

Millville Public Charter School's Gifted and Talented Program fosters a love of learning. We believe in a program where each student's passion can be explored.

We are committed to a model that values differentiated instruction, one in which classroom teachers work to tailor instruction and content to match student ability level. Our Gifted and Talented Program is designed to address the unique social and emotional needs of students by promoting self-understanding, awareness of needs, and cognitive and affective growth.

We hope to inspire and support this special group of learners to embrace challenges and opportunities.

The intent of all levels of Gifted and Talented programming is to honor the "whole child, every child" in developing student competencies that forge lifelong learners and create global and world changers!

Millville Public Charter School believes that meeting the needs of all students is paramount to providing a thorough and efficient education. Our goal is to empower students to reach their highest potential, physically, academically, emotionally and socially. Students will find the challenge and support needed to help them function in a world that requires:

- Competence in academics and the arts;
- Excellence in communications;
- Adaptability, creativity, and critical thinking;
- Valuing of diversity; and
- Development of character

The New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLs) in ELA, Mathematics, and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), are intended to promote higher levels of learning for all students, emphasizing analytical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving skills. These standards provide a rigorous framework for instruction at each grade level in terms of content and progression of skills. As gifted and talented students typically grasp curriculum concepts more quickly and deeply than peers their age, they also need additional learning experiences that extend and enrich the standards and require students to apply complex, creative, and innovative thinking to authentic problems.

In order to identify and provide for the many diverse talents of our students, we have developed a triad model for grades 3-6. This model has been adapted from Joseph Renzulli's Schoolwide Program and is based upon the Triad Model, which was developed and field tested over a ten year period throughout the United States and Canada (Renzulli, 1990). At the heart of the model is differentiation of instruction. The Triad Model is based upon the following four general goals:

- To improve the extent and quality for all students and promote excellence throughout the school environment;
- To provide various types and levels to a broader spectrum of the school population than usually served in traditional gifted programs;

- To integrate the program within the classroom, with opportunities to enhance learning experiences in a collaborative pull-out setting;
- To minimize concerns about exclusiveness and the negative attitudes that are often expressed toward students participating in only special programs for the gifted.

STANDARDS FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED

The following standards are from the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). These standards provide a framework in which to develop opportunities for gifted and talented students.

Standard 1: Learning and Development

Description: Educators, recognizing the learning and developmental differences of students with gifts and talents, promote ongoing self-understanding, awareness of their needs, and cognitive and affective growth of these students in school, home, and community settings to ensure specific student outcomes.

Standard 2: Assessment

Description: Assessments provide information about identification, learning progress and outcomes, and evaluation of programming for students with gifts and talents in all domains.

Standard 3: Curriculum & Instruction

Description: Educators apply the theory and research-based models of curriculum and instruction related to students with gifts and talents and respond to their needs by planning, selecting, adapting, and creating culturally relevant curriculum and by using a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to ensure specific student outcomes.

Standard 4: Learning Environments

Description: Learning environments foster personal and social responsibility, multicultural competence, and interpersonal and technical communication skills for leadership in the 21st century to ensure specific student outcomes.

Standard 5: Programming

Description: Educators are aware of empirical evidence regarding (a) the cognitive, creative, and affective development of learners with gifts and talents, and (b) programming that meets their concomitant needs. Educators use this expertise systematically and collaboratively to develop, implement, and effectively manage comprehensive services for students with a variety of gifts and talents to ensure specific student outcomes.

Standard 6: Professional Development

Description: All educators (administrators, teachers, counselors, and other instructional support staff) build their knowledge and skills using the NAGC/CEC Teacher Standards for Gifted and Talented Education and the National Staff Development Standards. They formally assess professional development needs related to the standards, develop and monitor plans, systematically engage in training to meet the identified needs, and demonstrate mastery of standard. They access resources to provide for release time, funding for continuing education, and substitute support. These practices are judged through the assessment of relevant student outcomes.

WHAT IS GIFTEDNESS?

Although interpretations of the word “gifted” seem limitless, there are a handful of foundational definitions that may be categorized from conservative (related to demonstrated high IQ) to liberal (a broadened conception that includes multiple criteria that might not be measured through an IQ test).

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)

Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports).

Federal Definition

This definition is taken from the Javits Act, which provides grants for education programs serving bright children from low-income families:

“The term ‘gifted and talented student’ means children and youths who give evidence of higher performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools in order to develop such capabilities fully.”

