

District #64

Primary Challenge Program

Primary Challenge is a program of services for students from kindergarten through 2nd grade with advanced learning needs in the specific academic areas of reading and math. The program is designed to use a flexible identification process and provide services as a student demonstrates need. The process used to identify students for these services employs classroom and Primary Challenge teacher observations and consultations. Whole class lessons may be followed by assessments of individual students. The process is conducted during each trimester. Criteria for identification include demonstration of skills in reading and/or math that are advanced for the child's grade level.

If pullout services are appropriate for your child, you will receive a notification letter and permission slip following the observations and assessment period.

Primary Challenge Services

The Primary Challenge services provided to students are aligned with the classroom curriculum while providing students a level of challenge appropriate to their level of ability. The exact nature and content of the program

services will be determined cooperatively between the classroom teacher and the Primary Challenge teacher. This will be based on the observed learning needs of the students to be served.

Primary Challenge teachers:

- provide collaboration time with classroom teachers for identification and support services needed by students in their classroom.
- assist teachers in developing or accessing classroom materials to support differentiated instruction of students as needed.
- collaborate with classroom teachers in the identification of students for services through the program.
- provide pullout instruction in specific skill areas for identified students. Such pullout instruction is scheduled for a period of weeks and addresses areas of strength in reading and/or math that the students have in common.

Primary Challenge teachers may also provide:

- pull-out additional instruction for students identified collaboratively with classroom teachers.
- small group instruction within the classroom as appropriate.

Primary Challenge Identification Process

Developmentally, children's abilities emerge at different times. Identification process for Primary Challenge will occur throughout the school year. Identification of students for services in grades K - 2 will be based on district, classroom, and Primary Challenge teacher assessments. The identification is fluid and allows for participation based on a student's strengths, interests, and needs.

The identification process for Reading includes DIBELS testing for all students and individual reading assessment for targeted students. For math identification, classroom lessons with small group follow-up assessments identify students who have already mastered the grade level math curriculum for the coming program period. Classroom teacher input is also included in the process.

Student Grouping

Students in the Primary Challenge program are assigned to heterogeneous classrooms. Cluster grouping of students in Grades 1 and 2 is a factor considered in assigning students to heterogeneous classrooms. Cluster grouping is an administrative arrangement that places small groups of students with high academic ability within heterogeneous classrooms. Group sizes range from 3 - 6 students. Cluster grouping facilitates differentiation of instruction for students of high academic ability.

Social and Emotional Needs

"The surest path to high self esteem is to be successful at something one perceived as difficult." Dr. Sylva Rimm

Students identified for the Primary Challenge program need opportunities to develop self-confidence. They must learn how to accomplish "hard" tasks in order to have confidence in their abilities. Working with other students of similar ability will encourage them to meet necessary learning challenges. Consistent involvement in challenging learning opportunities encourages the development of positive self-image.

These needs are usually well met within the context of the regular classroom and the Primary Challenge program. Students who require a more intense response are referred to the building social worker for appropriate services.

Parent Communications

Information about the program and the calendar are distributed during building curriculum nights. Parents receive written notice if their child has been identified for the program. Lesson Links are sent home after each session so that parents know what has been addressed in the Primary Challenge class that week.