



# RUSD GIFTED AND TALENTED IDENTIFICATION AND PROGRAMMING

A Parent Handbook

[GT Program Web Link](#)

## INTRODUCTION

Our Gifted and Talented guide evolved from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Statutes and Administrative Rule [Legal Reference](#) and the National Association of Gifted Children standards. [NAGC Gifted Programming Standards](#)

This handbook provides an overview of Racine Unified School District's Guide to Gifted and Talented Identification and Programming and includes:

- Philosophy towards gifted education
- Five areas of gifted
- Gifted Education and Response to Intervention
- Identification Procedures
- FAQ
- Parent resources

Information in this handbook is explained in greater detail on our district website. Talented and Gifted is part of the Curriculum and Instruction Department. For more information about gifted programming in RUSD, please visit: [GT Program Web Link](#)

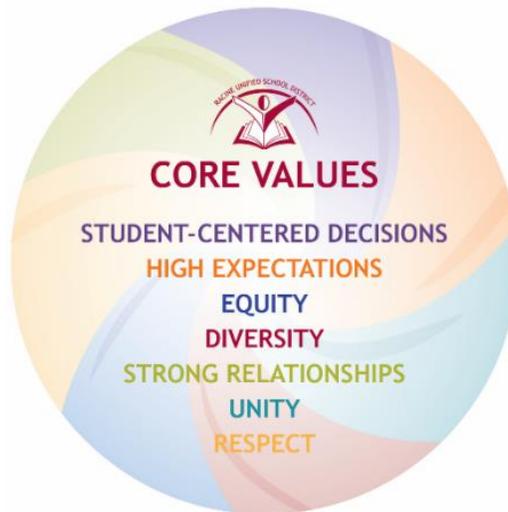
## RACINE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT'S NORTH STAR VISION

In RUSD, we are focused on our North Star Vision that all students will graduate career and/or college ready. This vision aligns with our mission of “Educating Every Student to Succeed.” Our North Star Vision focuses on the whole child. It aligns with the Board of Education’s Results Policies that establish expectations for all graduates to successfully demonstrate:

- Academic achievement
- Workplace skills
- Global citizenship
- Life skills



Key benchmarks related to academics, social/emotional and career/life skills at grade levels along the way are used to monitor student progress. In RUSD, our Vision, along with our Core Values, drives our work to ensure every student exceeds expectations!



- We are best when our students are first. All decisions are centered on the needs of the student
- We hold high expectations for our students and ourselves
- Every student deserves a high quality education with resources aligned to their needs
- We believe our diversity is our strength and an asset
- Success requires strong, successful partnerships with our colleagues, families and community
- We thrive when we support one another and work collaboratively
- Everyone deserves a respectful, safe and positive school environment

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## GLOSSARY of TERMS

**Ability** – A natural tendency to do something successfully or well.

**AP (Advanced Placement)** – A Nationally recognized program which consists of college-level courses and examinations for high school students. College credit may be earned with a successful score of an AP exam.

**Aptitude** – A quickness to learn.

**Bloom's Taxonomy** - Developed in 1956 by Benjamin Bloom, the taxonomy is often used to develop curriculum for gifted children. There are six levels within the taxonomy that move from basic to high levels of thinking; they include knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

**Cluster Grouping** – An arrangement in which a group of students with similar talents are arranged in order to help modify their curriculum.

**Compacting** – Streamlining the regular curriculum in order to eliminate repetition of previously mastered material. May allow student to participate in independent study, accelerated content and/or enrichment

**Content** – The knowledge, understanding, and skills we want students to learn.

**Differentiated Education Plan (DEP)** – An individualized plan for ensuring curriculum and instruction of a gifted student. This plan is developed at the school site with parents and staff on an as needed basis.

**Differentiation** – Modifying what occurs in the classroom so that students have multiple options for taking in information, making sense of ideas, and expressing what they learn.

**Dual Enrollment** - Most often refers to high school students taking college courses, often for college credit.

**Early Entrance to kindergarten** – The process by which a four-year-old student enters kindergarten prior to turning five-years-old.

**Enrichment** - Activities that add or go beyond the existing curriculum. They may occur in the classroom or in a separate setting such as a pull-out program.

**Flexible Grouping** – Students are grouped together within a classroom or between classrooms in order to provide instruction or activities at an appropriate level.

**Grade Level Acceleration** – Advanced grade placement for a student in all areas of the curriculum; also known as “skipping a grade”.

**Gifted** – Having exceptional natural talent or intelligence.

**Interest** –Topic or subject that grabs the attention, curiosity, and involvement of a student.

**Independent Study** – Structured projects agreed upon by student and teacher that allows a student to individually investigate areas of interest or to advance knowledge.

**MAP** – Measure of Academic Progress, a computer adaptive assessment that measures growth in the areas of mathematics and reading.

