

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Does Melrose Public Schools have a gifted and talented program? What is the message that parents will receive regarding next year?

Next year at the elementary level, the students who are identified as “gifted” per the assessment tools that the district is using (Sages2 & NNAT) will be clustered in the same classroom(s). The district is looking to build out capacity through professional development, resources, and materials.

2. Is there going to be a “smart” classroom at each grade level?

No. Each classroom will have a mixed population of learners. Identified G & T students will be clustered together in one or two classrooms at each grade level with other students with mixed abilities.

3. If my child is identified as gifted and talented do I have to retest my student every year?

No. If your child is identified as gifted he/she will not have to be retested.

4. What if my child is not identified as gifted but I disagree? What is the appeals process?

There is an appeal process. The schools have chosen the two assessment tools that we will be using, however, if after the first tool is used and you disagree with the findings, you may request to appeal the results and the second tool will be given to your child. Please contact Pat Muxie, the Curriculum Director for assistance in this area by calling (781) 979-2166 or e-mail her at pmuxie@melrose.mec.edu.

5. How often will testing take place? When and how will students be identified as gifted/talented?

G & T screening will be given in the early spring each year. At this time all first graders will be screened. Parents can request to opt out of the screening. If new students enroll during the school year, their parents or teachers can use the referral process.

6. What is the definition of Gifted and Talented?

The current federal definition of gifted students was originally developed in the 1972 *Marland Report to Congress*, and has been modified several times since then. The current definition, which is located in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, is Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.

7. Why is screening the deciding factor?

Presently, the district is using the SAGES 2 and NNAT as our initial methods of screening to identify gifted and talented students in the areas of Math/Science, Language Arts, and Reasoning. As the district progresses classroom performance, portfolios, teacher evaluations, and district assessments will also be part of the identifying process.

8. Who is administrative liaison/overseer? Whom do we call with questions, or issues?

Gifted and Talented falls under the domain of the Curriculum Director, Pat Muxie. She can be reached at (781) 462-3257.

9. Are teachers expected to teach other grade level material or enrich our grade level material?
In many cases students will need enrichment using topics from the student's grade level, however, in some cases teachers may need to bring in material from other grade levels.

10. How will elementary district assessments be differentiated?

District assessments will not be differentiated because these assessments are measuring students against a grade level benchmark, not individual performances.

11. Why does Melrose need a gifted/talented program?

Melrose Public Schools are committed to meeting the educational, social, psychological and behavioral needs of all learners. Research shows that many students with G & T profiles may require learning approaches and modifications to allow them to reach their full potential.

12. Students are not always gifted in all areas. How will this be addressed in the groupings?

The groupings will be flexible. Although all of the gifted students will be clustered, there will be students of varying levels in the classroom. If a student, for example, is gifted in mathematics, then he or she may work with the other gifted students during math. If this same student is not gifted in language arts, then he or she may work with the regular education students during this period.

13. How will teachers know the makeup of the G & T clusters in their class in advance?

After spring screenings are completed teachers work with principals to develop class lists for the following year. Teachers will be given time to discuss their incoming students with the previous year's teachers. This will allow teachers to have an idea of what types of clusters they will encounter the next year. Teachers will also be able to share any suggestions or strategies for these incoming students during this time.

14. What materials are going to be used to teach the children that are G/T?

Central Administration along with principals and teachers are currently researching how other districts create and use curriculum and materials. However, any suggestions of certain materials are welcome. For next year, however, clustered grouping is the plan. The district needs to remain sensitive to the budgetary concerns and needs to move deliberately regarding G & T.

15. Will teachers be trained in the area of G & T?

The district will seek to provide teachers with on-going professional development opportunities.

16. My child has a learning disability, is it possible that he or she is gifted as well?

Yes, these children are often described as twice exceptional. These students demonstrate high performance ability or academic potential and who have a cognitive, physical, behavioral, or emotional disability that requires accommodations in order for their potential to be realized.