

Indian River School District

Elementary Gifted and Talented Educational Program



ExCEL

Gifted and Talented Educational Staff

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Exceptional, Cognitive, Enrichment Learning

ExCEL is a differentiated enrichment program for students in grades 4 and 5 who demonstrate, or who have the potential to demonstrate, superior intellectual abilities and academic aptitudes. Participating students engage in small flexible, part-time grouping and/or multi-age group instruction provided in resource rooms within the school. This arrangement provides horizontal enrichment opportunities to foster the development of higher mental processes, creativity, independent study, and problem solving.

Concurrent with program operation, Gifted and Talented certified staff members develop comprehensive S.T.E.A.M (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) curriculum so that a sequential plan evolves.



S.T.E.A.M

(Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics)

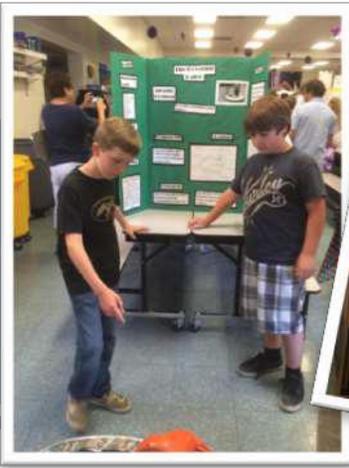


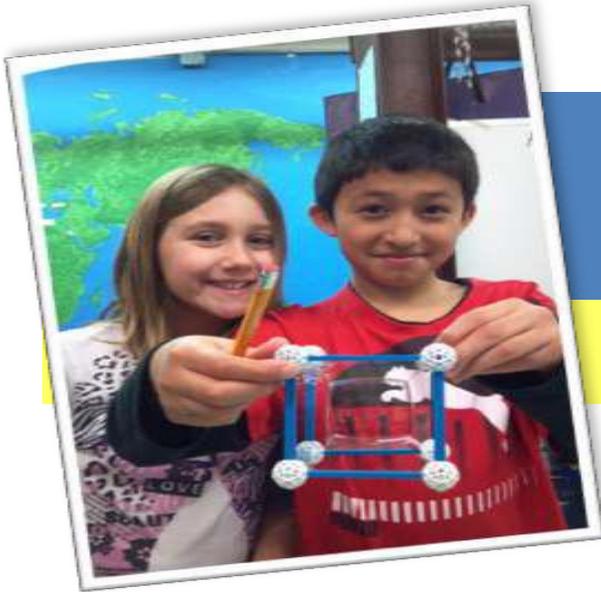
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Goals and Objectives



The ExCEL program has been designed:

- To provide an opportunity which will enable the student to maximize his/her superior intellectual abilities and/or academic aptitudes.
- To provide an environment that will enable the student to develop his/her potential, particularly in critical and creative thinking and problem solving.
- To provide an atmosphere which will enable the student to develop independent goals and to assume responsibility for meeting those goals.
- To provide differentiated activities which will enable the student to gain greater self-expression, self-investigation, and self-knowledge.
- To provide experiences which will enable the student to develop a sense of responsibility toward humankind.
- To provide a divergent curriculum which will enable the student to apply decision-making skills to current and future issues.
- To provide students with the ability to think and problem-solve on a global level, providing experiences connected to the real world.
- To provide a field trip experience surrounding ExCEL units of study.

Delaware Gifted and Talented Regulations

Delaware Title 14, Chapter 31

"Gifted or talented child" means a child in the chronological age group 4 through the end of the school year in which the child attains the age of 21 or until receipt of a regular high school diploma, whichever occurs first, who by virtue of certain outstanding abilities is capable of a high performance in an identified field. Such an individual,

identified by professionally qualified persons, may require differentiated educational programs or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize the individual's full contribution to self and society. A child capable of high performance as herein defined includes one with demonstrated

achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singularly or in combination:

- a. General intellectual ability;
- b. Specific academic aptitude;
- c. Creative or productive thinking;
- d. Leadership ability;
- e. Visual and performing arts ability;
- f. Psychomotor ability.

