

# **New Canaan Public Schools Special Education Challenge Program**



## **Program Philosophy**

In all New Canaan classrooms, curriculum, instruction and assessments are designed based on best practice standards. Cognitively complex, creatively demanding and meaningful learning is developed through the practice of responsive, differentiated instruction. An array of choices and opportunities exist within the general education program that serves students with special learning needs on both ends of the learning and performance spectrums.

We believe that in addition to the quality experiences provided within the general education program, gifted students have unique needs that can be addressed through a program of specialized instruction and services. We further believe that programming needs to be flexible in its response to the distinct profiles of gifted learners. The New Canaan Challenge Program addresses the needs of those students with exceptional cognitive abilities and provides the opportunity to build relationships with intellectual peers in a responsive environment.

## **Program Service**

The New Canaan Public Schools offers the Challenge Program to identified gifted students. Our Challenge Program teachers have developed curriculum based on Systems Thinking, which is "a perspective that sharpens our awareness of a whole and of how the parts within those wholes interrelate. Systems thinking can refer to a special vocabulary with which we express our understanding of dynamic complexity." (Waters Foundation 2009).

The Challenge Program is structured to stimulate and develop the natural intellectual potential of gifted students as well as to offer a variety of opportunities for expression within a classroom environment that is flexible and encourages creative thinking. Specific information regarding curriculum, scheduling, and student assessment is further explained on this website.