

District Regulation

2464 - GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPILS (M)

Section: Program

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Staff Members responsible:

- District Gifted and Talented Coordinator
- Shaner Gifted and Talented Content Coordinator
- Hess Gifted and Talented Teacher
- Davies Gifted and Talented Content Coordinator
- Building Administrators
- Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- Teachers and Other Designated Staff

Professional Development:

HTSD offers a variety of paths for Professional Development and Training to meet the needs of our teachers when working specifically with our Gifted and Talented students. On-demand, self-paced training and Help Videos are available along with additional, live, customized professional development.

The Elementary Gifted & Talented Program may consist of:

1. A School-Wide Enrichment Program (SWEP) Gr. K-5
2. Push in and/or Pull-Out Programs in grades K-5
3. Curriculum Compacting
4. Cluster Grouping in Regular Classroom
5. Differentiation
6. Accelerated Learning
7. Social Emotional Learning Support

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 across content areas by using a lens of 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 ties and connections among students. Student output will be shared and celebrated; reflection of the thought and learning process will be encouraged.
- Students that 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 discussed for recommendation for Tier 1 of the Gifted and Talented identification process.

Identification of Students for SWEP:

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

Student Responsibility:

Students are required to regularly attend class, to participate actively in classroom discussions and activities, and maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Program Start Date:

The programs commence at the start of the school year.

Gifted and Talented in Grades K-5

In Grades K-1 (Push-In and Pull-Out):

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

- Students who demonstrate competencies in mathematics and significantly beyond their peers are identified and will receive weekly instruction in a small group re-grouping session. Daily instruction will be customized for these students with the support and input of the mathematics coordinator.
- The reading specialist will identify students who demonstrate reading competencies that are significantly beyond their peers and will conduct a reading group weekly for these students. Daily instruction will be customized based on the level at which each child is testing.
- Shaner's Guidance Counselor and Social Worker teams will coordinate with the G&T Coordinator in order to review data gleaned from psychosocial and social-emotional assessments (as needed). These data are used to generate an individualized plan befitting each child.
- Routinely, Shaner's program will be delivered to identified students through an in-class learning model and teachers will receive coaching on differentiated, tiered practices and applications therein.
 - Additionally, students may receive pull-out service for a "monitoring-extension-celebration" during which students will work on and complete a project/research-based performance task independent of their typical classwork. This will occur exclusively within *pull out*.

Caution must be exercised not to exceed the developmental level of the child as text beyond the two grade levels is typically not appropriate for primary-aged students.

In Grades 2-5:

The Hess gifted education teacher will advocate for and support students in grades 2-5 via pull-out services as defined in each student's Gifted Student Education Plan (GEP). Recommended pull-out services may include but are not limited to 80 minute sessions; once every 6 days.

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

Gifted and Talented within the Regular Elementary Classroom:

- **Enrichment Activities** - When working on critical thinking skills the 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** - Provides opportunities for students to work with and discuss issues with academic peers. Students gifted in specific subjects or skills have 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 provides appropriate challenges for these students
- **Schedule modifications** - Allow the adjustment of the student schedule to support students attending higher grade content while remaining 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. As students (G&T and 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, weekly participation in SEL Curriculum (Second Step), peer support

Identification of Elementary Gifted and Talented 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.
3. Use local and subgroup norms to ensure that underrepresented populations are included.

Multifaceted identification scheme may include:

- Norm-referenced measure of achievement in each domain for which advanced services will be provided.
- Norm-referenced measure of aptitude for reasoning in each of the domains for which services will be provided.
- 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
- Referrals can also be made by administration, teachers and parents by way of a written letter to the gifted and talented program coordinator stating the desire for an evaluation for participation in the Gifted and Talented Program.

K-5 Identification Timeline:

October- December, End of 1st Trimester -

- Data collection (TS GOLD, F&P, MAP testing, Start Strong Assessment, CogAt (grades 1 & 5))
- In class observations made in search of outliers on a rotating basis
- 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
- Identify those eligible for Tier III and share with the building Principal, District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction

January

- Schedule meeting with the Gifted Education Teacher and/or Building Gifted and Talented Coordinator, the building Principal, the District Gifted and Talented Coordinator and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to discuss data
- Letters requesting permission to screen sent home to parents of eligible students.
- Complete matrix form & folders for each child moving on to Tier III
- Inform classroom teachers of those students to be screened and work collaboratively to create a testing schedule for the screening tools
- Administer the screening tools
- Provide for make-up testing
- Scoring completed simultaneously

February

- 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 K and 2nd grade students
- Inform Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services of newly identified students so they can be labeled 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
- Send letters home to the parents of children found ineligible to participate in the Gifted Education program (This must happen before the parents of identified students are notified)
- Gifted Education Plan meetings with parents of the children found eligible to participate in our Gifted Education program

- ❑ Newly identified students will begin participation in the Gifted Education program on their scheduled day of the 6 day rotation

Summer:

- ❑ CogAt scores are examined to ensure that no student is overlooked by the matrix system. Composite SAS and Nonverbal SAS scores are reviewed
- ❑ Eligibility scores for the CogAt testing are adjusted according to the current year population. (No set number as it will change each year with the population's scores)
- ❑ Hess Gifted and Talented Teacher and School Coordinators meet to discuss the continuation of programming and Gifted Education Plans (GEP) for students moving from Shaner to Hess, from Hess to Davies and from Davies to GEHT

Ongoing Screening Process:

- New-to-district students will have their Tier I and II data reviewed as they enter HTSD 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 will be screened using the identification tools.
- CogAt (cognitive abilities test) - will be administered in Hamilton Township School District to all students in grade 1 and grade 5. The results will be reviewed during the summer 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 II & III, prior to further evaluation.
- Following the completion of Tier III, a meeting will be scheduled with parents to finalize the process and complete the GEP for those students found eligible for services.

