

**Norwalk Community School
District**



**Gifted & Talented
Development Program**

August 2024

Norwalk Community School District



Growing Learners and Leaders

Self-Aware:

- Demonstrates self-efficacy
 - Demonstrates a growth mindset
 - Recognizes strengths and areas of growth
 - Engages in metacognition and reflection
-

Self-Directed:

- Proactively sets goals and self-monitors progress
 - Takes purposeful initiative
 - Demonstrates enthusiasm, grit and persistence
 - Cultivates leadership opportunities for self and others
-

Strategic:

- Embraces curiosity and inquiry
 - Engages in critical thinking
 - Identifies and solves problems
 - Uses creative and flexible thinking
-

Socially-Aware:

- Demonstrates empathy and respect for others
 - Appreciates diversity
 - Develops equity consciousness
 - Listens and communicates effectively
-

Connected:

- Engages with the community
- Understands civic responsibilities
- Builds healthy relationships
- Participates in teamwork and collaboration

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MISSION

Our primary mission is to actively support the academic and affective development of learners and leaders to maximize gifted and talented student potential - all day, every day.



VISION

The vision of Norwalk Community School District's Gifted & Talented Development Program is to identify and actively support students whose learning needs and/or abilities require services or activities beyond those provided by the Universal Core. We strive to collaborate with administration, teachers, parents, and students to provide a match between learner needs and the student's learning environment in order to support individual growth potential.

VALUES AND BELIEFS

- Gifted and talented learners are a diverse group with a range of strengths and needs.
- Our Gifted and Talented Development Program is integrated within the educational system through collaborative efforts among administrators, gifted and talented development specialists, classroom teachers, support staff, parents, and community.
- Identifying the needs of gifted and talented learners is an ongoing process. A continuum of services is provided based on the individual needs of each identified student.
- A comprehensive staff development program and a diversity of resources must be provided for all school staff.
- Continuous opportunities for identification of student needs will be provided through the Gifted and Talented Development Program.
- Identified gifted and talented learners have unique social and emotional needs that may need to be addressed through the collaborative efforts of school and parents.
- Identified gifted and talented learners' progress should be monitored over time and educational goals adjusted, as appropriate.

GOALS

100% of Gifted and talented learners are advanced proficient and/or show expected growth as measured by statewide assessments.

OVERVIEW OF A MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)

Norwalk Community School District has a learning goal to “develop, design, and implement a systemic instructional framework that includes a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) for academics and behavior.” In alignment with NCSD’s Portrait of a Learner, as well as the Iowa Department of Education, we are committed to ensuring high levels of learning for all students and staff (Norwalk Community School District, 2020).

The Iowa Department of Education defines MTSS as an “education decision-making framework of evidence-based practices in instruction and assessment that addresses the needs of *all students* starting in general education.” An MTSS framework is a continual improvement process that guides instructional decisions to provide appropriate support that fosters student learning and growth. MTSS focuses on three tiers (Iowa State Board of Education, 2016):

Tier 1: Universal Core Curriculum

- All students receive strong core curriculum instruction that
 - aligns with grade level standards
 - is delivered through high quality classroom instruction
 - utilizes scientifically based curriculum and methods
 - teaches critical elements of a subject

Tier 2: Strategic, Targeted Instruction

- Some students will receive strategically-targeted instruction in addition to the core that
 - addresses the specific needs of students who have already demonstrated proficiency or have not made sufficient progress in Tier 1
 - is provided in small groups of similarly-skilled students
 - enriches learning experiences with grade level standards or modified grade level standards
 - has increased intensification of differentiation strategies

Tier 3: Intensive, Targeted Instruction

- A few students will need intensive targeted instruction that
 - addresses the academic and intellectual needs that are not being met by Tier 1 or Tier 2 supplemental, targeted instruction
 - makes provisions for alternative learning opportunities
 - is designed to allow for continued growth at the student’s level

MTSS allows educators to analyze data on all students and identify any additional supports needed to ensure academic growth. The goal is for all students to reach the expectations set by the Iowa Core standards and be prepared for success after high school (Iowa Department of Education, 2014).

MTSS AND GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMMING

Norwalk Community School District supports students who have already reached the expectations set by the Iowa Core and may need differentiated instruction to enrich and extend the learning standards. In addition, we support students who demonstrate the need to move at an increased pace through the Iowa Core standards.

