



Western Academic Talent Search

2010-2011 WATS Coordinators Guide

You Are Invited to Participate in the Western Academic Talent Search (WATS)!

Welcome to the 29th year of the Western Academic Talent Search! WATS is one program offered through the Center for Bright Kids, one of the national non-profit Regional Talent Development Centers. WATS enables **academically talented 3rd through 9th graders to take the ACT, SAT, or EXPLORE test at a much earlier age.** This above-level testing experience allows students to:

- better evaluate their strengths
- practice taking a more challenging test
- compare their scores with other high achieving students
- qualify for special summer or academic year opportunities or scholarships
- receive recognition of their outstanding abilities

We welcome back coordinators whom we've worked with for years, and welcome new coordinators or potential coordinators who are interested in getting more students involved in the national academic talent search at your school. This Coordinators Guide is intended to help you identify and notify students who qualify for talent search about this program. We ask that regardless of whether you might sign up your own son or daughter, you still allow families the opportunity to make a personal choice about the fit of academic talent search with their own childrens' educational needs and goals. The Guide also provides tips and hints that our veteran coordinators have thought you'd find useful, as well as frequently asked questions that families may have for you, or you often have for us.

Please discuss the WATS program with families at your school – in an age of phishing and scams, we want to assure you that the academic talent search has a long-standing national reputation for excellence, advocacy, and educational purpose and is affiliated with Johns Hopkins, Duke, and Northwestern Universities as our sister Regional Talent Development Centers. We need the help of schools and districts to provide families with information about the benefits of this national program.

If you are new and you feel uncomfortable with your understanding of the program and its benefits, please give us a call. We are happy to walk through the program with you in your own regional contexts, or perhaps we can arrange to come out and offer a family night to educate those who have qualified about the program—you can sit in and experience a mini-training. Please do not hesitate to call us with any questions or concerns about **WATS or CBK at 303-428-2634 or email us at cbk@centerforbrightkids.org**. **The process of identifying students and providing families with a choice regarding this program is relatively quick and simple.** Let us help you make this an opportunity at your school!

Let's recognize our kids for their academic accomplishments and open some additional doors for educational opportunities and scholarship. Please share the program and distribute the application bulletins to counselors, teachers, parents and qualified students as soon as possible. Deadlines are creeping up quickly! Just give us a call if you need more copies of the Bulletin. Thank you so much for your participation – we hope to talk with you soon!

The Center for Bright Kids Regional Talent Development Center is a nonprofit 501(c)3, with academic enrichment and acceleration programs for motivated, high-achieving students in grades K-12. CBK has been in operation for 29 years from Denver, Colorado.

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WATS seeks the assistance of schools in order to identify academically talented and highly motivated students who qualify for this special opportunity. Here are the ways your school or family liaison can participate in assisting us in this process:

1) Carefully read the full 2010-2011 WATS Registration Bulletin.

2) Identify whether a coordinator already exists or did exist at your school or in your district – make sure you touch base with your district or school personnel for gifted and talented. Please email us this updated information at cbk@centerforbrightkids.org!

3) Identify students with qualifying criteria – many states, such as Colorado, have gone to a proficiency measurement rather than a percentile. Any student with an **“advanced” on any section** of the state standardized test (in Colorado the CSAP) qualifies for WATS – otherwise, you are looking for a 95% or higher. GPA or Honor Roll lists are sometimes also helpful – **one recommendation letter from you including a list of qualifying students can serve in place of qualifying test score reports. Or, you can issue a standard letter that states, “you qualify,” which can serve in place of a family submitting a score report. If you call us with your overall identified number of students, we will ship you copies of the Bulletin to distribute to your students.**

4) Invite qualifying students to participate – please email us if you would like us to send you an electronic sample letter template that you can edit to make this process simpler. Prior participants will have already been invited back by WATS.

