I. **Definition.** A person in the chronological age group four through twenty years inclusive, who by virtue of certain outstanding abilities in academic achievement, creativity, and task commitment, is capable of high performance in an identified field. Such an individual, identified by professionally qualified persons, requires differentiated educational programs or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize his or her full contribution to self and society.

II. **Eligibility Criteria**

A. **General**

According to the publication entitled *Program Standards for Gifted and Talented Education in the State of Delaware* as approved by the State Board of Education in June of 1986, and Title 14, Chapter 31, Section 3101 of the Delaware Code, students eligible to receive differentiated educational programs or services are those who demonstrate achievement, and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, either singularly or in combination:

1. General intellectual ability
2. Specific academic aptitude
3. Creative or productive thinking
4. Leadership ability
5. Visual and performing arts
6. Psychomotor ability (non-athletic)

III. **Philosophy**

The Smyrna School District recognizes that academically gifted students exist in all ethnic, geographic, and socioeconomic groups within the State of Delaware. These students represent a valuable asset to our community and require a differentiated educational experience. Our Gifted and Talented youth possess talents and ability differing from those of their peers to such a degree that instruction and experiences, which are particularly suited to their needs, are required in order for them to reach their full potential. It is imperative that support for this differentiated instruction will become a necessary part of District policy and will be implemented by the Superintendent, Supervisor of Special Services, the building Principal, and all teachers who instruct these students. A well-rounded, academically-gifted program that includes plans for both acceleration and enrichment will allow students to work at their own pace, in more depth and with greater variety in content. The students will also receive additional opportunities in the development of creative, affective, and problem-solving skills.

IV. **Goals and Objectives**

A. To foster the development of self-generating problem solving abilities and higher level thinking skills by providing differentiated learning opportunities focusing on developing higher order thinking skills and creativity.

B. To encourage creativity with the integration of STEM.

C. To provide for the affective needs and encourage the development of a positive self-image.
D. To provide acceleration as appropriate.

E. To encourage curiosity by providing students with new experiences and allowing them to explore new concepts through independent study and projects.

F. To encourage parental communication and participation in the academically-gifted program; to enhance community perception of gifted education.

G. To assist classroom teachers with consultation, materials and training which will facilitate the enrichment of the curriculum for Gifted and Talented students.

V. Definitions

A. Acceleration is any adjustment in the student’s program that allows him/her to complete any school program (curriculum) in less time than is normal. Strategies may include grade or subject skipping, early admission, credit by examination, AP courses and early admission to college.

B. Enrichment is the provision of learning experiences that develop higher processes of thinking and creativity in a subject area. Strategies may include independent study and projects, learning centers, field trips, mentorships, STEM experiences and numerous after-school activities.

VI. Selection of STEP Participants, Grades 2 and 4

A. The screening pool:
   1. The teachers of the academically-gifted administer a group intelligence test to all nominated students in grades 2 and grade 4 during the spring semester.
   2. Using the results of this testing, results of this testing will be applied to a district matrix.
   3. The teachers of the academically-gifted solicit nominations from classroom teachers that include students who demonstrate exemplary abilities in learning characteristics, creativity, or motivation. Self-nominations and parent nominations are also accepted at this time.
   4. The teachers of the academically-gifted complete a matrix of scores for each student that includes:
      a. a group intelligence test,
      b. teacher rating scales,
      c. parent rating scales,
      d. grade point average in core academic areas,
      e. an individual creativity index.
   5. The matrices are scored and ranked.
   6. The teachers of the academically gifted meet with the Screening Committee to make the final selection of STEP participants. This committee may be composed of all grade level teachers and the principal and guidance counselor. The perceived needs of each student will be the primary consideration when selection is considered.

B. This selection process should be completed for each newly-nominated student and those students entering the school district for the first time, even if the student has been a participant in a gifted and talented program elsewhere.

VII. Exit Policy

A. Withdrawal from the Academically-Gifted Program
1. If withdrawal of a student is being considered, a conference with the parent, classroom teacher, and teacher of the academically-gifted and building principal is required.

B. Conditions that may merit withdrawal from the program:

1. Failure to meet program requirements upon reevaluation.
2. Difficulty with academic achievement.
3. Inability to perform adequately during academically-gifted class period for either academic or discipline problems.
4. Parental decision.

VIII. Instructional Program

A. Curricula

Curriculum in the STEP Program is differentiated by using the Renzulli Enrichment Triad Model through Type I, Type II, and Type III activities. Creativity and higher level thinking skills may be developed from a combination of Bloom’s Taxonomy, Torrance’s theories of creativity and Talents Unlimited.

B. Delivery Models

1. Smyrna Early Enrichment (SEE) Program, Early Elementary
   a. Rationale

   The Smyrna School District recognizes the difficulty with early selection due to uncontrollable factors such as early schooling, an enriched home environment, and early exposure to learning materials and learning activities. Therefore, through the SEE program, every child may benefit from specific classroom activities that stress creative, affective, and critical-thinking skills.

