



## **Grade 8 Workshop - Gifted/Talented**

**Course Information**

<b>Grade(s):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> K <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<b>Discipline/Course:</b>	<b>Discipline:</b> Gifted/Talented <b>Course:</b> Grade 8 Gifted/Talented		
<b>Course Title:</b>	Grade 8 Workshop - Gifted/Talented		
<b>Prerequisite(s):</b>	Acceptance into the Workshop - Gifted/Talented Program based on criteria set by the Fairfield Public Schools.		
<b>Course Description:</b> <i>Program of Studies</i>	<p>The Fairfield Public Schools are committed to providing an education of excellence that challenges students to reach their highest potential by meeting their interests, abilities, and needs under a common curriculum framework. A key component of this philosophy is that high-quality, differentiated learning experiences are at the heart of good classroom instruction across all grade levels and subject areas.</p> <p>It is also understood that some students may perform at significantly higher levels than their peers and benefit from instructional services beyond those found in the general educational program. To that end, a program that supports students who demonstrate above-average ability, creativity, and high levels of task commitment has been developed. Our grades 3-8 program includes the following academic and social-emotional components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A small group setting where social connections are developed and cultivated</li> <li>● A rigorous curriculum focused on conceptual thinking, higher-level processes, and problem-solving</li> <li>● Opportunities for students to be themselves and collaborate with like-minded peers</li> <li>● Social-emotional exploration activities and discussions that help students develop healthy self-concepts and increase commitment to personal responsibility toward others</li> </ul>		

	<p>Our Workshop-Gifted/Talented program invites students to tackle complex, real-world challenges in creative and innovative ways. Students will develop a willingness to explore multiple solutions, fostering a curious mindset. They will learn to combine knowledge and skills from various disciplines, recognizing the nature of interconnected learning. Emphasis will be placed on self-motivation and personal drive, empowering learners to pursue and complete problem-based and project-based tasks with determination and focus. The program will also reinforce content from the grade-level curriculum, allowing students to draw connections between what they are learning in their classes and what they choose to explore within each unit. Students will enhance their understanding and engagement by selecting projects that align with their interests, making learning more relevant and personal.</p> <p>Collaboration and communication are key components of our program, helping students to appreciate diverse perspectives and harness the strengths of their peers. Students will develop critical thinking skills through rigorous analysis of information, evaluation of evidence, and informed decision-making. They will learn to adapt to changing circumstances, adjusting their goals based on new insights and feedback. Additionally, students will articulate their ideas, share their findings, and engage with a variety of audiences, improving their ability to convey complex concepts clearly and persuasively. Ethical considerations will be integrated throughout the curriculum, guiding students in making responsible choices in their project work.</p> <p>By embracing a mindset of innovation, students will explore new approaches and solutions while learning to reflect on their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for growth. Our program aims to equip students with the skills and strategies they need to navigate challenges creatively and effectively as they prepare to make a meaningful impact in their future endeavors.</p> <p>Curricular connections: Theme and theme development, symbolism, close reading, experiences that shape us, elements of dystopian worlds, developing a narrative, Cold War tensions, civil liberties (justice, due process, and the impact of hysteria on legal proceedings), economic and social condition impact on Americans in the postwar era, Cold War impact on domestic and international politics, as well as on American society</p>
<b>Course Essential Questions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How can we approach complex problems with creativity and innovation?</li> <li>● How can knowledge and skills from multiple subject areas help us address real-world challenges?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is self-motivation important in pursuing and completing tasks?</li> <li>• How do diverse perspectives and strengths contribute to successful project outcomes?</li> <li>• How can we develop advanced critical thinking skills to analyze information and make informed decisions?</li> <li>• How can we adapt to changes and redefine goals based on new information, feedback, or setbacks?</li> <li>• How can we effectively articulate our ideas and present our findings to diverse audiences?</li> <li>• What ethical considerations should we be aware of in our work, and how can we make responsible choices?</li> <li>• How can we embrace innovation and explore novel approaches to challenges within our work?</li> <li>• What role does self-reflection play in our learning journey?</li> </ul>	
<b>Course Enduring Understandings:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative problem-solving involves using unconventional thinking and innovative strategies to navigate complex challenges.</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary knowledge provides us with a better understanding of real-world issues.</li> <li>• Self-motivation drives persistence and commitment, enabling us to overcome obstacles and achieve goals.</li> <li>• Embracing diverse viewpoints and strengths improves collaboration.</li> <li>• Advanced critical thinking helps us rigorously evaluate information, enabling informed decision-making considering multiple viewpoints and potential consequences.</li> <li>• Flexibility and adaptability allow us to respond constructively to change and realign goals.</li> <li>• Effective communication involves tailoring messages to different audiences, ensuring clarity and engagement.</li> <li>• Ethical awareness guides decision-making and ensures our actions align with values and societal standards.</li> <li>• A mindset that values innovation encourages the exploration of new ideas and approaches, facilitating the development of unique solutions to complex problems.</li> <li>• Self-reflection allows us to assess experiences, learn from successes and failures, and continuously improve skills and understanding.</li> </ul>	
<b>Duration:</b> <b>Credit:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Semester <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full-Year	<input type="checkbox"/> .5 Credit(s) <input type="checkbox"/> 1.0 Credit(s)

