

## **Fort Mill School District Middle School Gifted and Talented Program**

We constantly monitor our instructional program in an effort to provide the best academic outcomes for all students. Through this process we determined a need to examine our middle school gifted and talented (GT) program model. Our goal is to provide every student with the opportunity to achieve at the highest level.

We feel all students should have the opportunity to work and learn with all students. We feel all students should have the same access to high-level instruction and learning. Our current STEAM and 1-1 Chromebook initiatives provides us with a unique opportunity to change our model while providing the necessary training and support to our teachers.

We propose aligning the middle school gifted and talented model with the elementary model. We would serve GT students in English and Math and heterogeneously mix students in science and social studies. We would implement this plan in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade for the 2019-2020 school year. We would then continue the plan with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. We feel this is the best model for a variety of reasons as stated below.

- When students qualify as GT in South Carolina they qualify with scores in verbal, quantitative, mathematics or reading domains. Students do not qualify for GT services in science or social studies.
- The science and social studies standards in middle schools are identical for grade level and GT classes. Students in the GT program take an entirely different course in math each year as well as a different course in English during their 8th grade year.
- Our current GT model does not align with the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform, a leader in middle grades education. Their literature shows it is imperative for all students to participate in heterogeneous classes with high expectations for all students. All students should have access to the same high level of instruction.
- We do not feel our current GT model aligns with the goals of the Profile of the S.C. Graduate. This profile spells out the qualities we want our students to have upon high school graduation.
- With our current district STEAM initiative, we are working on providing personalized, differentiated instruction in all content areas for all students. This approach will support all students and lessen the need to schedule classes based on GT qualifications. As we continue creating problem-based learning experiences and STEAM focused lessons and units all students will benefit from these efforts.
- Teachers are receiving intense professional development this year as part of our 1-1 Chromebook initiative which focuses on differentiation.
- Enrollment in gifted and talented courses in middle school science and/or social studies does not impact enrollment in high school honors or advanced placement courses.