When considering gifted and talented learners, each tier is governed by the identified needs of students. At Norwalk Community Schools we believe all students can learn, but students learn in different ways and at different rates. Identified students who need more intensive services beyond the differentiated general curriculum will move into different tiers.

TIER 1: Universal Core Curriculum

Tier 1 is the foundational core curriculum, often called the Universal Core Curriculum (grade level standards) for ALL students. A strong Universal Core meets the needs of 80-85% of all students. These students are learning and growing through Tier 1 grade level standards, instruction, and learning experiences. The Universal Core Curriculum is aligned to the Iowa Core State Standards guidelines and differentiation is provided within the regular classroom to add depth, breadth, and challenge for advanced and gifted students around grade level standards.

| Tier 1: Essential Elements of Instruction | |
|--|---|
| Components | Instruction |
| Curriculum | Universal Core Curriculum and instructional materials to support grade level standards |
| Instructional Organization | This may include, but is not limited to, the following instructional strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● varied pacing ● varied tasks ● flexible grouping |
| Instructor | Classroom teacher |
| Assessment | This may include, but is not limited to, the following instructional strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● pre-assessment ● formative assessment ● summative assessment ● benchmark screening (K-8) ● cognitive abilities screening (CogAT) |
| Time | Core instruction provided daily |
| Setting | General education classroom (with appropriate grouping for differentiation) |
| Support | Professional development for school personnel regarding differentiation, social/emotional needs, knowledge of the characteristics of gifted learners, and understanding of proven strategies for gifted/advanced learning |

Role of the gifted and talented development specialist at the Tier 1 level:

- Collaborate with teachers in the identification of advanced learners
- Provide classroom teachers with lists of identified students
- Collaborate with teachers in implementing appropriate grouping strategies
- Collaborate with classroom teachers in implementing strategies for differentiating instruction
- Collaborate with classroom teachers in finding appropriate resources

TIER 2: Strategic, Targeted Instruction

Tier 2 includes instruction that modifies the grade level Universal Core Curriculum by increasing the use of a variety of differentiation strategies.

| Tier 2: Essential Elements of Instruction | |
|--|--|
| Components | Instruction |
| Curriculum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Universal Core Curriculum and instructional materials to support grade level standards ● Research or evidence-based strategies that extend Tier 1 instruction ● Possible replacement of the Tier 1 Universal Core Curriculum with advanced coursework as needed in content areas |
| Instructional Organization | <p>In addition to or in place of Tier 1 strategies, Tier 2 may include, but is not limited to, the following instructional strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● cluster grouping ● self-paced instruction ● independent study ● compacting ● other differentiation strategies |
| Instructor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● classroom teacher ● teacher leaders ● community partnerships or other specialists |
| Assessment | <p>This may include, but is not limited to, the following instructional strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● pre-assessment ● formative assessment ● summative assessment ● portfolio ● benchmark screening (K-8) ● cognitive abilities screening (CogAT) |
| Time | Extended time may be needed |
| Setting | General education classroom |

| | |
|---------|--|
| Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instructional teams such as grade level PLCs to determine differentiation strategies to support the needs and traits of gifted and advanced learners ● Professional learning for school personnel regarding differentiation, social/emotional needs, knowledge of the characteristics of gifted learners, and understanding of proven strategies for gifted/advanced learning |
|---------|--|

Role of the gifted and talented development specialist at the Tier 2 level:

- Collaborate with teachers in the identification of advanced learners
- Provide classroom teachers with lists of identified students
- Collaborate with teachers in implementing appropriate grouping strategies
- Collaborate with classroom teachers in implementing strategies for differentiating instruction
- Collaborate with classroom teachers in finding appropriate resources
- Collaborate with teachers who service groups of clustered gifted students
- Provide professional development for teachers who service groups of clustered gifted students
- Provide professional learning regarding Tier 2 instructional strategies and needs of gifted and talented learners

TIER 3: Intensive, Targeted Instruction

Tier 3 consists of intensive instruction that differs significantly in level, pace, and complexity from age-level peers. When data indicates a need for significant differentiation, a part or all of a student’s grade level Universal Core Curriculum may be replaced with advanced coursework as needed.

