



## **Gifted & Talented Program**

### **Introduction**

The Passaic Public Schools recognizes and encourages the unique needs, talents and abilities of each child as an individual learner to develop to their fullest potential. Accordingly, we are committed to providing educational opportunities for those students who are exceptionally gifted and have established a program that provides gifted learners the opportunity to expand their knowledge beyond the foundations already created in classroom settings.

Our Gifted & Talented Program provides students with the opportunity to

- explore concepts, ideas and topics that extend beyond the grade level curricula.
- encourage the growth of creative critical thinking and problem solving abilities.
- collaborate with peers of like ability and receive differentiated learning experiences.

### **Definition of Giftedness**

NJ Administrative code 6A:8-3.1 defines students who are gifted and talented as those who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability in one or more content areas when compared to their chronological peers in the local district and who require modification of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.

Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (demonstrated performance or achievement in top 5-8%) in one or more content areas. Passaic Public Schools actively supports the growth of diverse gifted and talented programs and provides relevant, high quality professional development to staff to enhance their delivery of instruction for gifted learners.

## Screening & Identification

The *National Association for Gifted Children* estimates that 6% - 10% of a local student population is gifted. Through the use of qualitative and quantitative measures, an identification strategy that includes multiple measures is the best way to ensure all gifted learners receive services. For the 2021-2022 school year, the district utilized the Renzulli creativity assessment as a multiple measure alongside academic assessments. The district is currently researching alternative multiple measures to learn what other options are available

Passaic Public Schools begin to identify students for gifted and talented programs in Kindergarten and Grade One each Fall.

Entrance process for kindergarten and grade 1 students:

- a) All Passaic Public Schools kindergarten & grade 1 students will be automatically considered as applicants for the Gifted and Talented Program.
- b) All Passaic Public Schools kindergarten and grade 1 students will be provided with an opportunity to take an assessment of creativity that will be used in conjunction with standardized test scores from the current year to determine a ranked order of students for potential entrance to the Passaic Gifted and Talented Program.

The formula for acceptance is as follows: 25% Math MAP scores, 25% ELA MAP scores and 50% creativity assessment.

- c) Acceptance letters will be sent, based on the number of available spots, to the highest-ranking grade 1 students.
- d) Once acceptance is acknowledged by parent/guardians, grade 2 students will be given the option to select, in order of their ranking, a Passaic Gifted and Talented approved strand.

Entrance process for incoming grade 2 students:

- a) All Passaic Public Schools grade 1 students will be automatically considered as applicants for the Passaic Gifted and Talented Academy.
- b) All Passaic Public Schools grade 1 students will be provided with an opportunity to take an assessment of creativity, that will be used in conjunction with standardized test scores, district approved assessments, and semester one grades for Math, English, Science and Social Studies from the current year to determine a ranked order of students for potential grade 2 entrance to the Passaic Gifted and Talented Academy.

The formula for the semester one grade calculation is as follows: The sum of the semester one grades in Social Studies, Science, Math, and ELA divided by four.

- c) Acceptance letters will be sent, based on the number of available spots, to the highest-ranking grade 1 students.

d) Once acceptance is acknowledged by parent/guardians, grade 2 students will be given the option to select, in order of their ranking, a Passaic Gifted and Talented approved strand.

e) If available openings are declined by students who were offered acceptance, the next highest ranked student(s), will be contacted for enrollment.

2. Entrance process for incoming grade 3-8 students:

a) Students entering grades 3-8 who are eligible to attend Passaic Public Schools as defined by district policy may apply for admission.

b) Parents/Guardians of eligible students may complete the online application in order to be considered.

c) All incoming Passaic Public Schools grades 3-8 students, who apply to Passaic Gifted and Talented, will be provided with an opportunity to take an assessment of creativity, that will be used in conjunction with standardized test scores, district approved assessments, semester one grades for Math, English, Science and Social Studies from the current year, and/or an audition if applicable, to determine a ranked order, by strand that a student applied to, of students for potential entrance to the Passaic Gifted and Talented Academy.

The formula for the semester 1 grade calculation is as follows: the sum of the final grade in Social Studies, Science, Math, and ELA divided by four.

d) If available openings are declined by students who were offered acceptance, the next highest ranked student(s), will be contacted for enrollment.

3. The Superintendent and his/her designee will identify a committee through which all applications will be reviewed. All applicants and their families will be notified as to the status of their acceptance, wait list, or non-acceptance.

