Consultants for High Ability, LLC

K-12 Programs and Services for Gifted Students

Program Evaluation for West Windsor-Plainsboro

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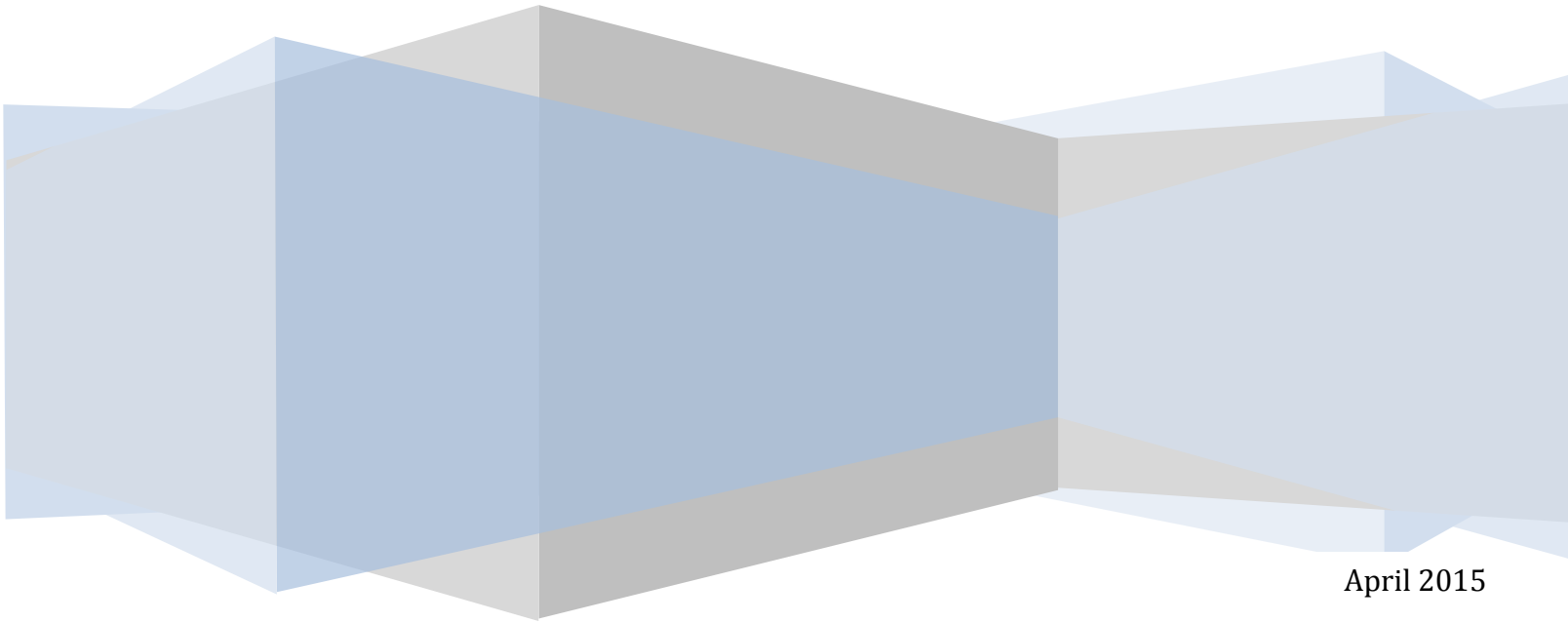

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Overview of Gifted Program Evaluation

Purpose and Focus

A team of experts in gifted education were contracted to conduct a comprehensive, formal evaluation of West Windsor-Plainsboro's program for gifted students. The purpose of the request was to seek feedback about the effectiveness of the current program. Information provided will be used to guide program improvement for gifted students and ultimately for West Windsor – Plainsboro Regional School District as a whole.

For the purpose of analysis and the discussion of findings, the gifted program was divided into 5 key areas: Program Design, Curriculum and Instruction, Affective Needs, Professional Development, and Program Effectiveness. For each program area, the report includes the data sources used for the analysis, the findings, a summary, and targeted recommendations for future positive development.

West Windsor - Plainsboro has a strong foundation of strengths that will facilitate changes to improve the gifted program. A culture of respect for high achievement permeates the district. From the academic extra-curricular opportunities to the array of advanced course offerings at the high school, the promotion of high achievement is evident throughout the district. Additionally, the schools are well supported by the community with strong interest in the programs offered and long-standing pride in the quality of education provided. Finally, district leadership is supportive of programmatic changes that will strengthen the gifted program. These key indicators of support for high achievement are not to be undervalued in terms of their influence on facilitating changes for gifted program development.

With this foundation of strength, WW-P is now in position to thoroughly examine its programs for gifted students to target areas for development and/or modification that will enhance the educational experiences for these students, developing skills necessary for success, and enhancing the high levels of performance already in place.

Evaluation Process

The consultants used the following process in their evaluation:

ONSITE

- Three and a half days of structured interviews with school principals, key teachers, parents, students, and school board members.
- Meetings with the Gifted Program Coordinator and the Assistant Superintendent.
- Building visits at each school.

OFF-SITE

- Development of a plan for the evaluation with input and approval from the district.
- Consultation with the gifted coordinator throughout the process.
- Construction of survey items and preparation of interview questions.
- Document review.
- Review and analysis of student identification data, policies, procedures, and placements.
- Review and analysis of program student standardized test data.
- Review and analysis of Advanced Placement data.
- Review of classroom instruction, including classroom videos and lesson plans.
- Review of curriculum outlines, extracurricular offerings, and programs of study for middle school and high school.
- Analysis of responses to surveys from program students, program parents, non-program parents, non-program students, and teachers.
- Review and analysis of interviews with administrators, faculty, students, and parents.
- Final document preparation.

Data Analysis

Survey data were tabulated for each stakeholder group. In addition, results were analyzed across building levels (primary, upper elementary, middle, and high school), across stakeholder groups (teachers, parents, and students), and between stakeholders of Talent Pool students and stakeholders of Non-Talent Pool students. Pertinent survey results are reported and described within each appropriate section of the report. Additionally, narrative comments from the interviews and surveys were analyzed for themes and are summarized as well. Classroom videos of instruction were analyzed with the classroom observation tool, *Assessing Classroom Differentiation* designed for use in classrooms that include gifted students (Appendix H). Lesson plans and other program materials and policies were analyzed according to the guidelines proposed in the *National Association for Gifted Children's Program Standards.* Student achievement and aptitude test data were analyzed. Results from all data sources were used to triangulate findings from each of the overarching evaluation components.

Background Information about WW-P School Corporation

- Total enrollment: 9,788.
- 62% of the district students are Asian, 6% Black, 4% Hispanic, and 27% White: less than 1% are Pacific Islander or Multi Racial.
- Approximately 6% of students are considered Economically Disadvantaged.
- Some information was obtained from the district website and some from state reports for the schools. New Jersey school reports are by school; composite information for the district as a whole from the same school year was not found; this report could be amended with more specific information.

Survey to constituent groups

Table 1: Survey Respondents

Group	Number Responding
Parents of Talent Pool Students in Primary Grades	**105**
Parents of Non Talent Pool Primary Grade Students	**246**
Parents of Talent Pool Students in Upper Elementary	**93**
Parents of Non Talent Pool Upper Elementary Students	**163**
Parents of Talent Pool Students in Middle School	**74**
Parents of Non Talent Pool Students in Middle School	**208**
Parents of High School Students	**320**
Teachers of Primary Grade Students	**60**
Teachers of Upper Elementary Students	**44**
Teachers of Middle School Students	**67**
Teachers of Honors and AP High School Students	**64**
Identified Talent Pool Students in Middle School	**41**
Non Talent Pool Students in Middle School	**97**
High School Students	**415**
Total Number of Respondents	**1,997**

Program Area: Program Design

The state of New Jersey defines Gifted and Talented as *""students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability in one or more content areas when compared to their chronological peers in the local school district and who require modifications of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities." (N.J.A.C. 6A: 8-1.3)* The state allows for local decision as to how to best identify and serve gifted students, but the state does mandate that identification be ongoing, begin in kindergarten, and encompass multiple measures (*N.J.A.C. 6A: 8-3.1(a)5 ii).*

West Windsor-Plainsboro's Gifted & Talented Program was evaluated within the context of the New Jersey mandate with a thorough examination of the following:

- Written philosophy, definition, and mission statement guiding gifted programming.
- Consistency of identification procedures with philosophy and definition of giftedness.
- Continuum of services offered to meet the needs of all identified gifted students.
- Communication with stakeholders regarding gifted programming options.

Data Sources

- Review of program documents
    - District GT program website
    - Philosophy, Mission Statement, and District Definition of Gifted
    - PowerPoint from District GT parent presentations
    - GT Resource specialist's website
    - Spreadsheet of 2nd and 4th grade InView scores
    - Spreadsheet of Terra Nova data for A & E placement
- District policies on identification and acceleration
- Interview and survey data (See Appendices A-E for the Interview Questions, the Interview Schedule, and Sample Surveys).

Findings

Philosophy, Definition, Mission Statement

West Windsor-Plainsboro states that the mission of their gifted and talented program is to "provide opportunities for students to explore their intellectual, creative and artistic gifts and talents within the classroom and with beyond-the-classroom experiences." Furthermore, the district recognizes that "it is essential to provide diverse, appropriate, and ongoing learning experiences and environments that incorporate the academic, psychological, and social needs of students." The district views its responsibility to "provide students with educational alternatives that teach, challenge, and expand their knowledge, while simultaneously stressing the development of independent and self-directed learners who continuously generate questions, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and ideas."

The district's mission is guided by the philosophical teachings of Dr. Joseph Renzulli who conceptualized gifted behaviors as occurring when three elements intersect: above average ability, creativity, and task commitment. The district further defines above average ability to include some of the multiple intelligences articulated by Howard Gardner: verbal-linguistic, math-logical, naturalist and spatial "intelligences."

Identification

West Windsor-Plainsboro also ascribes to Dr. Renzulli's "Talent Pool" identification concept. According to Renzulli,[1] the Talent Pool should be comprised of the top 15-20% of learners. These learners should be identified through multiple measures, including, but not limited to, standardized aptitude and achievement tests, as well as through parent, teacher, and self-nomination. Students within the Talent Pool then self-select into enrichment opportunities based on their interests and motivation. WW-P establishes its Talent Pool through multiple measures. The district automatically includes any child who scores at the ninth stanine (96th percentile or higher) on the verbal and/or nonverbal reasoning subtests of the InView. Additionally, other children are added to the Talent Pool through teacher observation, parent nomination, and self-selection into enrichment services. Identification is ongoing with the InView data collected systematically in 2nd and 4th grade, and qualitative data supplied by the teachers and family considered annually.

Collectively, the district's philosophy, mission statement, definition of gifted, and identification processes are theoretically consistent. Although West Windsor-Plainsboro identifies approximately 30% of its students in the Talent Pool instead of the 15-20% recommended by Renzulli, this decision is supported by the data indicating that this district's average indicator of cognitive ability is approximately 1 standard deviation higher than the national average.[2] In such a high aptitude district, more children would be expected to display "gifted behaviors" than the 15-20% Renzulli noted in typically performing districts. The Talent Pool that casts a wide net, includes the use of qualitative data such as teacher and parent observation, and provides enrichment opportunities for all, is an excellent approach for a highly performing district such as WW-P to adopt. With a well-educated, concerned parent population, strict cut-off scores for inclusion into gifted service options could easily fuel unhealthy competition and elitism and exclude children who could legitimately benefit from services.

The district's identification process is also consistent with New Jersey's mandate for an ongoing identification procedure that uses multiple measures. New Jersey law, however, mandates that identification begin in kindergarten. While WW-P does informally identify students in the kindergarten and 1st grade years with qualitative data and classroom based assessments, no formal standardized measure of aptitude or achievement is given until 2nd grade. The district may want to consider giving an aptitude test, such as the primary version of the InView (Primary Test of Cognitive Skills) to students in the second semester of kindergarten and use this data to establish the foundation of the Talent Pool. In this way, more gifted students than just those recognized by teachers or parents, may begin receiving services earlier than 2nd grade.

Continuum of Service Options

WW-P provides a continuum of services at each building level. At the primary level, a Gifted and Talented Resource specialist serves all four buildings. This GTR specialist serves Talent Pool students and their teachers through a combination of pushing into the classrooms to model lessons and work with students, pulling students out of the classroom for enrichment activities, and helping all teachers and students learn

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[1] Renzulli, J.S. (n.d.). *A practical system for identifying gifted and talented students*. An article on the website of the National Research Center for Gifted and Talented at the University of Connecticut. www.gifted.uconn.edu/sem/semart04.html

[2] The mean Cognitive Skills Index for WW-P 2nd graders was 116; the national mean is 100, and the standard deviation for the Inview is 16 points.

how to use the Renzulli Learning system for research. Additionally, in some buildings, at some grade levels, Talent Pool students are also clustered into classrooms to facilitate differentiation. At the upper elementary schools, one GTR specialist serves both schools. This specialist also does a mixture of pushing into the classroom to assist the classroom teacher and pulling students out of the classroom, primarily for creative problem solving activities. The GTR specialist also facilitates a program called Motivation Abilities Generating Innovation through Creativity (MAGIC). This program is held twice a week during lunch and/or recess and offers students opportunities to learn about newspaper publishing, coding, biographies of eminent people, and geometric design. In addition, students who apply and test into the "Accelerated and Enriched" math program begin a separate program for math that accelerates them two years above grade level. As with the primary buildings, some clustering of GT students takes place, but this practice is not executed consistently across both grade levels and both buildings. At the middle school level, one GTR specialist per school facilitates the Performance Revealing Individual Student Magic (PRISM) program, a program that occurs during students' FLEX time. The first six weeks of the year consist of a "Prism for All" where students are provided general information regarding giftedness such as the theory of multiple intelligences and the growth mindset. Students are then able to select from National History Day, Future Problem Solving, Scenario Writing, or Inquiry study for their PRISM focus. New this year, students at Community may also participate in an environmental science or Makers Ambassadors PRISM strands. Students continue with A & E math, and there is also an honors section of Pre-Algebra and Algebra for 7th and 8th graders, respectively. At the high school level, options for gifted students include a wide array of honors and AP courses as well as student led clubs and other extracurricular activities.

The services that WW-P has articulated for gifted students are also theoretically consistent with the district's philosophy and definition of gifted students. Data collected through classroom observation as well as an analysis of the interview and survey data, however, indicate that the number of personnel allocated for the program at the primary-middle school levels is not sufficient to provide the services as they are articulated, thereby resulting in a "non-therapeutic dose" for students. These concerns will be addressed for each of the building levels.

Primary: At the primary level, one GTR specialist, Anne Marie Hughes, is charged with serving all four primary buildings. While all survey comments regarding Mrs. Hughes' competency were glowing (e.g. *"Anne Marie Hughes is a great resource and is extremely helpful; Anne Marie Hughes is absolutely amazing and is so helpful in providing support"*), survey results indicated that **60% of classroom teachers never use her or use her less than once a month.** Representative narrative comments suggest that the lack of use is because of her limited availability:

"Mrs. Hughes is a wonderful resource! She just has to spread herself so thin that she is not able to work with enough students who could benefit from her activities"

"Sharing one resource specialist among 4 schools is difficult - especially since she is popular among teachers."

When primary teachers were asked if they would use the GT resource teacher more often if her availability was not an issue, 47% indicated that they would use her quite often or very often. As one teacher explained, *"I feel that it would be helpful to have weekly visits with the gifted and talented teacher not only for the students but to help me plan lessons that would fit their individual needs."*

One element contributing to the challenge of meeting the advanced academic needs of the gifted learners at the primary level is that the gifted students are not consistently clustered into the same classrooms. With the district identifying as many as 30% of its students in the Talent Pool, the specialist does not have time

to effectively address their needs when they are spread across all classrooms. Research on the Total School Cluster Grouping model[3] indicates that the model leads to achievement gains for all students when gifted students are clustered together with average learners and the range of ability in the other classrooms is restricted to no more than three levels, with above average students in every class. Without clustering, teachers commented on how challenging it was to meet the needs of the whole range of learners in their classrooms:

"The range is so wide, the curriculum so extensive, and the time so limited, that I never feel there is enough time to assess, plan, teach, and assess if I've met all of their needs."

"I feel that our placement systems also spread resources too thin because it places low students with g/t students. The teacher naturally worries more about students who are not meeting benchmarks. If placed with 'like' students, the teacher could focus more on enrichment and resources could be more streamlined."

The teachers who do have clustered classrooms responded enthusiastically for how this grouping arrangement facilitated their ability to differentiate for their students as indicated by this sample comment, *"I find that in my math class where I am teaching a whole group of high math students, I can offer opportunities for [creativity and choice] because I don't have to worry about strugglers on the other end. I pretest all units, teach grade level concepts as needed, and then move into extensions."*

Finally, at the primary level, one programming element that does take a considerable amount of the GTR teacher's time is pushing into each classroom to teach the students (and teachers) how to use the Renzulli Learning System. This program is designed to facilitate research and allow students, particularly gifted students, access to leveled websites and information that will allow them to explore their interests. Survey results, however, indicate that some teachers and parents do not feel the system is useful. 52% of parents of Talent Pool students report that their children rarely or never use the system at home. Representative narrative comments from parents and teachers:

"My high level math class utilizes Renzulli. Overall, I am not highly impressed with the activities it suggests. There is also no real teacher training on improving practice with Renzulli. We have had training on HOW to use it, but not WHEN and WHY. It seems like a lot of money to spend on an underutilized program." (Primary teacher)

"Forgive me for saying so, but we HATE Renzulli, and have through both of our kids' time in this district. It is IMPOSSIBLE to find anything interesting through their search engines, and we end up frustrated every time we go on it." (Primary parent)

"Renzulli is like a search engine, it just takes the kids to other sites, it is not fun or interesting. If there's more to it that we don't know then there should be a tutorial for parents to understand it better." (Primary parent)

Upper Elementary: Similar to the GTR teacher at the primary level, the GTR teacher for the upper elementary faces the same problem of not having time to adequately address the needs of the gifted students due to such a high number of students in her caseload coupled with the fact that many are not clustered into the same classroom. At the upper elementary level, 63% of the teachers said they never used

[3] Gentry, M. (2014). *Total School Cluster Grouping and Differentiation: A Comprehensive, Research-based Plan for Raising Student Achievement and Improving Teacher Practice*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

the GTR teacher or used her less than once a month. **Again, narrative comments indicated the reason for the lack of usage was not because of a lack of competency on the part of the GTR teacher but rather due to her lack of availability since she is spread so thin.** Narrative comments by the 4th and 5th grade teachers express their concern that gifted students are not having their needs met because the services are too infrequent:

"I feel that the offerings right now are not doing the trick because they are not offered on a consistent basis. I feel that Shanna Weber is doing the best she can in light of the fact that she has to serve a rather large population. But having her in our school only a few hours each week doesn't seem to be working for the students. Those who can benefit from her services really need her services more than just 40 minutes each week." (4-5 teacher)

"I feel that having one person to meet the needs of students in our schools at the 4-5 level is not sufficient. If we had the assistance of a full-time GRT, I feel that the needs of the students would be better met. There is no better way of improving a program for students than by adding highly qualified teachers to work with them." (4th-5th grade)

Consistent with the primary level, the lack of consistent clustering of gifted students contributes to the problem of meeting their advanced academic needs. As one teacher commented, *"Since we don't have our children clustered, our G&T person is spread among all of us. I would love to work with her more regularly, which would mean some form of clustering."* If her availability were not an issue, 39% of teachers said they would use her quite or very often.

