MSAD 33

Dr. Levesque Elementary School
&
Wisdom Middle/High School

Gifted & Talented Handbook

Revised by Chantal Blanchette
G/T Coordinator

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Welcome to the MSAD 33 Gifted & Talented Handbook

This handbook is meant to serve as a guide for implementing G/T services and as a resource for teachers, students, and their families. We intend to support students so they can receive the most from their education.

We encourage you to take some time to look around. Resources in the appendix help us understand exactly what G/T is and what it isn't. There are also helpful links for teachers and families to find supplemental educational experiences and to explore what it means to be a Gifted and Talented student.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

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Program Philosophy

MSAD #33 is committed to providing educational programs that meet the needs of an academically diverse student population. Within this population are students who demonstrate unusually high levels of general intellectual ability, and/or specific academic aptitude in one or more areas of the core curriculum, including visual and performing arts.

MSAD #33 recognizes that academically precocious students benefit by moving at their own pace, need diversity in their educational experiences, and must be challenged to develop their abilities and potential. Meeting these needs requires specialized curricula that are advanced, conceptually complex, and clearly differentiated from the regular curriculum.

MSAD #33 also recognizes that the needs of identified gifted students vary as they progress through the elementary and secondary grades and that instructional settings must exist to accommodate these changes.

With this awareness in mind, MSAD #33 is committed to the development and implementation of an educational program that addresses the special needs of identified gifted and talented students. In doing so, MSAD #33 has considered the requirements of the Maine Statutes, Title 20-A, § 8104, and the recommendations of Pre-K-Grade 12 *Gifted Program Standards* from the *National Association of Gifted and Talented Children.*



Academic Program Abstract

The implementation of G/T services varies from grade cluster to grade cluster. For example, the needs at the elementary level are different than at the high school level due to different types of scheduling; the elementary school consists of grade-level classrooms that include all levels of ability while most middle/high school classes are based on readiness level. Each allows for tiering and differentiating but how these look may be different. In addition, supplemental enrichment opportunities may be necessary for one group and not another.

As recommended by the Maine Department of Education and G/T programming guidance, we will identify approximately 5% of the total population for Academic subjects such as ELA, Math & Science. Another 5 % of the population will be identified for Visual and Performing Arts services. The program delivery format and structure may vary from subject to subject.

In addition to regular G/T services, at the high school level, students will be provided with the opportunity to participate in advanced placement classes, Early College courses, and internships with experts in the community in their specific academic aptitude.

Identification

Screening

Whole population screening will begin in the Spring with Grade 3. To rule out any biases, all students will go through the initial screening process (described below). The purpose of this initial screening is to ensure that all students are assessed equitably for possible exceptional abilities and to locate students who need the program or students who need further assessment in order to determine if there is a need for services. All the tools used in the screening process target the students' achievement. At least three tools will be used as part of the selection process. Once the screening is complete, students who have been selected will be tested to see if they qualify for services.

Initial Academic Screening Tools Include: *

Star Reading / Math scores
NWEA scores
Teacher nominations
Self-nominations
Parent nominations
Peer nominations
(Visual Arts) Portfolio
(Music) Audiation assessments

*** Tools may change due to district changes in assessment programs.*

Testing

Academics:

Tools used in the selection process (The CogAT) target the student's reasoning and problem-solving skills. Once a pool of students is identified in the screening pool, each student will be assessed using the CogAT

CogAT/Cognitive Abilities Test is a standardized test designed to measure learned reasoning and problem-solving skills in three different areas: verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal. The CogAT is neither an intelligence test nor an achievement test.

Visual and Performing Arts:

Once a pool of students is identified, in the screening pool, each student will be assessed using one of the following components:

Visual Arts: Portfolio assessment with rubric

Music: Portfolio assessment with rubric

Review of Identification Procedures and Services

The G/T Coordinator, in collaboration with the GT Advisory Board, will annually review all current G/T student records, screen any new students, and consider any new teacher & parent nominations. This review process will be conducted at the end of each school year.

The G/T Advisory Board will include the G/T Coordinator and at least two G/T certified teachers.

The primary function of the G/T Advisory Board is to:

- Review the need for each student's inclusion in G/T services
- Review the appropriateness of each student's services in relation to their needs and goals as stated in their Individualized Learning Plan (ILP).
- Consider the possible removal of a student from the G/T program
  Exiting procedures
- Meet and review any appeals made

Twice Exceptional Students

It is important to know that students can be gifted and also have any of the following; (SpLD), speech and language disorders, emotional/behavioral disorders, physical disabilities, autism spectrum, or other impairments such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

In addition, giftedness is often overshadowed by their disabilities, or these students may be able to mask or hide their learning deficits by using their talents to compensate.

Meeting the Social-Emotional Needs of Gifted Students

Like all students, gifted students need support in their social-emotional learning. It is important to note that a gifted student's socio-emotional development may lag behind their intellectual development. We are committed to promoting the well-rounded development of and the pursuit of **self-actualization** for our gifted students. In addition, emotion regulation, social skills, willingness to take strategic risks, ability to cope with challenges and handle criticism, confidence, self-perceptions, and motivation should be developed.

