

PACE

Program

Preparing Advanced Children to Excel

Handbook

Van Buren

School District

PACE Program: Preparing Advanced Children to Excel

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DEFINITIONS OF GIFTEDNESS



Gifted learners are children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment.

US Department of Education

Gifted and Talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who, by virtue of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These are children who require *differentiated* educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society.

US Department of Education

Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination:

1. General intellectual ability
2. Specific academic ability
3. Creative or productive thinking
4. Leadership ability
5. Visual and performing arts

Sidney Marland

US Commissioner of Education

Giftedness is that precious endowment of potentially outstanding ability which allows a person to interact with the environment with a high level of achievement and creativity.

The Council for Exceptional Children

Those who manifest giftedness obviously have some inherent or inborn factors plus the motivation and stamina to learn from and cope with the rigors of living.

Arkansans for Gifted and Talented Education

CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTEDNESS

Creative Characteristics of the Gifted

- They are FLUENT thinkers able to produce a large quantity of possibilities, consequences, or related ideas
- They are FLEXIBLE thinkers able to use many different alternatives and approaches to problem solving.
- They are ORIGINAL thinkers seeking new, unusual, or unconventional associations and combinations among items of information. They also have an ability to see associations and combinations among items of information. They also have an ability to see relationships among seemingly unrelated objects, ideas, or facts.
- They are ELABORATIVE thinkers, producing new steps, ideas, responses, or other embellishments to a basic idea, situation, or problem.
- They show a willingness to entertain complexity and ambiguity and seem to thrive in problem situations.
- They are good guessers and can construct hypotheses or “what if” questions readily.
- They are often aware of their own impulsiveness and the irrationality within themselves and show emotional sensitivity.
- They have a high level of curiosity about objects, ideas, situations, or events.
- They can be less intellectually inhibited than their peers in expressing opinions and ideas and often with spirited disagreement.
- They have a sensitivity to beauty and are attracted to aesthetic dimensions.
- They have a well developed sense of humor.



Learning Characteristics of the Gifted

- Gifted and talented children often show keen powers of observation, exhibit a sense of the significant, and have an eye for important details.
- They often read a great deal on their own, preferring books and magazines written for children older than themselves.
- They take great pleasure in intellectual activity.
- They have well developed powers of abstraction, conceptualization, and synthesizing abilities.
- They have rapid insight into cause-effect relationships.
- They tend to like structure, organization, and consistency in their environments. They may resent violation of structure and rules.
- They display a questioning attitude and seek information for the sake of having it as much as for its instrumental value.
- They are often skeptical, critical, and evaluative. They are quick to spot inconsistencies.
- They often have a large storehouse of information regarding a variety of topics which they can recall quickly.
- They show a ready grasp of underlying principles and can often make valid generalizations about events, people, or objects.
- They readily perceive similarities, differences, and anomalies.
- They often attack complicated material by separating it into its components and analyzing them systematically.

Behavioral Characteristics of the Gifted

- They are willing to examine the unusual and are highly inquisitive.
- Their behavior is often well organized, goal directed, and efficient with respect to tasks and problems.
- They exhibit an intrinsic motivation to learn, find out, or explore and are often very persistent. "I'd rather do it myself" is a common attitude.
- They enjoy learning new things and new ways of doing things.
- They have a longer attention and concentration span than their peers.
- They are more independent and less subject to peer pressure than their age mates.
- They have a highly developed moral and ethical sense.
- They often exhibit daydreaming behavior.
- They may seek to conceal their abilities so as not to "stick out."
- They often have a well developed sense of self and a realistic idea about their capabilities and potential.

Social and Emotional Needs of the Gifted (possible)

- ***Acceptance as a child first (with the normal problems) and gifted second***
- Dealing with feelings of isolation due to different interests or level of complex thought from peers
- Comfort with older students and adults (opportunities with intellectual peers who may not be age peers)
- Dealing with introversion
- Dealing with perfectionism, setting of unrealistic standards for self, harsh self-criticism
- Acceptance of and outlet for intensity of emotions
- Opportunities where humor, questioning, intellectual risk-taking, creative thinking, and making connections are appreciated
- Outlets for empathy and heightened awareness to world issues (service learning to deal with injustice, hypocrisy, ...)
- Methods of stress management
- Opportunities for concentrated focus (may be highly resistant to interruptions)
- Time to explore their many and varied interests, but also time management and assistance in career focus with so many interests
- Dealing with gender stereotypes which may conflict with goals (example: girls interested in science) and encouragement to delay dating (boys and girls) to pursue goals
- Appropriate level of challenge so that child is not bored or fidgety in school
- Outlets for high energy/restlessness, yet training to be less impulsive and to take time for consideration
- Explanations for change and allowance for slow adjustment; comfort to express fears and anxieties
- Reading in fantasy and other imagination literature
- Discussions with others on philosophical ideas and ponderings/wonderings

