

Gar-Field High School Gifted Education Overview



Gifted Referral, Identification, Eligibility and Placement

Students may be referred for gifted evaluation through universal screening by the school or individually by anyone familiar with their thinking – teachers, parents, peers and the students themselves are common sources. Please contact Celeste Jacques at 703-730-7000 or JacqueCI@pwcs.edu to make a referral. Eligibility for resource support and participation in the Gifted Program is based on a comprehensive evaluation of multiple criteria and based on need. “Gifted” is not a definitive diagnosis, nor an achievement to be touted on applications nor a prophecy of future accomplishments, but more like an educational “prescription” for additional resources and opportunities to support growth based on advanced current ability and/or potential achievement.

Benefits of Participation for Identified Students

Regular involvement in the high school gifted program is intended to provide multiple benefits, which potentially impact nearly every aspect of academic and personal life:

- Advanced Communication, Collaboration, and Creative, Critical, and Conceptual Thinking
- Engaging and academically rigorous activities, readings and discussions
- Quality time with gifted peers in an environment away from the grade pressure of classes
- Opportunities to foster personal growth, understanding, and social-emotional health
- Connection to resources and guidance regarding future goals and plan development

The benefits that students individually receive from the seminar program depend largely on the effort they put into the activities and discussions. There are some students who speak very little during the seminars but gain a great deal from the experience because they are mentally processing their ideas. There are some students who speak all the time, but who do not process the ideas that are being shared. Most students are somewhere in the middle, but all can continue to improve both their contribution to discussions and the benefit they receive through engaged participation and reflection.

Every seminar group is different because the students who are in the group contribute much of the content. Seminars are student-centered discussions, and each student’s attendance and participation influences the entire group’s learning experience. In ninth grade, students learn to express their ideas and take intellectual risks with their peers. Tenth grade challenges students to grow in their curiosity and ability to connect ideas while grade eleven offers opportunities to analyze and evaluate complex, real-world issues. By graduation, students will be able to build on the ideas of their peers, respect the validity of conflicting ideas, and create new meaning and understanding as they consider the challenging ongoing questions of Identity, Reality, Knowledge, Ethics and pursuing a “life well lived.”

Evaluations

While high school gifted resource services (the seminars) are not graded like typical classes, annual evaluations for each student provide feedback from teachers and, more importantly, give the *students* the opportunity to think about the progress being made in the quality of *their own* thinking. There are also short answer questions to provide more open-ended reflection on the opportunities provided to improve collaboration, communication, and critical, creative, and conceptual thinking. All students are encouraged to spend a few moments reflecting on their current strengths and the ways they can continue to work toward becoming truly expert thinkers.