

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

“On April 5, 2000, the State Board of Education adopted a new chapter of administrative code, N. J. A. C. 6A: 8, Standards and Assessment for Student Achievement, which includes expanded requirements for gifted and talented programs. The new regulations define gifted and talented students as:

Those exceptionally able students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers in the local district and who require modification of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.”

It is with this intent the following information is presented regarding the Toms River Regional Schools’ Gifted and Talented Program at the Elementary Level.

Program Overview:

The elementary Gifted and Talented Program of the Toms River Regional Schools has been designed to enhance the comprehensive core curriculum at all twelve elementary schools. It is a model for school-wide enrichment that integrates the existing school and community resources with the gifted and talented program in order to initiate, to develop and to extend educational services. The curriculum is developed and delivered by designated program teachers under the umbrella topic of “Frontiers of Exploration: Past, Present and Future”. Bloom’s Taxonomy of Higher Level Thinking Skills and Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences are critical elements of the program. Regular education and special area teachers provide additional resources and instruction when deemed appropriate.

The Teacher of the Gifted and Talented serves as an “enrichment specialist” who works closely with classroom teachers for the identification of Omni/Discovery students and to suggest enrichment activities and instructional options to enhance the core program for all.

The fourth and fifth grade program is called the Omni Program and is delineated into two distinct parts - General Academic and Specific Academic. The Kindergarten through third grade program is called Discovery.

Omni Program **(Grades 4 and 5)**

Omni is a school-based enrichment program designed to present critical thinking skills and multifaceted experiences to students who have been formally identified as demonstrating potentially exceptional abilities. There are four divisions of the Omni Program.

- ❖ The General Academic component has been designed for students in grades four and five, who demonstrate outstanding overall general abilities and achievement. The identified students meet for a block of eighty minutes per week over the course of the academic school year. (September through June) A student enrolled in the General Academic Omni may also participate in Specific Academic if it is deemed appropriate and supported by multiple criteria.**
- ❖ The Specific Academic component has been designed for students in grades four and five, who have demonstrated strengths in the following curricular areas: Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies and/or Science. These specific areas are presented in trimesters with Mathematics in the first trimester, Language Arts in the second trimester, and Science or Social Studies during the third trimester of alternating years. (Social Studies 2006/Science 2007) Student participation is not limited to one specific area and is based on multiple criteria for each area.**
- ❖ The Specific Subject Concentration component has been designed to meet the needs of students who demonstrate potential and/or exceptional talent in the areas of the Performing Arts, the Fine Arts, Leadership, and/or Technology. Special subject teachers and/or other designated teaching staff members may address these areas. A mentor program may be developed**
- ❖ The Additional Activities component is designed to provide resources and activities that can be integrated into the classroom curriculum to develop, support, and extend the learning experiences of the identified gifted and talented students.**

Discovery Program

Grades Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3

Discovery is a school-based enrichment program that has been designed to present higher level thinking activities and challenges to those identified students in grades Kindergarten through third. Creative problem solving, cooperative learning experiences and the communication processes are developed through an interdisciplinary curriculum model. Participating students are identified by teacher recommendation and support documentation that indicates strong academic, social-emotional development, and exceptional strengths, talents and abilities. Grade three students are identified during the first marking period for participation throughout the year based on a rotation and needs. Grade two students are identified during the first marking period for participation during the second marking period. Grade one students are identified during the second marking period for participation during the third marking period. Kindergarten students are identified during the third marking period for participation during the fourth marking period. It may be possible to provide whole class Discovery experiences during the last marking period rather than individual pull out sessions. Discovery is designed as a weekly thirty-minute pullout program for the designated marking period.

