

# Pathways Yearly Report

Data as of May 31, 2025  
Based on the 2024-25 school year

# What is Pathways?



- Pathways is the name for advanced learner (Gifted and Talented) services in the Waunakee School District.
- Pathways helps to determine students' current academic needs and whether there is a mismatch between those needs and the specific Waunakee Community School District curriculum.

# Who are the Pathways Specialists?

Waunakee has 4 educators working in Pathways (3.5 FTE):

*Full and half-time Specialists*

- **Lyn Cederholm** - AES & HES Specialist - 100%
- **Steven Stack** S- PES Specialist - 50% (50% Math Interventionist)
- **Andy Moll** - 5-8 Specialist 100%
- **Janell Dorn** - K-12 Coordinator & 9-12 Specialist 100%

# What is the District's Purpose with Pathways?

To meet identified educational needs, Pathways Specialists will:

- evaluate students' curricular learning needs.
- help provide resources for differentiated instruction within existing classrooms.
- provide support for acceleration within the departmental structure when needed.
- provide enrichment opportunities to enhance and extend students' experiences
- analyze existing data to identify students in need of further evaluation.

To support staff, Pathways Specialists will:

- provide extension resources.
- collaborate with staff to determine how to meet students' needs.
- provide professional development.
- work with teachers to support parent Advanced Learning concerns and questions.

# Which students can be supported through Pathways?

- All students at all grade levels K-12
- Some students are twice-exceptional ~ they may have a vulnerability in one or more areas, and an advanced ability in one or more areas.
  - English Learners
  - Special Needs Students
  - ADHD
  - Non-teacher pleasers
  - Students with non-traditional backgrounds
  - Students who struggle with Executive Functioning skills

# What is required by State Law?

## Statutes and Rules for Gifted Education

- Wisconsin Statute 118.35
  - Intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership or specific academic areas
  - State superintendent establishes guidelines for the identification of gifted and talented pupils
  - School BOEs ensure all GT students have access to program to meet needs
- Wisconsin Administrative Rule 8.01(2)(t)2.
  - School BOEs establish plan & designate Coordinator
  - Identification shall occur in kindergarten through grade 12
  - ID Process based on multiple measures
  - ID tools responsive to pupils' economic conditions, race, gender, culture, native language, developmental differences, and identified disabilities

# What is WCSD School Board Policy related to Gifted Education?

## Waunakee Gifted Education Board Policy

- Plan & program ID as needed; may require additional ed programming
- Multiple measure referral process
- Plan & program provides opportunity for parent participation
- Design and implementation consistent with district non-discrimination obligations & policies
- Giftedness can emerge or be first identified at different ages; initial identification cannot be based solely on a student's age or grade
- All licensed employees expected to collaborate to identify, meet student needs and implement Pathways program
- Pathways students will be provided with different academic plans and assignments in place of and not in addition to the regular curriculum and assignments

# Number of Identified Elementary Students

School	Students - may be identified in multiple areas
Arboretum	46
Heritage	29
Prairie	32

# Number of Identified Elementary Students in ELA

School	Students
Arboretum	21
Heritage	10
Prairie	12

# Number of Identified Elementary Students in Math

School	Watch List	Accelerated 1 Year	Accelerated Multiple Years
Arboretum	1	28	0
Heritage	1	14	2
Prairie	4	17	0

# Number of Identified Intermediate Students

Subject	Students
All - may be identified in multiple areas	117
ELA	80
Math Watch List	5
Math Acceleration - 1 Year	70
Math Acceleration - 2 Years	2
Math Acceleration - 3 or more Years	0

# Number of Identified Middle School Students

Subject	Students
All - may be identified in multiple areas	120
ELA	87
Math Acceleration - 1 Year	53
Math Acceleration - 2 Years	2
Math Acceleration - 3 or more Years	0

# Number of Identified High School Students

Subject	Students
All - may be identified in multiple areas	241
ELA	169
Math Acceleration - 1 Year	126
Math Acceleration - 2 Years	3
Math Acceleration - 3 or more Years	0

# District Wide Identification in Other Areas

While students can be referred in 10 different areas, most are referred for ELA or Math. The other areas in which students can be referred are: Science, Social Studies, World Language, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Creativity, Leadership, and General Intellectual. Below are the number of students currently identified in other areas.