   The classroom teachers and the teacher of the academically-gifted will utilize this program to cultivate gifted behaviors in all students and as a preliminary screening device for selecting grade 2 students for the STEP Program.

   b. Goals and Objectives

   1. To foster creativity in all students.
   2. To develop creative and critical-thinking skills.
   3. To develop affective skills and a sense of self-worth.
   4. To encourage and stress positive decision-making skills.
   5. To develop task commitment.
   6. To provide an initial screening pool through classroom observation.

   c. Grades K-2 SEE Program

   All students in grade two will be exposed to Type I and Type II Literacy Enrichment activities. Services will be provided in the classroom environment. The teacher of the academically-gifted will design and arrange the activities, and act as a resource to the classroom teacher.
2. Smyrna Triad Enrichment Program (STEP), Grades 3 - 6

a. Rationale

Programming for the academically-gifted student should consider emotional and social development in addition to intellectual stimulation. The Academically Gifted Program, therefore, provides additional opportunity for students to explore ideas and focus into a pattern of thinking by probing, testing, and investigating with students of the same ability. This differentiation of the curriculum for the academically-gifted student allows them to gain knowledge and acquire skills that emphasize research, critical thinking, and analysis, and not just the accumulation of facts.

b. Goals and Objectives

1. To encourage curiosity by providing the students with new experiences and allowing them to explore new areas.
2. To foster the development of a positive attitude toward self and to provide emotional support in a safe environment.
3. To provide individualization in student’s area of interest and preferred learning styles.
4. To develop analysis skills by requiring the students to define related problems, find evidence, define elements, and identify parts.
5. To develop synthesis skills by requiring students to elaborate ideas, give alternate solutions, rearrange ideas, and combine ideas.
6. To develop evaluation skills by requiring students to come to a conclusion, compare, and contrast.
7. To develop fluent, flexible, and/or original and creative thinking by requiring students to identify multiple solutions to the same problem, define different kinds of approaches to problems, and seek novel, unique or unusual possibilities.
8. To develop problem-solving skills by requiring students to plan, implement, and evaluate final products.

c. Program

Academically-gifted students in grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 will be cluster-grouped in classrooms or with one team of trained teachers. Students should not be expected to do additional or substituted work, per board policy 5133.

Students will participate in a pull-out program that enables them to work specifically with the teacher of the academically-gifted. Activities will be planned according to the Renzulli Enrichment Triad: Type I activities expose students to information beyond the regular curriculum, Type II activities focus on research, productive thinking and methodology in a topic area, and Type III activities allow individual research projects tailored from the interests of the students. Student projects should be appropriately exhibited to an intended audience. Emphasis will be placed on STEM activities.

3. Junior Honors Program, Grades 7 and 8

a. Philosophy

The Smyrna School District believes that all students deserve a rich and varied educational environment that strives to recognize and enhance their unique talents. These talents, or strengths, will vary among individual
students, and may manifest at varying stages of student maturation. Educational placements, therefore, should be as academically appropriate and flexible as possible. The educational environment should reflect the academic needs of students, and should be the product of effective communication between district professional staff, students, and parents.

b. Rationale

The Smyrna School District recognizes that individual differences in the academic needs of students do exist and that students that exhibit high achievement, ability and motivation must be provided with an educational setting that will enhance the greatest possible development of their talents. This setting should afford opportunities for continuous development of their talents, in students of comparable readiness, by trained professional staff. Research has shown that homogeneous groups of committed scholars, identified in their talent strength area, have benefited in learning, achievement, and personal self-satisfaction.

c. Goals for the Junior Honors Program

1. To provide a program that will stimulate interests and develop individual talents in specific academic areas.
2. To provide the superior learner with new and highly challenging learning activities that is commensurate with academic ability and readiness.
3. To provide opportunities that will develop self-awareness, personal strengths, and social responsibilities.
4. To provide gifted learners with the opportunity to explore personal interests, and thereby develop talents, through independent study and community involvement.
5. To foster high level thinking processes, resulting in a more complete and productive individual who is challenged by the school environment. These processes would include, but are not limited to, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, critical and creative thinking and divergent production.
6. To encourage and practice cross-discipline explorations and applications.
7. To provide academically talented and committed students with a positive self-concept, while concurrently fostering awareness of talents in self and others.
8. To aid the student in setting learning goals and to relate these to future educational and career possibilities.
9. To provide valid academic differentiation through appropriate instructional activities and teaching methodology, and through expected student performance outcomes.
10. To develop course syllabi that reflects the more challenging environment of the honors section.
11. To emphasize individual student growth through a deeper and more intense course of study.
12. To provide continuous in-service training for all teachers of honors classes.

d. Delivery Model

Students in grades seven and eight at Smyrna Middle School will be invited to enroll in one or more honors sections in language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics. These classes will be taught by grade level content area professionals. Student placement in the honors sections will be determined by the identification procedure defined in section 3, e.
Selection procedure

Selection of students who will participate in the Junior Honors Program will be conducted in the third quarter of grade six, and for all newly entering students.

1. A screening pool of potential participants will be determined after the second marking period of grade 6. The pool will be composed of all students who have achieved a grade point average of 93 or better, in the content area concerned, in grades 5 and 6 (to date).

2. The screening pool of students will be administered a group IQ test. Content area teacher evaluations and parent inventories will also be completed for each nominee.

3. Appropriate norm-referenced scores and SBAC scores will be included for each student in the screening pool.

4. All of the above scores will be placed on a weighted matrix for each student in each content area. (see attached)

5. A total matrix score will be determined for each student nominated in a content area.

6. Matrices will be ranked by score, with the highest scores resulting in honors class eligibility.

7. Final decision regarding student placement will be made by the honors selection committee composed of sixth grade teachers and the gifted teacher.

8. Additional information pertaining to student achievement (i.e. a portfolio) may be considered by this committee when a single score on the matrix seems to inaccurately reflect true student ability or achievement potential.

Withdrawal from the Honors Program

A student may be withdrawn from any honors class at any time for the following reasons:

a) Failure to maintain satisfactory academic achievement.
b) Lack of commitment towards assigned work.
c) Failure to meet program standards upon re-evaluation.
d) Chronic disciplinary action and/or disruptive behavior.

g. Honors Program Evaluation

Teachers, administrators, and participating parents and students will evaluate the Honors Program at Smyrna Middle School every two years. The basis of the evaluation will be adherence to program goals.