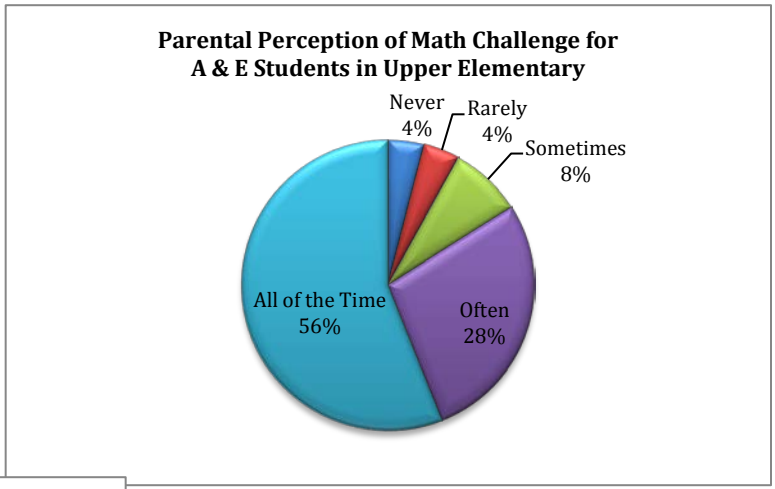
In addition to pushing into the classroom, the GTR teacher also tries to meet the needs of students by offering supplementary enrichment activities in the form of a six-session creative problem-solving unit that she pulls students out of class to attend and the MAGIC units of study. The success of either of these two programs, however, is hampered by the fact that the GTR teacher does not have her own space or designated time in the day to work with the students. While the GTR teacher is creative in finding space (we observed her working with students in the hallway during recess and later in the teacher's lounge), without a place designed for classroom activities it is more challenging to deliver an effective lesson. Additionally, the MAGIC lessons are held during lunch or recess, forcing students to choose between gifted programming and much needed downtime. The timing of these lessons precludes many students from joining as indicated by the parent comments on the survey:

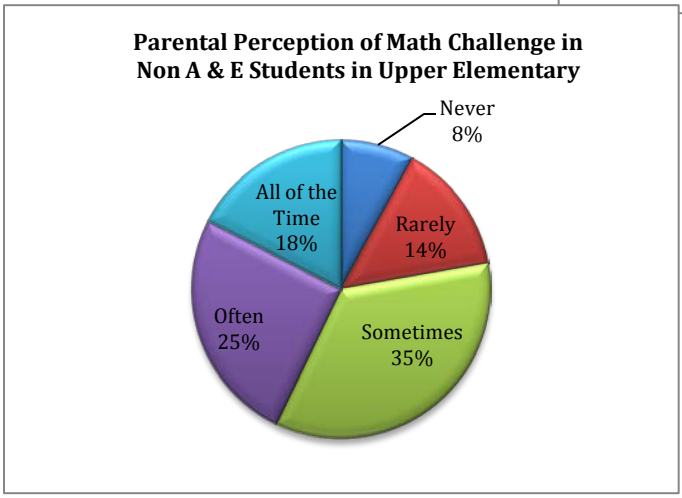
"I think recess serves a certain purpose in letting a child have a brief break with their peers. I do not think it is fair to ask/expect a child to give up this break to participate in extra (albeit probably very interesting) work."

"Children need downtime and time in unstructured social situations. Taking students out of lunch/recess to do work is counterproductive to the whole child/every child concept."

Figures 1 & 2: Parental Perception of Math Challenge in Upper Elementary

Finally, at the 4th and 5th grade level, students also have the opportunity to test into the Accelerated and Enriched Math program. Parents of students participating in this program feel that it is both rigorous and beneficial for their students. As indicated by the graph to the right, 84% of the parents of A & E math students who responded to the survey felt that their children were challenged in math often or all of the time. Survey comments were also positive about the program. For example, one parent commented, *"My older 2 have truly enjoyed A&E math - that sequence has truly fueled their passion for math starting in 4th grade all the way through high school. They have NOT found in at all stressful--the A&E/Honors & Accelerated "saved" my kids from feeling isolated and weird."* Some parents of gifted children who were not selected for the A & E program, however, perceived their children as being less challenged in math. As the graph to the left illustrates, only half as many respondents of parents of GT students not selected for A & E math felt their children were often or always challenged in math compared to the parents of the A & E math students.

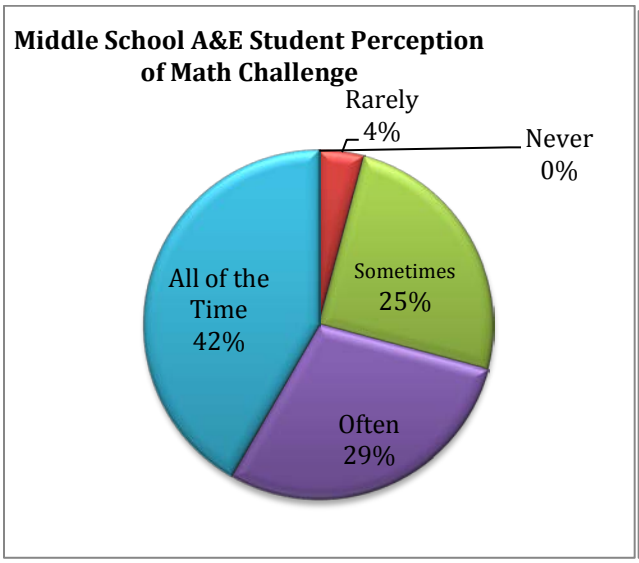


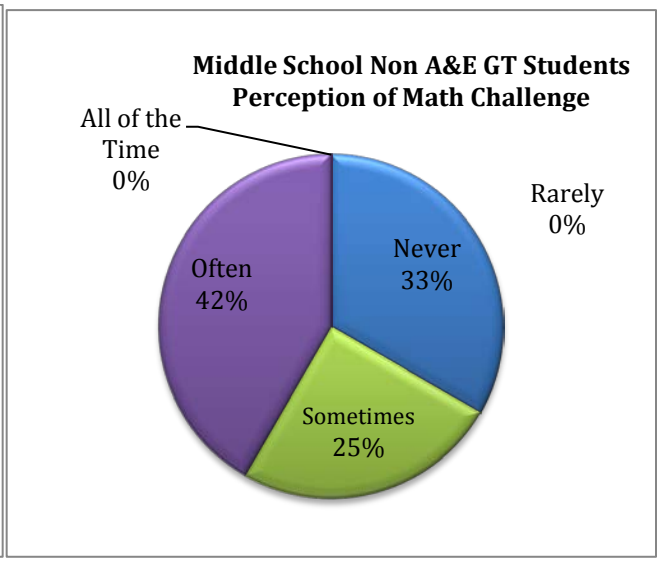


Middle School: Services at the middle school include a continuation of the Accelerated and Enriched math program, the addition of Honors Pre-Algebra and Honors Algebra, PRISM, and an array of clubs and electives. As was the case at the upper elementary level, parents of children participating in A & E math continue to perceive the program as beneficial; the graph below shows that 95% of parents who participated in the survey felt their children were challenged all of the time or often in the program. In contrast, only 52% of parents of gifted children who were not in A & E math found their math program to be challenging often or all of the time. While there is an Honors level between general and A & E math, both students and parents still felt that there was too big of a gap between this level and A & E.

The same parent who commented above on how her oldest two children thrived in A & E shared a different experience for her third child who did not qualify for the program:
"We have watched him spiral into a complete boredom with the honors track. Without any effort (which is what being in the honors track has taught him) he gets straight A's and he says he learns very, very little. The slow pace is torture for him. All of his honors math teachers have said he is top in their classes."

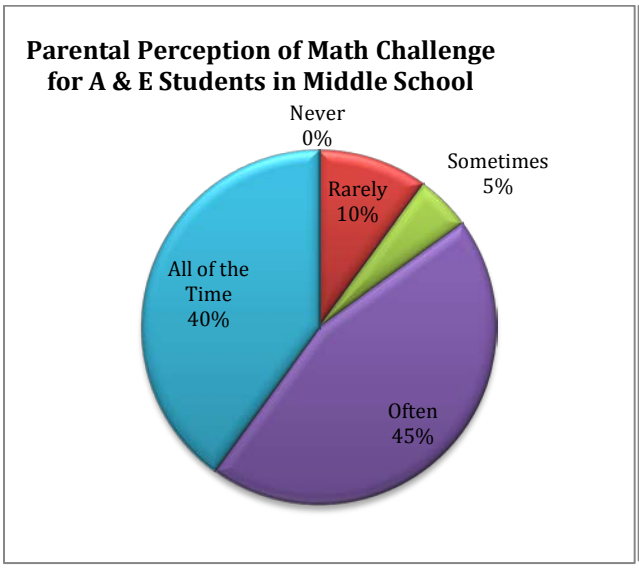
Figures 3 & 4: Middle School Student Perception of Math Challenge

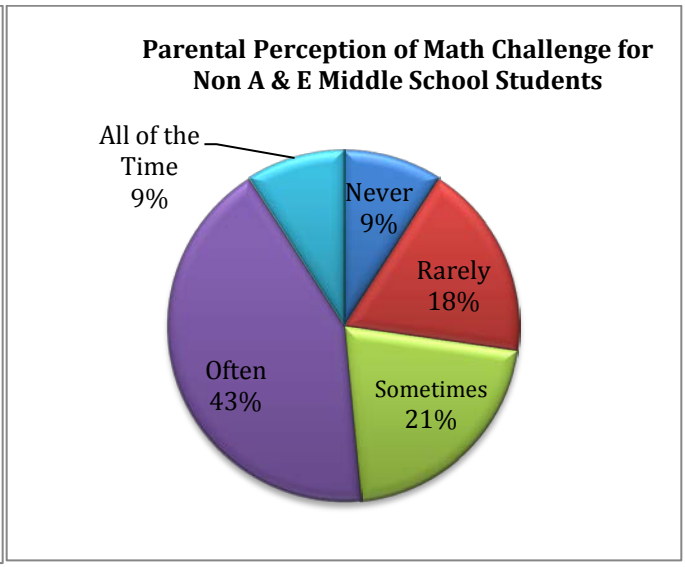




Student comments also reflected the need for the Honors level to be more challenging: *"In math, I find all the topics very easy. I have tried out for A & E but have not made it. I wish that there was another way for me to get into the program now and in high school."*

Figures 5 & 6: *Middle School Parent Perception of Math Challenge*





In addition to A & E math, the other service option for gifted students during the day is PRISM. As noted above, this program is initially advertised for all students to participate. After a six week series on giftedness and gifted behaviors, students select among well defined programs in which to participate including the most popular programs: Future Problem Solving and National History Day as well as Scenario

Writing, Inquiry, and Aries (an environmental science program housed only at Community). Students have been extremely successful with these programs in the past and have won state and national competitions. They also believe the program has been beneficial in teaching them valuable research and presentation skills.

Comments from both parents and students highlight the perceived value of this program:

"Under Mrs. Cohen's direction, she gained so much from the program that she did not learn during her regular coursework -- research methods, analytic thinking, how to write clear evidence-supported arguments and how to think on her feet and defend her research topic. These skills have clearly benefitted her as she moved on to high school" (Parent of Middle school student).

"PRISM is an amazing program where I get to find my hidden talents and learn things that are above and beyond and require higher level thinking and analysis. If it wasn't for this program than I would not be the way I am today." (Middle school student)

The only problem with such a popular offering, especially in a high performing population, is the demand for programming may exceed the capacity for service. Such is true for the FPS component of PRISM where students are on a waitlist because the program is full.

Despite its popularity with many students and parents, others do not view PRISM as a service option that meets their needs. Narrative comments revealed two primary reasons for this: the program focuses too much on competitions and it does not align with their interests. Sample comments included:

"Unfortunately, the programs are based on competition prep for National History Day and Future Problem Solvers (a science fiction writing challenge). I wish there was a true G&T program where kids are exposed to different skill sets, opportunities to learn different topics, and careers." (Parent of Middle School Student)

"FPS, National History Day, etc. should be separate programs. PRISM should be for independent study only." (Middle School Parent).

"At the 8th grade level, I'd like to see PRISM become an elective. Since there are two electives, one could be PRISM, allowing students full use of their flex time for other pursuits." (Middle School Teacher)

"Middle school PRISM seemed not interesting to her, because it was all competition-driven." (Middle School Parent)

When asked what other program offerings they would like to see for PRISM, students noted they would like to have debate, general problem solving, music, and STEM opportunities. It is important to note that many of these offerings suggested by students are currently available as clubs and electives, but none are perceived as a gifted service offering because they are not connected to PRISM.

High School: At the high school, 58 Honors and 18 AP courses are available for gifted students. The district is also exploring the possibility of offering AP Capstone which includes AP Seminar and AP Research courses. These courses include performance tasks, assessments, and the application of research methodology. They require students to analyze and evaluate information in order to create and present evidence-based arguments. Success in AP Capstone would be the ultimate example of fulfilling the competencies WW-P has endorsed. Additionally, all students have a common lunch hour allowing for

student-led clubs and activities to take place during this time. Students value the opportunity for student-led clubs as suggested in this sample comment: "*Being able to participate in student run clubs has been very beneficial to my education because it teaches students how to interact in a 'real' society situation."* High school students who responded to the survey were also pleased with the variety of offerings for gifted and talented students at their level. In fact, when asked to comment on their most meaningful extracurricular activity, students commented on 44 different activities! **This sheer number of most valued activities is indicative of the value the district places on offering opportunities to fit all students' interests.**

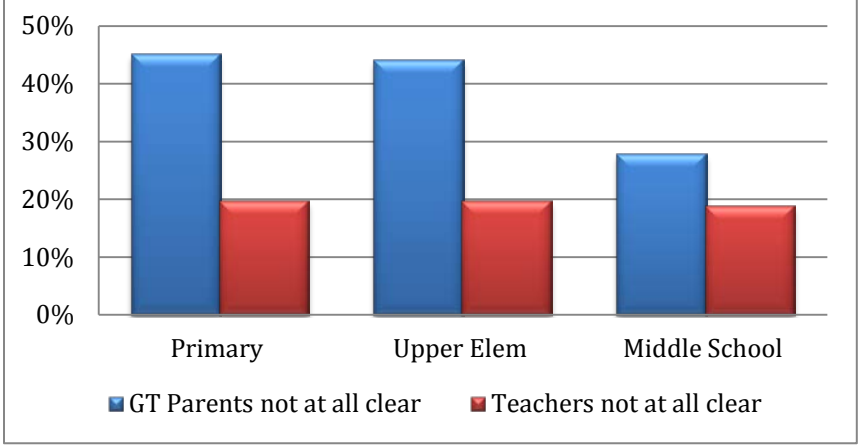
Communication with Stakeholders

The district has multiple outlets to communicate the GT program's mission, philosophy, definition, and service options to stakeholders. The website has links to written documents outlining the program as well as to the PowerPoint that is presented annually to parents. Each of the GTR specialists has a website with PowerPoint presentations that explain the programming at her level and connect back to the overall philosophy of gifted and talented at the district level. The GTR specialists at the upper elementary and middle school level each begin their school year meeting with students explaining the philosophy and programming to them. Finally, the district GT coordinator is easily accessible to parents seeking more information regarding the educational opportunities for gifted and talented students.

Despite all of these efforts to communicate about the gifted and talented program, results from the interviews and survey date suggest problems in parent and teacher understanding of the definition and programming for gifted students. **45% of the parents of primary students who had received GT services responded that they were not at all clear on the district definition of giftedness. Results for upper elementary parents were nearly the same (44%).**

While communication seems more effective at the middle school, 28% of middle school parents of GT students also reported that they were not at all clear on the definition. Teachers were similarly unsure about the district definition of giftedness with approximately 20% at each of the primary, upper elementary, and middle school levels of the respondents marking "Not at all clear." Results are summarized in Figure 7above.

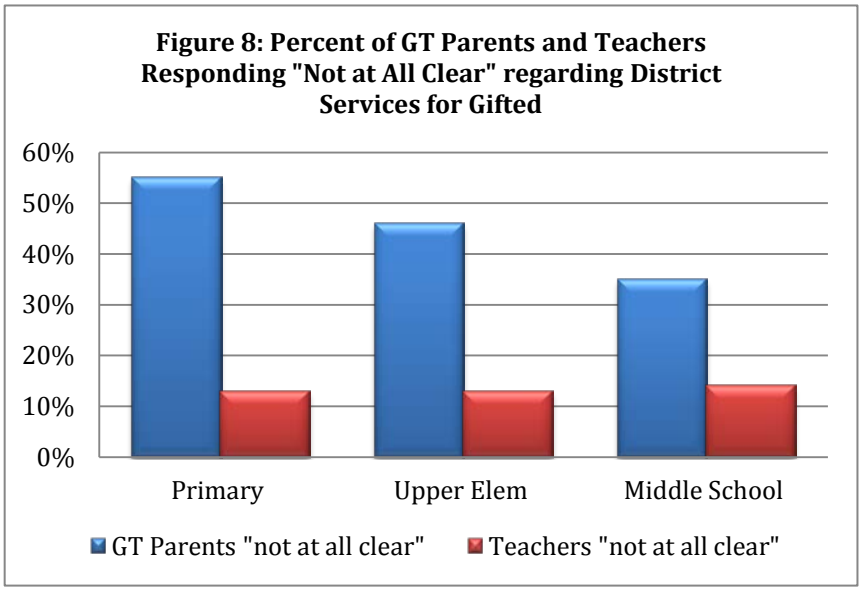
Figure 7: Percent of GT Parents and Teachers Responding "Not at All Clear" regarding District Definition of Gifted



When asked a follow-up question to determine how clear their understanding was regarding the services available for gifted and talented students at their building, again the percentages of parents who reported "Not at all clear" were high. Results are summarized in Figure 8 below.

