

PART 1: Welcome to the East Rutherford School District Gifted and Talented Education Program

Subheading: Core Belief

The East Rutherford School District recognizes that there are students who require differentiated programs and services beyond the core curriculum because of their exceptional abilities in a particular area. Our goal is to provide a variety of learning opportunities, designed to meet the needs and challenges of these learners in various dedicated program settings. The district believes that these students should have a comprehensive articulated educational program, designed to maximize their unique abilities and to enhance personal growth. An integral aspect of our Guiding principles is the belief that we should design programs that focus on the importance of flexibility in the provision of services, ensuring that all students have access to high level learning opportunities.

PART 2: East Rutherford School District Gifted and Talented Framework

Overview

Our district wide School Gifted and Talented/Enrichment Program is designed to provide meaningful activities for all students to meet their highest potential. The program is designed to challenge students through a multidimensional teaching approach in both the cognitive and affective domains. Our Program is structured to provide a differentiated curriculum to identified students; it is intended to complement the strong skill-based curriculum in the core classes and to provide students with opportunities to explore and hone their talents in technology, science, math and the arts.

East Rutherford School District Program Rationale

Our aim is to expose students to experiences, activities, and challenges beyond the regular curriculum that can expand their thinking and further prepare them for 21st century careers. Many activities are performed in cooperative learning teams, which are designed to promote interdependence through collaborative thinking and decision-making, persuasive speaking and writing. Rigorous honors programs in areas such as : English Language Arts, Math, and World Language are designed at the Middle School level to challenge our scholars with highest rigor and expectations that will meet the students' social, emotional, and academic needs.

Curriculum: Through its design and implementation, the Gifted and Talented/Enrichment Program will meet the needs of the highly-able, creative and talented student by providing curricular and instructional opportunities in the areas of content, process, product, and learning environment. The following tenets will be adhered to:

- We will closely follow the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, utilizing skills from Math, Science, Language Arts and Technology.
- Students will be presented with content that is related to broad-based issues, themes, or

problems.

- Students will engage in cross-curricular problem-based-learning activities by integrating multiple disciplines into coursework.
- Our program will promote 21st Century Competencies including critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity.
- Much emphasis will be placed on critical thinking skills.
- Students, especially at the middle school level will develop research skills and methods.
- Finally, our program will foster creativity and innovation thus creating a learning culture that challenges students to be risk takers, to learn from mistakes, to be decision makers and leaders, and to tolerate student differences

PART 3: Nomination, Screening, Identification & Selection of Students

Nomination

All students not previously identified shall be eligible for nomination for the program each year. Nominations may be submitted by students themselves, teachers, parents or any person familiar with a student's abilities, potential, performance, and/or past records. Nominations shall be based on evidence of high level reasoning ability and/or the development of unique products that demonstrate unusual academic ability.

Screening

The screening stage creates a pool of students twice the size which will be selected for the program. It uses existing data on the students at target grade levels.

- Spring NJSLA results will be used for students currently in Grades 4-7 as a screening measure for achievement in academic areas assessed.
- Unit Assessments will be used for students currently in Grades 1-3 as a screening measure for achievement in academic areas assessed.

Identification

This stage of the process requires the use of more off-level assessments to discern who top students are in each domain. The Cognitive Abilities Test is used at all grade levels to find the most promising students in three domains: verbal, mathematical, and nonverbal. These aptitude scores will be useful in rank ordering the students within each area for selection of the top 10% in a given grade level. In addition to the COGAT, it is important to obtain teacher recommendations on these learners in their area of strength, with appropriate indicators for aptitude in these areas.

Students in the East Rutherford Public Schools will be assessed for Gifted and Talented starting in spring of each school year, using multiple measures that may include:

- Cognitive Abilities Test
- Teacher Questionnaire
- Parent Questionnaire

- Student Questionnaire
- Report Card Scores
- Model Unit Assessments
- ELA, Math, World Language Honors assessments

Additionally, students must demonstrate not only advanced reading and math abilities for their age but also demonstrate that they are very advanced in their critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, and reasoning skills, in addition to being very inquisitive and motivated when presented with a challenge.

Selection

A selection committee, whose members have received training in gifted education, will review all applications as they are received. This committee makes the final decision as to which students qualify for the program.

Any new students entering the East Rutherford Public Schools who are identified from another school district and miss the spring identification sessions will be screened during the first six weeks of the school year. Students must be enrolled and attending to participate in the Identification Process. Students enrolling from private schools are asked to call the Supervisor of Gifted & Talented Education for an appointment.

The selection process and evaluation process is in compliance with New Jersey Department of Education requirements for Gifted and Talented programs.

PART IV: Our Programs

Elementary School

- At the elementary school, students who are selected for the Gifted and Talented/Enrichment Program receive pullout instruction once per week for a forty six minutes session.
- The Enrichment for all Program which is available to all students works on many levels, including activities available to all. This “Enrichment for All” opportunity is infused within the classroom, a minimum of one period per week.
- Enrichment centers include cooperative learning designed to promote dependence through collaborative thinking and decision making. Numerous content areas are infused into enrichment centers (i.e. Reading, Writing, Math, Science, Social Studies, Technology, Visual Arts: Music, Art, Dance, Sports, Theatre).
- All grades K-4, attend the South Bergen Jointure Commission STEAM Discovery Lab throughout the school year.

Middle School

- At the middle school level students who are selected for the Gifted and Talented/ Enrichment Program are enrolled in either or a combination of the following courses: (i) Honors English, (ii) Honors Math and or (iii) Honors World Language.
- Fifth Grade students receive a separate Enrichment program from their 6th-8th grade counterparts.
- Robotics, STEAM and STEM opportunities are also offered at the middle school level.

PART V: Board Policy

Please click on the following link to view our Board Policy which governs this program.

<https://www.straussesmay.com/seportal/Public/DistrictPolicy.aspx?policyid=2464&search=gifted+and+talented&id=8123269e120b4bd38bfd33f99750a769>

PART VI: Procedure to File a Complaint

To file a complaint regarding dissatisfaction with services offered in the Gifted and Talented Program, a parent/guardian may follow the steps below:

- Begin by reviewing the information that the district has provided regarding the gifted and talented services offered.
- To ask questions or discuss the services currently being provided, a parent/guardian is encouraged to reach out to his/her child's teachers or school counselor.
- If there are further concerns, he or she can contact their building principal.
- If the issues are still not resolved, a parent/guardian can put the concerns in writing to the Superintendent of Schools.