

MEMORANDUM

To: Karen Berasi, Superintendent of Schools
From: Brian Hendrickson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
Date: May 2, 2018
Re: Talented & Gifted Programming



This memo is to provide an overview of Suffield Board of Education Policy, State of Connecticut statutes, and current programming regarding Talented and Gifted in Suffield Public Schools. Additionally, Board of Education member Maureen Sattan and I attended a workshop regarding talented and gifted education sponsored by the Connecticut Association for the Gifted (CAG) and the State Department of Education.

Policy

SPS Policy 6172.1 states the following:

"The Suffield Board of Education and professional staff are dedicated to educating each child to their full potential. The gifted and/or talented child is an individual who, by virtue of outstanding ability, creativity and task commitment, is capable of high performance. As these characteristics are brought to bear on particular curricular or artistic areas, and as a child responds to them, the individual performs in a "gifted" or "talented" manner. The gifted and/or talented child is defined by the state as "a child identified by the Planning and Placement Team as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of very superior intellectual, creative or specific academic capability." The school district shall provide, within the limitation of a public school system, gifted and talented students, through classroom *differentiation*, learning opportunities that include a broad spectrum of experiences. These educational experiences increase knowledge and develop skills necessary for students to function successfully in society while encouraging them to excel in areas of special competence and interest. State statute requires identification of gifted and talented students. Special abilities, talents and skills appear at different times in the lives of children. The identification of gifted and talented students should be recognized as a continuing process throughout the students' school career."

Applicable State Statutes

Gifted and talented education provisions are articulated with Connecticut Special Education Law (see Connecticut General Statutes 10-76a-2 regarding definitions for students eligible for talented and gifted education). Similar to students with learning disabilities, students are identified as talented and gifted through a planning and placement team process (PPT). At the same time, Section 10-76d(c) states that public school districts are not required to provide talented and gifted programming to identified students.

Current Practices

Consistent with Suffield Board of Education Policy, differentiation is the key vehicle for delivering instruction to all students, including students identified as talented and gifted. In support of Board of Education Policy, Suffield's Teacher Evaluation Plan requires all teachers to differentiate their instruction. Domain 3, Instruction for Active Learning, Attribute B, [Differentiated and Evidence Based Learning Strategies] states the following expectations for teachers to be rated as "Accomplished":

- Employs differentiated strategies, tasks and questions that cognitively engage students in constructing new and meaningful learning through appropriately integrated recall, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, purposeful discourse and/or inquiry. At times, students take the lead and develop their own questions and problem solving strategies.
- Uses resources and flexible groupings that cognitively engage students in demonstrating new learning in multiple ways, including application of new learning to make interdisciplinary, real world, career or global connections.
- Implements instruction that provides multiple opportunities for students to develop independence as learners and share responsibility for the learning process.