State of Delaware General Standards for the Gifted and Talented Programs

Delaware Title 13 Regulation 902 establishes the following general standards that apply to all types of gifted or talented programs:

- (a) Create unique opportunities for high-achieving and underachieving students who are identified as gifted or talented.
- (b) Make provisions for ensuring participation of students in the upper range of intellectual ability.
- (c) Make provisions for ensuring full participation of students from disadvantaged and varying cultural backgrounds.
- (d) Improve the quality of existing programs for gifted or talented students.
- (e) Experiment with a variety of programmatic approaches and cost levels.
- (f) Obtain written consent of a relative caregiver and file the consent with the district or

Charter school prior to the student's participation in the program.

- (g) Meet the specific needs and requirements as specified for gifted or talented students. Academic components shall be included in all program offerings.
- (h) Reflect the assessed needs of its identified students.
- (i) Ensure that all identified gifted or talented students shall have an opportunity to participate in the Gifted or Talented Program.
- (j) Develop a written plan available for public inspection. The written plan shall describe the appropriately differentiated curricula for identified gifted or talented students as well as specify the methods used to examine the appropriateness of the identified student's total

educational experience, including articulation with other special-funded programs that serve gifted or talented students.





STUDENT OUTCOMES

Performance expectations are listed in each unit's contract and are evaluated on different rubrics (oral presentation, design process, collaboration, etc.) Self and peer evaluations are completed throughout each unit.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

Given the prescribed ExCEL environment, opportunities, and curriculum, the student will:

- Involve himself/herself in activities that require interpretation, application, critical thinking (analysis and synthesis), abstract thinking and evaluation.
- Continue to develop special interests and aptitudes.
- Work cooperatively in different types of group discussions, teacher and student-directed learning and activities.
- Engage in independent study and projects that incorporate criteria-based evaluations.
- Engage students in the use of meaningful technology.
- Develop greater facility in planning and conducting research.
- Use varied forms of expression to communicate ideas.
- Increase individual responsibility for independent learning and social interaction.

ExCEL CURRICULUM

WATER WORKS is a S.T.E.A.M. unit whose first focus is the molecular structure of water and how it is affected by the addition of other chemicals and substances (Chemical Engineering). Student teams experiment with different hygroscopic substances, their effects on the structure of water molecules and a bubble's ability to perform within certain constraints. After conducting their own scientific investigation on different hygroscopic solutions and soaps, the students create their own "super" bubble solution. Students work collaboratively on challenges that not only deal with the chemical makeup of a bubble solution but also the aspects of different materials and mechanical engineering of unique bubble blowing devices

(Materials and Mechanical Engineering.) For their summative assessment, the unit challenges the students to mechanically engineer a creative bubble wand "contraption" to be used in conjunction with their "super" solution. Marketing strategies are incorporated with their creative product.

FORENSICS: In this unit, students are presented with a "crime scene." They then learn about forensic techniques and use those techniques to solve the mystery. Topics covered included fingerprint examination, and collection, toxicology, dental and foot impressions, chromatography, blood typing, DNA and handwriting. After gathering evidence, students use their results and logic to figure out who committed the "crime."

CURRICULUM UNITS

Water Works

Forensics

Creativity

Robotics



CREATIVITY:

This unit focuses on developing innovative and creative thinking in students. By participating in S.T.E.A.M. activities that foster the four components of creativity (Fluency, Flexibility, Originality, and Elaboration), students hone their “out of the box” thinking skills to become better problem solvers. Many students have the misconception that S.T.E.A.M. is not creative, however through the activities that involve science and math, students realize that problems of today and tomorrow need creative answers.

