



Lake Mills Area

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Gifted and Talented Education

Program Plan and Resource Guide

Updated April 2023

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Lake Mills Area School District believes that all students have unique gifts and talents, the ability to learn and achieve, and should be provided opportunities for optimal development. LMASD believes talented students possess measurable, qualitatively different characteristics in one or more of five areas: general intellectual ability, creativity, leadership, artistic ability and academic aptitude.

PURPOSE

The Gifted and Talented Resource Guide is meant to provide staff and parents with information regarding the school district's goals, beliefs, identification process, and support system for talented students, as well as function as a resource for educators and families.

BELIEFS

Several beliefs form the basis of Lake Mills Area School District's Gifted and Talented Approach:

- Identification of talentedness should be early, ongoing and continuous.
- Appropriate support for talented students is a responsibility shared by classroom teachers, specialists, support staff, administrators, parents and students.
- A support system for talented students must consistently provide challenges to develop student's potential.
- Talented students learn in an environment where their gifts and abilities are valued and nurtured.
- Talented children have unique and varied cognitive and affective abilities and needs which may require unconventional and non-traditional approaches and/or scheduling.
- Talented students may require a differentiated curriculum and/or a variety of supportive options within and outside the classroom to meet their unique intellectual, social, and emotional needs.
- Communication between the parent and school staff regarding the talented child's learning needs is essential.
- Parents and teachers of talented children may benefit from additional education and support.
- A Equitable Multi-tiered Systems of Supports (EMTSS) framework provides an optimal identification, service delivery, and decision making processes to promote Gifted and Talented services for students.

WHAT IS GIFTEDNESS?

The concept of giftedness has varied over the course of educational, philosophical, and psychological history. Educational approaches to meeting the needs of students with gifts and talents have been based on our understanding of giftedness, so they have varied as our conceptualizations have shifted. It is now accepted that intelligence is not a single entity, but multifaceted. Guidelines for developing gifted education plans in Wisconsin are anchored in this broad notion of gifts and talents.

CHARACTERISTICS FOR AREAS OF GIFTEDNESS

TALENTED AREA	CHARACTERISTICS
<p>General Intellectual Ability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understands complex concepts ● draws inferences between content areas ● sees beyond the obvious ● thrives on new or complex ideas ● enjoys hypothesizing ● intuitively knows before taught ● uses an extensive vocabulary ● does in-depth investigations ● learns rapidly in comparison to peers ● 1 - 2 repetitions for mastery ● manipulates information
<p>Specific Academic Ability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● strong memorization ability ● advanced comprehension - 1-2 repetitions for mastery ● intense interest in a specific academic area ● high academic capacity in special-interest area ● pursues special interests with enthusiasm ● operates at a higher level of abstraction than peers ● asks poignant questions ● discusses and elaborates in detail
<p>Creative Thinking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● independent and/or flexible thinker ● exhibits original thinking in oral and/or written expression ● generates many ideas to solve a given problem ● possesses a keen sense of humor ● creates and invents ● intrigued by creative tasks ● improvises and sees unique possibilities ● risk taker ● resists conformity
<p>Artistic (Visual/Performing Arts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● communicates their vision in visual/performing arts ● unusual ability for aesthetic expression ● compelled to perform/produce ● exhibits creative expression ● desire for creating original product ● keenly observant ● continues experimentation with preferred medium ● excels in demonstrating the visual/performing arts
<p>Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● takes an active role in decision making ● high expectations for self and others ● expresses self with confidence ● foresees consequences and implications of decisions ● follows through on a plan ● appears to be well liked by peers ● ideas expressed accepted by others ● sought out by others to accomplish a task

EQUITABLE MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (EMTSS)

EMTSS is a framework of educational decision making and service delivery. This model assumes each student receives high-quality, research-based, and differentiated instruction from a general educator in a general education setting. At its core, EMTSS is the practice of:

- Providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student needs.
- Monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals.
- Applying child response data to important educational decisions.

