

GIFTED & TALENTED/ENRICHMENT

The philosophy of the Linwood Public Schools is to provide enrichment opportunities for all students in all areas of the curriculum. In Kindergarten through 4th grades, students are provided with challenging opportunities that are appropriate to their abilities and interests through extension activities and alternative projects and assignments within the classroom. These activities foster self-esteem, problem solving and creative thinking skills. Flexible grouping in the classroom and ability grouping in math and language arts further meet the needs of individual learners.

All students in grades five through eight meet with the Gifted and Talented teacher in the Related Arts cycle during SPEAK (Students Performing, Experiencing, and Acquiring Knowledge) and benefit from enrichment activities such as digital storytelling, public speaking, Mock Trial, and participation in Belhaven's TV production activities. Gifted and Talented students receive enhanced and extended activities during this SPEAK cycle. Pre-engineering middle school activities are offered to the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Gifted and Talented students within the Industrial Technology rotation.

In grades five through eight, all students are provided opportunities for enrichment through thirty clubs and athletic experiences including band, drama, Math Counts, Builders Club, Think Team, etc. Sixth through eighth grade students who meet district criteria participate in the Accelerated Math Program, which offers Pre-Algebra in sixth grade, Algebra in seventh grade and Geometry in eighth.

In accordance with state guidelines, identification of potential Gifted and Talented students occurs at every grade level. The identification process for Kindergarten through grade three students is completed through review of the functional assessment data used within the classroom to support the instruction of all children. All potential candidates participate as part of an early elementary talent pool receiving curricular enrichment within the classroom. As part of our district philosophy and in alignment with current state and federal assessment trends, standardized assessments are used to identify Gifted and Talented students in the fall of fourth grade. This assessment process includes the results from statewide testing, measures of achievement, creativity, and aptitude. Students are initially identified through performance on the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) and must meet three of the four eligibility criteria to be considered for acceptance into the program. Initial referral for assessment may also occur through teacher or parent nomination.

Criteria:

Kindergarten through Grade 2:

Identification of potential gifted and talented students, Kindergarten through Grade 2, is based upon functional assessment data administered in the fall to all students. Potential candidates must meet the three grade level identification criteria to be included in the early elementary talent pool.

Kindergarten:

- **Functional Assessment Language Arts Literacy:** Minimum score of Level 4 or above on the Literacy Progress Record
- **Kindergarten Entrance Screening:** Student performance at the 97th percentile or above
- **Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scales (GATES):** Minimum standard score of 121 or above

Grade 1:

- **Functional Assessment Language Arts Literacy:** Minimum score of Level 6 or above on the Literacy Progress Record
- **Functional Assessment Mathematics:** Performance score of 3 on open-ended Math assessment
- **Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scales (GATES):** Minimum standard score of 121 or above

Grade 2:

- **Functional Assessment Language Arts Literacy:** Student performance at the 97th percentile or above
- **Functional Assessment Mathematics:** Performance score of 3 on open-ended Math assessment
- **Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scales (GATES):** Minimum standard score of 121 or above

Grade 3 and above:**State Assessments:**

- **NJASK:** Statewide assessment based upon the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards (for grades 3-8): “Advanced Proficient” in both Language Arts and Math (with scores that reflect 85% of the total points possible).
- **Otis Lennon School Ability Test:** Total score of 125* or higher; an assessment of students’ thinking/reasoning skills using verbal, nonverbal, and quantitative abilities, providing both ability and achievement information
*Note: If a child is designated as eligible for Special Education Services, the criteria is 125 in *either* the verbal or nonverbal subtests as his/her disability might affect the results
- **Sages2: Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary and Middle School Students:** 95th percentile; Measures aptitude from a reasoning subtest and achievement through questions about language arts, social studies, science, and math. This test also examines the relationship between a student’s aptitude and achievement.
- **Torrance Test of Creative Thinking: Thinking Creatively with Pictures:** 95th percentile; Measures creative thinking using picture-based exercises to assess fluency, originality, elaboration, abstractness, etc.

Inclusion into the Gifted & Talented program is predicated on meeting three out of four of the above criteria. Students can also be recommended for the program through teacher and/or parent referral. Parent referrals to be tested for the Gifted & Talented program must be in writing and are due to the building principal by September 1st. Gifted and Talented testing will occur in the fall of each year for those that are eligible based upon their ASK scores, and also those that are referred by parents and/or teachers. Parents will be notified if their child is eligible for testing based upon the ASK scores, and will then be notified of the testing results in early winter.

If a student transfers to our district and was eligible for and participated in the Gifted & Talented program from their sending district, they may participate in our program without additional testing.