ROBOTICS:

Students expand their understanding of robotics as they explore mechanical design and computer programming. This unit focuses on developing skills needed to build and program autonomous and driver controlled robots. Inspired by a design problem, students work with a cooperative group to apply their knowledge to design, build, test, and refine a mobile robot that meets a set of design constraints and performs a specific function.

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

The Gifted and Talented teachers discuss and evaluate the curriculum throughout the year after each summative assessment and at the end of the year when meeting with the Director of Elementary of Education. Students evaluate the activities and perform self-evaluations on a regular basis. The Gifted and Talented teachers adapt the curriculum to incorporate newer technologies as well as the ever-changing focus of education.

CERTIFICATION OF TEACHERS

Teachers identifying the I.R.S.D. ExCEL students are professionally qualified. On top of their Elementary Teacher certification, ExCEL teachers have Gifted and Talented certifications are highly qualified and have coursework in gifted and talented. Dawn Keenan has her Master of Arts in Teaching with a concentration in Secondary Science. Cindy Isaacs has a Master of Science in Human Resource Management, School Leadership and Instruction.

SELECTION MEASURES

Selection of students for participation in ExCEL is based upon point values assigned to several screening devices. The screening devices for ranking are described below:

1. Achievement

The spring reading and math scores of a nationally normed achievement test will be averaged to yield an overall achievement score.

2. Intelligence

The School Ability Index (SAI) of the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test will be used for calculation purposes.

3. Parental Nomination Permission to Test

Parent rating of characteristics of giftedness.

4. Teacher Nomination

Professional rating of characteristics of giftedness.

5. Psychologist

In the event that a professional or parent requests a re-evaluation of a student for inclusion, a referral may be made to the Indian River School District Department of Instruction. Upon receipt of

Student Qualification

A student qualifies for the program based on:

1. A total accumulation of 215 points, which must include a School Ability Index (SAI) of 116 or higher on the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test and/or
2. An SAI of 130 or higher on the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test.

In July, all parents/guardians of students tested are notified of their child's results through district mail. Any questions are directed to the Director of Elementary Education.

The final selection will reflect the top 2-5% of the district's total elementary grade population served by the ExCEL program that school year.



parental permission, an appropriate intelligence test (WISC-V) will be administered to the student by a school psychologist after September 30th. That score may be substituted for the intelligence segment of the above outlined formula.

6. District Support Team

In the event a student has undergone a series of re-evaluations and still does not meet the criteria for selection, but a professional and/or the parent continues to request re-evaluation, the building principal may

schedule a district support team meeting. Team members will include the principal, the student's classroom teacher, the ExCEL teacher, school psychologist, and Director of Elementary Education. The district support team will further examine the student's records to determine if documented evidence warrants program placement. Such determination requires the consent of three members of the support team. A written explanation along with the supporting evidence will be signed and dated by all team members and filed by the Department of Instruction.

STUDENT REVIEW

Although it is educationally sound to presuppose that the academically gifted student has mastered basic skills and grade level work, it is necessary to periodically review the student's placement in the ExCEL program. This review will include the following:

1. Marking Period Review

The regular classroom teacher will communicate concerns and the ExCEL teacher will review each participating student's nine-week grades to confirm that he/she is maintaining an acceptable level of performance in the regular classroom. Each student will be expected to maintain an **85% or higher** in reading, writing/english, and mathematics.

For each unit of study, the ExCEL teacher will review each participating student's performance to confirm that he/she is maintaining an acceptable level of performance as documented on the ExCEL Student Evaluation.

If a student performs unsatisfactorily in the regular classroom, he/she must attempt to improve his/her performance in the content area(s) in question (reading, writing and/or mathematics). The student must also meet the expectations in the classroom by completing classwork/homework. If a student does not achieve an 85% or higher in the area in question for one marking period, a letter will be sent to the student's parents informing them of the probationary status for the following nine-week period and a plan for success will be developed.



Student Review Continued...