Exiting Procedures

Students participating in the elementary program will be reevaluated going into grade 9. In the event the student no longer qualifies for services, *this will not be considered exiting the program*. The G/T services will be defined in duration in terms of grades 4-6 and grades 7-12.

Qualified students are eligible to continue in the G/T program from one year to another *unless there is a written request* for a student to exit the program from the G/T teacher, classroom teacher, the parent/guardian, counselors, or administrators.

Exiting of students from G/T services is based upon multiple criteria including performance in the program and psychological or personal reasons and *is finalized by a consultation with parents and teachers*.

Prior to formally exiting from the program, the following steps will be followed.

a.) Document and review student progress
b.) Conference with student, parent, and other appropriate educators.
c.) Formally notifying parents

Appeals Process

The parents, guardian, or teacher of any denied student's inclusion into the G/T program may appeal the decision, through the G/T Advisory Board, as follows:

1. A parent/guardian or teacher expresses concern regarding the exclusion of the student into the program. The G/T coordinator will review results of testing and information collected with the concerned person. The G/T coordinator will compare results and let the concerned person know why the decision was made according to the criteria of the program.

2. The G/T Advisory Board will meet to reconsider eligibility in terms of new test results, additional data, and/or student products.

3. The G/T coordinator will notify the parent, guardian, and teacher of the decision made by the GT Advisory Board.

★ *In the event the student does not qualify for services, the student may be reevaluated in a year at the request of the parent, guardian, and/or teacher.*

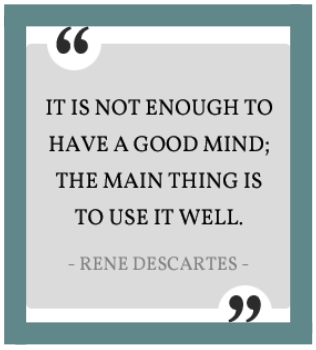
Consideration of Eligibility of Transfer Students

In the event a student transfers from a different district and was previously identified and serviced in that district, the G/T coordinator will

- Review the identification documentation and compare it to the local identification system.
- If the student does qualify for services in MSAD #33 under their local identification criteria, then the student will automatically be eligible for services.
- If the student does not qualify for services in MSAD #33, then the previous school district will serve as a referral, and the student will have the option of going through MSAD#33's identification process.
- If the student does qualify, based on the newly acquired data, then the student will be placed in the program.

Professional Training / Staffing Roles and Responsibilities

MSAD # 33 will support professional training and development, in terms of financial support and release time, in accordance with the teacher's professional growth plan towards GT certification. This will include the associated costs for courses, conferences, workshops, and webinars.



The GT Advisory Board will:

- Meet to review files each spring
- Communicate concerns with G/T Coordinator
- Create Individualized Learning Plans (ILP's) for the students they service

The G/T Coordinator will:

- Oversee student services
- Communicate with staff
- Collect nominations
- Communicate with parents regarding screening, testing and services
- Create schedules for service
- Facilitate GT Advisory Board
- In the Spring, do an annual needs assessment via student, parent and teacher feedback

Program Evaluation

To maintain approval status for MSAD #33's Gifted & Talented Program at the state level, the following is required annually:

- Provide to the Commissioner any information that represents an alteration, addition, or deletion to any program category (Chapter 104.14, 1-9) as reported and approved in the original Program Approval Application.

- Provide/have available for review, results of the annual self-evaluation process.

- Conduct and document an objective analysis of G/T program student achievement.

MSAD 33 Annual G/T Timeline

August - September

- Grade 4 Screening
- PD for all staff on Giftedness (Screening, Identification and Services)
- Reminder to staff to hand in nominations by October deadline
- Reviewing Nominations

October - November

- ME DOE application
- Testing & Completion of regular* identification process

January

Progress Reports for G/T students
G/T Advisory Board mid year progress meeting

May - June

- G/T Advisory Board meets to update files of students receiving services and review eligibility
- Info session at Staff Meeting regarding the identification process
- Survey G/T students, G/T teachers, Parents and staff for feedback on the program and individual services and teacher needs

** The identification process (of all students grades 4 - 12) can be implemented on an individual basis, as needed, throughout the year.*

APPENDIX A - Important Links

MSAD 33 G/T Forms

Teacher Student Nomination Form https://forms.gle/g3y4T857HdeAkY9BA

Parent Gifted and Talented Student Nomination Form https://forms.gle/oJ5cWHsTcVfYrUBi8

Individualized Learning Plan (to be completed by G/T teachers)
https://forms.gle/HsyrKoWmkpYzbkZWA

Links to G/T Resources for Teachers, Parents and Students

National Association for the Gifted https://www.nagc.org

SENG Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted https://www.sengifted.org

Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development https://gifted.uconn.edu/#

Byrdseed https://www.byrdseed.com

TED - Ed https://ed.ted.com

Mensa for Kids https://www.mensaforkids.org

Hoagies Gifted Education Page http://www.hoagiesgifted.org



Appendix B - Helpful Information Regarding the Gifted Population

The Difference Between Bright and Gifted Learners

By Janice Szabos -*Gifted Child Quarterly*

Children who are considered gifted have an exceptional ability. The bright child has excellent educational strengths, which can be supported and enhanced within the classroom environment. Additionally, with current innovative teaching practices, and teachers who extend curriculum to meet learner needs, some of our gifted learners' needs can be met within the classroom environment. The information following can discern the difference between bright and gifted children.