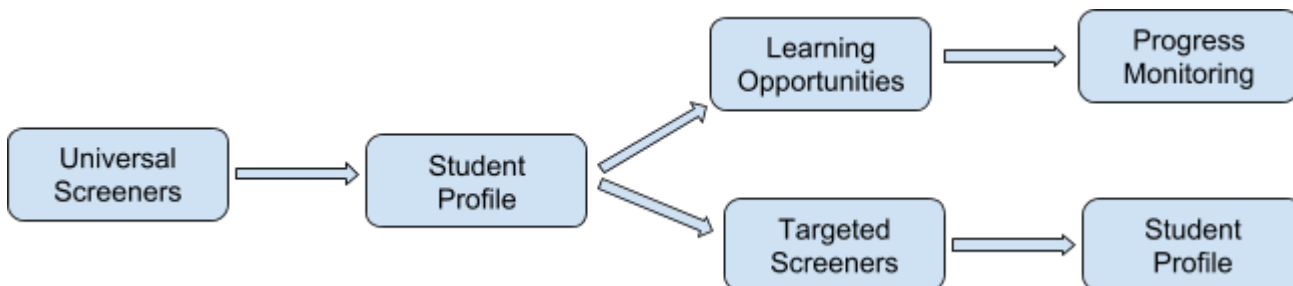
The Lake Mills Area School District is committed to providing optimal learning conditions that support academic achievement for all students. When implemented with fidelity, an EMTSS framework has the potential for meeting this commitment through the implementation of a multi-tiered system of support based on sound educational practices. The process also emphasizes the importance of leadership, the use of data to guide instruction, appropriate intervention and practice, parent involvement, and other researched based practices. In the world of Gifted and Talented, this refers to implementing and sustaining efforts which ensure our students have access to differentiated curriculum, flexible pacing, cluster grouping, acceleration, and other universal interventions available to all students in the regular classroom.

There are eight non-negotiable essential components of EMTSS.

1. Evidence-based curriculum and instruction.
2. Ongoing assessment.
3. Collaborative teaming.
4. Data-based decision-making.
5. Fidelity of implementation.
6. Ongoing training and professional development.
7. Community and family involvement.
8. Strong leadership.

Each element is part of an interrelated process that should be applied to every student. EMTSS creates an integrated and seamless continuum of service that encompasses all staff through a multi-tiered service delivery model. The Lake Mills Area School District's Gifted and Talented support system adheres to the principles of EMTSS as the foundation of our practice. Specific aspects related to services, identification, and data analysis will be further explained throughout this resource guide.

Using EMTSS to Identify Student Needs



From the visual above one can see that the district begins to create a student profile using information from universal screeners. If this profile gives us a clear picture of the student, no additional data is required. This information is used to determine what curriculum comes next so that the student will continue to grow and then decide on the instruction/programming/services that will promote that growth. LMASD monitors the student's progress during these learning experiences to ensure the student is learning as expected. If so, programming continues. If not, adjustments are made. This scenario is represented in the top pathway.

If the profile created from universal screeners does not give us a clear picture of the student, additional information is gathered using targeted screeners. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has provided a list of commonly used targeted screeners for each of the five areas of giftedness at this [link](#). Once a comprehensive student profile is complete, a decision about appropriate learning opportunities as summarized in the previous paragraph. This scenario is represented in the bottom pathway.

Tiers of Service

Ideally, student's academic needs are met in the place where they spend most of their time. For most students, this is in the classroom with their classmates, subject area, music, art, band, orchestra or drama teachers. Teachers differentiate instruction by providing students with a variety of opportunities and options for success.

