



**Our Children
Our School
Our Future**

The Gifted & Talented Handbook

Netcong Elementary School

Netcong Office Administration

Mrs. Kathleen E. Walsh, Superintendent
Dr. Kurt Ceresnak, Principal

Gifted & Talented Committee

Dr. Kurt Ceresnak, Principal
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Ms. Chloe Dougherty, Art/Gifted & Talented Teacher

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Introduction

Netcong Elementary School is dedicated to the development of all students and strives to provide the highest quality education. We also recognize that some learners possess unique talents and abilities, in which case, we are committed to providing those students with an education that goes beyond the material covered in their general education classroom.

Our Philosophy

As defined by the U.S. Department of Education (1993) and accepted by the National Association for Gifted Children (2004):

“Gifted learners are children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or who have the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishments when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment.”

Recognizing that these students come from diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds, Netcong Elementary School’s mission for the Gifted & Talented Program is to provide opportunities for students to explore their intellectual, creative, and artistic gifts and talents within the classroom and with “beyond-the-classroom” experiences. It is essential to provide appropriate and ongoing learning experiences and environments that incorporate the academic, psychological, and social needs of students. It is our responsibility to provide students with educational alternatives that teach, challenge, and expand their knowledge, while simultaneously stressing the development of independent and self-directed learners who continuously generate questions, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and ideas.

We also include the expectation that the measure of progress and growth is competition with oneself rather than competition against others. It resides in the notion that educators understand key concepts, principles, and skills of subject domains, and present those in ways that cause highly able students to wonder, grasp, and extend their reach.

Netcong Elementary School further accepts the “Theory of Multiple Intelligences” as advanced by Howard Gardner (1983) that recognizes multiple ways to “be smart”, including intrapersonal and interpersonal ability as well as musical and bodily kinesthetic abilities. The District is dedicated to providing a rich array of opportunities for students to explore leadership, music, performance, artistic, athletic, and other beyond-academic gifts and talents. Music, art, athletics, student government and leadership, and many more classroom and extracurricular activities are considered worthwhile opportunities for gifted students. However, our specific Gifted & Talented programming is dedicated to academic/creative talents in the areas of verbal-linguistic, mathematical, and naturalist and spatial intelligences.

What Defines A Gifted Child?

According to the National Association for Gifted Children:

“Students with gifts and talents perform - or have the capability to perform - at higher levels compared to others of the same age, experience, and environment in one or more domains. They require modification(s) to their educational experience(s) to learn and realize their potential.”

It is also important to note that gifted students need learning experiences that are organized by key concepts and principles of a discipline rather than by facts. They also may need a slower pace of instruction so they can achieve a depth or breadth of understanding needed to satisfy a big appetite for knowing. Finally, gifted students will learn at a higher “degree of difficulty”, where more refined skills are applied at a higher plane of sophistication.

A Bright Child vs. A Gifted Learner

A Bright Child...

A Gifted Learner...

Knows the answers	Asks the question
Is interested	Is highly curious
Is attentive	Is mentally and physically involved
Has good ideas	Has wild silly ideas
Works hard	Plays around yet tests well
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings and opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows
Understands ideas	Constructs abstractions
Enjoys time with peers	Prefers adults
Copies accurately	Creates a new design
Enjoys school	Enjoys learning
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
Enjoys straight forward and sequential instruction	Thrives on complexity

Screening & Identification

Netcong Elementary School's screening method requires grade banding, thus resulting in three groups: K-2, 3-4, and 5-8. The K-2 screening requirements will differ from grades 3-8. The district is aware that students require multiple modes of screening in order to ensure they are being given every opportunity to display their potential gifts and talents. Rubrics have been developed to identify gifted and talented students. The screening rubrics are based on the following criteria:

K-2:

- Teacher Recommendation Form
- ESGI Scores
- Diagnostic Reading Assessment Scores
- SAGES

3-4:

- Teacher Recommendation Form
- SAGES
- Report Cards
- Linkit! Scores/NJSLA Scores

5-8:

- Student Portfolio
- Teacher Recommendation Form
- SAGE
- Linkit! Scores/NJSLA Scores

A minimum score of 32 is required for acceptance into the program. Administration reserves the right to adjust cut scores to reflect changes in the academic environment.

