Serving the communities of District 146 Tinley Park, Oak Forest and Orland Park

Robert W. Procunier Administration Center
6611 W. 171st Street • Tinley Park, IL • 60477-3514
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Accelerated Academic Programming Family Handbook

This handbook is provided for parents and guardians and members of our community as a resource guide for academic acceleration (gifted) programs in District 146.

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Illinois Definition of Program Requirements

Illinois Accelerated Placement Act, Public Act 100-0421

Section 14A-17 defines "accelerated placement" as:

1. Placement of a child in an educational setting with curriculum that is usually reserved for children who are older or in higher grades than the child; and,
2. Includes, but is not limited to, the following types of acceleration: early entrance to kindergarten or first grade, acceleration of a child in a single subject, and grade acceleration.

Section 14A-32 requires that each school district develop a policy for accelerated placement that includes or incorporates by reference the following items:

1. A provision indicating that participation in accelerated placement is not limited to those children who have been identified as gifted and talented, but rather is open to all children who demonstrate high ability and who may benefit from accelerated placement;
2. A fair and equitable decision-making process that involves multiple persons and includes a student's parents or guardians;
3. Procedures for notifying parents or guardians of a decision affecting that child's participation in an accelerated placement program; and,
4. An assessment process that includes multiple valid, reliable indicators.

Section 14A-32 also provides that the adopted policy may include or incorporate, but need not be limited to, the following:

1. Procedures for annually informing the community at large, including parents or guardians, about the accelerated program and the methods used for the identification of children eligible for accelerated placement;
2. A process for referral that allows for multiple referrers, including the child's parents or guardians; licensed education professionals of the child with the written consent of a parent or guardian; a peer, through a licensed education professional who has knowledge of the referred child's abilities; or, in the case of possible early entrance to school, a preschool educator, pediatrician, or psychologist who knows the child; and,
3. A provision that provides that children participating in an accelerated placement program and their parents or guardians will be provided a written plan detailing the type of acceleration the child will receive and strategies to support the child.

Characteristics of Gifted Learners

All children may exhibit special talents and/or traits; gifted learners, however, possess characteristics that are developed to a much greater extent than other students of the same age, background, and experience. Gifted learners require instructional modifications in order to address their exceptionalities.

The table below provides insight into the differences between gifted learners and students who are bright, or academically talented.

A Bright Student…	**A Gifted Learner…**
Is interested	Is highly curious
Has good ideas	Has wild, sometimes silly ideas
Works hard to achieve	Knows things before they are taught
Answers the questions	Discusses in detail
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings and opinions
Top of the group	Beyond the group
Enjoys peers	Prefers adults or older peers
Completes assignments	Initiates projects
Is pleased with their own learning and work	Is highly self-critical
Needs 6-8 repetitions to master	Needs 1-3 repetitions to master
Memorizes well	Guesses and infers well
Finishes work in a timely manner	Has many ongoing unfinished projects

Identification Process

Step One: Screening

All students in grades K-8 undergo the initial screening process via the NWEA Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment every school year. Students are tested in three areas: Reading, Math, and English Language Arts during the fall, winter, and spring. Students who score at or above the 90th percentile on one or more of the assessments are automatically considered for the second identification step. District 146 also recognizes the referrals of parents/guardians, teachers, and outside professionals for consideration for further screening.

Step Two: Collect body of evidence

Information is collected on students from a variety of sources, which may include:

- Parent SIGS Form - *Characteristics and behaviors of gifted*
- Teacher SIGS Form - *Characteristics and behaviors of gifted*
- CogAT Assessment - *Intellectual Ability*
- State standardized test scores- *Achievement*
- Iowa Acceleration Scale - Early entrance to a grade level - *Characteristics and behaviors of gifted*
- Historical locally normed achievement scores - *Achievement*

Step Three: The school's academic acceleration team reviews the body of evidence by entering the data into the district matrix for identification consideration.

Step Four: Parent/Guardian meeting to share results

If the body of evidence does not suggest academic acceleration, a parent/guardian meeting is held to discuss findings.

If the body of evidence suggests academic acceleration is the best programming option for the student's learning, a parent/guardian meeting is held to share results and to create academic acceleration plan.

Step 5: Develop the academic acceleration plan

The school team will create an academic acceleration plan that identifies programming, learning goals, affective goal(s), and a family goal. The plan will include strategies and success indicators related to each goal. A progress meeting will be scheduled with parent/guardian and the team.

Criteria for Identification

Data summary

In order to be formally identified, a student must have a majority of qualifying evidence - generally the 95th percentile or above - from the following categories:

- Characteristics and behaviors of gifted
- Intellectual ability (aptitude)
- Achievement

Re-testing for identification

To maintain assessment validity, students may have to wait two years for specific re-testing via:

- SIGS parent form
- SIGS teacher forms
- CogAT

For the same purpose of maintaining assessment validity, parents/guardians and students may not view the testing materials described above. Results of these tests will be shared with parents/guardians and students upon request.

Elementary to middle school programming

Students who are identified for the academic acceleration program in elementary school will be re-evaluated at the end of grade 5 for possible middle school programming.

