



Gifted & Talented Identification Process & Continuum of Services

Philip's Academy Charter School (PACS) is committed to recognizing, developing, and nurturing the strengths and potential of all learners through challenging curriculum, intentional individualized instruction, enrichment, and opportunities for advanced and accelerated learning.

Mission Alignment

The mission of Philip's Academy Charter School Newark is to inspire diverse learners in a rigorous and innovative environment that cultivates resilient leadership, intellectual curiosity, and thoughtful stewardship.

PACS recognizes that fulfilling this mission requires providing students who demonstrate advanced abilities or potential with learning experiences appropriately matched to their instructional needs.

Commitment to Gifted and Talented Education

Philip's Academy implements its Gifted and Talented (G&T) identification process and continuum of services in accordance with the **Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act, N.J.S.A. 18A:35-34 through 18A:35-39**, applicable New Jersey Administrative Code, and Board Policy 6171.2, Gifted and Talented.

PACS maintains an **ongoing kindergarten through grade eight identification process** that:

- Considers all students for gifted and talented services;
- Uses multiple quantitative and qualitative measures;
- Identifies strengths in intellectual ability, creativity, reasoning/problem solving, demonstrated performance, and/or specific academic areas;
- Recognizes both demonstrated achievement and academic potential;
- Provides multiple pathways to identification;
- Ensures that no single assessment, score, nomination, or criterion serves as the sole basis for identification or exclusion;
- Considers students in comparison with their chronological peers within the local school context;
- Provides equitable consideration for multilingual learners, students with IEPs or Section 504 Plans, twice-exceptional students, and students from populations historically underrepresented in gifted education; and
- Connects identification to appropriate instructional adaptations and educational services.



Definition of Gifted and Talented

For purposes of identification and programming, gifted and talented students are students who possess or demonstrate a high level of ability in one or more areas when compared with their chronological peers in the local school context and who require modifications or adaptations to their educational program in order to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.

Giftedness may be demonstrated in one or more areas. A student is **not required to demonstrate advanced ability in every academic subject or on every identification measure** to receive services appropriate to an identified area of strength.

Giftedness may also emerge or become evident at different points in a student's development. Identification at PACS is therefore an ongoing process rather than a one-time determination.

K-8 IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

1. Universal Consideration of Students

All students in kindergarten through grade eight are considered for gifted and talented needs through the school's regular review of academic performance, classroom evidence, assessment results, and demonstrated student strengths.

Teacher nomination is **one pathway** into the formal review process but is not a prerequisite for consideration.

Students may be brought forward for additional review through:

- Universal screening and schoolwide data review;
- CogAT screening;
- Teacher referral;
- Parent/guardian referral;
- Administrator or instructional specialist referral;
- Student performance or work demonstrating advanced ability;
- Previously documented gifted and talented identification;
- New student/transfer records; or
- Other evidence suggesting that the student may require instructional adaptations beyond the general grade-level curriculum.

Students may be considered or reconsidered at any point when new evidence demonstrates a potential need for gifted and talented services.



2. Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) Screening

PACS utilizes the **Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)** as an objective screening measure within its gifted and talented identification process.

CogAT provides information regarding students' reasoning abilities and approaches to problem solving across verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal domains. Results may help the school identify students whose cognitive strengths or potential may not be fully reflected in classroom grades or traditional achievement measures.

CogAT is used as a **screening and identification data point and is not, by itself, a determination of giftedness or eligibility for services.**

PACS reviews CogAT results in conjunction with other available evidence. Students are not required to meet a single CogAT composite score or demonstrate advanced performance across all CogAT domains to be considered for services.

Particular attention may be given to significant strengths within an individual CogAT domain, patterns of performance, and evidence that a student's reasoning ability differs from current achievement or classroom performance.

When appropriate, PACS may use alternate or additional measures for students whose language background, disability, educational history, or other circumstances suggest that a particular assessment may not provide a complete representation of the student's abilities.

3. Multiple Measures

Gifted and talented identification decisions are based on a **body of evidence** rather than a single test or data point. Depending upon the student's age, grade, identified area of strength, and available data, the G&T Committee may consider evidence from the following categories:

Intellectual Ability and Reasoning

- CogAT verbal, quantitative, nonverbal, and composite results;
- Other available cognitive or aptitude assessment results;
- Evidence of advanced reasoning;
- Critical and analytical thinking;
- Problem-solving ability;
- Spatial reasoning; and
- Ability to recognize patterns, relationships, or complex concepts.



