



WillardPublicSchools

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Pioneers

Willard Public Schools
Gifted Education
Program Manual



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Who is the Gifted Learner?

Section 162.675, RSMo, defines gifted children as “those children who exhibit precocious development of mental capacity and learning potential as determined by competent professional evaluation to the extent that continued educational growth and stimulation could best be served by an academic environment beyond that offered through a standard grade level curriculum.”

A gifted learner is one who

- exhibits precocious capacity and learning potential;
- is identified by competent professionals; and
- needs an academic environment beyond standard grade level curriculum.

Why is Gifted Education Important?

Gifted and talented students need an academic environment to meet their learning needs so they can make continuous progress in school. They need

- challenging curriculum;
- meaningful enrichment;
- accelerated learning opportunities; and
- appropriate social and emotional support.

The myth that “gifted students will do fine on their own” is not supported by research. Gifted students need services provided by well-trained teachers, who challenge and support them, in order to fully develop their gifts and talents.

(Source: [MO DESE Gifted Education Program Guidelines](#))

Mission

The mission of the Willard Public Schools Gifted Program is to identify, advocate for, and support the unique needs of gifted learners.

Vision

Our vision is to empower our gifted students to reach their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally.

Goals

The goals of the Willard Public Schools Gifted Program will be guided by the Portrait of a Gifted Learner and the Missouri Gifted Learner Outcomes which are aligned to the Missouri Show-Me Performance Standards (all of which have been developed by the Missouri Department of Education).

Missouri Show-Me Standards

Goal 1: Students in Missouri public schools will acquire the knowledge and skills to gather, analyze, and apply information and ideas.

Goal 2: Students in Missouri public schools will acquire the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively within and beyond the classroom.

Goal 3: Students in Missouri public schools will acquire the knowledge and skills to recognize and solve problems.

Goal 4: Students in Missouri public schools will acquire the knowledge and skills to make decisions and act as responsible members of society.

Board and District Program Expectations

The board of education is committed to improving student learning opportunities for all students in the district and authorizes a program for meeting the educational needs of identified gifted students in an educational environment beyond that offered in the regular classroom. The board of education will make every effort to provide the level of monetary support necessary to sustain the gifted program.

The program will:

1. Provide a minimum of 150 minutes per week of contact time in which gifted program personnel work exclusively with identified gifted students.
2. Include a systematic process for the identification and selection of gifted students at all grade levels. The identification process will include alternative identification plans designed to identify gifted students who are traditionally underidentified and underserved, such as students with language differences, cultural differences, special educational needs and those from families living in poverty.
3. Utilize instructional personnel with the appropriate certification for the gifted program services they are providing.
4. Have class sizes and caseloads in accordance with Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) guidelines.
5. Include activities beyond the level usually provided in regular school programs that particularly contribute toward meeting the identified unmet needs of participating students.

The superintendent will designate a member of the district's professional staff to serve as the coordinator of gifted education. The coordinator is responsible for:

1. Overseeing the gifted education program.
2. Facilitating the process by which parents/guardians may request a review of the decision that determined their student did not qualify to receive services through the district's gifted education program.
3. Completing and submitting the application for a gifted education program through Core Data in a timely manner.
4. Reporting instructional positions and assignments of gifted program personnel through Core Data in a timely manner.
5. Completing an annual evaluation report before June 30 of each year that will be available in the central office.
6. Maintaining in the central office a description of the program's goals, learner objectives and activities as well as the annual program evaluation report.

Gifted Identification and Placement

The Willard Public Schools uses a systematic process for the identification of gifted students that is composed of multiple criteria, including objective measures and a competent, professional evaluation.

Screening

The district will provide screening for all students to ensure that all potentially gifted students have an opportunity for consideration. All available data, including information contained in the permanent record, will be considered during the screening process.

The district will use a variety of screening methods that reduce the chance of bias and provide an opportunity to identify the strengths of all students, including those students difficult to identify and traditionally under-represented, such as students with limited English proficiency, students from culturally diverse backgrounds and students with learning disabilities.

