

Gifted Service Overview for the 2021-2022 School Year  
Orrville City Schools

Grades 2-4 Gifted Services: Services will be available to students who are identified as gifted in superior cognitive ability, reading or math. This service will be provided by the classroom teacher, within the general education classroom, with co-teaching services and/or resources provided by the gifted intervention specialist. Adopted general curriculum materials will be used in conjunction with curriculum compacting, differentiation, and extension activities, as well as gifted curriculum materials and technology tools.

Grades 5-8 Gifted Services: Services will be available to students who are identified as gifted in superior cognitive ability, reading, math, creative thinking or visual and performing arts. This service will be provided by the classroom teacher, within the general education classroom. Support from the gifted intervention specialist and gifted coordinator are ongoing. Adopted general curriculum materials will be used in conjunction with curriculum compacting, differentiation, and extension activities, as well as gifted curriculum materials and technology tools.

Grades 9-12 Honors and CCP Classes: These courses continue to be available through the high school and various colleges, offering advanced, differentiated coursework for students identified in superior cognitive ability, creative thinking, reading, math, science, social studies or visual and performing arts.

- Honors classes are offered grades 9-10 in Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies.
- Dual enrollment options are available for 11th-12th graders qualifying via the College Academy. Students can receive high school and college credit simultaneously.

All students, including gifted learners, require a curriculum that is differentiated according to readiness, interests, and learning styles. Students who are gifted have diverse academic needs and require differentiated instruction that provides an appropriate level of academic challenge, while allowing for the development of critical and creative thinking skills. This differentiated instruction should match students' levels of readiness to allow for growth and align to the goals on students' Written Education Plans.

This year we will be focusing, as a district, on implementing Curriculum Compacting as a differentiation strategy. Curriculum Compacting is a flexible, research-supported instructional technique that enables high-ability students to replace standards that they have already mastered with more challenging content that is meaningful to the student. Gifted students often become frustrated because they are held accountable for daily requirements that are repetitive and unnecessary. This may lead to boredom, underdeveloped study skills, and disinterest with school in general.

Essentially the process of Curriculum Compacting involves:

1. Defining the goals and outcomes (learning standards) of a particular unit of study or segment of instruction.
2. Determining and documenting which students have already mastered most or all of a particular set of learning standards.
3. Providing replacement strategies/activities/learning outcomes through the use of instructional options that foster a more challenging and productive use of the student's time.

At the elementary level, classroom teachers will be meeting with the Gifted Intervention Specialist regularly to discuss learning standards and appropriate extension opportunities. At the middle school and high school levels, teachers will meet with grade level and content-specific colleagues, as well.

Regardless of the grade level, students will be offered the opportunity to demonstrate mastery before an instructional unit, often through a pre-test or standards mastery quiz. Students who earn 90% or higher, meaning they have mastered most or all of the standards in the upcoming unit/skills segment of instruction, will be given an A in Progress Book for those standards. These students will then be given the opportunity to work on replacement activities in which they will receive teacher and/or Gifted Intervention Specialist feedback for growth purposes, but they will not receive a formal grade, and their grades in the grade book will not be affected.

There will be times that gifted students may not yet have mastered the standards presented in the pre-test or standards mastery quiz. When presented with instruction on these standards, however, gifted students typically learn the material much more quickly than their peers. Once teachers are able to determine that students are ready, they will be offered time to work on replacement activities, rather than continue with repetitive practice. Students who did not earn the 90-100% on the initial pre-test will still take the post-test for their grade to be used in Progress Book.

Within this structure, teachers will continue to use differentiation strategies such as flexible groupings, independent studies, learning centers, and choice menus as options for the replacement work time. Providing time for replacement activities allows students to access advanced content and to focus on developing skills with more depth and complexity, without the fear of their grades being negatively impacted. This curricular model seeks to increase rigor into the general curriculum by asking students to develop scholarly behaviors. These behaviors are a foundation for academic success as students learn to ponder, consider different perspectives, set goals, thirst for knowledge, persevere while taking intellectual risks, demonstrate curiosity and academic humility, and strive for excellence, among others. These are traits that students are taught to exhibit through modeling, guided practice, and ongoing reinforcement from the Gifted Intervention Specialist, as well as the classroom teachers at the elementary level, and the content area teachers at the middle school and high school levels.

Replacement activities will be determined based on the degree to which they increase academic challenge and to the extent to which they meet individual needs. Great care will be taken to select activities and experiences that represent individual strengths and interests. Curriculum Compacting has been found to increase motivation in gifted students on pre-tests and regular assignments. Underachieving students also benefited as they realized that they could reduce the amount of regularly assigned material and “earn time” to pursue self-selected interests.

Our goal is for gifted students to recognize that school will be challenging at times, that perseverance is a necessary skill for all ability levels, that risk-taking leads to academic and social/emotional growth, and that work to this end, as identified gifted students, should and will occur in all settings in the school building. Sometimes our gifted students have a tendency towards perfectionism or a sense that their academics should not be difficult for them, especially in the general classroom. These characteristics may lead to extreme frustration and/or anxiety. We believe that our focus on Curriculum Compacting as a differentiation strategy will promote positive growth for all students, in all areas.