		<input type="checkbox"/> 1.5 Credit(s) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
<b>Course Materials/Resources:</b>	Each unit of study includes unique learning experiences and materials that support the Essential Questions and Enduring Understandings.	
<b>FPS Course Academic Expectation(s):</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exploring and Understanding (EU) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Synthesizing and Evaluating (SE) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creating and Constructing (CC) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conveying Ideas (CI) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaborating Strategically (CS) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Using Communication Tools (UCT)	
<b>Year at a Glance (Units):</b>	<b>Unit 1:</b> Balancing Talent, Goals, and Responsibility (~ 2 weeks) <b>Unit 2:</b> The Art of Influence (~ 9 weeks) <b>Unit 3:</b> Independent Study (~ 8 weeks) <b>Unit 4:</b> The Final Exit: A Dystopian Escape (~ 9 weeks) <b>Unit 5:</b> Uniting for Positive Change (~ 8 weeks)	

<b>Unit Number and Title:</b>	<b>Unit 1 - Balancing Talents, Goals, and Responsibility</b>
<b>Duration:</b>	~ 2 weeks (ongoing)
<b>Resource(s):</b>	<i>The Smart Teens' Guide to Living with Intensity: How to Get More Out of Life and Learning</i> by Lisa Rivero <i>Living With Intensity: Understanding the Sensitivity, Excitability, and Emotional Development of Gifted Children, Adolescents, &amp; Adults</i> by Susan Daniel and Michael Piechowski <i>When Kids Don't Have All the Answers</i> by Judy Galbraith and Jim Delisle
<b>Unit Overview:</b>	<p>This unit aims to help students understand and nurture their giftedness while emphasizing the importance of self-reflection, personal growth, and responsibility. Students will explore how their unique abilities and experiences shape their development and learn strategies for setting goals, seeking challenges, building healthy relationships, managing time, and maintaining overall well-being. Additionally, the unit will highlight the responsibility that comes with giftedness, encouraging students to contribute positively to their community through projects, mentoring, and community service.</p>
<b>Learning Goals</b>	
<b>Standard(s):</b>	<p><b>National Standards in Gifted and Talented Education</b></p> <p>1.1. Self-understanding. Students with gifts and talents recognize their interests, strengths, and needs in cognitive, creative, social, emotional, and psychological areas.</p> <p>1.2. Self-understanding. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate an understanding of how they learn and recognize the influences of their identities, cultures, beliefs, traditions, and values on their learning and behavior</p> <p>1.3. Self-understanding. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate an understanding of and respect for similarities and differences between themselves and their cognitive and chronological peer groups and others in the general population.</p> <p>4.2. Social Competence. Students with gifts and talents develop social competence manifested in positive peer relationships and social interactions.</p>
<b>Essential Question(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has my understanding of my giftedness evolved over time?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How can I maximize my giftedness to be successful in high school while ensuring a healthy work-life balance?</li> <li>● How can I use my gifts and talents to contribute positively to my community and society?</li> </ul>
<b>Enduring Understanding(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Experiences, self-reflection, and personal growth shape Giftedness.</li> <li>● Setting clear goals, seeking challenges, building healthy relationships, managing my time, and maintaining overall well-being will help me succeed and be healthy.</li> <li>● With gifts and talents comes the responsibility to contribute positively to my community and society, whether it be through projects, mentoring, or community service.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Goal(s):</b> <i>Students will know and will be able to use their learning to:</i> (Content/ Skills)	<p><b>Content:</b> (Students will know...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● how personal experiences, self-reflection, and personal growth influence their giftedness.</li> <li>● the principles of setting clear goals, the benefits of seeking challenges, the importance of healthy relationships, effective time management techniques, and practices for maintaining overall well-being.</li> <li>● the ethical and social responsibilities associated with their gifts and talents and various ways to contribute positively to their community and society.</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills:</b> (Students will be able to...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● analyze personal strengths, weaknesses, interests, and passions.</li> <li>● identify recurring themes in personal experiences that showcase talent or skills.</li> <li>● understand how past challenges have shaped personal growth and resilience.</li> <li>● seek feedback from teachers, mentors, and peers to gain external perspectives on strengths.</li> <li>● reflect on constructive criticism and use it to inform personal development.</li> <li>● embrace the belief that abilities can be developed through dedication and effort.</li> <li>● learn to view setbacks as opportunities for growth rather than failures.</li> <li>● understand the importance of stepping outside comfort zones.</li> <li>● embrace challenges as opportunities to learn and develop resilience.</li> <li>● prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance.</li> <li>● establish daily and weekly routines to create structure and predictability.</li> </ul>

