

Catoosa County Public Schools Horizon Program for Gifted Students **Instructional Program Description**

It is the goal of Catoosa County Public Schools (CCPS) to use the HORIZON program to provide a differentiated curriculum for those students identified as gifted students. Students being served in the Horizon Program meet the eligibility requirements set by state guidelines and are defined as gifted students as outlined in the *Georgia Resource Manual for Gifted Education*.

Parents, students and the community are provided information about the district's gifted program with this link on the system web. In addition, schools provide specific information to parents in the form of FAQ handouts, pamphlets, articles in newsletters, school websites, bulletin boards, etc. The Horizon teacher or the Horizon Coordinator in each school is responsible for educating other teachers in the school about the characteristics and identification of gifted students.

Students may be referred for the gifted eligibility process by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents/guardians, peers or self. Referrals are given to a Horizon teacher in the student's school, who collects all relevant data before proceeding with testing.

Catoosa County Public schools has established a decision-making process designed to be applied consistently to all students who referred for gifted eligibility consideration. This process considers all data and determines if it is appropriate to proceed with formal evaluation.

Parents or guardians of any student who is being considered to receive gifted education services are notified in writing of information about the gifted education program. Parent permission must be obtained before formal testing is done.

After the initial referral and parental consent for testing is obtained, students are screened in four areas as approved by the Georgia State Department of Education. The four areas of evaluation are: mental ability, academic achievement, creativity, and motivation.

Students who meet state eligibility requirements for gifted education are served through Catoosa County Public School's Horizon Program. Each of the sixteen schools provides gifted services. All schools use an advanced academic curriculum with complexity and acceleration. Increased academic rigor is the goal of all gifted classes. All instruction is based on Georgia Performance Standards and the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards.

Elementary students may be served in resource, cluster group or an advanced content model. The advanced content model is used in grades 6-12. Students in grades 6-12 may be served up to six subjects per day. High school gifted students are served through honors and advanced placement classes. Post-secondary options, with the opportunity to earn college credits, are available for gifted and talented students in grades 9-12, provided college admission requirements are met. Students in all grades must receive a minimum of five segments of gifted services per week (or the yearly equivalent).

The local education agency (LEA) strives to match students' advanced learning needs and interests (as documented by assessment results) to available programming options. Student placement in the gifted program will be best matched to the area of interest as indicated by eligibility tests and parent and student input. Every effort will be made to place students in classes reflecting their gifted ability and interest (or closely related content areas). For example, a student who qualifies for services with a high score in mathematics would best be served in gifted or advanced content mathematics classes.

When advanced content classes are offered in schools, they are open to both gifted and regular education students in all grades. These advanced content classes may be offered in English/Language Arts, mathematics, science, social studies and full-year World Languages. Students who have demonstrated exceptional ability and motivation in a particular content area may be placed by the Student Support Team (SST) in advanced content classes. The SST will consider the following criteria in making a decision about placement of a student in advanced content classes. The student:

- exhibits a high interest in the content area.
- maintains grades of C or better in the content area
- shows commitment to gaining a deeper knowledge in the specific content area as indicated by regular completion work and joining classroom discussions.

In addition to an advanced curriculum, students in the gifted program have many other opportunities. A greater breadth and depth of learning is encouraged which may include: 1) additional educational field trips; 2) in-depth conceptual units; and 3) competition through media festivals, art shows, social science fairs, writing competitions, Governor's Honors Programs, and a variety of other opportunities. In addition, eligible and interested students may participate in Duke University's Talent Identification Program.