In the first marking period of each school year, teachers will recommend students for the Gifted and Talented Program by submitting a teacher recommendation form. Once the teacher recommendation form is received by the Gifted and Talented staff, screening and testing will occur. However, any student or parent/guardian has the right to submit a request for themselves or child for consideration to be accepted into the Gifted and Talented Program.

Please note: Gifted and Talented recommendations, evaluation rubrics, and teacher checklists are not maintained as part of the permanent student record and as such, are not subject to review by students or parents.

Grades K-2 Admissions Process

Students in grades K-2 are screened based upon four separate criteria: Teacher Recommendation Form, ESGI Scores, Diagnostic Reading Assessment Scores, and the reasoning portion of the SAGES Test. The cumulative rubric below contains the required scores and weight of each criteria.

	4	3	2	1	% Weight	Total Points Possible	Total Points Earned
Teacher Recommendation Form	50	45	35-40	>34	3	12	
ESGI	90-100%	80-89%	70-79%	>69%	3	12	
Diagnostic Reading Assessment	Exceeds Grade Level	Meets Grade Level	Below Grade Level	N/A	2	8	
SAGES	130+	120-129	110-119	90-109	2	8	

Cumulative Total: /40

Grades 3-4 Admissions Process

Students in grades 3-4 are screened based upon four separate criteria: Teacher Recommendation Form, Report Cards, Linkit!/NJSLA Scores, and the reasoning portion of the SAGES Test. The cumulative rubric below contains the required scores and weight of each criteria.

	4	3	2	1	% Weight	Total Points Possible	Total Points Earned
Teacher Recommendation Form	45-50	40-44	35-39	>34	3	12	
SAGES	130+	120-129	110-119	90-109	3	12	
Report Cards	All A's & Above, All Subject Areas	All A's & 2 B's, All Subject Areas	Mix of A's & B's, All Subject Areas	All B's or below, All Subject Areas	2		
Data Bucket	Link it Exceeds NJSLA Exceeds	Link It Meeting NJSLA Meeting	Link It Approaching NJSLA Approaching	Link It Not Meeting NJSLA Not Meeting	2	8	

Cumulative Total: /40

Grades 5-8 Admissions Process

Students are screened based upon four separate criteria: Teacher Recommendation Form, Linkit!/NJSLA Scores, the reasoning portion of the SAGES Test, and the Student Portfolio. The specific criteria for the Student Portfolio is listed on the following page. The cumulative rubric below contains the required scores and weight of each criteria.

	4	3	2	1	% Weight	Total Points Possible	Total Points Earned
Student Portfolio	11-12	8-10	7	>7	3	12	
Teacher Recommendation Form	45-50	40-44	35-39	>34	3	12	
SAGES	130+	120-129	110-119	90-109	2	8	
Data Bucket	Link it Exceeds NJSLA Exceeds	Link It Meeting NJSLA Meeting	Link It Approaching NJSLA Approaching	Link It Not Meeting NJSLA Not Meeting	2	8	

Cumulative Total: /40

Portfolio Checklist & Instructions Grades 5-8

Students have the opportunity to showcase their many talents in the form of a portfolio. Your task is to present three projects that lie within these criteria:

Creativity

Please present a project that highlights your creative abilities and shows advanced proficiency in your creative work. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Creative Writing Sample
- Fine Arts Project
- Performance-Based Project

This submission should feature creative choices that go beyond the scope of your usual learning experience. Students are encouraged to draw connections from life experiences and world views, as well as showcase their ability to establish deep connections to world cultures. It is also in the student's best interest to display a high level of innovation and risk-taking.

Academic Excellence

Please present two separate projects that display a high level of academic excellence and achievement. Each project must come from a core subject area, but the students can choose the subjects they would like to use. The projects must showcase a student's ability to think beyond the basic level of knowledge. Students must also display their ability to draw deeper connections that reveal a breadth of understanding in a subject area.