Academic Achievement

- NJSLA results, when available;
- Schoolwide benchmark or diagnostic assessments;
- i-Ready assessment data, where applicable;
- LinkIt benchmark and standards-mastery data, where applicable;
- DIBELS or other literacy measures, where developmentally appropriate;
- Above-grade-level or high-ceiling assessments, when appropriate;
- Classroom formative and summative assessments;
- Report card performance; and
- Evidence of early or advanced mastery of grade-level standards.

Creativity and Advanced Thinking

Evidence may include a student's demonstrated ability to:

- Generate original ideas or multiple solutions;
- Approach problems from unusual or sophisticated perspectives;
- Demonstrate intellectual curiosity;
- Make advanced connections across ideas or disciplines;
- Engage in divergent thinking;
- Demonstrate intellectual risk-taking;
- Develop complex questions or hypotheses; or
- Produce creative or innovative work.

Demonstrated Performance

Evidence may include:

- Student work samples;
- Writing samples;
- Projects;
- Presentations;
- Research;
- Performance tasks;
- Portfolios;
- Academic competitions;
- Independent work;
- Products demonstrating advanced application of knowledge; and



- Other evidence of exceptional performance or potential.

Behavioral Characteristics and Observations

Evidence may include:

- Teacher observations;
- Appropriate gifted-behavior rating scales or checklists;
- Parent/guardian input;
- Student input;
- Demonstrated persistence or intense interest;
- Rapid acquisition of new information or skills;
- Unusually advanced questioning;
- Preference for complexity;
- Advanced vocabulary or conceptual understanding; and
- Other behaviors associated with advanced learning needs.

No single category must independently establish eligibility. Multiple measures are intended to provide **multiple pathways for identifying a need for services**, not a series of hurdles that a student must pass.

4. Use of Local Context and Norms

PACS considers student performance in relation to **chronological peers within the local school context**, consistent with New Jersey's definition of gifted and talented students.

Nationally normed results, including CogAT results where applicable, provide useful information and may be considered as part of the identification process; however, national norms do not replace consideration of the student's performance and potential relative to peers within PACS.

This approach allows the school to recognize students whose educational needs indicate a need for advanced services even when their profile may not be captured by a single nationally normed cutoff.

5. Equity and Access

The identification process is designed to provide meaningful access to gifted and talented services for **all PACS students**.

The G&T Committee will intentionally consider whether traditional measures may underestimate the ability or potential of:



- Multilingual learners;
- Students with IEPs;
- Students with Section 504 Plans;
- Twice-exceptional students;
- Students demonstrating high potential but inconsistent achievement;
- Students who have had limited prior access to advanced academic opportunities;
- Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Students entering PACS from other schools or educational settings; and
- Other populations historically underrepresented in gifted and talented programming.

A disability, language-learning status, intervention status, academic gap, behavioral need, or inconsistent classroom performance does **not** automatically preclude identification.

Where appropriate, the committee may examine alternate measures, assessment subdomains, nonverbal reasoning data, student portfolios, work samples, prior evaluations, or other relevant evidence to develop a more complete picture of student potential.

6. K–2 Identification and Services

Giftedness may be evident before standardized achievement data are available. PACS therefore does not delay consideration of advanced learning needs until grade three.

In kindergarten through grade two, teachers use developmentally appropriate evidence to identify students who demonstrate advanced learning needs. Evidence may include:

- Mastery of skills or standards prior to instruction;
- Acquisition of skills significantly more rapidly than peers;
- Advanced literacy or mathematical reasoning;
- Classroom assessments;
- Student work and performance tasks;
- Teacher observations;
- Creativity and problem-solving;
- Student interests and questioning;
- Parent/guardian input; and
- Other developmentally appropriate indicators.

All K–2 students receive enrichment opportunities within the general education classroom. Students demonstrating advanced learning needs may also receive differentiated content, flexible grouping, advanced



tasks, increased depth or complexity, curriculum compacting, or other instructional adaptations without waiting for formal G&T identification.

7. Formal Review and G&T Committee

Students for whom screening and/or other available evidence indicate a potential need for gifted and talented services are reviewed by the **PACS Gifted & Talented Committee**.

The committee may include, as appropriate:

- School administrator(s);
- Academic/instructional leader(s);
- Classroom or content-area teacher(s);
- Gifted and talented program representative(s);
- Student support or special education representative(s);
- Multilingual learner staff, when appropriate;
- School psychologist or other specialists when relevant; and
- Other staff with direct knowledge of the student or identification measures.

The committee reviews the student's **G&T Data Summary Profile**, which documents available evidence across multiple measures.

