



Parents/Students,

Welcome Back! Author Roy Bennett once said, "The more you feed your mind with positive thoughts, the more you can attract great things into your life." I am a true believer that this year will bring forth many opportunities for learning and expanding our minds to conquer new things. With that being said, allow me to share with you an overview of the operation of the Gifted Program at Parkside for this school year.

As you are aware, Parkside is moving toward gaining authorization for our International Baccalaureate (IB) signature program. The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. The IB program focuses on fostering critical thinking and building problem-solving skills, while encouraging diversity, international mindedness, curiosity, and a healthy appetite for learning and excellence. An IB education provides students distinct advantages as they enter a world where asking the right questions is as important as discovering answers.

In an IB environment, gifted and talent development students utilize two distinct instructional models. Those models are cluster and collaboration. The **collaboration model** serves gifted students daily in their homeroom classes through targeted instructional collaboration between the homeroom content-certified teacher and gifted-endorsed teacher. The **cluster grouping model** serves gifted students daily in a homeroom where the teacher is content certified and gifted-endorsed. The models require students to be served for a minimum of one-sixth of the instructional day or its annual equivalent. These delivery models meet the requirements of Georgia Board Rule 160-4-2-.38.

Your child's homeroom teacher may be supporting the cluster or collaboration model, however, team planning and lesson integration takes place on all grade levels for all students. Each grade level is led by a gifted endorsed teacher, who provides insight into the types of activities that can be implemented for the higher levels of learners during lesson planning. Those lessons and activities are simultaneously offered to all teachers on that grade level. In addition, I will also push into the collaboration classes to render support to the teacher and students weekly.

As an extension to the services provided by the homeroom teachers, I, Dr. Donelson, will introduce and facilitate "**DISCOVERY LEARNING WITH DR. D.**". This activity will take place, once a week, for approximately 75-90 minutes, for each grade level of gifted and talent development students. During this time, students will engage in meaningful lessons and activities that enhance the IB units of study. We will embed the gifted standards into a variety of lessons and activities that will allow the students to dig deeper into the IB units of inquiry. This is sure to enhance and continue to encourage the students to grow in their level of thinking and exploration. The schedule for "**Discovery Learning with Dr. D**" is attached. Classes will begin the week of August 23rd.

We will have a gifted and talent development meeting on Thursday, August 26, 2021 from 4:45-5:15pm to discuss our models in more detail. The meeting will be held via Zoom. Meeting ID: 550-408-5803

Passcode: HARRIS

I look forward to continuing the work of moving the needle for our gifted and talented students. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email me.