Additionally, the lack of communication regarding both the definition and the services was one of the most frequently commented on items within the survey across the building levels and stakeholder groups.

Representative comments regarding confusion over the definition and services from stakeholders at the primary, upper elementary, and middle school are included below.



"I have asked about this since my daughter was in the first grade. The talent program feels like a secret society . . . I have written to school and administrators asking what does the In-View scoring mean for my child to get into T&G. I get very elusive answers. I know the school doesn't like to label kids, but parents need a map to guide our children. We want to partner with the schools. We want to be engaged, so help us help you. I have thought about moving to a school district that I thought could articulate the roadmap a little better. I prefer not to move. We just need more clear and transparent communication from the district to resolve this enigma." (Primary Parent of GT Student)

"Again, I just don't know what's being done. I shouldn't comment on anything except the lack of information." (Parent of Primary GT Student)

"I've been to three annual presentations over four years, and no longer bother attending. The presentations have all been about what the district is going to do, and there seems to be very little action or clarity as to what is actually being done." (Parent of Upper Elementary GT Student)

"This seems to be a bit of a hidden piece of information. It is there if you go in search of it. However, it would make more sense to have it included on Infinite Campus much like the way students with special needs and those with health issues are indicated." (Upper Elementary Teacher)

"I have met with the school officials and G&T representatives in person last year. What is being practiced as part of G&T is different from what parents were told would happen once their children were selected into the G&T program. There is no additional enrichment that is being provided to the students, nor are they being pulled into select groups and given assignments or projects. The G&T officials have taken the very easy way out and asked the class teacher to provide additional math homework if the child accepts it out of their own interest. Nothing else of note is being done with regard to G&T in the WW-P school district." (Parent of Middle School Student).

Some parents indicated awareness that their child was participating in GT services but did not have a clear understanding of what was happening during the services. They expressed the desire for direct communication from the GTR specialist. One parent of a primary GT student explained,

"We have been informed that there is no way to notify parents of the gifted activity that takes place in the school unless the child volunteers the info. There had to be a better way, either through the classroom communication channels or other methods. This current way of putting the onus on the child does not work.

Parents would like to be more engaged in the process." Another commented, "*We have seen essentially nothing, and have basically given up on the idea that the district will 'do right by' this child in that regard." (Primary Parent of GT Student)*

The frustration expressed by parents over the lack of awareness of the definition and/or programming options may be resulting from the fact that the limited personnel dedicated to the program prevents services from occurring at the frequency needed for stakeholders to recognize it as legitimate programming. As one upper elementary teacher surmised, *"constant changes in program, self designated students, erratic scheduling of meeting times - all leave questions as to validity."*

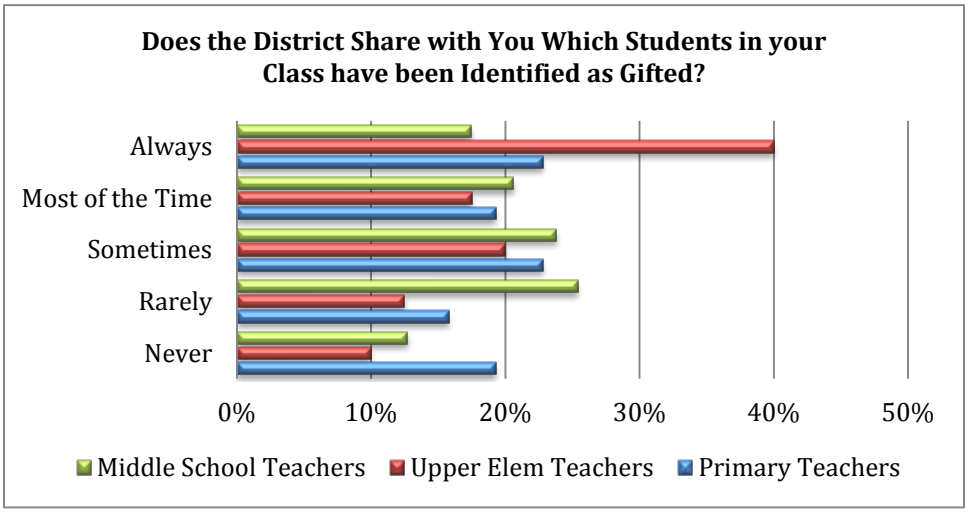


Figure 9: Teacher Knowledge of Identified Students

Compounding the problem of communication is a lack of awareness on the part of the classroom teacher as to which students are included within the Talent Pool. When asked if the district shared the list of identified GT students with the teachers, the results seen to the left were recorded.

Summary

WW-P has articulated a theoretically sound, coherent philosophy, mission, identification, and services for gifted students. Teachers find the GTR specialists to be competent and helpful in assisting them with their gifted students. The GTR specialists at the primary and upper elementary appear to be stretched too thin, however, to offer consistent, frequent programming and assistance to classroom teachers, especially without consistent clustering of GT students into the same classrooms. At the upper and middle school level, parents are pleased with the level of challenge their children are receiving in the Accelerated and Enriched math program; however, parents of some students at the upper elementary and some middle school students themselves who are not in the A & E math program indicated a need for more challenge in math. Additionally at the middle school, participants in PRISM wrote positive comments about this program, but other stakeholders expressed the desire for more GT programming that was less competition focused and also included broader programming. At the high school level, stakeholders were pleased with the course offerings and extracurricular activities made available to gifted learners. Finally, despite the district's attempts to communicate to stakeholders regarding the GT program, the majority expressed confusion and frustration over the district definition and perceived lack of services offered.

Recommendations

With approximately 30% of the students scoring at the 96th percentile or higher on an ability measure, additional supports need to be in place for the district to effectively address the GT students' learning needs. The district may consider the following recommendations:

- Consider using the Total School Cluster Model to cluster gifted students together in fewer classrooms and reduce the range of learners in all classrooms. This will allow 1) the classroom teacher to more effectively differentiate for gifted learners; 2) allow the GTR specialist to provide more targeted push-in classroom lessons; and 3) allow the GTR specialist to work with fewer teachers to arrange common pullout times for additional enrichment.
- Consider hiring an additional GTR specialist at both the primary and upper elementary levels, so each specialist has more time to provide services.
- Consider eliminating the Renzulli Learning System; negative feedback from stakeholders suggests it may not be worth the expense of the program. Additionally, without the need to train each class of students on the Renzulli Learning System, the GTR specialist would then have more time to spend doing different enrichment activities with GT students.
- At the upper elementary schools, explore the possibility of carving out time within the school day for GT programming, so students would not need to give up lunch or recess to attend.
- At the middle school, explore the possibility of modifying the content of the GT PRISM program so it appeals to a broader range of gifted students' interests. It may feel more balanced to stakeholders if NHD and FPS were held as after school clubs similar to the science, language arts, and technology focused programs. Providing them space within the school day appears to elevate their importance relative to the other competitions for gifted students. In their place, PRISM could focus on more of Renzulli's "Type 2" training which includes learning activities to develop critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving. Time could also be allocated with the PRISM flex for discussion of affective issues gifted students are prone to exhibit, such as perfectionism, anxiety, stress, and intensity. Independent research could still remain part of PRISM, and students could apply their Type 2 training directly to their research projects.
- Continue exploring the possibility of AP Capstone at the high school. These courses will offer students the opportunity to develop critical skills that are not currently emphasized in Advanced Placement courses such as real world problem solving, opportunities to present to authentic audiences, collaboration, and critical and creative thinking skills. These courses could be weighted the same as traditional AP courses to encourage student enrollment.

Program Area: Curriculum and Instruction

The evaluation of the program area of Curriculum and Instruction included an examination of the following components:

- A written, vertically aligned curriculum differentiated for gifted students and developed at the district level.
- The program of instruction, consisting of both advanced content and enrichment experiences.
- Learning opportunities, including a continuum of differentiated curricular options, instructional approaches and resource materials.
- Instruction focused on developing higher order thinking, communication skills, using technology, and collaboration.
- Students actively engaged in constructing knowledge, with the pace of instruction commensurate with the characteristics of the gifted student.

Data Sources

Documents: The district provided the following documents to review for suitability of curriculum and classroom activities for gifted learners:

- Emails from GTR teachers outlining the activities and projects they do with students and teachers at their respective buildings.
- Lesson plans for the particular lessons observed in the videos of instruction listed below. See Appendix G for the Teacher Observation Form and Appendix H for the Assessing Classroom Differentiation Protocol.
- The district competencies.
- The West Windsor- Plainsboro High School 2013 Profile.
- The Program of Studies 2014-2015 for West Windsor- Plainsboro High Schools North and South.
- The Program of Studies 2014-2015 for Community and Thomas Grover Middle Schools.

Videos of Instruction– approximately 30 minutes per video

- Math 3rd grade ability grouped.
- Math A&E 4th grade.
- Math 8th grade Honors Algebra.
- Math 9th & 10th Honors Pre Calculus.
- Reading kindergarten – not ability grouped.
- Language Arts 4th grade – not ability grouped.
- Language Arts 5th grade – not ability grouped.
- Language Arts 7th grade – not ability grouped.
- PRISM - Writing Elective for 8th grade.
- PRISM – National History Day.
- Science 8th grade.
- AP Biology.

Classroom Walkthroughs

- Evaluators visited all buildings for interviews, tours, and observations.

Interview and Survey data regarding perceptions of challenge.

Findings

Curriculum

According to best practice, curriculum for gifted students needs to be differentiated in multiple ways. The curriculum should focus on conceptual understanding and provide opportunities for both acceleration and enrichment. Conceptual focus can be illustrated through articulated curricular maps that tie topics and disciplines together, including an extensive emphasis on problem solving in math. The curriculum itself is to be accelerated in terms of pace and coverage of more content than is possible with more typical learners. Additionally, readings and resources are more complex and are written above grade level. Curriculum can be enriched through the utilization of primary sources and opportunities to develop the habits of experts in the field (e.g. using interview techniques as a reporter, problem based learning, etc.), and opportunities for independent study to pursue passion areas in depth.

In addition to reviewing for attention to conceptual understanding, acceleration, and enrichment, curriculum and instruction were also reviewed to determine if gifted students are systematically given the opportunity to develop the skills beyond content knowledge that are necessary to be successful knowledge producers in a global environment. These skills include *Critical* and *Creative* thinking to develop new ideas and *Communication* and *Collaboration* skills to work with others both in the development process as well as in the dissemination of new ideas. Finally, it will require the affective attributes of *Confidence* in one's ability to succeed as well as in *Commitment* to stay focused despite difficulty and setbacks.

Curriculum: Conceptual Focus, Acceleration, and Enrichment

Elementary. At the primary and upper elementary levels, gifted students are pulled out on occasion to do research or problem solving activities with the GTR specialist. Additionally, the GTR specialist sometimes pushes into the classroom to assist with enrichment lessons or other opportunities. Instructional time is not the same for each gifted student; time with the GTR specialist is dependent upon the schedule of the classes from which the students are pulled, the availability of the resource teacher, and the willingness of the classroom teacher to have the GTR specialist in his/her classroom. At the upper elementary, 4th and 5th graders are also given the opportunity to participate in the MAGIC enrichment program during lunch and/or recess. This pattern of contact with students makes it difficult to provide a planned scope and sequence of curricular experiences. With the exception of the Accelerated and Enriched math program, there is no written differentiated core curriculum for gifted learners at the elementary school level.

Middle School. At the middle school level, PRISM is offered during flex as an enrichment opportunity for interested gifted and talented students. Qualifying students also continue to partake in A & E math, and an honors level of pre-algebra and algebra is also offered for 7th and 8th grade. There are no honors level classes in social studies, language arts, and science at the middle school. Aside from math, there is no written differentiated core curriculum for gifted learners at the middle school.

High School. WW-P offers 57 honors level and Advanced Placement courses (AP) for identified gifted students. Weighted grades offer an incentive for students to participate in honors and AP courses. A variety of enrichment opportunities are also available for GT students in all discipline areas. Advanced Placement courses have a targeted curriculum in terms of the topics that will be covered on the exams.

Additional seminar type courses could be developed for gifted students that include in-depth discussion and more authentic learning experiences. These are important elements and could be engaging for those learners; such courses might prove to be a welcome change from the prescribed format of Advanced Placement.

Instruction

Instruction was reviewed through video recordings of classroom instruction at all levels. The analysis revealed orderly classrooms, small class sizes, well-behaved students, and competent teachers. The method of instruction was primarily teacher led. After the direct instruction, students were often working on assignments in pairs or small groups. Occasionally students or groups would present their work to the rest of the class. The exception to the teacher led approach was the student work on National History Day occurring in PRISM.

The level of challenge in the observed classes that had been ability grouped for gifted students was quite high and definitely above the level of the non-grouped classes. Students were clearly working on advanced content and being asked to think critically about what they were learning. Teachers were also differentiating within the advanced classes, making sure all were getting the instruction and scaffolding needed, as well as posing challenge questions for those with quick mastery.

While the sample observed was limited to 25-50 minute sessions or the classroom walkthroughs, what was not observed in core classroom learning activities were instances of student-made multimedia presentations, Problem or Project Based Learning, debate, use of specific research or critical thinking models, or other common instructional models for use with high ability learners. The WW-P students are focused and on task, but student engagement might be increased and sustained for all students if professional development for teachers included some of these models. The WW-P students work hard and their achievement is very high, but variety in one's day can help sustain the love of learning.

Survey Responses regarding Challenging Curriculum

Surveys were given to each stakeholder group asking their perception of the challenge level in each of the core content areas. Results were summarized, and narrative comments were analyzed for themes.

Table 2: Elementary GT Parent Perception of Challenge in Core Content

Area	Response	Primary G/T Parents	Upper Elem G/T Parents	Area	Primary G/T Parents	Upper Elem G/T Parents
Language Arts	Never	1%	2%	**Social Studies**	0%	0%
	Rarely	13%	8%		14%	15%
	Sometimes	35%	38%		47%	41%
	Often	41%	39%		37%	33%
	All of the Time	10%	14%		2%	11%
Math	Never	10%	7%	**Science**	4%	3%
	Rarely	18%	11%		15%	15%
	Sometimes	28%	27%		47%	42%
	Often	35%	26%		33%	31%
	All of the Time	10%	28%		1%	8%

Elementary

For both the primary and upper elementary, the subjects areas where parents perceived their children as being the least challenged were math and science. 28% of parents of GT primary students reported that their children were rarely or never challenged in math. Representative of other primary parent comments, one parent explained, "*My child is extremely bored in math and could use a lot more advanced work, as he is way ahead of 2nd grade level."* Another said, "*I find the math curriculum in particular is very basic, and my son hasn't learned anything new that he wasn't already doing in his Montessori kindergarten (still just addition and subtraction)."*

At the primary level, 30% of the GT students receive instruction for math outside of the school day (such as Kumon). When asked the reason for this extra math instruction, the majority of the parents of GT students said it was because the school curriculum was not challenging enough for their child. As a note of comparison, the same question was asked of parents of non-Talent Pool students. Similarly, 27% of these children also receive outside instruction in math. The majority of reasons listed for this extra instruction, however, were for purposes other than a lack of challenge (such as to reinforce skills, to boost confidence, and to improve speed). Analyzing the rationales provided for the extra math instruction by parents of gifted compared with non-identified students suggests that a significant number of GT primary students are not provided enough challenge in their school math curriculum. Parents feel the need to go beyond the school in order to ensure their children receive the appropriate level of challenge. Survey responses for math challenge in Upper Elementary were further disaggregated to analyze any difference between parents of students enrolled in the A&E math and other Talent Pool students. That difference was shown in Figures 1 & 2 and discussed in an earlier section of this report.

Survey responses also indicate that parents of primary and upper elementary students felt their children needed more instructional time and more challenge in the area of science. One parent wrote, "*More challenge in science required. More hours of instruction and introduction of scientific concepts should start earlier."* Another parent of an upper elementary student replied, "*My child wishes there was more science education."* It is important to note that the perception of the lack of challenge in science may also reflect the community value of science education and the importance of ensuring children are well prepared in this subject in particular.

One overall theme in the survey comments regarding challenge was parents' perception that the level of challenge is completely teacher dependent. As one parent of a GT upper elementary student explained: *"Experiences in the classroom are very dependent on the teacher. My children are in 4th and 5th grade and I can tell a big difference in the experience my first born had in 4th grade compared to my 2nd child. I would like to see consistency in curriculum and not a teacher dependent curriculum/ experience."* The perception that challenge is teacher dependent may have been compounded by the fact that some classrooms had clustered groups of gifted children whereas others did not; clustering facilitates teachers' ability to differentiate. Consequently, the parents' perception of inconsistency in differentiation across teachers may also be the result of inconsistency of clustering across classrooms.

