



DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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DR. LAWRENCE J. MUSSOLINE, SUPERINTENDENT

November 8, 2016

Dear Parents,

I hope your child's 1st quarter at the Marsh Creek 6th Grade Center has been filled with the excitement and fun that comes from being at a different school with new classmates and from the exciting learning opportunities teachers present each day. As the district continues to improve its delivery of gifted education services, I wanted to communicate more about what those services look like at Marsh Creek now and moving forward.

According to the Pennsylvania Code, Chapter 16, Special Education for Gifted Students, the purpose behind gifted education is to provide mentally gifted students opportunities to develop their gifted intellectual ability through specially designed instruction that enriches or accelerates what we offer within our regular education settings.

At Marsh Creek, gifted students are cluster-grouped onto four teams to create learning environments that permit the gifted education teachers to work with students more fluidly in and out of their classrooms. Students may self-pace through some foundational material to demonstrate their early mastery, which then permits them to work more closely with the gifted education teachers on more complex assignments that replace some of the traditional classroom work.

Gifted education is not about asking students to do more work; it's about providing students with different work that is more challenging. Your Marsh Creek gifted education teachers are working tirelessly in partnership with ELA and math teachers and curriculum leaders to accelerate students when appropriate and/or to enrich their studies by creating specially designed assignments that require higher-ordered thinking skills and provide students with the opportunity to make cross-curricular connections, which will deepen their understanding of both content areas.

Not all gifted students need this specially designed instruction. If your child's intellectual needs are being met within his or her classes, Chapter 16 considers the student to be gifted, but not in need of specially designed instruction. If this is the case, your child will work within our already rigorous regular education course parameters and a GIEP will not be required. Regardless of your child's placement, Downingtown is committed to educating your child in an individually responsive learning environment.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have general questions about gifted education services. As always, thank you for partnering with us to educate all students!

Carrie Dickmann, Supervisor of Special Education