The committee considers the totality of the student's profile, including areas of strength, patterns among measures, potential versus demonstrated performance, instructional need, and whether the student requires adaptations or services beyond those ordinarily provided within grade-level instruction.

Identification decisions shall not be based solely on:

- CogAT;
- NJSLA;
- Report card grades;
- Teacher nomination;
- A single percentile or cutoff score; or
- Performance in every academic area.



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8. Identification Determination

Following review, the G&T Committee may determine that:

A. The student is identified for gifted and talented services.

The available evidence demonstrates advanced ability or potential and an instructional need for adaptations and/or services beyond the general grade-level curriculum.

B. Additional evidence is needed.

The committee may collect additional work samples, conduct further observations, administer an alternate or supplemental assessment, review additional assessment domains, or otherwise gather information necessary for a more complete determination.

C. The student is not presently identified but will continue to be monitored.

Current evidence does not establish a need for formal G&T services at that time. Because identification is ongoing, the student may be reconsidered as additional evidence emerges.

The purpose of the process is to determine **what instructional services a student needs**, rather than simply to assign a label.

9. Family Notification

Families will receive written notification regarding formal G&T identification decisions.

Notification will include, as appropriate:

- Whether the student has been identified;
- The area or areas in which advanced learning needs have been identified;
- A general description of the evidence considered;
- The types of services or instructional adaptations the student may receive;
- The process for requesting additional information or reconsideration; and
- Information regarding the school's G&T complaint process.

When a student is newly identified, appropriate services and instructional adaptations will begin as soon as practicable and ordinarily within **30 school days of identification**.

10. Ongoing Identification and Reconsideration

Gifted and talented identification is not limited to one annual nomination period. PACS provides multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate advanced ability and potential throughout kindergarten through grade eight.



Students who are not identified during one review cycle remain eligible for later consideration. Students may be reconsidered when:

- New assessment data become available;
- Classroom performance changes;
- A student demonstrates a newly emerging area of strength;
- A teacher or family provides new information;
- A student transfers into PACS;
- A discrepancy exists between potential and achievement;
- The effectiveness of current instructional adaptations is reviewed; or
- Other relevant evidence warrants reconsideration.

A parent/guardian may request that the school consider new information or reconsider a student for gifted and talented services.

11. Transfer Students

Students entering Philip's Academy with prior gifted and talented identification or records of advanced programming will not automatically lose access to advanced learning opportunities.

The G&T Committee will review prior records, identification data, services received, current PACS data, and any additional information necessary to determine appropriate services within the PACS continuum.

Because gifted identification criteria and programming differ among school districts, prior identification will be given meaningful consideration but will not automatically determine the specific services provided by PACS.

CONTINUUM OF GIFTED & TALENTED SERVICES

Identification at PACS is connected to **student need and appropriate instructional adaptation**. Gifted education is not limited to participation in a single class, club, elective, or after-school activity.

Students may receive different combinations of services depending upon grade level, academic area, demonstrated need, and available programming.

Services may include:

- Differentiated core instruction;
- Flexible skill or readiness grouping;
- Curriculum compacting where mastery is demonstrated;
- Increased depth and complexity;



- Advanced or above-grade-level materials;
- Advanced questioning and higher-order thinking tasks;
- Open-ended and problem-based learning;
- Inquiry and research opportunities;
- Advanced writing and mathematical tasks;
- Independent or interest-based study;
- Project-based learning;
- Academic extension projects;
- Small-group enrichment;
- Subject-specific acceleration;
- Advanced coursework;
- G&T electives;
- Financial literacy and interdisciplinary enrichment;
- Leadership and authentic problem-solving opportunities;
- Academic competitions or external enrichment opportunities, when available; and
- Other instructional adaptations appropriate to the student's demonstrated need.

Instructional adaptations are intended to allow gifted and talented students to engage with the **New Jersey Student Learning Standards at their instructional level, not solely at their assigned grade level.**

K–2 Continuum

All students in kindergarten through grade two receive classroom-based enrichment and opportunities for advanced thinking.

Students demonstrating advanced learning needs may receive:

- Flexible grouping;
- Differentiated literacy and mathematics tasks;
- Advanced texts or concepts;
- Reduced repetition when mastery is evident;
- Enrichment centers or investigations;
- Open-ended problem solving;
- Independent or interest-based projects; and
- Increased depth, complexity, or pace within core instruction.



Grades 3–4 Continuum

Identified students may receive:

- Small-group enrichment within ELA and mathematics;
- Curriculum modifications and instructional adaptations within the general education classroom;
- Flexible grouping based on demonstrated readiness;
- Increased depth and complexity;
- Curriculum compacting or advanced assignments where appropriate;
- Academic extension and inquiry projects;
- Financial literacy and interdisciplinary learning opportunities; and
- Other advanced learning experiences responsive to student strengths.

