

Scholars' Academy

268 Capuchin Way
Orange, New Jersey 07050
Phone (973) 677-4000 Ext. 53700
www.orange.k12.nj.us



Student/Parent
Gifted and Talented
Education Handbook

Mrs. Karen Machuca
Principal

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Marcey Thomas, *ELA (9-12)*
Felicia Williams-Ware, *Guidance (K-12)*

"GOOD TO GREAT"

Revised: 8/22/2

Vision

The Scholars Academy's vision is to embrace a diverse, inclusive, and respectful school community. By acknowledging our diverse backgrounds, we foster creative students who are self-motivated, curious, leaders, and foster the love of learning.

Our goal is to maximize the development of the whole child using a comprehensive research-based curriculum aligned with the NJ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards, the National Association for Gifted Children Standards (NAGC), and the NJ Student Learning Standards (NJSLS). We are committed to social justice and developing children's advocacy and activism skills to be leaders of a more just and equitable world by honoring and respecting our diverse backgrounds.

Mission

- The Scholars Academy School Community (staff, students, and families) mission includes the following beliefs:
- We believe that all members of Scholars Academy school community will experience a quality educational environment that fosters an inclusive, diverse safe space that promotes and supports cognitive, and social-emotional growth.
- We believe in a developmental approach to education, supported by a research-based curriculum that is comprehensive and culturally relevant providing students with equitable opportunities to demonstrate self-awareness, empathy towards others, and academic growth.
- We believe in offering resources, information and support to promote awareness of gifted and talented education and preschool education among teachers, administrators, policymakers, and community members.

“Good to Great”





Orange Township Public Schools

Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D.
Office of the Superintendent



2023-2024 District Goals

Goal #1: 21st Century Integration

The Orange Public Schools will continue to invest in its teachers. The district values and promotes a culture of excellence in teaching and learning through increased and improved opportunities for quality, sustained professional development that address district needs and individual school needs as outlined by data points. The emphasis has been on best practices in teaching and learning. As a result of the pandemic and performance on assessments, a continued understanding of providing targeted and intentional delivery of instruction is paramount district-wide while keeping in mind how to integrate technology to strengthen but not decline instructional practices.

1) Increase in the number of job-embedded professional learning opportunities that incorporate the expertise of building principals planning alongside district administration by 70% from SY 22-23

- Administrative Meetings will continue to be instructionally-focused learning sessions for principals and district administrators. Ultimately, all training sessions will be germane to data points resulting from walk-through trend analyses.
- Administrative meetings will continue to have instructionally focused agendas with accompanying sign in sheets. Meetings will take place for horizontal and vertical articulation supports to build content knowledge and pedagogy if applicable and integration of technology to enhance the current curricula

2) By May 2024, 60% of students in each preparedness group will meet or exceed their assigned end of year growth target in mathematics.

- The assessments that will be used to measure progress towards the assigned growth targets include the iReady Diagnostic, NWEA MAP, District Benchmark Assessments, and select Performance Tasks in the area of Mathematics.
- The district will continue to report out all data in the area of mathematics in Curriculum Committee as per the assessment calendar as well as the Board of Education Meeting.

3) By May 2024, 60% of students in each preparedness group will meet or exceed their assigned end of year growth target in ELA.

- The assessments that will be used to measure progress towards the assigned growth targets include Reading Diagnostics, District Benchmarks, and Performance Tasks in the area of English Language Arts.
- The district will continue to report out all data in the area of English Language Arts in Curriculum Committee as per the assessment calendar as well as the Board of Education Meeting.

- 4) **By May 2024, 60% of students in each preparedness group will meet or exceed their assigned end of year growth target in Science.**
 - o The assessments that will be used to measure progress towards the assigned growth targets include benchmark assessments in the area of Science.
 - o The district will continue to report out all data in the area of Science in Curriculum Committee as per the assessment calendar as well as the Board of Education Meeting.
- 5) **By June 2024, 5% increases across all areas on the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (Mathematics, Science, and English Language Arts)**
 - o The district will provide assessments to prepare students and staff for the high stakes assessment.
 - o Review of data from the assessments in public as well as during several points throughout the year.
- 6) **By June 2024, 100% of students will have access to meaningful experiences of powerful learning opportunities and will demonstrate competencies and skills for the digital age.**
 - o All students will receive dedicated devices (Chromebooks) and accessories for year-round access in and out of school
 - o The district will strengthen its device management plan to address repairs of accidental damage and provide extended warranties
 - o The district will ensure processes and protocols at the school level are followed to replace lost, damaged, or stolen devices. This will include device management and inventory systems.
 - o The district will allow for gap orders for additional devices that considers growing student enrollment and continuous digital access when devices are out for repair
 - o The district will ensure continued support of full-time, school-based Technology Coordinators and VILS Coaches to help build educator capacity districtwide in the integration of technology across all subjects
 - o Schools will establish and cultivate student tech teams to involve students directly in the planning, execution, and day-to-day management of implementation
 - o The district will incorporate a 3-tiered system of assessing the degree of technology integration across the schools to include Technology Integration Matrix Lesson Observation Tool (TIM-O) walk throughs, Fall/Winter/Spring teacher/student surveys, and Usage Inventories (Time and Data).

Goal #2: Community Engagement

The Orange Public Schools will continue a system of consistent communication system for disseminating and receiving information between school administration, teachers, staff, students, parents, and the community.

