geq 95\%$ on EOG/EOC scores in reading and/or math from the current or the previous school year, which align with the qualifying CogAT score

AND

A Gifted Rating Scale with scores $\geq 88\%$ in three of the five GRS scales (Intellectual, Academic, Creativity, Leadership, or Motivation)

Students meeting the above criteria are identified in the area(s) in which the scores align.

- Students scoring $\geq 95\%$ on the Iowa Assessment in reading and/or math, and $<95\%$ on a qualifying CogAT score and the individual aptitude assessment from Gateway 2:

With $\geq 95\%$ on EOG/EOC scores in reading and/or math from the current or the previous school year, which align with the qualifying Iowa score(s)

AND

A Gifted Rating Scale with scores $\geq 88\%$ in three of the five GRS Scales (Intellectual, Academic, Creativity, Leadership, or Motivation)

Students meeting the above criteria are identified in the area(s) in which the scores align.

Gateway #5

Gateway #5 is a referral made by the SBCGE for an individual psychological evaluation to be completed by the AIG psychologist. This evaluation may include individual aptitude and/or achievement assessments.

This gateway can be accessed when portfolio data demonstrates consistent performance 1-2 grade levels above student's current grade placement who do not meet identification criteria in Gateways #1, #2, #3, or #4.

There are circumstances under which Gateway #5 can be accessed for any student when the SBCGE determines an individual assessment is appropriate. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Students needing individual nonverbal aptitude testing
- Students for whom group testing is not appropriate because of diagnosed medical problems
- Students whose group scores do not reflect the student's performance in the class (all scores \leq 95%)
- Students with IEP's or 504 Plans
- Students scoring \geq 95% on individual cognitive ability assessment and on achievement in reading and/or math are identified
- Students scoring \geq 95% on the individual aptitude, but below 95% on the individual achievement can access Gateway #4
- Students scoring \geq 95% on the individual achievement, but below 95% on the individual aptitude, can access Gateway #4

Service Delivery

Students identified as Academically or Intellectually Gifted receive differentiated services in all Wake County Public Schools. Each school develops an AIG plan outlining service delivery. Information on individual school plans is available for review in consultation with the school's AIG teacher.

Nurturing:

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

The 3rd grade Explorers Program, of the Wake County Public School System AIG Program, includes a unique nurturing component for all third grade students. Throughout the academic year, the AIG teacher works in partnership with all third grade teachers to provide a variety of in-class experiences in language arts and mathematics designed to elicit high academic performance. All third grade students participate in whole class experiences.

As the year progresses, students who demonstrate potential in these in-class experiences receive advanced and enriched learning opportunities. Student groups remain flexible and fluid throughout the school year to allow students with varying strengths and gifts to benefit from higher level instruction from a gifted specialist. This also provides the opportunity for the AIG teacher to develop work samples demonstrating higher-order and problem solving skills. This can be used as part of the student's portfolio to support the need for AIG identification.

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

Grades K-3

Identified students in kindergarten-3rd grade receive services as outlined in their Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP). The AIG teacher will consult with the classroom teacher regarding differentiated curriculum and instruction.

NOTE:

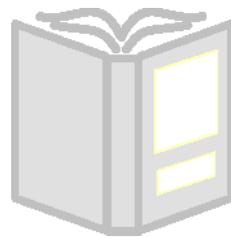
AIG identification for differentiated services does not guarantee a particular service option, program, class assignment, or school assignment.

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

- AIG Parent Guide
- Nomination Results Notice to Parents
- Individual Student Profile

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

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



The School Based Committee for Gifted Education examines multiple criteria;

- ◆ formal indicators
 - apptitude scores
 - achievement scores
- ◆ informal indicators
 - performance
 - portfolio work samples
 - teacher checklists
 - parent checklists

throughout the identification process.

- **Students in 3rd grade, identified for AIG services, will begin receiving services in the first semester of their 4th grade year.**
- **Students in 4th-12th grades are identified for AIG differentiated services when one of the five WCPSS Gateway criteria is met. AIG service will begin in the semester following their identification.**

The logo for AIG (Advanced Individualized Gifted) features the letters 'A', 'i', and 'G' in a large, bold, serif font. A five-pointed star is positioned above the lowercase 'i'.

Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program

