

Millburn  
Community Consolidated  
School District #24

Gifted Education Plan

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## School Description

Millburn Community Consolidated School District 24 includes 15.5 square miles in Lake County, Illinois. The school district, which serves the communities of Wadsworth and Old Mill Creek in addition to sections of Lindenhurst and Lake Villa, is in transition from rural to suburban. The school district experienced rapid growth at the end of the last century. As of **January 2016**, there were approximately 1,300 students from early childhood through eighth grade in attendance in one elementary and one middle school building. The district has six administrators and **105** certified staff members. The school district has an estimated teacher to pupil ratio of **1:27**.

## Gifted Program Personnel

The district has a full time, Coordinator/Teacher of the gifted program. **One** full-time resource teacher also teaches the gifted students. All members of the gifted program have instructional responsibilities.

## Philosophy and Goals

### District 24 **Mission Statement**

Millburn CCSD #24 exists to create a culture of learning that inspires and empowers students to enrich our community.

### District 24 **A.I.M. Philosophy**

The philosophy of the A.I.M. program is to provide a means to stimulate and develop gifted children to their fullest potential. To this end, A.I.M. provides curriculum in **A.I.M. classes** that is differentiated in pace, depth, and/or content level, and that also addresses the unique differences and individual needs of the gifted and talented child. **The AIM staff also provides support for teachers and gifted students in the general education classroom.**

The A.I.M. program also recognizes and adheres to the following:

- A commitment to the optimum development of each learner
- A belief that all students can and want to learn
- A need to help students develop responsibility for their own learning, behavior, and concern for others
- A commitment to help students develop confidence in themselves, their abilities and skills
- A commitment to the social-emotional development of the gifted student

The Illinois School Code definition of giftedness states:

Sec. 14A-10.

- (1)that gifted and talented children (i) exhibit high performance capabilities in intellectual, creative, and artistic areas, (ii) possess an exceptional leadership potential, (iii) excel in specific academic fields, and (iv) have the potential to be influential in business, government, healthcare, the arts, and other critical sectors of our economic and cultural environment;
- (2)that gifted and talent children require services and activities that are not ordinarily provided by schools;
- (3)that outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.

Sec. 14A-20. Gifted and talented children. For the purposes of this Article, “gifted and talented children” means children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other children and youth of their age, experience, and environment. A child shall be considered gifted and talented in any area of aptitude, and specifically, in language arts and mathematics, by scoring in the top 5% locally in that area of aptitude.

## Identification

Millburn District 24 identifies students for the gifted program, **Appropriate Instruction at Millburn, or A.I.M.**, with the cooperation of parents, teachers, and gifted personnel. Procedures are based upon the Illinois State Board of Gifted Education Rules.

**For consideration for the A.I.M. Program**, a child **may be identified as** gifted and talented in **reading** and mathematics by scoring **within the top 10%** locally in that area of aptitude. **Identification procedures follow.**

### 1. General Intellectual Ability

The child possesses general intellectual ability that is consistently superior to that of their peers to the extent that he/she needs and can profit from educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular curriculum.

### 2. Specific Aptitude Talent: Specifically **Reading or Mathematics**

The child possess an aptitude in a specific academic area which is consistently superior to the aptitudes of other children to the extent that he/she can profit from educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular curriculum.

The following is a list of the identification tools that may be used in the process of assessment based upon the student needs and requirements of the district:

#### **NWEA MAP Tests**

**Otis-Lennon Aptitude Test**

**Parent Observation/Recommendation**

**Teacher Observation/Recommendation**

**Kingore Observation Instrument (KOI)**

**Cognitive Abilities Test**

**Observations by Gifted Personnel**

**Other assessments as deemed necessary**

***Standardized Achievement Test(s) and the Otis-Lennon Aptitude Test*** are used as initial screening instruments. Both of these tests provide a look at students' achievement and abilities. **All students in grades 2 – 8 take NWEA MAP testing in the fall and spring. The Otis-Lennon is administered to all second and fifth grade students.** The gifted coordinator screens all students' test scores before any further testing or observations are performed.

