

Philosophy for Talented and Gifted Education

Gifted students require specialized educational experiences that promote the development and expression of their potential. If gifted individuals—as children, youths, and adults—are to experience fulfilling lives and if society is to derive optimal benefits from gifted individuals' uncommon potentials, an educational program must be structured to develop more fully their exceptional and varied abilities, interests, and talents.

Fulton County gifted services address the unique learning characteristics, interests, personal needs, and capabilities of gifted children. The services emphasize the gifted students' need for interaction with intellectual peers. Emphasis on the individual highlights the fact that there are differences among gifted students and a need for specialized educational experiences to meet these differences.

Basic to the philosophy of this program is the idea that no one teacher, resource, or instructional method can meet the needs of gifted students. Education for the gifted is viewed as a cooperative endeavor characterized, facilitated, and realized by the efforts of numerous individuals in the schools and community.

These goals are accomplished in Fulton County Schools by enriching and extending the Georgia Performance Standards for identified gifted students in and out of the regular classroom, adjusting the rate and depth of their learning, using a variety of appropriate teaching methods which address multiple intelligences, and providing opportunities to interact with other gifted students through extracurricular recognized programs as the Georgia Governors' Honors Program. Further differentiation beyond that in the regular classroom is accomplished through challenging instructional activities, seminars, independent studies, internships, and other challenging experiences available to gifted students. These educational experiences provide the additional variety and flexibility necessary to adjust and extend the Fulton County curriculum to meet these individuals' needs.

Program Goals and Objectives

In accordance with this philosophy, the following program goals and objectives have been adopted in order to identify and serve the gifted students of Fulton County:

A. To help teachers, administrators, and parents identify gifted students and understand their unique abilities, needs, and preferences. This goal will be accomplished by providing

1. Staff development for school personnel and in-service for parents to increase recognition of the characteristics of gifted students and an understanding of these students' natures and needs.
2. Routine review of scores from system-wide achievement test scores at each school, with additional testing when indicated.
3. Appropriate materials for assessment of students' abilities, interests, and needs.
4. Regular communication among classroom teachers, parents, counselors, principals, TAG teachers, and students to facilitate evaluation of the students' needs.

B. To design and implement differentiated instructional experiences in the school and the community. This goal will be accomplished by providing

1. Opportunities for classroom teachers, students, parents, and others to plan and develop appropriate educational experiences.
2. Appropriate materials and resources for individual students.
3. A variety of teaching strategies to be used by classroom teachers and TAG teachers in order to encourage higher levels of thinking, creativity, and independent learning.
4. Enrichment and/or academically accelerated materials that may include multi-media, multi-level, interdisciplinary approaches to learning.
5. Access to wide variety of community resources.
6. Activities that develop independent learning skills.
7. Open-ended activities which encourage students to acquire and apply knowledge through purposeful investigation.

C. To develop in gifted students an accurate and increasing awareness of themselves, their abilities, and their value to society. This goal will be accomplished by providing

1. Activities and guidance that encourage positive development of gifted students' self concepts and an understanding of their needs.
2. Activities and guidance that help students understand their abilities and their potential for contributions to society.
3. Experiences in school that foster interaction and cooperation with students of both similar and different abilities.
4. Opportunities for gifted students to discover and explore new interests and aptitudes.