

Pottsville Gifted and Talented Program Handbook

revised December 2016



Arkansas' Definition of Giftedness

"Gifted and Talented children and youth are those of high potential or ability, whose learning characteristics and educational needs require qualitatively differentiated educational experiences and/or services. Possession of these talents and gifts, or the potential for their development, will be evidenced through an interaction of above average intellectual ability, task commitment and/or motivation, and creative ability."

Pottsville School District Gifted and Talented Program Goals

The Pottsville School District strives to meet the needs of its gifted and talented students in a number of areas. The goals of the district are:

1. To provide academically challenging instruction to identified gifted students.
2. To provide opportunities for students to strengthen their ability to think creatively.
3. To build a culture of life-long learning.
4. To encourage students to be aware of their individual strengths and weaknesses and to use that awareness to work towards achieving their personal goals.
5. To support affective development so students have a healthy self-concept and can find their place in the community.

Statement of Evaluation

The Pottsville Gifted and Talented Program is evaluated annually in areas that are relevant to student learning and success. This evaluation and the plan of action are based on program goals and objectives. All components of the program are evaluated, including Community Involvement, Staff Development, Personnel, Identification, Program Options, Curriculum, and Evaluation. Evaluation information is gathered through a variety of sources such as interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

Evaluation results are compiled and reported to the Pottsville Superintendent, Pottsville School Board, GT Advisory Committee, Arkansas Department of Education Office of Gifted and Talented, and parents and the community.

Identification/Placement Procedures

Identification of gifted and talented students is an ongoing process extending from school entry through grade 12 and may occur at any time. Identification data is collected through the K-3 enrichment classes and classroom observation. Formal identification of gifted students is initiated generally at the end of the third grade or later and will begin with the referral of students. Referrals may be submitted by parents, teachers, students, or community members. These referrals do not guarantee placement in the program. Students will be recommended to receive services through the Gifted and Talented program if a data summary reveals their needs are not being met in the regular classroom and they are in need of qualitatively differentiated instruction.

After a referral is received and parental permission to collect data is granted, information from multiple sources, such as state achievement tests and results from tools that are specifically designed and administered for the purpose of the identification of gifted and talented students, and information shared by parents and teachers will be

compiled in a data summary. All data summaries will be reviewed by an Identification Committee, made up of at least five educators and chaired by the Gifted and Talented Coordinator. The function of this committee will be to determine if students' needs are being met in the regular classroom setting and make a recommendation for placement or non-placement based on that determination.

The following steps will ensure each student's rights and provide a guide for the referral and evaluation of gifted and talented students:

Referral Procedure:

1. Students may be referred for the Gifted and Talented Program by contacting a classroom teacher, Gifted and Talented Coordinator, school office, or by obtaining and returning a signed *Parent Permission to Test and Collect Data and Parent Questionnaire* form from the district website. Referrals may be made by any of the following:
 - a. teachers
 - b. parents
 - c. students
 - d. community members
2. After a referral is received, a *Parent Permission to Test and Collect Data* form will be sent home and must be returned with appropriate signatures before evaluations may begin. No child will be tested without parental consent to test on file.
3. When the *Parent Permission to Test and Collect Data* form is signed and returned, a battery of tests will be given. Those test scores, as well as achievement test scores, grade reports, teacher and parent questionnaires and anecdotal information will be compiled on a Data Summary Form. Data collection will consist of at least two *objective* and two *subjective* measures (one of which must assess creativity), chosen from the following:
Objective: Standardized mental ability test, standardized achievement test, test of creative ability. **Subjective:** Behavioral checklists, rating scales, biographical inventories, grades, and observations.

Instruments and procedures used in the identification process are non-discriminatory with respect to race, cultural or economic background, religion, national origin, sex, or handicapping condition.

4. After data summaries are completed, the Identification Committee will meet, review each data summary, and make a recommendation for either placement in the Gifted and Talented program or for continued placement in the regular classroom. The committee will consider objective criteria and subjective criteria in the placement decision. There is no single cut-off score for placement. The committee will consider placement for those students scoring above average in several areas, including academics, creativity and/or task commitment.
5. Parents will then be notified about the Identification Committee's recommendation for GT placement or for continued placement in the regular classroom.
6. If there is a disagreement with the placement decision of the Identification Committee, an appeal may be initiated using the following guidelines.

Appeals Procedure

- Schedule a meeting with the GT Coordinator to discuss the data summary information used for the placement decision.
- If, after this informal meeting, a formal appeal is desired, a written notice of appeal should be filed with the GT Coordinator. This appeal should include relevant information indicating why the placement recommendation is considered inappropriate to meet the needs of this student.
- Upon receipt of a formal notice of appeal, the GT Coordinator will collect additional information/data concerning the student. This additional information/data may include additional testing results, interviews, and/or observations.
- An appeals committee of at least five professional educators (including a mix of initial committee members and new committee members), chaired by the GT Coordinator will review the appeal and make a placement recommendation. Those initiating the appeal have the right to address the committee, but will not be present when placement decisions are made.
- The decision of the Appeals Committee is based on multiple criteria and will be communicated in writing to the parent/guardian and/or the person initiating the appeal. This decision will be final.

