

Hamilton Township School District

Gifted and Talented Procedures

Policy #2464 - GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPILS (M)

Section: Program

Date Created: October 2000

Date Edited: September 2020

Staff Members responsible:

- District Gifted and Talented Coordinator
- Gifted and Talented Content Coordinator (2) (Job description to be determined)
- Gifted and Talented Teacher
- Building Administrators
- Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- Other Designated Staff

Programs Grades K-5

The program components provide each child the opportunity to demonstrate characteristic behaviors of convergent and divergent or inventive thinking.

Some of the characteristics of convergent thinking are as follows:

- Grasps concepts quickly
- Recognizes flawed reasoning
- Intuitively sees correct answers
- Sees interrelationship of clues
- Defers judgment

Some of the characteristics of divergent or inventive thinking are as follows:

- Fluency
- Originality
- Elaboration
- Flexibility

In Grades K-1:

Identified students in grades K-1 will receive ongoing support and advocacy by the Gifted and Talented Content Coordinator which shall include but not be limited to the creation of their Gifted Student Education Plan (GSEP), the tracking of services provided to the student and ongoing communication with their teachers in the execution of their GSEP

- Students who demonstrate competencies significantly beyond their peers will be identified using multiple measures and will receive instruction in a small group re-grouping sessions according to their GSEP. Daily instruction will be customized for these students with the support and input of the classroom teacher and Gifted and Talented Coordinator.

In Grades 2-5:

The gifted education teacher will advocate for and support students in grades 2-5 via services as defined in each student's Gifted Student Education Plan (GSEP).

- Complex problem solving tasks will be completed.
- Activities will foster collaboration, self-esteem, problem solving and creative thinking skills.
- Project-based modules/units will be completed geared to maximize the unique gifts each child possesses.
- The gifted teacher will capitalize on students' giftedness to support them to work above and beyond their ability.

Gifted and Talented within the Regular Program may include the following:

- **Enrichment Activities** - When working on critical thinking skills the gifted teacher prepares additional challenge work for the identified gifted students, so they can continue this work within the classroom setting. These enrichment activities require the application of academic concepts using higher order thinking skills
- **In Class Support** - Opportunities to work with and discuss issues with academic peers. Provide students gifted in specific subjects or skills the opportunity to work together on projects in order to challenge themselves within the classroom setting
- **Acceleration**- Extension of grade level curriculum to accelerate learning
- **Curriculum Compacting** - Academic support to extend and/or accelerate the school curriculum through the process of compacting previously-mastered or quickly-acquired material. Upon demonstration of grade level skills mastery, students may move on to related analytical material and activities
- **Cluster Groupings in the Regular Classroom** - Cluster groupings of students for instructional purposes, CG is the intentional placement of high achieving or gifted students in an otherwise heterogeneous classroom with a teacher who has the background and willingness to provide appropriate challenges for these students.
- **Schedule modifications** - Adjust the schedule to support students attending higher grade content while in their current grade

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- **Differentiation for All** - Intentionally design and craft classroom environments which focus on higher order thinking strategies, student choice/voice, questioning to drive learning and purposeful technology integration, and encourage a climate of risk, perseverance and innovation. By planning unique, rigorous, differentiated learning experiences, focused on 21st century competencies, teachers empower all students to make strong content connections and strengthen their essential “real world” thinking skills. As students (GT & others) plan, design, create, reflect and celebrate their work, they cultivate the highest level of thinking skills and develop the tools necessary to reach their full potential.
- **Social and Emotional Learning Support** - Advisory sessions with guidance counselors and participation in SELCurriculum (Second Step)

Identification of Students:

Steps in Identification Process:

1. Identify not only students who are already high achieving in the domain but also those with potential but underdeveloped achievement.
2. Look for students who have outstanding performance or potential for outstanding performance when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment.
 - a. [Assessing Classroom Differentiation Protocol](#)
 - b. [Assessing Classroom Differentiation Scoring Form](#)
3. Using local and subgroup norms will ensure that underrepresented populations are included.

