

KENSTON N

Challenge Program

INTRODUCTION

Kenston provides a comprehensive general curriculum essential for all students. The Challenge Program intensifies this curriculum through compacting the course of study and enriching the curricular goals with in-depth application in Mathematics and English Language Arts. Some of the grade level curriculum objectives are expanded to meet the needs of students in the program.

The Kenston Challenge Program incorporates the following components to better meet the needs of the gifted student:

A. Interaction

For part of the day, gifted students have time to work together in the content areas of Mathematics and English Language Arts (including reading and writing).

B. Content

The standard curriculum taught to all students (including Challenge students) at each grade level is modified in one or more of these ways: (1) enrichment or extension of concepts, (2) taught via inter-disciplinary instruction, and/or (3) based on individual and group interests/strengths.

Emphasis is on higher level thinking and decision-making skills, rather than merely acquiring more information. While all of our classrooms emphasize higher order thinking and implement differentiated instruction, the Challenge Program provides an opportunity for students to quickly progress through knowledge, understanding and application, allowing more concentrated time for analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

The curriculum promotes the students' emotional growth in the areas of: (1) self-concept, (2) independence, and (3) risk taking, and stimulates intuition, feelings, and creativity.

PROGRAM POLICIES

The Kenston Schools' Challenge Program began in 1980 as a program for gifted/talented and high-achieving students. Since that time, the rules and procedures for identification have been modified to comply with the standards developed by the Ohio State Department of Education. Although the State of Ohio requires identification, it is a local decision to serve identified students.

The Challenge Program of the Kenston Local School District is consistent with the district's Mission Statement for each student to achieve individual academic excellence and to maximize personal growth in a community which demonstrates and develops mutual respect, responsibility, and life-long learning."

Within these state and locally established parameters, the specific goals and procedures of this program are overseen and coordinated by the Challenge Program Steering Committee. This group includes Challenge Program teachers, gifted coordinator for the district, and building administrators. Issues related to curriculum and instruction, student admissions, communication, etc., are initially considered by this Committee, which works in concert with other groups or individuals as appropriate to implement decisions. The Challenge Steering Committee makes enrollment recommendations consistent with the eligibility criteria. The opportunity to participate in the Challenge Program is open to all students meeting the established criteria.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In order to be eligible for enrollment in the Kenston Challenge Program, a student must obtain a qualifying score on the district's program placement matrix. Points are awarded in two categories: achievement and ability. The achievement results are provided by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. The verbal and quantitative ability scores are derived from the Cognitive Abilities Test. Grades and recommendations from a teacher are not a part of the placement process.

The Challenge Program placement matrix records points for the overall scores in reading and mathematics. Parents may, at their own expense, choose to have their child privately tested using the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, 5th Edition (WISC V). All students meeting the established criteria are invited to participate in the program.

Eligibility for the program will be established twice: in 2nd grade for the grade 3/4 program and again in the 4th grade for the grade 5/6/7 program. Initial entrance in the program is determined through whole grade level administration of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) in second grade. All students will be re-tested in 4th grade with the administration of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT).

To qualify for the grade level programs, students may be determined eligible in English Language Arts and/or Mathematics. While some students may re-qualify for both Mathematics and English Language Arts, others may only re-qualify for one content area, and others may not re-qualify.

TIMELINE

February – Administration of whole grade tests
March – Results are received and shared with parents
April – The Gifted Committee meets
June – Letters are sent to parents if the student is eligible

TRANSITIONAL PROCEDURES

In grades 3/4, students remain in the Challenge cohort for English Language Arts and Mathematics instruction only. For all other subjects (science, social studies, music, art, etc.), the Challenge students are heterogeneously grouped with other children in their same grade level.

Within the grades 3/4 and 5/6/7 program, students may make the transition out of the Challenge Program if it is determined that a change would best meet the child's needs, though not without the expressed consent of their parent or guardian. Students will be transitioned out of the program after 4th grade if eligibility criteria is not met for the 5/6/7 grade program.

PERSONNEL

All individuals involved in teaching students who are eligible for Kenston Challenge Services have the necessary training and experience to address the special needs of gifted students. Teachers continue to attend workshops, training sessions, and college credit courses to maintain the highest level of effective classroom management and instruction possible. There will be at least one fully certified/licensed teacher in gifted education at each grade level (grades 3 through 7). The State of Ohio also considers teachers who have completed a specified number of professional development hours on the core gifted competency topics as qualified to provide gifted services. Students eligible for gifted services may also be placed in these classrooms.

CHARACTERISTICS OFTEN EXHIBITED BY GIFTED LEARNERS...

- Poses unforeseen questions
- Is curious
- Is selectively mentally engaged
- Generates complex, abstract ideas
- Knows without working hard
- Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives
- Exhibits feelings and opinions from multiple perspectives
- Already knows
- Needs 1 to 3 repetitions to master
- Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas
- Prefers the company of intellectual peers
- Creates complex, abstract humor
- Infers and connects concepts
- Initiates projects and extensions of assignments
- Is original and continually developing
- Enjoys self-directed learning
- Manipulates information
- Is an expert, abstracting beyond the field
- Guesses and infers well
- Anticipates and relates observations
- Is self-critical
- May not be motivated by grades
- Is intellectual

Source: *Kingore, B (2004). Differentiation: Simplified, Realistic, and Effective. Austin: Professional Associates Publishing.*