- 1) **Increase the timeliness, access, and effectiveness of all communication with all stakeholders via multiple measures by 60% from the previous school year (the previous year was at a 50% increase.**
 - o Social Media Platforms & Website (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter)-Utilize the platforms for immediate news-worthy information as well as the district website via the latest news and announcements section.

- RoboCalls via School Wires at the district and school levels; we are incorporating more text to speech and emails for as well as translated versions of all messages both district and at the school level.
- Superintendent's Report (online access to staff and community stakeholders) the day immediately following the board meeting by noon.
- Routine face-to-face opportunities to engage with community and stakeholders via PTO, Back to School Nights, Report Card Conference Nights, Community Events within Orange Township as well as partnership meetings based on those established and forthcoming within the school district. We will continue the parent and student councils at the Superintendent's Level.
- Provide Bilingual Supports for all families to ensure their engagement within the school district via translations, translator supports, and district as well as social level meetings.

2) Increase the use of emerging and available communications outlets to transmit information by 45% (Last Year the Percentage was at 40%)

- Partner with universities (local and throughout the state) in order to get information to prospective candidates for job fairs and other industry level announcements. We will conduct virtual and in person job fairs as well to widen the search for potential candidates outside of the University realm.
- Continue to utilize the Orange Public School App for more timeless information.
- Continue to utilize the Emergency Pop Up on the website for transmitting important, time sensitive information weekly.
- Provide Translations on all documents that are disseminated from schools and district offices.

3) Continue Parent and Student Councils at the Superintendent's Level

- Have monthly meetings with parents and students about academics as well as self-care supports; student council meetings will take place separately from the parent council.
- Continue the Bilingual Parent Advisory and ensure that the meetings are quarterly.
- Continue the Special Education Advisory Council Meetings and ensure that the meetings take place quarterly.
- Continue the Early Childhood Advisory Council Meetings and ensure that the meetings take place quarterly.
- Establish the Nutrition Advisory Council alongside school level student councils. Ensure that the meetings take place quarterly.

Goal #3: Facilities, Finance, and Staff Support

The Orange Public Schools will continue to redesign the fiscal management, operations, and human resources of the organization to ensure a system of accountability, transparency, and efficiency for the optimal delivery of services for partnerships to flourish and staff to be retained across the district.

1) Create a district budget under constraints that accommodates and supports the needs of central office departments, all schools and students while sustaining systems that have yielded results through a strategic assessment of data

- Analyze and clarify how all budgeted funds are allocated and expended at the department and school levels.

- Examine and evaluate contracted services provided to the district and continuously improve effectiveness.
- Identify and execute capital projects (short term/long term, prioritized, and categorized on the basis of need.)
- The transfers money from account lines on the district level will decrease by 25% from the previous school year (22-23 was a decrease of 20%).
- Implement a new fiscal system that is streamlined and actionable (Genesis Financial)

2) Implement innovations that empower teaching and learning as well as efficiently allocate funding within their locations

- Continue to monitor the budgeting module My Budget File to ensure adherence to staff and federal mandates.
- Create a long-term and short-term facilities development plan to outfit buildings district wide in the effort of expanding programming throughout the school district. These plans will be presented at the Facilities and Finance Committee Meetings as well as via the Regular Board of Education Meeting as we have several aging buildings in the district.

3) Maximize employee expertise and create a positive and supportive environment

- Continue to have roundtable conversations with staff in order to provide an optimal work environment.
- Continue to offer the Employee Assistance Program to allow for continue support of our staff holistically.
- District level personnel attending meetings at the school level in order to bridge the gap between the schools and district office.

Goal #4: Social and Emotional Supports

The Orange Public Schools will continue to ensure that all students will receive social and emotional support to become adaptable, confident citizens who embody self-awareness and strong interpersonal skills, and who are capable of responsible decision-making and managing their emotions and behaviors.

1) Provide research-based curriculum to strengthen students' social/emotional relationships

- Continue to utilize Restorative Practices as a means of providing effective supports to students in the effort of problem solving. This includes at both the elementary and secondary levels.
- Continue the monitoring of mental health to provide students another avenue to combat social-emotional concerns and thus remediate areas of deficiency related to mental health.
- Ensure that staff and students continue to have resources readily available by the district to ensure their social-emotional needs are met with fidelity.

2) Enhance community-based partnerships in order to assist students and families

- Continue to utilize the District's community engagement officer as well as community school liaisons to assist school-based staff with establishing partnerships to support families and students and thus have a vehicle to support families Pre-K through Twelve.
- Provide self-care supports for students and families based on surveys (conducted twice per year) as well as discussion with support staff members including the Superintendent's Trauma Informed Team.

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to the Scholars' Academy family! The Scholars' Academy staff is committed to providing children with a safe and stimulating learning environment that will enable them to excel academically and socially.

This handbook contains basic policies and procedures necessary to maintain a school climate conducive to teaching and learning.

It is the responsibility of all students and parents to read this handbook, follow the guidelines, and keep it available for future reference. Our policies and procedures are designed to ensure that children have a positive educational experience at Scholars' Academy.

