

Cedar Mountain Gifted and Talented

April 26, 2017

What's the Definition of "Gifted"?

According to the National Association for Gifted Children, gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude or competence in one or more areas. Cedar Mountain uses a variety of assessments to identify gifted and talented students including, but not limited to, Star tests, MCA tests, Accuplacer, OLPA scores, Preschool Screening, and teacher and parent referrals.

Vision - Cedar Mountain puts forth the vision that students should work at a level which challenges them. This vision is one that we are in the process of achieving. We are currently looking at barriers that get in the way of students moving forward and working to remove those barriers.

Our Beliefs about Gifted and Talented Students – Cedar Mountain recognizes that some students have outstanding abilities that differ from others of their age, experience, or environment. Cedar Mountain seeks to identify these gifted and talented students in order to provide opportunities to meet their unique needs.

This describes the way we strive to serve our gifted and talented students. Cedar Mountain uses a Levels of Service model in designing services provided.

Definition of Levels of Service Model

Level I: Services for All Students

Opportunities that provide foundational skills and tools that help all students to discover and build their personal strengths and talents.

Students at this level all receive high quality, culturally responsive, research-based, core instruction aligned with State Standards and differentiated to match their advanced learning needs. Differentiation is NOT additional work; it is different work.

Level II: Services for Many Students

Opportunities that invite students to engage in activities through which they can investigate their interests and verify areas in which they may demonstrate strengths and talent potentials.

Level III: Services for Some Students

Opportunities that involve alternative learning activities for students to engage in rigorous and complex learning based on their demonstrated performance and documented needs in areas of strength and sustained interest.

Students with strengths and talents in math may be placed in advanced math classes, Honors classes, or AP math courses (based on mathematical aptitude, skills, and interests). Their math opportunities may involve acceleration as well as opportunities for enrichment (e.g., special projects for individuals or small groups).

Level IV: Services for a Few Students

Advanced opportunities that respond to the unique needs of individual students who have demonstrated outstanding ability, expertise, motivation and passion to learn in a talent domain or academic area.

Identifying Students for Gifted, Creative and Talented Minds

How does Cedar Mountain identify advanced learners for Levels of Service? Students are identified if they need to receive advanced math or language arts instruction.

In the Elementary Schools:

Cedar Mountain uses multiple age-appropriate measures to determine student abilities. In Reading we have a half hour a day dedicated to reading instruction at each student's ability. This Power Half Hour model allows

for students that are in the “beyond” group to get enriched instruction daily in English Language Arts standards. Students read at their own levels during Accelerated Reading time and are encouraged to read books at their Lexile level. Students are also encouraged to work at their level during computer based activities such as IXL and Study Island.

In the Middle School:

In the Middle School, students are able to advance to upper level courses when deemed appropriate. Activities such as Knowledge Bowl give our students opportunities to showcase and improve their skills in an extracurricular.

In High School:

Students can self-select classes that will meet their goals. To enroll in advanced options like CIS or PSEO courses, students must satisfy all of the pre-requisites courses and any other requirements expected by the instructor or the college.

Further Understandings

What is differentiation? Differentiation is a set of teaching strategies that help teachers respond to the learning differences in their students. Differentiation is being aware of how we teach and being knowledgeable about how our students learn so that students can reach their learning goals. In the elementary schools, one way differentiation looks is through the use of flexible grouping in reading and math. A student’s skill level is frequently assessed and then instruction is designed to best match that skill level. The middle school matches instruction to students through the use of honors English and Math courses while the high school offers many choices of Advanced Placement (AP) courses and College in the Schools (CIS) courses. This is one form of differentiation.

What opportunities are there for enrichment? Another effective way to help meet the needs of gifted, creative and talented students is through enrichment. In the elementary we have after school offerings in Lego Club, creative arts classes and others. Summer offerings include 1 day to week long academies in the area of ecology, history, science, and technology.

What is acceleration and how does it help gifted and talented students? There are many forms of acceleration but the basic premise is moving highly qualified students ahead of their traditional grade in either one or more school subjects, or, on much rarer occasions, a whole grade. Students need to meet criteria for acceleration.

Early Entrance - Children who demonstrate social/emotional maturity, academic motivation and superior intellectual ability may qualify for early entrance into kindergarten or first grade.

MN law requires all children entering kindergarten to be at least five years of age by September 1 of any given year. To be considered for early entrance into kindergarten, a child must have a fifth birthday (or for early entrance to first grade, a sixth birthday) falling between September 1 and November 1 of the school year in which admission is requested.

A variety of standardized assessments will be used to determine eligibility. Administration will review all requests for early entrance and use preschool screening data to determine if early entrance is an option. Additional assessment will determine final eligibility.