

NEWS FROM ACADEMICALLY GIFTED

The Middle School Edition

Quarter 3

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

~ *Nelson Mandela*



For more information on the choice options, visit Magnet and Choice Schools website:

<https://www.gcsnc.com/Domain/2425>

News from our School:

Plan now to attend the 2022 Choice Showcase! GCS is a nationwide leader in magnet and choice schools, just one of the ways the district is personalizing learning. Families have a wide variety of choices for their children's education—choices that build on or stimulate educational interests, foster academic achievement and provide cultural and ethnic diversity. Below are the details for the 2022 Showcase

February 1-4, 2022

- Interact with school leaders in live sessions.
- View videos and fact sheets about each school.
- Discover what makes these award-winning programs unique!



From the GCS AG Department

Guilford PAGE:

Advocates Needed! What's an advocate you ask? An advocate is a person who publicly supports a particular cause. For years, the dedicated board members of the Guilford County Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education (PAGE) have been champions in bringing the academic, social, and emotional needs of gifted students in Guilford County Schools to the forefront. Over the years, the students served in Guilford County Schools' academically gifted program have benefited from initiatives implemented by Guilford PAGE, such as: parent webinars; seminar presentations; access to online resources; and transportation grants for the Academic All-Star Camp field trips.

The AG Department of Guilford County Schools recognizes the impact Guilford PAGE has had in assisting the district with the implementation of an AIG Plan that aims to address the needs of academically gifted students in grades K – 12. The department depends on Guilford PAGE to be a consistent voice within the community as it relates to the implementation of effective programming for gifted students. **Although many of you support Guilford PAGE through membership, we are asking each**

of you to consider serving as a board member. All students served in the AG program have benefited from the efforts of Guilford PAGE. We must continue to have dedicated advocates who are willing to help others develop a better awareness of the academic, social, and emotional needs of gifted students. Please consider serving on the Guilford PAGE board. For more information, please contact Dibrelle Tourret, AG Director at toured@gcsnc.com.

Social Emotional Article:

The few pages provide tips you can use at home to address your academically gifted student's social and emotional development. The article was provided to us by the AG Department.

Transition to High School:

On February 10, 2021, in conjunction with the Guilford Parent Academy the AG Department is hosting a meeting for rising 9th grade students to learn about their transition to high school. The meeting will begin at 6:00pm, please use the link below to register for the Zoom link.

Link: <https://bit.ly/3zQK7T5>

The Case for Affective Development

2021 – 2022 Article Series: Adapted from *I'm Not Just Gifted* by Christine Fonseca (2015)



For the 2021 – 2022 academic year, the AG Department is using Christine Fonseca’s book, *I’m Not Just Gifted*, to provide information to the families of students receiving

academically gifted services on fostering the social and emotional skills of these students. This quarter’s newsletter will focus on emotional intelligence. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), there is a direct correlation between student achievement and social-emotional skills. The CASEL framework focus on the following skills: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making. These skills are an important part of human development and school success. More information about the district’s use of the CASEL social and emotional learning model can be found by visiting www.gcsnc.com and selecting the Social Emotional Learning and Character Education Department. This article provides tips on how parents/guardians and other caregivers can help academically gifted students develop the emotional intelligence needed for school success:

- **Help academically gifted students identify their strengths:** Many academically gifted students have trouble recognizing and acknowledging their strengths. This is can be attributed to desires for perfection. A strong desire for perfection causes academically gifted students to overly focus on areas of weakness and ignore their strengths. For this reason, adults raising and educating academically gifted students need to help these students learn how to correctly identify both weakness and strengths; so, when faced with challenges they will be able to recall positive traits. On the next page, Activity 1 highlights ways adults

can help academically gifted students identify their strengths.

