

DEFINITIONS OF GIFTEDNESS

Giftedness, intelligence, and talent are fluid concepts and may look different in different contexts and cultures. In Germantown, there are children who demonstrate high performance, or who have the potential to do so; therefore, we have a responsibility to provide optimal educational experiences for talents to flourish in as many children as possible for the benefit of the individual and society.

Current Definitions

Although interpretations of the word “gifted” seem limitless, there are a handful of foundational definitions that may be categorized from conservative (related to demonstrated high IQ) to liberal (a broadened conception that includes multiple criteria that might not be measured through an IQ test).

- **National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)**

A gifted person is someone who shows, or has the potential for showing, an exceptional level of performance in one or more areas of expression.

Some of these abilities are very general and can affect a broad spectrum of the person’s life, such as leadership skills or the ability to think creatively. Some are very specific talents and are only evident in particular circumstances, such as a special aptitude in mathematics, science, or music.

The term *giftedness* provides a general reference to this spectrum of abilities without being specific or dependent on a single measure or index. It is generally recognized that approximately five percent of the student population, or three million children, in the United States are considered gifted.

A person’s giftedness should not be confused with the means by which giftedness is observed or assessed. Parent, teacher, or student recommendations, a high mark on an examination, or a high IQ score are not giftedness. They may be a signal that giftedness exists. Some of these indicators of giftedness are more sensitive than others to differences in the person’s environment.

(For more information go to: <http://www.nagc.org>)

- **The Javits Act (1988)**

This definition is taken from the Javits Act, which provides grants for education programs serving bright children from low-income families:

“The term gifted and talented students means children and youths who given evidence of higher performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools in order to develop such capabilities fully.”

(For more information go to <http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=574>)

There are five main areas to consider when identifying students with gifts and talents:

- **Academic** - Students who are gifted academically possess exceptional capabilities in one or more of the core academic subject areas (reading, writing, math, science, and/or social studies). These students ask poignant questions, have strong memorization skills, and use extensive vocabulary specific to the content area.
- **Intellectual** - Students who are gifted in general intellectual ability have exceptional skills in such areas as comprehension, retention of information, logical relationships, vocabulary development, and cause/effect relationships. Students often exhibit early language and vocabulary development, along with rational and advanced levels of reasoning skills, critical thinking skills, and problem solving skills. Students are often identified to be several years beyond their peers in cognitive thinking. These students typically enjoy hypothesizing and intuitively know before doing.
- **Creative** - Students who are gifted in creativity display proclivity toward oral, written, and nonverbal expression; ideas are depicted and expressed using means which are novel, unique, and inventive. Students often do not settle for only one answer as the correct answer and have a strong inclination toward visualization skills. Students with creative talents often resist conformity and have a keen sense of humor.
- **Artistic** - Students who are gifted in artistic manners are talented in the visual, performing (drama), or musical arts. These students typically have a keen sense of observation and prefer to express their ideas using aesthetic expression. This area is to be assessed using performance-based assessments and identification should take place through nominations and portfolio assessments.
- **Leadership** - Students who are gifted in leadership skills are adept at goal-setting, organization, and progress monitoring; and interpersonal skills are proficiently displayed. Students with proclivities toward leadership have the abilities to persuade others, are self-confident, and are comfortable with peers. Students are able to express themselves and often have a charismatic personality.

Students who are gifted are capable of high achievement and performance compared to others of similar age, experience, and environment (grade, demographics, socioeconomic status). GT student education requires differentiated and challenging programs offered through differentiation, enrichment, and/or acceleration provided beyond the regular education programs designed for all students. In order to provide appropriate services to gifted and talented student, roles and responsibilities must be defined.