The district uses the following screening methods:

- Nationally normed achievement test scores
- Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) scores
- Anecdotal records
- Recommendations from teachers and other personnel, parents/guardians and peers

The district uses the following screening methods designed to select students who are hard to identify or traditionally under-represented:

- Nonverbal achievement tests
- Assessments given in languages other than English
- Individual Evaluation

Based on screening results, some students will be targeted for individual evaluation. The program coordinator and district staff will determine which students will receive individual evaluation. The district will use a variety of evaluation methods to differentiate between the academically superior student whose educational needs are met by regular classroom programs and the gifted student with needs requiring additional developmental opportunities.

Students will be individually evaluated in the following areas and must qualify in 3 of the 4 areas to be accepted into the program:

1. General Mental Ability – Including a full-scale score on an individualized intelligence test at or above the 95th percentile. The district uses one or more of the following tests of general mental ability:

2. Academic Ability – Including a norm-referenced test with a cut-off score at the 95th percentile or above on the composite score or on a majority of subtests.

3. Creativity, Reasoning and Problem-Solving Ability – Including results of instruments indicating outstanding ability in one of the following areas related to the design of the district's gifted program:

- Creative and productive thinking
- Advanced insight
- Outstanding imagination
- Innovative or creative reasoning ability
- Advanced perception of cause-and-effect relationships

- Problem solving
- Abstract concepts

4. Other Ability – Including documented evidence of exceptional performance in a general academic area, a fine arts area, or another area of the gifted program. The district may use the following to identify gifted students in this area:

- Formal observations by people knowledgeable of the characteristics of gifted students
- Teacher surveys
- Other assessments as identified appropriate by the identification team
- MAP scores

Students are eligible for placement in the gifted program if, based on individual assessments, including alternative assessments, they meet the district's criteria for placement in the gifted program.

Assessment Process

To qualify for the Pioneers program, a student must meet the criteria in 3 of the 4 following areas. All testing must be completed by district personnel.

1. **Academic Ability:** We use the NWEA as a universal screener. Every student in the district takes this assessment at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Students scoring 84th percentile or higher will be screened further for the gifted program.
2. **Creativity, Reasoning, and Problem Solving Ability:** NNAT3 assessment. This assessment indicates the level and pattern of cognitive development of a student in comparison to grade and age mates. A score in the 90th percentile is required to qualify for further testing for the gifted program.
3. **General Mental Ability:** WISC-V assessment: A school counselor or assessor will administer this. A full scale IQ score of 125 or higher is required to qualify for the gifted program. General Ability Index (GAI) of 125 or above may be used in place of the full scale IQ.
4. **Other Area:** If it is determined by the qualification team that there are factors contributing to students that are difficult to identify traditionally or are under-represented, an alternative method of assessment can be used to qualify these students. Students will still need to qualify in 3 of these 4 ability categories. This could be documented evidence of exceptional performance. We assess this differently depending on the student's age and circumstances. Evidence includes the following tools: MAP test scores (Advanced in one area), observations, or data compiled from a teacher survey.

Referrals from teachers, other personnel, and parents/guardians can also be made for students to be considered for individual evaluation using the above process. Email Laurie Chester at lauriechester@willardschools.net to receive a link to the referral form.

Alternative methods of assessment may be used in cases where students are difficult to identify traditionally or are under-represented, such as students with limited English proficiency, students from culturally diverse backgrounds and students with learning disabilities.

If the child meets the requirements for 3 of the 4 areas, then he or she will qualify for Pioneers, the gifted program. All data and evidence will be reviewed by a district team including the Willard gifted education coordinator and other qualified professionals. Families will be notified whether their students have been accepted into the program.

Retesting

Parents/Guardians can request retesting if the students WISC-V and NNAT3 scores are within 10% of the qualification scores. Retesting for the gifted program can only be done once and a student cannot be tested again within a year of their previous WISC-V IQ test.

Placement

When students are accepted into the Willard Gifted Education program, the district offers the following placement option:

Grade level(s): 2nd-6th grade: **Pioneers** (Resource Room Teacher (RRT) model) is a pull-out program where the students will be pulled out of their regular classroom one day each week to attend Pioneers with the certified gifted educator.

(Kindergarten students may not be placed until second semester so that first semester can be used for identification and evaluation.)

Transfer Students

Generally, transfer students will be placed in the district's gifted program only if **all** of the following criteria are met; however, the district will make exceptions as required by law or policy (for foster care students or transfer students in the household of an active duty member of the military, for example):

1. The student was previously placed in a gifted program in a Missouri school district.
2. The program in which the student was placed is similar to that offered by the district.
3. The student meets or exceeds the district's placement criteria.
4. The student and parents/guardians agree to the placement.
5. Transfer students will be eligible if they otherwise qualify in subsequent years.