Grades 5–8 Continuum

Identified middle school students may receive:

- Small-group enrichment within ELA and mathematics;
- Curriculum modifications and instructional adaptations within general education classes;
- Advanced texts, tasks, and problem-solving;
- Project- and inquiry-based extension;
- Academic extension and interdisciplinary projects;
- Financial literacy and other school-based enrichment opportunities;
- Gifted and talented elective opportunities;
- Subject-specific acceleration where appropriate; and
- Advanced coursework.

Identified students may participate in an advanced-level G&T elective for **one period per week** as part of the middle school continuum.

In grades seven and eight, students demonstrating appropriate readiness may also participate in accelerated mathematics pathways, including **Algebra I, a high-school-level course**.

Participation in a specific service is determined by student need, readiness, academic area, scheduling, and the nature of the available opportunity. Identification as gifted and talented does not require that every student receive the same service.

PROGRESS MONITORING AND ANNUAL REVIEW

Identification is the beginning of the service process, not its conclusion.



Teachers and instructional leaders monitor whether gifted and talented students are receiving sufficient challenge and making appropriate progress within their identified areas of strength.

Evidence may include:

- Classroom performance;
- Student work;
- Assessment results;
- Engagement and demonstrated challenge;
- Progress in advanced coursework or enrichment;
- Teacher observations;
- Student feedback; and
- Family input, when appropriate.

The school will review its G&T identification procedures and continuum of services at least annually to consider:

- Students identified and served by grade;
- Representation of student groups;
- Effectiveness of identification measures;
- Access for multilingual learners and students with disabilities;
- Opportunities for identification across all grade levels;
- Alignment between identified needs and services;
- Student progress;
- Available instructional opportunities; and
- Needed changes to procedures, programming, or professional learning.

Gifted and talented identification does not automatically expire at the conclusion of a school year. Services may evolve as a student's strengths, needs, coursework, and available programming change.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND LEARNING

Philip's Academy recognizes that effective gifted education depends upon the capacity of classroom teachers as well as staff directly responsible for G&T programming.

PACS will provide professional learning, guidance, and/or collaborative planning opportunities related to areas such as:

- Characteristics of gifted learners;
- Recognizing giftedness across diverse student populations;



- Twice-exceptionality;
- Potential versus performance;
- Interpretation and appropriate use of CogAT and other assessment data;
- Differentiation for advanced learners;
- Curriculum compacting;
- Depth and complexity;
- Flexible grouping;
- Advanced questioning and problem solving; and
- Supporting the social-emotional needs of advanced learners.

DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING

PACS maintains documentation necessary to implement and evaluate its gifted and talented program, including identification and service information.

The school will complete applicable State reporting requirements concerning students receiving gifted and talented services and staff whose responsibilities include identification and/or provision of G&T services.

Information regarding the school's identification procedures, identification measures, applicable timelines, continuum of services, Board policy, and complaint procedures will be made publicly available as required by New Jersey law.

COMPLAINT PROCESS

Philip's Academy encourages families to raise questions or concerns regarding identification or gifted and talented services directly with school administration so that concerns may be addressed promptly.

Consistent with the **Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act**, any individual who believes that Philip's Academy has not complied with the requirements of the Act may file a complaint with the **Philip's Academy Charter School Board of Trustees**.

The complaint process is as follows:

1. The individual may first communicate the concern to the appropriate school administrator and seek informal resolution.
2. If the individual believes that the school has failed to comply with the Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act, the individual may submit a written complaint to the Board of Trustees or its designated representative.
3. The complaint should identify the alleged area of noncompliance and provide relevant information supporting the concern.



4. The school administration may review the matter and provide relevant information to the Board.
5. The Board of Trustees shall issue a written decision affirming, rejecting, or modifying the school's action in the matter.
6. Following the Board's written decision, the complainant may pursue an appeal to the Commissioner of Education in accordance with applicable New Jersey law and regulations.

The complaint procedure, Board policy, identification procedures, and information regarding the continuum of G&T services will be publicly accessible through the school's website.

LEGAL AND GUIDANCE REFERENCES

- **N.J.S.A. 18A:35-34 through 18A:35-39** – Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act
- **N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3** – Definitions
- **N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1** – Curriculum and Instruction
- Philip's Academy Charter School Board Policy 6171.2 – Gifted and Talented
- New Jersey Department of Education – Gifted and Talented Education Guidance