



A Challenge Program for Grades K-8

What educators and psychologists recognize as giftedness in children is really potential giftedness, which denotes promise rather than fulfillment and probabilities rather than certainties about accomplishments. How high these probabilities are in any given case depends on the match between a child's budding talents and the kinds of nurturance provided."

- A. Harry Passow



Kirkwood School District Mission

The mission of the Kirkwood schools, a personalized educational network rich in tradition and energized by future possibilities, is to create environments characterized by a passion for learning, purposeful discovery and expectations of excellence in order to guarantee that each learner achieves personal goals, academic success, and becomes a leader in society.

REACH

Rationale

The Kirkwood REACH Program is designed to support the learning needs of students who possess significantly advanced knowledge and highly developed learning capabilities. These learners demonstrate the capacity to handle curricular content at a rapid pace and at advanced levels of abstractness, complexity, and independence, the desire to explore open-ended problems in significant depth, the tendency to ask difficult questions and to imagine new possibilities. Such learners are found in all of our schools and in all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. These students require rigorous and challenging curriculum and learning opportunities that match their advanced learning capabilities in order to achieve the personal goals and academic success of which they are capable.

The primary purpose of our gifted curriculum is to support high levels of student achievement as defined by the Kirkwood Curricula and the Missouri Show-Me Standards. The REACH program will address this purpose by facilitating opportunities for students to

- engage in expert-like inquiry, research, problem solving, and creative production related to rigorous multi-disciplinary curricular content
- explore personal interests, passions, and talents above and beyond what can be experienced in the general classroom
- develop self-understanding as learners and citizens through their work in communities of like-minded learners



Goals

- Support mastery of district curriculum at a pace and depth appropriate to the capacity of advanced learners
- Facilitate essential understandings of curricular-based systems of knowledge, macro-concepts, issues and problems that frame the external world
- Develop advanced levels of communication skills
- Provide an environment that encourages divergent thinking and promotes critical thought
- Develop research skills and methods progressing toward professional expertise
- Provide a community where advanced learners can explore their unique social-emotional needs and learning passions

Services

The REACH Program provides personalized learning opportunities for students in grades K-8 who demonstrate highly advanced learning capability. Services offered through the REACH program include Challenge Classes, Personalized Learning Plans and Collaboration and Differentiation Support for teachers of students with advanced readiness.

Challenge Classes are designed for students who demonstrate exceptionally advanced capability in critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and comprehension as well as a rapid rate of acquiring new skills and knowledge. REACH Challenge Classes serve students who require instructional approaches designed to challenge and develop their learning capabilities beyond what is available solely through the general curriculum.





The Challenge Class curriculum supports the study of advanced concepts and themes contained within grade level curricula with emphasis on the development of advanced skills in Creative Problem Solving & Production, Critical Thought, Information Processing & Inquiry, Self-understanding.

Personalized Learning Plans and goals are developed for each REACH Challenge student during the first year of participation and are reviewed annually at parent conferences. The Personalized Learning Plan assists teachers, students and parents to understand and provide for each student's unique learning needs.

Collaboration & Differentiation Support Services are provided to assist classroom teachers in planning differentiated learning activities and preparing materials appropriate to the advanced learning capabilities of identified gifted and other high performing students. REACH and classroom teachers work collaboratively to ensure that accommodations and resources are available within the general education classroom to support the advanced learning readiness of these students.

"Failure to help the gifted child is a societal tragedy, the extent of which is difficult to measure, but which is surely great. How can we measure the sonata unwritten, the curative drug undiscovered, the absence of political insight? They are the difference between what we are and what we could be as a society."

James Gallagher



Eligibility

All students are considered in the screening process for REACH. Classroom teachers observe student performance both in and out of the regular classroom for signs of highly advanced readiness and learning capabilities. Grade level teams and REACH teachers review available achievement scores and other examples of student performance to determine the appropriateness of further assessment in the areas of creativity, reasoning, problem solving, achievement, cognitive/mental capability, and gifted characteristics. Students who meet eligibility criteria in 3 out of 4 areas of giftedness are eligible to participate in REACH Challenge classes.

Screening and Evaluation Timeline

September - October – Grades 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

October - November – Kindergarten

February – May – Grades 2, 3

Kirkwood resident students who attend non-public schools may be referred for REACH Challenge eligibility by submitting a REACH nomination referral and supporting documentation of gifted learning potential (e.g. cognitive and/or achievement assessments, students work samples/portfolios) to the REACH teacher in their Kirkwood neighborhood school. This information will be reviewed to determine if additional eligibility assessments are appropriate. Contact the REACH teacher in your attendance area school for more information.



Contacts

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