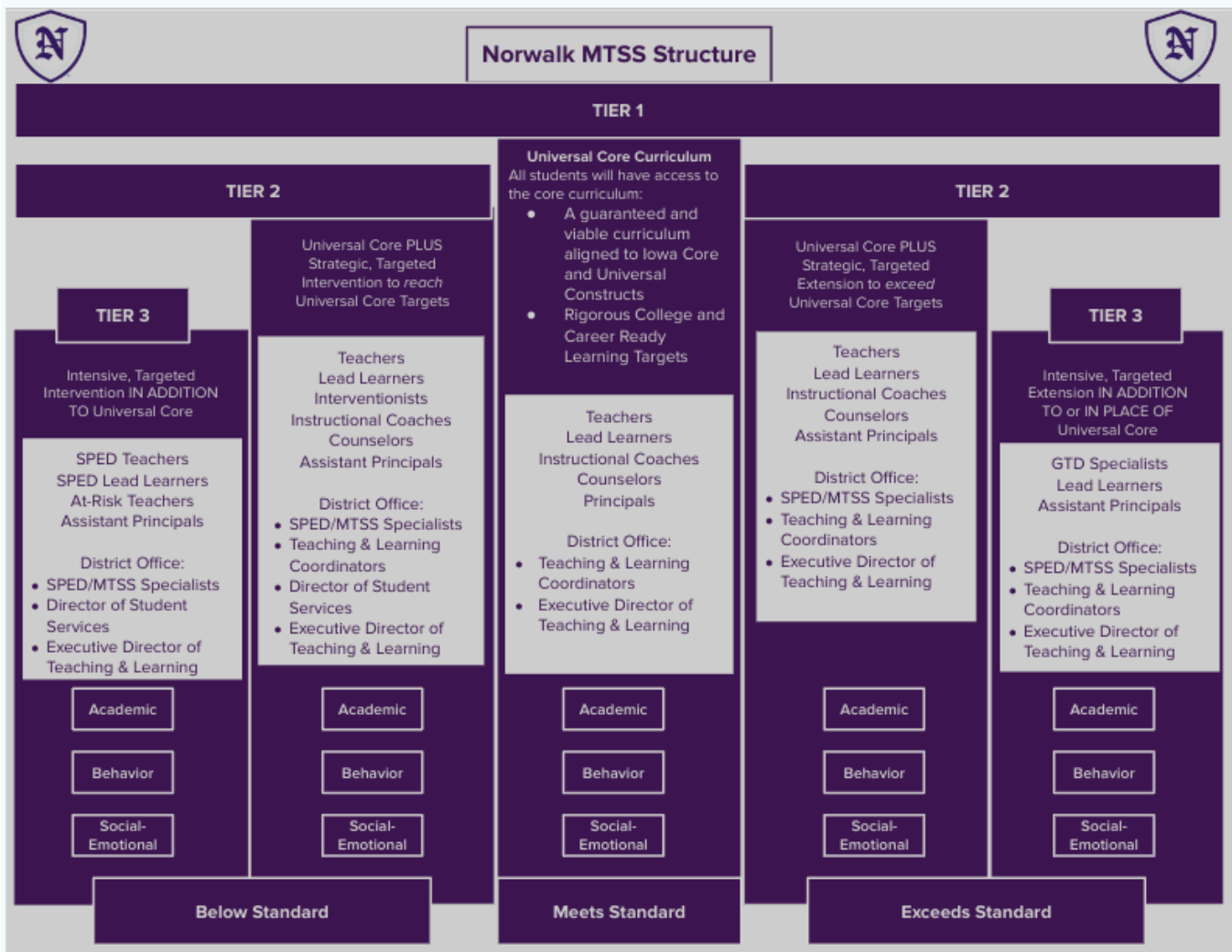
| Tier 3: Essential Elements of Instruction | | |
|--|---|--|
| Components | Instruction | |
| Curriculum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Possible replacement of the Tier 1 Universal Core Curriculum with advanced coursework as needed in content areas | |
| Instructional Organization | This may include, but is not limited to, the following instructional strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● cluster grouping ● differentiation ● enrichment ● compacting ● single subject acceleration ● whole grade acceleration | At the secondary level, the following learning opportunities may be utilized if data indicates the need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● single subject acceleration ● credit advancement ● advanced placement courses (AP) ● post-secondary education options (PSEO) ● telescoping ● self-paced instruction ● independent study |

