

Marple Newtown School District

Gifted Support Program Position Statement

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The Marple Newtown School District strategic plan, approved in October of 2002 provides a strategic goal to ensure that the written, taught and assessed curriculum is standards-based and meets diverse student needs. The Strategic Objective for Gifted Education calls for the district to “develop and implement a Gifted Education program that ensures compliance with the new Chapter 16 Regulations and that meets the needs of the District’s Gifted Support Students.” In this position paper our intent is to assess current practices in view of our evolving gifted support program with a view to providing the best possible services to our students.

Philosophy of Gifted Education

The needs of gifted and talented students in Marple Newtown School District are met in a variety of ways. Relying on current research findings, the district offers a unique combination of inclusion and self-contained classes in order to meet the needs of this population of students. Once students have been identified as gifted, they are usually clustered in the same grade level classroom. In this way, the gifted students have the benefit of being included in a heterogeneous group of students while at the same time being able to interact academically with peers performing at a similarly high academic level. Through this combination of homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping, in conjunction with the use of a gifted support teacher, both gifted and other highly able students are assured of receiving instruction at an appropriate level.

Goals of the Gifted Support Program

The goals of the Marple Newtown School District special programs for gifted students are listed below:

- To stimulate the cognitive processes of creativity, originality, problem solving, and complexity (increasing content depth and sophistication).
- To provide a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation and Present Levels of Educational Performance of sufficient depth and scope to provide a comprehensive gifted individualized education program.
- To ensure that the gifted student is able to benefit meaningfully from the rate, level and manner of instruction.
- To provide learning opportunities that go beyond the program that the student would receive as part of the regular education program.

- To integrate gifted education as part of the regular instructional day.
- To provide flexible grouping to maximize the potential of each identified gifted student.
- To provide a program that addresses the needs of the whole child, including social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs.

Program Overview

Marple Newtown School District employs a gifted support teacher to work with regular education teachers who have the identified gifted students in their classrooms. The gifted support teacher maintains the GIEPs (Gifted Individual Education Plan) of these students and provides support to the students and their teachers so that individual student GIEP goals can be met. The gifted support teacher serves as both a resource and as a co-teacher/collaborator. The classroom teachers and gifted support teacher form a team and collaborate to differentiate the classroom lessons so that all students work at a level that is appropriately challenging. This frequently includes use of a co-teaching model in which the regular classroom teacher and the gifted support teacher work together to provide appropriate instruction. Sometimes lessons are taught to the whole class. Other times the class is divided into flexible groups with the gifted support teacher providing an extension or enrichment activity at a higher level for those students capable of more challenging assignments.

Seminars are also provided for identified gifted students in the district. Seminars serve the purpose of bringing together the identified gifted students at a specific grade level for additional enrichment and extensions of the written curriculum. Seminar projects are usually long-term, and relate to an identified student's specific grade-level

curriculum. Components of math, language arts, science, social studies and the fine arts are incorporated in recognition of multiple intelligences. Seminar students are evaluated on their seminar work using rubrics and other performance assessments. A seminar report card is issued and evaluates the gifted student's performance in the seminar class.

Elementary seminars are full day and are held approximately twice a month at one of the district's four elementary schools. They allow the gifted students to spend the day working in a homogeneous group of their gifted peers, on more academically rigorous tasks. . The gifted support teachers from each of the elementary schools in the district work with guest teachers, outside speakers, community experts and curriculum experts to provide an interesting array of challenges for the students to pursue.

Program Evaluation

Beginning in June of 2002, under the direction of the Office of the Assistant Superintendent of Schools a team of Elementary and Middle School Faculty and Administrators began a comprehensive review of gifted support best practices research. This comprehensive review process is a major part of the Marple Newtown School District Strategic Plan. The comprehensive review continues today under the direction of the newly appointed Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education. The committee analyzed the scope and depth of our gifted support program in the elementary school. Included in this analysis is a comprehensive review of the gifted support screening process. The Strategic Plan Action Plans completed to date include:

- To identify a location for a Gifted Support Seminar

- To designate a coordinator for the Gifted Support Program (the co-coordinators for the Gifted Support Program are the newly appointed Director of Secondary and Director of Elementary Education).
- To redesign the gifted support screening and identification process. The on-going review of the gifted support program will include further discussions of the screening process.
- To develop procedures for GIEP development and implementation including a transition process from elementary to middle school.
- To assess the current program using:
 - Interviews and observations of students and staff in classrooms (walk through model).
 - Written description of the current program
 - Interviews with parents, students, staff and graduates.
- To develop a research team to investigate the quality and design of GS program models in neighboring districts:
 - Currently two visitations have been completed
 - The district has contracted with a noted consultant who has worked with and designed many successful Gifted Support Programs
- The Gifted Support Team is currently in the process of designing a K-12 program and curriculum work should begin during the summer of 2005.
- The Gifted Support Team is currently developing a written description of the program and corresponding procedures.

