

DISTRICT

Waterbury

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PROGRAM NAME

Facilitation of Options Centering
Upon Scholarly Studies (FOCUS)

GRADES SERVED

4-12

**CONTACT
INFORMATION**

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DESCRIPTION

Grades 4-8: FOCUS is Waterbury's program for academically gifted students in grades four through eight. FOCUS operates on a resource room model in which identified students spend one day a week receiving special services. Resource rooms at each middle school serve sixth through eighth graders in the building and fourth and fifth graders from their feeder schools.

The curriculum is based on three components: core curriculum topics, skill development, and small-group or individual projects. At each grade level, the core curriculum is differentiated and based on special topics not usually studied or emphasized in the regular curriculum. These topics are used to enrich the students' learning experiences, stimulate students by exposing them to new areas or potential interest, and provide a springboard for in-depth investigations.

Skill development consists primarily of training activities designed to promote analytical thinking, communication skills, and methodologies appropriate for various types of research.

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These skills may be integrated into the unit being studied or presented as separate lessons. As students begin to work on group individual projects, the related methodological skills will be identified and taught.

It is expected that the group/individual will commit to the pursuit of an in-depth study which arises out of individual interests or interest generated by the unit being taught. This component of the program has the following purposes:

1. To encourage students to identify and pursue an area of study in greater depth than normally possible within the scope and pace of the regular curriculum; 2. To provide meaningful opportunities to apply higher level cognitive skills and research methodologies; 3. To permit students, to the greatest extent possible, to become productive and self-directed learners capable of contributing new ideas and information for themselves and their audiences, rather than simply collecting and reporting information from standard sources.

Grades 9-12: The high school program for the intellectually gifted students operates on a part-time supplementary resource model in which students receive special services from a resource teacher approximately three periods a week. The student's program includes small group seminars and independent study. The seminars consist of instruction and practice of process skills; additional seminars or mini-courses are presented by mentors or consultants on topics of students' interests. The independent study aspect of the program affords gifted students the opportunity to identify and pursue an area of interest in greater depth than normally possible within the scope and pace of the regular classroom.

In addition to the required seminar and independent study activities, the high school program will permit the following additional options, as deemed appropriate for individuals and groups: 1. Placement in courses in local colleges, 2. Off-campus placement or internships with mentors, 3. Participation in recognized state and national programs and competitions, and 4. Special large group events (conferences, workshops, symposia).