4. Parents/Guardians of students accepted to the Passaic Gifted and Talented Academy must notify the Principal of intent to attend within 14 calendar days.

5. Students placed on the waitlist must reapply for the next school year. 6. Students who attended the Passaic Gifted and Talented Academy during the previous year will not need to reapply.

Entrance process for incoming grade 6-12 students:

All Passaic resident students who wish to enroll in Passaic Preparatory Academy or Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering are required to complete online applications that will assist the district in administration of the placement process. Other nonresident students may apply to either school during the application period and following the procedures as outlined in the Nonresidents Policy (File Code 5118).

The dates for application submission will be published each year and all applications must be

submitted within the timeframe indicated. Applications must be submitted online and parents will be able to use district computers to complete the application if necessary. Information sessions will be held at each school and interested parents/guardians and students will be invited to attend any or all of these sessions. Student assignment will depend strictly on program capacity and the established program requirements for each school. No student attending the Passaic Public Schools shall be denied access to, or benefit from, any educational or vocational program solely on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, place of residence within the district, socioeconomic status, or disability.

#### Guidelines:

a. Applications will be accepted for openings in all grades except 12th grade during the open application period.

b. A student may apply to all of the programs concurrently. An application will only be considered for those programs for which the application is complete.

Application Process: a. An application will be considered when the application form has been submitted online.

b. The Superintendent and his/her designee will identify a committee through which all applications will be reviewed.

c. All applicants and their families will be notified as to the status of their acceptance, wait list, or non-acceptance.

d. Notification of acceptance will be sent no later than June 1st to all students who submitted completed applications as described above and did so within the stated timeframe.

e. Parents/Guardians of students accepted into the Passaic Preparatory Academy, and the Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering must accept placement within 14 calendar days.

f. Students placed on the waitlist, or not accepted, must reapply for the next school year.

#### Passaic Preparatory Academy/Passaic Academy of Science and Engineering Grades 6-8:

a. Students that apply and are accepted into the schools, and are currently enrolled at Passaic Preparatory Academy and Passaic Academy of Science and Engineering in grades 6 and 7, with a final average of less than 2.0/C/73% in Social Studies, Science, Math, and ELA will be required to attend summer programming prior to enrollment in the following school year.

The formula for this calculation is as follows:

The sum of the semester one grades in Social Studies, Science, Math, and ELA, divided by four. Subjects are weighted based on the 9-12 grade scale.

b. Students who wish to transfer between schools at any point must complete the application process for the grade they wish to enter.

c. Applicants must agree to participate in an academically rigorous course sequence that may include a significant number of honors-level and Advanced Placement courses and must participate in a full day schedule every school year (i.e., In a 9- period day, students must participate in 8 periods of instruction; in a 10-period day, students must participate in 9 periods of instruction).

d. Students enrolled in grade 8 at Passaic Preparatory Academy or Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering who have a final average of 3.0/B/83% or higher in Social Studies, Science, Math, and ELA at the end of semester one, and are successfully promoted, will be automatically enrolled in grade 9 at the school they are currently enrolled in.

The formula for this calculation is as follows: The sum of the semester one grades in Social Studies, Science, Math, and ELA, divided by four. Subjects are weighted based on the 9-12 grade scale.

Students who are automatically enrolled into grade 9 at Passaic Preparatory Academy and Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering must continue to put forth consistent effort with quality outcomes or risk being removed from the school.

e. Students in grade 8 that have a final average of less than 3.0/B/83% in Social Studies, Science, Math, and ELA must reapply to their school of choice for grade 9. The formula for this calculation is as follows:

The sum of the semester one grades in Social Studies, Science, Math, and ELA, divided by four. Subjects are weighted based on the 9-12 grade scale.

Passaic Preparatory Academy/Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering Grades 9-12:

a. Students who wish to enroll in Passaic Preparatory Academy and Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering must agree to maintain at least a grade point average (GPA) of 2.0/C/73% or higher. If the GPA falls below 2.0/C/73%, students will be required to attend mandatory academic support programs that may occur after school, on Saturdays, and/or during summer.

b. Students that apply and are accepted into the program with a GPA lower than 2.0/C/73% will be required to attend summer programming prior to enrollment in the following school year.

c. Students who wish to transfer between schools at any point must complete the application process for the grade they wish to enter.

d. Applicants must agree to participate in an academically rigorous course sequence that may include a significant number of Honors, Advanced Placement, and Dual Enrollment college credit courses and must participate in a full day schedule every school year (i.e., In a 9-

period day, students must participate in 8 periods of instruction; in a 10-period day, students must participate in 9 periods of instruction).