Middle School

Gifted and Talented middle school students were also asked to comment on the level of challenge within their core courses to determine if the courses were rigorous enough to meet their advanced learning needs. Results were disaggregated across grade levels and are summarized in the table below.[4]

Table 3: Middle School Perception of Challenge in Core Areas

Challenge	Response	6th GT	7th GT	8th GT	Total GT
During the school day, are you provided enough challenge in language arts?	**Never**	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Rarely	20%	30%	0%	19%
	Sometimes	35%	40%	67%	42%
	Often	40%	20%	33%	33%
	All of the Time	5%	10%	0%	6%
During the school day, are you provided enough challenge in social studies?	**Never**	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Rarely	5%	10%	17%	8%
	Sometimes	45%	30%	83%	47%
	Often	45%	60%	0%	42%
	All of the Time	5%	0%	0%	3%
During the school day, are you provided enough challenge in science?	**Never**	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Rarely	20%	10%	17%	17%
	Sometimes	60%	40%	67%	56%
	Often	15%	50%	17%	25%
	All of the Time	5%	0%	0%	3%

With the exception of language arts, 8th graders overall reported feeling less challenged in their core content classes compared to sixth and seventh graders. The majority of the narrative comments for all grade levels, however, focused solely on the subject area of science. Both parents and students expressed a desire for more rigorous curriculum in science. Selected representative comments are included below:

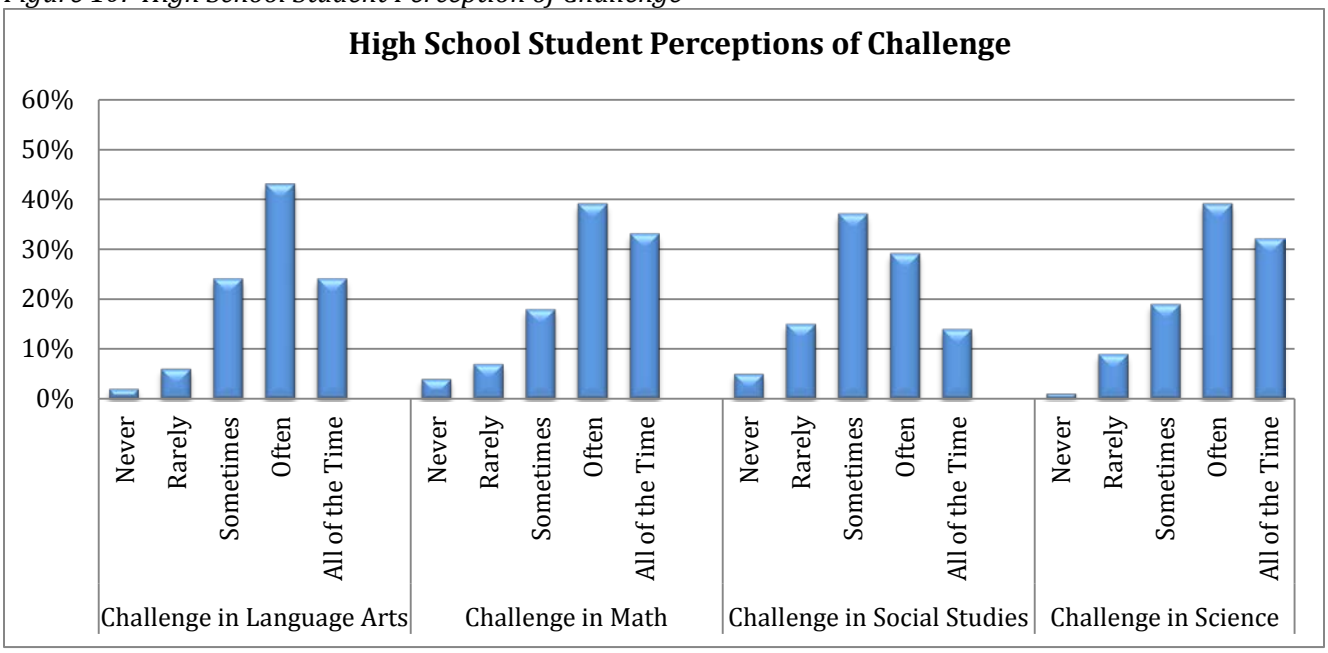
- *"The science curriculum has to be seriously changed to bridge the high school courses" (Middle School Student).*
- *"Science curriculum should be better. Raise the bar" (Middle school student).*
- *"In my opinion the science curriculum needs some change. Until 8th grade there is not much covered and in high school kids are overloaded and then they suffer" (Middle school parent).*
- *"Science curriculum is below par when compared to global levels - this area needs a lot of focus if these kids want to be successful in a globally competitive world" (Middle school parent).*
- *"Science is not being taught. You are expecting children to watch low grade videos and takes notes then give a pop up quiz the next day. The teacher needs to take more responsibility to provide interesting instructions" (Middle school parent).*

[4] GT middle school students' perception of math challenge was reported in the Program Design section, so it was not repeated here.

High School

At the high school level, students are no longer identified as gifted and talented. Courses have eligibility requirements and eligibility review. Therefore, results of perceptions of challenge are for all high school students who responded to the survey. Results are summarized in the graph below.

Figure 10: High School Student Perception of Challenge



The narrative comments regarding the challenge of Honors and AP courses were spread evenly across the disciplines. As one student surmised, "*WW-P has a wide variety of subjects that are quite challenging while keeping the students engaged at the same time.*"

An analysis of the content of the narrative comments, however, indicated that a subset of students did not feel challenged by the content in the advanced courses but rather by the sheer amount of work and/or style of teaching.

"Not very challenging intellectually, just a lot of work. I haven't been forced to think very hard in any class at all, I just have too much work to do."

"I feel that the challenge in classes comes more often from the amount of work required rather than the subject matter."

"It's not challenge all the time in terms of content, but a challenge in the amount of work we get."

"The course, homework, tests, projects, etc., are not challenging; the teacher's grading and teaching methods are."

21st Century Skill Development

Stakeholders were also surveyed to determine the extent to which 21st century skills, the skills necessary to be successful in a competitive, global environment, were being addressed. In every classroom in every

building in WW-P a set of 21st century competencies is posted to remind faculty and students of the emphasis the district places on the importance of developing 21st century skills. The competencies include being an Effective Communicator, Collaborative Team Member, Creative and Practical Problem Solver, Flexible and Self-Directed Learner, Globally Aware and Responsible Citizen, and Information Literate Researcher. District wide commitment to these competencies illustrates the district's understanding that to be successful, students need skills beyond mastery of content. These competencies are directly in alignment to the best practices in skill development for gifted learners that have always been the hallmark of gifted education. When asked about these competencies in survey questions, all stakeholders who responded spoke with complete awareness of them, illustrating that they do not just exist on paper but rather true emphasis is placed on developing them. A review of lesson plans at the high school also indicated that teachers document how they are addressing the competencies within each lesson. The district should be commended for emphasizing the importance of these competencies for all learners, including gifted talented learners. Survey responses were analyzed to determine the extent to which stakeholders felt that the gifted program was facilitating the development of these competencies, including the development of critical and creative thinking, communication skills, research experiences, and self-directed learning.

Critical and Creative Thinking, Research, and Presentations

Table 4: Elementary GT Parents and Teachers Perception of Opportunities for Development of Critical Skills

Competency		Primary GT Parents	Primary Teachers	4th/5th GT Parents	4th/5th Teachers
Critical Thinking	Never	3%	3%	2%	3%
	Rarely	14%	0%	17%	0%
	Sometimes	46%	16%	36%	16%
	Often	33%	53%	32%	53%
	All the Time	4%	28%	13%	28%
Creative Thinking	Never	1%	0%	1%	0%
	Rarely	13%	0%	13%	0%
	Sometimes	38%	19%	46%	19%
	Often	47%	55%	32%	55%
	All the Time	1%	26%	8%	26%
Presentation Skills	Never	5%	6%	2%	6%
	Rarely	19%	6%	15%	6%
	Sometimes	49%	29%	39%	29%
	Often	24%	39%	40%	39%
	All the Time	3%	19%	4%	19%
Research of Personal Interest	Never	5%	10%	7%	10%
	Rarely	25%	6%	26%	6%
	Sometimes	49%	42%	46%	42%
	Often	20%	39%	16%	39%
	All the Time	1%	3%	5%	3%

Elementary. At both the primary and the upper elementary levels, both parents and teachers reported positive ratings for the development of critical and creative thinking and opportunities to do research and give presentations in their GT students. Results are summarized in Table 4.

Narrative comments indicated that parents would like to see additional opportunities to develop creative thinking at both the primary and upper elementary levels. At the upper elementary level, parents like the MAGIC program focus and the opportunity for Creative Problem Solving. They would like to see more of those types of programs available. For example, one parent commented, *"I would love to see more critical and creative thinking emphasized, with more problem-solving and open-ended work, and fewer basic worksheets."*

Several parents reported on their inability to comment on the opportunities to develop these skills due to a lack of communication regarding programming: *"Due to lack of weekly recap or any kind of communication from the teacher parents have little idea regarding any of the above mentioned skills."*

Middle and High School. At the middle school level, students felt more positive than high school students about the opportunity to develop critical and creative thinking, develop presentation skills, and conduct research in areas of personal interest.

Table 5: Middle School GT Parents, High School Parents, Teachers, and Students' Perception of Opportunities for Development of Critical Skills

Competency		Middle School GT Parents	Middle School Teachers	Middle School GT Students	High School Parents	High School Teachers	High School Students
Critical Thinking	Never	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%
	Rarely	11%	0%	6%	6%	0%	11%
	Sometimes	35%	15%	11%	34%	5%	30%
	Often	46%	55%	57%	44%	62%	40%
	All the Time	7%	30%	26%	15%	33%	16%
Creative Thinking	Never	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%	5%
	Rarely	18%	2%	9%	14%	0%	29%
	Sometimes	38%	21%	29%	37%	15%	35%
	Often	34%	58%	46%	34%	63%	21%
	All the Time	8%	19%	17%	11%	22%	10%
Presentation Skills	Never	0%	2%	0%	1%	2%	1%
	Rarely	7%	13%	6%	7%	10%	7%
	Sometimes	50%	51%	26%	34%	42%	30%
	Often	30%	26%	60%	44%	31%	42%
	All the Time	13%	8%	9%	14%	15%	19%
Research of Personal Interest	Never	6%	2%	6%	10%	7%	20%
	Rarely	27%	28%	14%	33%	23%	44%
	Sometimes	38%	49%	49%	37%	43%	25%
	Often	28%	13%	26%	13%	20%	8%
	All the Time	1%	8%	6%	6%	7%	3%

Higher ratings in these areas compared to the high school may in part be the function of the GT PRISM program at the middle school that was designed to develop each of these skills through the Future Problem Solving program, National History Day, and Independent Research Opportunities. For example, one student summarized the value of NHD, saying, *"This research oriented project gives students not only in-depth knowledge of their topic, but the training in time management, organizational skill, and critical thinking are very valuable."*

At the high school level, students indicated that while they conducted research and did presentations often, "*The research conducted often is not in areas of personal interest or topics chosen by the students."* Students credited their clubs and other extracurricular activities with their opportunities to explore their passion areas. Out of these four competencies, the one that garnered the most comments was the question on opportunities to develop creative thinking. Students recognized the importance of creative thinking and were disappointed in the lack of opportunities to develop this skill in the classroom. A sampling of high school students' comments regarding creative thinking are included below:

"*Creative thinking is arguably the most important skill to adapt to problems in the future, but we very rarely get to think creatively in school."*

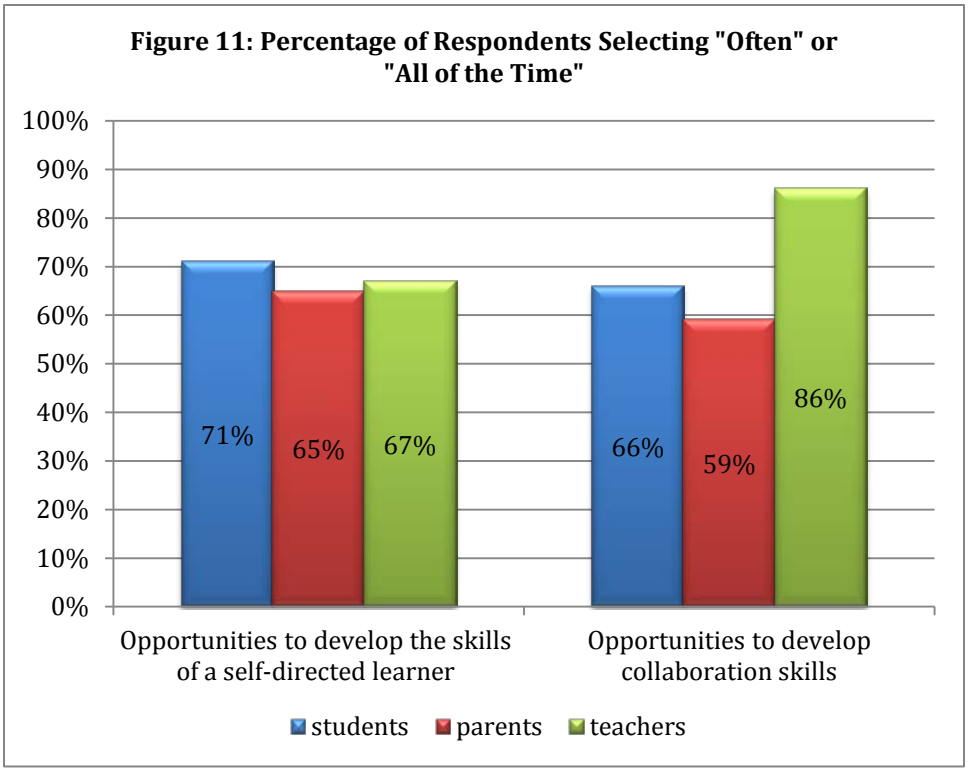
"Creative thinking skills are almost never developed in any course."

"WW-P doesn't usually reward creative thinking. We stress analytical thinking, but there is hardly any [incentive] to try and employ creative ideas in projects, essays, etc. as opposed to obvious (textbook-quality) concepts. Critical thinking is important, but so is independent thinking. WW-P doesn't do enough to stress the latter: it's possible to get an 'A' without ever coming up with an original idea in four years of high school."

"My definition of creative thinking is the way a student can cleverly solve a problem given certain resources. The way I've been taught how to develop my "creative thinking" since upper elementary is to annotate a paragraph out of a textbook."

Opportunities for Collaboration and Self-Directed Learning

Across all building levels and stakeholder groups, survey respondents reported opportunities for collaboration and self-directed learning. While all stakeholders agree that these competencies are being practiced regularly, high school students and parents do not agree on the manner in which they are practiced, prompting the evaluators to report on these competencies separate from the others. With regard to collaborative learning, students complained that while they do collaborative work, it is not structured in a way that is productive. Often, the workload is unevenly distributed, and all students in the group receive the same grade. Students feel as though they have not been given proper guidance on how to work together effectively. Students have a negative attitude toward collaboration as a result of such frequent and negative experiences. Below are representative comments from high school students and parents:



"Collaboration skills are equally important, but teachers are very rarely sensitive to the fact that many team projects result with one person doing all of the work. My experience in AP Chemistry was the epitome of this conflict; we'd have a lab every four days, and more often than not, post-lab write ups, which are heavily weighed in terms of points, were team projects. Individuals would struggle because the amount of work designed for four people were often left to be completed by one person; all the while, the entire group would get the same grade. In most of the AP classes, the end of the year results in a team project, and when students taking multiple AP classes are faced with several team projects to do, those who actually do the work are faced with a mountain of work to do."

"Our child is often giving opportunities for collaboration with other classmates but we noticed that he will struggle connecting and sharing workloads. As parents we will hear our child talk about how it is challenging to get his partners to collaborate due to a variety of issues, time, schedules, etc. We have always coached our child that these are all things that you are going to be dealing with in college and when you start working. As parents I am not sure if the teachers/school curriculum is reinforcing and/or helping students develop skills to overcome those collaboration challenges."

"Collaboration skills are NOT taught NOR nurtured but expected. Tasks are assigned to groups with supervision as to content but NO supervision or scaffolding of team work."

Similarly to collaboration, stakeholders objected not to the concept of self-directed learning, but rather how it was implemented within the classroom. Many felt as though teachers misapplied the concept such that they were not providing enough instruction on content acquisition. The majority of the negative comments regarding self-directed learning stemmed from high school parents and students. Sample comments from parents and students are included below.

"'Self-directed learners' at the WW-P high schools doesn't mean 'taking ownership of work and action.' My children, their friends and many parents in the community (including our family) refer to it as 'teachers who no longer have to teach.' One of my kids actually jokes about 'teachers who actually teach, what a concept!' Instead of letting the students figure out things for themselves and thus forcing parents to teach their kids or hire expensive tutors. This is not a free public education by any stretch of the imagination! If our family had known this, we definitely wouldn't have moved to this district! We feel scammed, to put it mildly." (Parent).

"When I have trouble in class teachers can't help me because I have to be 'self-directed' and it makes my learning experience harder. There is more focus on that than actual academics" (Student)

"I feel that teachers waste my time with the type of work we do. It is mainly busy work because of the 'self directed learner' [curse word]. I want the teachers to actively engage with the students and ACTUALLY TEACH new concepts and ideas instead of sitting on their computers." (Student)

"Teachers often misuse the term 'self-directed' to mean that students should be self-studying all of the material. If that is the case, a teacher is not required as they are not TEACHING but rather just handing out papers.' (Student)

"Teachers work so hard trying to develop these skills that often they forget to actually teach us so we end up doing the learning on our own with little facilitation on the teacher's end." (Student)

"Self-directed learning does not and should not replace the teacher having to teach in class. This appears to be happening more and more in my child's classes, especially Social studies." (Parent)

"Also the self directed learning approach seems to be an excuse for teachers not to teach. My children have tried to figure things out on their own. They had difficulty with specific topics and asked the teacher for help. The teacher's response has been to go figure it out on your own." (Parent)

Summary

A review of curriculum documents, videos of instruction, and survey responses highlight strengths and areas of challenge for WW-P with regard to providing differentiated curriculum and instruction to meet the advanced learning needs of their gifted students. The district excels in providing enrichment opportunities for gifted students through the MAGIC program in upper elementary, the PRISM program in middle school, and the array of clubs and extracurricular activities at the high school. High school students also have an extensive array of courses from which to choose in the arts and in core areas that include advanced content. Additionally, the district provides rigorous, challenging experiences in math for those identified for the Accelerated and Enriched program. For students in the primary grades, and those who just missed the cutoff for the A & E program, additional challenge is necessary for math instruction. Science was also specifically noted as an area in need of additional rigor. With regard to 21st century skill development, stakeholders recognized the value the district has placed on ensuring that attention to these skills occurs at all building levels. Students report ample opportunities for critical thinking, conducting research, and giving presentations within their classes and extracurricular activities. Stakeholders also expressed the desire for more opportunities to develop creative thinking, primarily at the high school level. Finally, while stakeholders also acknowledge that teachers provided opportunities for collaborative work and self-directed learner, they reported dissatisfaction in how these competencies were taught in the classroom.

Recommendations

- Continue to promote enriched learning experiences that foster research, creative, and critical thinking skills.
- Consider adopting the Total School Cluster Grouping model, so teachers may more easily differentiate their core subjects to provide more challenge for their gifted learners.

- Convene a curriculum team to review the science curriculum, K-8, to determine how to provide more opportunities for authentic, hands-on scientific experimentation and problem solving.
- Convene a curriculum team to review the math curriculum, K-8, to determine how to provide more rigorous math instruction for GT primary students and to determine how to address the gap in challenge level between A & E math and general math at the upper elementary level and A & E math and the honors levels at the middle school level.
- Provide professional development for teachers of gifted students (including high school teachers of advanced classes) and GTR specialists. Training on strategies that are designed to promote higher level thinking skills will enable teachers to better understand how to increase the challenge of classes through higher level thinking tasks rather than through more work.
- Consider providing faculty, particularly at the high school level, with targeted professional development on creativity skill training, so they may to learn how to effectively integrate creative thinking into their instruction and learning activities.
- Provide professional development for teachers on how to successfully scaffold student acquisition of effective collaboration skills and development of self-directed learning.
- Provide professional development for all teachers in instructional strategies that will provide greater variety in how the learning activities are structured for students.

Program Area: Affective Needs

Gifted students have unique social and emotional needs in addition to their unique cognitive needs. As such, programs for gifted students should address these affective needs to ensure healthy overall development. The evaluation of the program area regarding affective needs included an examination of the following components:

- A specific written affective curriculum to address social and emotional needs of gifted students.
- Gifted program fosters positive social and emotional development and a positive attitude toward learning.