*You will also see that we use the **lighthouse** as a symbol for Scholars' Academy as we believe that all students shine brightly as we all work together to navigate the seas of education! Please follow us on Social Media:*

Facebook--Orange Public Schools

Twitter--@SAcademy268 #GoScholarsNJ

@ops_district #GoodtoGreat

Wanting the Best for Your Child,

Mrs. Karen Machuca

Mrs. Karen Machuca

Principal

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OVERVIEW

Although there is no universal definition for the gifted and talented and/or talented child the Orange Public Schools has adopted the Federal definition:

“Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high academic achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.”

New Jersey Code for Gifted and Talented Services *New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:8-3.1* defines students who are gifted and talented as those students 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.

The *N.J.A.C.* requires that students be compared to their chronological peers in the local school district. The New Jersey Department of Education has not established state-level criteria for identifying students who are gifted, such as mandated tests or assessments, grade point averages, or IQ scores. Local school districts must use **multiple measures** to identify students.

According to the **Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act** that was signed by Gov. Phil Murphy into law on Jan. 17, 2020, requires the following effective July 1, 2020:

- that each school district reports the number of students identified as gifted by grade level and the number of teachers/administrators whose job includes identification of and services to gifted students.
- multiple services should be provided and the identification of gifted students should match the services provided
- a report by each district of policies, procedures, timelines for identification and instructional adaptations made for gifted students in a continuum of services for all levels K-12, including professional development for staff.
- modifies the goal of meeting the NJSLS to match the student’s instructional level.
- provide equity for all students for the application process to include English language learners, students with 504s and students with IEPs.

Students who are identified as "twice-exceptional" may have learning disabilities that mask their giftedness. These students may require different identification methods and program modifications to reach their full potential. It should not be assumed that students with disabilities cannot participate in gifted and talented programs.

N.J.A.C. requires that district boards of education provide appropriate K-12 services for students identified as gifted and talented. This includes appropriate curricular and instructional modifications indicating content, process, products, and/or learning environments. District boards of education must also consider the [PreK-Grade 12 National Gifted Program Standards](https://www.nagc.org/standards/PreK-Grade12NationalGiftedProgramStandards) of the National Association for Gifted Children in developing programs for gifted and talented students. The standards are available at www.nagc.org.

Out of state....

N.J.A.C. does not set requirements regarding the identification of gifted and talented students. The measures that are used for the identification process are determined by the local school district. Therefore, a school district is not obligated to accept the evaluation from another state, school district, or independent service.

GENERAL INFORMATION

“Home Page” and Updated Contact Communication:

Consistent communication enables all members of the school community to stay updated with the educational journey of students. All staff members have a website for communication and updates about their classroom. Please visit <http://www.orange.k12.nj.us/domain/1625> for the announcements, calendar updates, and a wealth of information to assist with your child(ren)’s education. Please ensure that your email and phone numbers are up-to-date! It is extremely important that phone numbers are updated, and are valid numbers. Phone blasts and emails are used to provide information to parents. **Should a phone number change, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide the new numbers to the office and to the Homeroom teacher as well. Emergency phone numbers must be provided for all students.** Parents are required to sign up for ClassDojo as well for school communication!

School Information:

Address: 268 Capuchin Way Orange, NJ 07050

Phone number: 973-677-4000 Ext. 53700 Main Office

Fax: 973-678-6956

HOURS OF OPERATION and SCHEDULING:

Once a week students in grades 1-7 who meet the criteria for the program will be bussed to Scholars Academy for a full day of instruction as indicated below:

Day of the Week	Grades	Anticipated Start Date
Monday	1st and 2nd grade	Sept. 11, 2023-June 10, 2024
Tuesday	7th grade	Sept 12, 2023-Jan. 16, 2024
	6th grade	Jan. 23, 2024-June 11, 2024
Wednesday	5th grade	Sept. 13, 2023-Jan. 17, 2024
	4th grade	Jan. 24, 2024-June 12, 2024
Thursday	3rd grade	Sept. 14, 2023-June 13, 2024

- The students will have attendance taken at their home school and eat breakfast at Scholars Academy.
- Students will be picked up from their home schools between 8:30-8:50 a.m.
- The students will not be responsible for the home school classwork on their Scholars Academy day.
- The students are responsible for homework assigned from their home schools.
- The students will be bussed back to their home schools for dismissal at 2:00 p.m.
- Students will attend the Scholars Academy on early dismissal days.
- In the case of delayed openings due to weather, an administrative decision will be made about the students being transported to Scholars Academy.
- Teachers with students attending the Scholars Academy program are required to adjust the planning to include the logistics of arranging the bussing, recording of attendance, and distribution of homework.
- On the days that students in the Scholars Academy program are not in their home schools, teachers are urged to use this opportunity to fashion instructional time based upon the needs of the other students.


Below is a sample schedule for the 2023-2024 school year:

Sample Schedule Gr. 1-7 (See each teacher for 75 min. each week)

9:00-9:30	Arrival, breakfast, attendance
9:30-10:45	AM Class (ie: Math)
10:45-12:00	AM Class (ie: STEM)
12:00-12:35	Lunch
12:40-1:55	PM Class (ie: Soc. Studies)
2:00	Dismissal to home schools

*Science will be provided via Google Classroom as independent coursework due to staff adjustments at this time.

