

**I. E. iii.**  
**Addressing Specific Student Groups**  
**Gifted and Talented Programs**

The *Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act* §5-401 requires that the updated plan “shall include goals, objectives, and strategies regarding the performance of gifted and talented students, as defined in §8-201.”

The *Annotated Code of Maryland* §8-201 defines a gifted and talented student as “an elementary or secondary student who is identified by professionally qualified individuals as: (1) Having outstanding talent and performing, or showing the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other students of a similar age, experience, or environment; (2) Exhibiting high performance capability in intellectual, creative, or artistic areas; (3) Possessing an unusual leadership capacity; or (4) Excelling in specific academic fields.

Instructions:

The focus of the 2007 Master Plan Update is on progress of student performance, means of accelerating student performance, and adjustments made to overcome challenges. In accordance with this focus, local school systems are expected to provide a cohesive, stand-alone response to the prompts outlined below.

**A. THE PROCESS FOR IDENTIFYING GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS:**

**1. The identification process for Gifted & Talented involves multiple criteria.**

Identification is an on-going process that reflects the characteristics of talented learners. It is a process where multiple criteria are evaluated by a designated team, using a variety of assessment sources. Screening provides opportunities for all students to potentially qualify for the program.

Somerset County Public Schools identifies students beginning in Grade 2 by using a compilation of data which includes nominations from teachers and community members, checklists completed by parents and teachers and ability tests including the Naglieri Nonverbal test of Ability, SAT-10 Reading and Math and MSA. All second grade parents receive a checklist

The county Gifted & Talented committee evaluates the students by organizing the gathered data into a spreadsheet. This ensures the committee members are looking at multiple criteria to identify potentially qualified students. It is important that a single source of information is not used to either include or exclude a student from the program.

2. The number and percentages of students identified in each grade band.

Percentage of Total Enrollment Participating in Gifted & Talented			
	#Enrolled	# of Students	% of Population
Elementary (Gr. 3)	27	214	13%
Middle	75	441	17%
High	94	1081	9%
District	196	2926	7%

Percentage of Gifted & Talented Participants by Subgroup							
	African Am	Caucasian	Hispanic	Farms	Spec Ed	Male	Female
Elementary	8%	19%	0%	56%	0%	48%	52%
Middle	49%	46%	4%	60%	0%	51%	49%
High	48%	48%	1%	58%	0%	51%	50%
District	35%	38%	2%	58%	0%	50%	50%

**B. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN PLACE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS BY GRADE BAND:**

The Gifted and Talented Education Program serves students who, when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment demonstrate a high potential for accelerated performance. These students require learning experiences beyond the standard curriculum.

Somerset County relies on curriculum enrichment as the means by which instructional experiences are differentiated to encourage the development of students' outstanding academic potentials. The program provides research-based differentiated curricula to meet the needs of students who demonstrate advanced learning capabilities.

**1. Elementary (Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade)**

The *Primary Talent Development* program (PTD) has been fully implemented in grades K-2. PTD is a curriculum which develops targeted natural learning behaviors in all students. Natural learning behaviors are nurtured and challenged through hands-on experiences, discovery activities and child-sensitive experiences. The developments of these behaviors assist children in becoming better students. As students begin to demonstrate potential or advanced learning capability through the PTD curriculum or other referrals, the classroom teacher enriches instruction through the use of differentiated reading and mathematics curricula to appropriately address the child's demonstrated learning strength.

**2. Elementary (3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

Curricula from grades three through five include highly-challenging content and materials that differentiate and extend Somerset County Public Schools' Essential Curriculum in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Teachers have been trained to differentiate curricula and provide enrichment or acceleration. These strategies are

implemented through flexible grouping within the regular classroom. Staff are at various levels of skill and expertise in flexibly grouping and regrouping students.

Along with the flexible grouping within the regular classroom, the identified students have the additional use of Touchpebbles (grades 3 & 4) and *SuccessMaker* (grades 2-5) to enrich both reading and math. *TouchPebbles* is a reading program that builds critical thinking, communication, and cooperative learning skills. Using fables, poems, art, and literature from diverse cultures to engage students in lively group discussions, it promotes reading strategies and creative problem solving, and helps students' develop skills in reading and speaking in a group setting. *SuccessMaker* is a math software program that presents content to students at their individual ability level. In the case of the gifted student, instruction is above grade level making their experience more challenging.