| | |
|------------|---|
| Instructor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● classroom teacher ● gifted and talented development specialist ● teacher leaders ● community partnerships or other specialists |
| Assessment | <p>This may include, but is not limited to, the following instructional strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● pre-assessment ● summative assessment ● personalized education plan (PEP) ● out of grade level testing ● cognitive abilities screening (CogAT) |
| Time | As determined by a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) |
| Setting | As determined by a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) |
| Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instructional teams such as grade level PLCs to determine differentiation strategies to support the needs and traits of gifted and advanced learners. ● Professional learning for school personnel regarding differentiation, social/emotional needs, knowledge of the characteristics of gifted learners, and understanding of proven strategies for gifted/advanced learning |

Role of the gifted and talented development specialist at the Tier 3 level:

- Collaborate with teachers in determining the need for Tier 3 instruction
- Collaborate with teachers who service groups of clustered gifted students
- Provide professional development for teachers who service groups of clustered gifted students
- Provide professional learning regarding Tier 3 instructional strategies and needs of gifted and talented learners
- Create, monitor, and revise student goals and classroom teacher(s) as needed

NORWALK MTSS STRUCTURE



DIFFERENTIATION

Differentiation of instruction is the overriding philosophical foundation for the inclusion of academically gifted services into every classroom. Academically gifted and talented students may possess learning characteristics and needs that differ from those of their chronological peers. Their learning experiences may need to be differentiated from that of other students. Differentiating for academically gifted and talented students includes modifying and/or enriching the content, product, and/or processes.

Gifted students are gifted all day, everyday. Gifted and talented development specialists, alone, do not provide services for identified learners. Their role is to support classroom teachers to meet the needs of these learners.

A differentiated curriculum for gifted and talented learners may include, but is not limited to, the following:

Content: Complex and challenging subject matter that

- requires intellectual struggle
- integrates research skills and methods
- incorporates relevant and real-life experiences
- integrates interdisciplinary connections

Process: Instructional strategies are designed to

- emphasize higher-order thinking, problem-solving, and communications skills
- foster self-initiated and self-directed learning
- promote creative application of ideas
- model and encourage academic discussion

Product: Products may demonstrate

- self-directed learning
- meaningful collaboration
- effective problem solving of challenging and complex issues
- effective communication
- social and emotional understanding of self relative to community, culture, and physical environment

Environment: Classroom climate and culture that

- foster an environment where it is safe to fail
- encourage creativity and discovery/inquiry-based learning
- utilize flexible grouping such as cluster grouping
- provide opportunities to work with other gifted students - even in different grades
- are led by an educator who is willing to relinquish control and become a “guide on the side”
- support the unique social and emotional well-being of the gifted and talented population

GIFTED SCREENING AND IDENTIFICATION

Gifted and talented learners are identified as possessing outstanding abilities who are capable of high performance. These students may require differentiated instruction and educational services to support their abilities and needs beyond those provided by Tier 1. Norwalk Community Schools identifies gifted and talented learners in the following domains (Iowa Code 257.44):

- General Intellectual Ability
- Specific Ability Aptitude
 - English
 - Math
- Leadership
- Creativity
- Visual/Performing Arts

It is important to note that differentiated educational services for academically gifted and talented learners are not designed for the typical high ability student who can earn “A” grades and who is a good student. These services are reserved for the students who demonstrate exceptional talent to understand and generate abstract ideas at a higher level. Our mission is to identify the top tier of students and to provide educational opportunities that will challenge and develop their abilities.