Perceptions of Attributes

Based on work by Paul Slocumb and Ruby Payne

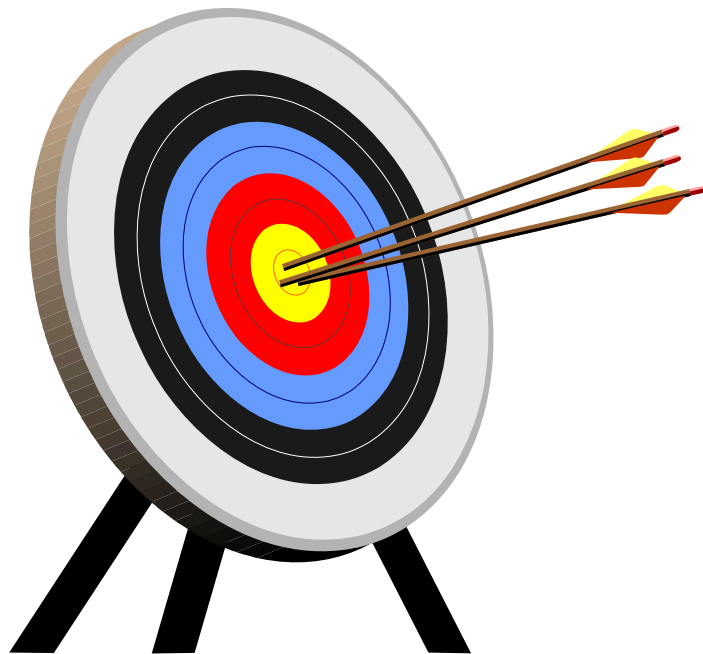
Some characteristics of gifted may be revealed in different forms—and these may be perceived positively or negatively.

<i>Positive Perception</i>	<i>Negative Perception</i>
Curious about information; inquisitive; doesn't accept information at first glance; questions and pushes for more information	Obnoxious with questions; likes to "stump" people with hard questions; enjoys questions with "shock value"; questions authority; unwilling to follow rules; skeptical
Sticks to task; gets job done; doesn't give up easily even when things are difficult	Stubborn; avoids tending to other things that need to be done just because he/she is not through with individual priority
Learns at faster rate than his/her peers; absorbs more with less practice; able to accelerate his/her learning; displays eagerness to do work	Finds it difficult to wait for others; unwilling to do detail work; show reluctance to do some assignments because he/she already knows content or skill
Understands subtleties of language in his/her primary language; uses language in powerful way; displays unique sense of humor; able to use language to build personal relationships	"Smart mouth"; master at put-downs of others; uses humor in destructive manner; unable to relate to peers because other's sense of humor isn't as sophisticated; class clown
Thirst for knowledge; seeks answers to questions; motivated to do research to find answers to questions; likes rhetorical questions; curious about ideas	Shows little interest in what is to be learned; wants to pursue only those things that spark his/her curiosity; is more curious about people than events
Commits to long-range projects and tasks; focused; goal oriented; strives to meet high standards	Has difficulty completing tasks; unaware of deadlines; oblivious to those around him/her; very focused on and committed to his/her priorities
Able and willing to ascertain and solve problems; does not need specific directions; may set own goals that surpass teacher's expectations	Loves ambiguity and dislikes being given specific directions and/or parameters; defies convention or rules/limits for procedure/product; unable to be specific with other people who need specific direction; comes across as highly creative/inventive
Deeply interested in many things; is good at many things; loves to learn new things	Unable to make decisions—makes decisions quickly without regard for consequences; may hop from one thing to another without experiencing closure in anything; appears random
Develops high standards and expectations of self; self-starter who needs little supervision; has self-control	Perfectionist; nothing is ever good enough; can't finish something because it still isn't correct; avoids trying something difficult for fear of failure; may display low self-esteem image about academic performance
Excellent facility with language; can elaborate on thoughts and ideas; uses formal register when communicating with others	Has trouble listening while others talk; interrupts others to the point of rudeness; talks at inappropriate times; may be reluctant to write; very expressive in casual situations