- Once a written description is completed a parent education program will be designed. Information will be included on the Marple Newtown School District website.

Gifted Support Program Summary Statement

The results of on-going meetings beginning in June of 2002 and continuing on a regular basis today provide valuable insights into the strengths and needs of the current gifted support program. In addition, on-going discussions have served to validate many of the current initiatives included in regular education as valuable to serving the needs of the gifted student. Programs such as the gifted seminar in mathematics, which include highly talented but not identified gifted students, serve to meet the needs of gifted students while enhancing the education of the regular education students. The Junior Initiative and Senior Project programs at the high school provide regular education and gifted students with the flexibility necessary to meet individual goals for mentoring programs. We believe that all children need opportunities to learn in a challenging environment and our analysis has helped the district to identify and articulate several innovative programs meeting this goal.

The Elementary Gifted Support Program provides opportunities for relevant enrichment and extension of the Marple Newtown Curriculum. Gifted students are included in the regular education program. Gifted Support teachers often co-teach with the regular classroom teacher providing enrichment opportunities for the whole class. In addition, Gifted Support teachers work with individual and small groups of students to facilitate differentiation of instruction. Gifted Support teachers provide opportunities for students to research topics of interest, participate in literature discussions, utilize

technology and apply acquired skills across the curriculum. In order to meet the individualized GIEP goals students sometimes work in small pull-out groups. Elementary Gifted Support Students attend a full day seminar twelve times a year. At seminar, GS students have opportunities to extend their learning through in-depth units of study related to student interests and academic standards.

The Middle School Gifted Support Program provides academically talented students with a combination of enriched and accelerated courses. Enriched courses are offered for English and History. These curricula extend the standard expectations to include additional requirements, expanding the depth and breadth of the basic curriculum.

Advanced (accelerated) courses are offered in Math and Science. These courses are accelerated by grade in order to provide students maximum exposure to courses in these disciplines. The current Middle School Gifted Support Program includes use of a gifted support teacher working in the regular education classroom to assist with tiered and differentiated lessons. There is a school-wide commitment to raising academic expectations for all students thereby raising the expectations for gifted, regular, and special education students.

The Marple Newtown Senior High School Gifted Support Program is currently undergoing an extensive review process. The gifted support program at the high school includes Honors and Advanced Placement courses, independent study and projects, tiered and differentiated instruction in the classroom, use of on-line study and special courses, as well as concurrent college enrollment. Gifted Support students also participate in national and state competitions and Olympiads. Off-site learning and field trips are an integral part of each program. The district will continue to revise the high school

delivery system. We anticipate that the number of GIEP's in the high school will increase and require a revision of the case manager system.

Conclusion

We believe that the Marple Newtown School District is positioned to serve the needs of all students including its gifted population. The school district will continue to be diligent and continue to make advancements with respect to the gifted support program. Based on our experience, Chapter 16, population and demographic shifts, and our planning and implementation process for our gifted student's needs, it is the position of this committee that the Marple Newtown School District should:

- Continue to provide enrichment and acceleration opportunities for gifted students when appropriate. Enrichment and acceleration opportunities should be expanded when appropriate.
- Continue to provide faculty with professional development opportunities to differentiate instruction, continue flexible grouping, and gain greater understanding of the different learning styles associated with gifted students.
- Increase secondary staffing for the gifted support program.
- Continue to implement the MNSD strategic plan for gifted education.
- Continue to monitor and improve the screening process for gifted support. Provide in-service opportunities for faculty to improve the data collection process so important to the gifted screening process.
- Develop a gifted support website for increased communications with parents, faculty and the community.

- Expand the use of seminar courses at the middle and high school.

The Marple Newtown School District recognizes that gifted students have special learning qualities and needs. Our gifted support program is designed to meet the unique individual needs of the gifted student. Gifted students are provided with a curriculum that enables them to learn at different rates and study more complex material at an earlier age. In addition, ongoing curriculum review and revision ensures that the regular curriculum is continuously modified to address the advanced conceptual and processing abilities of the gifted student.