5) Call the WATS office at 303-428-2634 or email us to request additional copies of the Bulletin or 2010-2011 Application (students must use the current year app!). You are welcome to copy any of these materials as needed, or we can send you a box if we have ample advance notice. However, **we ask that you please not copy and distribute just the application to new families**, as we have found that they really need the full Bulletin and instructions to be successful in applying to the program. Also, call us or email as a liaison for your school, district, or community with any recurring questions or feedback so that we might continue to improve the program materials.

6) Post the test dates and deadlines on the back of the Bulletin in a convenient location – you might run a copy with your invitation letter (we can also email this document to you).

7) Hold a family information meeting prior to or following sending out the invitations for participation. **Let us know if you would like us to join you to present the program** and answer questions. We also can hold school district or community large group meetings for staff and/or families if this is more effective in your area. For communities outside of Colorado, we can coach you through this presentation and provide materials. For larger presentations, we may also be able to travel and provide this service for your large group.

8) Assist families with the application process, ensuring applicants **meet the appropriate deadlines and applications are filled out correctly** – see the line by line **“how to” instructions in the Bulletin.**

9) In early April, you will receive a list of all of those students who elected to test and release score information to schools. Many of these students will be invited to the state recognition ceremony if one is available in your location. Scores and recognition will be noted on your list. **We invite you to also attend the ceremony to share in your students' recognition.**

10) Distribute participation certificates that will be sent to you with your list in April to students who registered with WATS (**certificates and score info only for students who released info to the schools will be included in this mailing**). You might include distribution of these certificates in your school's end of the year ceremony.

Tips and Hints Regarding Academic Talent Search Registration:

- It is important for each parent to have the WATS Bulletin (full-color 12-page fold-out) **and** an application (included inside the Bulletin) for families to receive complete info. Please let us know if we can send you copies.
- The Western Academic Talent Search (WATS) fee to process the application is a **one time nonrefundable amount of \$43 per applicant made payable to CNDC CBK**. No matter how many tests the students plan to take it is still one \$43 WATS fee. This is the **ONLY** fee to include with the application unless testing for EXPLORE. There will be fees that need to be paid to the ACT and SAT test companies during the second step of registration that will be mailed to families. The fee does not renew and must be paid each year. Multiple students within the same family should submit separate checks for clarity, with the student name and test listed on the memo line.
- If taking the EXPLORE test an additional fee of \$30.00 per applicant is applied. So the check amount would be \$73 per applicant and this amount is **made payable to CNDC CBK** with the application for a one-step process.
- If taking the SAT or ACT, the additional test fees are paid directly to the companies with the secondary registration – only a \$43 fee is paid to CNDC CBK.
- **WATS does not charge the SAT or ACT late fee** – the testing company does. Therefore, if a family receives the secondary registration for SAT or ACT late due to late registration with WATS and will not make the original postmark deadlines of the company, they should not send a late fee to WATS. The late fee will be included with the testing company fee when they mail the secondary registration to SAT or ACT. The WATS fee remains \$43. This is not the case if a family is registering for EXPLORE, which is a one-step process. **Families DO include a late fee with their \$73 EXPLORE costs to WATS if applicable.**
- Each applicant needs to have copies of either a **score report or a letter of recommendation** for eligibility attached to the application. The application **cannot** be processed without this information.
- Our website will have a lot of great information, including program descriptions, test dates and test sites, deadlines for applying and the downloadable WATS application forms with online payment: www.centerforbrightkids.org. **Families paying online using PayPal MUST include their PayPal receipt stapled to their application at the time of registration.**
- Please have the families phone us at 303-428-2634 or email us at cbk@centerforbrightkids for more information or to have additional questions answered.

