

# LINDFIELD EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL



## GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES



**2015**



# Lindfield East Public School

## Gifted and Talented Education Policy and Implementation Strategies



Government schools have a responsibility to educate all students to their potential. Lindfield East Public School (LEPS) is committed to high quality educational outcomes for all gifted and talented (GAT) students. GAT students are found in all communities regardless of their ethnic, cultural or socio-economic backgrounds and include students who are underachieving and who have disabilities.

Students at LEPS are taught in a supportive learning environment that satisfies the model of pedagogy discussed in *Quality teaching in New South Wales public schools: Discussion paper* (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003). The model promotes a high level of **intellectual quality**, establishes a high **quality learning environment** and generates **significance** by connecting students with the intellectual demands of their work.

### Definitions

This policy adopts the definitions of giftedness and talent based on Gagne's (2003) Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT).

**Gifted students** are those whose potential is distinctly above average in one or more of the following domains of human ability: intellectual, creative, social and physical.

**Talented students** are those whose skills are distinctly above average in one or more areas of human performance.

The translation of giftedness into talent results from application to appropriate opportunities for learning, training and practice.

(Adapted from Gagne, 2003)

### Regional Targets

A recent review of the practices and knowledge of schools in the Northern Sydney Region has identified many areas as priority areas for Gifted and Talented Education in Northern Sydney public schools. The findings which are most pertinent to LEPS have been evaluated and addressed in this policy document. These are:

- that the school will provide professional learning opportunities for teachers about gifted education;
- that gifted students need to be identified early and accurately in order to meet their cognitive and socio-emotional needs;
- the need to develop a school identification toolkit, to assist all parties to identify giftedness;
- that the school review current practices in gifted education and evaluate their effectiveness, making changes where necessary.

(NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2012)

## Factors Relating to Talent Development

At LEPS it is understood that there are catalysts and impediments that can help or hinder the recognition of giftedness and the development of talent in young people. These include intra-personal and environmental factors.

Intra-personal factors	Environmental factors
Motivation	Socio economic background
Self-management	Culture and family
Self-esteem	Beliefs about giftedness and talent
Self-efficacy	Inter-personal relationships
Poor health and disability	Events
Learning difficulties	Teacher expectations and practices
Language proficiency	Learning activities

(Adapted from NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004)

The education of the gifted is a form of special education (Borland, 1989). Students supported by this program are those students from Years K to 6 identified as gifted and/or talented through multiple-criteria procedures.

### Levels of Giftedness

It has been recognised that there are varying degrees of giftedness among students. The practices and procedures of gifted education must be responsive to the varying levels of giftedness and to individual needs (Harrison, 2003). The breakdown of giftedness in the general population this policy will use is taken from Gross (2000) and is listed below:

- Mildly: 115 – 129 > 1:40
- Moderately: 130 – 144 1:40 - 1:1000
- Highly: 145 – 159 1:1000 - 1: 10 000
- Exceptionally: 160 - 179 1:10 000 - 1:1 million
- Profoundly: 180 + < 1:1million

### Procedures

The school principal, in consultation with parents/caregivers, teachers, school counsellors and other appropriate personnel, have the prime responsibility for decisions in relation to the education of GAT students.

The school's Gifted and Talented Committee and Learning Support Team is responsible for:

- Ensuring early and ongoing identification of GAT students takes place
- fostering collaborative home-school partnerships to support GAT students
- ensuring a wide range of opportunities are provided for GAT students and that effective monitoring processes are implemented
- providing staff development opportunities in the education of GAT students

## Identification

Processes for identification should be multifaceted, involving parents/caregivers, students, teachers, and other professionals. The identification procedure must:

- be school-wide
- use multiple criteria
- be inclusive
- be dynamic and continuous
- be culturally fair
- ensure that all domains of giftedness and fields of talent are identified
- recognise degrees of giftedness and talent
- be organised and linked to differentiation
- allow for early identification and identification at all stages
- enable input from everyone involved.

Special approaches may be required to recognise gifts and talents of:

- underachievers
- students with learning difficulties
- students with disabilities
- conduct-disorder students
- students from non-English speaking backgrounds
- students from culturally diverse backgrounds
- students disadvantaged by gender inequity
- socio-economically disadvantaged students.

(Adapted from NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004)

LEPS employs a wide range of identification methods. These include:

- checklist for teacher identification of gifted and talented students – Years K-6 (Appendix A)
- Checklist for parent identification of gifted and talented students – Years 1-6 (Appendix B)
- Parent questionnaire on Kindergarten Children enrolling – Kindergarten (Appendix C)
- Peer Identification (Appendix D)
- teacher evaluation of student work and responses
- NAPLAN results Years 3 and 5
- off-level testing
- competition results
- standardised tests
- IQ tests and other culturally appropriate measures of ability
- observational and anecdotal evidence
- interviews
- academic grades.

## Provisions

Once a student is identified as gifted or talented, suitable teaching strategies need to be selected and implemented. These may include:

- curriculum differentiation
- accelerated progression
- cluster-grouping
- extension activities within and across classes
- enrichment
- contract work
- problem solving
- individual research
- mentoring.