Early Entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade

The Illinois legislature passed the Illinois Accelerated Placement Act, Public Act 100-0421, effective July 1, 2018. This act allows Illinois public school districts to provide early access to educational services for kindergarten and first grade students to meet the needs of the highly advanced gifted child.

Children are normally admitted to kindergarten if their 5th birthday is on or before September 1 of that school year, and to first grade if their 6th birthday is on or before September 1 of that school year.

District 146 recognizes some children may benefit academically, socially and/or emotionally from accelerating and/or grade skipping. Highly advanced gifted students may be granted early entrance to kindergarten or first grade and accelerated in District academic programs.

The Process

Step 1:

- District 146 residency must be established by the parent/guardian at the administration center. Parent/guardian must also provide the child's birth certificate.

Step 2:

- Parent/guardian fills out the acceleration/grade skipping application.
- Appointment is scheduled for achievement screening (30-90 Minutes).

Step 3:

- School/teacher SIGS form is completed by the preschool or kindergarten teacher, if applicable.
- Parent/guardian submits SIGS form.

Step 4:

- Results are collected. If the child is within the 95th percentile, the CogAT assessment is scheduled.

Step 5:

- Placement is determined from data results with a majority of the results falling at or above the 90th percentile.
- Parent/guardian meeting is scheduled to discuss results and possible placement options.

Step 6:

- School team will schedule an academic acceleration plan meeting with the parent/guardian.

Transfer and Exit Procedures

Transfer

Transfer students who have been identified and served previously in a gifted program will automatically be referred for eligibility screening in the District 146 program. Scores provided from required assessments from the student's previous school will be applied to the District 146 matrix for possible placement. In the case where scores are not available, assessments will be administered by the school team.

Exit procedure

Students placed in the gifted program may be exited when it is determined that it would be in the best interest of the student to discontinue acceleration. A parent/guardian meeting will be held to discuss findings.

In order for a student to be exited, one of the following conditions must be met:

- A parent/guardian requests that the student be removed from the program.
- The teacher, principal or school team recommend the student exit the program following a parent/guardian meeting.
- A furlough is requested; programming may be temporarily suspended for a year or less.
- Grade 5 assessment data indicates the student should not continue in the program for middle school placement.

District 146 Gifted Programs

Elementary

Early Entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade: Students who qualify gain early entrance to the grade level (kindergarten or first grade) before the required birthday cutoff date. Consultation with the gifted facilitator, reading and math specialists will occur with the student's teacher to provide challenging learning.

Elementary Accelerated Mathematics: Students who qualify in grades 3-5 attend a daily accelerated math class with a qualified gifted/math instructor. Students in grades k-2 are serviced on an identified need, which may include: daily attendance in an out-of-level (grade) class, differentiated support within their classroom setting, or attendance in an accelerated math class.

Elementary English Language Arts: Students who qualify in grades k-5 attend a daily learning workshop model within their classroom setting. Reading and writing materials are provided at the child's interest and instructional level. The use of book clubs, author studies, and writing workshops will be provided in consultation with the reading specialist and gifted facilitator. In some cases, a student may attend an out-of-level workshop provided within another grade level.

Middle School

Middle School Accelerated Mathematics: Students who qualify in grades 6-8 attend a daily accelerated math class with a qualified gifted/math instructor. Services may also include: daily attendance in a middle school out-of-level (grade) class, or attendance in an accelerated math class at the student's future high school.

Middle School English Language Arts: Students who qualify in grade 6 attend a daily learning workshop model within their classroom setting. Reading and writing materials are provided at the student's interest and instructional level. The use of book clubs, author studies, and writing workshops will be provided in consultation with the instructional coach. In some cases, a student may attend an out-of-level workshop provided within another grade level.

Students who qualify in grade 7 and 8 attend a daily learning workshop model within their classroom setting. Reading and writing materials are provided at the student's interest and instructional level. The use of compacting the curriculum and acceleration are primary strategies for support. The use of book clubs, author studies, writing workshops will be provided in consultation with the instructional coach. In some cases, a student may attend an out-of-level workshop provided within another grade level. In addition, these students are encouraged to take Spanish to enhance their learning.

Appendices

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Acceleration / Grade Skipping Application

Please print clearly.

Student Name: _____ DOB:____/____/____ Check male or female ☐ M ☐ F

Current School: _____ Current grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Requesting Acceleration: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Siblings:

Sibling Name	Age	Grade	Current School

Has the current school been consulted about grade acceleration? Y ☐ N ☐
Does the student currently have a sibling in the same grade? Y ☐ N ☐
Does the student currently have a sibling in the next grade level? Y ☐ N ☐
Does the student receive any special services (ESL, OT, speech, health, etc.)? Y ☐ N ☐ If yes, please specify:
_____

Please provide a brief description of why you think full-grade acceleration is needed at this time:

As the parent/guardian of the above named student, I understand that:

1. I am authorizing D146 to screen and administer appropriate assessments to determine appropriate educational placement for my child.
2. Student and parent support of full-grade acceleration is essential if this intervention is to be successful.
3. If applicable, I authorize D146 to gather data from my child's previous school. A Release of Information is attached.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Submit form to:
Community Consolidated School District 146
6611 W. 171st Street
Tinley Park, IL 60477