District and School Calendars The district calendar is available on the district website at www.orange.k12.nj.us. Our school calendars will be published monthly and provided to all students as well as available on our school website. It is important that our parents and students keep both posted in a safe area and reference them on a regular basis to ensure you are aware of school events and closings. **Parents are expected to sign up for ClassDojo as this is another daily communication we use to keep parents informed. Specific information about how to join Scholars' Academy will be distributed from the classroom teachers.**




Orange Township Public School District – 2023-2024 Calendar

Gerald Fitzhugh II, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Approved 2/15/2023

Revised 4/19/2023



Jason E. Ballard, CEFM, QPA, RSBO

Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Tina Powell, Ed.D.

Assistant Superintendent for Innovation & Systems

<div> <div>1 Professional Dev. For Staff Only</div> <div>4 Labor Day - District Closed</div> <div>5-6 Professional Dev. For Staff Only</div> <div>7 First Day of School</div> </div>	<div>Staff 20 September Students 17</div> <table> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td></tr> <tr><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td></tr> </table>	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	<div>Staff 16 February Students 16</div> <table> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td></tr> <tr><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td></td></tr> </table>	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		<div>19-23 District Closed - Winter Break</div>														
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The calendar includes 188 contractual certificated staff days and 183 contractual contact student days. There are 3 snow days or emergency closing days built into this calendar. Should the District use more than 3 emergency closing days the days will be used at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools

OEA Day 12:30 Dismiss Students

Parent Conf. Gr. 8-12 12:30pm Dismissal

Parent Conf Prek-7 12:30pm Dismissal

Early Dismissal - 12:30 pm

District Closed for Staff and Students

Professional Development Staff Only

12:30 Dismissal Students Only

The calendar includes 188 contractual certificated staff days and 183 contractual contact student days. There are 3 snow days or emergency closing days built into this calendar. Should the District use more than 3 emergency closing days the days will be used at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools

OEA Day 12:30 Dismiss Students	△	Parent Conf. Gr. 8-12 12:30pm Dismissal	◇	Parent Conf Prek-7 12:30pm Dismissal	■	Early Dismissal - 12:30 pm	○
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12:30 Dismissal Students Only							

ACADEMIC PROGRAM--Gifted and Talented

Orange Township Public School District
2023-2024

Interim & Marking Period Report Card
Grade Posting Window Schedule
as of April 14, 2023

Reporting Period	Marking Period Start Date	Marking Period End Date	Posting Window Opened	Posting Window Closed	Distribution
Interim Report Card 1	Thursday 9/7/23	Friday 10/6/23	Friday 9/29/23	Tuesday 10/10/23 4:00pm	Thursday 10/12/23 End of Day
MP1 Report Card	Thursday 9/7/23	Tuesday 11/14/23	Monday 11/6/23	Friday 11/17/23 4:00pm	Conferences (PreK-7) 12/4/23 5:30-7:30 (8-12) 12/5/23 5:30-7:30
Interim Report Card 2	Wednesday 11/15/23	Friday 12/15/23	Wednesday 12/6/23	Wednesday 12/20/23 4:00pm	Friday 12/22/23 End of Day
MP2 Report Card	Wednesday 11/15/23	Wednesday 1/31/24	Wednesday 1/24/24	Friday 2/2/24 4:00pm	Wednesday 2/7/24 End of Day
Interim Report Card 3	Thursday 2/1/24	Wednesday 3/6/24	Wednesday 2/28/24	Friday 3/8/24 4:00pm	Conferences (PreK-7) 3/11/24 1:15-4:00 (PreK-7) 3/12/24 5:30-7:30 (8-12) 3/13/24 5:30-7:30 (8-12) 3/14/24 1:15-4:00
MP3 Report Card	Thursday 2/1/24	Friday 4/19/24	Monday 4/15/24	Wednesday 4/24/24 4:00pm	Friday, 4/26/24 End of Day
Interim Report Card 4	Monday 4/22/24	Monday 5/20/24	Monday 5/13/24	Wednesday 5/29/24 4:00pm	Friday 5/31/24 End of Day
MP4 Report Card	Monday 4/22/24	Thursday 6/20/24	Thursday 6/13/24	Wednesday 6/19/24 3:00pm	Wednesday 6/26/24 12:30 PM

Dates are subject to change at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools

NOMINATION TIMELINE AND PROCESS

The following are the steps required for the selection of students to attend the Scholars Academy Gifted and Talented program. The program is designed to address the intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership needs of the student that requires specialized instruction based on higher order thinking skills to allow for him/her to meet their academic potential. The program is open to all children regardless of their academic placement. This includes students with IEPs and in the Bilingual/ESL program. Please note that behavior is not a criterion for selection. Nominations from teachers, administrators, and parents will be accepted in March and April.

Step 1:

Staff or Parent recommendation with the submission of the following forms:

- Recommendation form
- Updated report card
- NJSLA-Math and NJSLA-ELA scores (grades 4 and up) inputted on Recommendation form
- GATES form of GT characteristics with final score
- Work samples demonstrating the student's high academic areas (copies only)
- Parent recommendation form with signature for authorization of NNAT3 assessment (Nonverbal assessment) or CogAT assessment. A parent permission form must be signed by the parent/guardian before a student can be formally assessed, identified, and services provided to a student.

All forms are submitted via electronically through Google forms to the Administration of the Gifted and Talented program by the designated date. Applications are due by winter break in February which permits the administration of the CogAT assessment to begin in March until June. **Incomplete applications will not be processed.**

Step 2:

A folder is created for each applicant to include all application forms.