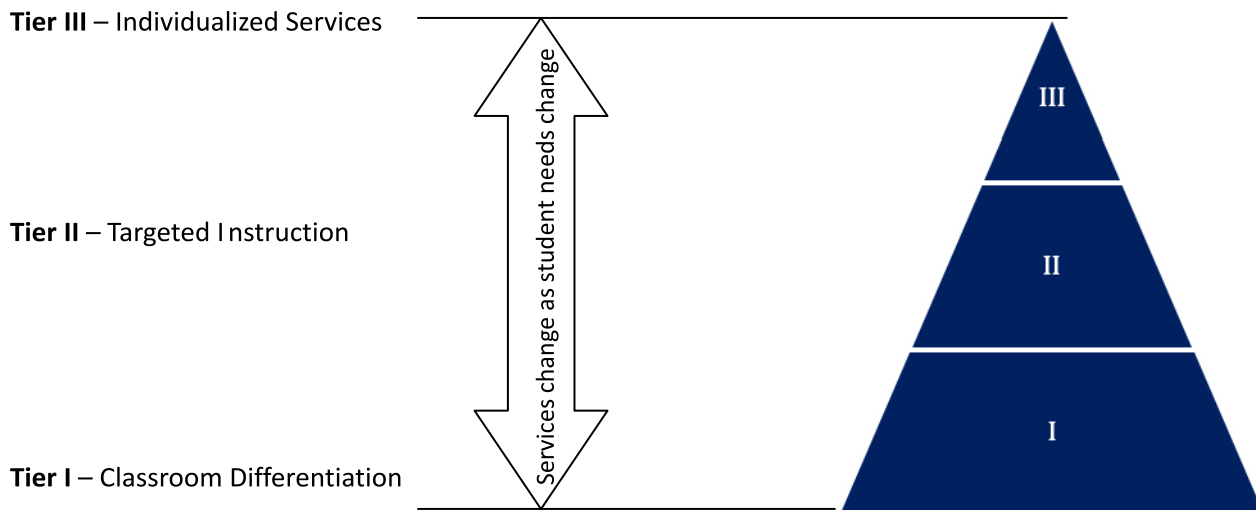
Differentiated instruction is not a curriculum or a program. It is a process that enables teachers to improve student learning by matching students' learning characteristics to district standards and benchmarks. This process requires teachers to anticipate and acknowledge the differences in students' readiness, interests, and learning style. Teachers can then effectively engage students in meaningful and challenging work.

A Talent Development Plan is created for identified students in Tier II and Tier III and implemented for these students. The plan is jointly developed by students (when appropriate), parents, classroom teachers and Gifted and Talented staff and reviewed on a yearly basis. The review includes current performance data and recent assessment and observational data. Students identified in Tier I are tracked and supported through the Lake Mills Area School District EMTSS process.

Through elementary school, exceptional needs are largely met through a variety of classroom differentiation opportunities. In middle and high school, exceptional needs are met through differentiation as well as student placement and scheduling. Students should work with their school counselor to ensure a sequence of courses that are most aligned to the student's interests and needs.

Even with effective differentiation, some students require additional opportunity and greater challenge. For these students, the GT Coordinator, School Counselor, teachers and/or Principal will assist classroom teachers in identifying resources and support options to meet students' demonstrated needs.

The following model demonstrates the different tiers of intervention which may be used to address individual needs.



Classroom Differentiation — Tier I

The majority of students needing Gifted and Talented services will have their learning needs met through services in the regular classroom by the classroom teacher. The base of the Gifted and Talented model represents these students. Differentiation includes instructional strategies that an educator uses to meet student learning needs. These strategies include but are not limited to the use of flexible grouping (including during intervention time), tiered assignments, pre-assessment, modified assignments, independent projects, extensions, and enrichment. The Lake Mills Area School District EMTSS model promotes active identification and intervention with students at this tier.

Targeted Instruction — Tier II

Tier II represents a smaller number of students whose needs become more unique and services become more specialized. In addition to Tier I services, the classroom teacher collaborates with the GT Coordinator, specialists, and grade level colleagues to plan learning activities to meet the student's demonstrated need. Academic venues/competitions, special supports, guidance, subject level acceleration, or independent projects may be used to meet student learning needs. A Talent Development Plan (TDP) will be written for students at this tier.

Individualized Services — Tier III

The top of the pyramid represents a very small number of students. These services are for students whose needs for academic and intellectual challenge transcend the grade level curriculum by so much it is unlikely, even with effective differentiation at that grade level, they will be adequately challenged. Instructional strategies and services for students with highly exceptional needs include all services at Tiers I and Tier II plus the possibility of grade level acceleration, radical acceleration, distance learning options, or post secondary options. Grade acceleration is a significant decision that requires the collaborative efforts of teachers, the GT Coordinator, the School Counselor, administration, the School Psychologist, teacher and parents. A Talent Development Plan will be written for students at this tier.

