

**State of Maine  
Department of Education**

**Gifted and Talented Educational Program  
Initial Application  
2015-16**

Gifted and Talented Educational Program Initial Applications are to be submitted electronically to [GT.DOE@maine.gov](mailto:GT.DOE@maine.gov) by **September 30, 2015** **\*(30-day extension granted per Patti Drapeau)**.

Below is the Maine statute and accompanying Maine Department of Education rules pertaining to Gifted and Talented Educational Programs.

Maine Revised Statutes Title 20-A, Chapter 311, section 8101-A(1) and (2) state:

- 1. *Implementation.*** Each school administrative unit (SAU) shall implement a gifted and talented education program. The Commissioner may provide technical assistance to a SAU in planning and implementing its gifted and talented education program.
- 2. *Costs; approval.*** Costs of gifted and talented education programs approved by the Department are subsidizable costs under the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act.

Maine Department of Education (05-071) Rules Chapter 104:

**104.13 *Program Approval: General Principles.*** Each SAU shall apply annually to the Department for approval of its gifted and talented program(s) on forms provided by the Department. The superintendent of the SAU is responsible for supplying all information necessary for a determination that the program is entitled to approval. The application form must be signed by the superintendent of the SAU in which the program is located certifying that the form contains information that is accurate at the time of reporting.

**104.14 *(Initial) Program Approval Application.*** The Application for program approval must represent full implementation of the gifted and talented program. The following information (Items 1 – 9 on application) shall be required and must reflect the degree of implementation at the time of reporting.

\*\*\*Failure to submit required reports and applications in a timely manner shall be grounds for loss of program approval and of State subsidy aid.

***All final applications and accompanying approval/non-approval letters and budgets will be posted on the Maine Department of Education's gifted and talented website.***

School administrative unit name: MSAD #60

Name and title of person responsible for gifted and talented program:

Fern Brown

Phone number: 207-676-2843, x 3156

Email address: fern.brown@msad60.org

**CERTIFICATION:**

The statements made herein are correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Steven B. Connolly

Superintendent Name (printed)

  
Superintendent Signature

Date application submitted to Maine DOE for review: December 7, 2015 (revision)

**FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Jennifer Pooler  
Maine Department of Education  
(207) 624-6638

**RETURN BY EMAIL TO:**

GT.DOE@maine.gov

EF-S-206  
Revised May 26, 2015

**DUE DATE: September 30, 2015 (30 day extension granted)**

Reviewed By: Patti Drapeau

- Approval
- Approval with concerns
- Non-approval

Maine DOE Authorization: 

Date of Approval: 12/9/15

**Initial Application**

The following information shall be required and must describe the complete plan for identification, programming, and evaluation of the gifted and talented academic and arts programs. Refer to the companion *Instructions* document for clarification.

***Please use as much space as necessary. DO NOT add tables, charts or graphs, or change the formatting of this document.***

1. Provide the school administrative unit's (SAU) philosophy for the gifted and talented program(s) (by academic and arts).

**Academic program philosophy:**

We believe that students who excel or show the potential to excel consistently above the norm must be provided with academic opportunities that are commensurate with their individual aptitudes, abilities, interests and readiness level. These students will require and profit from specially- designed educational services within, beyond and in lieu of the regular curriculum. These educational experiences will provide opportunities for the acquisition of in-depth knowledge and skills at a faster pace and/or at an advanced level of complexity and abstraction. This special educational programming will contribute to the development of independent lifelong learners who are encouraged to recognize, develop and appreciate their own strengths and talents as well as those of others and to explore how each can fit meaningfully, productively, and compassionately into the world community.

**Arts program philosophy:**

We believe that students who excel or show the potential to excel consistently above the norm must be provided with opportunities in the arts that are commensurate with their individual aptitudes, abilities, interests and readiness level. These students will require and profit from specially- designed educational services within, beyond and in lieu of the regular curriculum. This special educational programming will contribute to the development of independent lifelong learners who are encouraged to recognize, develop and appreciate their own strengths and talents as well as those of others and to explore how each can fit meaningfully, productively, and compassionately into the world community.

2. Provide a program abstract which describes the children to be served and the program(s) to be implemented in the school(s) of the unit (by academics and arts).

