

benefits many highly capable individuals by better motivating them toward schooling, enhancing their involvement with extracurricular activities, promoting more challenging options in the middle school and high school years, and preparing them to begin contributing to society at an earlier age.”

Research-based practices that may be considered by a school include grade skipping, early entrance into college, and acceleration in content areas through such programs as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate. Adaptations in the classroom, such as curriculum compacting, are highly encouraged.

Group and individual decisions concerning acceleration can be made by the Eligibility Team at each school. Examples of decisions of this type include gifted program placement, AP or advanced content program placement, referral for Talent Search programs such as Duke TIP, or the need for curriculum compacting in the regular classroom.

Decisions concerning grade skipping or early entrance to college should be made on an individual basis by a child study team comprised of, at a minimum, the parent(s) and teacher(s) of the candidate, the school counselor, and an administrator. The Iowa Acceleration Scale should be used in order to help guide decision making. Acceleration decisions of this type should be made thoughtfully with the needs of the whole child in mind by considering the child’s intellectual and academic profile, socio-emotional and physical development, and preferences of the child. A written acceleration plan that specifies a monitored transition period should be developed by the team (attached at end of document). Other considerations in the plan may include (when applicable) determination of which grade-level achievement test the student will take, clarification of transportation issues, procedures for determination of class rank and the process for awarding course credit, and procedures for inclusion in appropriate extracurricular activities.

## **Curriculum and Instruction**

### **Gifted Program Curriculum**

The Gainesville City Schools Gifted Program seeks to enrich students’ mastery of the Georgia Standards of Excellence (where applicable) and Georgia Performance Standards by providing instruction that incorporates advanced research and communication skills, social and emotional support and creative and critical thinking. Specific standards for gifted students have been established that align to the regular classroom curriculum. Approved curricula include, but are not limited to: Georgia Frameworks lessons, McGee-Keiser units, William and Mary units, GEMS units, P.E.T.S., Hands On Equations, Future Problem Solvers and a variety of other units developed using backward design. At the high school

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level, mentorship opportunities and Advanced Placement classes are offered. Parents are notified concerning school-specific curriculum and programs on an annual basis. Additionally, Gifted Education personnel review and revise (if needed) curricula at the close of every year.

Rich and rigorous instruction is achieved through the use of a variety of models, including resource services, advanced content classes and collaboration among classroom and gifted endorsed teachers. All eligible and served students receive a minimum of five segments of gifted education per week. The appropriate type or combination of services are designed and implemented at the school level, although in addition to services that may be designed at the school, all elementary students participate in a full-day resource model one day a week.

Differentiated instruction is a teaching theory based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse students in classrooms (Tomlinson, 2011). The model of differentiated instruction requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching and adjust the curriculum and presentation of information to learners rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the curriculum (Hall, 2011). A differentiated curriculum for gifted learners includes the following expectations:

**Content: Complex and challenging subject matter that:**

- Requires intellectual struggle
- Utilizes primary documents
- Integrates research skills and methods
- Incorporates relevant and real-life experiences
- Integrates interdisciplinary connections

**Process: Instructional strategies are designed to:**

- Emphasize higher-order thinking, problem-solving and communications skills
- Foster self-initiated and self-directed learning
- Promote creative application of ideas
- Model and encourage academic discussion

**Product: Gifted student products should demonstrate a developmentally appropriate capacity for:**

- Self-directed learning
- Meaningful collaboration
- Effective problem solving of challenging and complex issues
- Effective communication
- Social and emotional understanding of self relative to community, culture, and physical environment

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