Equitable Multi-tiered Systems of Supports and Gifted and Talented Services: A Few Notes

- Student movement through the tiers is intended to be a fluid process based on student assessment data and collaborative team decisions about students' response to instruction. Students may be receiving services in a variety of the tiers depending on their needs.
- Tiers of intensity in supports allow for the diversity of individual needs of students who demonstrate strong talents. EMTSS provides support systems for students with exceptional ability or potential.

- In Gifted and Talented, rather than remediation-based interventions, strength-based interventions and strength-based supports, are used to describe tiered instruction. The problem-solving process which uses data, strengths and interests of students to implement appropriate, rigorous and relevant curriculum and instruction are strengths of EMTSS.
- Progress monitoring continually contributes new data so that learning is dynamic and adjustments are made for pace, depth and complexity of the evidenced-based practices utilized. Our goal is to promote a match between students' needs and their curriculum and experiences.
- The LMASD provides intervention time within the K-8 schedules. This time is utilized to support students across the learning spectrum. Students with talents who are in need of learning extensions, clustering with similar ability peers, leadership opportunities, and/or other learning supports may be scheduled into a GT grouping throughout a school year. These groupings are flexible and fluid and are made up of students across the identified tiers.

IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

The purpose of identification is to locate students who need more than core/universal curriculum and determine what types of services are needed to ensure a minimum of a year's growth in a year's worth of time. The district will focus on providing services for all students regardless of identification. Identification is an ongoing and continuous process to develop awareness of student capabilities and needs. All students are considered for identification with a culturally responsive lens in Kindergarten through 12th grade.

It is important to note that while students in early elementary school are considered for identification it is difficult to make accurate determinations on true ability in young children. The Lake Mills Area School District will work to ensure there is a match between young students' curricular needs and their educational experience, regardless of formal identification. This process is ongoing and embedded into core instruction and EMTSS practices at the elementary school. Typically, formal identification processes become valid in late elementary school and are conducted within the framework outlined in this guide.

The Lake Mills Area School District uses multiple criteria, in accordance with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, to identify highly capable students in five areas. Multiple criteria used for identification of talented students may include standardized test scores, individualized testing, parent/guardian nominations, teacher nominations, and district assessments.

As part of the Lake Mills Area School District EMTSS process, extensive student data is reviewed at least tri-annually in grade level data meetings. This process facilitates a continuous review of student progress, which in turn fosters a talent identification approach that is flexible and responsive to student needs.

Initial referrals for Gifted and Talented supports usually come from the tri-annual grade level data meetings or the classroom teacher, who has in-depth knowledge and understanding of a student's abilities. Principals, other educational staff, or parents may refer students for identification using the Gifted and Talented Nomination Form.

The decision to refer a student for identification may be based on universal screeners such as scores from the Wisconsin Forward Exam, Pre-ACT Secure, ACT, F&P or the iReady diagnostic. When a student is referred for an evaluation the Lake Mills Area School District will complete the evaluation and hold a meeting within 60 calendar days of receiving signed evaluation consent.

District staff look at measures of performance, aptitude, and achievement. When gathering information to inform decisions about students' need for challenge beyond the regular curriculum, standardized tests (objective, norm-referenced tests of academic or intellectual skill), performance data, certain selected grade-level classroom

assessments, and nomination forms (rating scales and narrative information from teachers and parents) are all considered.

IDENTIFICATION ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The School Counselor, GT Coordinators, and/or School Psychologist will facilitate data collection in order to compile a student profile to include referrals, assessments, inventories, checklists, classroom data, in combination with anecdotal information. Using a wide variety of assessments will allow the Student Services Team (SST) to make determinations to best meet the needs of gifted and talented students. Results from the combination of data gathered will allow the Student Services Team to determine for what tier of Gifted and Talented services each student will qualify. Identification of students will be determined using selected tools from the list provided:

- State Assessments such as the Wisconsin Forward Exam.
- District Assessments such as the iReady Assessment and Fountas & Pinnell.
- Grade-level classroom assessments.
- Intelligence tests.
- Achievement tests.
- Talented Evaluation Scale based on national norms of GT students.
- Gifted and Talented inventories and checklists for parents/guardians, students (if applicable), teachers, etc.
- Nomination forms from parents and/or teachers.
- Teacher observation evidence.
- Student work samples or portfolios.
- Letters of recommendation.
- Advanced grade level assessments (if applicable).