**Academic program abstract:**

The Project EXCEL program differentiates and extends the regular curriculum for students in grades K-12 by providing learning opportunities that are more advanced, complex, accelerated, abstract, fast-paced, and/or in-depth. Lessons are qualitatively differentiated in lieu of students' regular programming. These experiences are provided through a variety of service models, including, but not limited to pullouts, in-class differentiation through teacher collaboration, grade acceleration, subject area acceleration, tutorials, mentorships, seminars, independent studies, limited college courses, and specific academically-based competitions. Advanced placement courses and honors level work will be available to high school students through the regular curriculum.

At the K-3 level, EXCEL services also serve as a screening and identification tool. This means that, in addition to students who are already identified for the program, students who demonstrate a need for learning that is more advanced will take part in flexible pullout experiences or modified classroom activities without being formally identified. The primary service mode is consultation with classroom teachers.

Students identified as being gifted are grouped, wherever possible, in clusters at the elementary level. In addition to this grouping, they receive small group pull-out services in their area(s) of identification. These services are delivered by the endorsed GT teacher at their school and generally range from 1 ½ to 4 hours per week.

At the middle level, students identified as general academic or in the language arts have as their ELA teacher an endorsed GT professional. That class also works on such projects as National History Day so as to meet the needs of students who are identified in Social Studies. Robotics classes are offered to those identified as general academic or science. Students identified in mathematics received instruction in the advanced math class at each grade level, as appropriate, and may participate in academic competitions in the area of mathematics.

Once in high school, students are guided by the endorsed GT Teachers to make selections that will challenge them academically. In addition to these course offerings, they meet regularly in small groups with the GT teachers for such experiences as “KnightTime” (our intervention block that is used to meet the needs of students in the RtI tiering format; GT students may receive interventions appropriate to them at this time), specialized classes, such as Humanities, an interdisciplinary class for EXCEL students, independent studies, and other classes that may be specifically designed for these students. For juniors and seniors, we offer Project SEARCH at UNH, which provides an opportunity for students to work with other advanced learners to experience college-level lectures and discussions under the guidance of UNH graduate students, with follow-up with the EXCEL teacher.

EXCEL (GT) teachers communicate regularly with classroom teachers to support them in providing services to gifted students when they are in the regular classroom, and provide quarterly or trimester progress reports to parents about students. They call home periodically, and district GT parent meetings enable parents to gain a better understanding of the scope of the program. At each change in level (and, in some cases, more frequently), the GT teachers provide team teachers with a profile of each identified student at the beginning of the school year.

Records of student identification are maintained and shared among GT staff within the district’s electronic system, and GT students are made easily identifiable by flags in Infinite Campus, which alerts teachers as to the identified student’s area of strength. Approximately 5% of our MSAD #60 students are identified in academics.

#### **Arts program abstract:**

Students identified in the visual and performing arts receive instruction and participate in activities that provide them with advanced skills and knowledge in their arts area of strength (music, art, creative writing, or theatre arts). These experiences are provided by district staff and outside artists, and occur through differentiation of the regular arts curriculum, pull-out groups, or special visitations. In addition, students at the high school level have an opportunity to participate in the York County Regional Fine Arts Program which offers advanced classes in music, art, creative writing, theatre arts, and dance (for the 2015-16 year, dance is being replaced with jazz improv).

At the K-3 level, arts students who show particular talent are served in their regular arts classes, with those teachers (music and visual art) differentiating for students as needed. Classroom teachers support students through experiences that help develop writing and theater as part of their curricula.

As students move to the upper elementary levels (grades 3 through 5), they may be recommended for services in the areas of creative writing, music (voice or instruments) or visual arts. Students identified in these areas receive services through their arts teachers, with the support of the EXCEL teachers, who consult with them about how to extend opportunities for young learners.

By the middle level, students who have been formally identified in the arts continue to receive differentiated class experiences, but also have eight or more lessons (semi-private or in very small groups) in theater, creative writing, voice, instruments and art. These lessons range from ½ to one hour in duration and are delivered approximately every other week by a contracted artist who is a professional in the field. The artists discuss with the EXCEL Director and EXCEL Teacher or Arts Teacher in the school the curriculum that will be used.