GENERAL INTELLECTUAL ABILITY IDENTIFICATION and SERVICES

All students will be screened for gifted and talented development services in grades 2, 5, and 8 using the Cognitive Abilities Test screening tool (CogAT). Any student who scores in the top 10% of our locally normed CogAT screener will have additional data collected. In addition, students who have been placed in a talent pool due to previous scores on a locally normed CogAT may also have additional data collected. The CogAT full battery of tests will determine if additional services are needed for academic growth. Formal identification criteria may include:

1. Cognitive Ability Test (CogAT): Top 3%-5% on Core Total
2. State Assessments: Top 3%-5% on the Core Composite
3. State Assessments: Top 3%-5% Reading Total
4. State Assessments: Top 3%-5% Math Total

Trend data will also be considered when identifying the academic needs of students. New students will be screened as needed. Parent requests to test will be honored if the data indicates the need. If additional data is needed, the following will be considered:

- Universal Screening Data (FastBridge/ISASP/MAP)
- Classroom Assessment Data

Once the data is collected, a team of teachers and administrators will analyze the data to determine identification with the emphasis on what services are needed to promote academic growth in each student. Academic gifted and talented development services are offered on a consultative basis. Gifted and talented development specialists and the building administrator(s) work with the classroom teachers providing materials, strategies, lessons, and instructional techniques for meeting the needs of high-ability learners. During the school year, if data indicates a need, identified students may participate in classroom enrichment lessons for the purpose of promoting creativity as well as analytical and critical thinking. Identified gifted services could include:

GRADES K-2:

* While no formal identification is done at these grade levels, students displaying exceptional abilities are identified by the classroom teacher, CogAT kindergarten screener, and the gifted and talented development specialist and given additional or alternative instruction suitable to their needs.

- Tier 1 and Tier 2 classroom differentiation
- gifted and talented development specialist involvement

GRADES 3rd-12th:

- Formal identification
- Cluster grouping
 - 3rd-7th: classroom clustering
 - 8th-12th: advisement clustering
- Academic and social/emotional goal setting and monitoring
- Gifted and talented development specialist classroom differentiation support as needed

SPECIFIC ABILITY APTITUDE IDENTIFICATION and SERVICES

Any student who demonstrates ability within the top 5% of their peers in math or English language arts will be considered for identification within that specific subject area and appropriate services will be determined. All students will be screened for Specific Ability Aptitude identification in the spring of 6th grade for English and math. Screening and identification will determine course recommendations for the following school year.

GRADES 7th-12th:

- Formal identification
- Academic goal setting and monitoring
- Cluster grouping within identified subject area
- Gifted and talented development specialist classroom differentiation support as needed

The following data will be gathered and analyzed to determine if services are needed to promote academic growth beyond the core curriculum in the following subject areas:

Mathematics

Identification Criteria:

1. Cognitive Ability Test (CogAT): Top 5% on Quantitative Test
2. State Assessments: Top 5% on Math Total without computation
3. Universal Screener: Top 5%

English Language Arts

Identification Criteria:

1. Cognitive Ability Test (CogAT): Top 5% on Verbal and Non-Verbal Tests
2. State Assessments: Top 5% on Reading Total
3. Universal Screener: Top 5%

CREATIVITY IDENTIFICATION and SERVICES

With support of the gifted and talented development specialist, identified gifted and talented learners will be provided opportunities to grow their creative abilities through the differentiated instructional strategies and learning experiences they receive in the classroom setting.

Creativity will be fostered by learning experiences that require the following processes:

- Original thinking in oral and written expression
- Determining several solutions to a given problem
- Possessing strong visual thinking or imaginative skills
- Transferring ideas and solutions to unique situations
- Preferring variety/novelty and an individual way of solving problems
- Asking many and unusual questions
- Often having several projects going on at once
- Resisting external controls, tests, and challenges limits

Identification Criteria:

1. All students in the top 3-5% of locally normed Torrance Test for Creative Thinking Figural Test administered in 4th grade will be classroom clustered.

LEADERSHIP IDENTIFICATION and SERVICES

With support of the gifted and talented development specialist, identified gifted and talented learners will be provided opportunities to grow their leadership abilities through the differentiated instructional strategies and learning experiences they receive in the classroom setting.

Leadership will be fostered by learning experiences that require the following processes:

- Assuming responsibility
- Maintaining high expectations for self and others
- Foreseeing consequences and implications of decisions
- Using good judgment in decision making
- Organizing skills and/or others for activities
- Relating to and motivating other people
- Demonstrating high levels of self-assistance when making decisions or convincing peers
- Seeing problems from many perspectives
- Listening to and respecting the opinions of others (or listening to and debating the opinions of others)

Identification Criteria:

1. Scales for Rating the Characteristics of Superior Students (Renzulli Leadership Scale) is given to teachers of all students in 8th grade for referral in 9th grade for leadership opportunities for those scoring in the top 5%.

