

Gifted and Talented Education Services

Andover Regional School System





# Andover Regional School District

## Tiered Systems of Support

Inclusive Gifted and Talented Program

### Mission Statement

At Andover Regional School District, it is our belief that every student possesses natural gifts and talents, which make them unique and distinct. The goal of the Tiered System is to provide students with opportunities to discover those interests, talents, and connections through enriched exposure.

**Tier 1 – For All Students (100%):** All students at Andover receive enriched instructional experiences in varied disciplines such as Technology Education, Computers, Art, World Languages, and Music (vocal and band instruction). These subjects allow all students the possibility to excel in creative subjects and life skills. All students will be provided with additional enrichment opportunities that are integrated into the core curricular classes and through school-wide experiences.

**Tier 2 – For Many Students (~15%):** Any student can also participate in enrichment activities, academic clubs, and competitions. These individual and team options are selected by students who are motivated in areas of strength or interest. These enrichments, clubs, and competitions are offered before school, after school and/or during lunch/recess times. Some of these activities may also take place during the school day. They are offered in a variety of areas such as: Robotics, Earth Club, TREP\$, Art Club and sporting opportunities, which consist of both competitive teams or intramural sports activities. Sometimes students will sign up for these activities and other times they will be invited to participate based upon certain areas of strength.

**Tier 3 – For A Few Students (~5%): Gifted and Talented Programming**

Students are identified using varied criteria to engage in weekly project-based learning. These experiences take place in small groups outside of the classroom and emphasize rigor, rapid progress, accelerated pacing, self-directed learning, increased complexity and depth of curriculum. Long Pond School also offers an Honors High School Algebra class within the school day. Entrance to this program is based upon local benchmarks, standardized assessments, and teacher feedback. The rigorous curriculum adheres to the standards at the high school level.

## **New Jersey State Definition of Giftedness**

According to N.J.A.C. 6A:8, “gifted and talented students” means those students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers in the local school district and who require modifications of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.

## **Purpose Statement**

Andover Regional School District’s purpose is specifically designed to challenge academically advanced learners and provide experiences that require critical thinking, problem solving, independent study skills, communication, and persistence in the face of challenges. When engaged in high quality gifted services, students will develop their unique abilities, maintain their passion for learning, and have the opportunity to contribute to the strength and vitality of our school and community. They will be challenged to apply their knowledge and skills in complex and advanced ways so that they can continue to develop academically.

Given the diverse needs of gifted and talented learners, the program must be flexible and responsive to the needs of the particular learners in the classroom. The instructional environment will encourage and nurture inquiry, flexibility and critical and creative thinking. This must be delivered in an environment that fosters a positive attitude toward learning.

## **District Philosophy**

The Andover Regional Schools prepare students to successfully meet the challenges of today and tomorrow by fostering a love of learning. Our safe, supportive, and stimulating environment encourages students to reach their full potential. It is an expectation that all students shall achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards at all grade levels. In Andover Regional, every child catches the learning spirit!

Andover Regional School District is committed to providing a quality educational program that supports the unique needs, talents, and abilities of its students. The vision of Gifted and Talented Education Services is to challenge and engage students in building knowledge that they will use as lifelong learners, creating a learning community where participating students can explore and develop their potential through meaningful projects.

The services provide sustained support to individuals who would benefit from challenges above and beyond grade level standards and expectations. Through the use of multiple measures, students are identified as intellectually gifted and provided with programs and opportunities that will extend the learning experience. These programs are aimed at sustaining the student's level of interest and/or achievement. Andover Regional School District also understands that some students excel specifically in certain areas, yet they may not meet the measures for inclusion in the year long program. For this reason, these students will be provided the opportunity to partake in activities throughout the school year with the Gifted and Talented class when a project meets their area of giftedness. (Tier 2 in our Tiered Systems of Support)

## **Program Goals**

- To support mastery of core areas of learning at a pace, complexity, abstractness and depth appropriate for gifted learners
- To develop an understanding of concepts, themes, and issues which are fundamental to the disciplines and to develop an appreciation for interrelationships among the disciplines
- To develop inquiry skills at a level of complexity, abstractness and depth appropriate for gifted learners
- To develop the skills of critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving and decision-making
- To develop proficiency in communicating abstract and complex ideas, relationships and issues
- To develop an appreciation for the benefit of collaboration in solving a complex task
- To collaborate with community members when relevant to a task in order to see the interconnectedness between the work they are accomplishing in G & T and the work of professionals