U.S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) (1993)

In the report titled National Excellence and Developing Talent, the term “gifted” was dropped. Their definition uses the term “outstanding talent” and concludes with the sentence:

“Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.”

State Definitions of Gifted and Talented

Each state has its own definition of gifted and talented.

- The New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1) definition of gifted and talented students states the following: “Those students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers in the local school district and who require modifications of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.”
- Code N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1(a)5ii requires all district boards of education to provide appropriate K-12 educational services for gifted and talented students.

Gifted and talented students are those who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance and are identified by qualified teachers. These are students who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society.

IDENTIFICATION/SELECTION PROCESS

Millville Public Charter School uses multiple measures to determine if a student meets the criteria for the Gifted and Talented Program when compared to grade level peers. This is an ongoing process throughout the school year. Nominations can originate from teachers, parents and community members during the nomination period. Report card grades are reviewed before nominated students are informed with a formal nomination letter. The recommendation for participation in the program is reevaluated annually by the current classroom teachers.

Students transferring into the district who were eligible for, or were active participants in a Gifted and Talented Program in their previous district, will be considered upon entry into the Millville Public Charter School. The principal or classroom teacher will review the documentation of the student’s participation in or eligibility from their previous district’s program. The student’s records, including any achievement test scores, will be reviewed. Review and notification process will follow as described in this section of the document.

Screening/Assessment Process

A student profile is used to identify those students who perform at remarkably high levels of accomplishment relative to their age, peers, experience, or environment. The criteria used will be a combination of qualitative and quantitative instruments which include the following:

- Performance in Testing- **CogAT**
- Let’s Go Learn and LinkIt
- Report Card Grades (all subject areas)
- Teacher Recommendation- Classroom teachers are to complete the Recommendation for Gifted and Talented Teacher’s Checklist for any student that meets the criteria for the Gifted and Talented program. (No Cs on report cards)

A rubric score is utilized to establish an entrance criteria into the Gifted and Talented program. Students must score 8 or above points on the rubric.

Selection Process

The student profile identifies the student's strengths and weaknesses. The percentiles and/or scores from the assessment instruments are plotted on the student profile. Each student's profile is individually evaluated by the Gifted/Talented Selection Committee through a blind (no name) process. The decision is based on the committee's observation of the preponderance of the evidence on the student's profile.

The selection committee consists of teachers and administrators. All committee members are trained in the nature and needs of gifted students. The selection committee makes a professional judgment based on the recorded student profile data. As the committee evaluates the data on the students who were nominated, the committee has three options:

- The preponderance of profile data indicates the student would benefit from the services offered in the Gifted/Talented Program and services will be offered to meet the educational needs of the student.
- There is insufficient evidence in the documentation at this time, indicating the student's educational needs would best be met by the Gifted/Talented Program. The preponderance of evidence indicates the student's educational needs would best be served with the services of the regular curriculum.
- Further information is requested for the committee to make a placement decision.

Once the identification process is complete, parents or guardians are notified of the Selection Committee's decision via notes sent home with the student. Parents of all screened students may request a conference to examine their child's assessment results. The request should be made through the student's home school.

OVERVIEW OF THE TRIAD TIER MODEL

While differentiation is a hallmark of good instruction and expected in every class for all disciplines, the Triad Model provides additional opportunities to enhance student learning. The Triad Model provides for three tiers of:

- Tier I: Whole Group Curriculum Extensions
- Tier II: Individualized Curriculum Opportunities
- Tier III: Gifted and Talented Program

Tier I and II involve all students in challenging and rigorous education opportunities. Tier III is designed for students identified as being gifted and talented in one or more academic areas.

Tier I: Whole Group Curriculum Extensions

Tier I includes general exploratory experiences for all students designed to provide exposure to critical thinking and problem-solving opportunities within a variety of novel topics, ideas, and fields of knowledge. This type of instruction is implemented into various planned activities throughout the school day. Instruction is also built into multi-leveled tasks and projects within each discipline of our board approved K-6 curriculum.