VISUAL/PERFORMING ARTS IDENTIFICATION and SERVICES

With support of the gifted and talented development specialist, identified gifted and talented learners will be provided opportunities to grow their visual/performing arts abilities through the differentiated instructional strategies and learning experiences they receive in the classroom setting.

Visual/Performing Arts will be fostered by learning experiences that require the following processes:

- Showing very high ability in the visual arts
- Possessing unusual ability to create, perform, or describe music
- Possessing unusual talent in drama or dance
- Using artistic ability to express or evoke feelings
- Persisting with an artistic vision

IDENTIFICATION OF NEW STUDENTS

New students previously identified in another school district that move into Norwalk Community School District will be evaluated with current data from Norwalk CSD using local norms. Since Norwalk CSD utilizes local norms to identify students for gifted and talented programming, a data portfolio will be collected within the first 2-4 weeks the student is enrolled. Students in kindergarten through grade 2 will be given the CogAT screener to assist in the identification process. Students in grades three through eight and 9-12 by request will be given the full CogAT battery to assist in the identification process. If a cognitive ability assessment is available from a previous district and less than 2 years old, this data will be used in lieu of giving the CogAT assessment. When the data portfolio is collected with local data, a team will meet to review the portfolio to make a decision about the best programming for the student. The team may include the classroom teacher, gifted and talented specialist, elementary or secondary coordinator, building principal and the executive director of teaching and learning.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: NAGC Standards

GIFTED STANDARDS

Standard 1: Learning and Development: Educators understand the variations in learning and development in cognitive, affective, and psychosocial areas between and among individuals with gifts and talents, creating learning environments that encourage awareness and understanding of interest, strengths, and needs; and promoting cognitive growth and social-emotional and psychosocial skill development in school, home, and community settings.

Standard 2: Assessment: Assessments provide information about identification and learning progress for students with gifts and talents.

Standard 3: Curriculum Planning and Instruction: Educators apply evidence-based models of curriculum and instruction related to students with gifts and talents and respond to their needs by planning, selecting, adapting, and creating curriculum that is responsive to diversity. Educators use a repertoire of instructional strategies to ensure specific student outcomes and measurable growth.

Standard 4: Learning Environment: Learning environments foster a love for learning, personal and social responsibility, multicultural competence, and interpersonal and technical communication skills for leadership to ensure specific student outcomes.

Standard 5: Programming: Educators use evidence-based practices to promote (a) the cognitive, social-emotional, and psychosocial skill development of students with gifts and talents and (b) programming that meets their interests, strengths, and needs. Educators make use of expertise systematically and collaboratively to develop, implement, manage, and evaluate services for students with a variety of gifts and talents to ensure specific student outcomes.

Standard 6: Professional Learning: All educators (administrators, teachers, counselors, and other instructional support staff) build their knowledge and skills using the NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted and Talented Education, (NAGC-CEC) Advanced Standards in Gifted Education Teacher Preparation, and the Standards for Professional Learning. Institutions of higher education utilize these standards and the NAGC Faculty Standards to ensure quality professional learning experiences in pre-service, initial, and advanced educator preparation programs. Educators frequently assess their professional learning needs related to the standards, develop and monitor their professional learning plans, systematically engage in coaching and learning to meet their identified needs, and align outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards. Administrators assure educators have access to sustained, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, and data-driven learning and assure adequate resources to provide for release time, fund continuing education, and offer substitute support. The effectiveness of professional learning is assessed through relevant student outcomes.

Appendix B: Types of Acceleration

These interventions move a student through an educational program faster than the usual rate or at an age younger than the typical age.

