

Clinton-Glen Gardner School District



Gifted and Talented Program Parent Handbook 2010-2011

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Philosophy

Clinton Public School's Gifted and Talented program acknowledges, values, and nurtures the diverse talents of students and is committed to identifying and furthering the development of gifted learners. Designed to meet the needs of the individual, the program challenges students to maximize their potential through a broad range of enriching and differentiated experiences. Identified students will be active participants and share the responsibility for their own learning.

Definition of Giftedness

According to the New Jersey Administrative Code, gifted and talented students are defined as “those 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.”

N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3 & 6A:8-3.1

Characteristics of Giftedness

Research on creative-productive people has consistently shown that although no single criterion can be used to determine giftedness, persons who have achieved recognition because of their unique accomplishments and creative contributions possess a relatively well-defined set of three inter-locking clusters of traits. These clusters consist of above average, though not necessarily superior, ability, task commitment, and creativity (see Figure A). It is important to point out that no single cluster “makes giftedness.” Rather, it is the interaction among the three clusters that research has shown to be the necessary ingredient for creative-productive accomplishment. The shaded portion of Figure A represents this interaction. It is also important to point out that each cluster plays an important role in contributing to the display of gifted behaviors.

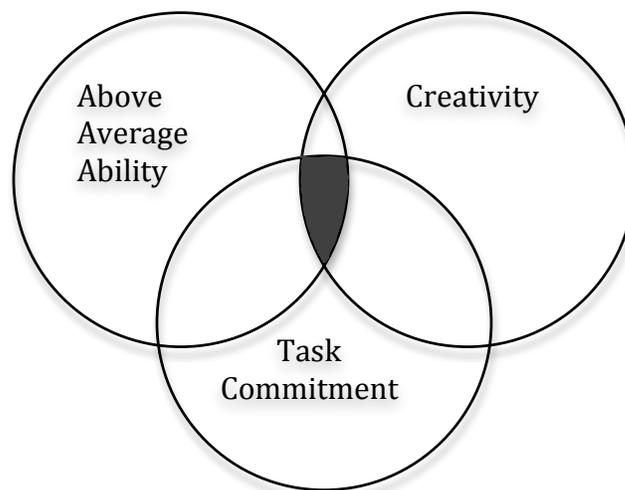


Figure A

The following list further describes the characteristics of each of the three giftedness clusters.

Above Average Ability

- High levels of abstract thinking, verbal and numerical reasoning, spatial relations, memory, and word fluency.
- Adaptation to the shaping of novel situations encountered in the external environment.
- The automatization of information processing; rapid accurate, and selective retrieval of information.
- The application of various combinations of the above abilities to one or more specialized areas of knowledge or areas of human performance (e.g., the arts, leadership, administration).
- The capacity for acquiring and making appropriate use of advanced amounts of formal knowledge, tacit knowledge, technique, logistics, and strategy in the pursuit of particular problems or the manifestation of specialized areas of performance.
- The capacity to sort out relevant and irrelevant information associated with a particular problem or areas of study or performance.

Task Commitment

- The capacity for high levels of interest, enthusiasm, fascination, and involvement in a particular problem, area of study, or form of human expression.
- The capacity for perseverance, endurance, determination, hard work, and dedicated practice. Self-confidence, a strong ego and a belief in one's ability to carry out important work, freedom from inferiority feelings, drive to achieve.
- The ability to identify significant problems within specialized reason; the ability to tune in to major channels of communication and new developments within given fields. Setting high standards for one's work; maintaining an openness to self and external criticism; developing an aesthetic sense of taste, quality, and excellence about one's own work and the work of others.

