

# *Opportunities for Academically Talented Students*

**Indian Prairie School  
District 204**



*Enrichment*

*Acceleration*

*Advanced  
Placement*

*Honors  
Classes*

*Dual Credit*

## Gifted Education in Indian Prairie School District

There are many definitions and interpretations of the term "gifted" used across states and school districts. Our District utilizes the United States Office of Education's 1993 definition: "Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth exhibit high performance capacity in intellectual, creative and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor."

The National Association for Gifted Children estimates that approximately 6% of the US K-12 student population can be identified as academically gifted. In District 204, the percentage of students who qualify for gifted services will vary from school to school and also within grade levels. Multiple identification criteria are used to identify students whose profile best fits with the program options currently in place.

District 204 gifted services are designed to meet the specialized needs of gifted learners. The Project Arrow program specifically addresses the academic needs of those in grades two through eight. These students may or may not show high performance on daily work, but exhibit advanced thinking skills that either require an accelerated pace or more challenging process skills. The program allows interaction with peers of similar ability. It includes a variety of services ranging from classroom enrichment at the elementary level to modified/accelerated curriculum for higher age levels.



## Vision/Mission/Goals

### Vision

*At Indian Prairie School District 204, we believe that gifted program services will encourage students to:*

- Value and utilize their individual talents
- Apply and value learning and knowledge
- Communicate their ideas effectively

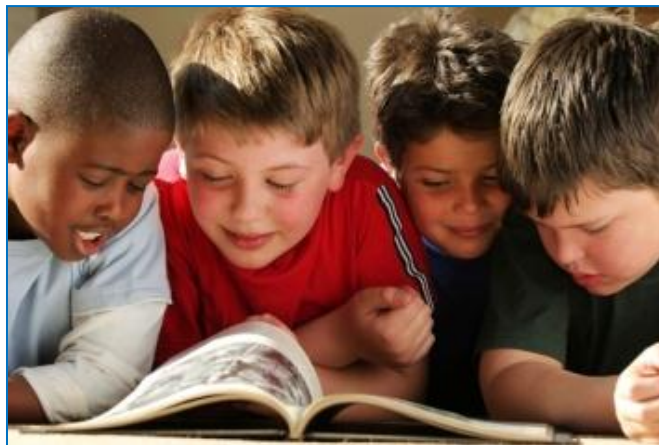
*We believe academically talented students are entitled to programs and services supportive of their needs.*

### Mission

The mission of the gifted program is to identify academically talented students and provide them with a learning environment that offers an enriched/accelerated curriculum and promotes interactions with academic peers.

### Program Goals

1. Identify a diverse population of academically talented students;
2. Promote excellence and rigor in the curriculum;
3. Enrich/accelerate grade level curriculum;
4. Provide consistent and challenging instruction to identified students;
5. Create an environment that encourages risk taking and personal growth;
6. Promote staff and community understanding of gifted students' needs and services; and
7. Employ evaluative practices and procedures.



## Grade Level Services

### **Elementary School**

Direct contact time with a Gifted Resource Teacher is provided through a pull-out program for a minimum of 200 minutes a week for grades 3-5, and 150 minutes a week for grade 2. An identified gifted student's program will include modified, and often integrated, curriculum units that focus on higher level thinking skills.

Project Arrow students are grouped in clusters of 4-7 students in 2nd-5th grade classrooms. Each elementary school has a Gifted Resource Teacher who collaborates with classroom teachers to differentiate curriculum and instruction.

### **Middle School**

Identified gifted students are scheduled for the appropriate Strands. Students may be placed in the Project Arrow **Reading Strand** and/or **Math Strand**.

The **Reading Strand** includes placement into Project Arrow literacy, science and social studies.

The **Math Strand** includes pre-algebra in 6th, algebra in 7th and geometry in 8th grade.

### **High School**

Honors, Advanced-Placement and Dual Credit Courses are offered in many areas. Please refer to the current high school course catalog for a complete listing of opportunities and requirements for enrollment eligibility.

### **Level of Service Delivery System**

<b>Students Eligible (% varies by building)</b>	<b>Service</b>
Top 1 - 5 % ile	Student-based service
Top 6 - 10% ile	Curriculum-based service Academic advancement Acceleration
Top 20 % ile	Curricular enhancement



## Identification of Academically Talented Learners

The identification process takes place at each individual school. Team members utilize multiple criteria to ensure a student's academic needs require services offered through the Project Arrow program. Listed below are procedures that occur at every school. Supplementary relevant data may also be used to identify students. Typically, placement of students occurs in the spring with PA classes scheduled for the upcoming school year. Students who are new to the district, and who have already been identified for gifted services elsewhere, may join the program as soon as required documentation is complete. If additional testing is required, parents will be contacted by the school's Student Services Coordinator or Guidance Counselor.