BRIGHT CHILD	GIFTED LEARNER
1. Knows the answers	1. Asks the questions
2. Is interested	2. Is highly curious
3. Is attentive	3. Is mentally and physically involved
4. Has good ideas	4. Has wild silly ideas
5. Works hard	5. Plays around, yet tests well
6. Answers the questions	6. Discusses in detail; elaborates
7. Top group	7. Beyond the group
8. Listens with interest	8. Shows strong feelings and opinions
9. Learns with ease	9. Already knows
10. 6-8 repetitions for mastery	10. 1-2 repetitions for mastery
11. Understands ideas	11. Constructs abstractions
12. Enjoys peers	12. Prefers adults
13. Grasps the meaning	13. Draws inferences
14. Completes assignments	14. Initiates projects
15. Is receptive	15. Is intense
16. Copies accurately	16. Creates new designs
17. Enjoys school	17. Enjoys learning
18. Absorbs information	18. Manipulates information
19. Technician	19. Inventor
20. Good memorizer	20. Good guesser
21. Prefers straightforward tasks	21. Thrives on complexity
22. Is alert	22. Is keenly observant
23. Is pleased with own learning	23. Is highly self-critical

Behaviors Seen In Intellectually Gifted/Talented Students

Adapted from J. Juntune, PhD., 1997

Characteristics	Positive Behavior	Negative Behavior
Learns rapidly and easily	Memorizes and masters basic facts quickly	Gets bored easily, resists drill, disturbs others, day dreams
Advanced Vocabulary	Communicates Ideas Well	Shows off, Invokes peer resentment
Curious, has a variety of interests	Asks questions, gets excited about ideas	Goes on tangens, no follow through
Alert and observant	Recognizes problems	Impolitely corrects adults
Works independently	Creates and invents beyond assigned tasks	Refuses to work with others

Maddening Myths

Adapted from: The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide, A Teen Handbook
by Judy Galbraith, M.A and Jim Delisle, Ph.D.

There are many misconceptions about what it means to be gifted. Here are ten of the most common myths we've encountered over the years:

Myth #1: *Gifted kids have it made and will succeed in life no matter what. They don't need any special help in school or anywhere else.*
Fact: Everyone needs encouragement- and help- to make the most of their abilities and succeed in life. (Research shows that 25% of gifted people are underachievers and quit trying because nothing they do leads to any measurable success or satisfaction.)

Myth #2: *Gifted kids should love school, get high grades, and greet each new school day with enthusiasm.*
Fact: Most schools are geared for average learners, not gifted learners, which makes it hard for gifted students to get excited about going. Some of the most talented students in the United States actually choose to drop out of school altogether.

Myth #3: G*ifted students come from white middle- and upper class families.*
Fact: They come from all cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.

Myth #4: *Gifted kids are good at everything they do.*
Fact: Some gifted students are good at many things; others are exceptionally able at only a few things. Some gifted students are also learning disabled, which means that they might not be very good at schoolwork.

Myth #5: *Teachers love to have gifted students in their classes.*
Fact: Some do; some don't. Certain teachers feel uncomfortable with gifted students and get defensive when they suspect that their students know more than they do.

Myth #6: *If gifted students are grouped together, they will become snobbish and elitist.*
Fact: Some will; some won't. What's especially pernicious about this myth is that some adults use it to rationalize decisions about *not* allowing gifted students to work or study together or *not* providing them with opportunities that meet their learning needs.

Myth #7: *All gifted kids have trouble adjusting to school and forming friendships.*
Fact: Some do; some don't- just like other kids.

Myth #8: *Gifted students don't know that they're "different" unless someone tells them.*
Fact: Most gifted kids don't need to be identified or labeled before they know that they're not quite like their age peers.

Myth #9: *Gifted students must constantly be challenged and kept busy or they will get lazy.*
Fact: They might get bored, but they won't necessarily get lazy.

Myth #10: *Gifted kids are equally mature in all areas-academic, physical, social, and emotional.*
Fact: That would be convenient, but it is not a reasonable expectation. (The Columbus Group in 1991 found that gifted kids tended to be asynchronous in their development. They are way above their peers in cognitive development, are highly sensitive for their age, but may lag behind in physical development and socially they prefer younger kids or adults as companions.)