QUEST:
Question, Understand, Explore, Seek, Think
The Bernards Township Schoolwide Enrichment and Gifted & Talented Program

Bernards Township School District
Grades K-5

Prepared by:
Kristin Fox
Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction
David Persily, Gifted and Talented Teacher, Oak Street School
Jessica Kovacs, Gifted and Talented Teacher, Cedar Hill School
Kerry Linstra, Gifted and Talented Teacher, Mount Prospect School
Grace Campbell, Teacher, Liberty Corner School
Devin Glinsky, Gifted and Talented Teacher, Liberty Corner School

School year 2019-20
Committee Members

Katie Miller, Teacher, Oak Street School
Lisa Brouillard, Teacher, Liberty Corner School
Kathleen Heitman, Teacher, Cedar Hill School
Kimberly Mazza, Teacher, Oak Street School
Stephanie Corcoran, Teacher
Tara Bowman, Supervisor of Mathematics/District Testing Coordinator
Paul Ciempola, Principal, Cedar Hill School
Jane Costa, Principal, Oak Street School
Joanne Hoseny, Principal, Mount Prospect School
Jenna Hawkswell, Assistant Principal, Liberty Corner School
Karen Fischer, Parent, Cedar Hill School
Tara Desaino, Parent, Liberty Corner School
Karin Hanlon, Parent, Oak Street School
Arthi Krishnan, Parent, Mount Prospect School
Karen Gray, Board of Education
Linda Wooldridge, Board of Education
Robin McKeon, Board of Education

Program Mission Statement and Vision

Mission
The mission of the Bernards Township identified gifted program is to challenge all children to pursue appropriate learning opportunities that promote gifted behavior. Gifted behaviors are evidenced when above average ability, task commitment, and creativity result in original materials, products, and/or performances that reflect the highest standards of a discipline.

Program Goals

- Develop the academic potential of identified gifted learners.
- Encourage and challenge students in their areas of specific abilities and interest by providing opportunities for in-depth learning in their area of talent and interest.
- Develop the thinking dispositions and affective skills such as risk taking, curiosity, and intrinsic motivation necessary for students to become independent learners.
- Encourage opportunities for interaction with academic peers to develop self-awareness and self-efficacy.
- Development of social and leadership skills, fostering a sense of societal responsibility.
- Encourage creative productivity through the development of higher order thinking skills such as problem solving, decision-making and critical thinking in all students.
- Foster ongoing professional development to support classroom differentiation of content, process and product.
**Definition**
The district employs the New Jersey State Board of Education definition of giftedness as defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:8 as:

*Those exceptionally able students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers in the local district and who require modification of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.*

“Giftedness consists of an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits — these clusters being above-average general abilities, high levels of task commitment, and high levels of creativity. Gifted and talented children are those possessing or capable of developing this composite set of traits and applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance. Children who manifest or are capable of developing an interaction among the three clusters require a wide variety of educational opportunities and services that are not ordinarily provided through regular instructional programs.”


**Standards**
The Gifted program has been developed to reflect the Exemplary Standards outlined in the Gifted Program Standards Pre-K-Grade 12 developed by the National Association for Gifted Children.

**Analysis of Current Program**
The model for gifted education in Bernards Township until 2009 was the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM). SEM provided three different types of learning opportunities for students, depending upon their skills, interest and motivation. Type I activities consisted of “Interest Building” motivational components. Type II activities consisted of “How To” skills needed to develop proficiency in an area. And type III activities, “Independent” level, consisted of extension provisions included to address the needs of high ability, highly motivated, and/or highly creative students. A “Type III Project Springboard”, which could be modified for use with any curriculum unit, was included to provide independent courses of study. The enrichment teacher and classroom teacher were expected to collaborate to facilitate the effective implementation and delivery of the lessons. The enrichment teacher’s primary role was to provide support in the form of overall collaboration. Since the lessons took place in the regular classroom the classroom teacher was expected to implement plans...
unless otherwise stipulated. The primary objective of this process was to facilitate the
development and transfer of strategies and skills that the classroom teacher was able to
independently apply in the future.

In 2009, SEM was eliminated due to budget cuts that impacted programs throughout the
district. At that time, the district’s approach to meeting the needs of gifted students was
through differentiation within the classroom.

In 2014, the district re-instituted a formal Gifted & Talented program. The initial
recommendation was to provide programming through a combination of Cluster Grouping
and Telescoping Math, where identified students would be placed in the Telescoping Math
program, while other students benefited from targeted instruction through the cluster
grouping model. Teachers in the regular classroom would be better equipped to meet the
needs of students at all ends of the spectrum if the range of abilities in each classroom
covered a smaller range of abilities. However, scheduling constraints prevented the
implementation of a cluster grouping model and the focus of the Gifted & Talented program
has been Telescoping Math for students in Grades 3-5 since 2014.