School-Wide Enrichment Program (SWEP) Gr. K-5

Curriculum:

The SWEP is designed to supplement the regular education curriculum, implemented as both an enrichment program used with academically gifted and talented students as well as a magnet theme/enrichment approach for all students, thus providing opportunities & experiences for underserved/under identified students to demonstrate their abilities (lens for equity). The theme of the SWEP is to develop the strengths and talents of ALL students as follows:

- Materials chosen reflect the **New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)** and Enrichment activities focus on providing students with opportunities to explore interests and strengths while promoting creativity. Throughout the year students will be presented with various dilemmas, situations, and/or tasks which will require the use of higher order thinking and problem solving skills.
- Students under the direction of the SWEP teacher (Media Specialists) will be expected to use inquiry, investigative and exploratory skills to formulate a plan, solution or product.
- A combination of independent, partner and group work will be exercised to ensure student success. Teamwork and teambuilding will be emphasized in an effort to strengthen social

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ties and connections among students. Student output will be shared and celebrated; reflection of the thought and learning process will be encouraged.

- Students who exhibit a high level of ability in one or more of the SWEP areas when compared to their chronological peers in the district will be identified and entered into the Identification Matrix for Tier I (see below)

Identification of Students:

All kindergarten through grade five students participate in the SWEP delivered by the Instructional Media Specialists.

Student Responsibility:

Students are required to regularly participate actively in classroom discussions and activities. They are graded based on their effort and participation.

Program Start Date:

The programs commence at the start of the school year.

A multifaceted identification scheme may include:

- Norm-referenced measure of aptitude for reasoning in the domains for which services will be provided (for example, verbal reasoning scores considered for placement into language arts services and quantitative reasoning scores for placement into mathematics).
- Scores interpreted using local norms.
- Qualitative measures that add descriptive information about students' performance or potential in the domains for which services are provided. Qualitative measures may include portfolios of work samples, problem solving activities that demonstrate reasoning, and parent or teacher rating scales
- Consider the standard error of measurement; refrain from strict cut-off scores
- Avoiding a one size-fits-all program.
- Alignment with state and or federal code/regulations and district policy.
- Referrals may be made by administration, teachers and parents

Three tiered process Grades 2-5:

October- December, End of 1st Trimester -

- Data collected for Beginning of the Year (TS GOLD, Linkit Benchmark testing).
- In class observations made in search of outliers on a rotating basis.
- Data collected for Reading Levels at the end of first Trimester
- Data entered into Identification Matrix for Tier I
- Report card data collected for analysis and entered into Tier II of Identification Matrix
- All data entered into Excel grid for Tier I and II
- Tally of Tier I and II data to determine eligibility for screening.

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- Identify those eligible for Tier III and share with the building Principal and the District Gifted and Talented Coordinator

January Week 1 and 2-

- Meeting with the Gifted Education Teacher, the building Principal and the District Gifted and Talented Coordinator
- Letters requesting permission to screen sent home to parents of eligible students.
- Complete matrix form & folders for each child moving on to Tier III.

January Weeks 2, 3, 4 -

- Inform classroom teachers of those students to be screened and work collaboratively to create a testing schedule for the two screening tools. The two tests can not be given on the same day.
- Distribute the Multiple Intelligence Survey to the appropriate homeroom teachers.
- Administer the Naglieri and Torrence screening tools.
- Make up testing
- Collect the Multiple Intelligence Surveys.
- Scoring of each will be completed simultaneously during this time frame.

February week 1,2 -

- Enter screening data onto student matrixes and tally Tier III.
- Meet to discuss the results of all data collected and confirm the list of newly identified 2nd grade students.
- Inform Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services of newly identified students so they can be identified accordingly in Genesis (gold star) and/or other relevant areas.
- Inform Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services of newly identified students so they can be scheduled into the 6 day rotation cycle.

February week 2, 3 -

- Notify parents of students that did not meet the criteria for the program
- Gifted Education Plan meetings with parents of the children found eligible to participate in our Gifted Education program.