Technological Aptitude

Please present a project that best displays your knowledge, skills, and innovation in the technology field. Examples include but are not limited to: website design, 3D modeling, graphic arts, digital magazine/mock social media, and advertising. The project must be fully digital and display very high levels of digital literacy. Students should be prepared to explain their process in developing the project and answer questions regarding the steps they took to completion.

Exit Criteria

A student enrolled in Gifted & Talented who is experiencing difficulty in their gifted and mainstream courses and/or no longer meets the pre-established criteria, may be exited from the Gifted & Talented Program. The ongoing assessment of each student will be used to monitor their progress and ability to maintain the rigor of the program. Progress reports will be used to record a student's growth toward meeting expectations and or/communicate concerns once a semester. The final re-evaluation of each student will take place at the conclusion of each semester, in January and June.

Students being considered for exiting the Gifted & Talented Program will be reviewed by the faculty. A conference will take place with the parents and members of the faculty to discuss student placement. The evaluation and exit process is in compliance with the New Jersey Department of Education Requirements for Gifted & Talented Programs.

The exit criteria will be any of the following:

- C or below in any core course, not including special areas.
- The student is unable to complete two or more Gifted & Talented assignments.
- The student has more than three excused absences or any two unexcused absences in Gifted & Talented.

Appeals Process

Parents and guardians requesting for their child to be reconsidered for admission into the Gifted & Talented Program must submit an *Appeal Form* and supporting documents to the principal within seven business days of receiving your child's rejection letter. See *Appendix F: Parent Appeal Form*. Appeals will be reviewed and decided upon by the Gifted & Talented Program faculty. Parents/guardians will receive a letter within 10 days of the appeal notifying them of the final decision.

Appendices

Appendix A: G&T Teacher Checklist

Appendix B: Screening Request Form

Appendix C: Acceptance Letter

Appendix D: Permission Form

Appendix E: Non-Acceptance Letter

Appendix F: Parental Appeal Form

Appendix G: G&T Faculty Post-Appeal Letter

G&T Teacher Checklist

Student's Name:
Teacher's Name:

Grade:
Date:

Gifted students are defined by the National Association for Gifted Children as students who are capable of performing at higher levels compared to students of the same age, experience, and environment in one or more domains. They will require a more intense level of instruction that is personalized to meet their needs. The following list of characteristics represents traits and/or behaviors that may be observed in advanced students.

1= Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

The student is highly curious.	
The student discusses in detail with elaboration.	
The student constructs abstractions.	
The student enjoys learning.	
The student thrives on complexity.	
The student operates ahead of the class pace.	
The student has creative or "silly" ideas.	
The student is mentally and physically involved.	
The student is intense.	
The student initiates projects.	
Total Score:	

**Netcong Elementary School
Gifted & Talented Program
Screening Request Form**

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

Homeroom Teacher: _____

Please explain why you believe you or your child qualifies for the Gifted & Talented Program:

By signing this form, I am acknowledging that the statement(s) above are true and I have read and understand the Gifted and Talented Handbook.

Printed Name of Requestee (Parent or Student)

Date

Signature of Requestee (Parent or Student)

Date

Upon completing this form and submitting it to the main office, a Gifted & Talented Teacher will notify you once the preliminary screening has been completed.



Netcong Elementary School

26 College Road, Netcong, NJ 07857
(P) 973.347.0020; (F) 973.347.3676 @netcongschool
www.netcongschool.org

*Mrs. Kathleen E. Walsh
Superintendent*

*Dr. Kurt Ceresnak
Principal*

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Upon review of your child's grades, submitted materials, and test scores, it has been determined that they would be a great fit for the Netcong Elementary School Gifted & Talented Program. This is a remarkable achievement and opportunity for advanced learning and we congratulate you and your child.

If you and your child wish to accept the offer of enrollment, please fill out the attached permission form within five school days and return it to the main office.

We look forward to helping your child achieve their true and highest potential and cannot wait to get started.