After a student is placed in the Gifted and Talented program, a review of his/her placement is made annually to ensure continued appropriate placement. Although great effort and attention is given to appropriate student placement in the G.T. program, situations may arise when placement in the program no longer meets the student's needs. Parents may choose to withdraw their child at any time. No conference or ID Committee meeting would be required. If the Program cannot meet the needs of the identified gifted student then a student could be exited from the program

Exit Procedure

- An exit request may be initiated by teachers, administrators, parents, and/or the student.
- When someone other than the parent or student indicate that an identified student would be best served in the regular classroom the student's parent will be notified of the matter and given the opportunity to respond and a Data Summary Form will be completed to be placed before the Identification Committee for consideration.
- Information concerning the request will be collected and sent to the ID Committee, chaired by the GT Coordinator, to determine if the program continues to meet the student's needs. As with determining initial placement, no single criteria may be used to exit a student from the program. Multiple criteria will be used when determining all student placements.
- If a student is exited from the program, parents will receive written notification of that decision. If parents or classroom teachers wish to appeal the exit recommendation, they must follow the appeals procedures outlined in this handbook.

Records of placement decisions and data on all referred students are kept on file for a minimum of five years or for as long as necessary for educational decisions. Knowledge gained throughout the identification process may be shared with instructional staff in order to benefit the student and assist in creating a learning environment conducive to his/her learning, regardless of final placement. Since all Gifted and Talented student records are

confidential, the access to and destruction of current and outdated records containing identifiable information will be handled in a manner which assures confidentiality.

Participation in the gifted program is noted on student transcripts and permanent records. Permanent record notation is made at the time of placement in the program. Transcript notation is made on student's final transcript.

**In the case of multiple absences, including being suspended or attending ISS, gifted students served through a pull-out option may receive their G.T. services for the week in an alternate form, at the discretion of the GT Coordinator.*

***There is a major identification in the spring of each year when most of the students are identified to participate in the program for the following fall. After school begins, students who have moved into the district have the opportunity to apply for participation in the program. Although students may be placed throughout the year, it is recommended that students who move into the district wait a minimum of one grading period before being referred for placement in the program.*

Gifted & Talented Attendance And Regular Classroom Work

“Curriculum for the gifted must differ not only in degree, but in kind. It is important to avoid simply ‘more of the same’. It should be in place of rather than in addition to required classroom work. Students should not be penalized for being identified as gifted by being given extra work. Teachers should be sensitive to student interests and talents in planning both cognitive and affective activities.”

***Taken from the Arkansas Department of Education
Gifted and Talented Rules and Regulations:
Program Approval Standards
2009**

Pottsville School District Guidelines

In accordance with the Arkansas State Department Rules and Regulations concerning gifted and talented students, a student attending a gifted and talented program must not be held accountable for assignments missed while attending GT classes or activities. He/she may, rather, be held accountable for the concept to be developed in his/her absence. Teachers should be very selective in the make-up work required of GT students during these out of class experiences. Alternative assignments may be required of these students in such a way that it does not become a burden to participate in the GT program. Teachers should make every effort to avoid planning tests, reviews or introducing new material during their students' scheduled GT class time.

Program Options

(Grades K-3)

At the K-3 level, the GT Coordinator works with each classroom teacher to provide whole group enrichment lessons, focusing on creativity, higher order thinking skills and problem solving. Students are provided enrichment opportunities delivered by the GT Teacher. The GT Teacher meets with each class monthly to provide classroom enrichment, model lessons, make observations and work with students. The GT teacher serves as a resource for teachers and administrators, and collaboratively works with teachers to document gifted characteristics of students for use in future identification.

(Grades 4-6)

Identified 4th – 6th grade students attend a GT resource room for a minimum of 150 minutes weekly. The Middle Grades pull-out program's curriculum is a student-centered project based approach to learning. Differentiation focuses on enrichment and extension of core content by focusing on higher order thinking skills, research skills, critical and creative thinking, independent learning, problem solving, logic, product construction, competitions and technology skills. An emphasis on affective behavior is in place to help students better understand themselves, others around them and develop a personal responsibility for learning.

(Grades 7-9)

Identified Gifted Junior High School students are served primarily through Pre-AP classes in Advanced Mathematics, English, Science, Social Studies, and Studio Art. The GT Coordinator meets with identified gifted students periodically to serve as a resource for them and to inform them of independent educational opportunities that may be of interest to them. All core-content teachers serving gifted students have received training in differentiation through Secondary Course Content training. All Pre-AP teachers have attended College Board approved training institutes and possess a current Pre-AP certificate.

(Grades 10-12)

At the High School level, gifted students are served primarily through Pre-AP and AP classes in Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, English and Studio Art. The GT Coordinator meets periodically with identified gifted students, and serves as a resource for students, teachers and administrators. All core-content teachers serving gifted students have received training in differentiation through Secondary Course Content training. All AP and Pre AP teachers have attended College Board approved training institutes and possess current AP/Pre AP certificates in their content area.

Resources

Differentiation Central

<http://www.differentiationcentral.com>

Council for Exceptional Children – The Association for the Gifted (TAG)

<http://www.cectag.org>

Gifted and Talented – A Resource for Parents and Teachers

<http://www.gifted-children.com>

Hoagies' Gifted Education

<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org>

National Association for Gifted Children – NAGC

<http://www.nagc.org>

Uniquely Gifted – Resources for Gifted Children with Special Needs
<http://www.uniquelygifted.org>

AGATE Arkansans for Gifted and Talented Education
<http://www.agatearkansas.org>

Gifted and Talented Contact Information

Diane Hancock

Gifted & Talented Teacher/Coordinator, AP Coordinator

(479) 890-6631

diane.hancock@pottsvilleschools.org

Office Location: Middle Grades Saferoom

Room # 102