Highly developed social conscience; concern for social issues and problems; awareness of global issues; has internal locus of control	Over-concern for social problems and issues to extent that depression results; doomsday view of life; overwhelmed with despair; sees self as victim
Able to comprehend complex ideas and thoughts; able to learn advanced and more complex content	Out of touch with reality or day-to-day routines; bored by simpler things in life; unwilling or unable to abide by basic requirements and/or rules; questions accepted understandings because sees additional complex issues involved or reads more into a situation; difficulty in decision-making due to seeing multiple points of view
Sees patterns in things; can transfer learning to new situations; sees the big picture; discovers new information; supports generalizations with facts/details	Unwilling to learn facts to support generalizations; can be great "talker" but is unable to produce because work lacks substance; disorganized
Makes connections; sees relationships between/among diverse ideas and events	Difficult to stay focused because of random thoughts/ideas; highly creative but perceived as "weird" by peers
Generates a large number of ideas or solutions to problems and questions; often offers unusual, unique, clever responses	Shows clever, unique responses to questions and problems; often responds with humor or offer "silly" response to questions
Sensitivity to beauty; tunes in to aesthetic characteristics of things	Appreciates color; likes to doodle and draw; has affinity for graffiti
Uninhibited in expressions of opinion; sometimes spirited in disagreement; tenacious	Uninhibited in expressions of opinion; sometimes appears radical and disagreeable; may show anger when disagreeing with others; has little tolerance for what is perceived as ignorance or illogic
Is a risk-taker in academic endeavors; is adventurous and speculative in his/her thinking; visionary	Is a high risk-taker; dares to break rules and then challenges authority when caught; unafraid to challenge others
Criticizes constructively in socially-acceptable manner; unwilling to accept authoritarian pronouncements without critical examination	Criticizes openly; unwilling to accept authoritarian rules and procedures; orally and openly condemns them; may irritate others
Keen observer; sensitive to environment; sees the unusual or details that may be overlooked by others	Overly excitable due to too much stimulation of senses; cannot filter input

GENERAL PROGRAM GOALS

1. The student will develop advanced higher-level and creative thinking skills through content that is accelerated, involves greater depth and complexity, is authentic to the disciplines, incorporates problem-solving, and provides choices in study.
2. The student will develop the ability to relate to self and others including understanding of own strengths and weaknesses and best methods for learning.
3. The student will develop habits of mind and emotional intelligence in order to make the best use of intellectual skills.
4. The student will develop skills in oral, written, and artistic expression.
5. The student will develop the necessary skills for in-depth research and guided independent study.
6. The student will develop competence in the use of technology.
7. The student will develop an awareness that the future is one that is capable of being shaped and of their contributory role in that future.
8. The student will develop leadership capabilities.



THINKING SKILLS

- Focusing attention to selected information
- Finding problems
- Defining problem
- Goal setting
- Planning
- Information gathering
- Observing
- Questioning
- Organizing
- Classifying
- Comparing and contrasting
- Analyzing attributes and components
- Distinguishing significance
- Assessing strengths and weaknesses
- Identifying relationships and patterns
- Inferring
- Predicting results or consequences
- Elaborating
- Reasoning/interpreting from data to conclusion
- Integrating information
- Evaluating by criteria
- Identifying errors
- Inducing and deducing logically
- Constructing support
- Understanding abstractions and symbolic representations
- Analyzing different perspectives
- Decision making
- Inventing
- Communicating effectively
- Using reflection and metacognition to understand self


Excellence!

