Indian Springs School District #109

Gifted and Talented Program

Developed August 2004

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Definition

State of Illinois
Gifted and talented children exhibit high performance capabilities in intellectual, creative, and artistic areas, possess an exceptional leadership potential, excel in specific academic fields, and have the potential to be influential in business, government, healthcare, the arts, and other critical sectors of our economic and cultural environment. Gifted and talented children require services and activities that are not ordinarily provided by schools; and outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata and in all areas of human endeavor.

Federal
Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.

Philosophy

District #109 believes commitment to providing every student with a quality education that will instill a desire and ability to achieve their maximum potential is an essential factor in the education process. It is believed that by identifying those students in need of advanced enrichment and developing personalized programs of instruction, we can more effectively serve their individual needs.

Goals

- Provide a quality education to all learners that meets their individual needs
- Identify students who are in the greatest need of advanced academic differentiation
- Use an identification system that accurately identifies students from all demographics
- Offer ongoing professional development that increases knowledge and teaching practice
- Communicate with stakeholders about the program

IDENTIFICATION

(IL Code 227.20)

Illinois Code requires districts to identify students in the upper five percent of its population. This will be accomplished through a matrix system that is multi-faceted, using formal and informal data (e.g. achievement tests, aptitude tests, and teacher observation/recommendation).

Who is identified?

- Upper 5% population in each intermediate grade level at each building
- Underrepresented populations
- Twice exceptional gifted students
- Gifted underachievers
- Culturally diverse gifted students
- Low socioeconomic gifted students

A yearly analysis of student data is conducted each spring. The screening process includes several measures which are based on multiple factors that includes, but may not be limited to, achievement and cognitive test data, teacher recommendation, inventories, classroom observations, and portfolios of student work. The selection process includes the analysis of the **Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR), the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), and Teacher Recommendation.** These scores are weighted in a matrix which is used to identify the upper 5% of each intermediate grade level at every building.

APPEALS PROCESS

It must be recognized that identification of gifted and talented students is not, and cannot be, perfect. There will always be students for whom the identification processes are insufficient. Given this, it is critical that the search for information is as rigorous and comprehensive as possible. When parents or staff have a question or concern about identification, they should contact school administration.

PROGRAMMING

(IL Code 227.20*)*

Elementary School (Grades 4-6)

Students in the upper 5% population are clustered in one classroom per grade level. If there are more than six students, two or more clusters may be formed. Research indicates that gifted and talented students are more motivated and successful when there are others who learn like them in the same classroom. Those students who are high achieving but do not fall into the top 5% will be placed in the other classrooms in the grade level. These students may become the leaders in their classroom and benefit from being clustered with high achieving peers.

Middle School (Grades 7-8)

Math

Students in the upper 5% population in math will be placed in the accelerated Math class alongside their high achieving peers. This course is designed to expose learners that excel in math to an advanced, high school math curriculum. Those students that do not fall into the gifted or high achieving criterion will be placed into math classes that match their appropriate ability level. Research has shown us that in the middle school years, mathematical placement produces the most success when students are placed by ability. This model will allow all learners to be exposed to math content at the level of pacing that meets their needs.

ELA

Students in the upper 5% population in ELA will be placed in the accelerated ELA class alongside their high achieving peers. Research indicates that gifted and talented students are more motivated and successful when there are others who learn like them in the same classroom. Those students who are high achieving but do not fall into the top 5% may be placed in the other classrooms in the grade level. This model will allow all learners to be exposed to ELA content at the level of pacing that meets their needs.

CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

Students in the top 5% and the lowest 5% are in the most need of curriculum differentiation. Teachers will meet the needs of the gifted and talented students by using the following differentiation strategies in their classroom when appropriate.

Compacting

Giving students full credit for what they know about an upcoming unit and/or providing advanced students opportunities to learn new material in a shorter time period than needed by classmates

Independent Study

Ongoing in-depth research on a topic of a student's own choosing

Flexible Grouping
Grouping and regrouping students throughout the year according to readiness, interest, learning style, achievement level, activity preference, or special needs

Tiered Assignments
Varying the level of complexity, depth, or novelty of a lesson so students can go beyond basic requirements of an assignment

Extension Menus
A selection of topics from which a student can choose to pursue an independent study that extends the learning beyond already mastered content standards

Interest Centers/Groups
Ways to organize students to work together on learning activities or projects

Learning Center
Location of a collection of students' tasks and activities

Learning Contract
A signed agreement between student and teacher regarding specific tasks to be done by the student

Mentorships/Apprenticeships
Opportunities for students to work with a mentor for guidance in a particular area

Questioning Strategies
Using high level, open-ended questions meant to challenge thinking and learning

ASSESSMENT MEASURES

(IL Code 227.20)

Illinois Assessment of Readiness
(IAR)
The IAR tests are high quality, computer-based K–12 assessments in Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy. The tests are aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards and measure what students should know at each grade level.

Cognitive Abilities Test
(CogAT)
The CogAT is a series of tests that provide information about the level of development of general and specific cognitive skills of students from kindergarten through grade 12. The

primary purpose of CogAT is to provide a description of the student's cognitive potential for learners that teachers can use to help the student achieve instructional objectives. Three subtests are constructed to measure general cognitive skills using verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal types of test tasks.

NWEA/Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

MAP is a computer-adaptive test, as the student answers correctly, questions get harder. The purpose of MAP is to determine what the student knows and is ready to learn next. It is designed to measure student achievement in the moment and growth over time.

Teacher Recommendation Rating Scale

The rating scale is an adaptation of the *Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students* (Renzulli, J.S., et al, 2004) published in *The Cluster Grouping Handbook* by Susan Winebrenner, M.S. and Dina Brulles, Ph.D in 2008. Teachers rate students on 33 statements that encompass a wide range of areas of giftedness.

REFERENCES

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