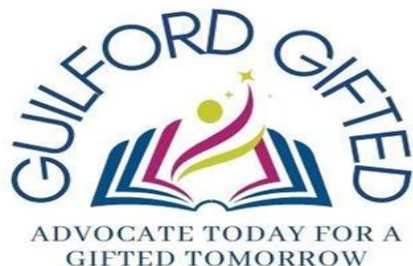


NEWS FROM THE ACADEMICALLY GIFTED DEPARTMENT

The Middle School Edition

Quarter 1

Join Guilford Gifted!



Website: <https://www.guilfordgifted.org/>

Guilford Gifted is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization supporting our community's brightest young minds with strong advocacy for the advancement of gifted education. We provide the tools to engage and empower all those involved with gifted children, thereby building tomorrow's leaders today. **It's FREE to join!**

School Contact:

Pamela Herndon, TAG Chair
Jamestown Middle School
(336) 819-2100; herndop@gcsnc.com

District Contact:

Dr. Dee Jordan, AG Coordinator
(336) 370-8322; jordand@gcsnc.com

At the middle grades level, to be identified as academically gifted, the student must score a Level 5 on the NC EOG for Math or Reading **OR** have a nationally normed achievement percentile score at or above the 85th percentile in either of these two areas. Once identified, students in grades 6 – 8 are served through **enrollment in advanced coursework** based on the district's placement guidelines and their identified area.

To ensure proper differentiation occurs in the classroom, teachers of academically gifted students should hold their AIG licensure or, at a minimum, have completed the district's professional development on the characteristics of academically gifted students and proper classroom support for academically gifted and advanced learners. Annually, the school will provide a copy of the ***Differentiated Education Plan (DEP)***, which details how the curriculum provided in advanced coursework differs from grade-level content and supports the learning needs of academically gifted students. Each year, the school holds a beginning-of-year meeting for parent/guardians to review the ***DEP*** and seek clarification regarding their child's identification. In addition to the DEP, for newly identified students or for students who have added an identification area, the ***Student Eligibility Record (SER)*** is provided. The ***SER*** details the data used for AG eligibility. The ***SER*** must be signed and returned by the parent/guardian.

News From Our School:

AG ANNUAL PARENT MEETING:

Thursday, October 3

Sessions offered at
5:40, 5:55, and 6:30
(choose one)

District Highlight:

The district's Choice Application Window will open October 16, 2024. Scan the QR Code below to learn about the choice options available at the middle grades and high school levels. Additionally, you can visit the Choice Schools & Programs webpage at: www.gcsnc.com/Domain/2425



Social Justice and the Gifted Student

Quarter 1 Article Provided by the GCS AG Department



Many academically and/or intellectually gifted students exhibit characteristics that are quite positive but still cause challenges for their families and educators (Ruff, 2009). As we approach Election Day, November 5, 2024, it may be helpful for families and educators to understand one of the commonly accepted characteristics of gifted students, **Strong Empathy and Sense of Justice**. Some academically and/or intellectually gifted students may have a hard time processing real or perceived injustices and feel deeply for those around them (Davidson Institute, 2021). The high reasoning ability of academically and/or intellectually gifted students leads them to an early concern for fairness, justice, and doing what is right. These students are keenly aware of what it means to address needs for the “common good”. The list below provides some behaviors that may be observed in a gifted student who also has a strong sense of justice:

- Strongly offended by any perceived injustice, whether toward themselves or towards others.
- Demonstrate uncomfortableness with any policy/procedure they perceive is not fair/just.
- Demonstrate confidence in their ability to explain situations, specifically bringing light to areas of unfairness.
- Demonstrate kindness towards others by noticing and caring for the pain of others (Ruff, 2009).

Having a strong empathy and sense of justice can be an added stress where students feel like they need to solve the problems facing the world (Graham, 2023). The families and educators of academically and/or intellectually gifted students can help these students cope with this stress in the following ways:

- Have open discussions on current events. Use vetted resources to help students understand arguments for and against a particular stance.
- In community groups, focus on activities that allow students to view all people, even those they disagree with, through a lens of humanity.
- Help your child develop the ability to ask questions and to listen.
- Show your child the value you place in public education.

Of the four recommendations listed above the last one proves to offer the most hope in helping academically and/or intellectually gifted students develop the soft skills needed to balance the stress that may be attributed to their keen awareness of fairness and justice. Although public schools cannot solve all the injustice that impacts our global community, they are a vital piece of the solution (Weissbourd, Manning, & Torres, 2023). Through gifted education programming, public schools cultivate the sensibilities and skills needed to engage constructively with those who may have an opposing position. In Guilford County Schools, the elementary AG Units listed below, provide activities that are standards aligned but also allow students to view their peers as complex individuals. At grades 4 and 5, these units are also available to students enrolled in the Very Strong (VS) Program:

Grade 3:	Grade 4:	Grade 5:
Won't You Be My Neighbor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Hero Within• It's Revolutionary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I Have a Voice• Convince Me: The Art of Persuasion

As students transition to secondary (middle and high), the goal is to help your child find community-based opportunities that will allow them to implement the lessons learned from the elementary AG program through community service. The Volunteer Center of Greensboro is a great resource for matching students with possible service opportunities. So, as our televisions and radios are bombarded with political ads, please be mindful that your academically and/or intellectually gifted student may experience stress and will require your patience and open communication to help them reconcile what they are hearing with their strong sense of fairness and justice. Listen to them – not for the sake of “fixing” their thoughts; but to simply allow them a safe space to express their view of the world.

References:

- Davidson Institute (2021): *10 Characteristics of Profoundly Gifted Students*
Graham, D. (2023): *A Teacher's Guide to Supporting Gifted Middle School Students*
Ruff, D. (2009): *5 Levels of Gifted: School Issues and Educational Options*
Weissbourd, R., Manning, G., & Torres, E. (2023): *Teaching Students to Talk Across Political Difference (ASCD Article)*