Creativity

- Fluency, flexibility, and originality of thought.
 - Openness to experience; receptive to that which is new and different (even irrational) in thoughts, actions, and products of oneself and others.
 - Curious, speculative, adventurous, and "mentally playful" willing to take risks in thought and action, even to the point of being uninhibited.
 - Sensitive to detail, aesthetic characteristics of ideas and things; willing to act on and react to external stimulation and one's own ideas and feelings.
- (Renzulli)

Bright Child vs. Gifted Learner

(Janice Szabos, Challenge Magazine)

A Bright Child

- Knows the answers
- Is interested
- Is attentive
- Has good ideas
- Works hard
- Answers the questions
- Is in the top group
- Listens with interest
- Learns with ease
- Needs 6-8 repetitions for mastery
- Understands ideas
- Enjoys peers
- Grasps the meaning
- Completes assignments
- Is receptive
- Copies accurately
- Enjoys school
- Absorbs information
- Is a technician
- Is a good memorizer
- Is alert
- Is pleased with own learning
- Enjoys straight forward sequential presentation

A Gifted Learner

- Asks questions
- Is highly curious
- Is Mentally & physically involved
- Has wild, silly ideas
- Plays around, yet tests well
- Discusses in detail, elaborates
- Is beyond the group
- Shows strong feeling & opinions
- Already knows
- Needs 1-2 repetitions for mastery
- Constructs abstractions
- Prefers adults
- Draws inferences
- Initiates projects
- Is intense
- Creates a new design
- Enjoys learning
- Manipulates information
- Is an inventor
- Is a good guesser
- Is keenly observant
- Is highly self-critical
- Thrives on complexity

Program Goals

The program's goals are focused in the following areas:

1. Student Identification – process and student
 - To identify outstanding intellectual potential in students and to nurture the academic, creative, artistic, and social/emotional needs of gifted, talented and creative children.
 - To implement an ongoing identification process of screening and selecting students based on multiple and specific criteria (both qualitative and quantitative).
2. Curriculum Development
 - To offer a continuum of services designed to challenge academically gifted and talented students through rigorous curriculum with a focus on developing higher order, critical thinking skills and problem solving as well as leadership and communication skills.
 - To develop and implement a variety of differentiated and substantive learning opportunities providing exploration of in-depth content to generate complex products appropriate to their giftedness.
3. District Support
 - To support the district's commitment to this program by providing educators with appropriate staff development and resources to meet the needs of academically talented students.
4. Program Evaluation
 - To analyze the effectiveness of the gifted and talented program through ongoing evaluation for the purpose of continued improvement, development and refinement.

Program Description

The Clinton Public School Gifted and Talented program is comprised of two components. Our general G&T program, Q.U.E.S.T. (Question, Understand, Explore, Solve, Think), is open to students in grades 1-8. Kindergarten students who demonstrate exceptional academic skills will be provided differentiated opportunities either within the regular classroom setting or with the enrichment teacher. CPS also offers a program, E², which focuses solely on mathematical concepts and is available to students in grades 4-8. Each of these programs is designed to provide investigative experiences that reach beyond the grade level curriculum.

Q.U.E.S.T.

This program is delivered to students using a pullout format that incorporates a multi-disciplinary approach to learning. Students are engaged in thematic learning experiences with extended inquiry-based projects designed to develop critical thinking skills, collaboration, and creative approaches to real world situations. Q.U.E.S.T. is designed to be responsive to the interests and affinities of the participants, with an infusion of 21st Century Skills as denoted by the program components listed below.

Program Components

- use inquiry and research within project driven learning experiences
- frame, analyze and synthesize information in order to solve problems and answer questions
- articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively through speaking and writing
- exceed basic mastery of skills and/or curriculum to explore and expand one's own learning and opportunities to gain expertise
- set and meet high standards and goals for delivering quality work on time
- understand the interconnections among systems
- solve different kinds of non-familiar problems in both conventional and innovative ways
- use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information
- work effectively with diverse teams
- utilize the global community as a resource to expand one's own knowledge, insight and expertise
- analyze and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs effectively
- synthesize and make connections between information and arguments
- be receptive and responsive to new and diverse perspectives
- utilize the global community as a resource to expand one's own knowledge, insight and expertise

Primary

At the primary level Q.U.E.S.T. consists of a pullout program, where students are provided an array of learning opportunities that emphasize content in the four core academic areas (math, language arts, science and social studies). The pullout program design allows students to be grouped homogeneously with other gifted and talented students and participate in enriched academic experiences. Enrichment and extension of advanced concepts are explored through a project-based application integrating learning across content areas.