### 3. Middle (6<sup>th</sup> Grade – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)

Math is the focus of the Gifted and Talented opportunity at the middle level. Students are identified based on a series of assessments, including the IOWA Algebra Readiness Test, the local end of year placement test, MSA scores and previous math course grades. All of the data is reviewed by the guidance counselor, principal and middle school math teachers. Qualified students are enrolled in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra or 6<sup>th</sup> grade Pre-Algebra classes.

### 4. High (9<sup>th</sup> Grade – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade)

High schools offer a sequence of rigorous Advanced Placement courses which include advanced content and emphasize abstract and complex ideas. Advanced Placement courses are offered in Calculus, Statistics, English Literature, US History, Biology, and Environmental Science. AP Workshops are held to prepare for the AP Tests in US History, English Literature, and Environmental Science. Online AP courses are also available for students through the Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunity. Additionally, prerequisite Honors courses have been established to prepare and encourage students to enroll in A.P. courses.

### 5. Summer Enrichment Centers

The Summer Enrichment Centers were offered to provide opportunities for students to display talents and increase knowledge in areas of interest. Week long sessions in Culinary Arts, Band, Sculpture, Cooking, and Digital Story Telling were offered for students in grades 3-5. Participation in 2007 decreased from the previous year.

Program	Students	Teachers
Culinary Arts	4	1
Summer Band	7	1
Fun with Cooking	8	1
Fun with Sculpture	9	1
Digital Storytelling	5	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>5</b>

## C. RESOURCES ALLOCATED TO PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS:

<b>Related Resources For Gifted &amp; Talented</b>	
<b>Staffing</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assigned a Part Time GT Coordinator</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$ 17,865 <b>Source:</b> Thornton
<b>Core Program</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used <i>Success Maker</i> math software for all elementary schools.</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$ 27,000 <b>Source:</b> Local
<b>Professional Development</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trained all 3<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers <i>TouchPebbles</i> Curriculum</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$ 2,350 <b>Source:</b> Thornton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided a Differentiated Instruction Workshop for all elementary teachers.</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$ 3,900 <b>Source:</b> Local
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported attendance at a four day National AP Conference by 4 teachers and 1 administrator</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$1,455 <b>Source:</b> Nexus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported a 3 day Pre AP Conference attended by 6 teachers</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$1,250 <b>Source:</b> Nexus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided Differentiated Math Instruction (Linking of Skills) Workshops</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$5,250 <b>Source:</b> Nexus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported National Differentiated Instruction Conference attended by 14 elementary teachers &amp; administrators</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$6,900 <b>Source:</b> <i>Reading First</i> (\$5,400) Local (\$1,500)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided <i>Success Maker</i> Training for all elementary principals and facilitators</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$6,800 <b>Source:</b> Local
<b>Materials, Supplies &amp; Equipment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchased materials for use with the science based PTD lessons.</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$600 <b>Source:</b> Thornton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchased materials for Summer Enrichment Centers (Art supplies, food &amp; cooking supplies, etc.)</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$ 650 <b>Source:</b> Local
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchased Textbooks for students and teachers to use with <i>TouchPebbles</i></li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$ 7,600 <b>Source:</b> Thornton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchased testing materials: SAT-10 Math, Naglieri Nonverbal Test of Ability and PSS (Practice PSAT)</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$ 8,228 <b>Source:</b> Local (\$5,728) Nexus(\$2,500)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchased textbooks for AP courses</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$2,288 <b>Source:</b> Nexus
<b>Intervention</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funded AP Workshops to assist students' preparation for AP Tests</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$5,000 <b>Source:</b> Nexus

**D. LONG-RANGE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES FOR ACCELERATING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS:**

The county level Gifted & Talented Committee has developed guidelines which are in place to extend implementation of the Gifted & Talented program throughout the school system. Building

on the fully implemented K-2 PTD High School AP courses, the next steps are: increased differentiated instruction at the elementary level, the extension of *TouchPebbles* into the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the development of an advanced program in reading for middle level students, and increased participation in High School AP courses.

The committee members from the Central Office and schools will continue to assist with staff development opportunities on identification, instruction and program management as they relate to the Gifted & Talented program. Data will continue to be collected and organized to assist with the identification of students and needed instructional modifications. The committee will continue to maintain certain related site-based procedures as well as reporting gifted and talented developments to School Improvement Teams to guide what is needed for their School Improvement Plans.