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Remember | 4. Analyze |
| <i>Recognizing</i> | <i>Differentiating</i> |
| <i>Recalling</i> | <i>Organizing</i> |
| 2. Understand | <i>Attributing</i> |
| <i>Interpreting</i> | 5. Evaluate |
| <i>Exemplifying</i> | <i>Checking</i> |
| <i>Classifying</i> | <i>Critiquing</i> |
| <i>Summarizing</i> | 6. Create |
| <i>Inferring</i> | <i>Generating</i> |
| <i>Comparing</i> | <i>Planning</i> |
| <i>Explaining</i> | <i>Producing</i> |
| 3. Apply | |
| <i>Executing</i> | |
| <i>Implementing</i> | |

CREATIVITY SKILLS

- Brainstorm many and varied (divergent) ideas
- Recognize attributes or details (parts forming the whole)
- Minimize/magnify
- Recognize gaps or missing elements
- Add details to embellish or enhance
- Add to modify existing idea or object
- Make predictions
- Rearrange and idea or object
- Reverse thinking
- Substitute an element for another
- Combine elements
- Recognize connections
- Make analogies
- Observe sensitively
- Tolerate uncertainty, contradictions, ambiguity, multiple viewpoints, or lack of resolution
- Be passionately interested
- Appreciate aesthetics
- Delve beyond usual constraints
- Refrain from criticism early in process
- Question and ponder
- Piggyback off of other's ideas and use other inspirations as models
- Analyze in a stream of cause and effect (webbing)
- Envision possibilities

Constructive Thinking: Habits of Mind

Desire to:

- Strive beyond what is expected
- Persist/persevere
- Observe keenly
- Organize or create order
- Ask questions (be inquisitive and skeptical)
- Be imaginative, visionary, and innovative
- Be analytical as well as see the big picture
- Seek reasons and truth
- Control/restrain impulsivity
- Reflect, ponder
- Monitor own thinking
- Make commitments
- Apply knowledge for betterment
- Set long term goals
- Value diversity and respect others
- Tinker and experiment
- Integrate things or ideas
- Pursue goals
- Withhold judgment until sufficient evidence has been examined
- Be generous, charitable, and serve for common good
- Be faithful, trustworthy, loyal, and responsible
- Express gratitude
- Enable others to contribute and succeed
- Be sensitive to feedback
- Work systematically
- Listen carefully to others including various viewpoints
- Avoid sweeping generalizations and stereotypes

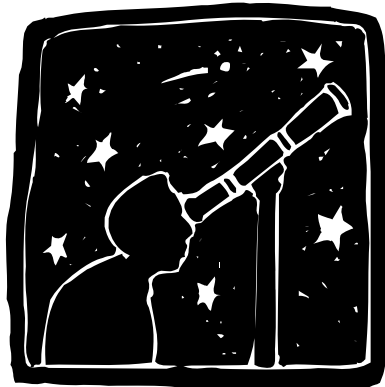
Desire for:

- Accuracy, precision, clarity
- Unusual and unique, alternatives
- New learning
- Complete engagement and absorption (focus, passion)
- Empathy
- Intellectual courage and risk-taking
- Independence in thinking
- Making connections and seeing patterns
- Open-mindedness
- Wonder
- Humor
- Humility
- Improvement
- Comfort with complexity, uncertainty, ambiguity, and abstraction

Positive feelings from hard work
Justice, ethics, and moral conviction
Willingness to make sacrifices
Belief in self (confidence and empowerment) and others
Integrity
Flexibility

Self-understanding in:

Interests, preferences, and goals
Strengths and limitations
Learning styles and approaches
Collaboration
Vision and sense of destiny
Beliefs, philosophy, and perspective
Comfort with individuality, non-conformity, independence, and solitude
Relationships with others
Intensity and focus



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Identification

Gifted students are defined as those needing a qualitatively differentiated educational experience due to demonstrated academic ability or potential (intellect, creativity, and task commitment/motivation) as defined by the US Department of Education.

Approximately eight percent of the student population of the Van Buren School District meets the criteria for service.

Gifted and talented identification, an ongoing program activity beginning at the end of 1st grade, employs a student profile review process and assures equal access to all students regardless of ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic background/environment.

- Referrals may be made at any time during the year by school personnel, parents, and students.
- Parents are notified of a referral and completion of a consent-to-test form is requested.
- Multiple assessments are used in order to obtain a comprehensive profile of the student's academic potential. The formal assessments include school achievement indicators, a cognitive abilities test, a nonverbal ability test, an exercise in divergent/creative thinking, and home-school rating scales that measure general intellectual ability, specific content ability, creativity, and leadership.
- A placement committee is comprised of representative administrators and GT teachers from various school levels.
- Each student's profile is assigned a number. The placement committee reviews each profile by number only, without any identifying information. The committee then recommends students for placement.
- Parents are notified of all test results along with the placement decision.
- Parents of qualifying students and their child are scheduled for a conference with a GT specialist to discuss the program and obtain a written consent for placement.
- Placement of students is reviewed at the end of each school year.
- Placement of students is noted on the student's cumulative district folder and student files in APSCN (state record system). Transcripts of graduates are noted with "Gifted and Talented Program."
- GT student files are kept by the students' current GT specialist through middle school. Files for students in grades 7-12 are kept in a cabinet in the GT office. Files of graduates are kept in a separate storage for five years; after that time, file information is shredded. All files are secured in locking cabinets.

