



D124 Project Tree Program Guide

Background and Mission

Identification Process

Programming: Math English Language Arts

Social-Emotional Component

Parent Appeal Process

Background and Mission

Evergreen Park Elementary School District 124 is committed to providing all learners with curriculum opportunities that enable them to reach their highest potential. We celebrate the unique gifts and talents of every child, understanding that each student learns and grows at their own pace. Recognizing the diversity of our learners, we strive to address individual needs through a range of instructional strategies and support systems.

Our district's focus on gifted and talented education is rooted in a deep respect for the varied strengths and abilities of our students. While we value the potential in all children, we also acknowledge the need for targeted programming that supports those who exhibit exceptional aptitude in specific areas. By using research-based diagnostic tools and assessments, we can identify students who will benefit from advanced learning opportunities and tailor curriculum experiences to meet their needs.

We believe that the curriculum should offer a balanced approach, combining accelerated learning opportunities with enriched and expanded experiences across core content areas. This approach ensures that students not only progress at an advanced pace but also engage in deeper, more complex learning activities. Through differentiated instruction, collaborative learning experiences, and personalized support, we are dedicated to helping every student reach their full potential.





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Identification Process

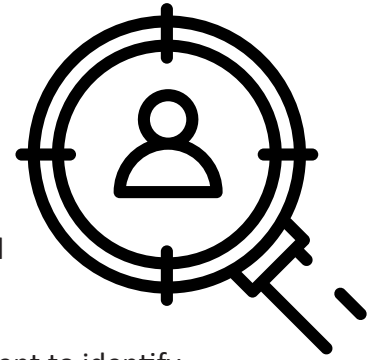
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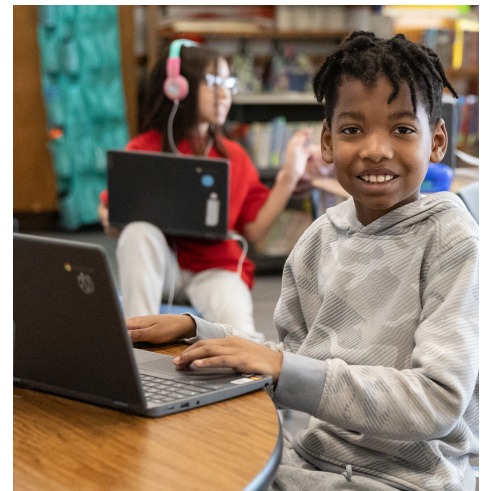
Identification Process

The identification of students qualifying for advanced programming in District 124 follows a comprehensive, multi-criteria approach designed to ensure fairness, accuracy, and alignment with the Illinois School Code. This process combines both objective measures and professional judgment to identify students who would benefit from enriched and accelerated learning opportunities.



In Grades K-3, students will be identified for enrichment support by their classroom teacher using assessment data from mClass (for K-2) and STAR (for Grade 3), along with their overall performance in class. The enrichment groups will be flexible and can be adjusted at any time depending on each student's evolving needs. This approach allows for responsive and personalized support to ensure all students can progress at their own pace, with adjustments made as needed based on ongoing assessment data and classroom performance.

As part of our identification process, all students are universally screened at the end of third grade and fifth grade using the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT). This widely recognized assessment measures verbal reasoning, logical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, providing valuable data about each student's cognitive potential. Additionally, STAR assessment data, which provides percentile rankings based on student performance in reading and math, is also used as a key indicator to assess readiness for advanced programming. Finally, the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) is used to indicate a student achievement at current grade level standards.



The results from the OLSAT, combined with STAR percentile data and IAR scores, are then used to determine appropriate placement for students in middle school accelerated programming. This careful evaluation ensures that students are matched with learning opportunities that align with their strengths, challenge them academically, and foster their continued growth.





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Programming

Math



Grades K-3

Students receive targeted math enrichment during small group instructional time, led by their classroom teachers. This involves focused, differentiated activities that challenge students to build a strong mathematical foundation while exploring advanced problem-solving techniques and critical thinking skills.

