

# **SOMSD GIFTED & TALENTED STRATEGIES**

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**Board of Education Meeting**

**November 24, 2014**

# NEW JERSEY STATE MANDATE

***“District boards of education shall be responsible for identifying gifted and talented students and shall provide them with appropriate instructional adaptations and services..... Kindergarten-through-grade-12.”***

**N.J.A.C. 6A: 8-3.1(a)5**

# Definition of Gifted and Talented

*“Gifted and talented students” means students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability in one or more content areas when compared to their chronological peers in the local school district and who require modifications of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.*

NJAC 6A: 8-3.1.3

# Guiding Change Parameters

- The Board of Education directed Administration to develop Gifted and Talented Strategy proposals.
  - **Background** – Review of offerings suggested an ad-hoc approach to identification and personalization
  - **Context** – To fulfill the unique needs of G&T students
  - **Desired Results** – Strategy that equitably identifies G&T students and provides high quality enhancements and/or alternatives
  - **Unacceptable Means** – Criteria for identification shall not use a single one-time measure, shall not fail to be research-based, and no strategy shall result in a self-contained class within a grade

# Developing Strategies

- Reviewed current research on G&T approaches.
- Joined national and local associations for G&T
- Attended external conferences and workshops to deepen knowledge of current best practices.
- Solicited community input from teachers, administrators and parents, including a parent focus group.
- Worked with an expert with knowledge in G&T programming to consider options and develop recommendations for consideration by the Board.
- Considered a variety of options and approaches to best meet the needs of students and the Guiding Change document parameters.

# Statement of Philosophy

The South Orange Maplewood School District is committed to providing appropriate and challenging learning opportunities for all students. Rather than providing a one-size-fits-all approach to learning, we believe that every student is entitled to receive what they need in order to be successful. Utilizing a multi-faceted approach to gifted and talented programming, SOMSD identifies and makes provisions for students in each grade level who possess or demonstrate exceptionally high levels of ability across various subject areas, as compared to their peers within the district. Programming is continually assessed, reviewed and modified as necessary.

# CURRENT PROVISIONS:

- AP Offerings in the High School.
- Single-subject acceleration in secondary schools.
- Differentiated curriculum within the classroom.
- Flexible subject-specific ability groupings within the classroom.
- Differentiated instruction and ability groupings are currently ad hoc and teacher dependent.
- Identification/intake testing.

# Proposed additional strategies

- Consistent differentiated curriculum within classrooms district-wide.
- Continue flexible subject-specific ability groupings within classrooms.
- Cluster rotations.
- After school enrichment activities.
- Involvement in local, state and national competitions.
- Gifted Action Plan (GAP) / Negotiated curriculum.
- Gifted mentor program.
- Staff professional development on issues related to giftedness and effective differentiated instruction.



# Benefits of proposed additions

- **Systematic** identification of students with exceptional abilities, including re-assessment in grade 3.
- **Consistent** range of provisions available and provided to identified students across all grades and all schools.
- Students with similar talents provided opportunities to work together (research based '**best practice**'), without implementing pull out programs.
- In cases where extreme modifications are warranted, **Gifted Action Plans** ("GAP") provide clear documentation, allowing consistency, awareness and follow up as students move through the school system.