Intermediate and Middle School

At the intermediate and middle school levels Q.U.E.S.T. consists of a pullout program that is differentiated in terms of content, process, and product. Students at this level are involved in inquiry-based lessons, group problem solving settings, independent investigations and group discussions. Learning experiences at this level will include an integration of core academic areas. Since students in this program are high achieving, they may be excused from making up work missed while attending their Q.U.E.S.T. session unless new material is introduced or students have not yet demonstrated mastery of the day's learning objective. However, if there are particular assignments due on the Q.U.E.S.T. pullout day, it is the responsibility of the student to work out an accommodation with the regular classroom teacher.

E² Math

E² is an engaging and exciting component of the G&T program designed to meet the needs of our gifted math students in grades four through six. This program encourages high levels of critical thinking through rigorous collaborative and independent activities. It permits students to show a mastery of material and then provides them with the opportunity to progress at an accelerated rate through new material. It also presents students with multi-tiered assignments within each unit. Each activity and assignment is tailored to meet different student achievement levels and fosters opportunities for peer interaction and collaboration among students of similar interests and abilities.

Intermediate Program

In third grade, students whose classroom performance and assessment data have qualified them for placement in the high math group will be involved in math enrichment experiences. The program is a combination of individual, small group, and whole group investigations. The math enrichment teacher will co-teach lessons with the classroom teacher within the regular math class setting. In addition the math enrichment teacher will collaborate with the classroom teacher to provide individual and small group experiences. The number of days in a cycle and the percentage of time each student spends engaged in these activities as opposed to the regular math classroom setting

will vary by unit and by individual student need. Each of these experiences is designed to enrich and extend the NJ Core Content Standards that are the foundation of our current third grade math curriculum. It is our goal to enhance the mathematical experiences of our advanced third grade math students through the use of technology, classroom projects, and authentic, hands-on activities.

Beginning in fourth grade, students are formally identified for participation in the E² program. This program is a combination of individual and small group investigations. As is the case with our third grade program, the number of days in a cycle and the percentage of time each student spends in the E² Math Program will be driven by the needs of particular units and individual students. These units will be designed to challenge gifted math students in a setting where differentiation and collaborative exchanges provide natural extensions to the grade level curriculum. There will be frequent assessments of each participant's understanding of the math concepts being presented in the regular classroom. Demonstration of mastery will lead to more in-depth work which may happen inside or outside of the regular math classroom depending upon the students' interest and progress, as well as the core content and unit of study.

Middle School

E² will be a replacement math program for qualifying students in fifth and sixth grade. This means that students will no longer have math in the regular classroom setting. Instead, students will be taught in a cluster group of gifted math students and will have the chance to move through the curriculum at more rapid pace than their peers. Based upon students' performance on assessments, this curriculum compacting may provide an opportunity for students to "skip" ahead to *Eighth Grade Algebra I* at the beginning of their seventh grade year. After successfully completing *Eighth Grade Algebra I*, students will take an exam that will afford them the opportunity of taking a high school math class during their eighth grade year if they successfully achieve the minimum required score on this exam.

Identification and Selection

The identification process for entry into Q.U.E.S.T. and/or E² consists of three steps:

Step 1: Pre-Screening	
Q.U.E.S.T.	E ²
Literacy Portfolio (K-5)	End of the Year Math Test
Report Card Grades (6-8)	Final Math Average
NJ ASK Scores (3-8)	NJ ASK Scores
Renzulli-Hartman Scales	
Step 2: Screening	
Q.U.E.S.T.	E ²
SAGES 2	TOMAGS (4-6)
Step 3: Selection	
Q.U.E.S.T.	E ²
Review of Data	Review of Data
Parent Notification	Parent Notification

1. Pre-screening

All CPS students' math and language arts academic information will be reviewed. Those students who meet or exceed the Pre-screening Criteria will be eligible to be screened for entrance into the Gifted and Talented program – Q.U.E.S.T. and E² (beginning in fourth grade). This review process will begin during the spring for entrance into the program for the following school year. Parents will be informed of their students' eligibility for screening. Written consent is required before screening/testing begins.