At the high school, the middle level experiences continue, and the artists may help prepare identified students for regional or statewide competitions. A limited number of students participate in the Regional Fine Arts program in Biddeford. Field trips may take place to support GT students' abilities in the arts. High School students receive credit for their participation in EXCEL Arts programming.

As with academics, records of student identification are maintained and shared among GT staff within the district's electronic system, and GT students are made easily identifiable by flags in Infinite Campus, which alerts teachers as to the identified student's area of strength. Approximately 5% of our MSAD #60 students are identified in the arts.

3. Provide the goals, objectives and activities for each program component, K-12 (by academics and arts).

The goals, objectives and activities for each program are aligned with the NAGC Program Standards.

### **Academics:**

#### **NAGC Standard 2: Assessment**

**2.6. Evaluation of Programming.** Students identified with gifts and talents have increased access and they show significant learning progress as a result of improving components of gifted education programming.

**Goal:** To determine the effectiveness of the MSAD #60 EXCEL Program

**Objective:** To ensure that programming is effective with EXCEL students, particularly in the areas of social/emotional needs

#### **Activities:**

- EXCEL staff will meet to determine our definition of "effectiveness."
- EXCEL staff will research and/or develop measures to determine how our program meets this definition.
- EXCEL staff will implement and/or interpret agreed-upon measures to determine program effectiveness.

#### **NAGC Standard 6: Professional Development**

**6.3. Lifelong Learners.** Students develop their gifts and talents as a result of educators who are life-long learners, participating in ongoing professional development and continuing education

**opportunities.**

**Goal:** To increase the awareness of EXCEL staff of both new and well-researched facets of Gifted Education

**Objective:** EXCEL Teachers will expand their use of current, effective, techniques in Gifted Education.

**Activities:**

- EXCEL staff will attend the New England Conference on the Gifted and Talented and will follow up on their attendance with discussions at EXCEL staff meetings.
- EXCEL staff will attend the Maine Educators of the Gifted and Talented State Conference and will follow up on their attendance at EXCEL staff meetings.
- EXCEL staff will engage in text-based discussions of articles and/or books related to gifted education.

**Arts:**

**NAGC Standard 2: Assessment**

**2.2. Identification.** Each student reveals his or her exceptionalities or potential through assessment evidence so that appropriate instructional accommodations and modifications can be provided.

**Goal:** To improve the identification process for the EXCEL Arts program.

**Objective:** To modify the Arts identification process so that it is clear, cohesive and comprehensive.

**Activities:**

- Set up meetings with MSAD #60 teachers in the Arts (K-12) to have an open discussion about the current Arts identification and the requirements of Chapter 104
- Create a plan to improve the Arts identification process so that it reflects our philosophy and meets state requirements
- Share our identification process for the Arts on our website, with staff and with parents at district GT meetings

**NAGC Standard 3: Curriculum Planning and Instruction**

**3.3.1. Educators select, adapt, and use a repertoire of instructional strategies and materials that differentiate for students with gifts and talents and that respond to diversity.**

**Goal:** To more clearly delineate Arts programming at the elementary level.

**Objectives:** To ensure that the Arts programming at the elementary is appropriately differentiated.

**Activities:**

- Set up meetings with MSAD #60 teachers in the Arts (K-5) to discuss ways to differentiate the curriculum for talented arts students
- Share strategies for differentiating the arts through an ongoing dialogue

4. Provide a description of the identification processes (for general intellectual ability, academic aptitude and artistic ability) for each of the following program components: screening, selection, placement, and review of policies and procedures.

**General Intellectual Ability:**

Screening:

MSAD #60 uses a combination of objective and subjective measures to to screen for giftedness.

- We use the CogAT as a cognitive screening tool for all students in grades 3 and 5. In addition, students

who move into the district, or who have not been considered because of new or extenuating circumstances, are administered the CogAT on an individual basis (in years where there is no general screening).