Identified students complete the 3-6 Grade NJSLS in Mathematics over the course of grades
3-5. Upon completion of 5th grade Telescoping Math, students are eligible for placement in
Accelerated Math 06 in William Annin Middle School.

Students are identified through a process that includes COGATs, NWEA’s MAP Assessment
in Mathematics and the The Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior
Students (SRBCSS), specifically teachers complete a motivation and mathematics scale on
each student. Students are identified for placement in the program if they earn a minimum
number of points on the Telescoping Math rubric.

Program Review
The Elementary Gifted & Talented/Enrichment Committee was convened on in October, 2019 to
review the current Gifted & Talented program offerings and explore opportunities to expand
programming to a wider range of students across a broader range of disciplines.

The goals of the Elementary Gifted & Talented/Enrichment Review Committee were as follows:

- Review/Consider Revisions to Telescope Math Program gr 3-5
- Consider research and comparable district Gifted & Talented Education Programs
- Recommend next steps for school wide enrichment

The committee met four times in the fall of 2018. The committee reviewed the current program and
completed a self-evaluation. The district contracted with Dr. Lenore Cortina, Faculty Coordinator of
the Gifted Education Graduate Certificate Program, to serve on the committee and provide her
knowledge and expertise to the committee’s work. The committee broke into sub-committees to
examine three topics: The Identification Process, Telescoping/Accelerated Math Programs and
Comparable District Programs.
The committee held numerous discussions reviewing current programming challenges and considered alternate approaches to programming. The district staff, in consultation with Dr. Cortina, continued to review the compiled research and committee input and prepared recommendations for program revision.

Our conclusion is that Telescoping/Accelerated Math program likely meets the needs of a specific population of gifted students in Grades 4 and 5 whose skills and motivation in mathematics are truly maximized by the opportunity to accelerate and access content at higher grade level content bands. However, we believe further analysis is needed as students continue through the program. We recommend that we continue to analyze the effectiveness of the Accelerated Math program and its impact on student success in Grade 7 Algebra I and beyond. Further, we do not believe Telescoping Math is meeting the needs of all students, particularly many in Grade 3. By refining the identification process and eliminating Grade 3 we believe it will better meet the needs of all students and we will be able to expand the program to include students of a broader range of interests and abilities across grades K-5.

Program Description

Introduction

The QUEST (Question, Understand, Explore, Seek, Think) program is based on the belief that talents emerge when students are given opportunities to develop and display abilities in their area of talent and interest. It is this philosophy of talent development which provides the base on which the program has been built. It is our belief that all students benefit from valuable enrichment experiences and should be given opportunities for exposure to such experiences. The QUEST program provides varied enrichment opportunities for all students through special presentations, in-class enrichment experiences, or small group interest based projects and school-sponsored contests. An ongoing identification procedure has been established to identify students who demonstrate exceptional general or specific abilities, in one or more content areas, beyond those of their chronological peers. Students who demonstrate advanced abilities will have opportunities to participate in specialized programming to develop these advanced abilities. Identified students will be considered for curriculum modifications, advanced out of class mathematics instruction, and facilitation of independent projects as deemed appropriate through collaboration of the gifted and talented teacher with the classroom teacher(s). Curriculum modification may take the form of compacting, acceleration, or curricular enhancement as required for maximum academic growth.

Schoolwide Enrichment Programming Options

Enrichment opportunities for all students will be provided as agreed upon by the classroom teacher and the gifted and talented teacher in the form of:

Special Topics: Special topics or enrichment seminars will be arranged by the gifted and talented teacher. Students will be invited to participate in enrichment presentations based on interest and teacher referral. These enrichment seminars provide opportunities for interaction with professionals to develop career awareness in students and to identify and clarify student interests. School-sponsored opportunities for all students may be made available for participation in contests, clubs and competitions.
Enrichment experiences within the classroom will be offered to provide thinking skills and creativity instruction within the grade level curriculum areas or in other related disciplines as required to enhance instruction and develop thinking/creativity skills in all students.

In-depth Independent Investigations: The gifted and talented teacher will work to support the classroom teacher in the facilitation of in-depth investigations for students working independently, with small groups or as a whole class.