Toms River Regional Schools Discovery Program and Omni Gifted & Talented Program	
<p><u>Discovery K-1-2-3</u></p> <p>Enrichment activities are to be provided in or out of the student's classroom. Suggested participation is a minimum of at least one marking period.</p>	<p><u>General Academic</u></p> <p>Integrated curricular activities are provided for selected students in a pullout program of eighty-minutes per week which is conducted within the structure of the regular school day.</p>
<p><u>Dates for Discovery</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Grade Three</u></p> <p><i><u>First Marking Period</u></i> ~ Identification with student, teacher and parent notification <i><u>Second Marking Period</u></i> ~ Participation Time frame may be ongoing throughout the school year.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Grade Two</u></p> <p><i><u>First Marking Period</u></i> ~ Identification with student, teacher and parent notification <i><u>Second Marking Period</u></i> ~ Participation Time frame November through January.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Grade One</u></p> <p><i><u>Second Marking Period</u></i> ~ Identification with student, teacher and parent notification <i><u>Third Marking Period</u></i> ~ Participation Time frame January through March. <u>Kindergarten</u></p> <p><i><u>Third Marking Period</u></i> ~ Identification with student, teacher and parent notification <i><u>Fourth Marking Period</u></i> ~ Participation Time frame March through June</p>	<p><u>Specific Academic</u></p> <p>Activities are specific to a single content area and are provided in a forty-minute session during the regular school day for grades four and five. However, Grade four may be scheduled for the extended day program.</p> <p><u>First Trimester ~ Mathematics</u> (September ~ December)</p> <p><u>Second Trimester ~ Language Arts</u> (December ~ March)</p> <p><u>Third Trimester ~ Social Studies</u> * (March ~ June 2006)</p> <p><u>Third Trimester ~ Science</u> * (March ~ June 2007)</p> <p><i>*Third trimester subjects are addressed in alternating years as noted.</i></p>
<p><i><u>Second Marking Period</u></i> ~ Identification with student, teacher and parent notification <i><u>Third Marking Period</u></i> ~ Participation Time frame January through March. <u>Kindergarten</u></p> <p><i><u>Third Marking Period</u></i> ~ Identification with student, teacher and parent notification <i><u>Fourth Marking Period</u></i> ~ Participation Time frame March through June</p>	<p><u>Special Subjects</u></p> <p>Identified students will be provided opportunities to engage in varied experiences involving the Performing Arts, the Fine Arts, Leadership and/or Technology with teachers and/or community resource personnel through mentoring, independent study and/or programs. Participation time will be based on the individual's needs.</p> <p><u>Additional Activities</u></p> <p>These activities may be collaborative in nature for the extension, enhancement and enrichment of student learning outcomes and experiences for identified student(s).</p>

In order to facilitate the process of identification and support of the gifted and talented student, each school will create a School Level Enrichment Committee.

SCHOOL LEVEL ENRICHMENT COMMITTEE

The School Level Enrichment Committee consists of

- *One classroom teacher
- *The site designated teacher of gifted and talented
- *A school supervisor or administrator designated to oversee the site gifted and talented program

The School Level Enrichment Committee's primary responsibility is to review and recommend prospective candidates for the Omni and Discovery Programs. This process is initiated by the Class Analysis Sheet and is supported by a multiple criteria matrix.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM

1. It is not necessary for students who participate in the grade four and five General Academics program to be reevaluated each year. However, if a parent or teacher has concerns that program participation may not be in the best interest of the student, the School Level Enrichment Committee may recommend modifications.
2. It is necessary for students to be reevaluated each year for participation in the Omni Specific Academic Program, Special Subjects and Discovery.
3. Current fifth grade students will be evaluated for the intermediate school Pinnacle Program by teacher recommendation and a compilation of information based on a matrix of grades, scores, behavior and performance.
4. Although there are no exit criteria for the Omni General Academics program, when concerns arise regarding an individual student's performance and behavior in the classroom and at Omni, the School Level Enrichment Committee should convene to discuss strategies, suggestions and a plan of action. Input from the parent(s), teachers and extracurricular coaches should be sought. Participation in the Omni or Discovery Program should not be viewed or used as a reward or punishment but rather as a natural extension of learning opportunities based on sound educational principles and policies.
5. A child who does not qualify for the General Academic Program during third grade but has demonstrated strong academic, performance and attitude can be reviewed yearly during fourth and fifth grade. The following criteria applies for acceptance into the General Academic Program:
 - a. A stanine of eight or nine in the Otis Lennon School Ability Index (SAI)

- b. **Scores of Advanced or High Proficient in the Language Arts and Mathematics on the NJ ASK (state mandated test)**
 - c. **Report card grades reflecting a high number of Os**
 - d. **Strong teacher recommendation**
6. **The district's policy is that there will be no second administration of the Otis Lennon School Ability Index in order to assure a student's consideration into the Omni Program.**

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

- 1) **It is the responsibility of the school's designated Teacher of the Gifted and Talented Program to oversee the processing of parent notification and permission letters.**
- 2) **Each of the designated Gifted and Talented Program teachers will participate in the development of the curriculum for the Omni and Discovery Programs.**
- 3) **As time permits, the Teacher of the Gifted and Talented will serve as a resource for staff, students and parents. In this capacity, the teacher will develop and model instructional strategies for use by general education teachers to meet the needs of the gifted and talented students in their classrooms.**

ONGOING MISSION

As with all curriculum programs in the Toms River Regional Schools, the Gifted and Talented Elementary Program continues to develop, grow and evolve based on research and sound teaching strategies to ensure our students will meet with success as they face the challenges of the twenty-first century.