

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

The Major Achievement Program

The Board of Education encourages educational programs which challenge and promote the realization of individual potential in all students. The Board also recognizes that further efforts are necessary to extend educationally and in a cost-effective manner the allocation of resources towards appropriate programs for students identified as gifted and talented. Consistent with district efforts to develop a continuum of learning experiences which addresses the special gifts and talents of students, the Major Achievement Program (MAP) was founded in 1964 to meet the needs of intellectually talented children early in their educational experience. The program emphasizes:

1. opportunities for academic acceleration; and
2. enrichment experiences that extend classroom learning via:
 - a. independent study projects;
 - b. use of community resources;
 - c. activities that develop special interests both individually and in small groups; and
 - d. a defined, challenging and integrated curriculum.

The MAP shall help students continue to develop basic skills and, in addition, emphasize study skills, independent study habits and research techniques. The program shall provide children opportunities for enrichment or acceleration beyond the conventional curriculum in all subject areas, stressing more abstract concepts through the process of inquiry and creative thinking skills. Development of information processing and critical thinking skills is a key feature of the program.

The MAP curriculum:

1. encourages enrichment and acceleration in learning experiences;
2. introduces content and skills beyond those found in conventional curricula;
3. focuses on inquiry and creative problem solving;
4. emphasizes abstract concepts in the content areas;
5. integrates content areas;
6. uses multiple learning resources; and
7. transfers and applies learning to other situations.

Student Selection Process

Children who exhibit strength in academic potential, aptitude and performance are eligible to participate in the MAP. Criteria for selection include:

1. high achievement in reading and math on standardized tests and the New York State PEP Test;
2. cumulative school record of outstanding performance;
3. Principal and teacher recommendations;
4. evidence of creative and productive thinking; and
5. general intellectual ability shown in classroom performance.

A selection committee shall evaluate applications, taking into consideration each child's ability, achievement, readiness and potential. The records of all third graders in the district shall be screened each year to determine their eligibility for the program. A small number of students shall be evaluated to enter the program at each successive grade level thereafter.

The Board believes that programs traditionally viewed as for the gifted and talented greatly benefit the entire school program and encourages programs that provide enrichment opportunities for all students. The Board also recognizes the value of community support for program success and encourages the use of community resources for special programs and periodic reporting of activities through the district newsletter.

The negotiable aspects of this policy will be adopted and implemented in conformity with the Taylor Law and agreements negotiated with the individual bargaining units representing staff.

Ref: Education Law §§3602(23); 4451-4453
8 NYCRR Part 142; §§117.3(c)(3),(f)

Note: Prior policy, Policy Manual, The Major Achievement Program Brochure, revised

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MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM REGULATION

The Major Achievement Program

The Major Achievement Program (MAP) is a program that emphasizes academic acceleration and enrichment experiences, as well as providing a defined, challenging and integrated curriculum. It provides the opportunity for students to participate in a program based upon their learning needs and styles. It is a program that emphasizes academic acceleration and enrichment experiences, as well as providing a defined, challenging and integrated curriculum. Basic skills are continuously taught, and in addition, study skills, independent study habits, and research techniques are developed. It is a program whose instructional philosophy extends beyond the conventional curriculum, stressing more abstract concepts throughout the program. However, the style and techniques with which it is delivered depends upon the individual teacher.

The Elementary Program

Language Arts - The Major Achievement Program (MAP) Language Arts Program focuses on the integrated language concept in which skills are reinforced in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. All types of writing are taught, reinforcing the fundamentals of writing, as well as advancing students to a high level of proficiency in written expression. Oral language activities such as group discussion, speeches, debates and dramatic presentations help students develop confidence in all kinds of speaking and oral expression.

Reading - The reading program reinforces previously learned skills and expands them further through the use of novels rather than a basal reading program. This is the most unique aspect of the program and encourages critical reading through novels, plays, short stories, or poetry, often through the use of an author's original work. This approach exposes the students to a variety of writing styles and develops an appreciation of literature on a level commensurate with the student's reading abilities. Critical analysis of content materials and quality literature adds news depth not only to reading, but also establishes guidelines for children to use as they develop their own writing styles.