Office: 708-614-4500
Fax: 708-614-8992
Email: wwolgan@district146.org

COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT # 146
6611 West 171st Street
Tinley Park, Illinois 60477
(708) 614-4500

RELEASE OF INFORMATION REQUEST

I, the undersigned parent or guardian of: _____ Grade:____

Do hereby authorize the following school: _____

_____

_____

To release information regarding my child to: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I understand that this should include:

_____ Speech / Language Information

_____ Psychological / Social Work Information

_____ Educational Assessment Information

_____ Medical Records

_____ ESL History (W-APT /Access/Entry & Exit Letters)

_____ Permanent Records (Cumulative Folder)

_____ Temporary Records (Cumulative Folder)

_____ All of the above

_____ Others _____

Signed: _____

Relationship:_____

Date: _____

District 146 Multi-Criteria Evaluation Matrix

Kindergarten through Grade 3

Student Name: _____ Grade: ____ School: _____

Assessments	2	4	6	8	10	Total
CogAT Nationally Standardized Test of Intellectual Ability	85-87 Percentile	88-90 Percentile	91-93 Percentile	94-96 Percentile	97+ Percentile	
CogAT - Verbal Ability Score:_____ %ile: _____						
CogAT - Quantitative Ability Score: _____ %ile: _____						
CogAT - Non-Verbal Ability Score: _____ %ile: _____						
	2	**5**				**Total**
NWEA MAP Nationally Normed Achievement Test Fall _____ Winter _____ Spring _____	90-94 Percentile	95+ Percentile				
Total Reading RIT Score_____						
Total Math RIT Score _____						

District 146 Multi-Criteria Evaluation Matrix

SIGS Teacher Recommendation	Raw score	Standard Score	Percentile Rank	SIGS score 90-94% 5	SIGS Score 95%+ 10
General Intellectual Ability					
Language Arts					
Mathematics					
Science					
Social Studies					
Creativity					
Leadership					
SIGS Teacher Total					
SIGS Parent Recommendation					
General Intellectual Ability					
Language Arts					
Mathematics					
Science					
Social Studies					
Creativity					
Leadership					
SIGS Parent Total					
Recommendation Totals					

District 146 Multi-Criteria Evaluation Matrix

Grades 4 and 5

Student Name: _____ Grade: ____ School: _____

Assessments	2	4	6	8	10	Total
CogAT Assessment Nationally Standardized Test of Intellectual Ability	85-87 Percentile	88-90 Percentile	91-93 Percentile	94-96 Percentile	97+ Percentile	
CogAT - Verbal Ability Score:_____ %ile: _____						
CogAT - Quantitative Ability Score: _____ %ile: _____						
CogAT - Non-Verbal Ability Score: _____ %ile: _____						
	2	**5**	**10**			**Total**
PARCC State Standardized Test	Approaching	Meeting	Exceeding			
Total Reading Scale Score____						
Total Math Scale Score____						
	2	**5**				**Total**
NWEA MAP Nationally Normed Achievement Test Fall _____ Winter _____ Spring _____	90-94 Percentile	95+ Percentile				
Total Reading RIT Score_____						
Total Math RIT Score _____						

District 146 Multi-Criteria Evaluation Matrix

SIGS Teacher Recommendation	Raw score	Standard Score	Percentile Rank	SIGS score 90-94% 5	SIGS Score 95%+ 10
General Intellectual Ability					
Language Arts					
Mathematics					
Science					
Social Studies					
Creativity					
Leadership					
SIGS Teacher Total					
SIGS Parent Recommendation					
General Intellectual Ability					
Language Arts					
Mathematics					
Science					
Social Studies					
Creativity					
Leadership					
SIGS Parent Total					
Recommendation Totals					

District 146 Multi-Criteria Evaluation Matrix

Grades 6 through 8

Student Name: _____ Grade: ____ School: _____

Assessments	2	4	6	8	10	Total
CogAT Nationally Standardized Test of Intellectual Ability	85-87 Percentile	88-90 Percentile	91-93 Percentile	94-96 Percentile	97+ Percentile	
CogAT - Verbal Ability Score:_____ %ile: _____						
CogAT - Quantitative Ability Score: _____ %ile: _____						
CogAT - Non-Verbal Ability Score: _____ %ile: _____						
	2	**5**	**10**			**Total**
PARCC State Standardized Test	Approaching	Meeting	Exceeding			
Total Reading Scale Score____						
Total Math Scale Score____						
	2	**5**				**Total**
NWEA MAP Nationally Normed Achievement Test Fall _____ Winter _____ Spring _____	90-94 Percentile	95+ Percentile				
Total Reading RIT Score_____						
Total Math RIT Score _____						

District 146 Multi-Criteria Evaluation Matrix

SIGS Teacher Recommendation	Raw score	Standard Score	Percentile Rank	SIGS score 90-94% 5	SIGS Score 95%+ 10
General Intellectual Ability					
Language Arts					
Mathematics					
Science					
Social Studies					
Creativity					
Leadership					
SIGS Teacher Total					
SIGS Parent Recommendation					
General Intellectual Ability					
Language Arts					
Mathematics					
Science					
Social Studies					
Creativity					
Leadership					
SIGS Parent Total					
Recommendation Totals					

