



Cape to offer accelerated classes

Screening for elementary participants set to begin

By Melissa Steele
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Cape Henlopen School District plans to offer accelerated math and English classes at each of its four elementary schools.

The Cape Accelerated Program - CAP for short - is meant to challenge children from kindergarten to fifth grade, said Donna Kolakowski, supervisor of elementary education.

"This is going to be a great program, and it's really going to benefit our students," Kolakowski said.

Accelerated materials will be presented to all students in kindergarten to second-grade, but by third, fourth and fifth grades, Kolakowski said, students will be nominated by parents and teachers to be screened to participate in accelerated classes.

A nonverbal ability test, known as the Naglieri test, will be given to students nominated. The test does a good job of gauging academic ability without penalizing students, such as English language learners, who may not be proficient in English, she said.

Students who score in the 90th percentile will then receive a rating from educators based on leadership, motivation, artistic talent, creativity, and academic and intellectual ability.

Kolakowski said nomination forms for potential students will be sent out shortly, and a copy will be posted on the district website, www.capehenlopendistrict.com.

Once all the nomination forms have been turned in, she said,

children now in second, third and fourth grades will be tested for the fall program, which Kolakowski said would be considered a pilot program.

Third-graders will participate in an enrichment program during a school's 50-minute Response to Intervention period - which teachers use to help students who need help in English and math while allowing advanced learners to participate in science, technology, engineering and math enrichment, commonly known as STEM.

Under Cape's new accelerated program, fourth- and fifth-graders will meet for math and English language arts instruction with a teacher hired specifically to teach the accelerated class. The rest of the school day, Kolakowski said, students would return to their homeroom classroom and attend classes with their classmates.

"We want to have the top 5 to 10 percent of the fourth- and fifth-graders combined in one class," she said.

One teacher certified in gifted and talented education will teach an accelerated class of 20 to 24 students.

It will cost about \$100,000 to hire a teacher certified in gifted and talented education per elementary school. Another \$14,000 has been set aside to test students nominated for the program, Kolakowski said. All four existing elementary schools and the future fifth school to be built on Route 24 are all slated for new teachers, she said.

During recent discussion of

the new program, Cape Superintendent Robert Fulton said the accelerated program will push students academically.

"We need to do a better job of meeting the needs of all students in the district," he said.

The accelerated program is the latest in a series of enrichment programs the district has provided to students, Kolakowski said. STEM classes offered to students over the past few years recently expanded to include art and became known as STEAM. The district may continue to use those enrichment programs for groups of students not enrolled in the accelerated program, she said. Those in the accelerated program will receive more academic focus through a challenging curriculum, she said.

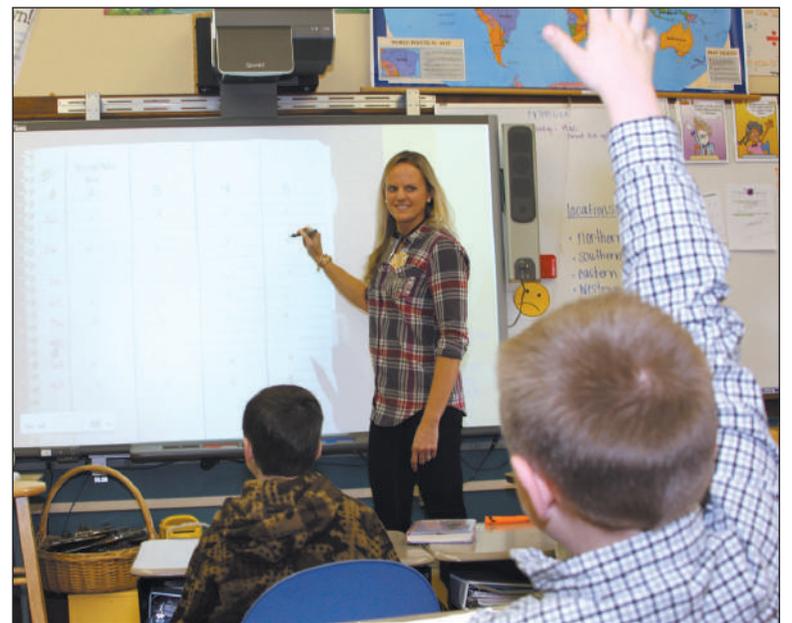
"It's another layer, because we have been doing STEM and STEAM," Kolakowski said.



MELISSA STEELE PHOTOS
KELLY BRAGG, left, and Elle Anderson get ready to start their robotic car.



Daniel Hearn, left, and David Hawtof program robotic cars made during a STEAM class.



Milton Elementary STEAM teacher Allison Peet goes over some math with third-graders Monte Gootee, left, and Finley Jones.

Clothing Our Kids benefits from donation of 200 coats

Clothing Our Kids, a not-for-profit 501c3 corporation, was the fortunate recipient of 200 brand-new coats from PJ and John Baker recently. The coats will be distributed to children in the Cape Henlopen School District through school counselors. In Cape, 51 percent of students come from low-income families in financial crisis, and there are almost 300 homeless students currently enrolled.

Sen. Ernesto B. Lopez, R-Lewes, who has young children in Cape schools, volunteered to deliver the coats to school counselor and social worker Judy Hudson at Rehoboth Elementary School. He said, "The problems we currently face with children being hungry and cold can be overcome in our state. Working together, we can solve the problem at a bipartisan and grassroots

level to create an environment that fosters learning and growth for all children. Kids without appropriate school wear are in danger of bullying and suffer from self-esteem issues as well as attendance. It is such a simple fix. I'm thrilled to have this donation going to our children, and I'm ready to be working for a more permanent solution to ensure no child goes to bed hungry or cold in our district."

Mary Rio, Clothing Our Kids founder, said the organization has been supplying essential clothing to preschool through elementary school-age students for the last three years. "We are completely dependent on our community for financial and clothing donations. These coats are a godsend and will be distributed to children in Cape Henlopen School District," she said.

Gretchen Hanson, executive chef of Hobos Restaurant and Bar, who facilitated the connection between the Bakers and Clothing Our Kids, said, "It's all about awareness. PJ and John wanted to make a donation, and I knew that we had a profound need in our area based on my conversations with Sen. Lopez and my own volunteer work. The Bakers have done a wonderful thing in making life a little bit warmer for our community."

Clothing Our Kids is dedicated to providing children with school-appropriate clothing. It is a 100 percent not-for-profit organization located in Millsboro. The coat distribution will be facilitated through the school district.

For more information on how to donate or be of assistance, go to clothingourkids.org.



SUBMITTED PHOTO
CLOTHING OUR KIDS received 200 new coats to distribute to children in the Cape Henlopen School District. Shown with some of the coats are (l-r) Sen. Ernesto Lopez, R-Lewes; Rehoboth Elementary School social worker Judy Hudson; RES Principal Trish Mumford; and Clothing Our Kids founder Mary Rio.