- set aside dedicated time for work, leisure, and self-care.
- recognize personal triggers for procrastination and develop strategies to overcome them.
- engage in activities that promote physical, emotional, and mental well-being (i.e., exercise, mindfulness).
- learn and practice techniques for managing stress.
- strive to maintain a balance between academic, social, and personal life.
- recognize the signs of burnout and take proactive steps to prevent it.
- learn to identify and assess the community's needs through research and engagement.
- work effectively with peers and community members, demonstrating leadership and teamwork.
- practice patience and empathy when working with mentees.
- help mentees set their own goals and develop plans to achieve them.
- provide constructive feedback and encouragement throughout their journey.
- understand the importance of networking and building professional relationships.
- explore opportunities for volunteering or internships that align with personal interests and values.



<b>Unit Number and Title:</b>	<b>Unit 2 - The Art of Influence</b>
<b>Duration:</b>	~ 9 weeks
<b>Resource(s):</b>	<i>How to Win Friends and Influence People</i> by Dale Carnegie <i>The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking</i> by Dale Carnegie Blind Justice by Michael Hoey
<b>Unit Overview:</b>	<p>In this unit, students will learn how to engage listeners by tapping into their emotions and perspectives, recognizing that a genuine connection can significantly enhance the impact of their message. Through storytelling, students will discover how to illustrate complex issues in a relatable manner, captivating their audiences and fostering a deeper understanding of the topics at hand. The unit will also focus on non-verbal communication techniques, such as body language and facial expressions, to influence and engage an audience. Students will practice these techniques to enhance their delivery and effectiveness as speakers. Additionally, they will engage in constructive feedback sessions and self-reflection exercises to refine their communication skills, understanding that continuous improvement is necessary to become an effective communicator.</p> <p>To provide a deeper context, students will delve into sophisticated topics such as the burden of proof, rules of evidence, strategic planning, and the art of anticipating and countering opposing arguments. By studying and reenacting the 1950's Rosenberg trial, students will not only understand the time period's complex interplay between politics, society, and individual rights but also how the communication concepts they are learning apply in real-world situations.</p> <p>As they practice the art of anticipating and countering opposing arguments, students will develop critical thinking skills essential for effective advocacy. Overall, this unit will equip students with the tools to communicate persuasively and effectively -- skills essential for personal and professional success.</p>
<b>Learning Goals</b>	
<b>Standard(s):</b>	<b>National Standards in Gifted and Talented Education</b>