District 146 Multi-Criteria Evaluation Matrix

Early Entrance
Kindergarten / 1st Grade

Student Name: _____ DOB: ___/___/___ Grade: _____

Assessments	2	4	6	8	10	Total
CogAT Assessment Nationally Standardized Test of Intellectual Ability	85-87 Percentile	88-90 Percentile	91-93 Percentile	94-96 Percentile	97+ Percentile	
CogAT - Verbal Ability Score:_____ %ile: _____						
CogAT - Quantitative Ability Score: _____ %ile: _____						
CogAT - Non-Verbal Ability Score: _____ %ile: _____						
	2	5				Total
NWEA MAP Nationally Normed Achievement Test Screener	90-94 Percentile	95+ Percentile				
Total Reading RIT Score_____						
Total Math RIT Score _____						

District 146 Multi-Criteria Evaluation Matrix

SIGS Parent Recommendation					
General Intellectual Ability					
Language Arts					
Mathematics					
Science					
Social Studies					
Creativity					
Leadership					
SIGS Parent Total					
Recommendation Totals					

Early Entrance Survey Points				
School and Academic Factors				
Developmental Factors				
Interpersonal Factors				
Iowa Acceleration Scale	34 or fewer points	35-45 points	46-59 points	60-80 points
Total Points				

Introduction to the Scales for Identifying Gifted Students

1

The *Scales for Identifying Gifted Students* (SIGS) is a norm-referenced rating scale designed to assist school districts in the identification of students as gifted. The SIGS assesses seven areas: general intellectual ability, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, creativity, and leadership, and each area is assessed at home and at school. This chapter presents (a) definitions of gifted and talented, (b) development procedures for the SIGS, (c) description of the SIGS, and (d) uses of the SIGS.

Definitions

While there is no federal mandate for serving students identified as gifted in the public school system, many states now have either permissive or mandated legislation for identifying and developing programs for these students. The federal government recognizes that students can have exceptional gifts and talents and provides a definition to guide states. The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-382) defined gifted and talented students as follows:

> The term "gifted and talented" when used in respect to students, children or youth means students, children or youth who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities. (Title XIV, p. 388)

A government report, *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent* (U.S. Department of Education, 1993), provides a definition from a talent-development perspective:

> Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas; posses an unusual leadership capacity; or excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor. (¶ 5)

Both definitions recognize diverse areas of giftedness (e.g., intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, academic) and use terms that imply the need for specialized services for identified students. Likewise, the SIGS recognizes seven areas of giftedness and can help practitioners identify gifted students so that educational programs can be designed to meet their needs.

Development of the SIGS

To develop an initial pool of items for the SIGS, we conducted a review of the literature, examined other rating scales for identifying gifted and talented students, and reviewed standards developed by educational organizations in different content areas. From this we developed a list of characteristics for each of the seven areas. The initial sets of characteristics were reviewed by a number of professionals in the field of gifted education. Based on their feedback, we refined the characteristics. The SIGS norming version contained 18 items per scale, except for the Leadership scale, which contained 17 items. The norming version of the SIGS was further refined through two statistical analyses before becoming finalized. First, we examined the item discrimination characteristics and deleted items that had item discrimination coefficients below .40. Second, we used the results of our differential item functioning studies to find additional items to delete (i.e., item bias; see Chapter 3, Technical Qualities, for

more information about differential item functioning). Based on the results of these procedures, the final version of the SIGS consists of 12 items per scale. Next we present the characteristics used in writing the initial pool of items for each of the seven areas measured by the SIGS.

Characteristics of General Intellectual Ability

Many schools use an intelligence test as one instrument to identify students as gifted. To test intelligence, however, one must define it. One of the early pioneers in the field, Spearman (1923), hypothesized that there was one underlying ability common to all tests, which he called general intelligence, or *g*. More recent theorists have posited that intelligence is more than a single factor. For example, Gardner (1983) hypothesized that there are seven intelligences: linguistic, logical–mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily–kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. In 1999 he added an eighth intelligence, called the naturalist. Another recent theorist, Sternberg (1988), developed a triarchic theory that recognizes three types of intelligence: analytical, creative, and practical. His theory also describes information-processing components necessary for extraordinary intelligence. Professionals in the field have identified the following characteristics as those describing individuals with high general intellectual ability (Clark, 1997; Coleman & Cross, 2001; Frasier et al., 1995; Paul, 1990; Piirto, 1999b; Sternberg, 1988; Tallent-Runnels et al., 1994; Terman, 1925):

- Reaches conclusions based on sound inferences
- Deals with novel tasks quickly
- Recognizes relevant elements of a problem
- Relates new information to old information
- Has an accelerated pace of thought processes
- Has advanced comprehension
- Has strong desire for knowledge
- Reasons rapidly
- Has wide range of general information
- Is an insightful and keen observer
- Is curious
- Asks many high-level questions
- Is an effective problem solver and finder
- Has an excellent retentive memory
- Is willing to explore intellectually

The SIGS items reflect a comprehensive view of intelligence like that of Gardner (1983) and Sternberg (1988). The SIGS items also reflect the characteristics as described in the literature as those possessed by individuals with high general intellectual ability, with several items focusing on metacognitve skills.

