**Ocean Academy Charter School**
**Program Guide**
**Gifted and Talented**

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| **Original Adoption:** | August, 2025 |
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**Rationale:**

Ocean Academy Charter School is dedicated to providing students with culturally responsive, differentiated teaching. The Gifted and Talented program is designed to provide all students with unique and challenging learning opportunities that enable them to achieve academic and/or creative success to their fullest potential.

This program aims to:

- Provide differentiated instruction to all students that meets their individual learning needs and offers opportunities to dive deeper into the curriculum
- Equitably assess students annually to identify any needs for more challenging content or instruction
- Develop learning modifications and curriculums that are appropriate for learners with exceptional abilities that align with the NJSLS and NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards

NJ Student Learning Standards Gifted and Talented Page

NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards

NJ Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act

## A Multi-Tiered System of Support

A multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework has a tiered infrastructure that uses data to help match academic and social-emotional behavior assessment and instructional resources

to each student's needs.

## Tier 1 Services (100% of students)

Tier 1 services are provided to all students within the general education classroom. Instruction is guided by ongoing formative assessments that help identify each student's strengths and areas for growth. This data is used to inform lesson planning and ensure that instruction is differentiated to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

Students receive a combination of whole-group, small-group, and individualized instruction tailored to their specific learning needs across content areas. Instructional approaches incorporate strategies that address multiple intelligences and varied learning styles, promoting access and engagement for all students.

### Tier 1 services include:

- Math Workshop instruction model
- Reading and Writing Workshop instruction model
- i-Ready Learning Pathways (Math and ELA)
- Weekly classes including Art, Music (Grades K-5)
- Enrichment opportunities including STEAM and other cross-curricular, research, and inquiry-based units offered once per week (Grades K-5)
- Electives including Painting, Ceramics, Drawing, Chorus, Guitars offered at secondary level
- Extra-curricular clubs in the arts, intramurals at all levels
- Summer month-long academic enrichment programs offered to all students: elementary students at their home school, secondary students at Georgian Court University

## Tier 2 Services (15-20% of students)

Tier 2 services are designed for students who demonstrate advanced academic performance and show potential for higher-level thinking beyond the general classroom curriculum. These students benefit from targeted enrichment opportunities that extend and deepen their learning.

The purpose of Tier 2 services is to bridge the gap between the core instructional program and the student's intellectual potential. These services may include flexible grouping, enrichment activities, curriculum compacting, or project-based learning, all tailored to

challenge students appropriately and support continued academic growth.

### Tier 2 Services include:

- Pull-out, small group instruction with G and T teacher once every 4 weeks (grades 3-5) in specific content areas
- Ocean County Math League (grades 4-8)
- Small group instruction/differentiation within the general education classroom based on data and individual needs
- G and T/classroom teacher collaboration to support individual student needs
- Advanced/Honors coursework in Math, English, Science, and History at the secondary level
- Dual Enrollment opportunities at both Georgian Court University and Ocean County College which gives students an opportunity to earn college credit and high school credit concurrently

## Tier 3 Services (3-5% of students)

Tier 3 services are intended for students who consistently demonstrate gifted characteristics and require highly specialized instruction to meet their advanced learning needs. These students typically represent the top 3–5% of their grade level based on a combination of exceptional academic achievement, advanced cognitive ability, and strong task commitment.

Tier 3 services provide intensive, individualized interventions that go beyond the scope of general classroom differentiation or enrichment. These may include accelerated learning pathways, individualized learning plans, mentorship opportunities, or participation in specialized gifted programs designed to foster deep engagement and maximize student potential.

### Tier 3 Services include:

- Pull-out, small group instruction with G and T teacher once per week (grades 3-8)
- G and T and classroom teacher collaboration to support student needs (all grades)
- Planned AP coursework at the secondary level

# Identification of Exceptional Students

The identification of exceptionally able students involves the use of multiple measures and a range of criteria to ensure a comprehensive and equitable process. Initial indicators of exceptional ability often emerge through classroom performance, particularly in the early elementary years, where some students demonstrate advanced capabilities compared to their age-level peers.

As students advance through elementary and into secondary education, the identification process becomes more formalized. It incorporates a variety of data sources, including standardized assessments, academic records, teacher observations, and student work samples.

The primary purpose of identifying exceptionally able students is to support instructional planning that meets their unique learning needs. Identification enables educators to provide appropriately differentiated instruction, modify curriculum as necessary, and offer a variety of learning opportunities that are challenging, intellectually engaging, and personally meaningful for the student.