2. Screening – Assessment/Testing

Students seeking entrance into the G&T program will be formally evaluated using standardized tests designed to determine giftedness.

For entrance into Q.U.E.S.T., testing will be conducted to measure both ability and achievement. Ability testing measures students' reasoning and problem solving skills, while achievement testing measures students' academic level in content areas. In grades K-3 students are administered the SAGES 2 test in reasoning, language arts/social studies, and math/science. In grades 4-8 students are administered the SAGES 2 testing in reasoning and language arts/social studies.

The achievement portions of SAGES 2 in language arts/social studies and math/science require the student to respond to questions in a multiple-choice format. The content for these tests was drawn from current texts, professional literature, books, and the national standards in each of these areas. Items require recall, understanding, and application of ideas and basic concepts in these content areas. The ability portion of SAGES 2 requires the student to solve new problems by identifying relationships among figures and pictures. The items are presented in an analogy format. The student must recognize pictures of figures, deduce relationships, and then find other pictures or figures that relate to the stimulus in the same manner. A score of 130 or greater demonstrates that a student is very likely to be gifted.

At the end of third grade, for entrance into the formal E² program students are administered the TOMAGS. The TOMAGS is correlated with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards and is designed to identify students who have talent or giftedness in mathematics. This test requires students to use mathematical reasoning and problem solving skills to understand how to communicate mathematically to solve problems. The TOMAGS is a standardized, norm-referenced test that utilizes open-ended responses rather than multiple-choice answers. The raw score is converted to a final standard score or quotient based on the child's age. A score between 121 and 130 shows mathematical strength. A score above 130 is considered to be exceptional.

3. Selection

Entrance into G&T programs is based on the following:

- Ability and Achievement test scores (NJ ASK 3-8, SAGES2)
- Renzulli-Hartman Scales (leadership, learning, creativity, motivation)
- Report Card Grades (6-8)
- Math and Literacy Rubric Scores (K-5)

Acceptance into one component of the G&T program does not automatically qualify a student for entrance into both programs. However, a student may participate in Q.U.E.S.T. and E² simultaneously after having met the entrance criteria for both programs.

The G&T committee convenes to review each screened student and uses both quantitative and qualitative data when making selections decisions. Parents are notified in writing of the committee's decisions. All decisions of the committee are final.

4. G&T Schedule

Placement Schedule	
Pre-Screening	June
Screening/Testing	Early September
Selection Meetings	mid-September
Parent Notification	End of September

Re-evaluation

Monitoring of student progress in G&T programs shall be an ongoing process that includes multiple criteria such as student attitude, performance and task commitment. Formal evaluation of Q.U.E.S.T. students will be required at certain points – upon entrance into the program and to continue in the program at the end of fourth grade. Students who have been accepted into Q.U.E.S.T. in grades 1-4 will remain eligible for participation through the end of fourth grade at which time they will be required to retest for continuance in the program. Students who have been accepted into Q.U.E.S.T. in grades 5-8 are eligible to participate through the end of eighth grade. Once students have been accepted into the E² program, they are not required to retest for continuance in the program.

Exiting the Program

Occasionally, there may be students who are identified for G&T programs who do not perform at expected standards in the program. Before a final decision is made, the student's teacher, G&T teacher, and/or school administrator will speak with the student's parent/guardian and explain the procedural safeguards to request a review of the decision to exit the student.

The following guidelines specify when a student may be exited from G&T programs:

- Parental request for student to discontinue participation
- Repeated failure to complete assigned work
- Substantial difficulty in understanding work that other students do independently
- Consistent pattern of low grades
- Behavioral concerns

If a teacher or parent requests a student be exited, the student may not re-enter a G&T program during that school year. In order to return to a G&T program in the following or any subsequent year, the student must be retested and meet all entrance criteria.