Role of the QUEST Teacher

Direct
• Pullout for telescoping math or advanced classes (ID)
• Pull out/push in for special projects (ID)
• Enrichment: Pull out/push in to work with small interest groups (ID or SW)
• Facilitate advanced programming options (ID)

Indirect
• QUEST teacher as resource for classroom differentiation (SW)
• Provide professional development to support SWE
• Develop curriculum to support programming options (ID)

Programming Options for Identified Students

Kindergarten through Grade Five
Students in grades Kindergarten through Grade 5 will be selected for specialized learning opportunities in accordance with the identification procedures outlined later in this document. Along with the options outlined above, the program options available include:

Classroom modifications
The classroom teacher and the gifted and talented teacher will collaborate to develop meaningful curricular and instructional modifications appropriate for the identified gifted learner.

Modifications may include:
• Curriculum Compacting- The classroom teacher assesses mastery of curricular material through formal or informal pre-testing. Curriculum content is then streamlined for the student and appropriate replacement acceleration and enrichment activities will be developed by the classroom teacher, in collaboration with the gifted and talented teacher.
- **Flexible or cluster grouping** – Identified students may be grouped with other high ability students for specific advanced learning activities as prescribed by the classroom teacher.
- **Modification of content, process and products** - Differentiation for the identified student may include advanced content, materials and resources, alternate assignments, complex depth and focus of an assignment, or modifications of time and length requirements for an assignment.

**Accelerated Math Grades 4 and 5**
Students identified for Accelerated Mathematics work with a QUEST teacher and their classroom teacher to learn the standards of fourth through sixth grade mathematics during their fourth and fifth grade school years. Upon successful completion of the telescoping math program, students are eligible to enroll in Grade 6 Accelerated Math.

**Out-of-Classroom Opportunities**
Identified students may be given opportunities to participate in higher level thinking activities/units/projects with academic peers outside of the regular classroom. These learning experiences will address the academic and affective needs of students with a variety of learning styles beyond classroom instruction. Students may be placed in these groups based on ability, talent, and interests as determined by the selection committee and QUEST teacher.

**In-Classroom Enrichment Opportunities**
The QUEST teacher may act as facilitator for in-class enrichment experiences for students who require enrichment beyond the regular classroom offerings, regardless of their identification status. Students who are not identified can be referred by their classroom teacher to the QUEST teacher to pursue in-class enrichment opportunities such as independent research or activities that foster critical thinking. Additionally, the QUEST teacher may provide whole-class enrichment lessons at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

**Identification Procedures**
Since the QUEST program seeks to serve the school population as a whole through enrichment experiences, the primary purpose of the identification process is to find and serve students who require academic modifications in order to maximize their potential performance. Regardless of their identification status, every student will have opportunities to explore their interests and develop their talents through enrichment options provided by this program. Students will be identified for specialized services beyond the schoolwide enrichment options offered in the QUEST program through an identification procedure that utilizes multiple measures of aptitude and ability. These measures include both qualitative and quantitative criteria and reflect the student’s performance as compared with peers in the local school district.

All students in Grades K-5 will complete the Renzulli Profiler. The Renzulli Profiler identifies student academic strength areas, interests, learning styles, and preferred modes of expression, which can then be matched with personalized, high interest, engaging educational
activities and resources. The Profiler can be used by students, teachers and parents to match students with interesting and engaging work.

**Kindergarten – Grade 2 Identification Procedures (Fall)**

**Nomination:**
Teachers and parents may nominate a student for consideration for identification. Nominations will be requested formally in the fall of each school year. However, identification procedures are ongoing and nominations can be made at any time. Once a child is nominated, a permission slip for further testing and parent rating scale will be sent home to the parents for completion.

**Data Collection:**
Data will be collected for all students who are nominated. Identification criteria considered are:

- **Kindergarten**
  - **Quantitative data:**
    - DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)
    - PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening)
    - Mathematics Screening Assessment
  - **Qualitative data:**
    - Teacher Rating Scale (SIGS)
    - Parent Rating Scale (SIGS)
    - Student Self-Reflection

- **Grades 1-2**
  - **Quantitative data:**
    - DWS (District Writing Sample Score)
    - DRA (Differentiated Reading Assessment)
    - Mathematics Screening Assessment
  - **Qualitative data:**
    - Teacher Rating Scale (SIGS)
    - Parent Rating Scale (SIGS)
    - Student Self-Reflection

**Selection:**
A selection committee will meet to evaluate assessment data profiles from each nominated student.

- The members of the committee will include the gifted and talented teacher, an administrator, the counselor or school psychologist, and the student’s current and/or previous year’s classroom teacher.
- Student scores must fall within the minimum score range on two of the three criteria on the quantitative criteria and eight of ten criteria on the qualitative criteria in order to be identified for specialized learning opportunities as defined in this document.
- The student self-reflection will be used to determine student motivation and desire to enter the program.
- The selection committee will make the final decision based on the evaluation of each student profile.
• Parents will receive written notification of the selection committee’s decision.
• Identification and assessment data profiles for each identified student will be shared with the classroom teacher, principal and other appropriate staff to facilitate appropriate curricular modification and differentiation.
• Students will be reevaluated for continued services annually.