## **Selection of Students**

Entrance into Gifted and Talented Programming will be based upon academic aptitude, achievement, and attitude towards learning. In grades K-1, Gifted and Talented programming takes place for advanced learners as a pull out enrichment program. Selection criteria is based upon running record levels, benchmark testing, local data collection sheets, and teacher input. Beginning in grade 2, students will be administered the RAVEN, a cognitive abilities measure. Selection criteria will include standardized test scores, benchmark assessments, classroom performance, and teacher nomination. Students admitted to the program in grade 2 will remain in the program through grade 5, unless they demonstrate that they no longer have a need for the program. When students enter grade 5, they will be rescreened using the RAVEN and selected criteria. The newly selected students will remain in the program for the duration of time at Long Pond School unless they demonstrate that they no longer need the program. This is normal and does happen at times. At any time, a student, teacher, or parent can also request that a child be considered for entry into the program. Any student new to the district will also be assessed for entry in the program.

## **Gifted and Talented Appeals Process**

A student and/or parent may file an appeal if not satisfied with the decision of the team planning the student's placement in the weekly gifted and talented program. The process is as follows.

1. The person appealing must submit to the Supervisor of Curriculum and the principal of the building outlining the nature of the concern. The written appeal must contain a statement of the concern, any evidence in its support, the solution desired, the student and parent signatures, and the date the appeal is submitted.
2. The Supervisor of Curriculum and the building principal will convene a meeting with the faculty counsel to review the appeal request within 15 school days. Immediately following the decision, the parents will be sent an Appeals Decision Notification letter.

***The decision of the appeals committee is final.***



Andover Regional School District  
Gifted Education Services Parental Appeal Form

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the following questions. DO NOT attach work samples.

1. Briefly state reason for appeal.

2. List any extenuating circumstances that may have adversely affected the student's test results.

3. List specific strengths and abilities that might not be indicated by test results.



## **Exit Procedures**

The denial of services to a student who has qualified requires careful attention and serious consideration. The parent/guardian, teacher or student may initiate the exit process if the program activities appear not to meet the student's needs. A decision regarding placement will be made following a call/conference with the parent/guardian. In addition, if a student falls into one or more of the categories below, the parents will be notified. If the parents choose to withdraw their child from the program, a written letter to that effect, must be sent to the school. Parents will be informed if their child's placement in the program is being reconsidered and will have the opportunity to discuss the student's circumstances and status. A decision will be made whether the child will remain in the program or be discontinued from program participation.

### **Reasons to Reconsider Student Participation in the Program:**

- Inability to meet the requirements of the regular instructional program
- Inability to function constructively in the program
- Expressed desire on the part of the student to discontinue his/her involvement
- Parent request for their child to leave the program.

## Gifted and Talented Program Components

The Gifted and Talented curriculum is multi-faceted, centered around a theme at each grade level. Below is a listing of thematic guidance at each grade level. However, given the diverse needs of gifted and talented learners, services must be flexible and responsive to the needs of particular learners. The instructional environment for gifted and talented learners must encourage and nurture inquiry, flexibility and critical and creative thinking and must be delivered in an environment that engenders positive attitudes toward learning. For this reason, activities in the classroom may alter from the *sampling* of topics listed below.

### **Grade 2 How Do Part & Whole Interact and Affect Each Other?**

- Spiders and Webs;
  - Create a KWL chart about spiders and their webs.
  - Read a couple of informational texts about spiders such as *Spinning Spiders* by Ruth Berman and *Tell Me Why Spiders Weave Webs* by Katie Marsico to see if any questions have been answered or new questions created.
  - Complete Spider Web Engineering Challenge
- Investigation of colors.
  - Research the meanings, roles, and uses of color.
  - Reference the movie “*Inside Out*” as a talking point.
  - What makes a character colorful? In teams create a colorful character that is involved with the color’s disappearance in your story.
  - Write a story incorporating your character to explain how disappearance of your color change would change the world.
- Create complex multi-step mathematical word problems incorporating the idea of part to whole. Use number bonds and mental models to show how you would solve your own problems. Swap with classmates.
- Discuss ecosystems. Each group should select an animal from a different part of the ecosystem. Research the effects their extinction would have on the ecosystem. Find a visual way to show this effect.
- Rube Goldberg unit

### **Grade 3 How Are Things Put Together and Taken Apart?**

- **Puzzles**

Study a variety of puzzles, both 2 and 3 dimensional. Examine design requirements needed to create each type. Create an educational pull apart 2 or 3 dimensional puzzle based on an important theme selected by students.
- **Maps**

In teams create a map. Determine the benefit of creating the map, who will use it and why it is needed. Consider how the many components of the map fit together. Decide what symbols are universal and may be utilized for identification purposes. Test maps upon completion. Reflect upon whether or not the initial goal was achieved and determine why or why not.

