



# Jefferson Township Gifted Education

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*K-12 Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction*  
*Mr. Christopher Hiben*

Dear Parents/Guardians:

In Jefferson Township Public Schools, the Department of Gifted Education offers a wide range of services to its student body. These services are composed of three main areas: pull-out comprehensive gifted education, enrichment groups by content area, and building-wide enrichment. In our GATEways (6-8) and STEP (3-5) pull-out programs we typically service the top 3-7% of students and strive to challenge their intellects while also fostering emotional growth and knowledge of self. Aside from our GATEways and STEP programs, students also have opportunities to become part of enrichment groups in math and language arts as well as take part in building-wide learning such as debate (grades 5-8), Project Challenge and TREP\$ (grade 5). Enrichment groups are based on performance in normal coursework (i.e. grades and teacher input), while school-wide programs are open to all on the basis of interest. Both types of programs meet throughout the school year.

The distinction between our principal pull-out program and all others is driven by the definition of a “gifted student”. While there is no unanimous definition, the State of New Jersey defines a gifted student as those 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.” In accordance with this definition, students in Jefferson Township Public Schools are identified for our chief pull-out gifted education program using multiple measures such as gifted behavior checklists, standardized screening tests (CogAt) and student performance within their normal coursework. The nature of these data points, along with a detailed scoring rubric, helps to provide a consistent and objective view of student ability.

To initiate the process, a broad pool of students are identified by classroom teachers and then examined in much greater detail using the data points noted in the preceding paragraph. As an additional means of initiating the identification process, parents may also complete a nomination packet on behalf of their child. The detailed nomination packet will then be examined by gifted education faculty. ***Please note that nomination, be it from a faculty member or a parent does not guarantee entrance in the GATEways or STEP program.***

Gifted children excel in an environment that allows them to go beyond the cognitive constraints of the regular education classroom while at the same time accounting for their interests and unique abilities. If you feel your child may fall into this category but has been overlooked, you are encouraged to fill out the nomination packet. In order to help you distinguish between a “bright child” and a “gifted child”, a list of attributes is shown on the next page.

*Continued On Reverse*

This is not an exhaustive list of attributes, but it can serve as a reference.

The Highly-Able/Bright Learner	The Gifted Learner
<p>Knows the answers            Is interested            Is attentive            Has good ideas            Works hard            Answers the questions            Top group            Listens with interest            Learns with ease            6-8 repetitions            Understands ideas            Enjoys peers            Grasps the meaning            Completes assignments            Is receptive            Copies accurately            Enjoys school            Absorbs information            Technician            Good memorizer            Enjoys straightforward, sequential presentation            Is alert            Is pleased with own learning</p>	<p>Asks the questions            Is highly curious            Is mentally and physically involved            Has wild, silly ideas            Plays around, yet tests well            Discusses in detail, elaborates            Beyond the group            Shows strong feelings and opinions            Already knows            1-2 repetitions for mastery            Constructs abstractions            Prefers adults            Draws inferences            Initiates projects            Is intense            Creates a new design            Enjoys learning            Manipulates information            Inventor            Good guesser            Thrives on complexity            Is keenly observant            Is highly self-critical</p> <p><i>Szabos, J. (1989). Bright child, gifted learner. Challenge, 34. Good Apple.</i></p>

The parent nomination window is open from **June 15<sup>th</sup> through September 9<sup>th</sup>** each year. To make a parent nomination, please fill out the Parent Nomination Packet included with this letter and return it to your school's main office during that time. If your child matriculates during the school year, this form may be turned in at that time. ***Please note that the parent nomination packet merely serves as a means to initiate a more detailed examination of data available for that child, and does not guarantee entrance into the GATEways or STEP programs.***

Should you have any questions about our program, please feel free to contact me via email, [chiben@jefftwp.org](mailto:chiben@jefftwp.org), or by phone (973)-663-5780 x5075.

Educationally Yours,



Chris Hibben  
 Supervisor of Science, Family and  
 Consumer Science & Gifted Education



# Jefferson Township Public Schools Gifted Education

## *Parent Nomination Form*

**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School/Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

Activity	Seldom or Never	Sometimes	Often or Always	If you checked sometimes, often or always, please provide specific current examples from your own child's life
In comparison to children of the same age, my child will spend more time and energy on topics that interest him/her. (Example: a child learning to sew spends every free minute designing patterns and trying to sew them.)				
I would describe my child as a "self-starter" who works well alone, with little supervision, and is not often 'bored'. (Example: after watching a film about musical instruments a child makes a guitar from items found around the house.)				
When faced with challenges or slow results my child will continue to work on a project. (Example: a child builds a model rocket only to have many failed launches but continues to redesign and test the rocket.)				
When working on an assignment or a project my child is realistic about which parts are good and which parts need improvement. (Example: on a project, a child points out that their artwork was not the best but their information was accurate and suggests new ways to improve their artwork.)				

*\*Adapted from Joseph Renziulli's "A Schoolwide Enrichment Model"*



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Activity	Seldom or Never	Sometimes	Often or Always	If you checked sometimes, often or always, please provide specific current examples from your own child's life
My child suggests imaginative ways of doing things and uses common materials in uncommon ways. (Example: to move a box from one side of the garage to the other, a child used broom handles to act as rollers.)				
When describing a situation my child often expresses him/herself with elaborate gestures, pictures or words. (Example: when describing an encounter with a lemur at a zoo a child may jump in and out of character or voice to show the behavior of the lemur and the person.)				
My child likes to "play with ideas" and discuss what he/she thinks the outcome of these ideas may be. (example: A child wonders what would happen if a scientist found a way to kill all the insects in the world and then discusses the impact of such an event.)				
My child often finds humor in situations or events that are not obviously funny to most children his/her age. (Example: your child tells you that after watching a video on playground safety the teacher sprained his ankle lining the class up after recess.)				
When researching something on the computer my child will seek multiple resources and critique the validity of webpages they encounter. (Example: when researching a characteristic of a seal the child finds info on a website called 'sealsitters.com' but doesn't trust the info until it is verified on National Geographic's website.)				

*\*Adapted from Joseph Renziulli's "A Schoolwide Enrichment Model"*