February week 3 :

- Newly identified students will begin participation in the Gifted Education program

Summer following Grade 2:

- Test scores received during the summer are examined to ensure that no student is overlooked by the matrix system.
- Eligibility scores are adjusted according to the current year population. (No set number as it will change each year with the population's scores)

Ongoing Screening Process:

- New-to-district students will have their Tier I and II data reviewed as they enter our district at any grade level. Students found eligible for screening will be moved on to Tier III and will be screened.
- New-to-district students coming into Hamilton Township Schools with Gifted and Talented status from their previous district will be moved directly to Tier III of the Hamilton Township Gifted Education Matrix and be screened using the identification tools.
- CogAt (cognitive abilities test) - this is administered in Hamilton Township School District to all grade two students. The results are reviewed during the summer, after second grade, to check and balance the district's gifted education program identification process. Adjustments will be addressed on an as needed basis using established program protocol.

Parental Involvement

- Parents will be contacted between Tiers 2 & 3, prior to further evaluation.
- Following the completion of Tier 3, a meeting will be scheduled with parents to finalize the process and complete the GSEP for those found eligible for services.

Student Responsibility:

Students are required to regularly participate actively in classroom discussions and activities. Students are expected to abide by all student identified responsibilities noted in their GSEP. They are graded based on their effort and participation.

Program Start Date:

- Programs for identified students will commence no later than the second full-week of school in September.

The Middle School Gifted & Talented Program:

Gifted students in Grades 6-8 may exhibit the following abilities:

- **General Intellectual Ability** - Exceptional ability in both verbal and non-verbal reasoning, often characterized by advanced vocabulary and abstract reasoning
- **Specific Intellectual or Academic Ability** - Exceptional ability in either verbal or non-verbal reasoning. These students are exceptionally high achievers in a specific academic subject to the extent that the normal curriculum may be insufficient.
- **Creative or Productive Think Ability** - Exceptional ability in developing original and/or unusual ideas, especially as solutions to problems. Such students are very imaginative and often willing to take risks when sharing their ideas
- **Psychosocial Ability** - Exceptional interpersonal skills or leadership ability, sometimes characterized by the ability to organize people and tasks, and motivate others. Often these students have strong moral and social concerns

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- **Visual and Performing Arts Ability** - Exceptional ability in art, music, drama or creative writing. These students are highly committed to their art form and often show imagination and originality within general artistic disciplines
- **Psychomotor Ability** - Exceptional ability in fine and/or gross motor skills. Students may have exceptional ability in balance, strength, agility and physical endurance

Identification of Students:

- Students who have previously been identified in the elementary school will maintain their Gifted identification upon movement to the middle school by the use of Genesis identification (gold star) and the transfer of their GSEP portfolio.
- The District Gifted and Talented Coordinator will monitor transitions between elementary to middle and middle to high school to ensure the continuity of services across schools and grade levels.
- The Gifted and Talented Content Coordinator will ensure that the GSEP is updated and followed by current teachers as the student transitions to middle school.
- Additionally, teachers at the middle school will look for unidentified students who have outstanding performance or potential for outstanding performance when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment.
- Multiple measures may include but are not limited to Report Card Grades in all content areas, NJ State Testing performance, and other Benchmark Tests.
- Newly identified students will be referred to the Gifted and Talented Content Coordinator for further observation and evaluation.

Steps in Identification Process:

1. Identify not only students who are already high achieving in the domain but also those with potential but underdeveloped achievement.
2. Look for students who have outstanding performance or potential for outstanding performance when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment.
 - a. [Assessing Classroom Differentiation Protocol](#)
 - b. [Assessing Classroom Differentiation Scoring Form](#)
3. Using local and subgroup norms will ensure that underrepresented populations are included.

Program Start Date:

The program commences at the beginning of the school year.