Data Sources

- Written documentation of appropriate guidance and counseling services reviewed for evidence of differentiation for gifted students.
- Academic policies.
- Copies of PowerPoint presentations shared with parents on affective needs of gifted students.
- Program student, faculty, and parent survey and interview questions relating to social and emotional needs.
- Classroom and building observations.

Findings

District Programming. Documents developed by GTR specialists for both the upper elementary and middle school PRISM program were reviewed for specific attention to the social and emotional needs of gifted students. At the upper elementary level, the GTR specialist uses grade level groups to address the following affective issues:

- Learning styles and multiple intelligences.
- Perfectionism – setting realistic expectations and taking risks.
- Communicating effectively with teachers and peers.
- Finding friends and like-minded peers.
- Learning to be successful in school.
- Making informed decisions and choosing appropriate learning opportunities.

These topics are well suited for addressing common affective issues that upper elementary students may experience. Addressing them in grade level groups also likely increases the comfort level for students to discuss.

At the middle school level, the GTR specialist spends the first 6 weeks of the school year teaching the "Prism for All" curriculum which was designed to help students better understand themselves and how their thinking styles, physical health, personality, and temperament influence critical thinking and problem solving. Students are taught strategies to reinforce positive attitudes and productive behaviors for higher level thinking. All students are invited to attend these sessions to help them determine whether PRISM would be a good fit for them during their flex period. These topics are excellent choices to cover as middle school students begin to develop a more conscious awareness of their unique identities and learning preferences. The emphasis on brain research and the effects of sleep and stress are also critical to cover at this age as students attempt to balance more extracurricular activities with increasingly rigorous

coursework. WW-P should be commended for the work that has been completed designing social and emotional curriculum at the upper elementary and middle school levels.

At the high school level, initiatives have also been put into place to help students navigate social and emotional concerns. All students have the same lunch period, and counselors make themselves available to meet with the students during that time. The high school also provides programming on how to manage stress. To assist students in managing their rigorous course loads, the high schools have also put several policies into place. Honors and AP courses are weighted appropriately to encourage students to take challenging courses and reduce anxiety about their grades. The high school mandates four no homework nights, so students have the opportunity to take a break from the academic pressure. Additionally, to discourage students from taking too many additional courses beyond their WW-P course load (Option ii courses), the school board recently adopted a ruling that students may only take one Option ii courses per year and only one per department. This ruling will both reduce student stress as well as help to ensure students do not have gaps in their education due to fast paced out of district courses that may not be at the same level of quality as the ones offered by WW-P. Finally, due to the highly competitive environment, high school students are not ranked, and high schools no longer announce the specific colleges and universities each graduate will attend but rather post one general list of institutions their graduates will attend.

At each level, the district has also provided programming for parents of gifted and talented students. Topics of the programming in the past have included characteristics of gifted children, the theory of multiple intelligences, the importance of a growth mindset, helping your child develop "grit," promoting student success, and helping students manage stress. The topics selected for the parent workshops are an excellent fit for parents of gifted students, particularly those from such a high performing district. Parents were surveyed to ask the likelihood of their attendance if the district held more sessions about understanding and parenting gifted children. Results are summarized in the table below.

Table 6: Interest in Parent Education

		Primary GT Parents	Upper Elem GT Parents	Middle School GT Parents
If the district held sessions about understanding and parenting gifted children, how likely is it that you would attend?	Unlikely	6%	16%	3%
	Somewhat unlikely	2%	4%	8%
	Undecided	12%	13%	14%
	Somewhat likely	23%	18%	14%
	Likely	57%	50%	61%

Survey responses indicate that most parents would be likely to attend programming on parenting gifted students. Interest was particularly strong for the primary level with 80% indicating likelihood of attendance.

Survey Responses for Student Engagement, Attitude toward Learning, and Stress

Stakeholders were also asked to respond to survey questions regarding affective issues including level of student engagement, attitude toward learning, and stress. Survey results and comments were analyzed across building levels.

Elementary. At the elementary level, parents and teachers were asked to report how engaging their gifted children find school and how their gifted children's school experiences influenced their attitudes toward learning. Results are summarized in the graph below.

Table 7: Elementary Engagement and Attitudes

		Primary Teachers	4th/5th Teachers	Primary GT Parents	4th/5th GT Parents
Do your gifted children find school engaging?	Never engaging	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Rarely engaging	0%	0%	5%	7%
	Sometimes engaging	24%	16%	29%	28%
	Most of the time engaging	68%	74%	48%	54%
	Always engaging	7%	10%	18%	11%
How do your gifted children's experiences in school influence their attitude toward learning?	Very negatively	0%	0%	1%	1%
	Negatively	0%	0%	2%	4%
	No influence	10%	0%	16%	12%
	Positively	68%	71%	60%	65%
	Very positively	22%	29%	21%	18%

As the results indicate, teachers were positive about both student engagement and children's attitudes toward learning. They shared comments such as, *"My gifted students participate often and share discoveries many other students did not have,"* and *"My group of advanced students always appear to be happy at school and engaged in learning. They enjoy leadership roles and small group projects."*

The majority of parents at the primary and upper elementary also thought their children found school engaging and that the experiences influenced their attitude toward learning positively. Relative to other sections in the survey, fewer parents commented on this section. An analysis of the comments that were reported indicated that parents felt their children would find school more engaging if they were more challenged. For example, one parent of a GT primary student remarked, *"My son has a high level of engagement in the school but he feels bored because he is not being challenged enough throughout the day and the course work assigned."* A parent of an upper elementary student wrote, "*My daughter tolerates all the subjects, but loves none of them. I think this is sad because at home I see her engage in SUCH a strong way with both numbers and science concepts (she loves the show NOVA, for instance), as well as reading books."*

Middle and High School.

In addition to asking about student engagement and attitude toward learning, middle and high school stakeholders were also asked about their level of stress. Results are included in the table below.

With all three questions, middle school students and parents were more positive than high school students and parents. Comments from middle school students suggest they feel moderately stressed balancing their responsibilities, but it is manageable. One representative student explained, *"I am sometimes stressed because of my extracurricular activities clashing with my schoolwork, but most of the time it isn't a problem,"* and a middle school parent commented, *"She enjoys school thoroughly - could not ask for a more fulfilling experience."*

Table 8: Secondary Engagement, Attitude, and Stress

		Middle School GT Students	High School Students	Middle School Teachers	High School Teachers	Middle School GT Parents	High School Parents
How engaging do you find school? Or do you perceive the gifted student to find school engaging?	Never engaging	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	1%
	Rarely engaging	6%	15%	2%	2%	7%	9%
	Sometimes engaging	43%	49%	34%	26%	25%	33%
	Most of the time engaging	43%	28%	57%	72%	50%	45%
	Always engaging	9%	4%	8%	0%	18%	12%
How does your experience in school influence your attitude toward learning?	Very negatively	0%	7%	0%	0%	1%	2%
	Negatively	6%	24%	6%	4%	4%	20%
	No influence	14%	26%	13%	7%	18%	16%
	Positively	63%	38%	62%	77%	58%	49%
	Very positively	17%	6%	19%	13%	18%	12%
How much of the time do you feel stressed as a result of school work and activities?	Always Stressed	3%	31%	13%	9%	4%	13%
	Most of the time stressed	18%	37%	26%	33%	6%	24%
	Sometimes stressed	59%	26%	54%	58%	53%	48%
	Rarely stressed	15%	5%	6%	0%	28%	13%
	Never stressed	6%	2%	2%	0%	10%	2%

Stakeholders at the high school were less positive regarding the impact of their school experiences on their level of engagement, attitude toward learning, and stress. 31% of the high school student respondents and 22% of parents said that their school experiences had a negative or very negative impact on their attitude toward learning. These percentages are in contrast to the only 5% of high school teachers who felt the over all school experiences had a negative impact on students' attitudes toward learning. 68% of students reported that they are stressed always or most of the time. This percentage is much higher than the 37% of parents and 42% of faculty reporting that students were stressed always or most of the time. Of note, 147 students chose to comment on this section of the survey, a response rate significantly higher than on any

other section of the survey. Due to the high volume of responses, multiple sample student comments are included below:

"Without a doubt, learning is something I'm grateful for. The amount of stress is the main issue I see. Especially with this district, people aim really high, which makes it difficult to stand out among the crowd. With this, competition is abnormally high. Stress has been there literally everywhere I go. In the hallways, there aren't discussions about someone's weekend, or about a movie, or anything of the sort. Every conversation that goes on is about the amount of stress piled on the students, and comparisons of teachers."

"I hate going to school. Clubs are perhaps the only positive school-related experience, other than friends. For me and many other kids in my classes - perhaps an overwhelming number - school is no longer about learning but instead about grades. Potential B's cause me stress every single day. I absolutely do not enjoy classwork nor homework, mostly due to the amount of weight everything has. No attempt is made to explain the course material or explore it in greater depth. It's all about formulas, AP strategies, and checklist-like essays."

"I love learning, but after this school district's experience, I think that school is a prison that we just live through in order to get on with our life."

"I've begun to hate learning, if I am to be completely honest. I feel like [school] is beating the learning out of me to the point where I dread, rather than enjoy it."

"Coming out of 12 years in this district I have learned one thing: that a grade, a percentage, or even a point is to be valued over anything else. This includes sleep, family, and personal health."

"You guys need to fix the system as soon as possible."

As the mission of the WW-P school district is to "develop passionate, confident, lifelong learners," the pervasive feelings of stress contributing to such negative attitudes toward learning is especially troublesome. As noted above, the district has attempted to put policies in place to address the stress. These were noted by some parents in the comments. For example, one parent spoke in appreciation of the parent education opportunities: *"I do like what the school district/PTA does with seminars and guest speakers on topics of child stress. We have learned a lot from those programs."* Another parent gave a nod to the four no homework nights but explained that in practice this policy does not work as well as intended, *"The "no homework" night idea is good in concept, but teachers pile on around the 'day off.' The same goes for breaks and holidays where my kids are loaded with assignments and projects. The notion of taking any time off to actually relax doesn't really exist."* With a community culture demanding a multitude of advanced academic offerings as well as high performance in all areas from their children, WW-P is in an admittedly challenging situation. The district must figure out how to help preserve the love of learning inherent within intellectually capable individuals while simultaneously preparing them to be competitive for selective college admissions.

Summary

Recommendations:

- Provide professional development for teachers on the affective needs of gifted students, particularly perfectionism, stress, and anxiety.
- Consider differentiating the topics covered in the 8th grade PRISM for All to have a heavier focus on stress management in preparation for high school.
- Convene a taskforce at the high school level that includes representatives from all stakeholder groups (administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and students) to determine 1) how to alleviate some of the stress and anxiety students are experiencing and 2) how to de-emphasize the performance goals and instead rekindle gifted students' natural interest in learning. A plan to accomplish these goals may include reducing the number of AP courses students are allowed to take and designing interdisciplinary capstone courses for seniors, (weighted the same as AP courses) that culminate in independent study projects that allow students to explore their interests more in depth.
- Continue to provide parent education on the social and emotional needs of gifted students and the importance of maintaining a mastery learning orientation rather than a focus on performance goals.

Program Area: Professional Development

The evaluation of the program area of Professional Development included an examination for the following components:

- Degree, Endorsement, License, and/or Professional Development in Gifted and Talented Education for the Gifted and Talented District Coordinator
- Degree, Endorsement, License, and/or Professional Development in Gifted and Talented Education for the Gifted and Talented Resource Specialists
- Professional development on the characteristics of gifted learners and strategies for differentiating curriculum and instruction to meet their advanced learning needs for faculty with responsibility for gifted and talented learners.

Data Sources:

- Faculty Professional Development Documentation Form: WW-P teachers were provided with a form to document years of teaching experience, years of teaching with responsibility for gifted and talented learners, professional development in content, gifted education, or other matters relating to meeting needs of students with high ability. This form can be viewed in Appendix F.

Findings:

The district collected a Professional Development Documentation Form from 57 faculty members who teach gifted learners at the elementary, middle, or high school levels. A review of the form indicated that WW-P teachers have a wide variety of teaching experience ranging from 1 to 45 years with an average of 12.9 years. Teachers had an average of 4.2 years experience with gifted students. Over half of the teachers held a master's degree or an additional educational credential beyond their bachelor's degree.

According to the documentation provided, the district GT coordinator has extensive experience in gifted and talented education. She holds a doctorate in curriculum and teaching and has taught a course for GT certification for Rutgers University. Two of the GTR specialists have certification in gifted and talented education, and another has attended multiple national conferences and professional development opportunities in gifted education; the fourth specialist does not have certification.

With regard to the faculty, one teacher documented completion of multiple graduate courses in gifted education, but none of the other faculty who responded reported any coursework in gifted education. The teachers of AP courses and advanced math courses reported attending conferences and workshops within their specialty areas. Additionally, several faculty reported attending district-led training on the characteristics of gifted students and the theory of multiple intelligences. Other professional development activities listed were not specific to gifted education.

Recommendations

- Continue to support certification and ongoing professional development in gifted and talented education for all GTR specialists.
- Continue supporting AP training from the College Board.
- Continue to provide in-house professional development within the district about the program itself and about the characteristics and needs of gifted students.

- Provide professional development for administrators on the importance of cluster grouping and narrowing the range of abilities in the classroom to facilitate differentiation of curriculum and instruction.
- Develop a plan for professional development of teachers with responsibility for students with high ability. This should include specific training on strategies that promote higher level thinking skills and how to differentiate curriculum and instruction effectively for gifted students.

Program Area: Program Effectiveness

The evaluation of Program Effectiveness included an examination of the following components:

- Program effectiveness as evidenced by achievement test scores.
- Success in Academic Competitions.
- Stakeholders' perceptions of effectiveness.

Data Sources

- Measures of College Readiness
  - Advanced Placement Exam Performance
  - SAT data
  - National Merit Scholar designations
  - College admissions and matriculation data.
- Results of academic competitions.
- Perceptions of stakeholders obtained through interviews.
- Survey data from program students, faculty, and parents.

Measures of College Readiness

Advanced Placement Data

In 2014, West Windsor-Plainsboro had 974 students taking 2,205 Advanced Placement exams in 30 different subject areas. This is an impressive number of students and exams. What is even more impressive is the performance of West Windsor-Plainsboro students on these exams. An amazing 48% of the students taking the exams are scoring the top score of five. Advanced Placements exams for WW-P students are shown in the chart to the right. A review of three years of data shows this to be a consistent pattern of performance. In looking at the number of students participating from each grade shows the pattern of AP exam taking by grade level below.

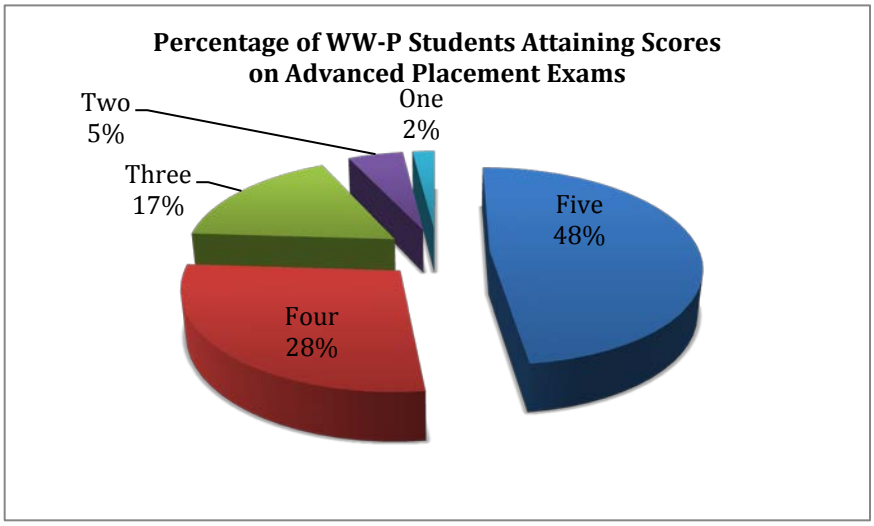
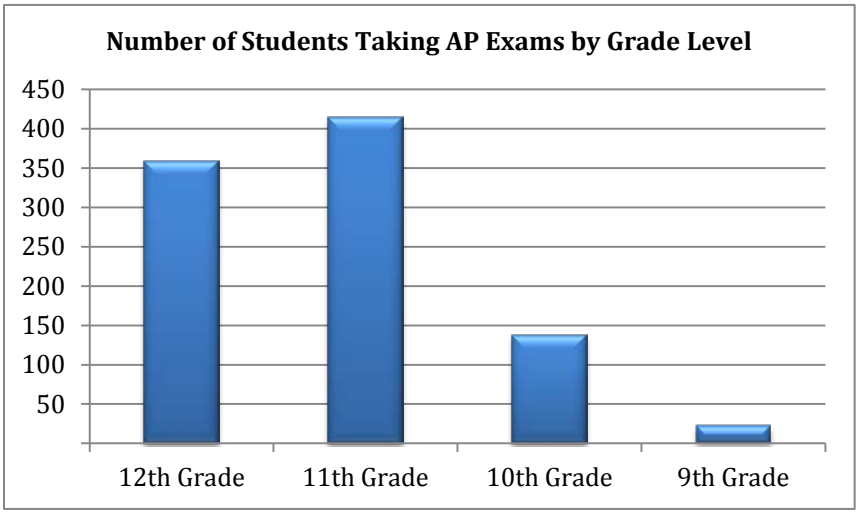


Figure 12: AP Exam Scores

Figure 13: Participation in AP by Grade Level



It is noteworthy that students are working hard all the way through the senior year. The AP exams are conducted in May after students have already received their notifications of college acceptance. In many school districts in the United States, student performance in the second semester of the senior year decreases dramatically. This is not the case in West Windsor – Plainsboro as the culture of high achievement remains strong through the senior year.

SAT and ACT Performance

The SAT and the ACT are the standard measures of college readiness in the United States. The information for the graphs below came from the West Windsor-Plainsboro 2014 High School Profile.