- We use the STAR assessment to help us learn more about the academic achievement of students.
- Teachers are asked to complete the Renzulli Scales to provide insight into students, and locally-modified rubrics are used in the areas of science and social studies, to supplement their input, as standardized testing (the STAR) only measures mathematics and language arts. The EXCEL teachers follow up on these forms with interviews with the teachers to help complete each student's profile.
- Parents are asked to complete a parent recommendation form using the Renzulli Scales.
- Our EXCEL (GT) teachers complete a recommendation for students with whom they have worked.
- We look at state testing when results come to the district.
- We consider individual testing (such as testing done for Special Education referrals) for students who may be twice exceptional.

The initial screening takes place in grade 3, with comprehensive reviews at each change in level, i.e., grade 5, grade 7 (grade 8 attends Noble High School). Students who move into the district or for whom we have new information are considered in grades 4, 6, and 8 - 12.

#### Selection:

A committee made up of EXCEL teachers, administrators, classroom teachers and counselors, when available, is convened to consider students for gifted and talented services. The committee has representation from all schools in the district. All students in the screening pool are considered on a case-by-case basis, with a review of decisions made at the end of the process to ensure that all students were considered equitably. Information about previous identification pools is included in the discussion so students who are not part of the initial grade 3 screening, e.g., students who either move in or are re-considered in grade 4, are considered in comparison with those previously considered and are not at any advantage or disadvantage. The committee determines whether the students falls into the category of general academic or specific academic giftedness (or neither). The Superintendent of Schools is then provided with a list of identified students and their services.

#### Placement:

Students who are identified as being Gifted and Talented (General Intellectual or Academic Aptitude) are placed in programming that is appropriate for the student. This may consist of being in a cluster group of students, in an advanced level of a subject, pull-out groups for instruction or other programming options. Our Gifted and Talented staff support teachers in differentiation options and in meeting the needs of high ability learners.

#### Review of policies and procedures:

During the 2014-15 school year, all policies and documents related to academic identification were reviewed by the EXCEL (Gifted and Talented) staff. Information was updated and the policies were revisited to see if they reflected the current thinking of the staff and effective gifted and talented pedagogy. This process will be ongoing and put on a review cycle.

#### **Academic Aptitude (same procedure as for General Intellectual Ability)**

Screening for academic aptitude takes place at the same time and with the same procedure as for General Intellectual Ability. When we review the student profiles, we determine in which category the student best fits.

#### **Artistic Ability:**

##### Screening:

Students are screened for artistic ability using a variety of criteria. Portfolios or auditions, as appropriate to the artistic discipline, help demonstrate student giftedness in the areas of theater, art, music (voice and instruments) and creative writing. Teachers for these subject areas complete recommendation forms. Students complete applications and interest sheets explaining their skills and the importance of their respective art forms.

Parents and outside instructors may also provide information about the student. Screening takes place at the upper elementary levels.

**Selection:**

An arts screening committee, consisting of teachers in their respective fields, the EXCEL Director, and EXCEL (gifted and talented) teachers review all of the information collected and determines which students will qualify for services in the Arts. Rubrics indicating the artistic components being considered are used by the screening committee to assist in this process. The Superintendent of Schools is then provided with a list of identified students and their services.

**Placement:**

Once students are selected, they are provided with individual or small group lessons appropriate to their disciplines. These lessons are delivered by professional artists eight or more times per year. In addition to the arts classes offered by these independent contractors, high school students who are highly recommended in their fields participate in the Regional Fine Arts program in Biddeford. At the high school level, gifted artists have a variety of specialized courses in their fields, such as different instrument and vocal ensembles, advanced art classes, and theater classes. At all levels, teachers are encouraged to differentiate their instruction for high ability artists.

**Review of policies and procedures:**

Most policies and procedures in this district have been in effect for over ten years without review. Last year, we began the task of reviewing our arts identification procedures with our Gifted and Talented staff. That resulted in a more open and transparent procedure. This year, we plan to work more closely with teachers in each of the arts disciplines to improve our identification procedures so that they are less cumbersome and allow students the greatest access to services.

**Process for transfer students:**

Cumulative files for transfer students are reviewed. Students who enter the district with a formal identification from another district are put on "watch" status so that our staff can observe the student in relation to our population and involve students as appropriate in services. If the student was identified in their previous district, we generally include them in GT programming that is appropriate for their needs. We administer the same screening measures as our current students and are considered for formal identification at the next identification cycle.