Math - At present, most Major Achievement classes use the Addison-Wesley Mathematics Program. This program contains many enriching activities that are challenging motivating, as well as featuring calculator, consumer, and computer components to further develop math skills. It is a goal of the program to complete six years' content in five years of instruction. Acceleration shall be based on the individual abilities of the students and requires mastery before progressing. Analytical, critical, and evaluative thinking skills, as well as "learning by discovery" are strong features of the program.

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Science - The Major Achievement science program stresses an inquiry approach as a way to involve students and solve problems in science. Throughout the program, students shall be engaged in activities that correlate the district's content and performance standards. The MAP science curriculum allows classroom teachers to enrich and extend the regular science program. Throughout the MAP program, students learn about science through a variety of modes which compliment their own learning style. The science program uses both "minds-on" and "hands-on" learning. Instructional resources include printed material, a technical laser disc program, and a wide array of manipulative kits. Topics include areas of study in life, earth and physical science.

At grade eight, MAP students accelerate in science by starting their Regents sequence in biology. With successful completion, the student will earn one Regents level high school science credit. The acceleration program makes it possible for MAP students to enroll in Advanced Placement science courses in grades eleven or twelve.

Social Studies - The focus of the social studies curriculum is the New York State Syllabus. Fourth grade MAP begins with an in-depth study of local history and local government. An introduction to American history is the focus of the fifth grade program with a concentration on an economic and geographic look at the United States, Canada, and Latin America. The program continues in sixth grade with the study of our world, comparing and contrasting history, geography, governments, economics, and cultures. Map and globe skills are consistently emphasized. Participation projects, which emphasize group interaction, are an integral part of the social studies curriculum. By focusing on the nature and accomplishments of multiple societies, students develop a concrete, understandable framework for learning the principles of democracy and citizenship. Through integrated activities, students also gain a better vantage point for viewing the world's diversity.

Computer - Computer literacy is a goal of the MAP curriculum.

MAP students shall be expected to be enthusiastic learners who demonstrate a high level of responsibility and self-discipline. However, MAP students shall need parental support particularly if they are new entrants to this challenging program.

Below are the personal characteristics related to learning which have been identified by the MAP Committee as being important determiners for a successful MAP experience.

A. Interest in Learning

- Positive attitude about school; enthusiastic
- Curious and inquisitive
- Enjoys challenge
- Attentive
- Participates actively in classroom activities
- Shows sustained interest

B. Task Orientation

- Completes daily work on time
- Always completes homework
- Shows potential to handle long-range projects
- Can work independently and stay on task
- Completes projects of good quality

C. Managing Resources

- Comes to class prepared
- Is organized
- Uses common sense and practical knowledge
- Self-directed

D. Self-Confidence

- Does not let temporary defeat slow effort; keeps trying no matter what the obstacle
- Can accept challenge
- Willing to try different methods of learning; is adaptive
- Not intimidated by change
- Not afraid to ask for help
- Knows strengths and weaknesses

E. Ability to Handle Challenges

- Has demonstrated ability to go beyond the expectations of routine assignments
- Is able to manage multiple tasks
- Shows an interest in putting extra effort into assignments

F. Attendance

- High levels of attendance with willingness to make up work if absent

G. Problem Solving

- Demonstrates ability to recognize problems and form problem statements
- Has the ability to generate original ideas and solutions
- Demonstrates divergent thinking
- Demonstrates ability to evaluate ideas by generating and using criteria

H. Critical Thinking

- Stores information and applies it to concepts
- Has good memory and efficient processes for retrieving information
- Has strong analytical skills

I. Work Habits

- Works cooperatively and effectively in small-group situations
- Remains attentive in large-group instruction
- Has a flexible attitude toward change
- Is able to focus attention on tasks within an appropriate period of time
- Is attentive to detail
- Prioritizes effectively
- Uses planning techniques
- Knows how to use a variety of resources, including other people

Note: Prior regulation, Policy Manual, The Major Achievement Program, revised

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