	<p>3.5. Instructional Strategies. Students with gifts and talents become independent investigators.</p> <p>3.6. Resources. Students with gifts and talents are able to demonstrate growth commensurate with their abilities as a result of access to high-quality curricular resources.</p> <p>4.2. Social Competence. Students with gifts and talents develop social competence manifested in positive peer relationships and social interactions.</p> <p>4.3. Responsibility and Leadership. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate personal and social responsibility.</p> <p>4.4. Cultural Competence. Students with gifts and talents value their own and others' language, heritage, and circumstance. They possess skills in communicating, teaming, and collaborating with diverse individuals and across diverse groups. They use positive strategies to address social issues, including discrimination and stereotyping.</p> <p>4.5. Communication Competence. Students with gifts and talents develop competence in interpersonal and technical communication skills. They demonstrate advanced oral and written skills and creative expression. They display fluency with technologies that support effective communication and are competent consumers of media and technology</p>
<b>Essential Question(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What role does empathy play in creating a persuasive and positively influential message?</li> <li>● How can storytelling be used to captivate an audience's attention?</li> <li>● What non-verbal communication techniques can improve a speaker's ability to influence their audience positively?</li> <li>● How can feedback and reflection improve a speaker's influence on an audience?</li> <li>● What is the burden of proof?</li> <li>● What are the rules of evidence?</li> <li>● How do we develop a legal strategy?</li> <li>● How do you anticipate and counter the opposing side's arguments?</li> </ul>
<b>Enduring Understanding(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Empathy helps speakers connect with their audience's emotions and perspectives</li> <li>● Storytelling can captivate audiences by illustrating issues in a relatable way</li> <li>● Non-verbal techniques, such as body language and facial expressions, enhance a speaker's ability to influence and engage an audience</li> <li>● Constructive feedback and self-reflection are necessary for refining communication skills</li> <li>● Effective communication requires an awareness of how both verbal and non-verbal strategies</li> </ul>

	<p>work together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The burden of proof is the obligation to present evidence to support a claim</li> <li>● The rules of evidence determine what information is admissible in court</li> <li>● Developing a legal strategy involves analyzing the facts of the case, understanding the law, anticipating the opponent’s moves, and crafting a coherent narrative that supports a position</li> <li>● Anticipating and countering opposing arguments requires critical thinking and an in-depth understanding of a case</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learning Goal(s):</b>  <i>Students will know and will be able to use their learning to:</i>          (Content/ Skills)</p>	<p><b>Content:</b> (Students will know...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● how empathy in communication fosters emotional connections with an audience.</li> <li>● how effective storytelling can make complex issues more relatable and engaging.</li> <li>● the role of non-verbal communication in improving message delivery and audience engagement.</li> <li>● the value of constructive feedback and self-reflection.</li> <li>● how verbal and non-verbal communication strategies complement each other in communication.</li> <li>● the basic rules of evidence that govern admissibility in legal contexts.</li> <li>● how to develop a legal strategy.</li> <li>● the concept of “burden of proof,” including beyond a reasonable doubt.</li> <li>● rules governing the admissibility of evidence in court, including relevance and types of objections.</li> <li>● how to consider case facts and strengths and weaknesses of a case to form a legal strategy.</li> <li>● how to anticipate the other side’s arguments and prepare effective counter arguments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills:</b> (Students will be able to...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● assess the emotions and perspectives of various audience groups.</li> <li>● tailor messages to resonate with the audience’s feelings and experiences.</li> <li>● engage in active listening exercises to better understand audience feedback and reactions.</li> <li>● develop engaging stories that include relatable characters and situations.</li> <li>● use anecdotes and real-life examples to illustrate complex issues.</li> <li>● rehearse storytelling techniques, including pacing, voice modulation, and emotional emphasis.</li> </ul>

- study effective body language used by successful speakers.
- experiment with different facial expressions to convey emotions and reinforce messages.
- combine verbal and non-verbal communication strategies in practice presentations.
- provide and receive constructive feedback on presentations from peers.
- establish specific communication improvement goals based on feedback and self-reflection.
- develop clear, concise claims that will be supported by evidence.
- conduct research to find credible evidence that supports claims made in discussions or presentations.
- practice structuring and delivering evidence in compelling ways.
- engage in role-play exercises to anticipate and prepare responses to opposing arguments.
- work in groups to devise and present legal strategies.
- apply the rules of evidence in a trial scenarios, including admissible and inadmissible evidence and making appropriate objections.

