

Gifted and Talented Plan

HOLLAND TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

710 Milford-Warren Glen Road, Milford, NJ 08848

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Gifted and Talented Program Philosophy

Students in the Holland Township Public School District who are gifted learners in any of the four areas; **intellectual, academic, creative, or leadership**, will receive education and support commensurate with their abilities and needs, resulting in the realization of their full potential, and maximum contributions to self and society.

Pupils with identified gifts and talents have unique academic, social, and emotional needs. When their needs are not met, there is a loss to the individual, school, and society. Three of those most basic needs are:

1. **An advanced level of challenge and/or pace;**
2. **Socio-emotional fulfillment through interaction with other students of similar ability; and**
3. **Support in dealing with issues such as perfectionism, sensitivity, loneliness, underachievement, and depression.**

These needs are best met on an **ongoing daily basis**, within the general education environment, by an appropriately trained school staff with access to adequate resources. This is not the responsibility of one person. All school district staff including administrators, teachers, related support staff and counselors, as well as parents, must be involved with planning, implementing, supporting and evaluating the Gifted and Talented Educational Services provided to our students. The students themselves have the responsibility to take advantage of the opportunities and services provided to them.

Gifted and Talented Educational Services

The Holland Township School District uses the Response to Intervention (RtI) three-tiered model to provide appropriate services for all students including those with identified gifts and talents. Since RtI is a district wide initiative, it is an effective way to provide systematic and continuous services beyond the core curriculum. The RtI process provides students with:

- High quality differentiated core curriculum;
- Ongoing assessments to identify learning needs;
- A tiered system of evidence-based interventions to meet identified learning needs; and
- Progress monitoring to ensure that interventions are appropriate and are resulting in adequate student growth.

RtI creates an integrated and seamless continuum of service for students and is implemented using culturally-responsive and evidence-based practices. Originally introduced as a way to help struggling students before they were referred for special education services, RtI is increasingly being recognized as an effective way to respond to the learning needs of all students.

Student movement through these RtI tiers is a fluid process based on student needs. Needs are determined through an ongoing, balanced system of assessments. A student may need intervention at some times and not others; in some subjects or all subjects. Needs are continually assessed and instruction/intervention is adjusted as needed.

Tier I Services

Students receive differentiated, high quality, culturally responsive, research-based, core instruction aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards to match their advanced learning needs. Differentiation is NOT additional work; it is different work. Techniques may include, but are not limited to:

- Anchor activities;
- Telescoping;
- Choice menus;

- Learning centers;
- Tiered assignments;
- Adjusting questions;
- Hardest problems first;
- Enrichment activities;
- Alternate assignments/assessments;
- Leveled texts/learning materials; and
- Counseling support.

The Gifted and Talented Coordinator will provide teachers and staff members a continuity of resources to differentiate instruction. Teachers and staff members continually review data from a balanced system of formal and informal assessments including pre-assessments, reading benchmark data, standardized test results, classroom assessment, and teacher observations. This data is used to identify student learning needs, monitor and document progress, and adjust instruction as needed.

Students meeting the minimum entrance criteria into the G&T program will be automatically placed into Tier I services.

Tier II Services

If Tier I services are not enough to keep a student learning at an appropriate level and pace, the teacher will contact the Gifted and Talented Coordinator to collaborate regarding the provision of Tier II gifted interventions. Signs that a student has learning needs beyond Tier I may include:

- Continued demonstration of proficiency, even when provided with more depth, breadth, complexity and higher level challenges; and
- Lack of appropriate progress from where the student started. Gifted students learn at a much faster pace relative to their age peers. They should not be expected to slow down and wait for others to catch up.

In Tier II small groups of students may receive strategically targeted instruction based on deepened learning goals in flexible groups which allow gifted students to work with others of similar ability within the classroom environment. The small groups may receive this instruction in a push in/or pull out scenario.

Grouping strategies which allow for advance work with others of similar ability;

- Curriculum compacting;
- Telescoping;
- Alternate assignments/activities/projects offering greater complexity and requiring higher level thinking skills;
- Alternate assessments based on higher level thinking;
- Academic competitions;
- Enrichment options;
- Online programs;
- Specialized curriculum;
- Counseling support.

Tier III Services

A small number of students may require more advanced instruction than those provided through Tier II. When this situation arises, the Gifted and Talented Coordinator, along with the I&RS team will convene to develop a Tier III plan. The team will review data and collaborate to create an intervention plan that meets each student's individual needs. Intervention at Tier III is individualized and intensive. It typically replaces most or all of the grade-level core instruction in one or more content areas. Tier III services will be provided in a pull out setting to be determined by the team.

Tier III Interventions may include, but are not limited to:

- Curriculum compacting;
- Online or Advanced level coursework;
- Independent projects;
- Working with a mentor;
- Dual enrollment;
- Subject or grade level acceleration;
- Counseling support.

Nomination and Identification of Students with Gifted and Talented Needs

The **Holland** Township School District utilizes data from multiple measures to identify students as gifted learners. These measures may include screeners, pre-assessments, reading benchmarks, standardized tests, rating scales, classroom assessments/products, portfolios, nominations, and teacher observations.