***Parent Observations*** are **included in** the identification process. Parents have a unique opportunity to watch the development of their child over several years. This makes their input a valuable tool in the identification process.

***Teacher Recommendations*** are essential and required for the screening process. Teachers observe and evaluate the students' learning styles as well as their performance in the classroom.

***The Kingore Observatory Instrument (KOI)*** provides a way to conduct planned experiences with **all second grade** children in order to observe gifted behaviors and responses. Evaluated areas are: materials used, organization, divergence, elaboration, and responses significantly beyond age level. The A.I.M. personnel conduct the activities that yield products from the children that are then assessed according to a set of criteria. These activities provide information on students without conducting formal testing.

***The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)*** is a norm-referenced test, which yields scores in three ability areas: verbal, quantitative, and non-verbal. From these three sections a composite score is given. The purpose of the test is to assess students' abilities in reasoning and problem solving using verbal, quantitative, and spatial (non-verbal) symbols. The results provide scores to help interpret the students' abilities and needs.

***Observations By A.I.M. Personnel*** may be conducted as needed. Teachers or parents can request that **an A.I.M.** teacher observe a child in order to look for specific responses and behaviors **that correlate with giftedness.**

**OVERVIEW OF SCREENING:** Criteria for placement are necessary in gifted programs to identify eligible students. All students are initially screened **in second grade**. Alternate assessment measures and/or environments will be utilized for students as required. The AIM Advisory Committee, consisting of an administrator, gifted program coordinator, classroom teachers and A.I.M. teacher(s), makes the decision for services. The classroom teacher, parents, and other interested parties may be invited when appropriate. If the committee decides to place a student in the AIM program, services are provided in the least restrictive environment.

### **Grade 2:**

All students are screened in the spring of second grade. The procedures below are intended to identify the students who demonstrate exceptional academic and intellectual ability based on local percentiles.

#### *Standard procedures:*

- All students are evaluated after participating in the KOI activities.
- The gifted coordinator and classroom teachers review the standardized testing results in the spring identifying all students with local scores typically at the 95th percentile or above in areas of reading **and math**.
- The gifted coordinator and classroom teachers review the Otis-Lennon results in the areas of verbal, non-verbal and/or the total score.
- Students who are identified are administered the Cognitive Abilities Test.
- Teachers complete a rating scale of gifted behaviors for each identified student.
- Parents of students being tested complete a checklist.
- Information from the above procedures is compiled and presented to the AIM Advisory Committee. A decision about appropriate placement is made for each student and presented to the parents or guardian.
- Parent requests for testing are honored.
- Students new to the district may be screened and tested if warranted.

**Grades 3 – 8:**

All students' test scores in grades three through eight are reviewed in the spring to determine eligibility for further screening. New students entering the district after this period may be screened at another time.

*Standard procedures:*

- The gifted coordinator and classroom teachers review the standardized testing results, **if available**, identifying all students with local scores typically in the 92<sup>nd</sup> percentile or above in areas of reading, language, math, and/or total battery.
- The gifted coordinator and classroom teachers review the Otis-Lennon scores in the areas of verbal, non-verbal and/or the total score.
- Students who are identified as needing further screening are administered the Cognitive Abilities Test.
- Teachers are given a rating scale of gifted behaviors to complete.
- Parents are given a checklist and question sheet to complete.
- Information from the above procedures is compiled and presented to the AIM Advisory Committee to make a final decision about each student. A decision about appropriate placement is made for each student and presented to the parents of guardians.
- Students new to the district may be screened and tested when warranted.
- Parent requests for testing are honored.
- For students currently in the program, assessment is on-going using a variety of techniques to insure appropriate instruction is being provided.