Gifted and Talented within the Regular Classroom

- **Enrichment Activities** - When working on critical thinking skills the gifted teacher prepares additional challenge work for the identified gifted students, so they can continue this work within the classroom setting. These enrichment activities require the application of academic concepts using higher order thinking skills
- **In Class Support** - Opportunities to work with and discuss issues with academic peers. Provide students gifted in specific subjects or skills the opportunity to work together on projects in order to challenge themselves within the classroom setting
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- **Schedule modifications** - Adjust the schedule to support students attending higher grade content while in their current grade
- **Differentiation for All** - Intentionally design and craft classroom environments which focus on higher order thinking strategies, student choice/voice, questioning to drive learning and purposeful technology integration, and encourage a climate of risk, perseverance and innovation. By planning unique, rigorous, differentiated learning experiences, focused on 21st century competencies, teachers empower all students to make strong content connections and strengthen their essential “real world” thinking skills. As students (GT & others) plan, design, create, reflect and celebrate their work, they cultivate the highest level of thinking skills and develop the tools necessary to reach their full potential.
- **Additional education activities** such as academic competitions, guest speakers, and lessons with a specialist
- **Social and Emotional Learning Support** - Monthly advisory sessions with guidance counselors, weekly participation in SELCurriculum (Second Step), peer support groups as coordinated by the Gifted and Talented Content Coordinators

Extended Related Arts Gr. 6-8

“Extended Related Arts” is offered to seventh and eighth grade middle school students. Sixth graders are eligible for two of the eight extended related arts courses, as we believe sixth graders should experience all of the available related arts’ courses during their first year at the middle school.

Curriculum

- An extended curriculum is provided for students to increase their learning time in the following Related Arts areas: Graphic Arts, Creative Arts, Concert Band, Show Choir, S.T.E.M. or World Languages (Spanish).
- Students are afforded the opportunity to take 2.5 trimesters periods of one of these Related Arts.
- All students will complete .5 trimester of World Languages, as required by the New Jersey Department of Education. Students who choose World Languages as their extended Related Arts will take 3 trimesters of this subject.
- Sixth graders are eligible for extended Concert Band and Show Choir.

Identification of Students:

All sixth through eighth grade students are given the opportunity to participate in the Extended Related Arts Program (sixth graders are only eligible for Concert Band and Show Choir).

The process for course selection is as follows:

- Related Arts teachers explain the program options to all sixth graders (7th graders are already involved in the program) in April.
- Each child formally provides their guidance counselors with their top three choices via a form that is to be completed at home and returned to their current Related Arts teacher.
- Every effort is made to provide each child with their top preference of choice; however, due to space and demand in the program, top preference of choice is not guaranteed.
- Students are encouraged to make their choices carefully and consider their interests and talents.
- Priority seating will be considered if remaining with the same Related Arts course from seventh to eighth grade.
- Teacher recommendation via the grade five band & choir teachers is utilized to determine which sixth graders will participate in extended Concert Band & Show Choir.

Course Offerings:

Arts

Graphic Arts; Creative Arts

Performing Arts

Concert Band; Show Choir

World Language

Spanish

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Technology

S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)

Student Responsibility:

Students are required to regularly participate actively in classroom discussions and activities. They are graded based on their effort and participation.

Program Start Date:

The programs commence at the start of the school year.

Gifted and Talented Appeals Process

Any parent has the right to appeal the decisions of the district regarding Gifted Education Programming. The appeal process is as follows:

1. Parent/Guardian will first contact the building principal.
2. Building principal will schedule an Appeals Committee meeting, consisting of the District Gifted and Talented Program Coordinator, Gifted Education Teacher and/or the Gifted and Talented Content Coordinator, one regular classroom teacher, one guidance counselor and an administrator.
3. The meeting will be set within 10 working days of initial contact by the parent/guardian.
4. The Appeals Committee will review the identification and/or screening process for the student and make an informed decision regarding placement.
5. The Building Principal will verbally contact the parent to communicate the decision.
6. A letter confirming the telephone call and the decision will be sent to the parent/guardian and a copy will be placed in the student's file. Notes documenting the procedure will be entered into Genesis.
7. If the individual wishes to appeal the decision of the Appeals Committee, the matter will be directed to the Director of Curriculum & Instruction who will make a final determination in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools.
8. An individual who believes that the district has not complied with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-34 et seq. may file a complaint with the Board of Education. This Policy is linked to the HTSD homepage. The Board shall issue a decision, in writing, to affirm, reject, or modify the district's action in the matter.
9. If not satisfied, the individual may file a petition of appeal of the Board's written decision to the Commissioner of Education through the Office of Controversies and Disputes in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:6-9 and the procedures set forth in State Board of Education regulations.