

Vision

The Challenge Program of the Cheltenham School District strives to ensure that gifted students become lifelong learners who actively pursue intellectual challenge; who think critically, creatively, and compassionately; and who value themselves and the diversity of their communities.

Mission

In order to accomplish this Vision, the faculty, staff, and administration of the Cheltenham School District will work collaboratively to:

- ✦ design instruction and learning experiences through which students can build a foundation of critical and creative thinking skills
- ✦ enable students with abilities beyond the norm to realize their potential by identifying and developing their strengths
- ✦ foster individual academic talents while simultaneously nurturing the whole child
- ✦ create a safe educational space in which students are encouraged to take intelligent risks, explore their interests, and express their gifts
- ✦ promote academic rigor by incorporating both enrichment and acceleration throughout all learning environments
- ✦ address students' individual needs by providing learning options and by teaching with a variety of appropriate methods

For More Information

Please contact the Challenge Consultant at your child's school, or call the Department of Innovation

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Programs & Services for Gifted Students

2020-2021

Cheltenham School District

Department of Innovation



Cheltenham's Challenge Program & Gifted Services

www.cheltenham.org/gifted

What is Giftedness?

In keeping with the District's Mission to nurture each child through a wealth of academic endeavors and community partnerships, our Vision to strive for excellence, and the charge of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the School District of Cheltenham provides, without cost to parents, screenings and evaluations of all students thought to be eligible for gifted services under Chapter 16 of the Pennsylvania School Code and appropriate programs and services to all students identified as gifted who are in need of specially designed instruction.

Programs and services are developed based on each child's identified areas of strength and the need for specially designed instruction and related services.

Many aspects of our program are currently being updated and revised to maintain the high standard of excellence we have traditionally held. Information about the plans for revision and progress towards completing the update will be posted at the district website.

The term *gifted student* in Cheltenham School District refers to children who give evidence of higher performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school district in order to develop such capabilities.

The unique needs and characteristics of gifted students manifest in many ways. Gifted children often:

- ◆ Learn new materials faster and retain them longer
- ◆ Comprehend in-depth, complex ideas
- ◆ Deal with complex, abstract concepts
- ◆ Infer and connect concepts
- ◆ Operate on higher levels of thinking
- ◆ Ponder with depth and multiple perspectives
- ◆ Develop asynchronously
- ◆ Display intense emotions, passions, and interests

Is My Child Eligible for Gifted Support?

The District screens all second and fourth grade students for gifted potential. However, screenings can be requested at any other time by a parent or teacher. If you suspect that your school age child is gifted, you may submit a written request to your building principal. A *Request for Gifted Screening* form for this purpose is available on our web site. Gifted screening is a three-stage process that looks at multiple criteria to determine whether a child is gifted.

Level 1: Aptitude and Achievement testing

Level 2: Individual test of gifted potential

Level 3: Gifted multidisciplinary evaluation (GMDE) by a certified school psychologist

To be eligible for gifted support services, the GMDE must determine that the student is both gifted *and* in need of specially-designed instruction. If this is the case, the Challenge Consultant will then develop a Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) in collaboration with the parents and general education teachers.

What does the Challenge Program Look Like?

While each gifted student has an individualized plan with specific goals designed for his or her needs, some needs are common to many gifted students, and the District has established specialized programs with such common needs in mind.

Full-time Challenge Consultants in each of our seven schools are dedicated solely to serving the needs of our gifted and high-ability students. They create extension activities and compacted curriculum and work in partnership with the general education teachers to provide enrichment opportunities.

In grades K-6, for example, students with advanced reading ability have access to the SYNC Curriculum. In math, we provide accelerated classes beginning in grade 5.

At Cedarbrook, students have a broad menu of options from which to choose in pursuing topics of personal interest.

Our high school Challenge Consultants provide individual support and counseling and also offer regular small group seminars.

What Services are Available to My Gifted Child?

The District provides a range of services to gifted students both within the general education environment and through pull-out and enrichment opportunities. Classroom teachers at all grade levels have received and continue to receive professional development in differentiating instruction and flexible grouping within the classroom.

As such, we make a wide range of options available for the education of gifted students. Programming to be considered by the GIEP team may include one or more of the following:

- ◆ Curriculum Compacting
- ◆ Flexible Grouping
- ◆ Subject-Matter or Whole Grade Acceleration
- ◆ Independent Study
- ◆ Small Group Seminars
- ◆ Mentoring
- ◆ Extracurricular Programs
- ◆ Dual Enrollment
- ◆ Early Entry to First Grade