| Types of Acceleration | | |
|---|---|---|
| Single subject acceleration | A student bypasses the usual progression of skills and content mastery in one subject where great advancement or proficiency has been observed. The learner will progress at the regular instructional pace through the remaining subject areas. | Research based gains: 1.57 Subject acceleration in mathematics resulted in significant positive academic increases for both elementary and secondary students. This form of acceleration accounts for only a small time change in the regular routine. |
| Whole-grade skipping | A learner is double promoted to bypass one or more grade levels. | Research based gains: 1.49 academic, 1.31 social Grade skipping for bright children also appears to be beneficial. Its greatest research-supported academic and social effects appear to be in grades 3-6. |
| Curriculum compacting (within a course) | The regular curriculum of any or all subjects is tailored to the specific gaps, deficiencies, and strengths of an individual student. The learner tests out or bypasses previously mastered skills and content, focusing only on mastery of deficient areas, thus moving more rapidly through the curriculum. | Research based gains: 1.83 (one year and eight additional months of growth per year). Curriculum compacting-whereby the student begins each school year at his/her actual level of performance in each subject-results in significantly positive academic effects. |
| Grade telescoping (multiple courses) | A student's progress is reorganized through middle school or high school to shorten the time by one year. | Research based gains: 1.40 Another implication from our analysis is that allowing children to progress through three years' curriculum in two years' time showed very positive academic outcomes for middle school and high school students. |
| Concurrent enrollment | A student attends classes in more than one building level during the school year. | Research based gains: 1.22 |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>AP courses (Advanced Placement)</p> | <p>A student takes an Advanced Placement (AP) course that aligns with an AP Board approved syllabus. The student has the opportunity to sit for the AP exam. Depending on the score earned and college the student attends, the student may be able to receive college credit.</p> | <p>Research based gains: 1.27 Participants are not harmed at the college level by having been credited for some courses. Also worth mentioning are the potential, positive effects of students having been adequately challenged and having been given more time to enroll in courses better suited to their interests and ability levels.</p> |
| <p>Credit Advancement</p> | <p>A student can earn credit for a course they have not taken if the student scores an 80% or above on the final exam. The student will earn a grade of “P” for “Pass” and be allowed to proceed to the next course.</p> | <p>Research based gains: 1.59 There appeared to be a strong relationship between testing out and subsequent performance in those subject areas.</p> |

Appendix C: Definitions

Acceleration: Interventions that move a student through an educational practice at a faster than normal rate.

Advanced Placement: Provisions of courses at the secondary level afford a student opportunity to “test out” of or be given credit for completion of college-level course work. The student takes courses with advanced or accelerated content (usually at the secondary level) in order to receive credit for college-level work upon successful completion of the AP exam.

Cluster Grouping: Four to eight gifted students in the same grade level are identified and placed in one class with a teacher who is trained to work with them and devotes proportional class time to differentiating for their learning needs. A gifted and talented development specialist supports the classroom teacher through planning and/or co-teaching. High ability students are placed in different clusters from the gifted students.

Concurrent Enrollment/Dual Credit: Students are allowed to attend classes in more than one building level during the same school year.

Cooperative Learning Groups: Grouping students to engage in activities for the purpose of developing peer interaction skills and cooperation which may include like or mixed ability groups.

Credit Advancement: Credit by exam allows a student to earn course credit by “testing out” of a course. Demonstration of proficiency (80%) of essential skills and concepts covered on an end-of-the-course examination is required. If 80% is achieved, the student is given a grade of “Pass” and awarded credit for the course.

Curriculum Compacting: The regular curriculum of any or all subjects is tailored to the specific needs of a student. Through the use of pretests, the students’ previously mastered skills and content are determined and instruction focuses only on mastery of deficient areas resulting in reduced amounts of drill and review. The time saved may be used to move faster through the curriculum or to pursue alternate activities.

Differentiated Instruction: A matching of instruction to meet the different needs of learners in a given classroom by modifying delivery, time, content, process, product, and the learning environment is used. One or more of these elements can be modified to provide differentiation.

Early Graduation: A student is granted a diploma prior to the end of their senior year after fulfilling all graduation requirements. Intent to graduate early needs to be approved by a high school principal.

Evidence-Based Instruction (EBI): Verifiable research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge is used.

Independent Study: Students take a class independently using materials provided by teachers. The purpose of independent study is to provide an alternative education program and setting for students.

Post-Secondary Education Option (PSEO): A high school student is allowed to enroll in a college or university course after exhausting all the courses of a particular content strand offered at Norwalk High School.

Self-Paced Instruction: A student learns through any kind of instruction that proceeds based on learner response.

Single-Subject Acceleration: A student is allowed to move more quickly through the progression of skills and content mastery in one subject where great advancement or proficiency has been observed; other subjects may be at grade level. This may involve a student moving between buildings daily. In this case, teams from both buildings need to plan appropriate programming.