Applicants are scheduled by the Gifted and Talented test coordinator for the administration of the CogAT assessment ([Cognitive Abilities Test](#)) at their home school or at Scholars Academy beginning in March.

Step 3:

Once all applicants have completed applications (all forms and the CogAT), their applications are reviewed for meeting the criteria of the program by the committee of Executive Director of Gifted Education, Administrator of Scholars Academy, Gifted/Talented Teachers, and the Superintendent as needed. .

Acceptance into the program includes meeting 5 out of the 6 criteria below:

- Having A's or B's in all content areas on their report cards
- Composite score of 65 or higher on the CogAT
- District benchmark data assessments indicate higher academic achievement
- Parent referral
- Teacher referral
- NJSLA-Math and NJSLA-ELA scores of level 4 or 5

Note: The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) is a group-administered K–12 assessment published by Riverside Insights and intended to estimate students' learned reasoning and problem solving abilities through a battery of verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal test items.

Letters are sent to parents in June making them aware if their child met or did not meet the criteria for eligibility for gifted and talented programming services for the new school year enrollment.

Eligible applicants receive the following documents that must be returned back to the Administrator of the Gifted and Talented program in order for the student to start the program. Documents include:

- Acceptance letter
- Transportation permission form
- Gifted and Talented contract
- Medical form
- Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) form
- Media Release form

APPEAL PROCESS

Non-eligible students may request another review of the application process by the parent/guardian in writing to the administrator of the GT program at Scholars Academy within 45 days of the dated letter being sent out. The application will be reviewed again along with the parent to determine the best way to move forward which may include but not limited to reassessment of the CogAT, review of grades, teacher interview, and student interview.

TRANSFER STUDENTS:

If a student transfers into the district during the summer, students may apply for the Scholars Academy program with the following documents. All materials must be sent to the Gifted and Talented administrator by September 30th. Students who transfer into the district throughout the year, may apply to the program and it will be at the discretion of the Gifted and Talented administrator for the timeline for processing the application.

- Parent referral
- Previous report cards from prior school
- State assessment scores if applicable
- Work samples

WITHDRAWAL OR EXITING THE PROGRAM:

Parents must meet with the administrator to discuss the concerns regarding withdrawing a student from the Gifted and Talented program. Students cannot withdraw from the program nor can the home-school teacher withdraw a student from the program without proper authorization.

Students' home school report cards and progress reports are monitored throughout the year. A student who is not meeting the criteria as outlined in the Gifted and Talented contract will meet with the Gifted and Talented administrator to assess the concerns. Parents will also be contacted to address the concerns. Students may be exited from the program should their home school grades indicate C's, D's or F's. The purpose of gifted and talented programming service is to enhance the learning process, not hinder other academic areas.

SCHOOL LIAISONS

Liaison: A staff member at the home school responsible for direct communication with the Gifted and Talented administrator; monitors/supervises students dismissal and arrival from Scholars Academy; point person for parents to obtain information about the GT program.

Responsibilities for sending students to Scholars' Academy:

- Take attendance on the authorized transportation sheet for students getting on the bus.
- Give the daily attendance sheets to the Bus Driver or Bus Aide.
- Verify the number of students getting on the bus.
- Contact with Scholars' Academy administration or secretary regarding students not attending Scholars Academy for that day. For example, if a student is absent or on a field trip.

Receiving students from Scholars' Academy:

- Meet them at the bus to receive the list from the Bus Aide or Driver.
- Verify the number and name of students getting off the bus.

- Students return to class.
- Keep attendance sheets for school records.

Other responsibilities include:

- Assist with getting the information out to the staff regarding applications for Scholars' Academy during the application timeframe.
- Forward the applications to Scholars' Academy by the assigned due date.
- Read and respond to email communications from Scholars' Academy Principal or Secretary. (Principals and Assistant Principals are usually cc'd on all email communication to keep them abreast of information.)

TRANSPORTATION AND PROCEDURES

The Orange Board of Education provides bus transportation to all Scholars' Academy students receiving gifted and talented program services.

1. If someone other than the parent is picking up the child, a signed note from the parent must be in the office, and identification must be presented to be copied and filed with the note.

The process and procedure for monitoring student attendance at Scholars Academy begins with attendance sheets giving to all school liaisons for them to take attendance each morning. Prior to students getting on the bus, the liaison (or school designee) is to check off who is getting on the bus. A photocopy of that list is to be made: one going to Scholars' Academy and the other remaining at the home school. Under certain situations, parents may sign in their child with the Scholars' Academy secretary so they can attend Scholars'. If the student does not get on the bus in the morning from their home school, alternative transportation will not be available. Promptness at the home school is essential.

Once the bus arrives at Scholars' Academy, the staff receives the attendance sheet indicating who is on the bus attending the program. Attendance is taken again in the gym, photocopied, and one copy is given to the Principal with the other copy remaining with the staff.

At dismissal from Scholars' Academy, the staff uses the attendance sheet from the morning and calls each student from that list to get on the bus. The original sheets that were from the home school are also given back to the bus aide or driver and they return it to the staff member upon their return to their home school.

In the event that a student is picked up early at Scholars Academy, the home school secretary is notified who was picked up so they are aware and can adjust their records. On the opposite side, if a student arrives at Scholars' Academy late from a parent, the home school is notified so they can update their records as the student is present.