Student Responsibility:

Students are required to regularly attend class, to participate actively in classroom discussions and activities, maintain satisfactory academic progress and abide by their identified responsibilities noted in their GEP.

Program Start Date:

- The G & T program for grades K-1 will commence as students are identified for their entrance into the program
- The G & T programs for grades 2-5 will commence no later than the second full-week of school in September.

The Middle School Gifted & Talented Program may consist of the following

1. Core Content Acceleration and Advancement
2. Curriculum Compacting
3. Cluster Grouping in Regular Classroom
4. Differentiation
5. Accelerated Learning
6. Extended Related Arts (Grades 7 & 8)
7. Social Emotional Learning Supports

**Core Content (English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies and Science)
Acceleration/Advancement Gr. 6-8**

Offering acceleration in the core subject areas of Math, ELA, Social Studies, Science, Music, Art and World Language allows each students' specific type of intelligence to be met.

- 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
- 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 of Middle School Students in Grades 6-8

- Students who have previously been identified in the elementary school will maintain their identification upon movement to the middle school by the use of Genesis identification (gold star) and their GEP portfolio.
- The District Gifted and Talented Coordinator will monitor transitions between elementary to middle school and middle to high school to ensure the continuity of services across schools and grade levels.
- During the Summer, the Gifted and Talented Teacher and Coordinators will meet to discuss the continuation of programming and Gifted Education Plans (GEP) for students moving from Hess to Davies and from Davies to GEHT.
- The Davies School G&T Coordinator will ensure that the GEP is updated for middle school and followed by Davies 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, the CogAt taken in 5th grade, other Benchmark Tests and teacher recommendation.
- Identified students will be referred to the Davies Gifted and Talented Content Coordinator for further observation and evaluation.

Student Responsibility:

Students are required to regularly attend class, to participate actively in classroom discussions and activities, maintain satisfactory academic progress and abide by their identified responsibilities noted in their GEP.

Program Start Date:

The programs commence at the start of the school year.

Gifted and Talented within the Regular ELA, Math, Social Studies, Science and Related Arts Classroom may include:

- **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
- **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. As students (G&T and 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** - Monthly advisory sessions with guidance counselors, weekly participation in SEL Curriculum (Second Step), peer support groups as coordinated by the Gifted and Talented Content Coordinators
- Additional education activities such as academic competitions, guest speakers, and lessons with a specialist may be utilized as appropriate

Pre-Algebra and Algebra – Grades 7 & 8

These classes are for students who demonstrate above grade level mathematics skills as well as, the motivation and the ability to work independently. The purpose of these advanced math classes is to enhance math concepts and problem solving. Emphasis will be placed on opportunities for students to build their math skills through participation in activities which require higher level thinking skills. Resources utilized are aligned with the district mathematics curriculum and therefore, reflect the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) for Mathematics.

Curriculum:

These classes offer students the opportunities to:

- Extend foundational mathematical skills.
- Deepen problem solving skills.
- Complete Pre-Algebra in 7th grade followed by Algebra in 8th grade.

Identification Process for All Students Interested in Participating in Advanced Math Classes:

Mathematics Analysis Sheets – Math teachers will complete a student analysis sheet for each student that compiles multiple data sources including but not limited to: the most current report card grades, MAP Growth Test, and State Assessment results for all students in grades six, seven and eight following the conclusion of the third marking period. Based on the data presented, teachers will make recommendations for participation in higher level math classes. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction will meet collaboratively with the building principal, the Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services, the Guidance Counselor and the mathematics coordinator to discuss the outcome of the analysis sheets and student placement for the upcoming school year. This process has been designed to capture and include as many eligible students into the Advanced Mathematics classes as possible. HTSD's goal is to promote inclusivity not exclusivity to higher level math classes.

Pre Algebra and Algebra Criteria – The program is designed for all students who have the ability to work independently, demonstrate above average critical thinking skills, and show advanced math problem solving skills. Students are selected for the accelerated math classes based on a combination of these characteristics and the student data compiled on the student analysis sheets. Available class space may affect the number of students eligible to participate.

New Students – Students entering the district during their Grade 7 and 8 academic years will be subject for admission to the program based upon the previous school's recommendations and an analysis of performance using the district's mathematics matrix.

Student Responsibility:

Students are required to regularly attend class, to participate actively in classroom discussions and activities, maintain satisfactory academic progress and abide by their identified responsibilities noted in their GEP.

Program Start Date:

The program commences at the beginning of the school year.

Extended Related Arts Gr. 6-8

“Extended Related Arts” is offered to all seventh and eighth grade middle school students and to sixth grade students participating in Concert Band and Show Choir.

Curriculum

- An extended curriculum for 7th and 8th grade students is provided so as to increase their learning time in the following Related Arts areas: Graphic Arts, Creative Arts, Concert Band, Show Choir, S.T.E.M., World Languages (Spanish) or Computer Science
- Students are afforded the opportunity to take 2.5 trimester 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 will experience a rotation of all available related arts courses over their first year in middle school

Identification of Students

All sixth through eighth grade students are given the opportunity to participate in the Extended Related Arts Program (sixth graders are 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 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 for Gifted and Talented students exhibiting a giftedness in a particular subject area.
- Priority seating will be considered for students that remain with the same Extended 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

Technology:

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

Computer Science

ESports

Student Responsibility:

Students are required to regularly attend class, to participate actively in classroom discussions and activities, maintain satisfactory academic progress and abide by their identified responsibilities noted in their GEP.

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. Parents/Guardians 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.