



Bellevue School District's Advanced Learning Differentiated Services Model

Often, students who exhibit a need for advanced learning services prefer to remain in their neighborhood or choice school rather than move to one of the school sites offering the self-contained service model. For this reason, BSD's Advanced Learning Department has developed a model to provide differentiated services to students demonstrating a need for advanced learning.

Service Delivery

Differentiated Services are for students identified for the self-contained service model offered at Cherry Crest, Medina, Somerset, Spiritridge, Odle, Tyee or Interlake who wish to remain at their neighborhood or choice school and receive advanced learning services in the general education classroom. *Carol Tomlinson defines differentiation as a way of teaching in which teachers proactively modify curriculum, teaching methods, resources, learning activities, and student products to address the needs of individual students and/or small groups of students in order to maximize the learning opportunity for each student in the classroom. Differentiated instruction is offered by adding acceleration, depth, complexity, and novelty into the existing core curriculum where relevant. It is not more work or anything additional. It's doing something different with the content that is being studied.* The service delivery is similar to the Domain Specific Services Model but provided in the core content areas of language arts, math, science and social studies. Classroom teachers have support from the Advanced Learning staff, as needed, to determine how to best meet each child's needs. It is important to note that teachers already use a variety of differentiation practices to meet the needs of students in their classroom, and application of these practices will continue for students identified as in need of advanced learning services.

In the fall, classroom teachers and parents will receive a Highly Capable Classroom-Based Student Plan. Each child's plan will explain his/her strengths as well as provide instructional ideas that the teacher may choose to utilize as needed. As the teacher completes formative assessments in the fall, he or she will determine how best to meet each child's needs. Differentiation of instruction may be necessary for many units of study, but teachers may find that at times, a child needs more standardized instruction. Research on students with high potential shows that sometimes they have advanced ability in certain areas of a specific content, but they may need intentional instruction in other areas in order for them to be able to extend their learning. What this means is that teachers act as diagnosticians throughout the school year and make decisions to best meet the needs of each child.

It is important to keep in mind that every child, every teacher, and every school is different. What works for one child may not work for another. Teachers' instructional styles vary, and though one teacher may choose certain strategies/practices to meet the needs of high ability learners, another teacher might choose a different set of strategies/practices.

Students participating in differentiated services can move into self-contained services at any time. If families are choosing to make a change during the school year, it is important to contact the new school to determine the best time to make a move. Changes in school placement are best made at the start of the new school year, rather than during the current school year. For secondary students, it is recommended that the change is made only at the quarter or semester.