ELIGIBILITY

Once a referral is made and an evaluation has been conducted, a SST meeting will be held to determine eligibility for Gifted and Talented services that may include school principal, school psychologist, counselor, teachers, parents, and/or student. Assessment data results will be shared at the eligibility determination meeting. At this meeting, assessment results will be applied to eligibility criteria at the various tiers and the evaluation team is responsible for interpreting this information and making the eligibility determination.

Students who meet eligibility criteria in Tier II and Tier III will have a Talent Development Plan (TDP) written for them. This plan outlines the nature of support that will be provided to the student. An example of a TDP can be found at the end of the resource guide.

ASSESSMENT DATA DEFINED

The following is a description of assessments which may be used in the identification process, as well as in determining appropriate supports for talented students.

Assessments	Grade	Responsibility	Area Assessed	Purpose of Assessment
Wisconsin Forward Exam	3,4,5,6,7,8	Classroom teacher	English Language Arts and Math	Measure student progress toward state standards.
iReady Diagnostic	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Classroom teacher Counselor	Math & Language Arts	Measure student progress toward state standards on an ongoing basis to inform instruction. Based on national norms.
Grade-level classroom assessments Student Portfolio	ALL	Classroom Teacher	ALL	Identify areas of strengths using classroom based evidence.
Intelligence Tests: Appropriate measures determined by school psychologist	ALL (Ages 3-18)	School Psychologist	Verbal, perceptual, memory, processing speed, and executive function.	Measure intelligence and child potential.
Achievement tests: Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, Woodcock Johnson IV	ALL (Ages 3-18)	School Psychologist	Reading, Math, Written Expression, Oral Language, Verbal Expression, Spelling	Measure how much knowledge you have in an academic area or your aptitude in an area (capacity for knowledge).
Pre-ACT Secure test	Grade 9-10	School Counselors	Pre-ACT Secure math, reading, and science assessment.	Plan course sequence and college readiness predictor.
ACT test	Grade 11	School Counselors	ACT math, reading, science, writing	Plan course sequence and college readiness predictor.
Talented Evaluation Scale-3 rd Edition (GES) Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scale (GATES)	ALL (Ages 3-18)	School Psychologist	Intellectual, Creativity, Specific Academic Aptitude, Leadership Ability, Performing and Visual Arts	Measure aptitude and ability in GT areas.
GT Inventories/Checklists- Talented Rating Scales – (GRS) Norm referenced scales Bright Child vs. Talented Child Checklist (teachers) Gifted Rating Scales (GRS) Torrance Test of Creative Thinking	ALL	Classroom teachers, special subject teachers, parents/guardians, students (if applicable), Counselors (if applicable)	Intellectual, academic ability, motivation, creativity, leadership, and artistic talent.	Measures aptitude and ability in GT areas.
Nomination forms from Parents and/or Teachers Gifted and Talented	ALL	Parent and/or Teacher	Intellectual Ability, specific academic ability, creative thinking, artistic, and leadership skills	Identify GT areas within the classroom or displayed at home. Observation and perspective data.
Advanced Grade Level Assessments	ALL	Classroom teacher and/or next grade level teacher	Achievement of state standards within classroom, academic area	Gain knowledge about how students would achieve in next grade level.

QUALIFYING CRITERIA

General Intellectual Ability (GIA)

The intellectually gifted are those children who exhibit early and rapid development of language ability, strong powers of reasoning and advanced ability in critical thinking and problem solving. They may manipulate information in divergent ways when challenged by complex issues. Typically these children are noted for being several years beyond their peers in their cognitive ability.