It is the expectation that the school liaison or designee takes attendance each morning for Scholars' Academy students, supervises them until the bus arrives, supervises them onto the bus, supervises them upon their return from Scholars' Academy, and verifies the list of students who have returned from Scholars' Academy. Students are not responsible for taking attendance at any time.

Picking up students early

If a child needs to be picked early from the Scholars' Academy, the parent must send the teacher a written request. The child will be dismissed to the office and only an authorized adult can sign the student out from the office. **NO CHILD WILL BE ALLOWED TO GO HOME EARLY UNATTENDED. The adult who is picking up the child MUST be listed as an approved adult for pick up on the emergency card at the child's home school AND have a picture ID. Students will not be released to any adult who is not authorized and listed on record at the child's home school.**

CURRICULUM

The Orange Scholars' Academy Gifted and Talented program services recognizes that there are students who require differentiated programs and services beyond the core curriculum because of their advanced abilities in one or more of the following areas: specific aptitudes in Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and related technical skills associated with the STEM disciplines. These students also possess differential cognitive and affective characteristics such as curiosity, creativity, passion, and drive that require educational responses geared to their needs. Moreover, Scholars' Academy recognizes that gifted students may come from underrepresented groups that include diverse ethnic backgrounds, learning and physical disabilities, and non-native English speakers. These students also represent a range of giftedness within and across areas of instruction, dictating the need for more individualized approaches to be employed in working with them.

The Scholars' Academy learning environment for the gifted provides student-centered learning, and safe risk-taking in order to enhance the potential for creative production in their areas of strength and passion. Scholars' Academy believes that these students should have a focused and articulated educational program, designed to maximize their academic strengths and to enhance personal and social growth. The program incorporates going beyond 21st Century Skills and addresses academic needs for advanced instruction that are challenging, hands-on, relevant to real-world issues and problems, and encourages students to develop projects that are innovative. It encourages the development of higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills as well as the metacognitive skills that promote self-awareness of learning needs.

These guiding principles influence the program in its design, development, and implementation; and focus on the importance of flexibility in the provision of services. They ensure that top students in the core domains of Math and Science who could benefit have access to high-level learning opportunities at the Academy. English Language Arts is embedded throughout the program with reading and writing activities.

Detailed elements of the gifted and talented curriculum in Math, Science, Social Studies, and STEM are available at www.orange.k12.nj.us/domain/2154. Elements include objectives, NAGC standards, state standards, duration of lessons, topics covered, grade level, and authentic assessments.

ASSESSMENT

Student progress reports are sent home twice a year after the 2nd and 4th marking periods (February and June). Parent teacher conferences are available at any time of the year. Students provide a

reflection of their growth using the 4C's of 21st Century Learning skills: Collaboration, Creativity, Communication, and Critical Thinking.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Gifted and Talented Administrator shall coordinate the annual, ongoing process of evaluating all aspects of the Gifted and Talented services and make recommendations for upgrading those areas that could use improvement. Data collected in the annual evaluation shall be used to review the program and results of the evaluation shall be presented for review of instructional progress. The program evaluation process shall address:

- Overall student progress;
- Student, parent, and faculty attitudes toward the program;
- Community involvements;
- Overall quality of instruction and program personnel credentials; and
- Future program directions and modifications.

STAFFING

The administrative and teaching staff for the gifted and talented program meet all the state criteria of highly qualified staff in their respective fields. Staff receive ongoing professional development through their memberships of New Jersey Association of Gifted Children (NJAGC), National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC), content specific professional organizations, district content training, and various current publications regarding best practices in gifted and talented education. Staff are also supported by the district with their enrollment into the Rutgers Gifted and Talented Online Certification program. Staff are mandated to meet the state requirement of 20 hours of professional development each year and the implementation of their professional development plan. Staff are also responsible and evaluated on Student Growth Objectives (SGOs).

Professional Associations

<https://www.state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/gandt/assoc.htm>

Professional Development

<https://www.state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/gandt/profdev.htm>

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Extension activities are an extension of the work and academic growth that is expected of students who attend the Scholars' Academy Gifted/Talented program. Extension activities will be posted via Google Classroom, Class Dojo, and discussed with students. Parents are asked to make sure children complete their extension activities independently, neatly, and correctly. Projects in various areas will be assigned at specific intervals throughout the year. These long term assignments will require students to efficiently budget their time in order to complete assignments as expected.

Students are expected to:

1. Make sure they understand the assignment, its purpose, due date and how it should be done prior to leaving class.
2. Develop a personal system for recording and keeping track of daily assignments.

3. Remember to take home appropriate materials necessary for the completion of all extension assignments.
4. Organize their after-school schedule so as to provide sufficient time to complete all extension assignments.
5. Turn in all assignments on time and in proper form, assure neatness.
6. Do their own assignments.
7. Arrange with the teacher to make up assignments missed due to illness or other circumstances.

DRESS CODE

Believing that school dress can significantly influence student behavior, the students attending the Gifted and Talented program will comply with the district's uniform dress code.

Boys- White or light blue polo or oxford shirt, navy blue (grades K – 4) or khaki (grades 5 – 7 only) pants, navy blue sweater, tie is optional.