### **Elementary**

**Grade 1:** A small group of recommended 1<sup>st</sup> grade students take the *Cognitive Abilities Test* and the *Iowa Assessments* in January. Classroom teachers are asked to evaluate students in the areas of Learning Characteristics, Creativity and Motivation. Classroom and district assessments and demonstrated classroom performance are also taken into consideration. A student profile is completed which identifies students who achieve within the top levels of performance criteria as designated by the district. Standardized test scores of students placed in the program are typically above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile.

**Grades 2-5:** All 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders take the *Cognitive Abilities Test* in the fall. All 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade students being considered for PA take the *Iowa Assessments* in January. Teachers are asked to evaluate students in the areas of Learning Characteristics, Creativity and Motivation. Classroom and district assessments and demonstrated classroom performance are also taken into consideration. A student profile is completed which identifies students who achieve within the top levels of performance criteria as designated by the district. Standardized test scores of students placed in the program are typically above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Parents whose children participated in the optional testing receive a letter which includes testing results and notification of placement decisions. Any questions regarding placement should be directed to the school Student Services Coordinator. Parents, teachers or administrators may request a review of placement decisions.

### **Middle School**

**Grades 6-8:** The middle school PA program is separated into two Strands —Reading and Mathematics. A separate qualification is necessary for each. Identified students meet designated district criteria. Parents are notified of student eligibility for either strand. Questions regarding placement should be directed to the middle school's grade level Guidance Counselor.

### **Qualification process for the Middle School Project Arrow Program for incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders:**

#### **Reading Strand**

Students qualify for the Reading Strand using the results from the most recent administration of the *Cognitive Abilities Test*, the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests* and the *Iowa Assessments*, and information from teacher rating scales. The rating scales focus on Learning Characteristics, Motivation and Creativity. Classroom and district assessments and demonstrated classroom performance are also taken into consideration.



#### **Mathematics Strand**

Students qualify for the Mathematics Strand using the results from the fall administration of the *Cognitive Abilities Test* and the spring administration of the *Iowa Algebra Aptitude Tests*.

**Qualification process for the Middle School Project Arrow Program for in-district 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade students:**

**Reading Strand**

Students qualify for the Reading Strand using the results from the most recent administration of the *Cognitive Abilities Test*, the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests* and the *Iowa Assessments*, along with information from teacher rating scales. Classroom and district assessments and demonstrated classroom performance are also taken into consideration.

**Mathematics Strand**

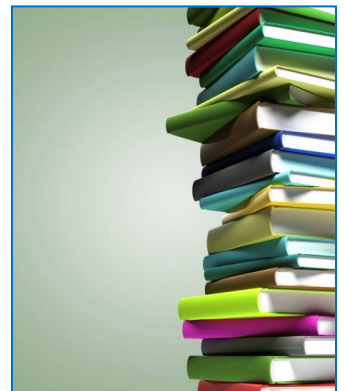
Students are required to take the *Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)* which is offered on a Saturday morning in February. This test, usually administered to high school juniors, is utilized in determining eligibility for placement into the PA math classes.

6<sup>th</sup> grade students who take the *SAT* and score 480 on the math section are eligible to take Algebra in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. 7<sup>th</sup> grade students who score 520 on the math section, and wish placement into PA Math as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, must take a fast-paced Algebra class offered by the school district or local community college in the summer in order to be prepared to take Geometry in the fall of the following school year.

**Curriculum**

***Project Arrow Curriculum Goals (Grades 2-8)***

- To provide for the mastery of basic skills while affording students an opportunity to increase pace, depth and level of learning
- To promote the development and application of critical thinking and reasoning skills
- To encourage divergent thinking
- To encourage advanced oral and written skills
- To develop research skills and methods
- To address characteristics unique to the gifted population



***Elementary Curriculum***

**Grades 2-5 (Project Arrow)**

The curriculum includes an enrichment-based emphasis in language arts, social studies, and science. A variety of literature and informational text is incorporated into each year's studies. Focus is on high level comprehension, vocabulary development and incorporation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills. Sample units at the elementary level include: Autobiographies, Literary Reflections, Neurology, Archeology and Economics. The Elementary Gifted Educational Framework emphasizes four Strands at all grade levels: Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Problem Solving, and Research.

***Middle School Curriculum***  
**Grades 6-8 (Project Arrow)**

Students utilize higher-level thinking skills through a modified curriculum which includes both interdisciplinary units and content-specific academic units. Math, reading and language arts are typically taught at an accelerated level, whereas science and social studies include more in-depth learning units. An in-depth, annual research project, Science Fair, is an integral component of the PA science program for the majority of the students. The social studies program is also enriched and differentiated for academically talented learners.

***High School Curriculum***

Honors, Advanced Placement and Dual Credit Courses are available – see current high school course catalog for individual course descriptions and requirements for enrollment. Current Dual Credit options are available in conjunction with the University of Illinois, North Central College and the College of DuPage. Contact the high school guidance department for information.