<b>Unit Number and Title:</b>	<b>Unit 3 - Independent Study</b>
<b>Duration:</b>	~ 8 weeks
<b>Resource(s):</b>	<i>Empower: What Happens When Students Own Their Learning</i> by John Spencer and A.J. Juliani <i>Launch: Using Design Thinking to Boost Creativity and Bring Out the Maker in Every Student</i> by John Spencer and A.J. Juliani <i>The Nature of Human Creativity</i> by Robert J. Sternberg and James C. Kaufman
<b>Unit Overview:</b>	<p>This unit offers a unique opportunity for students to challenge themselves intellectually, develop a deeper understanding of their capabilities and potential impact in their fields of interest, and unleash their talents and creativity. Whether tackling a challenging scientific inquiry, designing a community initiative, exploring new technology, or delving into a new art form, students are encouraged to expand their understanding, push boundaries, and think innovatively.</p> <p>As a culminating activity, students will share their journeys, focusing on the insights they gained throughout their process. The emphasis on their experiences encourages them to reflect on the challenges they encountered and the strategies they used to overcome them, deepening their overall learning. Through discussions and presentations, they will articulate how their interests influenced their inquiries and how incorporating personal experiences enriched their research. Additionally, students will outline their next steps for future learning, whether that means exploring new topics or delving deeper into their existing inquiries. This sharing fosters a sense of community and inspires ongoing exploration and growth in their fields of interest.</p>
<b>Learning Goals</b>	
<b>Standard(s):</b>	<b>National Standards in Gifted and Talented Education</b> 1.1. Self-understanding. Students with gifts and talents recognize their interests, strengths, and needs in cognitive, creative, social, emotional, and psychological areas. 1.2. Self-understanding. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate an understanding of how they learn and recognize the influences of their identities, cultures, beliefs, traditions, and values on their learning and behavior.

	<p>2.5. Learning Progress. Students self-assess their learning progress.</p> <p>3.2. Talent Development. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth in social and, emotional, and psychosocial skills necessary for achievement in their domain(s) of talent and/or areas of interest.</p> <p>3.4. Instructional Strategies. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate their potential or level of achievement in their domain(s) of talent and/or areas of interest.</p> <p>3.5. Instructional Strategies. Students with gifts and talents become independent investigators.</p> <p>4.1. Personal Competence. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth in personal competence and dispositions for exceptional academic and creative productivity. These include self-awareness, self-advocacy, self-efficacy, confidence, motivation, resilience, independence, curiosity, and risk-taking.</p> <p>4.2. Social Competence. Students with gifts and talents develop social competence manifested in positive peer relationships and social interactions.</p> <p>4.3. Responsibility and Leadership. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate personal and social responsibility.</p> <p>4.4. Cultural Competence. Students with gifts and talents value their own and others' language, heritage, and circumstance. They possess skills in communicating, teaming, and collaborating with diverse individuals and across diverse groups. They use positive strategies to address social issues, including discrimination and stereotyping.</p> <p>4.5. Communication Competence. Students with gifts and talents develop competence in interpersonal and technical communication skills. They demonstrate advanced oral and written skills and creative expression. They display fluency with technologies that support effective communication and are competent consumers of media and technology.</p> <p>5.1. Comprehensiveness. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth commensurate with their cognitive, social-emotional, and psychosocial abilities as a result of comprehensive programming and services.</p>
<b>Essential Question(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What aspects of my topic do I want to explore?</li> <li>● How can I use sources to gather information and expand my knowledge independently?</li> <li>● What skills and strategies do I need to research and understand my topic thoroughly?</li> <li>● How do my personal experiences and interests influence my understanding and exploration of this topic?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How can I use creativity to deepen my understanding of my topic?</li> <li>● What unique perspectives or ideas can I explore within my topic?</li> </ul>
<b>Enduring Understanding(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Exploring a topic beyond initial understanding encourages deeper comprehension and appreciation for its complexities.</li> <li>● Using various sources independently supports independence in research and expands knowledge.</li> <li>● Developing research skills and strategies promotes critical thinking and analytical abilities.</li> <li>● Personal experiences and interests foster a more personalized and meaningful engagement with learning.</li> <li>● Creativity allows for innovative exploration and interpretation of complex concepts.</li> <li>● Exploring unique perspectives and ideas within a topic promotes intellectual curiosity and understanding.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Goal(s):</b> <i>Students will know and will be able to use their learning to:</i> (Content/ Skills)	<p><b>Content:</b> (Students will know...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● there is an array of sources they will study that warrant further exploration.</li> <li>● how to identify, access, and evaluate a variety of sources, including primary, secondary, and digital sources.</li> <li>● essential research skills and strategies, such as note-taking, outlining, and critical analysis.</li> <li>● how personal experiences and interests can shape and deepen their understanding of a topic.</li> <li>● the importance of creativity in learning and methods to apply creative thinking to academic topics.</li> <li>● the value of exploring diverse and unique perspectives within a study topic.</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills:</b> (Students will be able to...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● identify personal interests and passions related to a topic.</li> <li>● formulate questions that reflect their curiosity and drive for deeper understanding.</li> <li>● establish personal learning goals based on interests and experiences.</li> <li>● locate a variety of sources (books, articles, databases) relevant to their topic.</li> <li>● assess the reliability and credibility of each source.</li> </ul>