**Exit Procedure:**

In the case of students identified in the Arts, students may choose to exit themselves from the program by completing a document designed for this purpose. These students may reapply for the program should they change their minds, or if circumstances change in the future. Additionally, if students do not avail themselves of programming offered through the school or through the EXCEL program, they are considered to be exited from the program and must reapply for consideration.

Exiting the EXCEL Academic program is far less common than exiting from the Arts. In the case where it appears that the student no longer needs services or support from the EXCEL program, a meeting is held with the student and parent to discuss the reasons for exiting the student and how the student's needs will be met in the regular classroom. A parent may also ask to have their child exited from the program. In this case, the EXCEL Director would contact the parent and discuss the rationale for exiting from the program.

**Process for appeals:**

Families are informed by letter of their student’s identification, and who to contact with questions or concerns. When a family disagrees with the decision of the screening committee, they may appeal the decision by bringing new information to the attention of the committee, which will reconsider the student’s eligibility for services. In the event that the family is unsatisfied with the committee’s decision, they may appeal to the Superintendent of Schools.

5. Provide a description of the staff development that takes place in order to implement the program(s).

The EXCEL staff provides professional development for general education staff in staff meetings, consultation with teachers and within administrative team meetings. Staff development for GT staff is accomplished primarily through attendance at local and regional conferences, with follow-up discussions in EXCEL staff meetings. Periodically, EXCEL staff may share articles and other resources that are discussed within staff meetings.

6. Provide a description of the staffing and management of the program(s); including completing the staffing tables below.

The EXCEL Staff consists of a .6 administrator who also serves as a .4 teacher, two full time teachers, one .8 teacher, one .8 teachers (.2 Interventionist), and one .6 teacher (.4 Interventionist), or 5.2 FTE employees. Each elementary teacher is assigned to one of the three communities in the school district. The staff is made up primarily of very experienced GT teachers. The staff meets approximately once/month as a whole group, with elementary and secondary staff holding smaller group meetings to address needs specific to their levels. Shared files and video conferencing make communication easy to accomplish.

Indicate the professional staff for the K-12 Gifted and Talented Program.

Name of Staff	690 Endorsement Yes/No	Teacher or Administrator	Grade level	Indicate Full-Time or Part-Time in GT
Laurie Bond	Yes	Teacher	K-5	P/T
Brenda LaFrance	Yes	Teacher	K-5	P/T
Eileen Sahagian	Yes	Teacher	K-5	P/T
Emily MacKinnon	Yes	Teacher	6-7	F/T
Adina Hunter	Yes	Teacher	9-12	
Fern Brown	Yes	Administrator/ Teacher	K-12 Grade 8	P/T P/T

Indicate the Auxiliary Staff: Educational Technician

Name of Staff	Role	690 Endorsement Yes/No	Grade level	Name and position of supervisor	Indicate Full-Time or Part-Time in GT
None					


7. Provide a description of the annual program self-evaluation process.

As mentioned earlier, the staff has not reviewed its policies or procedures for many years; this gap extends to self-evaluation. Last year we were granted several professional development days during which we looked at the needs of our students, our schools and our communities and made efforts to address programmatic weaknesses that were found. We have also set regular meeting times to look at data and how that reflects our program’s effectiveness. This was accomplished primarily through discussion within the GT staff; the evaluation will be extended this year to include students and others in the education community.

8. Provide a description of the costs to be incurred to implement the program(s).

Costs for the EXCEL program are largely dependent on salaries and benefits, which make up over 88% of the program budget. Among other expenses:  
 Almost \$22,000, or 5% is spent on independent contractors in the Arts.  
 Overall, 93% of the budget is for personnel.  
 Approximately .5% of the budget is spent on books and other instructional materials.  
 Almost 2% of the budget is devoted to tuition and professional development.  
 3% of the budget goes to arts and academic tuition programs.  
 Less than 2% of the budget is allocated for registrations and other allowable expenses.  
 Independent contractors work exclusively with identified gifted students during the school day.

9. For those school units requesting approval of allowable program costs for State subsidy, complete the following budget proposal. These amounts must be reported in the Maine Education Data Management System (MEDMS) financial system as part of the Annual Budget Reporting.