Applied Technology

Automotive Servicing (Weighted-Grade): Net+ Certification  
Electricity (Dual Credit), Architectural Drafting (Dual Credit)

Business Education

AP Microeconomics, AP Macroeconomics, Desktop Publishing & Computer Graphics I  
(Dual Credit –when both are completed)

English

Honors English I, Honors English II  
AP English III, AP English IV



Fine Arts

AP Studio Drawing, AP Studio 2D; AP Studio 3D, AP Art History

Foreign Language

AP French, AP German, AP Spanish

Mathematics

Honors Geometry, Honors Algebra II/Trig., Honors Math Analysis  
AP Statistics, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, AP Computer Science, Calculus III  
(University of Illinois Calculus 241 ( Dual Credit))

Music

AP Music

Science

Honors Biology, Honors Chemistry, Honors Physics  
AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Physics, AP Environmental Science  
Anatomy and Physiology, Horticulture, Genetics (College of DuPage Dual Credit)

Social Studies

Honors World History, AP Human Geography, AP Art History, AP World History, AP U.S. History, AP Psychology, AP European History, AP Government and Politics – US, AP Government and Politics - Comparative

## Accelerated Mathematics

The accelerated math program was created on the recommendations of parents, teachers and administrators who recognized that more and more students demonstrated the need for advanced math instruction. Although math acceleration is often part of many other district's programming services for the gifted, it is considered a separate program by District 204 (requiring separate qualifications).



The program is designed to begin at third grade and continue each year through high school. The program is for students who demonstrate a strong knowledge of math facts and mathematical problem solving and are beginning to apply that knowledge in different ways. Third grade students will learn skills typically presented in the third and fourth grade math curriculum. Fourth grade students will learn skills through the fifth grade curriculum and fifth grade students will continue on through the sixth grade curriculum. Students placed in the program are expected to master skills at a quicker pace.

Placement will be determined by scores obtained on math placement tests, local assessments, standardized tests and teacher recommendation. The middle school program has similar criteria for entry and will accelerate students to allow them to complete a standard high school algebra course by the end of eighth grade. Questions concerning this program should be addressed to your child's classroom teacher or the building principal.

Project Arrow Math is offered at the middle school. This is more highly selective in its entry requirements as it is a two-year accelerated sequence. In PA math, students complete a 2 year high school math equivalence program by the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade (algebra in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and geometry in 8<sup>th</sup>). Although PA students complete these high school classes, **they DO NOT RECEIVE high school math credits** towards high school graduation (by Illinois State Statute). Instead, they "move on" to higher mathematics immediately upon entering high school. A few students completing the PA math strand while in the middle school may be required to enroll in a summer "math refresher class" in order to continue on in an honors mathematics sequence at the high school level.

Grade Level	Regular Program	Accelerated Program	Project Arrow Program
3	3rd grade math	4th grade math	
4	4th grade math	5th grade math	
5	5th grade math	6th grade math	
6	6th grade math	7th grade math	Pre-Algebra
7	7th grade math	Pre-Algebra	Algebra
8	Pre – Algebra	Algebra	Geometry
9	Algebra	Geometry	Honors Algebra II/Trig
10	Geometry	Algebra II/Trig	Honors Math Analysis
11	Algebra II/Trig	Math Analysis	Calculus AB, BC
12	Math Analysis	Calculus	Statistics, Computer Science, Calculus III



## Glossary of Terms

**Acceleration** refers to the strategy of teaching content at a faster pace and usually a year ahead of the designated instructional grade level placement. Presently in the District, we accelerate math instruction beginning at third grade and begin formal math & reading content area acceleration at the sixth grade level with Project Arrow.

**Cluster grouping** occurs when a group of four to seven identified gifted students are “clustered” in the classroom of a teacher who has been trained in differentiation. This strategy allows students to work with academic peers throughout the school day.

**Creative thinking** is divergent. It involves exploring ideas, generating possibilities, and seeking more than one right answer. Terms used with students in discussing this type of thinking include brainstorming, fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration.

**Critical thinking** is deliberate and utilized in all academic areas. Critical thinking includes analyzing, evaluating, inferring, interpreting, judging, problem solving and synthesizing.

**Curricular enhancement** is a compilation of methods, materials and activities which teachers may use as a basis to modify curriculum for students having already demonstrated mastery in a particular area.

**Curriculum-based services** are modifications made to course content and instructional strategies used by classroom and gifted resource teachers. The modifications often result in changes in the accomplishments or requirements of the individual students.

**Curriculum Compacting** involves streamlining, condensing or eliminating grade level curriculum for students who have already achieved goals and objectives of the regular curriculum.

**Differentiation** is the process of adapting the curriculum according to the ability or interest level of the student. It is specifically geared to content, process or product.

**Enrichment** often involves extensions of the grade level curriculum. Classroom teachers may ask specific questions which have the student thinking on a higher level or provide activities which allow the student to investigate further into an area of study.

**Student-based services** are modifications to the student’s program of learning which are based upon the student’s ability. Services are available at the elementary level through grade skipping or math acceleration.

*This document is designed to provide a brief overview of program services for academically talented students. The Project Arrow Teacher, Student Services Coordinator or Guidance Counselor at your child’s school is able to answer specific questions you may have pertaining to the program and services.*

