



GIFTED SERVICES

MADEIRA SCHOOL BOARD PLANNING COMMISSION

STUDY 2016-2017

Presented to Board of Education for Madeira City Schools by

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Objective:

The subcommittee's assignment was to review Madeira's gift services with along with other similar school districts to determine whether changes are needed and if so, to what extent. This study focused on three key questions:

1. What are the best practices for gifted service delivery that support the academic, social, and emotional needs of students?
2. What are current practices in providing enrichment?
3. What methods/criteria are used to identify students for gifted services?

Methodology:

We interviewed 5 school districts with similar demographics and/or economic base as Madeira with a focus on 12 questions. With the assistance of Kevin Wright, the questions were developed as a means to evaluate and compare programs. In addition, we interviewed Dr. Tracy Alley, Madeira's Gifted Intervention Specialist.

Findings – Other Schools

While each school has different approaches and no singular best practice was determined, some generalities have been uncovered:

- Primarily two approaches; pull-out of classroom or service within classroom
- Resource allocation tends to be less for gifted students versus other development need students
- All have accelerated Math programs
- Schools struggle with allocating resources to meet gifted students' needs

Below is overview of the findings. Details of research are included in Appendix A.

Fairfield: Large district (graduating class size of ~700). They have cluster grouping of students in grades 2-4, but in grades 5-8, they have a self-contained gifted program called Visions. Only approximately 50 students in each grade make the cut, and those who do not are still placed in advanced math and language arts. Eligibility for visions is made through CogAT and MAP data.

Indian Hill: Approximately 54-60% of students are identified yearly in one or more area or gifted. For elementary school, 21% are served in the pull-out program with additional 30% in grades 4 and 5 are served in math and superior cognitive through the regular education math classroom. Students must have BOTH an ability and achievement score from a nationally normed assessment that is also on the list of approved assessments per the State of Ohio. Math acceleration begins in 5th grade and continues through 8th grade.

Mariemont: Does not provide specific Gifted Services. Their motto is "what's good for the gifted, is good for everyone." They have a differentiating coach to educate their teachers on how

to challenge advanced students. They hired a mental health coordinator to help gifted students deal with the pressures of being gifted (i.e.: perfectionism, different, etc...). They use the Stanford achievement test to identify gifted students.

New Albany (Columbus): Counseling services; Social Emotional Lessons conducted by School Counselors to help gifted students deal with the social emotional and/or characteristics of being a gifted child. I.e. Perfectionism, Perseverance, Stress, etc.

Oakwood (Dayton): Use IOWA test in 2nd, 4th and 6th grade to identify gifted students and service begins in 3rd grade. They have 3 Gifted Intervention Specialists; 2 for the Elementary school and 1 for Jr/High school (same building). The Jr/High school Gifted Intervention Specialist is new in 2016 school year to address the social needs. The students' academic needs are addressed in the classroom with the guidance from the Gift Intervention Specialist. They have an accelerate math program beginning in 5th grade. The program pulls students out of classroom for higher level math and at 8th grade, they are incorporated into high school math program.

Wyoming: Has two Gifted Intervention Specialists. A pull-out program exists for gifted students to service the students in grades 3-6. To be eligible for this pullout program students must score in the 95th percentile on their Total Battery Score and in the 98th percentile on their Cognitive score.

Madeira: Has one Gifted Intervention Specialist for the entire school district who is housed at elementary school. There is a pull-out program for 2nd to 5th grade which services 47 students. The pull-out program is one day per week dedicated to singular grade. To participate in the program, the student must have a cognitive ability score of 130 or higher and achieve at or above 95th percentile in math and/or reading on MAP. For 1st graders, the Gifted Intervention Specialist teaches reading/math for 45 minutes per week. While 40.3% of the students in Madeira are identified as gifted a small percentage participated in pull-out program. In addition, Madeira completes screening for creative thinking and visual/performing arts. In-service days do address the needs of gifted children so teachers have tools to manage in their classroom. The high achieving math students are tested in 4th grade to determine if they qualify for accelerated math program. For grade 6th to 12th, classes are leveled for honor and advanced learning. All teachers are provided gifted professional development throughout the school year with the assistant of gifted consultant.

Recommendations:

Madeira's position of excellence is hard to improve on dramatically. The vast reservoir of gifted students Madeira has in our midst provides an opportunity to excel in a new area by looking for ways to serve these students that in turn will dramatically move the entire body of students forward to a new level of excellence.

Madeira has two levels of gifted students; 40.3% as identified by the state of Ohio standards and the top 1% as identified by additional testing. While we serve both segments effectively now,

the recommendations focus on taking it to the next level to service their special needs, both cognitively and socially.

1. *Maintain Pull-Out Program in Elementary School:*

The needs of the gifted students are addressed in the general classroom along with a pull-out program which provides an enriched environment of accelerated learning amongst their peers for the top 1%. The pull-out program escalates the material taught, keeps them engaged and minimizes the hazards of boredom. Just as importantly, the social needs are addressed which is especially important for young learners who are excited to be at school. This experience sets the foundation for future learning which is enhanced by being around those with similar aptitude.

2. *Restructure Pull-Out Program for 5th Graders to 45 minutes per day:*

Currently, the pull-out program includes 5th graders for a half day per week. There are challenges involved with this at the middle school. It interrupts the general classroom learning and with a more challenging curriculum, it may require more “catch-up” than what is needed at the elementary school. In addition, a half day enrichment provides limited opportunity to address needs.

Providing the students with 45 minutes a day of enriched learning will assist in both cognitive and social needs. Middle school years are difficult ones so it is beneficial to set aside time for them to gather daily and share experience, discuss work and hang out together. They have been together as a close group since 2nd grade so it is beneficial to maintain the connectivity with a comfortable group of peers.

3. *Hire Gifted Coach for school district*

The district would benefit from a Gifted Coach to coordinate enrichment for all grades and provide continuity in services amongst schools. The coach’s role would support the teachers, develop professional development programs, research & communicate trends/emerging issues, and be actively involved in identifying resources. It is recommended the coach surveys the teachers to obtain feedback to ensure proper needs assessment and obtain buy-in.

4. *To enhance communication on the gifted services with parent involvement:*

Kevin Wright has an extensive communication process but it is not completely clear if all the parents understand the extent of gifted services. By enhancing communication, the parents will have a better understanding of the services which will reduce speculation, and mitigate uncertainties.

The recommendation does not necessarily mean more communication rather different types of communication. Interviewing parents will assist in identifying the gaps in communication and develop ideas for enhancements. In addition, on-going parent

involvement is recommend such as organizing with parent support groups, special meetings, group chats or creative communication vehicles.

5. *Continue professional development of gifted education for teachers:*

Continue to use in-service days and other professional development opportunities to assist teachers with gifted students' needs for all grades. This will help serve all 40.3% of the gifted student population and provide the teachers guidance. Consideration of offering an incentive to ensure high attendance.

6. *Develop double accelerated math program within the Middle School:*

The double accelerated math program allows a high achieving 5th graders to skip one level of math which continues through high school. Specific criteria are required to be eligible for this option along with meetings with school administration. Skipping a grade of one subject has some specific challenges:

- Scheduling problems between middle & high school for “special” activities/events, testing, and any other deviations from regular class schedule.
- High school scheduling challenges because of singular class options
- Social challenges for an 8th grader to take Algebra II at high school

By developing a double accelerated math program in the middle school, less strain is on high school scheduling and allows students to maintain their middle school schedule and be amongst their peers.