Rationale:

The Calgary Catholic School District is committed to the planning and delivery of high quality education programs, supports and services for gifted students in order to allow these students to maximize their learning and achievement.

In the context of public education, gifted education refers to the education of students who have outstanding abilities and are capable of exceptional performance across a wide range of abilities in one or more than one area, including general intelligence, a specific academic area, creative thinking, social skills, musical, artistic and kinesthetic abilities and have diverse educational needs.

The Calgary Catholic School District recognizes that gifted students require specialized programming commensurate with their exceptional abilities; including a supportive learning environment, effective programming options and services, appropriate curricula to meet diverse needs and effective teaching and learning strategies implemented within the regular classroom or a specialized gifted program setting.

Alberta Education requires school boards to identify and deliver effective programming for all students in grades 1 to 12 including those who are gifted.

Regulation:

In order to create learning environments where students with exceptional gifts and talents can thrive, the Calgary Catholic School District expects school personnel, working in consultation with Instructional Services and in collaboration with parents and community-based associations, to provide for the development and utilization of specialized programs and services for gifted students within the limits of available resources and programs.

Identification of Gifted Students

Alberta Education requires that school districts identify students with diverse learning needs, including students who are gifted. Within this provincial mandate, students identified as gifted must have access to an educational program as outlined in a collaboratively developed Learner Support Plan (LSP).
The first step to this process of program development is identification.

1. **Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT) Screening Process**
   Each year, the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT) is administered universally to grade four and six students. School staffs review the results in conjunction with classroom assessments and observations to better understand the learning profile of each individual student. Understanding the learning profile of each student supports appropriate programming for all students.

   As part of the CCAT review, school staff must identify students with test results that suggest high ability, indicated by Standard Age Scores (SAS) of 128 (95th percentile) or greater.

   If a student meets the criteria, and a parent or guardian consents to coding their child (Code 80 – gifted and talented), schools are responsible for completing the required Instructional Services documentation. Current documents and forms related to this process are found on the district intranet site.

   Some students are identified automatically in Part A of the CCAT Gifted Identification Process Form with a composite Standard Age Score (SAS) score of 128 or greater and Verbal and Quantitative Age Percentile Rank (APRV) scores above the 90th percentile. Students with SAS scores of 128 or above in the individual verbal or quantitative categories are also potential candidates for gifted identification. These students require further investigation by the teacher filling in Part B of the CCAT Gifted Identification Process Form. The completed CCAT Gifted Identification Process Form, including Part B, must be sent in the pony to the Gifted Programming consultant at St. Leo Centre for further examination. The consultant will determine the next steps. (See IHBB-E (1) – Gifted Identification Process Form)

   In all cases, the completed Gifted Identification Process Form and copy of the CCAT Identification Coding Form must be placed in the student’s cumulative record file.

2. **Psycho-Educational Assessments**
   The district does not typically conduct psycho-educational assessments for the purposes of gifted identification. On occasion, parents will share an assessment from another source with the school. If there is a psycho-educational assessment that indicates a student may be gifted, a Request for Support form must be completed, attached to the report, and sent to the consultant for Gifted Programming.

   In cases where the documentation provided is the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC IV or V) and the student scored above 125/95th percentile in either the Verbal Comprehension Index or the Perceptual Reasoning Index, additional information will be required to create a broader profile of the student’s learning capabilities.
To support this process the district’s consultant for Gifted Programming will review the available documentation to determine the next steps. The consultant may also request that the Instructional Services psychologist review the report prior to proceeding with identification if appropriate.

**Instructional Programming for Gifted Students**

Teachers must consult with parents/guardians and students when designing and implementing programming for students who have been identified as gifted. All gifted students must be given opportunities to collaborate with their teachers in selecting appropriate instructional strategies within their interests and strength areas.