Figure 14: SAT Performance

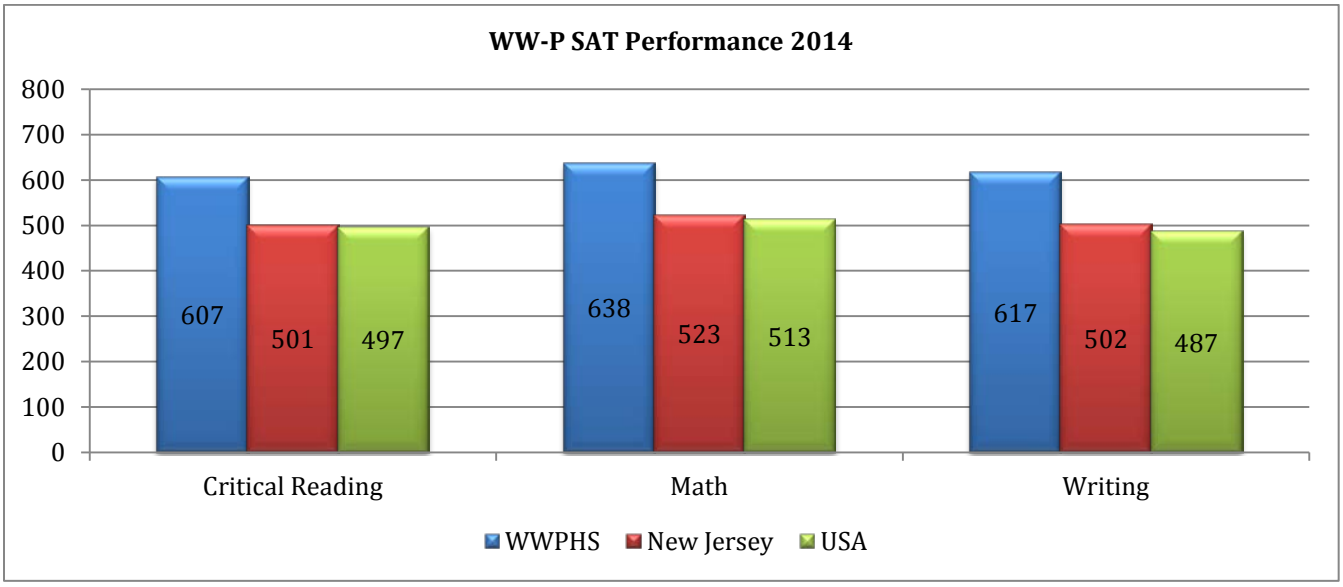
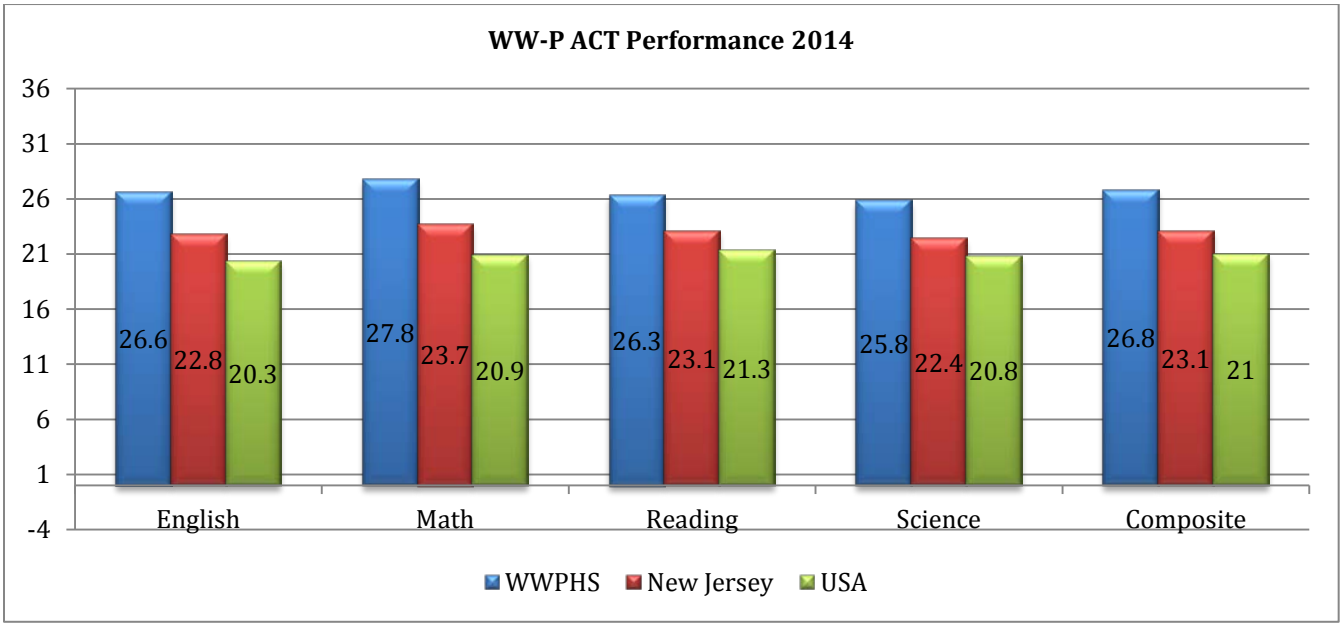


Figure 15: ACT Performance



National Merit Scholarship Program and College Matriculation

The High School Profile document reported that Class of 2014 had 40 National Merit Finalists and 124 Commended Scholars (22% of the graduating class.) Also reported was that 85% of the class intended to attend a 4 year college; 8 % planned to attend a 2 year institution, and 7% were enlisting in the military or were undecided. The class had a 96% graduation rate.

Academic Competitions

The West Windsor-Plainsboro High Schools have tremendous representation in academic competitions of all kinds at the regional, state, national, and international levels. While visiting one of the high schools the evaluators noted the many plaques and trophies won at academic events in recent years. Competitions begin at an early age with GT students participating in History Day, Future Problem Solving, Science Olympiad, Continental Math League, and MathCounts through their school day. After school clubs provide additional opportunities for interested students to participate.

Perceptions of Program Satisfaction

Stakeholders were asked to comment on their level of satisfaction regarding the services offered for gifted students. Results are summarized in the table below.

Table 9: Program Satisfaction

	Rating	GT Primary Parents	GT Upper Elementary Parents	GT Middle School Parents	High School Parents	High School Students
If you participated in gifted services, how satisfied have you been with the educational opportunities provided?	Very Dissatisfied	7%	9%	6%	12%	6%
	Dissatisfied	19%	13%	22%	13%	9%
	Neutral	54%	54%	32%	36%	33%
	Satisfied	19%	18%	26%	24%	35%
	Very Satisfied	1%	1%	14%	14%	16%

At the elementary level only 20% and 19% of primary and upper elementary parents felt satisfied with the services their gifted children were receiving. Comments regarding why they were not satisfied were reflective of issues previously outlined in the reporting including the lack of challenge in the core content areas (e.g. *"I know it is a strong district with lots and lots of bright kids who raise the averages in every situation, but there are still kids who just don't get the chance to move forward at their own pace, and that's a waste),"* not enough time allocated for services (e.g. "*There is too little opportunity for students of similar minds to meet together in school beyond A&E math; Magic meets once a week 20 min. Is that enough for children who are gifted??")* and lack of communication regarding the what services are being provided *(e.g. "I really need to find out more; I just don't see anything valuable happening.")*

Comments regarding satisfaction of gifted and talented services at the middle were more evenly split. Many parents expressed gratitude for the services offered such as these representative comments:

"Thank you for all that you do to nurture and develop the minds and talents of the future."

"As both a parent and tax payer, I appreciate the difficulty of balancing what is best for each and every child and what is financially feasible. I think the district is doing a great job in general, and as evidenced by this survey, is committed to keep improving. I highly appreciate this effort and would love to contribute whatever I can."

"The only comment I have is give them more resources and more teachers and stay out of their way. They are doing so many things RIGHT on so many levels - child-centered, not parent-centered, offering real-world challenges for these future leaders, being true 'guides on the side' for these special kids and empowering them, nurturing their confidence, and supporting their emotional needs/recognizing the needs of the 'whole child.' It's a unique and extraordinary program!"

Those expressing dissatisfaction with the program wished to see more challenge in core content areas (e.g. *"Needs to be much more differentiation in classroom for gifted, especially in honors math, social studies and science. The pace is also too slow")* and a change in PRISM so it is less competition based and includes more

topics (e.g. *"Not enough, and too 'competition-driven.' Too much emphasis on FPS, not enough guidance for independent projects").*

At the high school level, slightly over half the students reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the gifted and talented services they had participated in during their tenure at WW-P. One student commented, *"I feel the gifted services provide good opportunities for students to learn at a faster pace. It also lets kids with similar interests in a subject take the same course which makes it much more interesting,"* and another surmised, *"I am grateful to the gifted program for providing me an avenue by which to learn things at a pace that challenged me and opened up classes that I was actually interested in."* With regard to extracurricular activities, 57% reported feeling satisfied or very satisfied with the extracurricular offerings. They listed over 40 extracurricular activities that they found personally meaningful. As one student said, *"WW-P high schools offer many extracurricular opportunities that are amazing stress-relievers!* "

When asked if they had any recommendations to improve the educational experience for gifted and talented students at the high school level, many students offered thoughtful suggestions. Many of the suggestions centered around finding ways to minimize the competition and performance oriented mindset. Sample recommendations include the following:

"I believe that the education I am receiving is great and am thankful but it would be nice to not feel like the underdog and that everything is a competition. We need to be more focused on learning to have knowledge for the real world rather than always learning for a test that after we forget the material."

"Please do something about the level of competition among the students and the levels of stress. It's admirable that our school district is comprised of so many talented and gifted students, but it's difficult for students to really find their own paths and be genuinely interested in what they learn when they constantly have to be competing against their peers. I think that it would be incredibly beneficial if this school district established partnerships with companies who would allow students to intern or see how their studies can be applied outside of the classroom. Through this, students would be able to find their own unique paths and the competition wouldn't be taken as personally; in such an academically competitive environment, it's incredibly difficult to stand out, but when students begin to realize that they can stand out in other aspects, such as their own interests or future career paths, then school becomes more meaningful to them. School becomes a place to prepare for their futures, not simply a competition."

"Have more frequent discussions regarding interests of the students: goals for the future, possible careers or colleges, conversations like such. I feel that students would become more involved, which would positively influence their learning experience."

" . . . Change the mindset of people in the district (parents, teachers, students, etc.) to have them be aware that there is more to life than taking 25 APs by the time the student graduates and getting A's in all of them, as that will alleviate the pressure put on students to take as many APs as possible (but I am aware that this change is unlikely, at least before I graduate)."

"You can't tell students not to stress out over grades, they've been told that before. I think they need guidance while they're going through the process, most preferably from other students."

Summary

By all measures of achievement, the gifted and talented students at WW-P shine. They exhibit outstanding performance in academic competitions such as Future Problem Solving, National History Day, and Science Olympiad. Their scores on standardized measures of achievement such as Advanced Placement Exams are extraordinarily high. Unequivocally, WW-P gifted students are performing at levels commensurate with their academic potential. With this solid academic foundation for success in place, WW-P can begin to consider additional ways to strengthen their program. The district may use the recommendations provided throughout the report on their path of continuing improvement for the education of gifted students.

Summary Recommendations for Gifted Program Development

The strengths and challenges for the WW-P gifted program have been carefully articulated throughout this evaluation. The gifted students in WW-P have outstanding achievement levels, and the community is highly supportive of advanced academic opportunities for the students. The program is under the direction of administrators actively seeking program improvement. With these key features in place, WW-P has a tremendous opportunity to capitalize on its many strengths and move the program forward in a positive direction. A summary list of targeted recommendations is provided below, organized by program area, for the district's consideration in planning for gifted program improvement.

Program Design

With approximately 30% of the students scoring at the 96th percentile or higher on an ability measure, additional supports need to be in place for the district to effectively address the GT students' learning needs. The district may consider the following recommendations:

- Consider using the Total School Cluster Model to cluster gifted students together in fewer classrooms and reduce the range of learners in all classrooms. This will allow 1) the classroom teacher to more effectively differentiate for gifted learners; 2) allow the GTR specialist to provide more targeted push-in classroom lessons; and 3) allow the GTR specialist to work with fewer teachers to arrange common pullout times for additional enrichment.
- Consider hiring an additional GTR specialist at both the primary and upper elementary levels, so each specialist has more time to provide services.
- Consider eliminating the Renzulli Learning System; negative feedback from stakeholders suggests it may not be worth the expense of the program. Additionally, without the need to train each class of students on the Renzulli Learning System, the GTR specialist would then have more time to spend doing different enrichment activities with GT students.
- At the upper elementary school level, explore the possibility of carving out time within the school day for GT programming, so students would not need to give up lunch or recess to attend.
- At the middle school level, explore the possibility of modifying the content of the GT PRISM program so it appeals to a broader range of gifted students' interests. It may feel more balanced to stakeholders if NHD and FPS were held as after school clubs similar to the science, language arts, and technology focused programs. Providing them space within the school day appears to elevate their importance relative to the other competitions for gifted students. In their place, PRISM could focus on more of Renzulli's "Type 2" training which includes learning activities to develop critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving. Time could also be allocated with the PRISM flex for discussion of affective issues gifted students are prone to exhibit, such as perfectionism, anxiety, stress, and intensity. Independent research could still remain part of PRISM, and students could apply their Type 2 training directly to their research projects.
- At the high school level consider offering capstone interdisciplinary courses that will offer students the opportunity to develop critical skills that are not currently emphasized in Advanced Placement courses such as real world problem solving, opportunities to present to authentic audiences, collaboration, and critical and creative thinking skills. These senior level capstone courses could be weighted the same as AP courses to encourage student enrollment.

Curriculum and Instruction

Recommendations

- Continue to promote enriched learning experiences that foster research, creative, and critical thinking skills.
- Consider adopting the Total School Cluster Grouping model, so teachers may more easily differentiate their core subjects to provide more challenge for their gifted learners.
- Convene a curriculum team to review the science curriculum, K-8, to determine how to provide more opportunities for authentic, hands-on scientific experimentation and problem solving.
- Convene a curriculum team to review the math curriculum, K-8, to determine how to provide more rigorous math instruction for GT primary students and to determine how to address the gap in challenge level between A & E math and general math at the upper elementary and A & E math and the honors levels at the middle school.
- Provide professional development for teachers of gifted students (including high school teachers of advanced classes) and GTR specialists. Training on strategies that are designed to promote higher level thinking skills will enable teachers to better understand how to increase the challenge of classes through higher level thinking tasks rather than through more work.
- Consider providing faculty, particularly at the high school level, with targeted professional development on creativity skill training, so they may learn how to effectively integrate creative thinking into their instruction and learning activities.
- Provide professional development for teachers on how to successfully scaffold student acquisition of effective collaboration skills and development of self-directed learning.
- Provide professional development for all teachers in instructional strategies that will provide greater variety in how the learning activities are structured for students.

Affective Needs and Self-Regulation

Recommendations:

- Provide professional development for teachers on the affective needs of gifted students, particularly perfectionism, stress, and anxiety.
- Consider differentiating the topics covered in the 8th grade PRISM for All to have a heavier focus on stress management in preparation for high school.
- Convene a taskforce at the high school level that includes representatives from all stakeholder groups (administrators, teachers, counselor, parents, and students) to determine 1) how to alleviate some of the stress and anxiety students are experiencing and 2) how to de-emphasize the performance goals and instead rekindle gifted students' natural interest in learning. A plan to accomplish these goals may include reducing the number of AP courses students are allowed to take and designing interdisciplinary capstone courses for seniors, (weighted the same as AP courses) that culminate in independent study projects that allow students to explore their interests more in depth.
- Continue to provide parent education on the social and emotional needs of gifted students and the importance of maintaining a mastery learning orientation rather than a focus on performance goals.

Professional Development

Recommendations:

- Continue to support certification and ongoing professional development in gifted and talented education for all GTR specialists.
- Continue supporting AP training from the College Board.
- Continue to provide in-house professional development within the district about the program itself and about the characteristics and needs of gifted students.
- Provide professional development for administrators on the importance of cluster grouping and narrowing the range of abilities in the classroom to facilitate differentiation of curriculum and instruction.
- Develop a plan for professional development of teachers with responsibility for students with high ability. This should include specific training on strategies that promote higher level thinking skills and how to differentiate curriculum and instruction effectively for gifted students.

Appendix A - Interviews with Administrators, Faculty, Parents

Questions for Principals

1. Can you give us a brief overview of the services for Gifted and Talented students in your building?
2. What are the strengths of this program?
3. What are the challenges of this program?
4. Are the students successful in the program?
5. Are there other students who would also be successful who are not currently included?
6. Are students being served who are Gifted and Talented in language arts? In science? In Social Studies?
7. Have you had the opportunity to observe the students and the teaching in this program?
8. If yes, was it your perception that this was at a more advanced level than a class for other learners at that grade level?
9. What are the perceptions of the parents of Gifted and Talented students of the G/T services?
10. What are the perceptions of the parents of the non-identified students?
11. What are the perceptions of the teachers of these classes?
12. What are the perceptions of the other teachers?
13. (If not addressed earlier)Is there some perception of elitism associated with the program?
14. Do you have any recommendations for how students are identified for services?
15. Do you have any recommendations for how students are served?

Questions for Teachers in the Program

1. Can you give us a brief overview of the program for Gifted and Talented students in your building?
2. Is it your perception that the curriculum and instruction are at a more advanced level for G/T students than for other learners at that grade level?
3. If yes, in what ways are the curriculum and instruction different for the identified students than for other students in the same grade level?
4. What are the strengths of this program?
5. What are the challenges of teaching in this program?
6. Are the students successful in the program?
7. Are there other students who would also be successful who are not currently included?
8. Are students being served who are Gifted and Talented in language arts? In science? In social studies?
9. What are the perceptions of the parents of G/T students of the G/T services?
10. What are the perceptions of the parents of the non-identified students?
11. What are the perceptions of the other teachers related to the program?
12. (If not addressed earlier)Is there some perception o f elitism associated with the program?
13. Do you have any recommendations for how students are identified for services?
14. Do you have any recommendations for how students are served?

Questions for Students in the Program

1. Can you give us a brief overview of the program for Gifted and Talented students?
2. What courses are you taking now?
3. To what extent have you felt challenged by the Gifted and Talented program?
4. Is it your perception that the curriculum and instruction are at a more advanced level for G/T students than for other learners at that grade level?

5. If yes, in what ways are the curriculum and instruction different for you than for other students in the same grade level?
6. What are the strengths of this program?
7. What are the challenges of this program?
8. Are the students in the program successful in the program?
9. Are there other students who would also be successful who are not currently included?
10. What are the perceptions of the students not in the program about the program?
11. (If not addressed earlier)Is there some perception o f elitism associated with the program?
12. Do you have any recommendations for how students are identified for services?
13. Do you have any recommendations for how students are served?

