

Gifted & Talented Program



Atlantic Community Charter School
Revised August 2020



Mission:

The Atlantic Community Charter School believes that every child possesses special gifts and talents, and it is our mission to provide our students with a variety of learning experiences that cultivate their gifts and talents. These unique learning experiences can vary in nature and are delivered using multiple instructional strategies including differentiated instruction, cluster grouping, enrichment programs, curriculum compacting, accelerated learning, and independent study.

ACCS Programming for eligible students includes:

Grades K-3 Creativity and Critical Thinking

Each K-3 classroom is equipped with resources for teachers to use with students during their enrichment period who exhibit advanced levels of achievement in creative and critical thinking. These students will receive the enrichment activities based on careful consideration and evaluation by the classroom teacher in consultation with the Gifted and Talented teacher.

Grades 4-5 Gifted and Talented - Academic Challenge & Enrichment [ACES]

Those students who qualify for the ACES program meet with the Gifted and Talented teacher twice weekly for instruction. The ACES program focuses on providing instruction designed to appropriately differentiate activities and address individual strengths, learning styles, interests, creativity, and critical thinking to meet the unique needs of gifted learners.

Grades 6-8 Academic Challenge and Enrichment Courses [ACES]

Students are re-screened in the Spring of Grade 5 for participation in the middle school Gifted and Talented Program ACES program. Those who qualify are scheduled into one daily ACES course during their enrichment period each year. Instruction specific to the needs of gifted learners is integrated within the core disciplines of **English Language Arts** (grade 6), **Science** (grade 7), and **Social Studies** (grade 8) through a compacted curriculum. Typically, students engage in experiences designed specifically for the gifted learner two periods per week. They engage in discipline-specific learning in the content areas the remainder of the week.

Additional Resources Supporting Gifted Education

[The National Association for Gifted Children](#) provides a great deal of information identification of giftedness and programming for gifted students.

[The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented](#) from the University of Connecticut provides current research on what works for gifted students.

Prufrock Press website on [Parenting Gifted Children](#) provides information and resources for parents of the gifted.

The criteria for entrance into Gifted Education

The Atlantic Community Charter School and Talented Program in Grades K-8, utilizes measures of Student Achievement and an assessment of learned reasoning abilities to identify gifted students. The full text of the ACCS Board of Education-approved criteria can be accessed via the link below. Additionally, please see below for **FAQs about the CogAT**.

Cognitive Abilities Test [CogAT] Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the CogAT?

The Cognitive Abilities Test, or CogAT is a nationally-normed test published by Riverside Insights that measures students' learned reasoning abilities in the three areas most linked to academic success in school: Verbal, Quantitative and Nonverbal. It is NOT an assessment of grade level content and skills like the NJSLA standardized achievement tests. The CogAT is typically administered in a group setting, proctored by the student's teacher.

2. Which students are eligible to take the CogAT?

All students in grades 3 and 5 are provided the opportunity to be assessed via the CogAT during the course of the school year. Official communiqués regarding CogAT testing dates will be provided in advance of the coordinated testing dates and placed on the ACCS web site's calendar. Additionally, students new to the School in grades 4 and above are also provided the opportunity to take the CogAT during the summer [FAMS]/ at the beginning of each new academic year [elementary schools].

3. How does ACCS use the CogAT?

CogAT results inform our efforts to adapt instruction to the needs and abilities of students and provide a measure of cognitive development not typically represented in report cards. CogAT results are considered in making placements for middle school math programming as well as the gifted and talented program, Academic Challenge and Enrichment [ACEs] for students in grades 4-8. In both cases, the CogAT serves as one of several data points used as part of the identification/ placement process. [Click here to view the ACCS ACEs identification criteria.](#)

4. What does the CogAT measure?

The CogAT seeks to assess students' **learned reasoning abilities** as they relate to learning and problem solving via three batteries of tests:

Verbal - assesses students' abilities to use search, retrieval, and comparison processes that are essential in verbal reasoning.

Quantitative - assesses students' abilities to reason about patterns and relations using concepts that are essential to quantitative thinking.

Nonverbal - assesses students' abilities to reason with somewhat more novel questions that use spatial and figural content. These abilities are developed through students' experiences BOTH within and outside of school.

The CogAT is **NOT** a standardized achievement test of grade-level content and skills (such as the NJSLA in grades 3-8 and the Science assessment in grades 4 and 8) or the types of assessments teachers use to diagnose, inform, and/ or evaluate learning, which are intended to assess the extent to which students have learned and can transfer/ apply grade-level content and skills.

