



Rockford Area Schools

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EXCEL Gifted and Talented Program

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Rockford Middle School
Center for Environmental
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**Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet
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**Rockford Middle School Center for
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Dear Parent/Guardian:

We have reached the point in your child's education where we want to begin thinking about how we can best service his/her needs during the upcoming intermediate years. In every decision REAMS makes, we strive to use staff and school resources to their fullest potential. In the case of our Excel Gifted and Talented Programming, the end of 3rd grade marks a transition to a more formalized approach because the way that resources are used to serve 4th-8th grade students is different than during the primary years.

To begin making decisions in this respect, we need to gather some more information. I am excited to share with you that we are one of the only districts in the area to utilize a newly developed tool called the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) Screener Form. This is a smaller version of the full CogAT tool we will use to assess selected students. Both are well supported in research studies as very successful ways to measure student reasoning abilities. **During the weeks of January 11 and January 18, all 3rd grade students will be participating in the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) screener.** It is a short, 30 minute, test.

Obtaining scores from a full grade level (instead of a selected group of students) will allow us to use local norms to identify gifts and talents of our students. While it is interesting to look at how students compare at the national level, national norms are not the most useful information for making decisions for a local school program. None of the art, music, or athletic activities at Rockford Area Schools accept participants based strictly on national norms and we want our students' academic talents to be treated in the same way. Testing all 3rd graders will give us insight into which students will benefit most from the various EXCEL program services.

If you have questions or concerns about this programming decision, please feel free to contact me.

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