

GIFTED EDUCATION

Background

The practice of the District is consistent with the Ministry of Education's commitment to the development of abilities of every student to their fullest potential, both as an individual and as a member of society. The District recognizes the importance of providing programs and services to identify and develop the abilities and talents of children and youth who demonstrate extraordinary learning ability and/or outstanding talent. The development of the individual intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally is valued for the sake of the individual, as well as for the society as a whole.

The long-term goal for Gifted Education is defensible and comprehensive educational programs and services for gifted learners, Kindergarten through Grade 12. Achievement of this goal requires programs and services that respond to the diversity of needs of the student population and offer equity of access for students in all areas of the city.

Definitions

Enrichment involves supplementing and extending prescribed curriculum as an integral part of the regular classroom program. Enrichment is a general response to the occasional needs of a fairly large number of students and is an appropriate but limited response to that small portion of the student population identified as gifted.

Gifted Education implies the provision of specialized educational support services additional to those available within the context of the regular curriculum. This response will often involve modifying the student's program rather than simply adding to it. It is a continuing, co-ordinated response to the individual needs of students specifically identified as gifted.

The operational definition of Gifted Education for the District involved consideration of a set of formal procedures and practices, as outlined in the *Gifted Education Identification Guidelines* (1989).

Gifted Student

According to the Ministry of Education, a student is considered gifted when:

“...she/he possesses demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of exceptionally high capability with respect to intellect, creativity, or the skills associated with specific disciplines. These abilities are demonstrated with extraordinary task commitment. Gifted students often demonstrate outstanding abilities in more than one area. They may, however, also have accompanying disabilities and are not to be expected to have strengths in all areas of intellectual functioning.”

Procedures

1. The District recognizes that a variety of differentiated provisions are required to meet the diversity and range of educational needs of these students. Programs are often a blend of opportunities available in the school and the community. The more extraordinary the abilities of the student, the more their program will be expanded beyond the regular classroom.
2. Programming
 - 2.1. Principles for programming include the following:
 - 2.1.1. Qualitatively and quantitatively different learning experiences,
 - 2.1.2. Opportunities to interact with age peers and peers of similar abilities,
 - 2.1.3. Support for growth in the cognitive and affective domains,
 - 2.1.4. Appropriate modifications of content, process, product, pacing and learning environment,
 - 2.1.5. Extensions beyond schools into larger communities,
 - 2.1.6. Provision of extensive learning experiences in areas of individual talent,
 - 2.1.7. Provision of services to gifted students with learning difficulties or emotional vulnerability.
 - 2.2. In order to respond to the individual needs of gifted students, a variety of programming options are required that are not usually available in the context of the regular classroom involving, but not limited to, resource/challenge centres, mentors, specialist teachers, special courses, and curriculum differentiated in pace, complexity, and scope.
3. Identification
 - 3.1. Identification begins in the regular classroom, according to the following principles.
 - 3.1.1. Procedures support early identification that is on-going, continuous, and free from bias with respect to language, gender, culture, physical ability, and learning or other disability.
 - 3.1.2. Multiple criteria incorporates information from a variety of sources, including various professional personnel.
 - 3.1.3. Research-based characteristics of gifted and talented students provide reference points for observations of professionals.
 - 3.2. Identification is focused on determining students' needs and involves classroom teachers, parents, and students, as well as the school-based resource team.
4. Referral
 - 4.1. Students are referred to programs and services according to educational needs articulated as a result of the identification process. Referrals may begin with the student or the parents and go through the classroom teachers to the school-based resource team and a District screening process.

5. Screening

- 5.1. Students are screened to identify their educational needs. Screening reviews student abilities, social-emotional development, intrinsic motivation, performance on classroom tasks as well as standardized tests and considers factors that may affect the discrepancy between potential and achievement. Psycho-educational assessments are required only for students being considered for full-time, multi-age cluster class placement. Psycho-educational assessments may be recommended by school-based resource teams as a means to identify educational needs.

6. Educational Response to Identified Needs

- 6.1. The range of responses to student needs is based on program models and services available to the classroom teachers, the school, and the District.
- 6.2. The range of programs and services generally contain some of the following options but are not limited to these:
 - 6.2.1. Independent studies;
 - 6.2.2. Libraries and resource centres;
 - 6.2.3. District and community classes;
 - 6.2.4. Groups with intellectual peers for learning purposes;
 - 6.2.5. Mentorships;
 - 6.2.6. Career exploration and counselling;
 - 6.2.7. Accelerating, compacting, or telescoping student's program;
 - 6.2.8. Consultative services to assist teachers.

7. Personnel

- 7.1. Teachers who have appropriate specialized training and experience in gifted education are required for these programs.

8. Programming

8.1. Elementary

The District adopted a model for Elementary Gifted/ Enrichment Education July 11, 1994. The model consists of the following elements:

- 8.1.1. Classroom enrichment,
- 8.1.2. School-wide enrichment,
- 8.1.3. Challenge pull-in centres,
- 8.1.4. City-wide initiatives,
- 8.1.5. Multi-age cluster classes.

8.2. Secondary

Gifted/ Enrichment Education for secondary students includes a range of options:

- 8.2.1. Classroom enrichment and curriculum differentiation,
- 8.2.2. Interdisciplinary curriculum with back-to-back timetabling,

- 8.2.3. Extra-curricular activities,
- 8.2.4. Honours or enriched courses,
- 8.2.5. Mentorship,
- 8.2.6. Advanced placement courses,
- 8.2.7. Equivalency procedure enabling advanced placement within a discipline,
- 8.2.8. Mini schools,
- 8.2.9. International Baccalaureate Program,
- 8.2.10. Transition program supporting early entrance to university.

A District advisory committee provides support to the development of gifted education initiatives within the District.

9. Evaluation

Evaluation is on-going and provides information regarding:

- 9.1. Effectiveness of programming provisions,
- 9.2. Significant and positive differences that programming has achieved,
- 9.3. Strengths and weaknesses of programming,
- 9.4. Examination of assumptions underlying programming.

Reference: Sections 6, 11, 17, 20, 22, 26, 75, 85, 88, 89, 91 School Act
School Regulation 265/89
Individual Education Plan Order M638/95
Special Needs Students Order M150/89
Support Services for Schools Order 149/89
Special Education Services: A Manual of Policy, Procedures and Guidelines

Adopted: September 16, 1975

Revised: March 16, 1981; May 4, 1981; September 8, 1981; June 17, 1985; August 1, 1990; September 1994;
September 1998; February 1999; September 24, 2018