

## **ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT PROGRAM**

The district of Dumont is committed to meeting the needs of our gifted learners, and has created an environment that addresses our students' unique learning styles. The Academic Enrichment Program provides opportunities for students who possess these special academic needs. Emphasis is placed on enhancing creativity, increasing general knowledge, and developing the higher order thinking skills of analysis, evaluation, and creation.

The program content is based on a multidisciplinary approach to learning. Activities are designed to tap students' knowledge and skills in a variety of subject areas. Using these skills as a springboard, students expand their knowledge through research, experimentation, and discussion. Ultimately, students are asked to utilize these discoveries to find new and different ways to solve the problem at hand.

A team approach is used to service those children in kindergarten through second grade who have been identified as potential Academic Enrichment candidates. An informal assessment is used to determine which pupils possess advanced academic abilities. Instruments of measure include Kindergarten screening tests, teacher evaluation, parent input, and an individual assessment of skills checklist.

In these grades, the Academic Enrichment teacher conducts full class lessons to encourage higher order thinking skills as well as opportunities for students to think creatively. Working with the classroom teacher, the Enrichment staff may assist in the design of the child's school program and the selection of appropriate educational material.

In third through eighth grades, a theme approach is used for enrichment students, which affords an in-depth study of a particular unit. The students become an integral part of the learning process and gradually assume more of the responsibility for establishing individual and group goals. A key word for the program is enrichment. Classes are structured to broaden students' experiences and knowledge, rather than accelerate students in one specific area.

Because of the varied and unique needs of the gifted students, new and innovative educational opportunities are essential to an effective, stimulating and comprehensive program. Consequently, program evaluation and revision is ongoing.

In ninth through twelve grade, students receive numerous options based on interest and skill. Any enrolled student who meets the criteria for each selected course may take Honors, Advanced Placement and/or elective classes. Each of these classes has its own entrance requirements, curriculum and assessment practices.

## **IS THIS PROGRAM FOR ALL STUDENTS?**

Many children are hard workers and good students, attaining grades of "A's" and "B's." While certainly an achiever, a student may not possess the more advanced abstract thinking skills tapped by the program. Therefore, careful consideration also must be given as to whether this

child should be nominated. To assist parents/guardians in making this determination, a list of common traits of gifted children is offered below.

**A gifted child:**

- Constructs and handles abstractions better than their age mates; possesses above average problem solving abilities: often attacks complicated material by separating it into components and analyzing it systematically
- Possesses insatiable curiosity
- Displays independence in attitude and social behavior
- Is intensely focused on passions-resists changing activities when engrossed in own interests
- Works and studies independently; prefers to work individually; shows self reliance
- Exhibits creativeness and inventiveness; investigates new ways of doing things; interested in creating and brainstorming
- May use a large and advanced vocabulary

**SELECTION PROCESS AND ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Upon receipt of a nomination, a letter is sent home to the parents/guardians with a request for permission to screen their child for the program. The screening process for admission examines five different aspects of a student's scholastic performance:

1. Abilities test result
2. Math and Reading grades
3. Standardized test results
4. A parent's/guardian's assessment of the child's learning characteristics outside the classroom
5. The teacher's assessment of the child's learning characteristics within the classroom

Each of these multiple measures receives a score; these five scores are added to produce one cumulative score. The total scores of all nominees are then ranked from highest to lowest. The students with the highest scores are accepted. Parents/guardians are notified of the results by a letter from the Director of Special Services.

Students who do not gain acceptance into the program can be rescreened in subsequent years if they are renominated.

**TIMELINE OF IDENTIFICATION PROCESS**

Students are nominated for the program in the Spring. If a parent/guardian wishes to nominate their child, they may do so by sending a letter to their child's building principal by April 1st. Parents/guardians will be notified by letter in September as to whether their child has been accepted into the program.