5. What is the CogAT scoring process?

ACCS utilizes the publisher's scoring service and thus, is dependent upon the vendor's turnaround time with respect to scoring. Once scored reports are received in school, they are reviewed and Individual score reports are mailed home via U.S. Postal Service.

6. Which CogAT form is used in Franklin Lakes Public Schools? Which level will my child take?

Students in Atlantic Community Charter School are assessed using the most recently normed (2017) versions of the CogAT. The publishers of CogAT provide guidance to school schools regarding appropriate test levels for specific grade levels. The School tests students in grade 3 at level 9, grade 4 at level 10, grade 5 at level 11, etc.

7. What are the specific test sections on the CogAT?

The breakdown of individual test sections are:

1. VERBAL BATTERY

- Verbal Analogies
- Sentence Completion*
- Verbal Classification

2. QUANTITATIVE BATTERY

- Number Analogies
- Number Puzzles
- Number Series

3. NONVERBAL BATTERY

- Figure Matrices
- Paper Folding
- Figure Classification

8. How do I Interpret my child's CogAT Score Report?

Parents, guardians and teachers can utilize CogAT results to produce very detailed information about an individual student's learning profile via the **CogAT Interactive Ability Profile**

Interpretation System: <http://www.hmhco.com/cogat/cogatprofile>. To produce this student profile, simply click the provided link and refer to the student's Score Report to populate the required fields.

9. How is CogAT utilized as part of G&T eligibility criteria?

Eligibility for G&T is determined utilizing multiple measures, as illustrated in the graphic below. **Student achievement** as reflected in the a student's report card in the areas of Mathematics, Language Arts (Reading and Writing), Science, and Social Studies **AND** a qualifying **CogAT composite score** (verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and nonverbal reasoning) are requirements for G&T eligibility.

Identifying a High Achieving Child vs. A Gifted Learner Characteristics

A High Achieving Child

- Knows the answers
- Is interested
- Is attentive
- Has good ideas
- Works hard
- Answers the questions
- Is in the top group
- Listens with interest
- Learns with ease
- Needs 6-8 repetitions for mastery
- Understands ideas
- Enjoys peers
- Grasps the meaning
- Completes assignments
- Is receptive
- Copies accurately
- Enjoys school
- Absorbs information
- Is a technician
- Is a good memorizer
- Is alert
- Is pleased with own learning
- Enjoys straight-forward, sequential presentation

A Gifted Learner

- Asks questions
- Is highly curious
- Is mentally & physically involved
- Has wild, silly ideas
- Plays around, yet tests well
- Discusses in detail, elaborates
- Is beyond the group
- Shows strong feeling & opinions
- Already knows
- Needs 1-2 repetitions for mastery
- Constructs abstractions
- Prefers adults
- Draws inferences
- Initiates projects
- Is intense
- Creates a new design
- Enjoys learning
- Manipulates information
- Is an inventor
- Is a good guesser
- Is keenly observant
- Is highly self-critical
- Thrives on complexity

Atlantic Community Charter School
Gifted and Talented Program
Parent Nomination Packet Cover Letter

September 1, 2020

Dear Parent(s) and Guardian(s),

The Atlantic Community Charter School offers a comprehensive, standards-based K-3 program which includes classroom-based differentiated instruction to meet students' needs. As students are transitioning into 4th through 8th grade, they will have the opportunity to participate in our Gifted and Talented program known Academic Challenge & Enrichment [ACEs]

ACEs is available for students who demonstrate high levels of ability (when compared to their chronological peers) and who require modifications of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities. Students who are selected for the program participate in enrichment and project-based initiatives within the school day, where they can interact with like peers and engage in higher level thinking.

Parents, students, or teachers may nominate a student for the program. Multiple indicators are used to identify children requiring the kinds of modifications that **ACEs** provides. Enclosed is a Parent Nomination Packet should you desire to nominate your child for the program. Within the Parent Nomination Packet is a comparison chart with characteristics of a high achiever and a gifted learner which can help you to determine whether or not you wish to nominate your child. To complete the nomination process, you will need to complete the Parent Nomination Packet in its entirety and return to your child's building principal no later than Tuesday, April 8, 2021.

During the month of May, students who are nominated will have the opportunity to take the Cognitive Abilities Test, or CogAT a nationally-normed test published by Riverside Insights that measures students learned reasoning abilities in the three areas most linked to academic success in school: Verbal, Quantitative and Nonverbal. It is NOT an assessment of grade level content and skills like the NJSLA standardized achievement tests. The CogAT is typically administered in a group setting, proctored by the student's teacher.