**Mentor** – Someone who shares their work experiences or interests with a student who has the same career interest.

**Portfolio** – A collection of student work over time that can help to determine achievement and progress. It is an alternate or supplemental way to measure giftedness.

**Process** – How students come to understand or make sense of the content.

**Product** – How students demonstrate what they have come to know, understand, and are able to do after an extended period of learning.

**Progress Monitoring** –Progress monitoring helps teachers evaluate how effective is their instruction. Teachers then make informed decisions about the type of instruction that will work best for the child. It is a way of helping the child learn and the teacher teach.

**Response to Intervention (Rti)** – A process for achieving higher levels of academic and behavioral success for all students.

**Readiness** – The level that a student is ready to learn.

**Referral** (Educator, Parent, Student) – A process by which student data is collected, reviewed and used to determine further investigation.

**SST (Student Support Team)** – Team of professionals that may include: principal, teacher, parent, guidance counselor, school psychologist, or GT Coordinator that helps determine a plan of support for a student.

**Standardized Test** - Any form of test that requires all test takers to answer the same questions and is scored in a “standard” or consistent manner.

**Student Profile** – Record of referral information and history of student services.

**Subject Acceleration** – Advanced grade placement for a student in one particular area of the curriculum; for example, a fourth grade student who is placed in fifth grade mathematics.

**Talent** – An unusual natural ability to do something well that can be developed by training.

**Tiers** – Under Rti, tiers describe the level and intensity of instruction/interventions.

**Twice Exceptional** - Refers to intellectually gifted children who have some form of disability. These children are considered **exceptional** both because of their intellectual gifts and because of their special needs.

**Universal Assessment** – District-wide assessments given to all students.

**Universal Instruction** – Curriculum and educational experiences offered to all students.

## **GIFTED AND TALENTED PHILOSOPHY**

Racine Unified School District's mission includes the unique educational needs of our Gifted and Talented students. "Gifted and Talented students" are defined as students enrolled in public schools who give evidence of high performance capability in intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership or specific academic areas. While all students have personal strengths, some have abilities and talents, or the potential, to go beyond the core curriculum. To ensure these students succeed, RUSD utilizes the National Standards in Gifted and Talented Education and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's Key Characteristics of Effective Gifted Education Plans. Our gifted students will:

- Reflect the diverse population of our district
- Engage in guidance to meet student's unique social and emotional needs
- Receive instruction from highly trained educators
- Ensure a collaborative education that includes students, teachers, administrators, parents and the community

Racine Unified School District is committed to systematically and continuously identifying and monitoring students and agrees that gifted education is an integral part of the school district's staffing and funding plans.

## **Five Areas of Gifted Identification**

Wisconsin School Law, Chapter 118.35 defines “gifted and talented” as students enrolled in public schools who give evidence of high performance capability in intellectual, creative, visual/performing arts, leadership or specific academic areas. The students may need services or activities in order to fully develop such capabilities.

### **General Intellectual**

- Recalls facts easily
- Is well informed about one or more topics
- Shows keen insight with cause and effect relationships
- Has exceptional ability to solve problems
- Uses an extensive vocabulary
- Learns rapidly in comparison to peers
- One or two repetitions for mastery

### **Specific Academic Area**

- Has strong memory
- Intense interest in specific academic area
- Asks thoughtful questions
- Advanced comprehension
- Pursues special interest with enthusiasm
- Thinks abstractly

### **Creativity**

- Independent and original thinker
- Resists conformity
- Keen sense of humor
- Generates many ideas to solve a given problem
- Asks many and unusual questions
- Sees the possible

### **Visual/Performing Arts**

- Desire to perform/produce
- Persists with an artistic vision
- Very observant
- Shows strong ability in painting, sculpting, or drawing
- Unusual talent in vocal or instrumental music

### **Leadership**

- Relates to and motivates other people
- Listens and respects the opinions of others (or listens to and debates the opinion of others)
- Organizes others for activities
- Ideas are accepted by others

## Gifted Education and Response to Intervention

Response to Intervention pledges that each student receives high-quality, research-based, and differentiated instruction from their classroom teacher. Through standardized testing and progress monitoring (see glossary), teachers adjust their teaching to meet the needs of all students. The adjustment is fluid in nature allowing teachers to match needs with appropriate levels of instruction. Student needs may surface at different times and under certain circumstances. These *levels of instruction* allows for more students to be exposed to advanced content on an “as needed” basis, thus eliminating the possibility of letting a talent or gift go unnoticed. When a child consistently demonstrates the need for higher levels of instruction, teachers may need to refer for possible gifted testing.