Characteristics Related to Language Arts

Programs that serve students who are gifted in language arts develop students' spoken and written language. Because many students have uneven development in these two areas, it is important to gather information about students' talents in both written and spoken language. We reviewed the characteristics that professionals identified as those that indicate strength in language arts (Clark, 1997; Gardner, 1982; Garza & Ollmann, 1996; National Council of Teachers of English, 1996; Porath, 1996; Starko, 1989; VanTassel-Baska, 2002):

- Has advanced vocabulary
- Writes using sophisticated syntax
- Exhibits playfulness with language
- Reads critically
- Creates meaning
- Discusses literature at an interpretive level
- Uses mature themes and vocabulary in writing
- Communicates effectively with a wide variety of audiences for different purposes
- Reads often
- Reads advanced-level books
- Has an enhanced capacity to engage in inquiry
- Enjoys discussing reading

In the Language Arts scale, the SIGS items can be rated in terms of spoken or written language. In addition, the items reflect the characteristics cited in the literature and in the National Council of Teachers of English (1996) standards.

Characteristics Related to Mathematics

The *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000) describe sound instructional programs as those that emphasize problem-solving and reasoning ability. Students who are gifted in mathematics have an increased

ability to be effective problem solvers and to generalize their findings across mathematical situations. In addition, the following characteristics have been cited by professionals as those that indicate students who are gifted in mathematics (Ablard & Tissot, 1998; Clark, 1997; Cruikshank & Sheffield, 1992; Franke & Carey, 1997; Gallagher, 1996; Greenes, 1981; House, 1987; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000; Sheffield, 2002; Stanley & Benbow, 1988):

- Uses variety of strategies to find solutions to mathematical problems
- Makes good conjectures (discovery oriented)
- Uses effective mathematical communication
- Exhibits persistence in finding a solution to problems
- Generalizes ideas and principles from one mathematical situation to another
- Sees mathematical patterns and relationships
- Acquires formal operations earlier than age peers
- Solves problems in diverse ways
- Has strong intuition concerning mathematics (perceptive, sees relationships)

Many of the SIGS items examine students' proficiency in solving mathematical problems. In addition, the SIGS items recognize that students with talent in mathematics have advanced abilities to see mathematical patterns and relationships and understand advanced-level mathematical concepts earlier than age peers.

Characteristics Related to Science

The *National Science Education Standards* (National Research Council, 1996) propose that inquiry is central to science learning. Inquiry is the process whereby students describe objects and events, construct explanations, test hypotheses, identify assumptions, and consider alternative explanations. This process promotes students' understanding of science and helps them learn to combine scientific knowledge with reasoning skills. A review of the literature supports this view, with most of the characteristics identified by professionals as describing students who are gifted in science relating to inquiry. Characteristics most often cited in the literature (Adams, 1996; Brandwein, 1955; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; National Research Council, 1996; Piirto, 1999b; Subotnik, 1986; VanTassel-Baska, 1998; VanTassel-Baska, 2003) include the following:

- Enjoys experimenting
- Pursues inquiries beyond allotted time span
- Engages in independent science or laboratory work
- Has excellent deductive reasoning skills
- Pays careful attention to detail
- Generates potential research questions or hypotheses
- Carries out inquiry from beginning to end result
- Pursues experimental work
- Has good organizational skills for inquiry
- Relates scientific events or findings to one another
- Understands cause-and-effect relationships

The SIGS items reflect the *National Science Education Standards* and characteristics identified by professionals in the field. The items examine students' ability and enjoyment of participation in the various stages of scientific inquiry.

Characteristics Related to Social Studies

According to the curriculum standards from the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS; 1992), the primary purpose of social studies "is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (¶ 2). Further, the NCSS believes that the study of social studies should promote civic competence. Professionals in the field concur and have identified the following characteristics as those that indicate students who are gifted in social studies (Clark, 1997; Collett, 1998; Gallagher & Gallagher, 1994; Piirto, 1999b; Scriven, 1964; VanTassel-Baska, 1998):

- Has understanding and acceptance of world cultures
- Uses advanced levels of moral and ethical judgment
- Exhibits keen interest in developing solutions to social and environmental problems
- Makes connections from past to present or from one culture to another
- Attempts to understand other points of view

- Uses sound methods to conduct historical investigations (e.g., uses trustworthy sources)
- Reads extensively about social studies topics
- Shows passion for a particular period of history

The items on the SIGS reflect the NCSS standards with many items examining students' ability to make connections among and to understand cultures and people. Other items examine students' passion for social studies and their ability to conduct sound historical investigations.