2. ExCEL Project Completion:

At the culmination of each unit of instruction, the students are asked to complete independent research projects that show real world connections to the unit. When an ExCEL project is not turned in on its due date, the student will not be permitted to attend ExCEL class until the project is satisfactorily completed and submitted. The student will have a period of two weeks to satisfactorily complete the project. If the student does not complete the project satisfactorily then the student will be removed from the program.

3. End of the Year Review

The ExCEL teacher will review the overall performance of the participating students in both the regular classroom and the ExCEL program in order to make a recommendation regarding each student's continued placement for the following year and will meet with the classroom teacher if necessary.

4. Voluntary Withdrawal

If a student elects to voluntarily withdraw from the ExCEL program, a parent conference is required. In order for a student to re-enter the program, he/she must:

- submit a parent letter requesting re-admission.
- provide evidence of satisfactory grades in previously identified areas.
- complete ExCEL unit requirements that were due prior to the voluntary withdrawal.

If all of the criteria have been met, the student will be readmitted into the ExCEL program at the beginning of the next unit of study.

Identification and Timeline

Identification and Timeline:

- Parents will be notified of the nomination process through the Indian River School District's webpage and Facebook page.
- In addition, all 3rd and 4th grade students in the district will receive a notice about the ExCEL nomination process and deadlines. ExCEL staff distributes teacher nomination forms during the month of April.
- Students nominated are tested during the last 3- 4 weeks of the school year.
- Students new to the Indian River School District, who have been nominated between September and January, will be tested after cumulative records arrive.
- New students, who are nominated after January, will be tested at the end of the year.
- Students not previously tested, who are nominated in the fall, but who are not new to the Indian River School District, will be tested after the first marking period.
- Students, who were tested and did not qualify at the end of the previous school year, must wait until the end of the current school year to be retested for the program or be referred to the school psychologist for further testing. All data is recorded on compilation spreadsheets.
- New students that transfer into I.R.S.D. from an existing Gifted and Talented Program are considered for the program after verification of tests, qualifying scores and methods of inclusion. If a student does not meet the I.R.S.D. ExCEL requirements, the student will be tested for inclusion in the program.



Selection Procedures

Referral

Students may be referred in writing on an ongoing basis, based on the following:

- Teacher Recommendation;
- Parent/Guardian Request;
- Other (e.g., Psychologist, Community Members, Principal, Gifted Coordinator, etc.)

Upon receipt of a referral, the district will:

- Follow the process as outlined in this document.
- Notify parents of results of screening or assessment and identification within 30 days.

Screening

The district ensures equal access to screening and further assessment of all district students, including culturally or linguistically diverse students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, students with disabilities and students for whom English is a second language.

Thinkers in Engineering and Science T.I.E.S.

The Indian River School District's T.I.E.S. Program, **T**hinkers **i**n **E**ngineering and **S**cience will focus on critical thinking skills along with math, science and engineering. Targeted students have demonstrated a high level of academic achievement on district assessments, indicating that they have an accelerated learning rate compared to their peers. Although participation in T.I.E.S. does not guarantee placement into the ExCEL program, T.I.E.S. will foster those thinking processes necessary for academic success in higher thinking activities and programs.

Selection Procedures Continued...

Out of District Scores:

The district accepts scores completed within the preceding 24 months on assessment instruments approved for use by the Indian River School District that are provided by other schools and/or trained personnel outside the school district. I.R.S.D. has the ability to retest.

Transfer:

The district ensures that any student transferring into the district will be assessed within 90 days of the transfer should a parent make the request. Parents should contact the Principal to make the request.

Appeal Procedures:

An appeal by the parent is the reconsideration of the result of any part of the identification process that would include:

- Screening procedures or assessment instruments (which results in identification);
- The scheduling of a student for assessment;
- The placement of a student in any program; and
- Receipt of services.

Parents should submit a letter to the Director of Elementary Education outlining the nature of the concern.

The Director of Elementary Education will make a final decision within 30 days of the appeal. Retesting using a school psychologist may take place to include additional screeners.