The Calgary Catholic School District offers the following opportunities for gifted students to be challenged:

**Differentiated Instruction**

The term “differentiation” includes a variety of instructional strategies that recognize and support individual differences in student learning. Differentiated instruction encourages learning by considering students’ individual learning styles, recognizing that some students will require adjusted expectations and offering a variety of ways for students to explore curriculum content and demonstrate learning. With differentiated instruction, the teacher creates learning situations that match students’ current abilities and learning preferences. Differentiation can occur in the content, process, products and assessment of classroom instruction.

Differentiated assessment is an essential component of differentiated instruction. Completion of pretests to determine what students know is critical in determining and planning an effective differentiated program. As part of the gifted differentiated program, teachers must provide gifted students with opportunities to:

- explore complex content and comprehensively study interest areas, issues and concepts across core areas and beyond
- reconceptualize existing knowledge or generate new knowledge
- use appropriate and specialized resources in investigating and communicating unique aspects of various disciplines
- develop higher level thinking skills, creativity and excellence

When planning instructional programming for gifted students, teachers become guides or facilitators of learning. They provide a structure which encourages active student participation in all levels of learning and which provides a safe atmosphere that supports creativity and appropriate intellectual risk taking.

**Instructional Groupings**

The following instructional combinations are opportunities within the school and district to facilitate gifted differentiated instruction:
• cluster grouping within classes
• projects of choice and challenge
• cross grade-level groupings
• independent study and research
• special events and/or community based learning opportunities
• Program of Choice / “school within a school” specialized, congregated gifted programs
• acceleration

Within all of these situations, students may interact with intellectual peers, whatever the age difference.

Acceleration

The Calgary Catholic School District expects that appropriate instructional programming is in place to support student success.

Acceleration is progress through an educational program at rates faster or at ages younger than the average for one’s age. Acceleration may be grade-based or subject-based.

A summary of the research on gifted student acceleration supports the practice of acceleration only when appropriately researched, considered and carefully planned and implemented. The academic and social gains associated with acceleration for highly gifted students are well documented. The decision to accelerate a student needs to be weighed carefully according to the best interests and needs of the student.

Acceleration is usually presented by a parent to a teacher or principal. When this occurs, the parent should be asked to put their request in writing and to include evidence to support their request. The student’s teacher must also provide evidence of academic potential and performance compared to their same-aged peers. The district’s consultant for Gifted Programming must be contacted to support the facilitation of this systemic process.

Teachers are encouraged to include programming support from a variety of sources including the district consultant for Gifted Programming, school administration, school-based Diverse Learning coordinating teachers, School Resource teams and Instructional Services staff.

The district offers support by ensuring gifted students:

• receive appropriate specialized programming
• have access to the most enabling setting to meet their needs
• have regular opportunities to interact with their like-minded high ability peers
• enjoy their school life
• have access to specialized classes and services as required within the resources available
Further, the Gifted Programming consultant offers inservice and school-based consultation focused on identification, LSP development and specialized programming to support the gifted learner.

Resources to further complement programming for gifted students including Alberta Education resources and others may be found at the Instructional Media Centre (St. Leo Centre), the Teacher Professional Library (St. Leo Centre), school libraries and Instructional Services.

Approval Date: October 29, 2014

Policy Reference: EL-8 Treatment of Students and Parents
EL-13 Curriculum and Instruction
www.cssd.ab.ca/board-of-trustees/monitoring-reports/

District Vision Reference: Faith, Relationships, Excellence in Teaching and Learning
www.cssd.ab.ca/about-us/mission-vision-statements/

education.alberta.ca/media/311334/423.pdf
Ministerial Order on Student Learning (#001/2013)
www.education.alberta.ca/department/policy/standards/goals.aspx

Other Reference: The Journey: Handbook for Parents of Children who are Gifted and Talented
education.alberta.ca/admin/supportingstudent/engagingparents/journey.aspx

Making a Difference, Chapter 10, 2010
education.alberta.ca/teachers/resources/cross/making-a-difference.aspx

Cross Reference: IHBA, Special Education
www.cssd.ab.ca/about-us/district-governance/regulations/