

Effective Programming Options

District schools provide a variety or combination of programming options, based on the needs and interests of identified students.

Programming may include the following:

- enhanced opportunities for higher level thinking and complex learning
- individual study options
- instruction provided with the help of a school-based lead teacher using appropriate strategies
- increased access to diverse materials, resources and technology
- clustering (grouping several students who are gifted in the same classroom and providing appropriate learning experiences)
- pull-out for students, within a specific grade or combination of grades
- pull-out for specific subject acceleration
- interest or special project classes
- offering an "enrichment option" in junior high
- fast tracking science or math in junior high
- grade or subject acceleration



Ineffective Programming Practices for Gifted and Talented Students

There are certain practices that studies show are not effective or appropriate. These include practices based on assumptions that gifted and talented students should:

- make it on their own
- complete independent study projects without instruction or support
- do more of the same
- read two books instead of one
- answer 20 questions instead of five
- help the teacher with slower learning students
- excel in every area
- be perfect
- work quickly
- behave all the time
- do school work that is already mastered
- work through a pre-packaged "gifted program"
- be gifted only during pull out time
- become a group of elite "different" learners

How can Parents Help?

The most effective services are provided to students when the home and school work together as a team. To provide a positive learning experience parents can:

- be prepared to share information about their child's strengths and needs
- provide relevant information that could affect their child's learning and behaviour at school
- give their written and informed consent for any specialized assessments
- be willing to discuss the educational and social goals they have for their child
- be respectful of those who are working on behalf of their child
- maintain a positive and supportive attitude about school and learning, homework, and school activities
- maintain open communication with teachers and the school
- participate in the development of the IPP

Recommended Websites and Community Contacts

<http://www.lss.ecsd.net/gifted/>

Learning Support Services- Gifted, Talented and Enrichment Page

<http://www.gtccouncil.com/>

Gifted and Talented Educational Council of the ATA

<http://www.edmontonabc.org/>

Alberta Associations for Bright Children Support, Advocacy and Information

<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>

A great site for parent, teacher, and student resources, articles, issues, subject specific links

Recommended Resources

The Alberta Education Book 7, Teaching Students Who Are Gifted and Talented is a necessary resource for educators committed to gifted and talented education programs.

The following comprehensive resources can be downloaded free-of-charge at http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/ParentResources.asp or ordered through the Learning Resource Centre at 427-2767.

The Journey: A Handbook for Parents of Children who are Gifted and Talented (2003)

The Learning Team: a Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs (2003)

This handbook offers information and strategies for parents of children with special needs who want to be meaningfully involved in their children's education.

Every elementary and junior high has a collection of resources for teachers, parents and students.



EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

OPENING GOD'S WORLD...
INSPIRING THE GIFTS WITHIN EACH CHILD

Supporting Students who are Gifted and Talented



We believe

- That each person is created in the image and likeness of God
- In the goodness, dignity, and worth of each person
- That all can learn and develop their gifts
- That Catholic education is a shared responsibility in which parents have a primary role

What is an Inclusive School?

“Children that learn together, learn to live together.”

Author Unknown



An inclusive school is a place that values its students, staff and parents as a community of learners. It values diversity as an opportunity to learn about what makes us human. It focuses on how to support the gifts and needs of every student so that each feels welcome and is successful. It assumes that every child can learn when given the appropriate learning environment, encouragement, and meaningful activities. Instruction is based on what is known about good teaching and learning. Curriculum is determined by what students will be able to learn, not what the teacher will teach. Many gifted and talented students are supported and challenged within inclusive community school settings.

Who are Gifted and Talented Students?

There are wide-ranging differences among gifted students. These students tend to be highly curious, have strong interests, learn quickly, generate complex ideas, and enjoy self-directed learning. Alberta Education has adopted the following definition of giftedness:

Giftedness is exceptional potential and/or performance across a wide range of abilities in one or more of the following areas

- **general intellectual** - acquires information rapidly, thinks abstractly, recalls easily.
- **specific academic** - has strengths in a particular subject (e.g. math or science)
- **creative thinking** - is capable of coming up with many possible ideas to given problems
- **social** - demonstrates strong leadership and interpersonal communication skills
- **musical** - has an intense love and passion for music
- **artistic** - demonstrates proficiency and passion in visual and performing arts
- **kinesthetic** - demonstrates talent in such areas as athletics and dance

How are Gifted and Talented Students Identified in our District?

Previously, many of the gifted and talented students in our district were identified through scores derived from standardized achievement and cognitive ability tests, and teacher referral checklists. Selections based on standardized tests identify those students who have general intellectual ability or a specific academic aptitude. An updated identification process is being used in Edmonton Catholic Schools. It involves a three stage process:

- **Stage One- Referral.** This includes parent, teacher, student and peer referrals.
- **Stage Two-Screening and Identification.** This includes test data, academic performance and supporting data.
- **Stage Three-Selection and Communication.** This involves the process of selecting students, based on the data provided in Stages One and Two, and communicating with parents, and other staff.

In the spirit of Alberta Education’s current definition of giftedness, schools may also recognize children who have demonstrated talents in areas not measured by standardized tests. Teachers must have evidence reflecting the child’s giftedness or talents, and each school must be prepared to program for the child once he or she has been coded.



“As a faith community, Edmonton Catholic Separate School District No. 7 welcomes all students. Through inclusive practices inspired by the Gospel, the district seeks to meet students’ needs in regular classroom settings within the neighborhood school community, where a variety of services and supports are available.”

Administrative Policy 305

“Flexibility to adapt to the changing needs of students is an important feature of inclusive education programming. Specific delivery models for individualized programs may vary from class to class and from school to school depending on the needs of the individual students attending.”

Administrative Regulation 305.1

What Supports are Available for Gifted and Talented Students?

Research suggests that an array of services and supports best meets the needs of gifted and talented students. Students should be supported and challenged through teachers’ collaborative assessments, planning, and instruction.

Available School Programs

In addition to the support gifted and talented students are given in inclusive settings, students attending Edmonton Catholic Schools have the choice of a variety of focus schools and programs such as bilingual and immersion language programs, Early and Middle Years International Baccalaureate programmes, fine arts, sports academies, science and technology academies and honor and Advanced Placement programs. These varied programming options serve a broad range of strengths and interests within the diverse group of gifted and talented students.

Individual Program Plans

An Individualized Program Plan (IPP) is developed for each student who is identified as gifted and talented (*Alberta Education Code 80*). The IPP indicates the student’s assessment data, current levels of performance and achievement, areas of strength, and areas to develop. Meaningful long term goals and short term objectives are set by the Learning Team, and effective strategies and accommodations to promote student growth are established.

The Learning Team is “A team that consults and shares information relevant to the individual student’s education and plans special education programming and services as required. The team may consist of the classroom teacher, parents, students (where appropriate), other school and jurisdiction staff aware of the students’ needs and others as required.” Standards for Special Education (2004)

Edmonton Catholic School District Inclusive Education Consultants work with district teachers, students, administrators, other consultants, and parents. District consultants provide in servicing for district staff, assist with IPP development, provide information regarding services and resources, and assist teachers in acquiring knowledge and skills regarding differentiated learning strategies.