Professional Staff Name	Elementary (salary with benefits)	Secondary (salary with benefits)
Eileen Sahagian	\$52,249	
Brenda LaFrance	\$50,875	
Laurie Bond	\$49,239	
Emily MacKinnon	\$78,602	
Adina Hunter		\$65,693
Fern Brown	\$51,613	\$22,644
Subtotal	\$282,578	\$88,337

Auxiliary Staff Name	Elementary (salary with benefits)	Secondary (salary with benefits)
N/A		

Subtotal		

Independent Contractor Name	Elementary (contract amount)	Secondary (contract amount)
Claude Fried Jane Doe	\$1,487	\$1,486
Angelynne Hinson	\$ 595	\$2,378
Andrew Periale	\$ 981	\$2,088
Ellen Rondina	\$ 595	\$2,378
Virginia MacDonald	\$ 595	\$2,378
Jeffrey Samataro Zachary Lange Kelli Connors d/b/a Get-A-Clue Productions	\$1,486 \$ 595	\$1,487 \$2,377 \$ 731
Subtotal	\$6,334	\$15,303

Please list individual product names and costs associated with the district's gifted and talented program(s).

**A. A. Educational Materials and Supplies:**

Elementary: Material/Supply name	Cost	Secondary: Material/Supply name	Cost
<b><i>Books/materials to support literacy programming</i></b> 2 copies <u>Grammar Voyage</u> Teacher Copy @ \$50 apiece 2 copies <u>Grammar Voyage</u> Student Copy @ \$40 apiece 3 copies <u>Jacob's Ladder</u> Reading Comprehension program 5 @ \$40 apiece 3 Rummy Roots games @ \$20 10 copies <u>Tuck Everlasting</u> @ \$7 3 copies <u>Touchpebbles</u> Teacher Guides @ \$150 16 copies <u>Touchpebbles</u> Student Texts @ \$20	\$1200	<b><i>Books to support literacy programming</i></b> 15 copies <u>The Crucible</u> @ \$9 plus s/h Touchstones Class set for Freshman GT Students @ \$576 plus s/h  <b><i>Book to support science programming</i></b> 1 copy <u>Using the Next Gen Science Standards with Gifted Students</u> @ \$24	\$751
<b><i>Books for advanced math students</i></b> 2 copies <u>Advanced Common Core Math Explorations</u> @ \$29 apiece 2 copies <u>Zaccaro 700 Challenge Questions for the Curious Mind</u> @ \$29 apiece	\$96	<b><i>Extension materials for small groups</i></b> 2 copies <u>Change Through Choices</u> teacher guide (W&M) @ \$100 each plus s/h  2 copies <u>Philosophy for Teens</u>	\$250



grades 3 and 5			
EXCEL teacher travel expenses to conferences, district meetings	\$512	EXCEL teacher travel to conferences, district meetings	\$372
Subtotal	\$5880	Subtotal	\$622

A. C. Student Tuition:

Elementary: Program name	Cost	Secondary: Program name	Cost
		Regional Fine Arts Program	\$3600
		Project SEARCH	\$4000
		Transportation Costs to RFA, SEARCH	\$4690
Subtotal		Subtotal	\$12,290

A. D. Staff Tuition/Professional Development:

Elementary: Title	Cost	Secondary: Title	Cost
NECGT Conference, Registration and Travel	\$1725	NECGT	\$ 619
Tuition - Coursework		Adina Hunter, Fern Brown - Maine Consortium course EDPA - Educating Gifted and Talented in English/LA @ \$925, plus 2 copies of text <u>Challenging Units for Gifted Learners</u> @ \$25	\$1900
MEGAT Conference, Registration and Travel	\$475	MEGAT Conference	\$ 125
Subtotal	\$2200	Subtotal	\$2644

Totals

Subtotals from above	Elementary Costs:	Secondary Costs:	
Professional Staff	\$282,578	\$88,337	
Auxiliary Staff	N/A	N/A	
Independent Contractors	\$6,334	\$15,303	
A. A. Materials & Supplies	\$2552	\$1445	

A. B. Other Allowable Costs	\$5880	\$622	
A. C. Student Tuition		\$12,290	
A. D. Staff Tuition/PD	\$2200	\$2644	
Total	\$299,544	\$120,641	