Nonpublic School Student Participation

Any nonpublic school student may be enrolled in the Pioneers program if they qualify. This would include homeschool and private school students. According to the MO DESE the following guidelines must be met:

- The student **MUST** reside in the district, and the school's boundary, where they wish to attend the state-approved gifted program.
- The student **MUST** meet or exceed the placement criteria of the program in the school district.
- The student or their parents/guardians are responsible for transportation to and from the nonpublic school to the gifted program.
- If testing is required for placement, the public school policies, procedures, and timelines should be utilized as they would be for any transfer student to the district.

The nonpublic school student will be coded as a part-time student, and the public school district receives Average Daily Attendance (ADA) funding proportional to the time the student is participating in the program.

Parent/Guardian Request for Review

Parents/Guardians who receive notice that their student has not met the eligibility requirements to receive gifted services will be informed that they may request a review of that decision by contacting the district's coordinator for gifted education or an administrator in the school the student attends. If the request is made to an administrator, the administrator will forward the request to the coordinator.

The coordinator will arrange a conference with the parents/guardians to explain the identification process used by the district, including benchmarks and standards used by the district to identify the students eligible for services.

The coordinator will provide the parents/guardians with information specific to their student, including the results of any testing, assessment or evaluation of the student, and will assist the parents/guardians in interpreting the results.

The coordinator is not permitted to discuss any information about other identifiable students but may share aggregated information, such as how many students were considered for the program and how many were accepted.

The coordinator will share information with the parents/guardians regarding any enrichment activities, clubs and student groups available to all students that, based on the student's results, might be of interest to their student. The coordinator will also share information about the district options for student acceleration.

If, during the review, the coordinator identifies any error in the eligibility determination process that may have resulted in an incorrect determination, the coordinator will arrange to have the student re-evaluated for eligibility. Otherwise, the initial eligibility decision will stand.

(Program, Identification, and Review Policy BOE Approved- Original Adopted Date: 07/28/2022 | Last Reviewed Date: 07/28/2022)

Acceleration

The district will assist students in progressing academically in accordance with their capabilities. Acceleration refers to educational strategies that provide opportunities for students to more rapidly achieve their education goals. Effective acceleration matches the level, complexity and pace of the curriculum to the readiness and motivation of the student. Acceleration will not be used as a replacement for gifted education services or programs.

Acceleration shall be considered for all students who demonstrate advanced performance or the potential for advanced performance and the social and emotional readiness for acceleration. The district will offer subject acceleration and whole-grade acceleration and, at the discretion of the superintendent, may choose to implement other types of acceleration as well.

When determining whether a student should be accelerated, the district will consider all available student assessment data, the student's social and emotional maturity and the student's academic strengths. Acceleration decisions shall be based on the best interest of the student.

Parents/Guardians or teachers who identify a student who may benefit from acceleration should contact an administrator in the student's school for more information.

(Acceleration Policy BOE Approved-Original Adopted Date: 07/28/2022 | Last Revised Date: 06/22/2023 | Last Reviewed Date: 06/22/2023)

Pioneers Program

Goals

The goals of the Pioneers Program will be guided by the Portrait of a Gifted Learner and the Missouri Gifted Learner Outcomes which are aligned to the Missouri Show-Me Performance Standards.