Grades 3-5 Identification Procedures (Spring)

Nomination:
Teachers, students and parents may nominate a student for consideration for identification. Nominations will be requested formally in the spring of each school year. However, identification procedures are ongoing and nominations can be made at any time. Evaluations will be done in May of each school year. Once a child is nominated, a permission slip for further testing and parent rating scale will be sent home to the parents for completion.

Data Collection:
Data will be collected for all students who are nominated. Identification criteria considered are:

Quantitative Data:
• DWS (District Writing Sample Score)
• DRA (Differentiated Reading Assessment)
• MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) Language Arts, Math
• COGATs (Cognitive Abilities Test), Spring of Grade 2 only
• CTP-5 (Comprehensive Testing Program) - Grade 3 ONLY

Qualitative Data
• Teacher Rating Scale (SIGS)
• Parent Rating Scale (SIGS)
• Student Self-Reflection

Selection:
A selection committee will meet to evaluate assessment data profiles from each nominated student. The membership of the committee will include a QUEST teacher, an administrator, the counselor or school psychologist, and the student’s current and previous year’s classroom teacher.

• Criteria:
  o Grade 2
    • Student scores must fall within the minimum score range on five of seven of the quantitative criteria and eight of ten of the qualitative criteria to be identified for specialized learning opportunities as defined in this document.
  o Grade 3-4
    • Student scores must fall within the minimum score range on six of the eight quantitative criteria and eight of ten of the qualitative criteria to be identified for specialized learning opportunities as defined in this document.
• The student self-reflection is used to determine student motivation and desire to enter the program and is discussed during the committee meeting.
• The selection committee will make the final decision based on the evaluation of each student profile.
• Parents will receive written notification of the selection committee’s decision.
• Identification, and assessment data profiles for each identified student will be shared with the classroom teacher, principal and other appropriate staff to facilitate appropriate curricular modification and differentiation.
• Students will be reevaluated for continued services annually.

Phase-In of 2019-20 Program Identification Procedure
For School Year 2019-2020
Students in Grades 4 and 5 and currently identified and participating in the Telescoping Math program will continue in the program through Accelerated Math Grade 6, unless it is the recommendation of the Selection Committee that it would be in the best interest of the student to modify programming.

All other students in Grades K-5 will be eligible for programming through the above described identification process.

For School Year 2020-2021
Students in Grade 5 and currently identified and participating in the Telescoping Math program will continue in the program through Accelerated Math Grade 6, unless it is the recommendation of the Selection Committee that it would be in the best interest of the student to modify programming.

All other students in Grades K-5 will be eligible for programming through the above described identification process.

Outside Testing for Transfer/New-to-District Students:
Results of academic testing done outside of the school district will be considered if:
  • The test is a nationally normed and recognized test.
  • The test has been administered within two years of the evaluation.

Appeals:
  • Parents or students may appeal the selection committee’s decision.
  • A written request, including the rationale for the appeal, must be given to the building administrator.
  • A meeting may be scheduled with the parent, the gifted and talented teacher, an administrator, and/or the school psychologist or counselor to discuss the appeal.
  • Final decisions about appeals will be determined by the administration.
Exit Procedures for Accelerated Mathematics:
Students are re-evaluated annually for continued participation in differentiated services for the gifted and talented.

- Recommendation for exit from the program may be initiated at any time by the classroom teacher, the gifted and talented teacher, a counselor/school psychologist the parent, or the student.
- The recommendation should be made to the gifted and talented teacher who will then hold a meeting to discuss the concerns. Those invited to the meeting will include the parent, the classroom teacher(s), an administrator, and a counselor/school psychologist.
- If a plan has been developed to support the student’s continued participation, a second meeting will be held to evaluate the student’s progress and determine continued participation or withdrawal from the program.
- Criteria that will be considered will include, but will not be limited to: demonstrates of classroom participation and motivation, demonstrates proficiency within the accelerated mathematics curriculum.
- Final decisions about continued participation of accelerated mathematics will be determined by the administration.

Evaluation
The Gifted program will be evaluated annually. An evaluation report prepared by the gifted and talented teacher will be presented to the Superintendent and the Board of Education annually.

- The evaluation report should reflect the accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses of the program with recommendations for improvement.
- All stakeholders will be given the opportunity to evaluate the program, including but not limited to teachers, students and parents.