Questions for Parents in the Program

1. Can you give us a brief overview of the program for Gifted and Talented students in your child's school?
2. Is it your perception that the curriculum and instruction are at a more advanced level for G/T students than for other learners at that grade level?
3. If yes, in what ways are the curriculum and instruction different for G/T students than for other students in the same grade level?
4. What are the strengths of this program?
5. What are the challenges of this program?
6. Are the students in the program successful in the program?
7. Are there other students who would also be successful who are not currently included?
8. Are students being served who may qualify in language arts? In science? In social studies?
9. What are the perceptions of the parents not in the program about the program?
10. (If not addressed earlier) Is there some perception o f elitism associated with the program?
11. Do you have any recommendations for how students are identified for services?
12. Do you have any recommendations for how students are served?

Appendix B: Schedule of Onsite Visit

Monday January 12, 2015

Grover MS 7-10 6th grade conference room

7 – 7:30	Interview	GMS principal
7:30 – 8	Interview	MS Science
8:00 -9:00	Class visits	(where GT students are clustered)
9 - 9:30	Interview	8th grade Student A&E (PRISM)
9:30 – 10		MS A&E parents

HS South 10:30 -? Conference room main office

10:15 -10:50	class visits	HS South (high end classes)
10:50 -11:20	Interview	HS student NOT A&E math SOUTH
11:20 -11:50	Interview	South principal
11:50 – 12:20	Interview	MS non A&E math teacher 7th

Hawk Elem Principal's office

12:30- 1:00	Interview	Hawk Elem principal LUNCH
1 – 1:30	Interview	primary teacher interview
1:30 – 2	Interview	Hawk (elem) parent of two - cluster classes
2 – 2:45	class visits	cluster classrooms

HS South 3-5 conference room

3-3:30	Interview	South 10th grade LA Honors teacher
3:30 -4	Interview	student interview NOT A&E South
4- 4:30	Interview	South parent of one graduate and one high school student
4:30 – 5	Interview	Board Member interview (all Board members informed)

TUESDAY JANUARY 13

HS North

7 -7:30	Interview	North HS principal
7:40 – 8	Interview	HS A&E student interview
8- 8:30	Interview	HS guidance interview
8:30 -9:45	class visits	North
9:50-10:15	Interview	AP Science teacher interview

Community Middle School

10:30 – 11	Interview	CMS principal
11-11:30	Interview	PRISM teacher observe teaching

Millstone River Upper Elementary School

11:50 – 12:20	Interview	Millstone River principal *(lunch)*
	Interview	Millstone vice principal
12:20 – 1	Interview	GT teacher watch her class *MAGIC Coders*
1-1:30	Interview	GT teacher interview
1:30 – 2:30	Interview	A&E teacher and observe *4th grade pullout hallway*

Community Middle School 2:30 -5 conference room main office

2:40-3:15	Interview	PRISM teacher interview
3:15-3:45	Interview	Student NOT A&E MS
3:45 -4:15	Interview	LA MS teacher interview
4:15 -4:45	Interview	parent interview (two children 4th and 6th)

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 14, 2015

Village Upper Elementary School 7:30 – 9:45 conference room

7:30 – 8	Interview	Village 4/5 principal
8 -8:30	Interview	Village parent A&E
8 :30 -9 :45	class visits	Village 5th pull out Media Center 8:50 –9:30

Grover Middle School 10-11:30 conference room main office

10-10:30	Interview	GMS PRISM teacher interview
10:30 -11	Interview	A&E teacher interview 8th
11- 11:30	Interview	PRISM class observe teaching

Dutch Neck Elem School

11:45 – 12:15	Interview	Dutch Neck Principal lunch
12:15-1:15	class visits	Dutch Neck

Town Center Elementary School 1:30 -5 Conference room main office

1:30 -2		Interview	Town Center principal interview
	and	Interview	Vice Principal
2-3:00		class visits	Town Center (GTR Specialist with math full class)
3-3:30		Interview	K-3 GT teacher interview
3:30 -4		Interview	HS NORTH parent interview
4-4:30		Interview	Board member interview *(all members informed)*

THURSDAY JANUARY 15, 2015

Wicoff Elementary School

7:00 – 7:30	Interview	Hawk parent
7:30 – 8	Interview	Wicoff Principal
8- 8:30	Interview	Asst Superintendent C&I
8:30 – 9:00	Interview	Wicoff parent interview

Appendix C: Sample Student Survey: Middle School

What is your grade level?

- ❍ 6th
- ❍ 7th
- ❍ 8th

During the school day, are you provided enough challenge in language arts?

- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

During the school day, are you provided enough challenge in math?

- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

Do you participate in the A and E math program?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Do you receive math instruction outside of the school day (for example, tutoring, Kumon, etc.?)

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

If you receive math instruction outside of the school day, please explain the goals of this extra instruction:

During the school day, are you provided enough challenge in social studies?

- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

During the school day, are you provided enough challenge in science?

- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

Please share any comments you may have regarding the level of challenge you experience in school:

Are you given opportunities to develop the skills of a self-directed learner (taking ownership of work and actions)?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All the time

Are you given opportunities to develop collaboration skills?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

Are you given opportunities to develop critical thinking?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All the Time

Are you given opportunities to develop creative thinking?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All the Time

Please share any comments you have on your opportunities to develop self-directed learning, collaboration skills, critical thinking, or creative thinking skills:

Are you given opportunities to give presentations (for example, oral presentations, poster presentations, etc.)?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

Are you given opportunities to do research on areas of personal interest?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

Please share comments on your opportunities to give presentations or do research on areas of personal interest.

How engaging do you find school?
- ❍ Never engaging
- ❍ Rarely engaging
- ❍ Somewhat engaging
- ❍ Most of the time engaging
- ❍ Always engaging

How does your experience in school influence your attitude toward learning?
- ❍ Very negatively
- ❍ Negatively
- ❍ No influence
- ❍ Positively
- ❍ Very positively

How much of the time do you feel stressed as a result of school work and activities?
- ❍ Always Stressed
- ❍ Most of the time stressed
- ❍ Sometimes stressed
- ❍ Rarely stressed
- ❍ Never stressed

Please share any comments you have on your level of engagement in school, attitude toward learning, or stress level:

Do you participate in the school program PRISM?
- ❍ Yes, Inquiry Project
- ❍ Yes, Future Problem Solving/Scenario Writing
- ❍ Yes, National History Day
- ❍ Yes, Makers Ambassadors
- ❍ Yes, ARIES
- ❍ I do not participate in PRISM

If you do not participate in PRISM, please explain why not:

Are there additional topics that you would like to see offered in PRISM?
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes, please describe: _____

Which academic or extracurricular opportunity have you found to be the meaningful? Why?

Do you have any suggestions of how to improve the education you are receiving in this school district?

Appendix D: Sample Parent Survey: Upper Elementary

Please indicate the grade level(s) of your child(ren):
- ❍ 4th grade
- ❍ 5th grade

During the school day, Is your child provided enough challenge in language arts?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

During the school day, Is your child provided enough challenge in math?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

Does your child participate in the A and E math program?
- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Does your child receive math instruction outside of the school day (for example, tutoring, Kumon, etc.?)
- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

If your child receives math instruction outside of the school day, please explain the goals of this extra instruction:

During the school day, is your child provided enough challenge in social studies?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

During the school day, is your child provided enough challenge in science?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

Please share any comments you may have regarding the level of challenge your child experiences in school:

Is your child given opportunities to develop the skills of a self-directed learner (taking ownership of work and actions)?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All the time

Is your child given opportunities to develop collaboration skills?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

Is your child given opportunities to develop critical thinking?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All the Time

Is your child given opportunities to develop creative thinking?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All the Time

Please share any comments you have on your child's opportunities to develop self-directed learning, collaboration skills, critical thinking, or creative thinking skills:

Is your child given opportunities to give presentations (for example, oral presentations, poster presentations, etc.)?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

Is your child given opportunities to do research on areas of personal interest?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

Please share any comments you have on your child's opportunities to give presentations and do research on areas of interest.

How engaging does your child find school?
- ❍ Never engaging
- ❍ Rarely engaging
- ❍ Sometimes engaging
- ❍ Most of the time engaging
- ❍ Always engaging

How does your child's experience in school influence his/her attitude toward learning?
- ❍ Very negatively
- ❍ Negatively
- ❍ No influence
- ❍ Positively
- ❍ Very positively

Please share any comments you have on your child's level of engagement in school and attitude toward learning:

How clear is your understanding of how West Windsor Plainsboro defines a gifted child?
- ❍ Not at all clear
- ❍ Somewhat clear
- ❍ Very clear

How clear is your understanding of the services provided to gifted children in your child's school?
- ❍ Not at all clear
- ❍ Somewhat clear
- ❍ Very clear

Please share any comments you have on your understanding of how West Windsor Plainsboro defines and provides services for gifted children:

Do you think your child needs gifted education services during the school day?
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes
- ❍ I do not know

If you answered yes your child needs gifted education services, has the district also recognized this need and provided services?
- ❍ Yes, the district has recognized my child's need for services and has adequately addressed his/her needs
- ❍ Yes, but the amount/type of services provided has not adequately met my child's needs
- ❍ No, the district has not recognized that my child needs gifted education services
- ❍ I do not think my child needs gifted education services

Does your child participate in the school program MAGIC?
- ❍ Never

- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time

What influences the extent to which your child participates in MAGIC?
- ❍ The match between the topic/activity and my child's interest
- ❍ The time when MAGIC meets (during lunch/recess)
- ❍ Other _____

Please share any comments you may have regarding the type and amount of gifted education services offered by the district at your child's grade level:

If the district held sessions about understanding and parenting gifted children, how likely is it that you would attend.
- ❍ Very Unlikely
- ❍ Unlikely
- ❍ Somewhat Unlikely
- ❍ Undecided
- ❍ Somewhat likely
- ❍ Likely
- ❍ Very Likely

Overall, how satisfied are you with the educational opportunities the district is providing for gifted students?
- ❍ Very Dissatisfied
- ❍ Dissatisfied
- ❍ Neutral
- ❍ Satisfied
- ❍ Very Satisfied

Comments:

Appendix E: Sample Faculty Survey: Primary

What grade do you teach?

- 1st grade
- 2nd grade
- 3rd grade
- Other

Are you able to provide the appropriate level of instruction to accommodate the full range of learners in your classroom for language arts?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- All of the Time

Are you able to provide the appropriate level of instruction to accommodate the full range of learners in your classroom for math?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- All of the Time

Are you able to provide the appropriate level of instruction to accommodate the full range of learners in your classroom for social studies?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- All of the Time

Are you able to provide the appropriate level of instruction to accommodate the full range of learners in your classroom for science?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- All of the Time

Please share any comments you may have about your ability to meet the academic needs for the range of learners in your classroom:

How often do you use the Gifted Resource Teacher to support you or your students?

- Never
- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a Week

How much more often would you utilize the Gifted Resource Teacher to support you and your students if she had more availability?

- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Quite Often
- ❍ Very Often

Please share any comments you have regarding the availability of the Gifted Resource Teacher in your building:

Does the district share with you which students in your classroom have been identified as gifted or are identified for the "talent pool?"

- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Most of the Time
- ❍ Always

Please share any comments you may have about how the district identified students as gifted or for the "talent pool?"

Are your gifted/talent pool students given opportunities to develop the skills of a self-directed learner (taking ownership of work and actions)?

- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All the time
- ❍ I do not have any gifted/talent pool students in my classroom

Are your gifted/talent pool students given opportunities to develop collaboration skills?

- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time
- ❍ I do not have any gifted/talent pool students in my classroom

Are your gifted/talent pool students given opportunities to develop critical thinking?

- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All the Time
- ❍ I do not have any gifted/talent pool students in my classroom

Are your gifted/talent pool students given opportunities to develop creative thinking?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All the Time
- ❍ I do not have any gifted/talent pool students in my classroom

Please share any comments you have on your gifted/talent pool students' opportunities to develop self-directed learning, collaboration skills, critical thinking, or creative thinking skills:

Are your gifted/talent pool students given opportunities to give presentations (for example, oral presentations, poster presentations, etc.)?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time
- ❍ I do not have any gifted/talent pool students in my classroom

Are your gifted/talent pool students given opportunities to do research on areas of personal interest?
- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ All of the Time
- ❍ I do not have any gifted/talent pool students in my classroom

How often do you use the Renzulli Learning System with your students?
- ❍ Less than Once a Month
- ❍ Once a Month
- ❍ 2-3 Times a Month
- ❍ Once a Week
- ❍ 2-3 Times a Week

Please share any comments you have about your students' opportunities to do research, presentation skills, or use of the Renzulli Learning System:

How engaging do think your gifted/talent pool students find school?
- ❍ Never engaging
- ❍ Rarely engaging
- ❍ Sometimes engaging
- ❍ Most of the Time engaging
- ❍ Always engaging
- ❍ I do not have any gifted/talent pool students in my classroom

How do your think your gifted/talent pools students' experiences in school influence their attitude toward learning?

- ❍ Very negatively
- ❍ Negatively
- ❍ No influence
- ❍ Positively
- ❍ Very positively
- ❍ I do not have any gifted/talent pool students in my classroom

Please share any comments you have on your gifted/talent pool students' level of engagement in school and attitude toward learning:

How clear is your understanding of how West Windsor Plainsboro defines a gifted child?
- ❍ Not at all clear
- ❍ Somewhat clear
- ❍ Very clear

How clear is your understanding of the services provided to gifted children in your school?
- ❍ Not at all clear
- ❍ Somewhat clear
- ❍ Very clear

Please share any comments you have on your understanding of how West Windsor Plainsboro defines gifted children or your opinion on the type and amount of gifted education services provided in your school:

Overall, how satisfied are you with the educational opportunities the district is providing for gifted students?
- ❍ Very dissatisfied
- ❍ Dissatisfied
- ❍ Neutral
- ❍ Satisfied
- ❍ Very Satisfied

Comments:

Appendix F: West Windsor Plainsboro Professional Development Documentation Form

Name_____

Subject and grade level_____

How many years have you been teaching?

How many years have you had designated responsibility for G/T learners?

Do you have a Gifted & Talented Endorsement or other credential?

If yes, when did you complete this credential?

What was included in this coursework?

What other teaching licenses, advanced degrees, or certifications do you hold?

Have you presented, published, or received any honors for any organizations during the past two school years? If so, please list the organizations, location or publication, and titles

Have you attended any outside G/T professional development events during the past two school years? Please list the organizations, focus and the locations of the events

Did you complete any university coursework during the past two school years? If yes, what was that?

Describe any other G/T professional development activities you have participated in that contribute to your professional effectiveness as a teacher of gifted students.

Do you have particular plans for professional development for the current school year?

Are there other professional development activities you have participated in that contribute to your professional effectiveness as a teacher of gifted students?

Do you have particular plans for professional development for the current school year?

Appendix G: Classroom Observation Form to be Completed by the Teacher

Teacher Name_____Grade_____

Subject_____

Lesson Title:

Short description of the lesson:

Goals and objectives of the lesson:

Procedure or steps of the lesson:

Questions about this class and lesson:

1. Were students in this class pre-assigned in accordance with their academic ability or achievement level?
2. Are the materials to be used in this lesson above grade level?
3. Are any of the standards to be addressed in this lesson above grade level standards?_
4. Who developed this lesson? ___ This teacher or ___ Other: _____
5. Are differentiation strategies being used so that different students have different levels of activities, directions, or expectations? ___ Yes (multiple identified students)
    a. ___ Yes (single identified student)
    b. ___ Yes (not related to identified status, but current skill level)
    c. ___ Yes (IEP-determined)
    d. ___ No (all students are completing the same activities)
6. Were students pre-assessed for content knowledge so that some will not be participating in this content?
7. Is there anything else the teacher wants the observer to know?

Appendix H: Assessing Classroom Differentiation Protocol and Scoring Form

Assessing Classroom Differentiation Protocol - Revised

Revised from the original: Cassady, J. C., Speirs Neumeister, K. L., Adams, C. A., Dixon, F. A., Pierce, R. L. (2004). The Differentiated Classroom Observation Scale, *Roeper Review, 26,* 139-146.

1. **Preparation:** Before doing the observation, the observer will contact the teacher to find a time that is convenient for the observation. The following will need to be arranged before the observation date:
   - Permission to observe from teacher
   - Copy of lesson plan - let the teacher know in advance what types of things to include or if there is a particular format to use
   - Teacher will visually identify targeted group of students in classroom (with color-coded name tags or teacher's chosen strategy)
   - Teacher is made aware that there is a brief (5 minutes or so) pre-observation interview, and a short post-observation debriefing.
2. **Pre-Observation Interview - Review Lesson Plan before the interview. For the interview, use questions/ record answers on the ACD Scoring Form -** *This is an informal interview that is merely to gain essential descriptive information in order to inform the observation.*
3. **Classroom Observation and Scoring -** Use the Instructional Activity Codes below and on the next page to assist in recording what is seen in the observation during 5 - 10 minute segments. Use the ACD Scoring Form to record the codes and assessments. There are other questions on the Scoring Form to complete during this phase as well.
4. **Post-Observation Debriefing -** Follow directions on the ACD Scoring Form
5. **Reflection -** Add final comments after leaving the classroom.

Codes for Levels of Engagement, Activity, Learning Director, & Classroom Management

These are global ratings for each 5-minute segment. Thus, each segment will have only one rating for each of these domains, the rating that is most representative of that time period for that group.

Student Engagement	Pace of Instruction	Cognitive Activity	"Learning Director"	Classroom Management
L – Low engagement = 20% or fewer of students engaged in learning **M** – Moderate engagement = 21 – 79% of students engaged in learning **H** – High engagement = 80% or more students engaged in learning	**S** - Too slow = students losing interest or not paying attention **R**- Right = seems to be right with students able to keep up but not losing interest **F** - Fast = students having a hard time keeping up, may be some evidence of giving up	Remember Understand Apply Analyze Evaluate Create Ratings are made in each segment following the given scale: **1** – Not evident **2** – Evident **3** – Well-represented	Who directs the learning, or makes the decisions about the learning activities. Use this scale for making your segment ratings for the identified groups: **1** – Teacher directs all learning. **2** – Teacher directs most learning. **3** – Teacher and student share learning decisions **4** – Student directs most learning **5** – Student directs all learning	Students were on task and productive. Group procedures were clear, established, and understood by the students. Ratings are made in each segment following the given scale: **L** – Low - Students unclear on tasks **M** – Moderate - Some wasted time **H** – High - Students on-task

Five-Ten Minute Segment Scoring Codes (use ACD Scoring Form)

During the observation period, please indicate for each 5-10 minute segment which of the following instructional activities listed below were in practice. There will be at least one per segment, and each segment will likely have more than one. The segment ratings should be marked separately for the two groups of students: "Identified" and "Not identified." In the event that there is no way to distinguish between the two groups, make whole-group ratings in the "Not Identified" group location only. If the entire class has been identified as having giftedin the general intellectual domain and/or in the particular subject being observed, record the observations in the "Identified" group location. Feel free to make a note on what the activity was. In addition to the instructional activities, please also rate student engagement, cognitive level, "Learning Director," and classroom management for each 5-10 minute segment.