Missouri Show-Me Standards

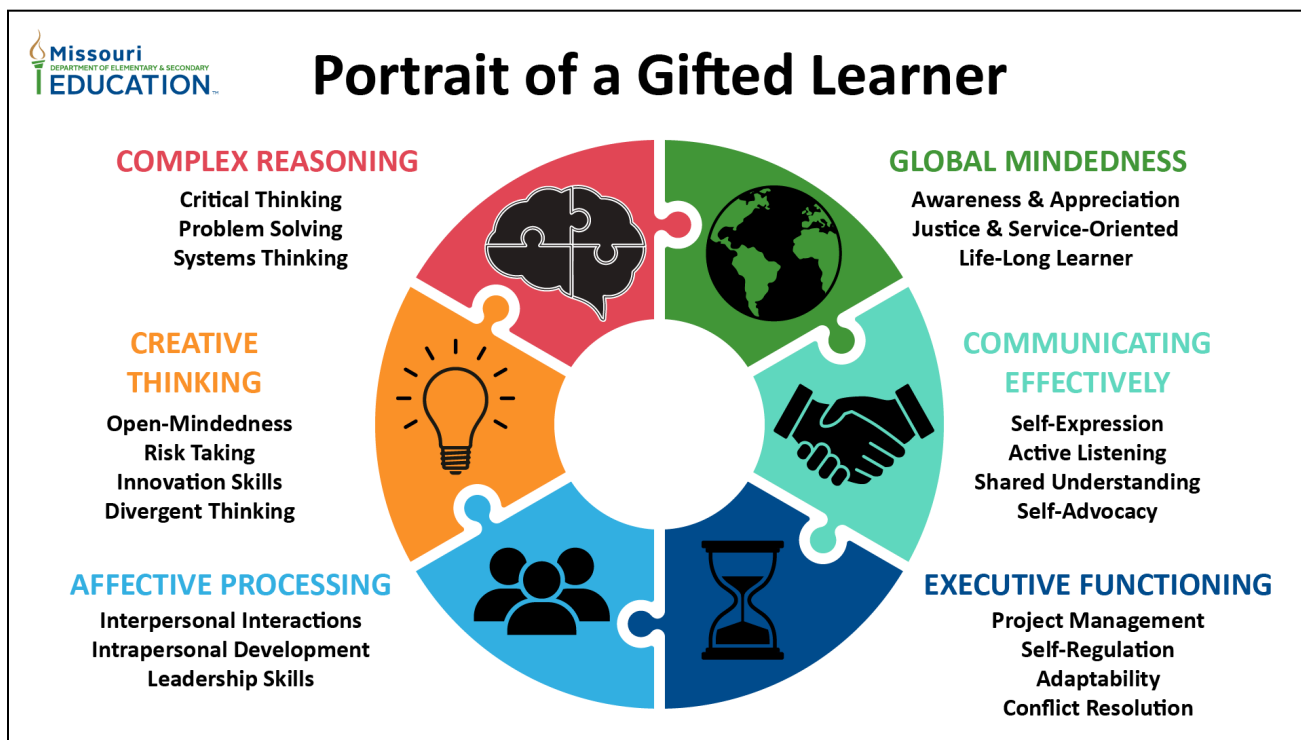
Goal 1: Students in Missouri public schools will acquire the knowledge and skills to gather, analyze, and apply information and ideas.

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Missouri Portrait of a Gifted Learner



Missouri Gifted Learner Outcomes

Here is a link to the [Missouri Gifted Learner Outcomes](#) from the Missouri Department of Education.

The above goals, standards, and outcomes will be met through a variety of individual, small group, and whole group challenging learning activities. Students who qualify for Pioneers will attend the program for one full day each week of the school year beginning the 2nd-3rd week of school.

What to Expect

Pioneers learning experiences and activities will include, but will not be limited to the following:

- Project Based Learning
- STEM and STEAM activities
- Challenging Math, Science, and ELA learning
- Critical Thinking and Logic activities
- Passion Projects
- Interdisciplinary Units
- Social/Emotional Learning centered Gifted Individuals
- Engaging technology integration

Location

The Pioneers educator has a classroom in both Willard Intermediate South and Willard Intermediate North buildings.

Transportation

On each student's assigned Pioneers day, students will still go to their home school site as they do all other days of the week and report to their homeroom teacher for attendance. Students will then proceed to the Pioneers classroom. Transportation will be provided by school bus for students who will be attending Pioneers in a building that is not their regular school site.

- WOHE and Willard South Elementary students will be bussed to Willard Intermediate South.
- Willard East and Willard Central students will be bussed to Willard Intermediate North.
- Willard North Elementary students will walk to the Pioneers room at Willard Intermediate North after checking in with their regular classroom teacher.
- Willard Intermediate North and Willard Intermediate South students will check in with their regular classroom teacher before walking to the Pioneers room in their buildings on their assigned Pioneers Day.

At the end of the day the gifted educator will escort students to the bus to be driven back to their home site in order to report back to their homeroom teacher. Students will be dismissed to go home with their homeroom class.

