

FAQ about the G/T program in SAD #53

Who are "gifted and talented" students?

State of Maine Definition:

(taken from the Marland Report-US Department of Education)

Gifted and talented children are those who require differentiated educational programs and services aligned with the Learning Results beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to themselves and society.

How do students become identified in SAD 53?

Students were recommended by their classroom teachers. Then the gifted/talented committee took the list of names from each class and collected the academic data. This data included MEA scores, Developmental Reading Assessment scores, Developmental Guide to Early Literacy data in both reading and writing, Early Math Diagnostic Assessment scores and Otis Lennon School Ability Test scores. Point values were assigned to each assessment. There was a total number of points a student could receive and it was compared to the number of points the child actually received to determine if a child was identified.

What will the programming look like for students in SAD 53?

SAD 53 has filed a plan with the Maine Department of Education that states we will differentiate instruction in reading, writing and math for students that have been identified as gifted in those areas. Most of this instruction will happen in the student's general education classroom. The classroom teacher, principal, parent, and student will meet to set goals for the student. Meetings will happen at least on a yearly basis.

What is a differentiated classroom?

(Tomlinson, 1999)

A differentiated classroom is a classroom where a teacher responds to each learner's needs through varied tasks, grouping, and on-going assessment and adjustment. A differentiated classroom is one that recognizes that a "one-size-fits-all" delivery system-one where everyone learns the same thing at the same pace-cannot and will not meet everyone's needs.

Key principles of a differentiated classroom:

- The teacher is clear about what needs to be targeted in subject matter.

- The teacher understands, appreciates, and builds upon student differences.
- The teacher believes that assessment and instruction are inseparable.
- The teacher adjusts content, process, and product in response to student readiness, interests, and learning profile.
- The teacher ensures that all students participate in respectful work.
- The teacher uses varied rates of instruction.
- The teacher creates an environment where a student competes against himself rather than others.
- A teacher provides specific ways for each student to learn as deeply and quickly as possible.

Teachers can create differentiated activities by modifying:

Content: *what students are to learn and the materials or mechanisms through which this is accomplished.* Example: Ms. Howe varies the words to be alphabetized in a second grade classroom. Each student is given an alphabetizing board and key tags with various words on them. Some students' key tags contain words such as "car" and "cap," that are a considerable challenge; for other students, words like "choose" and "chose" or "library" and "librarian" are more appropriate.

Process: *what key skills students use to make sense out of essential ideas and information.* Example: Mr. Keen helps his students review and refine their multiplication skills. Some students work in pairs testing each other with flash cards, other students practice independently on a guided computer program, and a few students work one-on-one with Mr. Keen.

Products: *what vehicles students use to demonstrate and extend what they know.* Example: In a 7th grade unit on the Middle Ages, Ms. Boutchard focuses students to learn about medieval cathedrals by creating a variety of products such as cathedral stories where the cathedral is the central figure in the story, a model showing the key features of a cathedral, or a book describing the symbols in a cathedral and their meanings to the people who built and worshipped in them.

Learning environment: *what classroom conditions that set the tone and expectations of learning.* In a third/fourth grade split classroom Mr. Hooper differentiates in his classroom by providing an interest center in the classroom to encourage students to enrich and expand their understanding of topics related to their formal study. The interest center presents a variety of tasks and changes every so often. For instance, during one unit on dinosaurs, the interest center instructs students to: draw a comparison picture of how iguanas are like dinosaurs, read about Chinese dragons and other mythological creatures, or make a dinosaur skeleton from clay.

Resources

Clark, B. (1997). Growing up gifted: Developing the potential of children at home and school.

Galbraith, J. (1998). The gifted kids survival guide for ages 10 and under.

Galbraith, J. (1996). The gifted kids survival guide : A teen handbook.

Kubilius, P. (2000). Early Gifts: Recognizing and Nurturing Children's Talents.

Quart, A. (2006). Hothouse Kids: The Dilemma of the Gifted Child.

Ruf, D. (1998). Losing Our Minds: Gifted Children Left Behind.

Sayler, M. (1997). Raising Champions: A Parent Handbook for Nurturing Gifted Children.

Smutny, J. (2001). Your Gifted Child.

<http://www.prufrock.com/>

<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/parents.htm>

http://www.ri.net/gifted_talented/parents.html

<http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/pages/ed.gifted.html>

http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/projectm3/parents_resources_5_3.htm