

DoDEA Gifted Rating Scale (6–8)

Please read prior to rating any students.

Dear Educator,

Gifted middle school students present significant quandaries for educators. They often seek to blend into the social world of middle school, denying their abilities in order to fit in. They may have internal conflicts about the degree to which they will conform. Newly aware of their limitations, they may begin to question their capabilities and feel that being less than perfect is unacceptable. Confronted with many new activities and options, they may find themselves with too much to do and no focus.

The first step in helping gifted middle school students is to identify them. At times students who are truly gifted are overlooked because their interests and learning patterns do not necessarily match classroom activities. Some gifted students may exhibit negative behaviors. They may challenge authority and school routines. They may show little tolerance for others or extreme sensitivity to others. Gifted students may be compliant or forceful, but the more important thing to consider is what they are revealing about their capabilities for deep, rich, and complex thought. If not identified, their need for challenges may be compromised and their social and emotional vulnerabilities may be heightened. This is particularly true for youngsters with very strong potential who are not finding correlating success in academic work.

High-achieving students are frequently perceived as gifted. Although many gifted students exhibit strong academic performance, this is not always the case. Likewise, many bright, high-achieving students who are successful because of hard work and strong support do not require differentiation. Gifted program services are not a reward for good work and good behavior. Rather, the gifted program provides support and challenges for highly capable students whose needs are beyond the standard curriculum.

You play an important role in the identification of students who may have exceptional abilities. As a trained observer, you have significant information about the students in your class. The Middle School Rating Scale is an instrument designed to help you notice students in your classes who may be exhibiting behaviors indicative of giftedness. The 15 characteristics on the rating scale are traits that have been documented in a number of research studies as characteristics of giftedness. Think about the students in your class and the degree to which they exhibit behaviors that match characteristics of giftedness. Please take time to consider each of your students as you complete the rating scale. By focusing on a profile of each child's strengths, you will be more empowered to work with everyone's potential.

(Signature of Gifted Resource Teacher)

(Date)