Grades 4-5

Students identified for math programming will participate in daily accelerated lessons, taught by the Project Tree teacher at their home school. These lessons utilize the core curriculum, but are delivered at a faster pace with additional opportunities for students to apply their skills in real-world scenarios. Enrichment activities include extended projects, higher-order thinking exercises, and the introduction of select above-grade-level concepts to promote deeper conceptual understanding.

Grades 6-8

Middle school students identified for Project Tree Math Programming engage in daily accelerated math instruction, including the option to take Honors Algebra in 8th grade for high school credit. The curriculum is tailored to challenge students with more complex problems, mathematical reasoning tasks, and extended learning opportunities that build on foundational knowledge. This ensures that students not only advance through the typical middle school math sequence but also provide the opportunity to take higher level math classes during their high school career.





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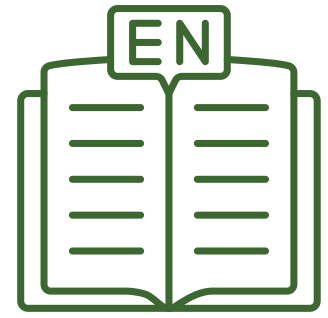
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English Language Arts (ELA)



Grades K-3

Classroom teachers provide English Language Arts enrichment through small group instructional time, allowing students to engage in enriched reading, writing, and language activities. This time includes the exploration of complex texts, extended writing projects, and the introduction of above-grade-level literary concepts. These groups will be flexible and may change throughout the year depending on student need.

Grades 4-5

Students will receive English Language Arts enrichment in a pull out setting with the Project Tree Teacher, allowing students to engage in enriched reading, writing, and language activities. This time includes the exploration of complex texts, extended writing projects, and the introduction of above-grade-level literary concepts. These groups will be flexible and may change throughout the year depending on student need.

Grades 6-8

Middle school students identified for Project Tree ELA participate in an accelerated ELA program that blends the core curriculum with advanced resources and methodologies. This includes the opportunity to take Honors Freshman English for high school credit in 8th grade, allowing students to engage in high-level analysis of literature, composition, and rhetoric. Through this program, students develop advanced writing skills, critical reading abilities, and a deep appreciation for literary analysis, preparing them for success in high school English and beyond.





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These enriched and accelerated programs are designed to provide students with the opportunity to challenge themselves academically, gain exposure to higher-level content, and cultivate a lifelong passion for learning. Through differentiated instruction and rigorous coursework, students will be empowered to reach their fullest potential and excel in both math and English Language Arts.

	Grade K-3	Grade 4-5	Grade 6-7	Grade 8
MATH	Classroom Enrichment	Accelerated Math		Honors Algebra at EPHS
ELA	Classroom Enrichment	Pull Out Enrichment	Accelerated ELA	Honors English at EPHS





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Social-Emotional Component



Research consistently shows that high-ability students are generally as well-adjusted as their peers; however, they face unique challenges that can impact their social and emotional development. While these challenges are not exclusive to gifted individuals, they can present specific risks that may hinder their ability to fully realize their potential. These students often encounter situations that require them to navigate social pressures, perfectionism, and the expectations placed on them due to their advanced abilities—issues that may not always be readily understood by peers, teachers, or even parents.

To support these students, direct instruction in positive coping strategies is essential. Teaching high-ability students how to manage challenges such as high expectations, perfectionism, and social dynamics can significantly enhance their self-concept, emotional resilience, and interpersonal skills. These coping strategies help students develop healthier ways to manage stress, communicate effectively with peers, and engage in productive self-reflection.





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Parent Appeal Process

Parents may appeal a decision by asking for the reconsideration of the results of any part of the identification process which would include the following:

- Screening procedure or assessment instrument (which results in identification);
- Scheduling of children for assessment;
- Placement of a student in the program; and
- Receipt of services.



Parents should submit a letter to the building principal outlining the nature of the concern, and with supporting documentation attached.