Girls- White or light blue polo or oxford Shirt, navy blue (grades K – 4) or khaki (grades 5 – 7 only) skirt, skort, or dress jumper, or pants. White or blue tights or socks, navy blue sweater.

BACKPACKS

Students are allowed to carry backpacks, slingback backpacks, cinch sacks, bags and purses to and from school. Students must place these items in their designated area before the start of the school day. Their name must be written on their belongings.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend their gifted education classes on a consistent basis as regulated by the schedule. There are exceptions such as picture day or special events at their home school. Attendance will be closely monitored and parents/guardians will be notified when students are missing classes and what action steps to put into place to support the student and their gifted education attendance and participation.

EXPECTATIONS OF BEHAVIOR/CODE OF CONDUCT

The Orange School District expects students to adhere to a “code of conduct” which has been fully outlined in Board Policy #5600 and Regulation #5600. Parents can request a copy of the policy and regulation at any time. All staff members have received and reviewed both and will implement the guidance found in each.

Based on the Orange School District board policy, the district has a code of conduct to ensure that each individual can thrive securely and safely.

Part of the growing process is the recognition of such rules and learning to live by them. Students are expected to:

- Be considerate.
- Be courteous and use good manners.
- Respect the work and opinions of others.
- Respect and care for materials and property.
- Follow safety rules.

- Be responsible for their own actions.

We expect that all of our students will demonstrate respect for every individual and the school itself. Disruptive behavior, either verbal or physical is unacceptable. If such incidents occur, students will be made aware of the consequences and held accountable.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Student misbehavior is handled directly by the classroom teacher and/or adult responsible for student supervision at the time of the occurrence.

All adults will discuss the student misbehavior with all concerned parties and assist students in resolving their concern(s) in a peaceful manner whereby all parties accept responsibility for their individual actions and understand what is expected of their behavior in the future.

However, any student interaction that results in a physical and/or significant verbal altercation, disrupting and/or creating an unsafe learning environment, will be referred immediately to an administrator (with a discipline notice) for resolution. The administrator will contact the parent(s) of all students involved and if deemed necessary, will schedule a meeting between all involved students and their parents.

Per the state requirement, Scholars Academy follows the process and procedure regarding Restorative Justice strategies which enhances accountability, community safety, and competency development.

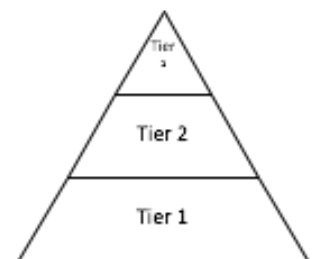
- **Accountability.** Restorative justice strategies provide opportunities for wrongdoers to be accountable to those they have harmed, and enable them to repair the harm they caused to the extent possible.
 - **Community safety.** Restorative justice recognizes the need to keep the community safe through strategies that build relationships and empower the community to take responsibility for the well-being of its members.
 - **Competency development.** Restorative justice seeks to increase the pro-social skills of those who have harmed others, address underlying factors that lead youth to engage in delinquent behavior, and build on strengths in each young person.
- Refer to the district's Student Code of Conduct provided to each student and posted on the website for more information.

DISCIPLINE STEP PROCEDURE

First and foremost, refer to the Student Code of Conduct District information booklet. The following is the procedure for offenses that disrupt normal school functioning. Major offenses may result in a suspension and/or recommendation for Administrative Hearing at any time, depending on the severity.

Tier One:

- Teacher conferences with student and documents student behavior.
- Teacher documents student behaviors and determines appropriate intervention strategies. Teacher contacts parents and possibly the counselor and administration.



Tier Two:

- Teacher refers the student to the administration on a referral form and parents are contacted. This indicates that the student has not responded to Tier One interventions in the classroom.
- Referrals will result in a conference with the student/parent and assignment of a consequence determined by the administration. A review of Tier One interventions and alternate strategies may be considered by the administration and the teacher.
- For severe deviant behavior, incorrigibility, or repeated violations, the student may be temporarily suspended from school for a period of one to five (1-5) days by Administration.
- Continued referrals may result in progression to Tier Three

Tier Three:

- When the student does not respond to interventions, an Administrative Hearing will be requested for a further action plan.

BULLYING/HARASSMENT

According to Board Policy #5512, “The Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a student. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe and disciplined environment. Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying. “Harassment, intimidation, or bullying” means any gesture, written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus and that:

1. Is motivated by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability; or
2. By any other distinguishing characteristics; and
3. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of harming a pupil or damaging the pupil's property, or placing a pupil in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
4. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

“Electronic communication” means communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager. Acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may also be a pupil exercising power and control over another pupil, either in isolated incidents (e.g., intimidation, harassment) or patterns of harassing or intimidating behavior (e.g., bullying).”

All Scholars' Academy staff are committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for all. Students learn best when they feel comfortable and safe among their peers. Bullying of any kind is not tolerated and will be addressed by all staff.

If a student feels they are the subject of bullying/teasing/harassment, they should report this immediately to their parent(s), classroom teacher and/or a school staff member or family member they trust. Once it is reported, the state regulations for Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) procedures will be conducted to include:

- An investigation to determine the specific nature of the teasing/bullying/harassment and make a note of the findings
- Parents/Guardians of the students involved will be informed about the investigation, the findings, and resolution to the matter.