Attachments

Philosophy of Elementary Gifted Support

Gifted Screening Process

Gifted Support Screening Forms

Paxon Hollow Middle School Advanced and Enriched Curricula

Marple Newtown High School Honors and Advanced Placement Courses

Philosophy of Elementary Gifted Support Program

The needs of gifted and talented elementary students in Marple Newtown School District are met in a variety of ways. Relying on current research findings, the district offers a unique combination of inclusion and self-contained models in order to better meet the needs of this population. Once students have been identified as gifted, they are often clustered in the same grade level classroom. In this way, the gifted students have the benefit of being included in a heterogeneous group of students while at the same time being able to interact academically with peers performing at a similarly high academic level.

Marple Newtown School District employs a full time gifted support teacher to work with regular education teachers who have the identified gifted students in their classrooms. The gifted support teacher maintains the GIEP's (Gifted Individual Education Plan) of these students and provides support to the students and their teachers so that individual student GIEP goals can be met. The gifted support teacher serves as both a resource, and as a co-teacher/collaborator. The classroom teachers and gifted support teacher form a team and collaborate to differentiate the classroom lessons so that all the students can work at a level which is appropriately challenging. This frequently includes use of a co-teaching model in which the regular classroom teacher and the gifted support teacher work together to provide appropriate instruction. Sometimes lessons are taught to the whole class. Other times the class is divided into flexible groups with the gifted support teacher providing an extension or enrichment activity at a higher level for those students capable of more challenging assignments.

Seminars are also provided, from 2nd to 5th grade, for identified gifted students in the district. Seminars serve the purpose of bringing together all the district's identified gifted students at a specific grade level for additional enrichment and extensions of the district's curriculum. Seminars are full day and are held typically twelve times a year at a central location. They allow the gifted students to spend the day working in a homogeneous group of their gifted peers, on more academically rigorous tasks. Seminar projects are usually long-term, and relate to the specific grade-level curriculum. Components of math, language arts, science, social studies and the fine arts are incorporated in recognition of multiple intelligences. The gifted support teachers from each of the elementary schools in the district work with guest teachers, outside speakers, and community experts to provide an interesting array of challenge for the students to pursue.

Seminar students are evaluated on their seminar work via rubrics and other performance assessments. A seminar report card is issued twice a year and evaluates the gifted student's performance at seminar.

Through this combination of homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping, in conjunction with the use of a gifted support teacher, both gifted and other highly able students are assured of receiving instruction at an appropriate level.

MN Elementary Screening Process for Gifted Support Services

- If referral is from Classroom Teacher or Gifted Support Teacher, begin at I.
- If referral is from Instructional Support Team, then GS and IS teachers will meet to determine where to start the process (since some data will already have been collected).
- If parents want to refer their child, please have them call the Gifted Support Teacher. The GS Teacher will explain to the parent that the process begins with data collection and that after the team reviews the initial data, they will be contacted.

If the parent submits an evaluation completed privately or by another school district, the team will review the date (IV) and determine if additional assessment is needed.

- If the teacher or parent refer a child for a reevaluation (previously tested and did not qualify), the reevaluation can be conducted; however, it has been the MNSD practice to reevaluate an ineligible student no sooner than two years from the previous evaluation. Exceptions can be made if recommended by the MNSD psychologist. (Note: WISC or Stanford Binet is not valid if re-administered in less than one year)

I. Initial Data Collection: The GS Teacher starts a folder, collects initial data, and begins a log in GS Screening Spreadsheet for the student.

- A. Standardized test scores, if available
- B. Language arts and math assessment scores/grades (district-wide & classroom level)
- C. Teacher referral forms (reading & math)
- D. Teacher interview(s)
- E. Student interview
- F. Check: Is the student receiving other special services? Was the student previously screened?

II. Team Review: The team may include classroom teachers, psychologist, counselor, principal, and IS teacher as appropriate.