Nominating Students for Gifted and Talented Educational Services

Gifted learners will often nominate themselves for services via their classroom performance. When students demonstrate mastery of topics prior to instruction and /or exceed grade level expectations, they are providing evidence of their need for gifted services. Students can be nominated for gifted services by teachers, parents, or school staff members.

The Gifted and Talented Coordinator will review standardized test scores and schedule needed evaluations to determine eligibility for G&T services. Test score review can help in the identification of gifted underachievers and gifted students in traditionally underrepresented groups. The Gifted and Talented coordinator will also periodically conduct a classroom search for students who show signs of giftedness in the areas of leadership, creativity, and the arts.

Nomination/Evaluation Process

Faculty will complete and submit the grade appropriate referral form (located on the district website) to the I&RS building coordinator. District personnel will conduct evaluations as required. Nominations need to be received by building I&RS coordinators prior to April 1st of each school year. Evaluations will be completed and parent notification of placement will be completed within 60 school days of the receipt of the nomination.

The following criteria needs to be met for entry into the G&T program: intellectual, academic, creative, or leadership.

- a) **Intellectual** a minimum of one criterion must be met

Full scale IQ at or above 125

Aptitude test at or above the 90th percentile

Other evidence of intellectual giftedness (authenticated by the school Psychologist)

b) **Academic** – a minimum of two criteria must be met

Achievement test score in the exceeds expectations range (NJSLA 785 minimum)

Documentation of student performance two or more years beyond grade level

Other evidence of academic giftedness (endorsed by the G&T coordinator)

c) **Creativity** - a minimum of two criteria must be met

Score of 15 for Creative strengths or 115 Torrance Test of Creative Thinking

Student general evidence (creative thinking activity or project)

Letters of recommendation from third party, cannot be parent or guardian; minimum of two

d) **Leadership** - a minimum of two criteria must be met

Student generated evidence of leadership activity

Letters of recommendation from third party, cannot be parent or guardian; minimum of two

Once the initial screening and evaluation are complete, parents will be notified of their child's status in the district G&T program by the G&T coordinator. Student needs in the program will be regulated each marking period by the Gifted and Talented Coordinator.

Appeals Process. Parents/Guardians may petition the District's Gifted and Talented Coordinator for an appeal to be reviewed by the District's I&RS team. The G&T Coordinator will contact the parents/guardians of the I&RS team's decision within 60 days of receiving the letter of appeal.

Appendix A Glossary of Terms

Acceleration: Interventions that move a student through an educational program at a faster than normal rate

Achievement Test: A test that measures what students have learned in a specific content area relative to the expected achievement of average students

Aptitude Test: A standardized test designed to predict an individual's ability to learn certain skills

Cluster Grouping: A grouping method that places the top five to eight high ability students in the same grade level in one classroom

Compacted Curriculum/Compacting: Streamlining the regular curriculum to "buy time" for enrichment, accelerated content, and independent study. Usually involves "testing out" of classroom content and using that time for challenge or enrichment activities

Concurrent Enrollment: Allowing students to attend classes in more than one building level during the same school year

Contracting: Allows students to contract for grades and /or choose from a variety of available project/product options. This strategy allows students an option to eliminate repetition of material already mastered, moving at their own pace, while insuring mastery of content, through enrichment and /or acceleration

Differentiated Instruction: A matching of instruction to meet the different needs of learners in a given classroom by modifying delivery, time, content, process, product, and the learning environment. One or more of these elements can be modified to provide differentiation

Evidence-Based Instruction: Refers to empirical research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge. This includes research that : employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment; has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review; involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn; relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and can be generalized

Flexible grouping: Grouping students based on readiness, interests, and abilities on an assignment-by-assignment basis

Grade Acceleration: Double promoting a student such that he/she bypasses one or more grade levels

Higher-Order Thinking Skills: Questioning in discussions or providing activities based on processing that require analysis, synthesis, valuation, or other critical thinking skills

Independent Study Projects: Structured projects agreed upon by student and supervising teacher that allows a student to individually investigate areas of high interest or to advance knowledge

Intelligence Quotient (IQ): A measure of cognitive ability as determined by standardized test

Intervention: Provided by school staff, these are learning activities designed to help a student improve performance relative to a specific, realistic, and measurable goal. Interventions are based upon valid information about present levels of performance relative to grade-level expectations, realistic implementation with fidelity, and may include modifications and accommodations. Interventions are multi-tiered, research-based, target-specific skills, time limited and parent inclusive

Learning Contracts: Student and teacher jointly develop a contract for accomplishment of learning outcomes; often involves a streamlining of regular class work

Mentoring: Establishment of a one to one relationship between a student and an outside of school expert in a specific topic area or career

Progress Monitoring: The ongoing process of collecting and analyzing assessment data to determine student progress toward specific skill goals or general outcomes. At Tier II and Tier III, progress monitoring data is used to make instructional decisions about the effectiveness of intervention to accelerate student learning that increases the learning rate and enables the student to meet a specific goal designed to meet at least minimum proficiency levels.

Response to Intervention: A process for achieving higher levels of academic and behavioral success for all students through high quality research-based instruction and interventions, regular monitoring of student progress using multiple measures, and collaborative, data-based educational decision making