Characteristics Related to Creativity

Defining creativity is difficult because there is no single, universally accepted definition. Some definitions examine the creative act as a cognitive process; from this perspective, creativity is defined in terms of mental processes. Other definitions explain creativity from a personality perspective, which examines the attributes that enable a person to be creative. Another perspective, the social context approach, focuses on the diversity of external conditions that create an environment conducive to a person being creative. The following characteristics have been identified by professionals as important in individuals who are highly creative, and they span these three perspectives (Amabile et al., 1996; Clark, 1997; Colangelo & Davis, 2002; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Gardner, 1993; Perkins, 1981; Piirto, 1999a; Presburg, Bensen, Fitch, & Torrance, 1991):

- Is open to new experiences
- Is passionate about own work
- Generates original ideas and solutions
- Takes risks
- Is attracted to complexity
- Is aware of own creativity
- Is energetic
- Seeks solitude for reverie
- Likes to improvise
- Is persistent
- Is tolerant of ambiguity
- Exhibits talent in art, poetry, creative writing, handicrafts, music, dancing, computer programming, or science
- Does not conform to societal stereotypes
- Is excellent problem finder

The items on the SIGS reflect all three perspectives on creativity as described above. Some items examine cognitive processes such as problem-solving ability; several items examine personality characteristics such as risk taking; other items examine external conditions conducive to creativity such as seeking solitude.

Characteristics Related to Leadership

For many years, Galton (1869) influenced the way in which people defined leadership. He believed that leadership consisted of a universal set of characteristics or traits that individuals possess. These traits were considered to be fixed and occurring across all situations. More recent theories recognize that situations influence the emergence of leadership. Professional in the field have identified the following personal characteristics as those that influence leadership abilities (Chan, 2003; Chauvin & Karnes, 1983; Hensel, 1991; Karnes & Bean, 1996; Piirto, 1999b; Roach & Wyman, 1999):

- Influences others
- Plans change
- Is highly sensitive
- Promotes harmony among others
- Is effective decision maker
- Is self-sufficient
- Shows empathy
- Has high level of social sensitivity
- Is goal oriented
- Is skilled in team building and working collaboratively
- Self-regulates
- Inspires others to do their best
- Is emotionally mature
- Holds high ideals

The items on the SIGS examine personal characteristics that are important for the emergence of leadership. Many of the items focus on the personal attributes listed above.

Description of the SIGS

The SIGS consists of the following four components:

1. Technical Manual
2. School Rating Scales (SRS)
3. Home Rating Scales (HRS)
4. Summary Form

Each of these components is described next.

Technical Manual

This Technical Manual includes the information the examiner needs to administer, score, and interpret the SIGS. Information relating to the standardization, reliability, and validity of the SIGS is also found in the manual.

School and Home Rating Scales

The School Rating Scales (SRS) and the Home Rating Scales (HRS) measure talent in students. The SRS can be completed by a student's teacher or other professional, such as a paraprofessional, a counselor, or any other educator who knows the student well. The HRS can be completed by the student's parent, guardian, or other caregiver who knows the student well.

The SRS and HRS assess talent in the following seven areas: general intellectual ability, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, creativity, and leadership. Each scale consists of 12 items that are rated using a Likert scale.

The SRS and HRS can be interpreted with reference to two sets of national norms: General or Gifted. The General norms are based on a large sample of students who have not been identified by their local school districts as gifted. The Gifted norms are based on a large sample of students who have been identified by their local school districst as gifted.

Summary Form

The Summary Form provides the examiner with a place to aggregate information from the SRS and HRS. In addition, there is space on the back of the form for examiners to compare a student's SIGS scores with other quantitative and qualitative information collected on the student.

Purposes of the SIGS

There are three main purposes for using the SIGS. These are described next.

To Assist in the Identification of Students as Gifted

The primary purpose of the SIGS is to assist in the identification of students as gifted in seven areas: general intellectual ability, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, creativity, and leadership. Because each of the seven scales provides a separate score, all scales do not need to be rated. For example, a school district that has a program for gifted students in mathematics and science would want educators and caregivers to complete the Mathematics and Science scales of the SIGS. Other sections would not need to be completed. By having only the most relevant scales completed, the examiner saves time in the data collection process.

To Monitor Progress of Gifted Students

Assessment and instruction should be clearly linked. For example, a program for gifted students should include students who exhibit the characteristics found on the assessment instrument, in this case, the SIGS. The items on the SIGS were chosen because they have been consistently identified by researchers as reflective of giftedness in seven areas. Because not all students will exhibit all characteristics to the same degree, the SIGS can be used to monitor progress in classes for gifted students. The SIGS contains clusters of characteristics that might be an important focus for gifted programming.

To Use in Research Studies

The SIGS is a well-researched, norm-referenced rating scale. Therefore, it is well suited to research giftedness in the seven areas measured by the instrument. Because it has two sets of norms and a school and home version, it can be valuable for a variety of research purposes.

Overview

Guide students to success

By measuring students' learned reasoning and problem-solving abilities in the three areas most linked to success in school, *CogAT* reveals a valid, comprehensive view of their talents. With this knowledge, educators can make decisions that elevate each student's academic experience.