General Intellectual Giftedness Criteria Guidelines <i>A minimum of two criteria from one tier are required in addition to the IQ score for identification.</i>				
	IQ	iReady Diagnostic and/or Forward Exam	Nationally Normed Assessment*	Gifted Rating Scale
Tier 3	145+	98th percentile	98th percentile	121 or higher
Tier 2	135-144	96th percentile	96th percentile	111-120

**Pre-ACT Secure, WJ-IV, etc*

Specific Academic Ability (SAA)

Academically able students are capable of making outstanding progress in one or more of the disciplines. Differentiation of instruction of academically able students should allow them to progress through the content area(s) at a pace and/or at the depth and breadth which reflects their considerable abilities. When compared to their peers, students who are one to two years advanced (Tier 1), can probably have their needs met through the differentiated classroom. Students who are two to three years advanced (Tier 2) could require additional curricular strategies, such as advanced coursework, cluster grouping per subject area, or workshop/ competitions in the identified gifted and talented area in the differentiated classroom. Students who are more than three years advanced (Tier 3) on the pyramid could require individualized educational support, such as single subject acceleration, grade level acceleration, or dual enrollment in courses.

Specific Academic Ability Giftedness Criteria Guidelines <i>A minimum of two criteria from one tier are required for identification.</i>			
	iReady Diagnostic and/or Forward Exam	Nationally Normed Assessment*	Gifted Rating Scale
Tier 3	98th percentile	98th percentile	121 or higher
Tier 2	96th percentile	96th percentile	111-120

**Pre-ACT Secure, WJ-IV, etc*

Creative Thinking

Creativity may cross all areas (academic, arts, leadership, intellect). Highly creative students tend to develop original ideas and products. They may express their creativity in oral, written, or nonverbal expression. They are flexible and original in their thinking, tending to reject one-answer solutions. These children tend to possess strong visualization. Frequently these individuals are strongly independent and often resist conformity. Creativity is characterized by originality of thought, human behavior, and product.

Creative Thinking Giftedness Criteria Guidelines				
<i>A minimum of two criteria from one tier are required in addition to performance evidence for identification.</i>				
	Performance Evidence	Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking	*Letters of Recommendation	Gifted Rating Scale
Tier 3	✓	99	✓	121 or higher
Tier 2	✓	97-98	✓	111-120

**Specialist in area of identification*

Artistic - Visual/Performing Arts

Students can demonstrate unusual adeptness or skill in the field of drama, music, and visual arts. Since this is a performance-based talent, identification should center around nominations, portfolios and expert assessment.

Artistic Giftedness Criteria Guidelines				
<i>A minimum of two criteria from one tier are required in addition to performance evidence for identification.</i>				
	Performance Evidence	Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking	*Letters of Recommendation	Gifted Rating Scale
Tier 3	✓	99	✓	121 or higher
Tier 2	✓	97-98	✓	111-120

**Specialist in area of identification*

Performance Evidence

- For ART—portfolio of work collected within one year of the student’s current grade level to be reviewed by two or more educators
- For MUSIC—audio sample of the student’s performance recorded within one year of the student’s current grade level to be reviewed by two or more educators (copies of the music submitted with the media)
- For DRAMA—visual or audio sample of the student’s performance recorded within one year of the student’s current grade level to be reviewed by two or more educators

Leadership

Leadership comes in many forms and may be positive or negative. Individuals gifted in leadership usually have the ability to convince people to act or not act in specific ways. Leaders are often self-confident and comfortable with their peers. They express themselves well and frequently are charming and charismatic. It is important to recognize that leadership traits may manifest into different leadership styles, depending upon the environment and personality of the individual. Observable characteristics may include influencing peers, being sought out by others to accomplish a task, addressing a need, holding high expectations for self and others, demonstrating or delegating responsibility, and internalizing concepts of right and wrong.

Leadership Giftedness Criteria Guidelines				
<i>A minimum of two criteria from one tier are required for identification.</i>				
	Student Interview of Leadership Skills	Resume of Leadership Activity	*Letters of Recommendation	Gifted Rating Scale
Tier 3	✓	✓	✓	121 or higher
Tier 2		✓	✓	111-120

**Specialist in area of identification*

GIFTED AND TALENTED STAFF

Parents are encouraged to direct their initial questions regarding Gifted and Talented to their child's teacher or school counselors. Follow up with administration is welcomed and encouraged if parents have continued questions.