- A. The team reviews the data collected.
- B. The team reviews standardized test scores (reading and math composites):
 1. If national (Terra Nova) or state (PSSA) percentiles are **95%+**, proceed to **V** and GS Teacher will call parents to schedule a meeting to obtain permission to evaluate & explain the parent input form.
 2. If percentiles are **<95%**, the student *does not qualify* and the

process ends, **unless** the team feels percentiles are an inaccurate reflection of the student's abilities. ***If so, proceed to III.***

3. If percentiles are unavailable, proceed to ***III.***

III. IQ Screening: KBIT (Kauffman Brief Intelligence Test) Counselor
Notifies parents of intent to obtain additional information about their child (through the KBIT)

A. Counselor administers and scores the KBIT

B. Counselor and GS Teacher review the KBIT score:

1. If **130+**, **proceed to V** and GS Teacher will call parents to schedule a meeting to obtain permission to evaluate & explain parent-input form.
2. If **125-129** (inconclusive), proceed to **IV** and counselor will call parents notifying them that the team needs to collect more data.
3. If **<125** the student ***does not qualify*** (the counselor determines if the team meets with the parents to explain that the student is not in need of gifted support services at this time.)

IV. Supplemental Data Collection and Review

A. Team chooses then collects extra data. Possible options: DRA, Observation, MN Year-End Math Assessment, etc.

B. Team reviews all data compiled and decides:

1. If “proceeding”, to **V** and GS teacher will call parents to schedule a meeting to obtain permission to evaluate & explain parent input form.
2. If the student ***does not qualify***, the GS Teacher ***schedules a team meeting w/parents*** to explain that student is not in need of gifted support services at this time and finalized folder & log.

V. IQ Test: WISC (Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children), WASI (Wechsler Abbreviated Scale for Intelligence) or Stanford Binet

A. Psychologist administers and scores the IQ test.

B. Psychologist and GS Teacher review the full scale scores:

1. If **130+**, the student ***qualifies*** and proceed to ***VII.***
2. If **125-129** (***inconclusive***), proceed to ***VI.***
3. If **<125**, the student ***does not qualify*** and proceed to ***VII.***

VI. Achievement Data Collection: WIAT (Wechsler Individual Achievement Test II)

A. Psychologist administers and scores WIAT.

B. Team reviews all of the data and decides if the child qualifies. (If achievement scores are strong and w/ a team consensus, a child can qualify for Gifted Support Services.) Either way, proceed to *VII.*****

VII. GWR: Gifted Written Report

A. Psychologist prepares the Gifted Written Report (GWR) stating whether the team does or does not recommend Gifted Support Services for the student

B. GS Teacher schedules a team meeting w/parents

1. If not recommended, psychologist and representatives of the team (depending on the situation) meet w/parents to explain results, GWR, and the challenges provided through the general education program.

2. If recommended, GS Teacher and representatives of the team (depending on the situation) meet w/ parents to review report and plan GIEP or revisions to IEP if student has one already.
- C. GS Teacher completes the folder and log in GS Screening Spreadsheet

MARPLE NEWTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

GIFTED SUPPORT SCREENING PARENT INPUT FORM

Name of Student _____ Date of Birth _____

School _____ Grade _____ Teacher _____

To assist in the Gifted Screening Process, I am providing the following information:

1. I see my child's strengths as: _____

2. I see my child's needs as: _____

3. Does your child appear to excel in one or more areas and/or have a passionate interest in a particular area?

4. Does our child participate in any activities outside of school? If so, which activities?

5. How does your child approach homework assignments or long-range projects? Are there any specific ways you assist your child with schoolwork completed at home?

6. Does your child have a preferred way in which he/she learns best, such as by hearing or listening to information, by seeing it, by hands-on activities or by a combination of these methods?

7. Please share any other information about your child that you believe is relevant or would be beneficial for us to know as we evaluate your child's strengths and needs.

_____ (Parent/Guardian Signature)

Phone # (Home) _____ Address _____

Phone # (Work) _____

PLEASE RETURN IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE

Advanced/Enriched curricula

Paxon Hollow Middle School

There are many options available for all students to be challenged at the middle level. Our offerings span the spectrum of opportunities to address the needs of students who are identified as learning disabled as well as those who can succeed in enriched or advanced courses. It is important to understand that enriched or advanced courses are able to be taken by any student whose parent requests such placement.

The purpose of this document is to clarify options for gifted students.

- A. There are three orientation meetings during the school year that are intended to describe our course offerings for all incoming sixth grade students.
 1. An open house takes place in November. This meeting provides an overview of the middle school and describes the criteria for admission to advanced or enriched courses.
 2. A formal curriculum description meeting takes place in February. This meeting is geared to current sixth and seventh grade parents to discuss scheduling the subsequent academic year.
 3. A formal introductory meeting for incoming sixth grade parents takes place in May. This meeting provides an overview of the middle school curriculum, allows parents the opportunity to discuss middle school transition issues with counselors, and gives the parents an opportunity to tour the building.