- break down complex information into manageable parts for better understanding.
- develop a structured approach for conducting research, including timelines.
- create systems for organizing research materials.
- link personal experiences to research topics to enhance relevance and meaning.
- articulate how personal experiences inform their understanding of the topic.
- use various forms of media (visual arts, writing, etc.) to interpret and present ideas creatively.
- apply creative problem-solving strategies to overcome research challenges.
- seek out and consider viewpoints that differ from their own.
- ask questions that challenge assumptions and explore new avenues of thought.
- evaluate personal growth and learning experiences.
- recognize and articulate specific challenges faced during the inquiry process.
- identify effective strategies used to overcome obstacles.
- effectively present new learning to an audience.
- analyze how interests shape the inquiry process and influence outcomes.
- offer thoughtful, respectful feedback to peers based on their project work.
- identify new areas to explore further based on current learning experiences.
- engage with peers during presentations and discussions to foster a supportive environment.
- understand and value the diverse interests, perspectives, and experiences of peers.
- inspire peers to pursue their interests and inquiries.



<b>Unit Number and Title:</b>	<b>Unit 4 - The Final Exit: A Dystopian Escape</b>
<b>Duration:</b>	~ 9 weeks
<b>Resource(s):</b>	“ <i>Escape Rooms: Everything You Need to Know</i> ” by Anecia Ascalon.
<b>Unit Overview:</b>	<p>In this unit, students will explore the power of creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration to generate fresh ideas that enhance the planning and design process. Emphasizing open dialogue, students will create an inclusive atmosphere for sharing thoughts and building on one another’s ideas while establishing clearly defined roles and responsibilities to enhance support among team members.</p> <p>Drawing inspiration from dystopian themes, students will create an interactive and engaging experience (i.e., an escape room) that showcases their new learning through innovative puzzles and technologies. They will develop skills, including design-thinking, to create engaging narratives and problem-solving strategies to ensure puzzles are both challenging and interconnected. Students will practice giving and receiving constructive feedback to promote continuous improvement, strengthen team dynamics, and develop flexibility and adaptability in response to new challenges.</p>
<b>Learning Goals</b>	
<b>Standard(s):</b>	<p><b>National Standards in Gifted and Talented Education</b></p> <p>3.4. Instructional Strategies. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate their potential or level of achievement in their domain(s) of talent and/or areas of interest.</p> <p>3.5. Instructional Strategies. Students with gifts and talents become independent investigators.</p> <p>4.1. Personal Competence. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth in personal competence and dispositions for exceptional academic and creative productivity. These include self-awareness, self-advocacy, self-efficacy, confidence, motivation, resilience, independence, curiosity, and risk-taking.</p> <p>4.2. Social Competence. Students with gifts and talents develop social competence manifested in positive peer relationships and social interactions.</p>

