

CAG Workshops and Services

The Connecticut Association for the Gifted, CAG, provides professional development programs in three areas: **Understanding the Gifted Student** (for educators and parents); **Instructional Strategies** (for teachers and district administrators), and the **Development and Administration of Programs and Services for High-Potential Students** (for administrators, district personnel, and teachers).

Understanding the Gifted Student

Gifted students exhibit specific traits, which connect to their social-emotional needs and, therefore, impact their learning. For example, such children often present with the following characteristics: perfectionism, high intensity, heightened sensitivity, and also may have focusing issues. Others may exhibit asynchrony, which means their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development have not developed at the same rate. Some gifted students may have Asperger's Syndrome or are twice-exceptional, that is gifted with a learning disability (ADHD, processing difficulties, etc.) at the same time. Still others are not recognized as a result of cultural, racial, or socio-economic differences.

Gifted students have specific needs, the understanding of which will help them to excel in both regular and gifted classrooms. Once identification has occurred, the services offered require specification to the learners' needs. Parents need assistance in learning about, and coping with, their gifted children's needs and behaviors.

CAG's experts are highly skilled at working with the adults who teach and/or live with gifted students.

Instructional Strategies

Research has demonstrated that *all* students learn better when gifted and talented teaching strategies are utilized in *all* classrooms. Workshop participants learn about the importance of infusing higher-order thinking and questioning skills in their approaches with students. Thus, not only will all teachers benefit from becoming skilled at using these strategies, but our presenters help those who teach *only* gifted students to work toward achieving mastery in key areas.

Differentiation of the curriculum increases students' achievement as knowledge, learning style, interests, and talents all are taken into consideration when the teacher provides substitution, enrichment, or accelerated activities for the gifted student. To be actively engaged in the curricular content, these learners need challenge and a chance to excel. Creative and self-selected inquiry-based learning projects ensure motivating and active involvement with outside professionals and resources. CAG workshop participants receive specific training in managing the differentiated classroom, which untrained teachers often find difficult and/or overwhelming.

Development and Administration of Programs and Services for High-Potential Students

To ensure the successful implementation of gifted programming in their schools, administrators must have a comprehensive understanding of program standards and of the skills teachers need to implement the recommended best practices to meet these standards. The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) has outlined this information, and our experts share it with those who support and evaluate classroom teachers. In addition, we offer workshops on implementing the Common Core standards for advanced students; strategies for raising teachers' expectations, and research-based methods for effective grouping leading to increased student success. Further, to meet diversity issues, they will learn about equitable practices and accompanying legal obligations, if any.

CAG professionals perform needs assessments in addition to evaluations of existing programs.