General Education Classwork/Homework

Students are responsible for all general education content and concepts. The student will not be required to make up daily assignments that they miss during their absence from the regular classroom. Students are still responsible for the concepts, learning, tests, and projects assigned or due during their absence. Students should not be penalized for being gone (e.g., miss recess or specials, lose points). Students should be given notification of any work or learning they will be missing while they are at Pioneers by their regular classroom teacher. Classroom teachers are encouraged to plan tests, projects due date, and special activities on days other than when the student will be absent from the regular classroom if at all possible.

Specials

So that elementary students do not miss the same specials for extended periods of time, the Pioneers days will rotate each semester.

Attendance

Students who attend Pioneers will be expected to spend one day a week in the Pioneers classroom each week of the school year. Exceptions will include a couple weeks at the beginning and end of the school year, when the gifted educator will be administering testing and individual evaluations for potential gifted students. Students can request permission to attend their regular classroom on their Pioneers day for special occasions such as field trips and annual class parties. Many engaging and ongoing activities will be happening in the Pioneers classroom, so we ask that parents and regular classroom teachers help us keep Pioneers absences to a minimum so we can best support these students.

General Education Classroom

Efforts are made by classroom teachers to create learning experiences related to the general education curriculum that meet students' identified needs through differentiated instruction. The gifted educator will also provide support and training to district staff on how to best meet the needs of gifted students in the regular classroom environment.

Willard District Gifted Assessment Results

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____

To qualify for the Pioneers program, a student must meet the criteria in 3 of the 4 following areas. All testing must be completed by district personnel.

1. **Academic Ability:** We use the NWEA as a universal screener. Every student in the district takes this assessment at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Students scoring in the top 85-90% will be screened further for the gifted program.
2. **Creativity, Reasoning, and Problem Solving Ability:** NNAT3 assessment. This assessment indicates the level and pattern of cognitive development of a student in comparison to grade and age mates. A score in the 90th percentile is required to qualify for further testing for the gifted program.
3. **General Mental Ability:** WISC-V assessment: A school counselor or assessor will administer this. A full scale IQ score of 125 or higher is required to qualify for the gifted program. General Ability Index (GAI) of 125 or above may be used in place of the full scale IQ.
4. **Other Area:** If it is determined by the identification team that there are factors contributing to a student's assessment results that make them difficult to identify traditionally or are under-represented, an alternative method of assessment can be used to qualify these students. Students will still need to qualify in 3 of these 4 ability categories. This could be documented evidence of exceptional performance. We assess this differently depending on the student's age and circumstances. Evidence includes the following tools: MAP test scores (Advanced in one area), observations, assessments in another language, or data compiled from a teacher survey.

All data and evidence has been reviewed by a district team including the Willard gifted education coordinator and other qualified professionals.

Student Results:

1. **Academic Ability:** NWEA Scores ELA: _____ Math: _____
2. **Creativity, Reasoning, and Problem Solving Ability:** NNAT3 score: _____
3. **General Mental Ability:** WISC-V assessment score: _____
4. **Other Area (if needed):** Assessment tool used: _____

_____Based on these scores your child qualifies for the gifted program in the Willard School District.

_____Based on these scores, unfortunately your child does not qualify for the gifted program in the Willard School District.

If your child has qualified for the program, the program coordinator will be contacting you with more information about the Pioneers program your child will be attending.

Please Sign to indicate that you have received and understand your child's testing results:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Request for Review

Parents/Guardians who receive notice that their student has not met the eligibility requirements to receive gifted services will be informed that they may request a review of that decision by contacting the district's coordinator for gifted education or an administrator in the school the student attends. If the request is made to an administrator, the administrator will forward the request to the coordinator.

The coordinator will arrange a conference with the parents/guardians to explain the identification process used by the district, including benchmarks and standards used by the district to identify the students eligible for services.

The coordinator will provide the parents/guardians with information specific to their student, including the results of any testing, assessment or evaluation of the student, and will assist the parents/guardians in interpreting the results.

If, during the review, the coordinator identifies any error in the eligibility determination process that may have resulted in an incorrect determination, the coordinator will arrange to have the student re-evaluated for eligibility. Otherwise, the initial eligibility decision will stand.

Retesting

Parents/Guardians can request retesting if the students scores are within 10% of the WISC-V qualification scores. Retesting for the gifted program can only be done once and a student cannot be tested again within a year of their previous WISC-V IQ test.