Area	Number Currently Identified
General Intellectual - Typically, results in a Full Grade Level Acceleration	4
World Language Accelerated Placement	12
Science	1
Performing Arts	2
Creativity	1

# Students Currently in Process of Being Evaluated

Students will be evaluated before the end of the year or over the summer months if possible to allow for placement from the beginning of the next school year. More will be added when students move to Waunakee over the summer.

Level	ELA	Math	WL
Elementary	16	26	0
5-8	8	14	0
High	2	0	1

# Number of Referrals This Year By Level

Currently, students can be referred for evaluation for Pathways support at any time during the year. Specialists evaluate students as quickly as they are able to by fitting them into their schedules where they are supporting students, staff and families.

Level	Total Referrals this Year
Elementary	93
Grades 5-8	65
High School	19

# Number of Referrals This Year By Referrer Type

We've noticed a trend of fewer teacher referrals due to automatic trigger referrals based on test scores by PW Specialists and our new universal test - NGAT.

Referrer	Total Referrals This Year
Parent	60
Teacher	17
Self	12
Pathways Specialist - including auto-referrals	88

# Ongoing Pathways Initiative

As I shared in previous years, one of our largest initiatives is improving our identification process: While many students in the district are identified and receiving support for their advanced abilities, we know many students are missed. We are continuing our work on ways to improve our identification process so it is less reliant on families and staff referring students for evaluation.

- Automatic Triggers for Evaluation
  - We continue to find many students through this process.
  - Each spring the Specialists use standardized test data to help identify students for further testing in both ELA and Math.
- Naglieri General Abilities Tests (NGAT)
  - We began using the NGAT in the 24-25 school year as a Universal Test with all second grade students
  - Different type of evaluation: How they think vs. what they already know
  - Do not see this taking the place of referrals, but rather in addition to

# Inequity in Gifted Testing

As shared in the 23-24 school year report, identification of advanced learners in the Waunakee Community School District is currently not equitable.

We are not identifying students from all backgrounds in alignment with the total percentage of students from each population in the district.

Through our current referral process we identify students who are Talented and some who are also Gifted, but we're missing some of our gifted students, especially from marginalized populations.

**“Gifted” & “Talented”**: Need to better identify students who are Gifted but not necessarily Talented, have not yet acquired the skills to demonstrate their abilities.

# Traditional vs. Equitable Evaluations

Traditional Advanced Learner Testing: Students' prior knowledge or ability - What they already know

- Biased
  - Not all students have the same opportunities or experiences
  - Does not consider cultural differences
  - Requires students to read, write, & speak English
  - Requires students to communicate verbally and in writing

Equitable Assessment of Students: Students' Thinking Abilities - How they think

- Fair and Equitable
  - Removes prior experiences dependence
  - Culturally neutral questions
  - No spoken or written language used - everything is animated
  - No verbal expression - multiple choice

# Universal Test: Naglieri General Abilities Tests



The Naglieri General Abilities Tests Evaluate Thinking vs. Knowing

Three Tests:

- Verbal, Non-Verbal & Quantitative
- Each only takes 30 minutes to complete
- Online - can complete on an iPad

# 2024-25 Implementation Plan

## 2024-2025 School Year:

- Universal Test with all second grade students at the beginning of second semester
- Introduction to whole staff at the beginning of the school year
- Additional times with second grade, English Learners, and Special Education teachers for more in depth information session
- The purpose of the sessions is to help staff understand the purpose and the design of the test - not what we'll do with results as that is yet to be determined.

# 2025-26 Implementation Plan

## 2025-2026 School Year:

- Analysis of 24-25 data in relation to class composition
- Model of existing class placements vs. proposed data driven placements
- Universal Test with all second grade students at the beginning of second semester
- Analysis of 25-26 data
- Creation of proposed data driven classroom composition for the 2026-27 school year

# Plans For How This Will Change Pathways

- Need for Gifted Identification to be Equitable
- Our overall idea is to begin a Talent Development Model in the district
- Finding students from all populations - equitable identification
- Providing the experiences for all students identified with innate abilities
- Continue to use best practices for acceleration that are already established
- Continue to accept referrals
- Universal test will be in addition to the referrals
- Universal test should reduce the number of referrals received as students identified before receiving referral

# Further Information

Pathways Webpage on the District Website - Located on the  
[Curriculum and Instruction page](#)

Further Questions?