**At the elementary level the provisions for identifying gifted and talented students may include some or all of the following:**

- Teacher identification through observations
- Diagnostic reading and math assessments
- CogAT testing
- Raven's 2 testing
- Parent input about specific interests or abilities of their child
- Student self-identification
- Classroom assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics
- High interest or ability levels in visual or performing arts or athletics
- Exceptional level of achievement in standardized testing (i.e. top 1–3%) on NJSLA in grades 3-5
- Student profiles and interest surveys

**At the secondary level, the provisions for identifying gifted and talented students may include some or all of the following:**

- Teacher identification or recommendation through classroom performance
- Parent input about specific interests or abilities of their child
- Student self-identification
- Final exams, report card grades
- High interest or ability levels in academics, athletics, visual or performing arts
- Exceptional level of achievement in standardized testing (i.e. top 1–3%) NJSLA 6-10, PSAT, and SAT
- Student profiles and interest checklist
- Qualifying exams for advanced-level courses
- Auditions or portfolios for visual and performing arts

## Appeal Process for Gifted and Talented Program Participation

Parents/guardians may appeal decisions regarding a student's placement into or removal from the Gifted and Talented (G&T) program. The district is committed to providing a fair, transparent process for addressing concerns related to these decisions.

**1. Initial Appeal**

- A written appeal must be submitted within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date the parent/guardian first became aware—or reasonably should have become aware—of the placement decision.
- The written appeal must be directed to the building principal or designee and must include:
    - A clear statement of the concern;
    - Supporting documentation relevant to the appeal.
- Appeals that do not follow this procedure will not be considered.

**2. Appeal to the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction**

- If the concern is not resolved at the building level, the parent/guardian may submit a second written appeal to the Director of Curriculum.
- This request must be submitted within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the decision from the principal or designee.
- The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction will schedule a conference to review the appeal and respond in writing following the meeting.

**3. Appeal to the Executive Director**

- If the parent/guardian remains unsatisfied with the outcome, a final appeal may be submitted in writing to the Superintendent or designee.
- This appeal must also be submitted within ten (10) calendar days of the Director's decision.
- A conference may be scheduled, and the Superintendent or designee will issue a final written decision.

**4. Formal Complaint Process (State Level)**

If all local appeal avenues have been exhausted and the parent/guardian believes the district is not in compliance with state law regarding gifted and talented programming, a formal complaint may be submitted to the Executive County Superintendent.

- Such complaints must be based on noncompliance occurring within one (1) year prior to the date of the complaint.
- The complaint must include:
    1. A statement alleging the district's noncompliance with state gifted education requirements, including specific facts supporting the allegation.
    2. The name, address, and contact information of the complainant.

For more information on filing a formal complaint, contact the Office of the Executive County Superintendent.

**5. Limitations of the Appeal Process**

- The confidentiality of the gifted and talented identification process will be strictly maintained. Individual assessment results will not be disclosed as part of any appeal.
- Appeals that challenge the results of the identification tools or assessments themselves will not be considered.
- Placement decisions will only be reconsidered if extensive and compelling documentation is presented that demonstrates the student's knowledge, skills, and abilities are significantly beyond what was measured during the school's identification process.

## Board Policy on Gifted and Talented Education

The Board of Trustees recognizes its responsibility to identify and support gifted and talented students across the district. These students demonstrate exceptional abilities in one or more content areas and require differentiated educational experiences to achieve in accordance with their potential.

**Definition**

For the purpose of this policy, *gifted and talented students* are those who exhibit high levels of ability, aptitude, or achievement in one or more academic areas when compared to their chronological peers. These students require modifications to their educational program to fully develop their talents and capabilities.

**Identification**

The Executive Director and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction shall establish and maintain an ongoing, developmentally appropriate identification process for students in Kindergarten through Grade 10. This process will:

- Use multiple measures of assessment, which may include standardized achievement tests, classroom performance, student work samples or products, intelligence

assessments, and recommendations from teachers, parents, and/or the students themselves.

- Be non-discriminatory and aligned with the programs and services provided by the district.
- Be reviewed annually to ensure fairness, consistency, and effectiveness.

**Program Development and Services**

The Executive Director and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction shall ensure the development and implementation of instructional programs that meet the unique needs of gifted and talented students. These programs shall be based on current best practices and aligned with the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards and the NJSLS.

Instructional strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- Differentiated instruction within the regular classroom
- Pull-out or resource programs
- Curriculum compacting and flexible pacing
- Subject or grade acceleration
- Advanced coursework and enrichment opportunities
- Distance learning options
- Individualized education plans or infused instructional modifications, with documentation maintained in the student's records

These services are designed to challenge students in their areas of strength and should supplement, not replace, the core instructional program.

**Parent and Family Involvement**

Parents or guardians of identified gifted and talented students will be consulted regarding the development and implementation of programs designed to meet their child's specific needs.

Open communication with families will be maintained throughout the student's participation in the program.

**Evaluation and Continuous Improvement**

Programs for gifted and talented students will be periodically reviewed and evaluated to ensure they remain effective, equitable, and aligned with student needs. Adjustments will be made as necessary to enhance program quality and student outcomes.