

A CHECKLIST TO IDENTIFY GIFTED UNDERACHIEVERS
Joanne Whitmore (1980)

Observe and interact with the child over a period of at least two weeks to determine if he or she possesses the following characteristics. If the student exhibits ten or more of the listed traits, including all that are asterisked, individual intelligence testing by a psychologist (Stanford-Binet5 or Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – 4th Edition WISC-IV) is recommended to establish whether he or she is a gifted underachiever.

- Poor test performance
- Achieving at or below grade-level expectations in one or all of the basic skill areas: reading, language arts, mathematics
- Daily work frequently incomplete or poorly done
- Superior comprehension and retention of concepts when interested
- Vast gap between qualitative level of oral and written work
- Exceptionally large repertoire of factual knowledge*
- Vitality of imagination: Creative*
- Persistent dissatisfaction with work accomplished, even in art*
- Seems to avoid trying new activities to prevent imperfect performance; evidences perfectionism, self-criticism
- Shows initiative in pursuing self-selected projects at home*
- Has a wide range of interests and possible special expertise in an area of investigation and research
- Evidences low self-esteem in tendencies to withdraw or be aggressive in the classroom
- Does not function comfortably or constructively in a group of any size*
- Shows acute sensitivity and perceptions related to self, others and life in general*
- Tends to set unrealistic self-expectations: goals too high or too low*
- Dislikes practice work or drill for memorization and mastery*
- Easily distracted; unable to focus attention and concentrate efforts on tasks*
- Has an indifferent or negative attitude towards school*
- Resists teacher efforts to motivate or discipline behaviour in class*
- Has difficulty in peer relationships: maintains few friendships*

From Joanne Whitmore (1980) Giftedness, Conflict and Underachievement, Allyn and Bacon. This is an excellent book on underachievement and demotivation among gifted students, which schools would find a most practical resource.