Other Frequently Asked Questions:

- 1) **Can I take more than one test?** YES – still one \$43 WATS fee no matter how many tests you choose to take. 6th graders can take all three. You will only pay WATS ONCE.
- 2) **Which test should I take?** Depends on the kid. ACT and EXPLORE kids tend to be content-driven, do well in school, absorb content knowledge easily, and watch educational programs; SAT kids tend to be problem-solvers, puzzlers, pattern-finders, and critical thinkers. Kids who have never taken a long test should start with EXPLORE if they are 6th graders and can't decide. Keep in mind many states now mandate the ACT for high school graduation, so this is great practice for initial testing. Students can participate again and take SAT.
- 3) **What about financial aid?** WATS does offer reduced fees, as well as full test fee waivers for ACT. Families must include free and reduced lunch documentation or income tax forms with application for consideration and a check for \$25. The program can be free or low-cost. EXPLORE and SAT do not offer test waivers.
- 4) **How do I find a local test site?** Go to www.centerforbrightkids.org and click on "Enroll Now," then scroll down to "Test Locations" and click on the test to search near you. EXPLORE testers enter this code on the WATS app. SAT and ACT will enter the code on the secondary application which will be mailed to them within 3-5 weeks.
- 5) **Can my school be a testing site?** Local high schools are probably already sites for ACT and SAT testing, and we cannot establish new sites due to test security. However, if you are interested in your school being a testing site for EXPLORE and have at least 10 kids who will be registering, please contact us prior to November so that we can get you set up. This process requires a school official contact who will help complete the paperwork and find test day proctors.

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Center for Bright Kids Regional Talent Center

		STEP ONE (WATS)		STEP TWO (FAMILY)	
ACT	Test Date	WATS Receipt Deadline	WATS LATE Receipt Deadline	ACT Company Receipt Deadline	ACT LATE Receipt Deadline
<i>\$43 Paid to CNDC CBK \$33 Paid later to ACT Late Registration: \$21 Date/Site Change: \$20 Standby Testing: \$41</i>	12/11	10/15	10/25	11/5	11/19
	2/12	12/13	12/27	1/7	1/21
		STEP ONE (WATS)		STEP TWO (FAMILY)	
SAT	Test Date	WATS Receipt Deadline	WATS LATE Receipt Deadline	SAT Company Receipt Deadline	SAT LATE Receipt Deadline
<i>Registration fee: \$43 Paid to CNDC CBK \$47 Paid later to SAT Late registration: \$24 Date/Site Change: \$24 Standby Testing: \$41</i>	12/4	10/15	10/25	11/5	11/19
	1/22	11/23	12/6	12/23	1/7
SINGLE STEP (WATS)					
EXPLORE	Test Date	WATS Receipt Deadline	WATS LATE Receipt Deadline		
<i>Registration Fee: \$73 paid to CNDC CBK (\$43 WATS fee + \$30 test fee) Late Registration: \$20 Date/Site Change: \$19 No Standby Testing</i>	1/22	12/20	1/3		
	2/19	1/7	1/28		

Please remember that the **ACT and SAT are a two-step registration** process. Participants must meet the WATS deadlines **FIRST**, then are responsible for making the test company deadlines – **watch the mail for registration packets**. Late testing dates are available, but **will not qualify** students for State Recognition Ceremonies (SAT 3/12 & 5/7; ACT 4/9). The **EXPLORE is a one-step** process with WATS deadlines only.

For example, in order to take the February 12th ACT, students must submit a **WATS application to CBK** before December 13th. **ACT materials will then be mailed to the family**, who must complete them using the Talent Search codes and then **send ACT materials directly to ACT** before January 7th. CBK cannot be held responsible for postal service delays or delivery errors. CBK makes every effort to process registrations and return secondary ACT and SAT packets within 2 weeks. Please plan ahead for December mailing delays. The WATS fee is nonrefundable.

A bright spot for bright kids...

Check out our website at www.centerforbrightkids.org!

Both the WATS Application and online payment are available on the WATS link.

Once online payment is finalized, families can fax in the application and receipt to 303-428-2638.

or email a scanned copy to cbk@centerforbrightkids.org. They **MUST** include a PayPal receipt upon registration!

Also, you can check out CBK Summer Programs, open to students across the country and internationally!