#### Application Component Formula Grades 6-11:

a. Applications to the Passaic Preparatory Academy will be calculated in the following way:

- 15% Math Assessment
- 25% English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment (or comparable literacy assessment in a native language)
- 20% GPA
- 40% Creativity

b. Applications to the Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering will be calculated in the following way:

- 20% Math Assessment
- 15% Science Assessment
- 10% English Language Arts Assessment (ELA) (or comparable literacy assessment in a native language)
- 15% GPA
- 40% Creativity

c. After the applications are calculated as described above, the scores will be ranked from highest to lowest. Acceptance and wait lists will be determined based on rank order and available spaces at each of the schools.

d. A student may apply to, and be accepted into more than one application school, however, the parent/guardian may only accept one placement for their child.

e. A student will not be enrolled into the school until the parent/guardian has returned the signed acceptance letter.

f. All timelines provided through acceptance communications will be strictly adhered to; failure to return documents by the designated time will result in a forfeiture of both the position on the ranking list and subsequent enrollment in the school.

## CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

Passaic Public Schools works diligently to ensure that all students identified as Gifted & Talented benefit from a variety of learning opportunities. Differentiated instruction is provided to our students through our classroom educators who utilize student assessment data throughout the academic year in all contents. Students in Kindergarten and Grade One receive weekly pull out instruction based on a comprehensive interdisciplinary curriculum that highlights innovation and exploration. In addition, students also receive enrichment from their general education teacher to continue their development as well as small group instruction is provided to promote exploration throughout units of study.

Students at our academies based school locations follow an enriched version of the regular district curriculum and receive assessment based differentiated instruction along with whole class push in enrichment. Based on their areas of interest and giftedness, students are placed in cluster groups to receive up to 210 minutes weekly in specialized instruction based on their identified gifted strand or career pathway.

Opportunities for engagement focused on higher order thinking skills and creative problem solving connected to their advanced content learning goals. In order to supplement daily instructional services, multiple enrichment opportunities are available. The district engages in partnerships with local colleges and universities in order to support student enrollment in pre-college programs in which students can attain credits while in high school. In addition, summer and extended programs are offered to students to cultivate their talents and critical thinking skills to meet the wide range of interests and gifts of students. Passaic Public Schools continues to evolve elements of the Gifted & Talented Program to expose students to innovative learning opportunities, competitions and festivals.

### Kindergarten and Grade One

<i>G&amp;T Services</i>	<i>Service Provider</i>	<i>Population Served</i>
Differentiated Instruction	Classroom teachers	Guided reading provide to all K & 1st grade students
Higher order thinking challenges and creative problem solving activities	Classroom teachers	Learning centers provide exploration for all K & 1st students
Pull Out Class Enrichment	GT/Arts Specialist	Instructional units geared at connecting talents from multiple contents and intelligences

### Grade Two through Grade Eight

<i>G&amp;T Services</i>	<i>Service Provider</i>	<i>Population Served</i>
Differentiated Instruction	GT Classroom teachers	All Grade 2 - Grade 8 students at PGTA School 20
Whole class enrichment - push in	GT Classroom teachers	All Grade 2 - Grade 8 students at PGTA School 20
Cluster Strategy based on Identified Gifted Criteria	GT Teachers/Arts Specialist/PE Specialist	All Grade 2 - Grade 8 students at PGTA School 20

### Grade Nine through Grade Twelve

<i>G&amp;T Services</i>	<i>Service Provider</i>	<i>Population Served</i>
Differentiated Instruction	GT Classroom teachers	All Grade 6 - Grade 12 students at Prep & Science
Higher order thinking challenges and creative problem solving activities	GT Classroom teachers	All Grade 6 - Grade 12 students at Prep & Science
Path Cluster Strategy based on Identified Criteria	GT/Arts Specialist	All Grade 6 - Grade 12 students at Prep & Science

#### Complaint Process and Procedures

Concerns and Complaints should be addressed to the Director of Student Advocacy,  
Mr. Luis Colon, [lcolon@passaicsschools.org](mailto:lcolon@passaicsschools.org)

Link: [Gifted & Talented Complaint Process & Procedures](#)