It is our intention to determine the root cause for the bullying behavior and work with all concerned to resolve in a manner that is beneficial and restores a safe and risk free learning environment for all students.

FOOD SERVICES

For the students in the Gifted and Talented program, they will receive breakfast upon their arrival at Scholars Academy. The lunch program is open to all students and utilizes a rotating lunch menu, which is distributed to all students at their home school. Students may participate in the school lunch program at Scholars' Academy or may bring their lunch from home. **Lunch applications will be provided at each home school and it is expected that the forms be returned to the home schools.**

Dietary restrictions must receive medical documentation which will be submitted to Food Services for review to see if accommodations can be made.

The following rules are expected to be observed in the cafeteria:

- 1) Students are expected to walk in the cafeteria.
- 2) Conversational tones are acceptable.
- 3) The tables and floors are to be kept clean. Garbage must be placed in wastebaskets.
- 4) Students are expected to be courteous and use table manners during lunch. Any infraction of the rules listed above may result in disciplinary action.
- 5) Lunches brought from home should
 - A. avoid glass containers,
 - B. avoid unhealthy snacks and beverages such as soda,
 - C. **will not** be refrigerated or warmed up by staff.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students will use electronic communication or data devices only in a manner consistent with instructional and testing activities in the classroom. These



devices include, but are not limited to, handheld calculators, music playing devices, one-to-one computing devices, cameras, and laptop computers. Use of these devices must not violate any district policy or cause classroom disruption nor may they be used in the access, creation, or possession of inappropriate materials. Use of electronic devices in the classroom is at the discretion of the teacher and/or building administrator. Parents or students who bring any electronic device to school or to a school activity do so at their own risk – **Orange School District and Scholars’ Academy assume no liability for damage, theft, etc.** Videotaping or taking pictures are prohibited on campus unless approved by building administration. If the policies are violated, administrators will determine consequences based on the severity of the incident and in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, on the first offense the device may be confiscated until a parent/guardian retrieves it from the front office/administration. District policy #5516 states, *Pupils are not permitted to use cellular telephones while school is in session. Cellular telephones must be **turned off** (not on vibrate) while the pupil is in the school building and may only be turned on after school has concluded for the day and outside the school building. Cellular telephones that are turned on are in violation of this policy will be confiscated by the Building Principal and the pupil will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include in and/or out of school suspension. Additionally, on the first offense the device may be confiscated until a parent picks it up. Students can request use of a telephone in the main office to contact their parent and/or guardian before, during and after school hours.*

If the policies are violated, administrators will determine consequences based on the severity of the incident and in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct handbook.

Students must arrive at Scholars with their district laptops charged and ready for their instructional day.

Technology Guidelines/Internet Use

All students and parents are required to sign an “**Acceptable Use**” policy statement prior to any student given access to our computer and internet services. This policy outlines the responsibilities of both students and parents in ensuring the safe use of equipment, searching functions, and computer internet safety. Students are provided numerous opportunities to utilize computers in their classroom and in our computer lab. Students will also be given the opportunity to use technology for homework assignments, written reports, and various other types of projects.

STUDENT AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

GIFTED AND TALENTED ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Our Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee (GTAC) is an organization of staff, parents, and administration to address the unique needs of gifted and talented children. The purpose of the GTAC is to stay abreast of current educational trends, stay connected to the happenings at Scholars’ Academy, and make connections within the community. Parents must be enrolled in Classdojo to receive updates regarding GTAC and check their child’s backpack for flyers which will also be posted online. There is

a sign up for which can be accessed by [clicking here](#). **Meetings will be hybrid: in person and/or virtually.**

PARENT WORKSHOPS

Throughout the school year, there will be various parent workshops available regarding academic support, social and emotional support, and other various topics focused on raising and supporting gifted and talented children. Workshops will be available in a hybrid format with virtual and in person options. Parents are encouraged to follow the information provided via ClassDojo, Google Classroom, and information sent home with their children. **Meetings will be hybrid: in person and/or virtually.**

ACADEMIC COMPETITIONS

Throughout the year, there may be a variety of academic competitions to provide opportunities for the students in the Gifted and Talented program to become academically challenged in competitions. It is highly encouraged that students participate in these activities when they arise to excel and strengthen their academic drive and determination and to challenge themselves. It is also the expectation that parents will support the competitions with participation and assisting the student as needed with practice sessions and meeting the criteria for the competition when applicable.

FIELD TRIPS

A standard walking trip parental permission request will be sent home for parents to sign and return to the student's teacher; giving the child permission to accompany his/her class on a walking trip.

Field trips requiring buses must be approved by the Board of Education. Parents will receive a permission slip with the purpose of the trip for approval at least two weeks prior to the trip from the homeroom teacher or the teacher that is supervising the trip.

In order to assure that students derive the greatest educational benefit from class trips and in order to assure the safety of all students participating, the following is required:

1. A signed field trip request with the signature of a parent or guardian must be returned no later than one week prior to the trip.
2. Proper uniform attire (unless specified otherwise by classroom teacher) must be worn on all field trips.
3. Parents who would like to volunteer to chaperone field trips will receive a contract that specifically outlines the role and responsibilities of being a chaperone. Parents must understand that they are making a commitment when signing up to chaperone a trip due to student to adult safety ratios. Parents who do not show up or cancel without 72 hours notice will not be able to chaperone future trips.

