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The Harford County Public School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs. Inquiries related to the policies of the Board of Education of Harford County should be directed to the Director of Public Information, 410-588-5203.

Harford County Public Schools

Office of Accelerated Learning Programs



Gifted & Talented Program: The Levels of Service Framework

www.hcps.org/gifted

Working to realize the Gifts and Talents of all students.

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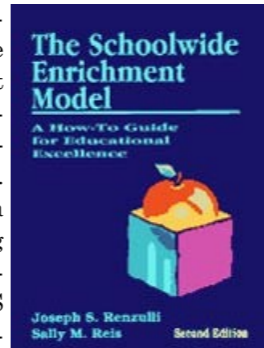
A Brief History of Gifted & Talented Education in Harford County



Getting Past the Label

Gifted Education's history began in the late 1800's. From that time through to the late 1990's, a student's ability was assessed using one score. One score that captured a narrow range of abilities, and it did not explain to educators what to do with these students. By using a body of evidence instead of just one score, Harford County has recognized that all students have gifts and talents. The goal is to assist students in fulfilling their potential.

Beginning in 1992, Harford County did extensive professional development in the University of Connecticut's Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM). This introduced the idea of enriching the existing curriculum and challenging students. HCPS funded positions throughout the elementary schools to this end. HCPS developed guidelines in 1996 that were written to provide schools with direction on how to implement the SEM program. The guidelines were reviewed and updated in 2006 to reflect current research.



Today's Program



Levels of Service: A Course Correction for HCPS

The guidelines for the Gifted & Talented Program were updated in 2006 through the combined work of the following Harford County Public Schools groups:

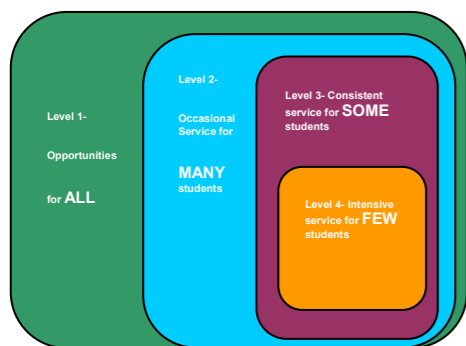
the Citizens Advisory Committee for Gifted Students; the Gifted & Talented Ad Hoc Committee; and the Gifted & Talented teachers. HCPS now uses a program called "Levels of Service" created by Dr. Donald Treffinger and implemented successfully in Fairfax Public Schools, VA. This program uses a series of approaches based on the abilities and interests of students. It holds true to Harford County's belief that all students have gifts and talents, but recognizes there are different intensities of need. (see the figure included in this pamphlet for more information on this).

Identification for Services

Gifted and Talented services begin with early entrance to kindergarten or first grade. At the end of second grade, the school's Gifted & Talented Services Committee convenes to evaluate student data and prescribes services for third grade. During this time, the committee also reviews the achievement of students currently receiving services and determines if they are a best match for their current needs. This is an important point since services are fluid. The level of service a student receives may change from year to year in accordance with their needs.



The Levels of Services in HCPS



The following chart illustrates the comprehensive nature of the HCPS Gifted & Talented program. The tables contain examples of the types of services that may be offered to students at each level. These are only examples and may not reflect all the services available at your school.

Level 1: Opportunities for ALL students

Foundational skills and tools: critical and creative thinking	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model lessons to develop thinking skills in all students 	K-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations or competitions open to all students 	K-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career pathways 	9-12

Level 2: Occasional Service for MANY students

Opportunities for additional challenges and extended learning experiences	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrichment lessons 	K-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class self-selection 	9-12

Level 3: Consistent services for SOME students

Rigorous course work with a specific focus	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cluster grouping in a specific subject 	K-8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking at least one Advanced Placement (AP[®]) or Honors class. 	9-12

Level 4: Intensive service for FEW students

Intense work in highly challenging curriculum or research	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade or subject level acceleration 	K-8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary research/product, mentorship, and internship 	3-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking at least four AP and/or Honors courses 	9-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Magnet Programs 	9-12

Frequently Asked Questions:

- How will services be prescribed to students?** Schools will use all available data as well as teacher recommendations to prescribe services that are a best match for each student's needs. This information will be reviewed by a committee within the school.
- Are schools abandoning services for K-2 students?** No, K and 1 students can be prescribed early entrance which is a Level 4 service. Additionally, all K-2 students receive enrichment opportunities.
- Why do some schools have a full-time G&T teacher?** G&T teachers are distributed to each school based on the school's population. Some schools made a decision to decrease a position in order to increase the time they have with the G&T teacher.
- How are G&T teachers selected?** Any Harford County teacher that has at least five years successful experience in the classroom can be selected. Maryland does not currently have a certification for G&T Education and few schools offer course work.
- Why is there no G&T curriculum?** One curriculum could not meet the needs of all students. By extending and enriching the existing curricular programs, students can be more specifically served.
- How can my child be receiving services if they are not seen by the G&T teacher?** Consistent services are most effectively delivered by the classroom teacher. The G&T teacher works in a collaborative role in the classroom to support this effort or in a consultative role to advise the teacher on how to meet students' needs.
- Who decides what Level of Service my child needs?** The Gifted and Talented committee at each school uses teacher recommendations, the student's past performance record, the student's interests, and parent input to prescribe the services that are the best match for each child.
- Are there services for children in Kindergarten through Second Grade?** Yes. Enrichment opportunities are available for all students. During K-2, the interests and abilities of each child are assessed for programs that begin in third grade. Some students are offered Level 4 acceleration opportunities in the Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade years.
- Why are students largely grouped heterogeneously?** Grouping students by age is the only true form of homogeneous grouping. Even in populations of students that have similar backgrounds and experiences the range of abilities can be wide. Harford County teachers try to find ways to meet students individual needs through the process of differentiation.
- Does Harford County offer any summer opportunities for G&T students?** Harford County hosts a Gifted and Talented Summer Center at Harford Glen in July. The focus of this program is on research methodologies. Check the HCPS Gifted website for more information.
- Where can I find out more about the Gifted & Talented program in Harford County?** Go to the HCPS website at www.hcps.org/gifted.