School	School Contacts	Contact Information
LMES	Natalie Stelzer, School Psychologist Erika Ellerie, School Counselor	920-648-2338 natalie.stelzer@lakemills.k12.wi.us erika.ellerie@lakemills.k12.wi.us
LMMS	Jennifer Topel, School Psychologist David Woodford, School Counselor	920-648-2358 jennifer.topel@lakemills.k12.wi.us david.woodford@lakemills.k12.wi.us
LMHS	Carmen Weldon, School Counselor (A-L) Rachel Dickhut, School Counselor (M-Z) Clare Hawthorne, School Psychologist	920-648-2355 carmen.weldon@lakemills.k12.wi.us rachel.dickhut@lakemills.k12.wi.us clare.hawthorne@lakemills.k12.wi.us

School	Administrator	Contact Information
LMES	Wendy Sallam, Principal	920-648-2338 wendy.sallam@lakemills.k12.wi.us
LMMS	Chuck Olson, Principal	920-648-2358 chuck.olson@lakemills.k12.wi.us
LMHS	Cale Vogel, Principal	920-648-2355 cale.vogel@lakemills.k12.wi.us
District Office	Erin Siedschlag, Director of Teaching and Learning Jamie Everson, Director of Student Services	920-648-2215 erin.siedschlag@lakemills.k12.wi.us jamie.everson@lakemills.k12.wi.us

TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Director of Teaching and Learning/Director of Student Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act as an advocate for the needs of talented students. ● Provide vision and direction for district GT supports. ● Monitor supports for identified students. ● Coordinate professional development. ● Provide resources/materials/ideas for GT.
Building Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act as an advocate for the needs of talented students. ● Coordinate professional development. ● Communicate and ensure appropriate GT support options are offered for identified students. ● participate in the development and implementation of Talent Development Plans (TDPs) and monitor continuous progress and support for identified students. Consult with GT Coordinator and teacher to ensure resources/materials/ideas for GT supports as required by TDPs are provided. ● Support differentiation strategies employed by teaching staff through the evaluation process.
School Psychologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act as an advocate for the needs of talented students. ● Administer standardized intelligence and achievement tests. ● Share assessment results with parents and Student Services Team. ● participate on the Student Services Team, as necessary.
Counselor/GT Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act as an advocate for the needs of talented students. Distribute lists of designated talented students in each building to all staff who have the talented students. ● Facilitate the writing of Talent Development Plan and ensure all teachers receive copies of Talent Development Plan. ● Provide support for classroom teachers implementing Talent Development Plan. ● participate on the Student Services team. ● Consult with GT Coordinator and School Psychologist when new referrals occur or transfer students arrive.
Classroom Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act as an advocate for the needs of talented students. ● participate on the Student Services team. ● Coordinate enrichment activities for the student. ● Provide classroom differentiation. ● Document mastery of goals identified in DEP. ● Utilize acceleration, when appropriate. ● Utilize individualized instruction or small group instruction, as needed. Communicate with the Student Services team about progress. ● Participate in professional development.
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act as an advocate for the needs of talented students.
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act as an advocate for the needs of self.



Lake Mills Area

SCHOOL DISTRICT

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Frequently Asked Questions

Parent input is essential for meeting each student's needs and helping each student reach higher levels of accomplishment. The following set of questions and answers is designed to answer some frequently asked questions about Gifted and Talented.

Who do I talk to if I think my child is talented in any area(s) and has not been identified?

Parents should initially contact the classroom teacher with questions regarding talent identification, differentiation and next steps. The teacher will consult with the school psychologist regarding next steps. If additional assessments are warranted, parents will be contacted for permission. The school psychologist will assess and identify talented student needs. At all levels, the results of the testing regarding formal identification will be communicated to parents through a meeting, phone call or letter. Differentiation will then be provided within the classroom and should be communicated by the classroom teacher.

When should I talk to the classroom teacher?

It is never too early or too late to contact your child's teacher about your child's educational needs. While conference time may be convenient, you may also call, e-mail, or ask your child's teacher for a meeting at other times during the year.

How will I know if my child is identified for Gifted and Talented supports?

Parents play a central role in the identification process and will be included throughout the evaluation.

How will I know what services my child will receive?