## Appeals Procedure for Gifted Identification and Placement

There is an established process for appeals for parents if they are dissatisfied with the identification process and/or placement of their child in the AIM program. The district's desire and intent is to reach a satisfactory solution during the informal process.

### ***Informal Process***

1. The parents will contact the gifted coordinator to express dissatisfaction.
2. The gifted coordinator will confer with the parents and may include any additional appropriate persons (i.e. classroom teacher, AIM teacher, counselor, etc.) At this time, information pertinent to the selection or placement will be shared.

In the event that a satisfactory agreement cannot be reached, parents may initiate the formal appeals process.

### ***Formal Appeals Process***

1. Parents shall submit a written request to the **district superintendent** that appropriate school personnel formally review their child's identification/placement in A.I.M. Parents may submit additional evidence in support of their claim at this time.
2. The **superintendent** shall acknowledge the receipt of the request in writing within five working days and shall forward copies of the request and acknowledgement to the gifted coordinator.
3. The **superintendent** and gifted coordinator along with other appropriate **personnel**, shall review the student's file, the earlier decision, and **any** new information within 15 working days of the original request.
4. Following that review, the A.I.M. Advisory Committee may **collect additional new** data.
5. The A.I.M. Advisory Committee, classroom teacher(s), and parents will **attend** a formal hearing. The **superintendent** will serve as moderator.

6. A **final** decision will then be made regarding the student's placement. A formal notification will be sent to parents. The decision shall be forwarded to appropriate school personnel.

### **Exit Procedure**

1. Should a student have difficulty in the program, a conference will be held with the student, parent(s), and A.I.M. teacher(s). Clear criteria will be established at this initial conference to help the student be successful in the program.
2. The A.I.M. teacher and/or coordinator will document all work and situations relevant to the criteria established during the initial conference.
3. If the student continues to have difficulty in the program, the following steps will be taken.
  - a. A conference will be held during which a contract will be read, discussed, and signed by the student and parent or guardian (see appendix).
  - b. The student, A.I.M. Coordinator, and/or A.I.M. teacher will meet on a quarterly basis to review the student's progress and determine if the contract will continue for the next **grading period**. The parent may be present if the need or desire arises.
4. Should it be determined that the student has not met the criteria of their contract at the end of each **grading period**, the student will be withdrawn from the program for the rest of the school year. The student may reapply for admission to the program the following year should they wish to do so. Their readmission to the program at that time will be on a contract basis.

### ***Rationale for exiting the program***

- Student is not performing as expected
- Student is suspected of being misidentified
- Program changes focus
- Student requests additional instruction with same age peers
- Student requests to leave the program

- There is a need for that student to leave the program for legitimate reasons (i.e., health, etc.)
- Parents request that student be removed from the program

***Procedures for exiting the program***

- Notify and talk with parents and students
- Document work and situations
- Notify program coordinator of situation
- Establish contract with student
- Review rules/procedures/policies for student
- Remove student from program and delineate steps to re-enter the program

## Program Delivery

**Overview:** The A.I.M. Program and Millburn District 24 provide services based on the unique characteristics and needs of gifted students. These needs and characteristics of gifted learners may include:

- Students who learn more rapidly in their areas of strength.
- Students who retain and use what is learned without repeated drill.
- Students who possess superior abstract thinking skills.
- Students who have superior communication skills.
- Students who have longer attention spans and can concentrate intensely. They are often able to display sustained energy.
- Students who freely associate ideas, and are able to come up with unusual connections and correlations.
- Students who have the ability to generalize, create patterns, and to use logical reasoning.
- Students who display great curiosity about many subjects and often want to explore topics in depth.
- Students who are intellectually playful.
- Students who have a strong need to know about a variety of topics.
- Students who have a greater tolerance for ambiguity.
- Students who need accelerated pacing to meet their rapid learning rate.
- Students who need cluster grouping to provide connections with similar students.
- Students who need opportunities to master foundation skills at earlier ages with less emphasis on drill and routine.
- Students who need opportunities to apply higher level thinking skills and the chance to engage in the active exchange of ideas.
- Students who need opportunities for a variety of types of expressions including written, verbal, and creative.