If you do not wish to nominate your child no action is needed on your part. Should a teacher or staff member nominate your child, you will be notified. Please understand that having a student nominated does not guarantee acceptance into the program. Once nominations are received, and testing has been completed, a selection committee comprised of administrators and staff members will meet to determine enrollment into the ACEs program for the 2021-2022 school year.

Sincerely,

Edmund F. Cetrullo, Jr.

Lead Person/Principal

Revised August-2020

Below is the information for the Parent Gifted and Talented Nomination Packet:

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Renzulli Characteristic Forms

Renzulli Characteristics: Creativity

The student demonstrates...	Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
1. imaginative thinking ability						
2. a sense of humor						
3. the ability to come up with unusual, unique or clever responses						
4. an adventurous spirit or a willingness to take risks						
5. the ability to generate a large number of ideas or solutions to problems or questions						
6. a tendency to see humor in situations that may not appear to be humorous to others						
7. the ability to adapt, improve or modify objects or ideas						
8. intellectual playfulness, a willingness to fantasize and manipulate ideas						
9. a nonconforming attitude, does not fear being different						
Add Column Total:						
Multiply by Weight:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Add Weighted Column Totals						
SCALE TOTAL =						

Renzulli Characteristics: Leadership

The student demonstrates...	Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
1. Responsible behavior, can be counted on to follow through on activities/projects						
2. a tendency to be respected by classmates						
3. the ability to articulate ideas and communicate well with others						
4. self-confidence when interacting with same age peers						
5. the ability to organize and bring structure to things, people and situations						
6. cooperative behavior when working with others						
7. a tendency to direct an activity when he or she is involved						
Add Column Total:						
Multiply by Weight:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Add Weighted Column Totals						
SCALE TOTAL =						

Renzulli Characteristics: Learning

The student demonstrates...	Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
1. advanced vocabulary for his or her age or grade level						
2. the ability to make generalizations about events, people and things						
3. a large storehouse of information about a specific topic						
4. the ability to grasp underlying principles						
5. insight into cause and effect relationships						
6. an understanding of complicated material through analytical reasoning ability						
7. a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics						
8. the ability to deal with abstractions						
9. recall of factual information						
10. keen and insightful observations						
11. the ability to transfer learning from one situation to another						
Add Column Total:						
Multiply by Weight:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Add Weighted Column Totals						
SCALE TOTAL=						

Renzulli Characteristics: Motivation

The student demonstrates...	Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
1. ability to concentrate intently on a topic for a long period of time						
2. behavior that requires little direction from teachers						
3. sustained interest in certain topics or problems						
4. tenacity for finding out information on topics of interest						
5. persistent work on tasks even when setbacks occur						
6. a preference for situations in which he or she can take personal responsibility for the outcomes of his or her efforts						
7. follow-through behavior when interested in a topic or problem						
8. intense involvement in certain topics or problems						
9. a commitment to long term projects when interested in a topic						
10. persistence when pursuing goals						

11. little need for external motivation to follow through in work that is initially exciting						
Add Column Total:						
Multiply by Weight:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Add Weighted Column Totals						
SCALE TOTAL =						

**Atlantic Community Charter School
Gifted and Talented: Nomination Form**

Student Name: _____

Student Date of Birth: _____

Grade: _____

School: _____

Parent Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Date: _____

I am nominating the above-named student for the Atlantic Community Charter School’s Academic Challenge & Enrichment [ACEs] program based on the criteria listed and completed within the Renzulli Characteristics Chart(s).

Individual Initiating Referral: _____

Relationship to Referred Student:

- Self
- Parent
- School Personnel
- Other (Please specify): _____

PLEASE ATTACH: Renzulli Scales

Atlantic Community Charter 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 ACEs. As part of the identification process, further testing is needed. Students who are nominated will have the opportunity to take the Cognitive Abilities Test, or CogAT. The Cognitive Abilities Test, or CogAT is a nationally-normed test published by Riverside Insights that measures students learned reasoning abilities in the three areas most linked to academic success in school: Verbal, Quantitative and Nonverbal. It is NOT an assessment of grade level content and skills like the NJSLA standardized achievement tests. The CogAT is typically administered in a group setting, proctored by the student's teacher.

Please complete and return this permission form to the principal.

_____ I give permission for CogAT testing

_____ I do not give permission for CogAT testing *

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Relationship to Student: _____

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