

Students Accelerated in Learning **SAIL** Handbook

2018-2019



Montclair Public Schools

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SAIL Handbook

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I. Introduction

Each year, Montclair Public Schools' students are identified for acceleration under the district's SAIL model. This model is for students who demonstrate advanced academic skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication in the language arts and mathematics subject matter areas. The students may show skills in developing innovative products that reflect individuality and creativity at an advanced leveled when compared to his/her/their peers. The goal of the model is to offer differentiated instructional opportunities for maximum growth every school year. All teachers work closely with students, parents, and administrators to ensure challenging opportunities to maximize student achievement.

The school district provides educational programs for the gifted and talented that include a broad spectrum of learning experiences which increase knowledge and develop skills necessary for the students to function successfully in society, while encouraging students to excel in areas of special competence and interest.

Programs are developed recognizing multiple intelligences and varied learning styles that stimulate students to participate constructively in and contribute to, the activities of their school, community, and society.

II. SAIL Program Mission Statement

Montclair Public Schools recognize that rather than any single gifted program, a continuum of programming services must exist for gifted learners as an integral part of differentiated classroom instruction. The district strives to provide an on-going educational program that identifies, develops and expands the gifts and talents of our students while monitoring the value and impact of services provided.

III. Definition of Giftedness

Exceptionally able students are those with outstanding intellectual or academic abilities, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers in the local district. They may display unique creativity, productive thinking, and leadership traits or may exhibit exceptional talent in the visual and performing arts. Academically talented students are those who have demonstrated and/or have proclivities to exceptional performance; accelerated comprehension and assimilation of context; exceptional capability for the abstract, creative and divergent thinking in academic or out-of-school activities and who require a differentiated educational program beyond that normally provided by the school district. The NJDOE defines gifted students as: *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 district and who requires modification of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.*

In Montclair, giftedness is guided by the principles of differentiation of instruction by the classroom teachers. Differentiated instruction is a way of teaching that allows teachers to customize their instruction, activities and assessments to meet the needs of all learners.

IV. Screening & Identification

Identification of gifted students is an ongoing process extending from grades kindergarten through twelve. Results from standardized academic assessments are used to identify a student as gifted. Therefore, once identified for the gifted program, students are not required to go through an annual qualifying process unless students demonstrate difficulty with the program of service provided. Testing instruments that have been developed to eliminate cultural bias may be used as validating instruments. No single criterion or score is used to exclude a student from being identified. Identification procedures will be analyzed annually to avoid any type of discrimination.

In keeping with the state mandate that every district Board of Education shall adopt policies and procedures to identify the intellectually gifted and talented students enrolled in its public schools and provide such students with an appropriate educational program opportunity pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1(a)(5) and district philosophy to provide inclusionary programs for all students. Students will be nominated for the academically talented program according to the multiple identification criteria summarized below. At this time, English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics (Math) are the two content areas under examination.

➤ Grades 2-8

❖ ELA and Math

- End-of-Year GPA to determine overall academic performance
- Universal screener for ELA and Math to determine competence in those subjects
- District assessments in ELA and Math to determine local achievement in standards
- Teacher inventory of learning and motivation characteristics to determine task commitment

V. Phase Planning and Annual Evaluation

To promote a thoughtful administration of our SAIL program, identification and services will be phased-in using the following timeline, and the district will use an external gifted and talented evaluator to examine our implementation and service model at the end of year 1, 2 and 3.

Screening and Identification

Fall 2018	K-5
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Spring 2019	6-8
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Services and Program Implementation

Spring 2018	K-5
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Fall 2019	6-8
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VI. Program Components

To accomplish its philosophy, the *Montclair Public Schools' SAIL Program* will provide a continuum of services for the exceptional learner, designed to address specific needs and levels of giftedness from Kindergarten through grade 12. Gifted programming options are provided during the regular school schedule.

A. Kindergarten through Grade 1

Students identified as gifted learners in the primary grades will receive *enrichment programming* in the general education classroom. Extensions will include adjustments to the curriculum for students who have already mastered grade level material that enhance critical and creative thinking, logical reasoning, and problem-solving strategies through project-based learning.

B. Grades 2-8

Students in elementary and the middle grades will receive *enrichment programming* in the general education classroom with the aid of a gifted and talented toolkit for teachers. Enrichment programming will include critical and creative thinking, logical reasoning, and problem-solving strategies through project-based learning. Learners will have the opportunity to experience myriad non-graded learning environments, both traditional and virtual, that offer differentiated curricula that incorporates advanced, conceptually challenging, in-depth, distinctive and complex content for students with gifts.

C. Grades 9-12

Students identified as advanced learners in secondary grades will receive academic instruction at the *honors and/or advanced placement* level in all major content areas and in specialized courses as identified in the *Montclair High School Program of Study*. Advanced coursework affords students the opportunity to master accelerated curriculum as well as earn college credits through dual enrollment.

D. Differentiated Instruction

Effective differentiated instruction will be available in the general education classroom to ensure that all students meet their highest potential. Differentiation will consist of carefully planned, coordinated learning experiences in ELA, Math, Social Studies, and Science that extend the core curriculum, combine the curricular strategies of enrichment and integrate instructional strategies that engage learners at appropriate levels of challenge. In addition, in ELA, diagnostic assessments are used to determine student readiness for reading. Content-area instruction is supported with carefully leveled texts that cover essential content at the "just right" reading level for each student. The guided reading program ensures success in reading, writing, and comprehension and helps move students toward independent reading.

VII. School / Home Connection

A. *Gifted Program Guidelines* will be reviewed annually with parents of SAIL students, teachers, SAIL students, and committee members. These open house forums in September and March will provide an opportunity to:

- Learn about the Gifted Program
- Preview Program Expectations
- Ask and answer questions
- Provide valuable feedback

Guidelines will also be posted on the district's website for easy access.

VIII. Recommended Reading

Johnsen, SK (2004). Ed. *Identifying Gifted Students: A Practical Guide*. Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented. Waco, TX: Prufrocks Press.

Machek, G.R. and Plucker, J.A. (2003, December). Individual Intelligence Testing and Giftedness: A Primer for Parents. *Parenting for High Potential*, 10-15.

National Association for Gifted Children (2010). PreK-Grade gifted programming standards. Washing, D.C. Retrieved from: <http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/national-standards-gifted-and-talented-education>

Olszewski-Kubilius, P., Clarenback, J. (2012). *Unlocking Emergent Talent: Supporting High Achievement of Low-Income, High Ability Students*. National Association for Gifted Children. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from: http://www.jkcf.org/assets/1/7/Unlocking_Emergent_Talent.pdf

Rimm, S., Gilman, BJ., and Silverman, L.K. (2008). Non-traditional Applications of Traditional Testing. IN J. Van-Tassel-Baska (Ed.), *Critical Issues of Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education Series, Volume 2: Alternative Assessment of Gifted Learners*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

Robinson, A., Shore, B., and Enersen D.L. (2007). *Best Practices in Gifted Education: An Evidence-based Guide*. Waco, TX: Prufrock press.