

## **Instruction**

### **Challenging Curriculum Policy (Criteria for Identification of Eligible Grade 8, 9 Students)**

The Amity Regional School District No. 5 (ARSD) Board of Education (Board) recognizes its responsibility to identify academically advanced students in grades 8 and 9, in compliance with Section 5 of P.A. 21-199, and to provide them with appropriate instructional adaptations and services. Any student who is capable of and wishes to do advanced course work or take an accelerated course or program, as detailed in this policy, should be permitted to do so (in grades 8 and 9).

The Board desires to nurture potential in all students and to challenge students with advanced capabilities through differentiation and responsive instruction. The needs of advanced and high potential learners will be equitably addressed across all populations.

In compliance with Section 5 of P.A. 21-199 the Board adopts this "challenging curriculum policy" aligned with CT State Department of Education (CSDE) guidance. This policy includes, as required, the criteria for the identification of students in grades 8 and 9 who may be eligible to take or enroll in an advanced course and that such identified students have an academic plan.

ARSD middle schools will offer advanced academic opportunities in the four content areas of: language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science.

### **Criteria**

For purposes of this policy these are students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability in one or more content areas when compared to their chronological peers in ARSD and who would benefit from advanced courses or programs in order to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will develop procedures for an ongoing identification process that includes multiple measures in order to identify student strengths in intellectual ability, creativity, or a specific academic area. The identification process shall include consideration of all students including those who are English language learners and those with Individualized Education Plans or 504 Plans.

Students who experience success in advanced courses or programs may exhibit the following characteristics: reading at or above grade level; strong study skills and self-motivation; proficient oral and written communication skills; self-discipline to plan, organize, and carry out tasks to completion; and interest and self-directedness in the particular subject. Student aptitudes, attributes, and academic behaviors will be identified, assessed, and reviewed through a multi-step, multi-modal, and multi-dimensional identification system. Such students may be found within any racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, within any nationality, across genders, and within populations of students with disabilities.

### **Identification Process**

Identification is a multi-step process, which shall consist of screening and referral, assessment of eligibility, and placement/enrollment.

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The Superintendent or his/her designee is directed to develop and document appropriate curricular and instructional modifications and/or programs for such identified students in grades 8 and 9 indicating content, process, products, and learning environments.

The identification process may include the following:

- Assessment of cognitive ability
- Specific academic ability in one or more of the following content areas: math, science, language arts, social studies
- Creative thinking ability
- Giftedness
- Teacher recommendations/referrals
- Referrals from parents, students
- Placement tests if available
- Parental approval

Detailed information will be made available on the ARSD website regarding this policy and the procedures used to identify students who would benefit from enrollment in advanced courses or programs and the required academic plan.

### **Academic Plan**

Each identified student shall develop an academic plan for grade 8 through high school. The plan, developed with the assistance of parents/guardians and with the advice and recommendations of school personnel, shall be reviewed annually. The plan is to include a list of courses and learning activities/programs in which the student will engage while working toward the fulfillment of graduation requirements and that will result in college or career readiness.

The student's academic plan must be designed to enroll the identified student in one or more advanced courses or programs and allow the student to earn high school and college credit or result in career readiness.

The academic plan must be aligned with the following:

1. the courses or programs currently offered by the Board of Education
2. the student's student success plan
3. the high school graduation requirements established in state law
4. any other Board-adopted policies or standards relating to student enrollment eligibility for advanced courses or programs.

A student or his or her parent/guardian have the right to decline the implementation of the provisions of the academic plan. The plan should be updated as necessary and at a minimum at least once a year.

Beginning in the middle school years students must be counseled on opportunities for

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beginning post-secondary education prior to high school graduation. Such opportunities include access to Advanced Placement (AP) or college-level courses for degree credit. Wherever possible students shall be encouraged and offered opportunities to take college courses simultaneously for high school graduation requirements and college degree credit (dual enrollment) upon approval of the Principal prior to such participation and the willingness of the college to accept the student for admission to the course or courses.

(cf. 6141.4 - Independent Study)

(cf. 6141.5 - Advanced College Placement)

(cf. 6141.51 - Advanced Courses or Programs-Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment)

(cf. 6172.1 - Gifted and Talented Students)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
P.A. 21-199 Section 5  
10-221r Advanced placement course program. Guidelines.  
District Guidance for Developing an Advanced Course Participation Policy