Ms. Chloe Dougherty
Gifted & Talented Teacher
Netcong Elementary School

Netcong Elementary School
Gifted and Talented Program
Permission for Testing

Student: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Grade: _____ **School:** _____

Your son/daughter has been nominated for the Gifted and Talented Program. As part of the identification process, further testing is needed. Students who are nominated will have the opportunity to take the SAGES (Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary and Middle School Students) Reasoning Aptitude Test. The SAGES test is a brief, non-biased, non-verbal measure that relies on reasoning and problem-solving skills. SAGES will be administered during the regular school day.

Please complete and return this permission form to your child's school principal.

_____ **I give permission for SAGES testing**

_____ **I do not give permission for SAGES testing ***

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Relationship to Student: _____

*** Please note that if permission is not given for SAGES testing the identification process for inclusion in the program will not continue***

**Netcong Elementary School
Gifted & Talented Program
Permission Form**

Students participating in the Gifted & Talented Program at Netcong Elementary School will be pulled out of their General Education classroom during the school day.

My child will be receiving Gifted & Talented during the following:

I hereby grant permission for my child, _____, to participate in the 2020-2021 Gifted & Talented Program at Netcong Elementary School. My child is in grade _____ and their homeroom teacher is _____.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date



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*Mrs. Kathleen E. Walsh
Superintendent*

*Dr. Kurt Ceresnak
Principal*

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child was nominated for consideration into the Gifted & Talented Program for the 2020-2021 school year. Upon review of the nomination, the Admissions Committee determined that your child does **not** meet the criteria established by the district for placement into the Gifted & Talented Program at this time.

Our general education curriculum is exemplary and effective differentiated instruction will be available in the classroom to ensure that your child continues to meet their highest potential. Differentiation will consist of carefully planned, coordinated learning experiences that extend the core curriculum, combine the curricular strategies of enrichment and integrate instructional strategies that engage learners at appropriate levels of challenge. Additionally, your child may participate in curriculum enrichment opportunities that offer extensions to the classroom curriculum. Extensions for students who have already mastered grade level material will include adjustments to the curriculum that enhance critical and creative thinking, logical reasoning, and problem solving strategies through project-based learning that promotes higher-level thinking.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact either Miss. Jacqueline Burkat or Ms. Chloe Dougherty to set up an appointment.

Sincerely,

Ms. Chloe Dougherty
Gifted & Talented Teacher
Netcong Elementary School

**Netcong Elementary School
Gifted & Talented Program
Parental/Student Appeal Form**

Student Name: _____

Homeroom Teacher: _____

Grade: _____

I hereby request that, _____, be reconsidered for admission into the Gifted & Talented Program. I also wish to submit further information about my child's or my own potential, accomplishments, and/or aptitude for review by the Gifted & Talented Program Committee.

Requestee Printed Name

Date

Requestee Signature

Date

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM IMMEDIATELY TO THE MAIN OFFICE

**Netcong Elementary School
Gifted & Talented Program
Response to Appeal
Non- Acceptance**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Gifted & Talented Committee has carefully reviewed the additional information you provided on behalf of your child,_____. Unfortunately, the committee has decided that he/she will not be granted acceptance into the program at this time. This was a difficult decision and we understand that it may be discouraging to receive this news. However, do not let it deter your child from continuing to work hard and strive for excellence, as that will aid them in being considered for future placement into the program.

Our General Education Curriculum is outstanding, and effective differentiated instruction will be available in the classroom to ensure that your child continues to excel and reach their highest possible potential. Differentiation will consist of carefully planned, coordinated learning experiences that reach beyond the curriculum and engage all learners. Netcong Elementary School always strives to meet students where they are, whether it is in the General Education or Gifted & Talented classroom.

Additionally, we encourage your child to participate in curriculum enrichment opportunities that extend beyond the material they are covering in the classroom. Extensions for students who have already mastered grade level materials will include adjustments to the curriculum that enhance critical and creative thinking, logical reasoning, and problem solving strategies through project-based learning that promotes higher-level thinking and creativity.

Thank you so much for your time and understanding.

Sincerely,

Ms. Chloe Dougherty
Gifted & Talented Teacher
Netcong Elementary School

