

Gifted and Talented (G&T) Identification and Programming

Roger Thorson, G&T Coordinator, has been encouraging the focus of our efforts around two main themes:

Student strengths

In an attempt to identify student strengths, any information from achievement or ability tests, classroom performance, teacher recommendations, parent input, or student inquiry is added to a “Talent Pool” data listing. This gives information to our teachers regarding specific areas of strength, the source of the information, and what co-curricular opportunities and instructional methods were used in the past. The Talent Pool indicates strengths, and not all those listed are labeled gifted and talented. In fact, when appropriate, G&T types of programming could be made available to anyone.

Classroom Differentiation

There are many ways the school staff may provide challenge within the regular curriculum by means of differentiation. We can differentiate the content, the process, or the product with which the student can get involved. We can differentiate school activities based on the

students’ readiness level, interest, and learning style. These principles apply to all students. The able student needs differences in the thinking level of the assignment, choices in the work procedures and real-world product expectations.

These characteristics of strong G&T programming come when the entire school community takes ownership. Our staff, already supportive, has training on several levels to widen their repertoire of differentiation strategies, alternative schedules are being created, and students will be guided through some of the choices for which they have responsibility.

Parents need to understand what to expect from a school regarding the challenge of an able student, recognize good programming, and learn how to support those efforts at home. There will be several opportunities to get parent information. Books are available on the subject. Watch the *Merton Memo or Friday Flyer* for parent meetings, student opportunities, and informational articles. Mr. Thorson and designated Teacher Advocates, will be working toward these goals with the students and staff. Please contact them with your questions.

Enrichment Opportunities

“**Young Rembrandts**” is an art program available for students after school. Drawing classes are offered to students K-8. (Semi- annual)

Midwest Talent Search is a program which supports able students’ needs to demonstrate academic strengths and find challenging programs. Students grades 4-8 can sign up to take the EXPLORE or ACT tests prior to the grade level usually given. This gives you valuable information and automatically places you on a mailing list for enrichment opportunities.

Camp Invention: summer science enrichment program grades 2-5

Forensics is a middle school competitive public speaking program.

Destination Imagination forms teams to solve creatively and technically rigorous solutions to challenges provided by this international competition. (all grades)

Math contests occur in grades 4-8 in “Math 24”, and problem solving

Robotics clubs and teams use LEGOS to solve problems

Enrichment Opportunities continued:

Independent Study: many times in a class a student may propose an alternative to the regular program or assignment. If he/she “knows it already” or can learn it faster it may be necessary adjust the assignment.

Guidance Groups are formed to deal with self-advocacy, seeking challenge, and knowing personal strengths.

Writer’s Roundup: an annual student writer’s conference where they meet an author, create an anthology of writing and art, which is presented in a “reader’s concert”.

Scholarships are available through the Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted. This group accepts applications from any student who is planning to enroll in an enrichment course, workshop, or camp. The due date is either April 15 or October 15, so let Mr. Thorson know if you want an application.

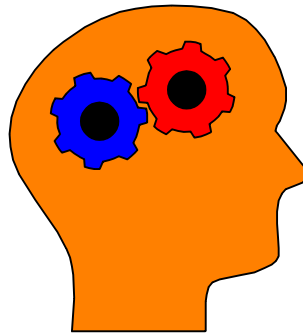
Area Opportunities: Universities and organizations offer all sorts of enrichment challenges designed especially for the able child. Lists are published regularly in the *Merton Memo and Friday Flyer*.

Organizations: There are organizations with information for parents with able children:

WATG: Wisconsin Association for the Talented and Gifted

NAGC: National Association for Gifted Children

MENSA: advocates intelligence and encourages challenge



Contact Mr. Thorson for further information on any of these programs.

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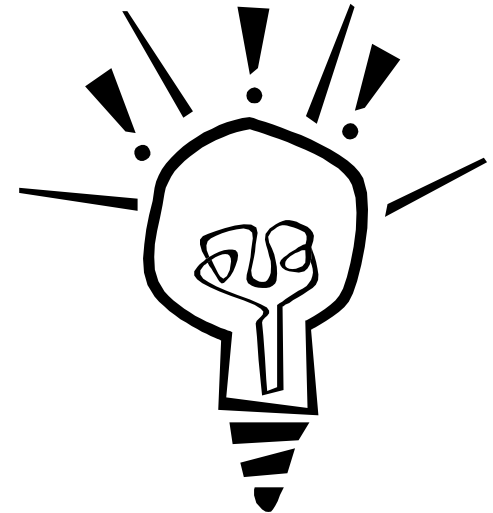
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