Curriculum

Curriculum is developed by GT licensed teachers to meet the Gifted and Talented Frameworks. It is aligned throughout the grade levels through a district presentation scope and sequence and through pre-Advanced Placement.

Elementary Program

K-1 teachers have been trained in Constructive Thinking which is implemented throughout their lessons. Observations of exceptional performance are noted on an inventory by the regular classroom teacher for use in identification.

Several options exist for GT identified students in grades 2-4.

- King Elementary—most teachers are GT specialists, and students receive daily GT enrichment sessions.
- Other elementary schools—students receive 150 minutes per week of enrichment in a pull-out session with a GT specialist

Middle School

Northridge—students are placed in cluster classrooms where the teacher is also GT licensed. Enrichment and accelerated skills are built into the curricular activities.

Central—students receive their social studies instruction from a GT specialist with enrichment and accelerated skills built into the curricular activities.

Junior High and High School

Any advanced student (not limited to those identified as gifted and talented) who has high task motivation may participate in the Advanced Placement program. Students select from pre-Advanced Placement classes offered in all core content areas.

Advanced Placement classes are offered at the high school in:

- English language and literature
- English language and composition
- Calculus AB
- US history
- World history
- European history
- US government and politics
- Psychology
- Environmental science
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Music theory
- Studio art

All teachers in the pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement program have received the state and national required additional training by College Board.

Students taking pre-AP classes receive a .5 weight to grades for in-district recognition purposes. AP students who take the exam from College Board will receive a 1.0 weighted credit for the course which appears on their official transcript. Students may also receive recognition from College Board for AP achievement:

- AP Scholar—grade of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams
- AP Scholar with Honor—average grade of 3.25 on all AP exams taken, and grade of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams
- AP Scholar with Distinction—average grade of 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and grade of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams

High school diploma levels are linked to Advanced Placement. In addition to other district requirements:

- College Prep—4 units must be pre-AP or AP classes from any subject area
- College Prep with Honors—8 units must be pre-AP or AP classes from any core subject with at least 2 of these being AP
- College Prep with High Honors—12 units must be pre-AP or AP classes from any core subject with at least 3 of these being AP

The high school sponsors a 30+ to encourage and celebrate those students who achieve a score of 30 or higher on the ACT exam.

Interested high school students may also participate in AM: Active Minds. These sessions begin at 7:00 AM, are facilitated by a GT specialist, and provide research time with guidance, activities in leadership development, and exploration of topics not covered by the regular curriculum.

Academic Competitions

Any student with interest and task commitment may participate in a variety of academic competitions. Students have the opportunity to compete with other advanced students in the region, state, and nation through:

Chess	5-12
Debate/forensics	10-12
National History Day	6-12
Quiz Bowl	4-12

Assessment of Student Progress

Evaluations for performance in the PACE Program (grades 2-4) will not appear on the student's report card. Teachers will do quarterly evaluations judging the student's progress in the attainment of program goals. These Progress Reports are sent home with the students for parent review and signature, and a copy is placed in the child's GT file. Self-evaluation on projects is also encouraged. Middle school performance is included in the content grades received by the students. Annual reviews will be conducted at the end of the school year to assess your child's progress followed by a recommendation to continue or not in the program.

Program Exit

Occasionally the parent(s), classroom teacher, or child may feel that the student's placement in the program does not meet his/her educational needs. Before exiting a child from the program, a conference with the parent(s), classroom teacher, and a school administrator will be held to evaluate the child's needs. The child may be asked to participate in the conference. A plan for success will be formulated. If the student's performance and/or motivation do not improve within the time frame discussed in the conference, an appropriate form will be signed by the teacher and parent(s) listing the cause for removal. The form will be placed in the student's GT file. Students who have

been exited from the program but wish to reenter will go through the identification process again.