In addition to participation in open-ended, multi-leveled tasks within each of the disciplines, the following programs are also examples of Tier I:

- Assemblies
- Classroom interest centers
- Field Trips / Virtual field trips
- Guest speakers
- Interdisciplinary instruction
- Projects
- Related arts units
- School-wide projects/activities
- Use of multimedia technology
- STEAM activities
- Arbor Day essay contest
- Poster contests (Arbor Day & Fire Safety)
- Student government / Student Ambassador/Student Council
- Anti-bullying assemblies
- Safety
- Math league
- Peer leadership

Tier II: Individualized Curriculum Opportunities

Tier II enhances general classroom differentiation through individualized opportunities to explore curriculum concepts. It assists all students in refining and enriching their individual development of higher order thinking processes.

Tier II opportunities vary by grade level, both in and out of the classroom. Some Tier II activities are embedded in the specific components of the daily schedule for all students (e.g., Reader's Workshop, choice time). Other activities occur weekly for students, and are based on ability or interest.

In addition to participation in open-ended, problem-solving tasks within each of the disciplines, the following programs are also examples of Tier II:

- Before or After school clubs
- Math groups
- Mentoring
- Instrumental Music
- Chorus
- Math Club
- Safety Patrol

- Plays through Visual and Performing Arts
- Student government /Student Ambassador/Student Council

Tier II Program Criteria

The following goals have been developed for Tier II activities and/or courses of study. These goals represent characteristics of intelligent behaviors adapted from the work of Arthur Costa and focus on the development and extension of these characteristics over time. These include:

- Persistence/persevering
- Listening to others
- Flexibility in thinking
- Metacognition: awareness of own thinking
- Checking for accuracy and precision
- Ingenuity, originality, insightfulness: creativity
- Depth of understanding/insight applying prior knowledge/making connections

These characteristics form the basis of course evaluation and student assessment in Tier II.

Tier III: Gifted and Talented Program

Tier III involves students who have been identified as gifted and talented based on district criteria. This tier serves that small percentage of students who exhibit high levels of ability, creativity, and task commitment in school activities (Renzulli, 1978). The goal of this tier is to enable students to become more independent, self-directed learners, leaders, and contributors to local and global society. Individuals who participate in Tier III are offered opportunities to explore real world problems via self-identified tasks. This tier provides students with challenging and engaging instruction, materials, and collaboration to meet specific needs in varied academic curricula.

The district honors the students' creativity during the Gifted and Talented Family Night.

PROCESS FOR FORMAL RECONSIDERATION LEVEL I

Formal reconsideration, Level 1, on behalf of students who do not initially meet qualifying criteria may be initiated by MPCS personnel, parents/guardians, self, and/or significant others in the child's life.

Formal reconsideration may be filed for the following reasons:

*The home language of the student is not English.

*The student has a disability which may have impacted testing.

*The student qualifies on two of the five criteria and in other ways exhibits need(s) for the gifted and talented services.

A completed Gifted and Talented Reconsideration Form, available from the school, accompanied by a letter requesting formal reconsideration, a description of the concern, the remedy sought, and evidence supporting the remedy must be filed with the building principal within five (5) working days after placement recommendations have been communicated in writing to the parent. Within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the request for formal reconsideration, the principal shall schedule a meeting of the school Screening and Selection Committee. The person initiating the appeal shall appear before the committee in person or shall submit written testimony supporting the reconsideration. The appeal process, outlined in the Millville Public Charter School's Policy, will be followed.

Within ten (10) working days of the hearing, a decision will be made by the School Screening and Selection Committee and communicated in writing to the person requesting the reconsideration. Should the person requesting the reconsideration disagree with the School Screening and Selection Committee decision, a written request should be forwarded to the Superintendent within ten (10) working days following communication of the Committee's decision (Level II). The Superintendent or designee will appoint a hearing officer.

LEVEL II

The Level II decision may be appealed to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

EVALUATION

Each year, MPCS will evaluate their Gifted and Talented Program in regard to the success of the identified students, the perceived problem areas, and the training required to correct these needs. The parents and teachers will be surveyed about the perceptions of our program. These findings will be used in conjunction with the student grades and test results to determine program needs and ensure greater student achievement. The parents of the G/T students will be given the opportunity to evaluate their child's program through participation in the Parent Conferences. The District Plan will address the staff development and budgetary needs of the overall program. However, each school plan will address the specific program needs and actions to be taken to correct them.

DISTRICT POLICIES

- Policy 2464 Gifted and Talented Students__

- Policy 9130 Public Complaints and Grievances___

COMPLAINT INFORMATION

For any complaints regarding the Gifted and Talented Program, please follow the Chain of Command below

1. Contact the building principal/assistant principal