- **Help academically gifted students learn how to manage fear:** “Healthy fear” are the reactions that cause us to evaluate our safety. However, “unhealthy fear” is closely aligned to ideals of perfectionism and can often prevent academically gifted students from taking risk and trying new things. For example, the fear of being wrong on a class assignment. According to Fonseca, “learning to recognize how fear impacts you as well as learning how to reduce the influence of fear is important to developing appropriate risk-taking skills” (pg. 41). To help your child better manage fear, have them reflect on a time that they were fearful:
 - What happened to caused them to be afraid? (fear trigger)
 - How did they feel? (fear symptoms)
 - How were they able to overcome the fear? (calming strategy)

When students can reflect on past experiences of overcoming fear, they are more prepared to take risk because they can reflect on the skills needed to overcome fears that may be associated with perfectionism.

- **Help academically gifted students develop an emotional vocabulary:** The emotional intensity displayed by academically gifted students can be hard to manage. This is partly due to the inability that some academically gifted students have to clearly describe their emotions and express when they are feeling overwhelmed. To help your child develop their emotional vocabulary, have them list emotions they have experienced and how the emotion was displayed in their body. For example, Frustration may be exhibited by clenched fists, tight jaw, and shallow breathing (Fonseca, 2015).
- **Help academically gifted students learn to manage feelings of being overwhelmed:** Learning to manage emotions and maintaining a positive perspective is a critical self-managing skill that is vital to the development of one’s emotional intelligence. On the next page, Activity 2 highlights ways adults can help academically gifted students learn to take

responsibility for their emotions and regulate their reactions to various life situations.

Activity 1: My Strengths

Begin this activity by helping your child understand these key terms:

- **Strength:** The knowledge, skills, attributes, and talents you use to overcome challenges.

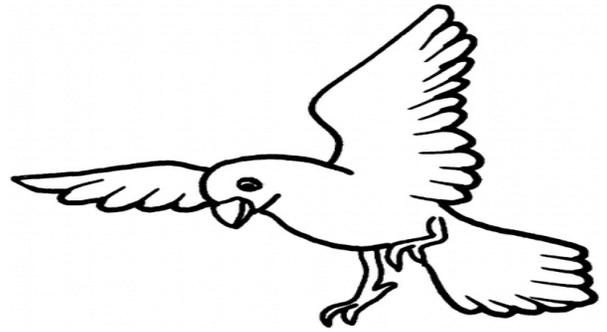
Examples:

- Someone who knows the capitals of all the states has a knowledge strength.
- Someone who knows how to tailor an outfit has a skill strength.
- Someone who serves those in need has an attribute strength of kindness.
- Your favorite singer has a talent strength in the area of music.

From these examples, we learn that our strengths are the things that are positive, that we do well; **but they must be developed over time.**

- **Weakness:** The lack of or opposite of strength. The knowledge, skills, attributes, and talents that are not YET as well developed as your areas of strength.
- **Perfectionism:** An unhealthy belief that you cannot grow from mistakes. A belief that we cannot turn our weak areas into strengths.

After you feel that your child has a good understanding of these terms, on a sheet of paper, have them draw two columns (on a separate sheet of paper you will need to do the same). In the first column have them write down their strengths; in the second column they will write down your strengths (you will need to do the same thing). When time is up, have your child share their personal strengths they you will need to share items you see as your child's strength that they did not include (be prepared to explain why you listed the item). Next have them share the strengths they see in you (compare your list with your child's list). Did your child list a strength that you once (or currently feel) is a weakness? If so, talk to your child about ways you grew from the weakness. After your discussion, give your child the bird cutout. Have them write down their strengths and tape it to their door to remind them that developing their strengths will help them soar.



You may find it necessary to enlarge the image

Activity 2: What I Control?

Have your child make a list of the overwhelming events that have recently happened to them. For each item, have them determine if they had control over the event or not. Also, ask them to list their typical reactions and help them determine which reactions were under their control and which were not. Now, on a sheet of paper have your child draw a big circle. Have them list the events/reactions within their control inside the circle, and everything else outside the circle. When they are done, have your child share how many events/reactions were completely within their control. Remind your child that one way not to become a victim to their emotions is to realize when they have the power to take responsibility for their emotions and regulate their reactions to life situations.