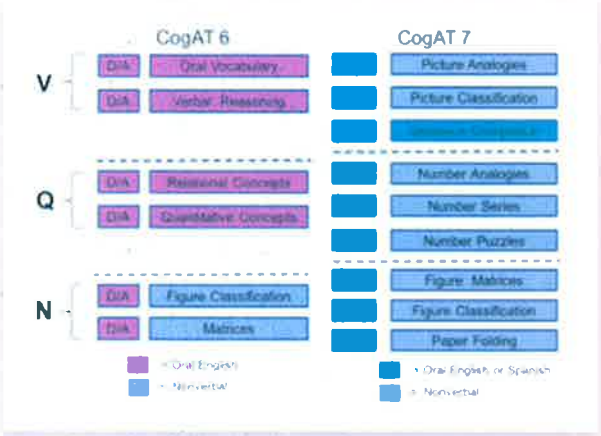
CogAT offers insight into cognitive domains not fully measured by other achievement tests.

Cognitive Testing

Complete cognitive testing includes verbal, qualitative, and nonverbal abilities that identifies strengths and weaknesses missed by other assessments.

Challenge Items

The addition of more challenging items at each test level reduces the need for out-of-level testing.



Get a complete picture of students' abilities

Every student is different. So the approach to teaching each student should be different, too. With its comprehensive assessment of abilities, *CogAT* lets educators make important programming recommendations, understand learning styles, and gain valuable information about all students, including English language learners.

District 146 Academic Acceleration Plan

Student Name: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____

School: _____ Grade: _____ Program: _____

Parent/Guardian Meeting Dates: _____

First Trimester	Goals	Strategies	Success Indicators
Academic Goals			
Interpersonal Goals			
Intrapersonal Goals			
Family Goals			

Second Trimester	Goals	Strategies	Success Indicators
Academic Goals			
Interpersonal Goals			
Intrapersonal Goals			
Family Goals			

District 146 Academic Acceleration Plan

Third Trimester	Goals	Strategies	Success Indicators
Academic Goals			
Interpersonal Goals			
Intrapersonal Goals			
Family Goals			

DISTRICT 146
CONTACT INFORMATION

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(708) 614-4500
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Director of Curriculum: Wendy Wolgan
www.district146.org

FIERKE EDUCATION CENTER
6535 W. Victoria Drive
Oak Forest, IL 60452
(708) 614-4520
Principal: Damien Aherne

FULTON SCHOOL
6601 W. 171st St.
Tinley Park, IL 60477
(708) 614-4525
Principal: Megan Miter
Asst. Principal: Kim Hartnett

KRUSE EDUCATION CENTER
7617 Hemlock Drive
Orland Park, IL 60462
(708) 614-4530
Principal: Carey Radde
Asst. Principal: Kim Hartnett

MEMORIAL SCHOOL
6701 W. 179th St.
Tinley Park, IL 60477
(708) 614-4535
Principal: Joe Trsar

CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL
18146 S. Oak Park Ave.
Tinley Park, IL 60477
(708) 614-4510
Principal: Randy Fortin
Assistant Principal: Kristen Salwierak
Assistant Principal: Sara Schnoor

Frequently Asked Questions About Acceleration

Adapted from Minnesota Department of Education Acceleration FAQ developed by Wendy Behrens and Ohio Department of Education Acceleration FAQ developed by Eric Calvert

What is acceleration?

"Accelerated placement" means the placement of a child in an educational setting with curriculum that is usually reserved for children who are older or in higher grades than the child. In Illinois, forms of acceleration required in school policies include, but need not be limited to, early entrance to kindergarten or first grade, accelerating a child in a single subject, and grade acceleration.

What are the benefits of acceleration?

Research indicates that students who are properly accelerated benefit significantly, both academically and developmentally. Accelerated gifted and talented students and other high ability students tend to perform at higher levels on achievement tests and are less likely to become bored and disinterested in school than similarly able students who are not accelerated.

Why is acceleration important?

When the level of instruction is not sufficiently challenging and expectations for continued growth are low, gifted learners may settle into patterns of underachievement. These students are at risk of developing negative attitudes toward school, and may miss out on opportunities to develop executive functioning skills and psycho-social skills important to long term success.

Are schools required to accelerate instruction to meet a student's needs?

Districts are required to have procedures in place for the academic acceleration of high ability students that include an assessment of students' readiness and motivation for acceleration using multiple valid and reliable indicators. The decision to accelerate a particular student is a local decision to be made with parent or guardian involvement. When considering whether or not a student should be accelerated, the decision should be based on the question of whether an accelerated placement would improve the current placement, and not whether it would be a "perfect" placement. Some advanced students may need a combination of different forms of acceleration, differentiated curriculum and instruction, and gifted education services to fully reach their potential.

What are some indicators that a student should be considered for acceleration?
Acceleration requires high academic ability. Standardized test scores and teacher observation can provide evidence that a student has mastered the current curriculum and is ready for a faster-paced and more complex curriculum. (Colangelo et al., 2004) Motivation and social-emotional maturity are also important indications that a highly capable student may be a good candidate for acceleration. Social-emotional maturity should be considered relatively, focusing on the question of whether they student could be successful in the setting to which he or she may be accelerated.

Who should and should not be accelerated?
Most good candidates for acceleration display some of the following characteristics:

- demonstrates above average general cognitive ability;
- achieves academically in one or more subject areas a grade level or at a higher level than his or her age-mates;

- expresses a desire for more challenging instruction;
- is socially mature enough to adapt to an environment serving older students; or
- responds positively to the possibility of acceleration.