	<p>4.5. Communication Competence. Students with gifts and talents develop competence in interpersonal and technical communication skills. They demonstrate advanced oral and written skills and creative expression.</p>
<p><b>Essential Question(s):</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What strategies can we use to encourage innovative thinking among team members?</li> <li>● What techniques can we implement to ensure everyone’s ideas are heard during brainstorming sessions?</li> <li>● How can we effectively build on each other’s ideas?</li> <li>● How can we create an inclusive environment where team members feel comfortable sharing their thoughts?</li> <li>● What roles and responsibilities will each team member take on to ensure accountability?</li> <li>● How can we support one another in our respective roles to enhance collaboration?</li> <li>● How can we create a system for giving and receiving constructive feedback?</li> <li>● How can we remain flexible and adapt our plans based on new information or challenges?</li> <li>● What approaches can we use to address differing opinions and constructively turn conflicts into opportunities for growth?</li> <li>● What strategies will we implement to manage our time effectively during the planning process?</li> <li>● How can we organize our materials and resources efficiently?</li> <li>● What new technologies and interactive elements can we introduce to make an interactive experience more engaging and memorable?</li> <li>● How can collaboration and teamwork enhance our design process and lead to more innovative solutions?</li> <li>● What methods can we use to reflect on our progress and identify areas for improvement?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enduring Understanding(s):</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Innovative thinking generates fresh ideas and improves the overall planning process.</li> <li>● Building on one another’s ideas results in more creative and innovative solutions.</li> <li>● A culture of open dialogue helps create an inclusive environment where team members feel comfortable sharing their thoughts.</li> <li>● Clearly defined roles and responsibilities help team members understand how to support one another best.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Giving and receiving constructive feedback promotes continuous improvement and strengthens a team.</li> <li>● Remaining flexible and adaptable to new information or challenges is essential for successful problem-solving and outcomes.</li> <li>● Addressing differing opinions constructively can transform conflicts into opportunities for growth and improvement.</li> <li>● Implementing time management strategies helps keep projects on track and ensures their successful completion.</li> <li>● Efficient organization of materials and resources helps maintain focus and improves overall productivity.</li> <li>● Integrating technology, interactive elements, and multimedia makes an experience more engaging and memorable for participants.</li> <li>● Collaboration and teamwork lead to a shared sense of ownership.</li> <li>● Regularly reflecting on progress and identifying areas for improvement fosters a culture of continuous learning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learning Goal(s):</b> <i>Students will know and will be able to use their learning to:</i> (Content/ Skills)</p>	<p><b>Content:</b> (Students will know...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● how creative thinking contributes to generating fresh ideas.</li> <li>● the value of collaboration in developing ideas and solutions.</li> <li>● how open dialogue fosters an inclusive team environment.</li> <li>● how to assess and recognize the diverse strengths and skills of team members.</li> <li>● the importance of clearly defined roles within a team.</li> <li>● the role of constructive feedback in team dynamics and improvement.</li> <li>● the significance of flexibility and adaptability in problem-solving.</li> <li>● how to address differing opinions and conflicts productively.</li> <li>● how to recognize effective time management strategies and their benefits.</li> <li>● the importance of organizing materials and resources efficiently.</li> <li>● how technology and multimedia can improve engagement.</li> <li>● the significance of collaboration in fostering a shared sense of ownership.</li> <li>● the components of design-thinking.</li> </ul>

- the value of reflecting on progress for continuous improvement.

**Skills:** (Students will be able to...)

- build on one another's ideas during brainstorming sessions to create more innovative outcomes.
- engage in open discussions that encourage everyone to share their thoughts and ideas comfortably.
- identify individual strengths and skills within the team and delegate tasks accordingly (i.e., artistic, technical, analytical).
- identify and assume specific roles and responsibilities, enabling them to support one another effectively.
- give and receive constructive feedback to enhance their work and strengthen the team's performance.
- adjust their plans and strategies in response to new information or challenges.
- engage in discussions that transform conflicts into opportunities for growth and improvement.
- implement time management techniques to ensure timely completion.
- organize their materials and resources to maintain focus and enhance overall productivity.
- integrate interactive elements and multimedia into their projects to create interest.
- work collaboratively to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for their group's success.
- understand the audience, anticipate challenges, create prototypes, and seek feedback through testing.
- regularly assess their work and identify areas for improvement, fostering a culture of continuous learning.

<b>Unit Number and Title:</b>	<b>Unit 5 - Uniting for Positive Change</b>
<b>Duration:</b>	~ 8 weeks
<b>Resource(s):</b>	<p>“Using Community Challenges for Learning” by Cathleen Beachboard            Community Problems and Solutions by the National Theatre for Children (NTC)            Dupont's Homeless Project            Energize Connecticut            “How to Empower Students to Take Action for Social Change” by Lauren Fullmer and Laura Bond            National Alliance to End Homelessness            “7 Real-World Issues Than Can Allow Students to Tackle Big Challenges” by Michael Niehoff            Prospect House in Bridgeport, CT</p>
<b>Unit Overview:</b>	<p>In this unit, students will begin by identifying the most pressing problems facing our local community and society today. Through research, collaboration, and creative problem-solving, they will learn to understand the root causes of these issues and explore effective strategies for enacting positive change. By investigating current challenges, students will engage with local organizations, government agencies, and community members to develop actionable plans. They will critically assess potential obstacles to implementing their solutions and work collaboratively to devise strategies to overcome these challenges. Additionally, students will learn to articulate their findings, propose solutions that raise awareness, and educate others about the issues. They will explore methods to inspire and motivate their peers and community members to join their efforts in creating meaningful change. This journey will culminate in an interactive community experience designed to spread awareness, provoke thought, elicit empathy and compassion, and propose viable solutions to the challenges they have addressed.</p>
<b>Learning Goals</b>	
<b>Standard(s):</b>	<p><b>National Standards in Gifted and Talented Education</b>            3.3 Responsiveness to Diversity. Students with gifts and talents develop knowledge and skills for living in and contributing to a diverse and global society.            3.5. Instructional Strategies. Students with gifts and talents become independent investigators.</p>