Students identified as having Tier I needs will be provided a variety of services appropriate to their educational needs. Conversations with teachers and school psychologist at parent-teacher conferences or individual meetings will provide information about each student's services. A Talent Development Plan is developed for students with Tier II and Tier III needs. The plan is jointly developed by classroom teachers, parents and school psychologist and reviewed on a yearly basis. School staff will meet on an annual basis with families whose child has a Talent Development Plan.

What does it mean to differentiate instruction?

Students come to school with varying levels of readiness to learn, different ways in which they learn best, and a wide range of interests. Differentiating instruction means that a teacher recognizes those academic differences and modifies classroom instruction in order to help each child reach his or her academic potential.

How will I know if my child is receiving differentiated opportunities?

Differentiation is designed to occur in all subjects and at all grade levels throughout the entire school year. In many cases, a child may not be aware that adaptations have been made to meet his or her needs, but parents are encouraged to ask their child and/or their child's teacher about assignments, groupings, projects, and opportunities that occur in his or her classes.

Who do I talk to if I have questions about Gifted and Talented supports? Who is the point of contact for a parent about different issues regarding Gifted and Talented supports?

The points of contact (in order) are your child's classroom teacher, the school psychologist or school counselor at the HS level, and the Principal. If a parent has further questions, they may contact the district's Gifted and Talented Director (Director of Teaching & Learning or Director of Student Services).

How will I receive on-going information about my student’s progress and support opportunities?

Communication among parents, students, and teachers is essential for parents to learn about supportive opportunities. Parents should ask the teacher if they are unsure of the differentiated opportunities being provided to their child.

How can I best prepare for conferences—to make sure I get information on my child’s needs—beyond hearing, “You child is doing fine”?

When possible, it’s always best to have an ongoing relationship with your child’s teacher. Feel free to write a brief letter or email that introduces your child and describes his or her perceived needs to the teacher before the school year begins. At your child’s conference, share what your child enjoys about school and share your insights about your child. Present yourself as a supportive parent who recognizes the teacher’s efforts to meet all students’ needs. If possible, remember to offer to help the teacher in some way. The following questions for teachers may help you obtain more in-depth information about your child.

1. What do you see as my child’s strengths and weaknesses?
2. If my child already has a solid grasp of the subject matter in a class, what additional opportunities are available? Are additional opportunities offered and taken advantage of?
3. If my child has a great deal of prior knowledge in a unit/theme, are there options to broaden the overall knowledge base or move ahead into more complex subject matter? (curriculum compacting, contracting, etc.)
4. How can I help my child at home?

How do I find out what opportunities there are throughout the school year for my child?

Information sheets listing extracurricular activities and clubs are generally available at schools during registration prior to the start of the school year. The LMASD also supports a wide range of activities for all students such as spelling bees, academic competitions (reading, writing, math, etc.), Forensics, clubs, and other competitions. Students are encouraged to explore and develop their interests. These activities come to students through many avenues including parents, teachers, schools, or the district. Families are also encouraged to explore activities offered by outside organizations such as the Wisconsin Center for Academically Talented Youth.

APPENDIX B

Gifted and Talented Nomination by Parent Form

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian(s) Name: _____

Phone: _____

If you believe that your child needs advanced intervention in the classroom, the first step is to speak with your child's teacher. If you and/or your child's teacher feel that your child needs additional Gifted & Talented support in one or more domains, please fill out this form and submit it to your child's teacher. The form will then be submitted to your child's school psychologist, and we will contact you within two weeks. The purpose of this form is to gather information regarding your child to initiate a discussion between you and school staff. The process for a match with appropriate interventions includes multiple steps that involve information gathering and possible additional assessments or interviews. You can also attach copies of information that you think will be helpful in considering options that are in the best interest of your child.

I grant my permission for my child to be assessed for Gifted & Talented needs:

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Inquiry Form

Questions	Evidence
What questions do you have that bring you to submit this pre-referral form?	
What unique talents and abilities does your child possess?	

<p>What are your child's individual needs as a learner in school?</p>	
<p>Does your child have a passion that is pursued outside of school?</p>	
<p>What discussions have you had with your child's teacher in the past year?</p>	
<p>What other information would you like us to have about your child's abilities and/or learning needs?</p>	

Date Received: _____

Copies to:

- Teacher
- School Psychologist
- School Counselor
- Principal
- District Office