Acceleration may not be appropriate for students with some of the following characteristics:

- has an older sibling in the same school and grade level to which the student may be Accelerated;
- is sufficiently challenged by the curriculum at his or her current grade level;
- would be significantly less emotionally mature than *typical students at the grade level to which he or she may be accelerated*; or
- responds negatively to the possibility of acceleration.

Further, one type of acceleration for a student might be appropriate when another is not. A student who is very advanced in reading and writing ability but struggles in math and is of average ability in science and social studies might be an excellent candidate for subject acceleration in reading and language arts, but a poor candidate for a whole "grade skip."

Conversely, a student who is strong in several areas might be happier and more successful if accelerated on a full-time basis so she could be with one set of peers all day and travel less back and forth between classrooms than she would if accelerated in only one or two subject areas. Near the end of the K-12 experience, some students may be ready to move on to college on a full-time basis and benefit from the opportunity to graduate high school early. Others may prefer to stay in high school and take advantage of other post secondary credit options, such as Advanced Placement (AP), dual credit programs opportunities on a partial or full-time basis.

Is acceleration the same as "grade skipping?" What are the most common types of Acceleration?

Whole-grade acceleration (commonly referred to as grade-skipping) is just one of many forms of acceleration. Other forms of acceleration include:

- early admission to kindergarten*;
- early admission to first grade*;
- Subject acceleration*/partial acceleration;
- Whole-grade acceleration/grade skipping*;
- Advanced online courses;
- concurrent/dual enrollment;
- continuous progress;
- self-paced instruction;
- combined (multi-grade) classes;
- curriculum compacting;
- telescoping curriculum (e.g. covering three years of learning goals in a two-year compacted program);
- Structured apprenticeship or mentorship experiences;
- early graduation;
- credit by examination or demonstration of mastery;
- early entrance into middle school, high school or college

("*" indicates acceleration options that must be addressed in Illinois school district policies.)

How can schools determine whether whole-grade acceleration is appropriate?
The Illinois Association for Gifted Children recommends using the Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) to evaluate students for potential whole-grade acceleration.

Won't skipping all or part of a grade cause the student's achievement test scores and grades to drop?

In most cases, students accelerated based on the recommendation of a research-based evaluation process will perform well on state achievement tests. Most students recommended for acceleration perform well above grade level prior to their accelerated placement. Research on acceleration indicates that students properly accelerated are capable of quickly catching up to their academic level peers and that any gaps in knowledge quickly disappear. Using assessments to identify any significant knowledge gaps prior to the accelerated placement, and building into the acceleration transition plan specific action steps to address any gaps identified, can help ensure success.

Is grade skipping socially damaging to students?

Gifted/advanced students selected for accelerated placement through a research-based process are unlikely to suffer negative social consequences. Studies show that they participate in school activities and view themselves positively. Their self esteem often increases as they find friends and social acceptance in the new class, although, like any student moving into a new setting, there may be a brief period of adjustment. Research on acceleration also indicates that advanced learners often feel more comfortable with their academic-level peers as opposed to their age-level peers.

What should parents do if they think their child should be considered for acceleration?

Begin by discussing your concerns with your child. If your child is interested and open to the idea, contact your child's teacher or advisor to schedule a conference. Be prepared to discuss your concerns and provide specific information as to why you believe the level and complexity of your child's instruction should be modified. Karen Rogers' book *Re-Forming Gifted Education* includes a tools for parents designed to help them gather and document information about their child's development that may be useful in discussion learning needs with the student's school.

What can school administrators do to support accelerated students?

- Create opportunities to group students based on readiness for curriculum rather than use strictly age-based grouping strategies.
- Help teachers align schedules to allow students to attend class at the most appropriate grade level based on instructional needs.
- Provide ongoing staff development opportunities so that all staff understand the unique instructional and affective needs of gifted and advanced learners.
- Challenge commonly held myths about acceleration with research and counterexamples.
- Help facilitate communication between classroom teachers, gifted education specialists, guidance counselors, parents and others so that students will receive the support they need to reach their potential.
- Where possible, place accelerated students in classrooms with teachers who are supportive of acceleration and differentiate instruction effectively.
- Reserve judgment as to the success or failure of an acceleration during the adjustment period.

- Create a school climate that recognizes and encourages high expectations and continuous growth for all students.

What can teachers do to support acceleration?

- Recognize advanced children by using formal measures (tests) and informal observations.
- Provide new challenges in and out of the classroom.
- Inform parents about acceleration options and enrichment opportunities throughout the child's academic career.
- Minimize teaching students what they already know.
- Reserve judgment as to the success or failure of an acceleration during the adjustment Period.
- Be proactive about integrating accelerated students into your classroom by introducing accelerated students to classmates who share their interests.

What can parents do to support their child's acceleration?

- Maintain open communication with your child and your child's teachers.
- Be aware that your child may be concerned about his or her ability to meet higher expectations and new challenges and have mixed feelings.
- Understand that acceleration may pose new challenges socially and academically.
- Reserve judgment as to the success or failure of an acceleration during the adjustment Period. Be prepared to offer extra support and encouragement as needed during the adjustment period.

Updated June 2019