These provisions will address the needs of the gifted student by:

- incorporating elements of Quality Teaching (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003) such as **Intellectual quality**, **Significance** and a **Quality learning environment** through a student-centred approach
- providing curriculum that is open-ended and promotes higher-order thinking
- encouraging independence and risk-taking
- using group-work to allow scope for leadership and cooperative decision making
- encouraging sustained and disciplined inquiry.

Differentiation is:

- deleting already mastered curriculum outcomes
- modifying content, process or product expectations of existing curriculum to provide extension and enrichment activities
- extending existing curriculum to provide enrichment activities
- provide challenging course work for able students
- writing new units or courses that meet the needs of gifted students.

Gifted students need differentiation because they:

- learn at faster rates
- find, solve and act on problems more readily
- manipulate abstract ideas and make connections to an advanced degree.

(NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004a)

## **Cluster-Grouping**

There are many ways in which schools can adequately provide for their gifted and talented population. One effective method is to place identified students into a cluster group. This usually contains 5-8 gifted students within an otherwise parallel class.

In a meta-analysis of many studies relating to this method, Kulik and Kulik (1992) found that placing gifted students together in a cluster-grouping with differentiated instruction could lead to 2 to 3 months of value-added gains in their academic progress. Similarly, In Rogers's (2007) meta-analytical study of grouping management strategies and their effect sizes, cluster-grouping of students showed a significant affect to academic growth.

At LEPS, cluster-grouping of identified gifted students takes place across years 1-4, as best as possible. In 2015, after consultation with school staff, current academic research on best practice in catering for gifted and talented students and our academic partner Dr Jill Forster, Lindfield East Public School has formed a Stage 3 composite class of high-ability students. The selection process for the class involved multiple criteria, and was undertaken by a committee comprising of Executive staff, the school counsellor, members of the Gifted and Talented committee, and class teachers. The creation of this class has allowed these students to receive the best possible learning activities to meet their needs. The class is taught by a teacher trained in Gifted and Talented Education. It is open to all students currently enrolled at the school.

## **Acceleration**

"When enrichment for gifted students does not include a faster pace and higher level of work, it is simply not effective as an intervention" (Colangelo, Assouline & Gross, 2004, p22). In this instance, the most effective intervention for gifted and talented students is acceleration in one or more forms.

Students who achieve curriculum outcomes more quickly than their age peers may be accelerated through curriculum compaction, content acceleration or partial or full-grade acceleration.

The decision to accelerate must include consultation with the parent, classroom teacher, principal, school counsellor and Learning Support Team. Academically gifted students generally differ from their age-peers, not only intellectually, but also in their social and emotional development. Use of tools such as the Iowa Acceleration Scale and Board of Studies documents should be undertaken to ensure the suitability of a student.

## **Subject Acceleration (to review)**

- Process for acceleration?
  - Appropriate assessment (benchmarking/ability testing (AGAT))
  - Consultation
  - Counsellor – cognitive assessments
  - Advice from DOE
  - Advice from external organisations (MANSW & Australian Mathematics Trust)

## **Enrichment for areas of strength**

LEPS provides enrichment and extension through activities that include:

- public speaking competitions
- debating
- Writing competitions
- Ability-based Mathematics groupings
- Maths Olympiad
- Music and dance festivals
- Band
- Choir
- PSSA representative sport
- ICAS Competitions – English, Maths, Science, Computer/Technology Studies
- Enrichment days provided by Killara High School
- Stage 3 Gifted Writers' Group

## **Goals of the program**

LEPS aims to:

- identify GAT students across all ability domains (Gagné, 2003)
- cater for the specific needs of GAT students both cognitively and socio-affectively
- ensure staff are trained in recognising and catering for GAT students
- assist GAT students to recognise their own potential and develop strategies to become effective learners.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The performance of identified students is consistently monitored and regularly reviewed through school assessment and reporting to ensure that their needs are being met. This process includes teachers, parents, students and other staff involved in the provision of gifted programs.

- Does the program extend to multiple levels e.g. classroom, school?
- How well does this program meet the syllabus requirements and standards?
- In what ways is this program linked to other programs for the gifted? Are there similarities and differences?
- How effective is this program in meeting its objectives?
- As a result of evaluation and reflection, how can this program be improved?

Strategies to implement effective evaluation procedures include questionnaires, research-based information, pre-tests and post-tests.

(Adapted from Van Tassel-Baska and Feng, 2004)

The monitoring and evaluation of GAT programs is the responsibility of the principal, teachers, and the GAT Committee, GAT Coordinator and the Learning Support Committee. Input from the school community and students is also valued and considered.



## **Supporting Documentation**

1. Whole Class Screener Checklist – Years K-6
2. Checklist for teacher identification of gifted and talented students -Years K-6
3. Checklist for parent identification of gifted and talented students - Years 1-6
4. Parent questionnaire on Kindergarten Children enrolling – Year K
5. Peer Identification – Class survey

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