## **Identification**

Only after a student has consistently demonstrated the need for advanced levels of instruction may they be referred for possible gifted testing. The classroom teacher or student's parent/guardian may complete a nomination form. A Student Support Team will convene to complete a Student Support Profile. This profile includes data regarding the learning environment, instructional modifications, social and emotional needs, and progress monitoring results. The Student Support Team will determine if testing for GT programming or the continuation of monitoring, is in the best interest of the student.

An evaluation for gifted programming consists of multiple and varied data pieces that build a profile of student strengths. These may include:

- Test of ability
- Test of achievement
- Test of aptitude
- Test of creativity
- Parent Rating Scale
- Teacher Rating Scale
- Interest Inventory
- Portfolio

If testing indicates an identification for giftedness, a Differentiation Education Plan (DEP) will be developed with the Student Service Team. This plan will be reviewed at least annually. If the test results determine there is no need for a DEP, the student may still need intensive instruction and will remain fluid in all tiers. Students are continually evaluated within a Response to Intervention (RtI) system.

## ACCELERATION

Racine Unified School District recognizes that in some cases subject acceleration or grade level acceleration may be warranted.

- **Subject Acceleration** – A student moves to an advanced grade level in one or more subjects but remains identified with his/her own age classmates.
- **Grade Level Acceleration** – A student is advanced to the next grade level in all subject areas on a full-time basis (grade skipping) in order to meet the student’s identified ability and/or performance needs.
- **Early Entrance to Kindergarten** – A student enters school earlier than other age level peers.

Parents wishing to apply for early entrance should visit the district website and follow the directions on the Early Entrance to Kindergarten forms: <http://www.rusd.org/district/early-entrance-kindergarten-forms>

RUSD has an Acceleration Policy divided into three steps. Parents should contact their child’s classroom teacher and/or school principal for more information.

1. Parent Request for Acceleration
  - Complete Parent Referral Form for Acceleration and return to classroom teacher. Student **must** be performing at Tier 3 instruction. Consult with teacher before submitting form.
  - A Student Services Team (SST) meeting is convened to determine if Tier 3 instruction continues or if testing for acceleration begins.
2. Assessment and Decision Making
  - Tests of achievement, aptitude and ability are administered to student.
  - The Iowa Acceleration Scale is completed and includes:
    - \*Test results
    - \*School and academics
    - \*Developmental factors
    - \*Interpersonal skills
    - \*Attitude and Support
3. Planning
  - Programming changes if the student is a good candidate for acceleration.
  - If student is not a good candidate for acceleration, a plan to meet the student’s needs is developed.

Parents interested in accelerating into first grade need to be aware of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s policy on 5 year-old kindergarten:

Act 41 does not require parents to enroll their five-year-old into five-year-old kindergarten. However, Act 41 does prohibit a school board from enrolling a child in first grade unless the child completes 5K or

is received on exemption. RUSD's Acceleration Policy may be used as an exemption. Final decisions are made by the Chief Academic Officer.

*Please note: In order to facilitate a smooth transition for your child, referral for acceleration during the 1st semester should be submitted by March 15<sup>th</sup> of the previous school year. Referral for second semester acceleration should be submitted by October 15<sup>th</sup> of the current school year.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Who should I talk to if I think my child is gifted?*

Parents should contact their child's teacher with questions regarding child's classroom performance/needs.

*Where can I find additional information?*

Check the Resource page at the end of this handbook for information. Also, Racine Unified School District has more information on their website. [www.rusd.org](http://www.rusd.org), under academics tab

*How will I know if my child is identified?*

You will be notified with a form mailed home at the time of identification. You will also be invited to another Student Support Team (SST) meeting to assist with the completion of your child's Differentiated Education Plan (DEP).

*Who should I call if I have questions?*

You should contact your child's teacher with any questions concerning specific classroom experiences. The principal in each school is the administrator responsible for the programs within his/her building. If you have tried to work through the teacher and still have questions, you may wish to contact the principal.

*Will all my children be identified as gifted?*

Not all children in one family may necessarily be identified as gifted. It is important as a parent to see each child as an individual. However, if experience with an older child leads you to believe that a younger child may have high potential, you may wish to share their advanced abilities with the classroom teacher.

## Parent Resources

[The Association for the Gifted](#)

[Davidson Institute for Talent Development](#)

[GT World](#)

[Hoagies' Gifted Education Page](#)

[National Association for Gifted Children](#)

[Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted](#)

[Twice Exceptional Newsletter](#)

[Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted](#)

Appeals Process:

- Request for appeal must be submitted in writing to the GT Coordinator within 7 business days of notification of results.
- Appeal must include written explanation as to why evaluation results should be considered.
- Appeal will be reviewed by a committee comprised of: Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Chief Academic Officer and Gifted and Talented Coordinator.

The decision of the committee is final. Racine Unified School District takes the issue of early entrance very seriously and may screen very few children per year. Few children are found eligible for early entrance to five-year-old kindergarten. RUSD does not screen for early entry to 4K programming.