**Grades K-2** includes reading enrichment (grades 1 – 2) via Bookworms.

Children are not formally identified. Differentiation assistance is provided at teacher request.

**Grades 3-5** are offered pull-out programs for mathematically and verbally gifted students **once they are identified for the program**. Sessions with an

A.I.M teacher include activities that extend the classroom curriculum, critical and creative thinking, accelerated instruction, and social-emotional needs. Identified students are clustered beginning in grade 3.

Differentiation assistance is provided at teacher request.

**Middle School:** AIM students are clustered for ELA with other A.I.M. readers. Math placement is dependent upon NWEA scores and student's placement the previous year. Grades 6-8 are also offered a pull-out class that meets two times per week. These classes are designed to offer interdisciplinary units that offer depth and extend the opportunity for application. Social-emotional needs are also addressed. Differentiation assistance is provided at teacher request.

### **Program Design:**

Programs are in place in the following areas:

#### ***Mathematics:***

Grades K – 2: differentiation within classroom **at teacher request**

Grades 3 – 5: replacement mathematics for gifted and talented

Grades 6 – 8: accelerated math **classes**

#### ***Reading/Language Arts:***

Grades K – 2: differentiation within classroom **at teacher request**; Kindergarten pull-out/enrichment **is available** as needed for early readers; Bookworms program for students in grades 1 and 2 who are **reading** at least one grade level above their current grade, recommended by the classroom teacher and **meet the screening criteria**.

Grade 3: pull-out three times per week for identified students

Grades 4 – 5: pull-out twice per week for identified students

Grades 6 – 8: cluster grouping of A.I.M students with other readers

In general, the curriculum for A.I.M. students could include:

- the opportunity to achieve basic skills with activities at an appropriate level
  - and pace
- content beyond the prescribed curriculum
- exposure to a variety of fields of study
- student-selected content
- content which contains complexity
- experiences in creative thinking and problem solving
- development of critical thinking skills, with an emphasis on synthesis,
  - analysis, and evaluation
- affective development
- development of motivation
- discussion and activities to address social and emotional needs
- exposure to STEM activities

In summary, the emphasis throughout the curriculum is the development of higher level thinking skills, such as analytical, critical, creative and executive process skills.

## **District Responsibilities**

After reviewing the needs assessment, Millburn District 24 provides a program for the gifted in order to:

### **Provide ability-based curriculum:**

- Individualization of curriculum that provides more depth, breadth and focuses on broad based concepts based on the needs of gifted and talented students
- Accelerated curriculum that allows appropriate subject or grade skipping and enrichment

### **Address social-emotional needs:**

- The unique social-emotional needs of gifted learners are met through teacher training
- The gifted and talented program will provide time for social interaction with other students who have similar abilities

### **The Coordinator of the Gifted Program will:**

- Maintain and develop the gifted program by:
  - serving as district level supervisor
  - coordinating and assisting in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of the program
  - coordinating and ensuring that curriculum is articulated between levels
  - serving as a consultant and resource
  - reviewing and selecting instructional materials
  - reviewing curriculum and assisting in creation and evaluation of new units
  - providing performance outcome data to ISBE
  - attend appropriate meetings and conferences to remain current in the field
  - coordinate identification and testing procedures

- Assist staff by:
  - orienting new teachers
  - providing staff development
  - assisting with gifted certification
  - assisting with differentiation
- Communicate with administration, parents, and community by:
  - promoting parent education
  - promoting public relations at a local level
  - informing the administration of activities of the gifted program and recommended improvements
  - serving as a liaison between the board of education, administration, parents, and teachers
  - reporting to the Board of Education annually as part of the school improvement plan