- B. Criteria for admission to advanced/enriched courses from Grade 5 to Grade 6
 1. Level 7 Mathematics
 - a. Grade 5 Mathematics teacher recommendation- Math teachers should recommend students who have earned a grade of “A” for each of the first two marking periods (exceptions require written documentation of extenuating circumstances) AND are among the top 30-40% of all the students taught during the teacher’s career, AND
 - b. Terra Nova Assessment-In addition to the math teacher’s recommendation, recommended students should also earn a mathematics composite score of 80% or better (based on national norms) on the Terra Nova Assessment (exceptions require written documentation of extenuating circumstances).

 2. Environmental Science/Grade 6
 - a. Grade 5 Science teacher recommendation – Science teachers should recommend students who have earned a grade of “A” for each of the first two marking periods (exceptions require written documentation of extenuating circumstances) AND are among

the top 10% of all the students taught during the teacher's career,
AND

- b. Terra Nova Assessment – In addition to the science teacher's recommendation, recommended students should also earn a composite score (CS) of 90le or better (national norms) on the Terra Nova Assessment, calculated using the formula:
 $CS = 50\% \text{ Science Score} + 25\% \text{ Reading Score} + 25\% \text{ Math Score}$ (exceptions require written documentation of extenuating circumstances)

3. Grade 6 English/Social Studies/Foreign Language

Teachers recommendation for admission to this program must be supported by:

- a. 90%ile or better on fourth grade standardized test in English/Social Studies
- b. Report card grade of 90+ for the first two marking periods
- c. Approximate top 10% in writing
- d. Approximate top 10%ile to work ethic (homework, projects, etc.)/organization
- e. Good attendance record

C. Parental requests: Parents may override the teacher's recommendations for courses. Teachers recommend students for courses on the basis of the criteria for admission to enriched or advanced courses. If parents do not agree with the teacher's recommendation, they must complete the form on the following page.

Student: _____

Dear Parents and/or Guardian:

After a thorough review of standardized test scores, grades, performance, and teacher recommendations, it has been determined that your child should not be placed in

_____ Enriched English

_____ Enriched History

_____ Advanced Math

_____ Advanced Science

_____ Foreign Language

By signing this document, you acknowledge that this placement will occur at your request despite our recommendations and such placement will be reevaluated at the end of the next academic year.

Sincerely,

Isabelle Francolini, Counselor
Lauren Forman, Counselor
Anthony J. Lazor, Jr., Counselor

Parent/Guardian Signature

D. Course resumes for all curricula that are offered to middle school students are described below. These descriptions include the entire range of options for students. Since a gifted program per se, does not exist at the secondary level, criteria have been established for students to be placed in either enriched or advanced courses.

1. Enriched courses are offered for English and History. These curricula are the standard expectations but also include additional requirements that stretch the depth and breadth of the basis curricula.
2. Advanced courses are a sequence of courses accelerated by grade in order to expose the students to maximum exposure to courses in those disciplines. Thus, a sixth grader might take a seventh grade level or an eighth grade level course. This is designed to facilitate career and college aspirations and respond to the individual and varied needs of our student body.

Advanced/Enriched curricula

Marple Newtown High School

The Marple Newtown High School Gifted Support Program is currently being redesigned to include gifted support case managers who will assist high school students with development and implementation of a GIEP for their time in the high school. Through a ninth grade gifted support seminar, the gifted support teacher will meet with students to develop individual goals, identify learning style preferences and discuss high school transition issues. The gifted support teacher will also work with content teachers to assist with differentiating instruction to meet the individual gifted needs as prescribed in the GIEP. Gifted support teachers will meet with parents and students on a regular basis to update and revise the GIEP.

The high school gifted support curriculum is offers students the opportunity to participate in interdisciplinary programs, advanced placement courses, independent study programs, dual enrollment programs and early college admission programs. The table below summarizes the high school gifted curriculum.

Interdisciplinary Programs	AP Courses	Independent Study	Distance Learning	Seminar Programs
Individual/Small Group Study	Interest Based Learning	Off-site Learning Experiences	National and State Competitions	Global Connections
Early College Admissions	Parallel Curriculum	Differentiated Instruction	On-Line Study	Dual College Enrollment