Subject Telescoping: A group of advanced students is accelerated through more than one year's curriculum in one year, such that three years' of curriculum are completed in two years' time.

Targeted: Focused instruction is provided on an identified skill.

Tier 1 Universal Core Curriculum: Tier 1, the universal core, includes differentiated practices that are provided to all students in a classroom.

Tier 2 Strategic, Targeted Intervention: Tier 2 Intervention is a strategic and targeted intervention that is implemented as a result of assessment that indicates a student is not making adequate gains from Tier 1 instruction. Tier 2 intervention is typically delivered in small groups of students with similar skill concerns.

Tier 3 Intensive, Targeted Intervention: Tier 3 interventions are for students who require highly individualized, systematic, and explicit instruction to accelerate learning rate and/or to support learning. Intervention is considered to be intensive and is typically delivered one-on-one or in very small groups of students (2-3) with similar skills.

Trend Data: Data from multiple years and in multiple forms used to analyze patterns for making instructional decisions.

Whole Grade Acceleration: Going up one or two entire grades. Whole grade advancement is determined on an individual basis in accordance with needs assessments which includes but not limited to the Iowa Acceleration Scale.

Appendix D: Parent Information

The Importance of Parent Involvement

Collaborative parent involvement is a vital component of successful education. The National Association for Gifted Children (www.nagc.org) publishes issues of *Parenting for High Potential* for parents of gifted children several times per year. School resource centers, public libraries, college/university libraries, the Davidson Institute (www.ditd.org), the Hoagies Gifted Education site (www.hoagiesgifted.org), and Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted (www.sengifted.org) are some additional good sources for more information on giftedness and talent development.

Becoming an engaged, collaborative parent who provides support and advocacy on behalf of a child with advanced learning needs takes time, practice, and patience. The National Education Association (NEA) has offered several suggestions regarding the important role parents play in the development of exceptional capabilities in their children.

- Try to encourage integrative thinking by drawing relationships among ideas and events. Discuss possible consequences of actions, both personal and social, building upon daily experiences and contemporary events.
- Encourage imagination – engage in storytelling and creative expression in the arts, for example.
- Support a child's or adolescent's calculated risk-taking and non-dangerous experimentation, even when the possibilities of success are slim. Help them understand how lack of success is part of lifelong learning, and encourage them to explore the causes of failure and alternatives to success.
- Guide your child in learning how to socially and emotionally cope with failure and with success.
- Provide opportunities to experience a variety of books, games, puzzles, activities, and publications that foster critical and creative thinking. Introduce them to situations that expand their horizons and help build an appreciation for diversity and an understanding of cross-cultural perspectives. Limit the time your child spends engaged in technology-enhanced activities such as TV, video games, and computer-based activities.
- Establish a collaborative relationship and partnership with teachers and school administrators about educating highly advanced learners. Understand policies and procedural guidelines that exist regarding accelerative options for your child.

You are your child's most important advocate. Guide your child in setting realistic goals and objectives. Help them learn to stop doing or to say "no" gracefully. Difficulties may arise from having an overwhelming number of choices or from being capable of high performance at too many things. Discuss and model ways in which difficult but necessary decisions can be made when faced with too many alternatives.

Appendix E: Tier 3 [Referral Form](#)

Appendix F: Appeal Process

1. The parent contacts the building principal and has an informal conversation about the gifted placement concern.
2. If the parent is still concerned with the administrative decision, the parent must address the building administrator(s) and the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning regarding any placement issues by sending a written letter of appeal outlining the rationale for considering a change in the child's placement.
3. Upon receipt of the written letter of appeal, the building administrator or the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning will contact the parent to arrange a meeting to review current data involved in placement decisions.
4. A meeting will be arranged with the parent that may include the building administrator(s), the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, and the gifted and talented development specialist to review data and discuss placement options. An administrator will send a written letter informing the parent of the placement outcome.

This handbook is a collection of information about the Norwalk Community School District's Gifted and Talented educational services. These services were started during the 1982-83 school year at the elementary level. In the fall of 1983 it was expanded to the middle school level. In the fall of 1993 it was expanded to the high school level. The material contained in this booklet is designed to be of aid to parents, teachers, and the administrative staff.

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