- **Recycle Books--Deconstructed Book Sculptures**

Determine a system for obtaining donations from the community for hardcover books to repurpose. Learn about the different pieces of a hardcover book and how they come together to create what they as readers see. Determine how a book could be repurposed into a sculptural, educational piece. Determine how much can be taken away to maintain integrity while creating something beautiful as well. Painting, drawing, photography may be added to enhance the “takeaway” message to the viewer.

- **Mobile Creation**

Study the work of famous artists. Create a mobile highlighting this artist. Examine the design requirements for engineering success including how movement occurs, what needs to be added or removed so that the piece is balanced and can move freely and what supports are needed for installation.

#### **Grade 4 What Patterns Surround Me?**

- Read Dot by Peter Reynolds
- Pattern Hunt (visual and behavioral)
- [activities](#)
- Pointillism: Research an artist, analyze some paintings, teach about him/her to the class
- Create own pointillism art piece
- a visual or live museum visit to see paintings
- Mathematical Patterns, tessellations
- Rubik’s Cube

#### **Grade 5: What Are the Effects of Breaking Barriers?**

- [Great Barrier Reef](#) lesson and the effects on the environment
- Breaking the Sound Barrier (students explore lessons to learn about this scientific concept and how it works.
- Jackie Robinson: students learn about this famous man’s contribution to breaking barriers.
- Students will work together to develop a list of other famous people who have broken important barriers. They will choose one of these people to research and develop a presentation for the class.
- Students will participate in [Scholastic’s Breaking Barriers Contest](#). due in Mid-March
- Students will look to present their findings to other classes if they are relevant to any classes.
- Students will end by exploring barriers in their own life that may get in the way of them being their best selves. They will create an action plan of how they can attempt to break these barriers.
- Possible Competitions: Spelling Bee, Geography Bee, Math League, and Breaking Barriers

### **Grade 6 How Can We Work Together for the Greater Good?**

- Many students and teachers have been saying it would be great to have a Spelling Bee in the schools. Students will work together to research how this is done in other schools and develop a Spelling Bee for Andover Regional. With the help of administration they will run the district wide spelling bee.
- Battle of the Books Competition...students will work together to design a method to create fair groupings. After taking part in book previews, students will design systems for 1. ensuring each book is read by multiple students in the group, 2. tracking their progress, 3. Summarizing each book and creating practice battle questions.
- Design Challenge. Students will be introduced to a unit on human factors engineering. They will select a product and repurpose it to make its usefulness more effective.
- What does it mean to be a global citizen?
- small scale: check the efficacy of statement on mixed nut cans, develop measurement technique, do lab, write to companies.
- Possible competitions: Geography Bee, Math League, Battle of the Books

### **Grade 7 What is Fair and Just?**

- Do group exploration on the issue of plagiarism in school (problem/solution, cause/effects, [Common Sense Media](#))
- Do group exploration on cybercrimes (ask Detective Laird to come visit)
- Difference between Civil Case Versus Criminal Case (have local lawyer come and visit)
- [Mock Trial](#) (meeting in October, competition due end of January, jury duty trip to watch winning cases performed May)
- Read *Return to Sender* by Julia Alvarez (what is fair and just/ties to current issues)
- *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* (leadership unit designed for 7th grade students)
- Possible Competitions: Geography Bee, Math League, Spelling Bee, Academic Bowl

### **Grade 8 Who Am I and What is Important to Me?**

- Selfie project, (Watch TED TALK by Lizzie Valasquez, How Do You Define Yourself?)
- Share in group discussion, personality inventory, real self versus ideal self (Carl Rogers), how do you define yourself?
- Write and film your TED TALK answering the same question as Lizzie, How Do You Define Yourself.
- Explore current social issues relevant to teens your age.
- Learn about poetry slam writing. (the writing aspects as well as the performance aspects)
- Write and perform a poetry slam that demonstrates what is important to you.
- As a group, determine a cause that is important to all of you as a collaborative group? Brainstorm ways that you could conduct a service learning project. Research and reach out to different groups you are interested in helping. Focus on one. Determine a goal for helping. Go through the process of planning, conducting a timeline and assigning project leads. Invite a member of the organization selected to come speak. Complete service learning project. Present your project to a larger audience.
- Possible Competitions: Geography Bee, Spelling Bee, Math League, Academic Bowl.