	<p>3.6. Resources. Students with gifts and talents are able to demonstrate growth commensurate with their abilities as a result of access to high-quality curricular resources.</p> <p>4.1. Personal Competence. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth in personal competence and dispositions for exceptional academic and creative productivity. These include self-awareness, self-advocacy, self-efficacy, confidence, motivation, resilience, independence, curiosity, and risk-taking.</p> <p>4.2. Social Competence. Students with gifts and talents develop social competence manifested in positive peer relationships and social interactions.</p> <p>4.3. Responsibility and Leadership. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate personal and social responsibility.</p> <p>4.4. Cultural Competence. Students with gifts and talents value their own and others' language, heritage, and circumstance. They possess skills in communicating, teaming, and collaborating with diverse individuals and across diverse groups. They use positive strategies to address social issues, including discrimination and stereotyping.</p> <p>4.5. Communication Competence. Students with gifts and talents develop competence in interpersonal and technical communication skills. They demonstrate advanced oral and written skills, balanced biliteracy or multiliteracy, and creative expression. They display fluency with technologies that support effective communication.</p>
<b>Essential Question(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the most pressing problems facing our local community or society today?</li> <li>● How can we effectively research and understand the root causes of these problems?</li> <li>● How can we engage and collaborate with stakeholders to develop a plan for change?</li> <li>● What are the potential challenges and obstacles we might face in implementing our solution, and how can we overcome them?</li> <li>● How can we raise awareness and educate others about the problem?</li> <li>● How can we inspire and motivate others to join our efforts and contribute to solving the problem?</li> </ul>
<b>Enduring Understanding(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understanding the most pressing problems facing our local community or society helps us prioritize issues that truly affect people's lives</li> <li>● To address community challenges effectively, we must research and analyze their root causes instead of focusing on the symptoms.</li> <li>● Engaging and collaborating with community members, organizations, and local leaders are</li> </ul>

	<p>essential for developing a shared vision and actionable plan for change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● By recognizing potential challenges and obstacles in implementing solutions, we can create strategies to adapt our efforts.</li> <li>● Clear and persuasive communication of our findings and solutions is necessary to raise awareness, educate others about the issues, and rally support for our initiatives.</li> <li>● Inspiring and motivating others require us to communicate effectively, demonstrate empathy, and foster a shared sense of purpose.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learning Goal(s):</b> <i>Students will know and will be able to use their learning to:</i> (Content/ Skills)</p>	<p><b>Content:</b> (Students will know...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● key issues and challenges facing their local community and society.</li> <li>● various research methods and sources will help understand the underlying causes of problems.</li> <li>● how to distinguish between symptoms and underlying issues.</li> <li>● challenges and obstacles to implementing solutions exist, as well as strategies to adapt or overcome them.</li> <li>● engaging with community members, organizations, and local leaders is necessary to create change.</li> <li>● examples of individuals and groups who have successfully made a difference.</li> <li>● clear communication is necessary to raise awareness, educate others, and advocate for solutions.</li> <li>● that inspiring and motivating others to join efforts is necessary to effect change.</li> <li>● that effective communication, empathy, and a sense of shared purpose are required to inspire and motivate others.</li> <li>● steps in the problem-solving process (identifying issues, brainstorming solutions, implementing).</li> <li>● resources and tools available for individuals and communities to create positive change.</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills:</b> (Students will be able to...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● identify problems in their community or society.</li> <li>● conduct research from multiple sources.</li> <li>● analyze and synthesize information.</li> <li>● identify community members, local organizations, and leaders relevant to the issues.</li> </ul>

- collaborate with peers and stakeholders to brainstorm potential solutions to the identified problems.
- adapt and refine plans in response to obstacles.
- create a detailed action plan outlining specific steps, resources needed, and timelines for implementation.
- organize and lead efforts to effect change.
- create and deliver presentations or campaigns to convey research, raise awareness, and share proposed solutions.
- design an interactive experience that highlights the importance of community issues and encourages participation.
- practice public speaking and persuasive communication techniques to engage different audiences.
- tailor messages for specific audiences to raise awareness and gain support.
- use storytelling techniques to share personal narratives or case studies that illustrate the impact of the issues.
- engage in self-reflection to evaluate personal contributions and the effectiveness of strategies implemented.
- seek feedback from peers and teachers to identify areas for improvement in communication and action.