

Policy Subject	Location Code	Adoption Date
GIFTED EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY & GOALS	507.1	3/10/86
	Rescinds/Amends	Adopted

Our overall mission at Norfolk Public Schools is to "develop the intellectual, physical, socials cultural, creative, and vocational capabilities of students" so that they become autonomous, creative, inquiring people...fully aware of their opportunities in the world with the will and intelligence to determine their own destinies".

PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHALLENGE PROGRAM

We recognize that students vary in the level and direction of their abilities, talents, and interests. We believe that intellectually and creatively gifted students and students with outstanding talents in specific areas often have different educational, needs than their peers. Therefore, Norfolk Public Schools has established a differentiated program for these students. This program provides modifications of the pacing, content, and methods of the ordinary school curriculum, as well as specialized activities intended to meet the developmental needs of gifted and talented youngsters in the specific areas of their abilities.

CHALLENGE PROGRAM GOALS AND RATIONALE

1. Intellectually gifted students and students talented in a performance area will be given the opportunity to move through the ordinary curricular sequence at an accelerated pace if this is not contradicted by their social needs. Intellectually able students grasp and retain new information more quickly than others of their age. Similarly, students talented in a particular performance area master new skills more quickly than their peers.
2. Academically able students will spend more time on higher level thinking assignments and indepth projects within the regular curricular areas of study and less time on routine, sequenced, memory activities than their peers. Although slow students are thought to learn best when knowledge is broken down into simple, sequential, practiced steps, academically able students find this approach frustrating. They learn best when they are given an overall view of a topic or problem, opportunities to apply, relate, or evaluate what they are learning, and a chance to pursue knowledge that relates to their own interests.
3. The creative, analytic, performance, or leadership potential of able students will be deliberately

fostered. Good original ideas and critical responses will be valued as much as right answers. Direct training in the skills of self-management, problem solving, creative process, critical thinking, performance, and/or leadership will be offered. Able students will have opportunities to design, evaluate, and share their own independent projects.

Some students display high creative, analytic, performance, and/or leadership potential. Research shows

that the repetitiveness of routine expectations can dampen such potential. Training students to be evaluators and producers of knowledge and culture benefits society as well as individual creativity.

4. The Challenge Program will provide enrichment of the ordinary curriculum. The themes of the ordinary curriculum will be examined at greater depth and will be illustrated with the great ideas and products of our culture. Cross-disciplinary topics and topics of interest to the children will be added to the curriculum.

Intellectually and creatively able students recognize the implications of important ideas, the universality of good art, the complexity of ethical problems, and the difficulty of dealing with the real world in terms of separate subjects taught at separate hours at an earlier age than their peers do. They also grasp concepts and master applications in the basic curriculum faster than other students: therefore they have time to go beyond the basics.

5. The program will assist intellectually gifted and creatively talented youngsters (a) in developing a commitment to originality, leadership, life-long learning and production, (b) in forming a positive and realistic self-image, and (c) in finding a sense of direction for the future in the light of their particular abilities, needs, and problems as gifted people. Most people are aware of the desirable side effects of being highly intelligent and creative but the problems often associated with giftedness receive little recognition. Research indicates that gifted students may have difficulty with perfectionism, unrealistic expectations, social rejections, heightened emotional sensitivity, or deciding which of many talents to pursue. Many bright students develop their potential without special training or treatment, but others (who lose their self-confidence, feel like misfits, and become hostile, withdrawn or depressed during their school years) ultimately fail to fulfil their potential or begin to use it in undesirable ways. Special modifications in the school program, such as those discussed above, may help these students to develop their potential and remain committed to society.