

**Parent/Guardian Information:**  
**What to Consider When Identifying a Gifted Child**

The West Des Moines Community School District will utilize multiple assessments to identify gifted and talented learners and their needs. ***We believe no single assessment can possibly sample all the behaviors a gifted student might demonstrate.*** Consequently, information needs to be gathered from a variety of sources and from a variety of settings. Parents are a valuable resource in this identification process.

The Gifted/Talented team would like you to review the differences between the different types of learners compared in the chart. If you feel your child exhibits the characteristics of a ***gifted learner***, please complete the Parent/Guardian Survey.

“High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Thinker”  
By Bertie Kingore, Ph.D.

“Identification of gifted students is clouded when concerned adults misinterpret high achievement as giftedness. High-achieving students are noticed for their on-time, neat, well-developed, and correct learning products. Adults comment on these students’ consistent high grades and note how well they acclimate to class procedures and discussions. Some adults assume these students are gifted because their school-appropriate behaviors and products surface above the typical responses of grade-level students.

While high achievers are valuable participants whose high-level modeling is welcomed in classes, they learn differently from gifted learners. Characteristics exhibited by gifted students are different from those of high achievers. Gifted students’ thinking is more complex and abstract than is typical of high achievers.” (Kingore, 2004)

If you have questions concerning GT screening, please contact GT Coordinator, Kristine Milburn, EdD, 515-633-4052 or [milburnk@wdmcs.org](mailto:milburnk@wdmcs.org).

High Achiever...	Gifted Learner...
Remembers the answers	Poses unforeseen questions
Is interested	Is curious; frequently and persistently asks how and why questions
Is attentive	Is selectively mentally and physically engaged; extreme focus on particular subjects/topics
Generates many ideas	Generates complex, abstract, innovative ideas
Works hard to achieve	Knows without working hard; tests well
Answers the questions in detail	Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives
Performs at the top of the group	Is years beyond the group
Responds with interest and opinions	Exhibits feelings and opinions from multiple perspectives; demonstrates unusual empathy
Needs 6 to 8 repetitions for mastery	Needs 1 to 3 repetitions for mastery
Comprehends at a high level	Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas
Enjoys the company of age peers	Prefers the company of intellectual peers
Understands complex, abstract humor	Creates complex, abstract humor
Grasps the meaning	Infers and connects concepts
Completes assignments on time	Initiates projects and extensions of assignments
Is receptive	Is intense
Is accurate and complete	Is original and continually developing
Enjoys school often	Enjoys self-directed learning
Absorbs information; follows directions to reach solutions	Manipulates information; creates new ways of reaching solutions
Is a technician with expertise in a field	Is an expert who abstracts beyond the field
Memorizes well	Guesses and infers well
Enjoys sequential presentation and step-by-step directions	Thrives on complexity and improvisation
Is highly alert and observant	Anticipates and relates observations
Is pleased with own learning	Is highly self-critical

Adapted from Kingore, B. (2004), Szabos, J. (1989), & Saylor, M. (1994)