### **The A.I.M Resource Teacher(s) will:**

- provide an enriched and accelerated individualized program for the gifted students which:
  - integrates thinking and meta-cognitive skills
  - meets required curriculum and state goals
  - provides for the social-emotional needs of the gifted student
- assist students in planning, organizing, and evaluating tasks
- screen, develop, and provide appropriate materials
- evaluate student progress and academic growth
- meet with cluster teachers to discuss students progress and curriculum
- interpret the program to parents, staff, and students
- work with gifted coordinator to ensure program goals are met

### **The Cluster Teacher will:**

- have attended the **Gifted Education Seminar** or its equivalent
- differentiate the regular classroom curriculum
- communicate regularly with coordinator and A.I.M. personnel
- evaluate student progress and academic growth



- assume personal responsibility for professional development
- evaluate and make recommendations of students for the gifted and talented program

**The Classroom Teachers will:**

- provide appropriate instruction for gifted/talented within the classroom
- evaluate and make recommendations of students for the A.I.M. program
- assist in the evaluation of the program

**The Building Principal will:**

- coordinate hiring of staff for A.I.M. in cooperation with gifted coordinator
- work cooperatively with other building and district personnel in evaluating the program

**The Students will:**

- actively participate in A.I.M. classes
- become active participants in the planning and evaluation of projects in the curriculum
- assist in the evaluation of the program

**The Administration/Board of Education will:**

- provide the necessary staff and funding to implement the A.I.M. program including coordinator and teacher salaries, in-service opportunities, instructional materials, publicity, and evaluation

**The A.I.M. Advisory Committee will:**

- review data determining student placement

**The Parents will:**

- be offered regularly scheduled meetings and programs about the gifted and talented program
- assist in the evaluation of the program

### Staff and Parent Development

Millburn School District Gifted staff will implement and maintain the A.I.M. program through the following resources and training opportunities. The plan for comprehensive staff and parent development **may include**:

	A.I.M. Teachers	School Personnel	Parents
In-service Training	√	√	
Overview of the Program	√	√	√
Outside Development	√	√	
Speakers	√	√	√
Workshops & Conferences	√	√	
Newsletter & Program Handbook	√	√	√
Journals, Literature, & Web Sites (especially those devoted to educating the gifted and talented)	√	√	√
Release days to visit gifted program sites	√		
Specialist in the field to visit to work with teachers	√	√	
After school focus group	√	√	√

## **Evaluation**

Periodic evaluation of the A.I.M. program is necessary in order to demonstrate the success of the program. Evaluation of A.I.M. is conducted regularly. Decisions on whether to continue, change, or expand the gifted program will be made based on established program goals and only after the following stakeholders have been presented with a detailed evaluation:

- students
- parents of the students in the gifted program
- coordinators/teachers of the gifted program
- all classroom teachers (grades K-2) and cluster gifted teachers in the regular education classroom (grades 3-8)
- building administration (principals/board of education)

## GLOSSARY

**ACCELERATION:** Covering the curriculum at a fast pace eliminating replication and excess drill that some gifted children do not need.

**CLUSTER GROUPING:** Grouping gifted students together because they learn better in homogeneous groups while simultaneously grouping the rest of the students in heterogeneous groups.

**COMPACTING:** A type of differentiation that allows students, whose content knowledge and skill level are substantially advanced from fellow classmates, to pursue enrichment options. The teacher identifies the essential content that can be accelerated, eliminated and/or pre-assessed for the student before beginning alternate projects or material.

**DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM:** Instruction that is designed to meet the unique needs of all children. For gifted children, this should include a curriculum that allows for acceleration, stimulation of high-level thinking, and convergent thinking.

**ENRICHMENT:** Learning activities that go beyond the regular curricular activities.

**PULLOUT PROGRAM:** Removing gifted students from the classroom on a regularly scheduled basis for differentiated instruction.

**REPLACEMENT CLASSES:** A.I.M. classes that parallel the regular curriculum only at a faster pace and with more depth.

**STEM:** Science + Technology + Engineering + Math activities.