Instructional Activity Codes

Instructional Activity- How	**Code**	**Description**
Lecture /Teacher Presentation	L	Teacher presenting to group of students; teacher demonstrating how to execute a task (e.g., working a math problem on board, how to use lab equipment); teacher may ask some questions of students
Class Discussion	CD	Discussion with whole class, students are primary discussants
Student Led Presentation, Demonstration, Drama, or Discussion	SL	Student(s) presenting information to the class (either planned presentation or on-demand task), demonstrating how to do a task, or leading the discussion
Student Responding	SR	Student(s) answering questions posed by teacher (e.g. spelling bee, review questions, working problems at the board, choral response)
Small Group Work	GW	Students working in small groups; could be discussing, working on academic assignments, or on a cooperative task
Manipulatives or Hands-On	M	Student(s) working with concrete materials to illustrate abstract concepts (e.g., math blocks, science models)
Use of Graphic Organizers or Other Visuals	GO	Student(s) using visual tools to illustrate concepts
Activities Differentiated by Readiness	ADR	Student(s) working with planned activities differentiated according to level of readiness
Activities Other	AO	Student(s) working with activities possibly differentiated by interest or learning style, but not necessarily
Seat work-Individual	SWI	Student(s) working at desk on academic materials (independently)
Teacher interacting with individual student	TIS	Teacher working with/talking to/helping individual student
Teacher interacting with small group	TIG	Teacher working with/talking to/helping small group of students
Technology use-Students	TS	Technology being used by students for related learning activities
Technology use-Teacher	TT	Technology being used by the teacher for presenting content
Assessment by Teacher	TA	Teacher is monitoring/ assessing student work
Assessment activity	A	Student(s) engaged in a formalized assessment activity (e.g., test; performance)
Other	O	List "other" activities
Instructional Activity - What	**Code**	**Description**
Student Choice	C	Student(s) can select topic, resource, activity, product
Independent Study	IS	Student(s) do independent investigations and research
Real Audiences	RA	Student(s) present to/prepare for outside reviewers or audiences
Advanced Content	AC	Content is advanced, e.g. from supplementary materials, above grade level, from primary sources, not adopted texts

Assessing Classroom Differentiation Scoring Form - Revision for Field Study
Teacher_____Date/Time_____Observer_____

Time segment			1	2	3	4	5
Identified	Activity						
	Student Engagement		□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H
	Pace of Instruction		□S □ R □ F	□S □ R □ F	□S □ R □ F	□S □ R □ F	□S □ R □ F
	Cognitive Activity	**Remember**	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③
		Understand	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③
		Apply	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③
		Analyze	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③
		Evaluate	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③
		Create	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③
	Learning Director		① ② ③ ④ ⑤	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
	Classroom Management		□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H

Time segment			1	2	3	4	5
Not Identified	Activity						
	Student Engagement		□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H
	Pace of Instruction		□S □ R □ F	□S □ R □ F	□S □ R □ F	□S □ R □ F	□S □ R □ F
	Cognitive Activity	**Remember**	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③
		Understand	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③
		Apply	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③
		Analyze	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③
		Evaluate	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③
		Create	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③	① ② ③
	Learning Director		① ② ③ ④ ⑤	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
	Classroom Management		□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H	□L □ M □ H

Pre-Observation Interview (Attach the lesson plan to this form)

1. Were students in this class pre-assigned in accordance with their academic ability or achievement level?_____
2. If students in this class have been identified as having Gifted(or G/T) or as having an Individual Education Plan for special education services, is the teacher licensed in that area? _____If yes, which area?_____
3. Are the materials to be used in this lesson for gifted students written above grade level?_____ Are any of the standards to be addressed in this lesson above grade level standards?_____
4. Who developed this lesson? ___ This teacher or ___ Other: _____ How closely will you be following the pre-designed lesson plan?
5. Are differentiation strategies being used so that different students have different levels of activities, directions, or expectations? ___ Yes (multiple identified students)

___ Yes (single identified student)
___ Yes (not related to identified status, but current skill level)
___ Yes (IEP-determined)
___ No (all students are completing the same activities)

6. Has any of this lesson been compacted for any child? If so, please explain the alternate learning activities that are substituting for the lesson.
7. Were students pre-assessed for content knowledge so that some will not be participating in this content?
8. What are the goals/objectives of this lesson?
9. Anything else the teacher wants to add before the observation:

Classroom Observation - Use Form Above with Coded Segments

1. Total number of students: _____ Number from identified group: _____
2. List additional adults in room, including time in room, role, and number of children served:

At the conclusion of the segment ratings, complete the following items, PRIOR TO the teacher debriefing.

3. Describe how grouping (if any) occurred in this classroom:

4. Did the teacher demonstrate high level content knowledge for the lesson topic? ____Yes _____No

5. Were differentiated practices used in the classroom for Identified and Not-Identified students? ___ Yes ___ No

Post-Observation Debriefing & Reflection

Debriefing with Teacher - Thank the teacher for the observation period, and use this last segment of approximately 5 minutes to clarify anything observed. Then, ask the teacher: Is there anything you wanted to add regarding the observation before I leave? (take detailed notes)

Final Reflection - After leaving the classroom, take a couple of minutes to make any other written comments that will help you remember what you saw or make the observation more contextually-based or comprehensive. Such issues may include the tone, demeanor, or attitude of the teacher and/or students.

Appendix I – Additional Survey Data

Parent Perceptions of Student Opportunities to Develop Competencies

		Primary Parents	Primary GT Parents	Upper Elem Parents	Upper Elem GT Parents	Middle School Parents	Middle School GT Parents	High School Parents
Is your child given opportunities to develop the skills of a self-directed learner (taking owners...	Never	2%	0%	5%	1%	2%	0%	1%
	Rarely	10%	11%	6%	5%	6%	5%	5%
	Sometimes	28%	33%	26%	35%	25%	29%	22%
	Often	43%	44%	43%	42%	43%	45%	48%
	All the time	17%	12%	21%	17%	25%	21%	24%
Is your child given opportunities to develop collaboration skills?	Never	0%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
	Rarely	7%	10%	7%	6%	5%	3%	3%
	Sometimes	37%	29%	37%	37%	32%	26%	36%
	Often	41%	47%	41%	44%	44%	55%	43%
	All the Time	16%	14%	15%	12%	18%	15%	17%
Is your child given opportunities to develop critical thinking?	Never	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%
	Rarely	8%	14%	10%	17%	8%	11%	6%
	Sometimes	40%	46%	42%	36%	37%	35%	34%
	Often	35%	33%	33%	32%	39%	46%	44%
	All the Time	14%	4%	14%	13%	15%	7%	15%
Is your child given opportunities to develop creative thinking?	Never	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	3%
	Rarely	12%	13%	14%	13%	9%	18%	14%
	Sometimes	38%	38%	41%	46%	41%	38%	37%
	Often	35%	47%	32%	32%	33%	34%	34%
	All the Time	14%	1%	13%	8%	14%	8%	11%

Is your child given opportunities to give presentations (for example, oral presentations, poster...	Never	3%	5%	3%	2%	3%	0%	1%
	Rarely	23%	19%	18%	15%	7%	7%	7%
	Sometimes	41%	49%	38%	39%	36%	50%	34%
	Often	27%	24%	29%	40%	40%	30%	44%
	All the Time	5%	3%	12%	4%	15%	13%	14%
Is your child given opportunities to do research on areas of personal interest?	Never	11%	5%	7%	7%	9%	6%	10%
	Rarely	27%	25%	24%	26%	32%	27%	33%
	Sometimes	41%	49%	41%	46%	41%	38%	37%
	Often	17%	20%	23%	16%	10%	28%	13%
	All the Time	4%	1%	5%	5%	8%	1%	6%

Student Perception of Opportunities to Gain Competencies

Competency	Response	Middle School Gen Ed Total	Middle School GT Total	High School Total
Are you given opportunities to develop the skills of a self-directed learner	Never	1%	0%	2%
	Rarely	9%	6%	3%
	Sometimes	33%	17%	24%
	Often	36%	51%	47%
	All the time	21%	26%	23%
Are you given opportunities to develop collaboration skills?	Never	1%	0%	1%
	Rarely	9%	6%	4%
	Sometimes	35%	11%	29%
	Often	36%	66%	50%
	All the Time	20%	17%	16%
Are you given opportunities to develop critical thinking?	Never	2%	0%	2%
	Rarely	12%	6%	11%
	Sometimes	26%	11%	30%
	Often	38%	57%	40%
	All the Time	21%	26%	16%
Are you given opportunities to develop creative thinking?	Never	2%	0%	5%
	Rarely	13%	9%	29%
	Sometimes	44%	29%	35%
	Often	26%	46%	21%

	All the Time	15%	17%	10%
Are you given opportunities to give presentations (for example, oral presentations, poster presentations)	Never	0%	0%	1%
	Rarely	11%	6%	7%
	Sometimes	32%	26%	30%
	Often	42%	60%	42%
	All the Time	15%	9%	19%
Are you given opportunities to do research on areas of personal interest?	Never	6%	6%	20%
	Rarely	34%	14%	44%
	Sometimes	41%	49%	25%
	Often	12%	26%	8%
	All the Time	6%	6%	3%

Perceptions of Teachers on Opportunities for Students to Develop Competencies

		Primary Teachers	Upper Elem Teachers	Middle School Teachers	High School Teachers
In your classroom are gifted students given opportunities to develop the skills of a self-directed learner.	Never	3%	3%	0%	0%
	Rarely	3%	3%	0%	2%
	Sometimes	22%	22%	15%	20%
	Often	47%	47%	58%	55%
	All the time	25%	25%	26%	23%
In your classroom are gifted students given opportunities to develop collaboration skills?	Never	3%	3%	0%	0%
	Rarely	3%	3%	0%	0%
	Sometimes	19%	19%	17%	15%
	Often	50%	50%	47%	53%
	All of the Time	25%	25%	36%	32%
In your classroom are gifted students given opportunities to develop critical thinking?	Never	3%	3%	0%	0%
	Rarely	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Sometimes	16%	16%	15%	5%
	Often	53%	53%	55%	62%
	All the Time	28%	28%	30%	33%
In your classroom are gifted students given opportunities to develop creative thinking?	Never	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Rarely	0%	0%	2%	0%
	Sometimes	19%	19%	21%	15%
	Often	55%	55%	58%	63%
	All the Time	26%	26%	19%	22%

In your classroom are gifted students given opportunities to give presentations (for example, oral, poster, multi media)	Never	6%	6%	2%	2%
	Rarely	6%	6%	13%	10%
	Sometimes	29%	29%	51%	42%
	Often	39%	39%	26%	31%
	All of the Time	19%	19%	8%	15%
In your classroom are gifted students given opportunities to do research on areas of personal interest	Never	10%	10%	2%	7%
	Rarely	6%	6%	28%	23%
	Sometimes	42%	42%	49%	43%
	Often	39%	39%	13%	20%
	All of the Time	3%	3%	8%	7%

Parent Percent Response to Survey Items Related to Challenge

Challenge	Response	Primary G/T Percentage	Primary	Upper Elem G/T Percentage	Upper Elem	Middle School G/T Percentage	Middle School	Total Percentage G/T Grades1-8	High School
During the school day, Is your child provided enough challenge in language arts?	Never	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%	4%	2%	1%
	Rarely	13%	9%	8%	9%	8%	4%	10%	6%
	Sometimes	35%	34%	38%	38%	43%	37%	38%	24%
	Often	41%	39%	39%	35%	36%	40%	39%	42%
	All of the Time	10%	16%	14%	16%	11%	16%	11%	27%
During the school day, Is your child provided enough challenge in math?	Never	10%	3%	7%	4%	5%	2%	7%	1%
	Rarely	18%	15%	11%	12%	13%	13%	15%	6%
	Sometimes	28%	30%	27%	26%	12%	28%	23%	15%
	Often	35%	35%	26%	39%	44%	31%	34%	45%
	All of the Time	10%	17%	28%	19%	25%	25%	20%	33%
Does your child receive math instruction outside of the school day (for example, tutoring, Kumon)	Yes	30%	27%	18%	23%	25%	16%	25%	did not ask
	No	70%	73%	82%	77%	75%	84%	75%	
During the school day, is your child provided enough challenge in social studies?	Never	0%	3%	0%	3%	7%	2%	2%	1%
	Rarely	14%	14%	15%	10%	17%	7%	15%	6%
	Sometimes	47%	41%	41%	36%	31%	38%	40%	25%
	Often	37%	33%	33%	37%	32%	37%	34%	42%
	All of the Time	2%	8%	11%	14%	13%	16%	8%	25%

During the school day, is your child provided enough challenge in science?	Never	4%	4%	3%	2%	15%	2%	7%	1%
	Rarely	15%	17%	15%	16%	11%	7%	14%	7%
	Sometimes	47%	39%	42%	33%	29%	37%	41%	21%
	Often	33%	32%	31%	33%	39%	34%	34%	37%
	All of the Time	1%	8%	8%	15%	7%	20%	5%	34%

Middle School Students Perception of Challenge By Grade and by GT

Challenge	Response	6th	7th	8th	Total Gen Ed	6th GT	7th GT	8th GT	Total GT
During the school day, are you provided enough challenge in language arts?	**Never**	0%	5%	6%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Rarely	6%	0%	3%	4%	20%	30%	0%	19%
	Sometimes	23%	43%	45%	37%	35%	40%	67%	42%
	Often	57%	38%	26%	40%	40%	20%	33%	33%
	All of the Time	14%	14%	19%	16%	5%	10%	0%	6%
During the school day, are you provided enough challenge in math?	**Never**	0%	0%	6%	2%	5%	20%	17%	11%
	Rarely	6%	10%	23%	13%	5%	0%	0%	3%
	Sometimes	33%	15%	32%	28%	30%	20%	17%	25%
	Often	36%	40%	19%	31%	35%	50%	0%	33%
	All of the Time	25%	35%	19%	25%	25%	10%	67%	28%
Do you receive math instruction outside of the school day (for example, tutoring, Kumon, etc.?)	**Yes**	6%	29%	17%	16%	15%	40%	0%	19%
	No	94%	71%	83%	84%	85%	60%	100%	81%

During the school day, are you provided enough challenge in social studies?	**Never**	0%	0%	7%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Rarely	3%	5%	13%	7%	5%	10%	17%	8%
	Sometimes	39%	40%	40%	38%	45%	30%	83%	47%
	Often	42%	30%	30%	37%	45%	60%	0%	42%
	All of the Time	17%	25%	10%	16%	5%	0%	0%	3%
During the school day, are you provided enough challenge in science?	**Never**	0%	0%	7%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Rarely	8%	0%	10%	7%	20%	10%	17%	17%
	Sometimes	31%	45%	40%	37%	60%	40%	67%	56%
	Often	39%	35%	27%	34%	15%	50%	17%	25%
	All of the Time	22%	20%	17%	20%	5%	0%	0%	3%

Middle School and High School Social & Emotional Well Being

		Middle School Students	Middle School GT Students	High School Students	Middle School Teachers	High School Teachers	Middle School Parents	Middle School GT Parents	High School Parents
How engaging do you find school? Or do you perceive the gifted student to find school engaging?	Never engaging	1%	0%	4%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
	Rarely engaging	11%	6%	15%	2%	2%	7%	7%	9%
	Sometimes engaging	35%	43%	49%	34%	26%	25%	25%	33%
	Most of the time engaging	38%	43%	28%	57%	72%	55%	50%	45%
	Always engaging	15%	9%	4%	8%	0%	13%	18%	12%

How does your experience in school influence your attitude toward learning?	Very negatively	1%	0%	7%	0%	0%	3%	1%	2%
	Negatively	10%	6%	24%	6%	4%	9%	4%	20%
	No influence	15%	14%	26%	13%	7%	17%	18%	16%
	Positively	59%	63%	38%	62%	77%	61%	58%	49%
	Very positively	16%	17%	6%	19%	13%	11%	18%	12%
How much of the time do you feel stressed as a result of school work and activities?	Always Stressed	12%	3%	31%	13%	9%	7%	4%	13%
	Most of the time stressed	13%	18%	37%	26%	33%	13%	6%	24%
	Sometimes stressed	39%	59%	26%	54%	58%	50%	53%	48%
	Rarely stressed	30%	15%	5%	6%	0%	26%	28%	13%
	Never stressed	5%	6%	2%	2%	0%	5%	10%	2%

Elementary Social and Emotional

		1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	Other	Total	4th grade	5th grade	Total
How engaging do you think your gifted/talent pool students find school?	**Never engaging**	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Rarely engaging	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Sometimes engaging	37.50%	26.67%	17.65%	0.00%	24.39%	15.00%	18.75%	16.13%
	Most of the Time engaging	37.50%	66.67%	82.35%	100.00%	68.29%	70.00%	68.75%	74.19%
	Always engaging	25.00%	6.67%	0.00%	0.00%	7.32%	15.00%	12.50%	9.68%
	Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
How do your think your gifted/talent pools students' experiences in school influence their attitu...	**Very negatively**	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Negatively	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	No influence	25.00%	6.25%	6.25%	0.00%	9.76%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Positively	50.00%	81.25%	68.75%	0.00%	68.29%	66.67%	73.33%	70.97%
	Very positively	25.00%	12.50%	25.00%	100.00%	21.95%	33.33%	26.67%	29.03%
	Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Communication Surrounding Gifted and Talented

		Primary Parents	Primary GT Parents	Upper Elem Parents	Upper Elem GT Parents	Middle School Parents	Middle School GT Parents	Primary Teachers	Upper Elem Teachers	Middle School Teachers
How clear is your understanding of how West Windsor Plainsboro defines a gifted child?	Not at all clear	58%	45%	51%	44%	40%	28%	20%	20%	19%
	Somewhat clear	29%	45%	35%	44%	43%	51%	34%	34%	55%
	Very clear	13%	9%	14%	13%	17%	21%	46%	46%	27%
How clear is your understanding of the services provided to gifted children in your child's school?	Not at all clear	64%	55%	56%	46%	46%	35%	13%	13%	14%
	Somewhat clear	28%	38%	31%	47%	37%	44%	40%	40%	61%
	Very clear	9%	7%	13%	7%	17%	21%	48%	48%	25%
Does the district share with you which students in your classroom have been identified as gifted?	Never							19%	10%	13%
	Rarely							16%	13%	25%
	Sometimes							23%	20%	24%
	Most of the Time							19%	18%	21%
	Always							23%	40%	17%