

# **Silsbee Independent School District**



## **Policies and Procedures Advanced Academic Services**

**Silsbee ISD does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, disability, age, military status, genetic information or on any other basis prohibited by law. Additionally, the district does not discriminate against an employee or applicant who acts to oppose such discrimination or participates in the investigation of a complaint related to a discriminatory employment practice. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities.**

## ***Overview of Advanced Academic Services***

Advanced Academic Services students are those who excel consistently or who have the potential to excel. These students are those who perform at, or show the potential for performing at, a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared with others of the same age, experience, or environment. Because Advanced Academic Services students have distinctive educational needs that are different from their peers, they require educational experiences that go beyond those normally provided by the regular school program.

Advanced Academic Services students' needs are best met through the collaboration of students, educators, parents, and community members. The needs of these students must be addressed and their unique abilities must be nourished and reinforced because their contributions are vital to our future. Advanced Academic Services require differentiated curriculum to meet their unique needs in an appropriate program.

Our district is dedicated to providing a sequential, system-wide differentiated educational program to students potentially identified in grades K-3 and identified in grades 4-12 so that these students may fully realize their own potential and maximize their contributions to society.

## ***Advanced Academic Services Program Definitions***

### ***National Definition***

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

### ***State Definition***

Gifted and talented student means a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area; possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or excels in a specific academic field. TEC 29.121

### ***Local Definition***

Advanced Academic Services students are those identified by a qualified committee. Identified Gifted and Talented students are those who have demonstrated superior intelligence, with potential or demonstrated accomplishments in several fields of study, and the ability to perform complex mental tasks.

## ***Mission Statement***

### ***Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented***

To promote awareness of the unique social, emotional, and intellectual needs of gifted and talented students and to impact the development of appropriate services to meet these needs.

### ***Silsbee Independent School District***

To implement a program that meets the unique social, emotional, and intellectual needs of Advanced Academic Services students through the collaboration of students, educators, parents, and community members that ensure opportunities for maximum growth and development for life-long success.

## ***Philosophy***

Silsbee Independent School District, in recognizing the uniqueness of each Advanced Academic Services student, commits itself to the identification and to a differentiated education to develop the human potential of this group. The Advanced Academic Services Program serves as an extension and enrichment of experiences for students with exceptional abilities or the potential of exceptional ability.

The district seeks to help each student appreciate his own worth and the worth of others as contributors to society. The goals of this program are to empower the gifted and talented student to think and act logically, independently, and creatively as well as facilitate the maximum use of this giftedness.

Realizing there is an ever-changing body of knowledge concerning this group, we believe the school personnel, the parents, and the community should be continuously educated in this area with evaluation being an integral part of the program.

## ***Advanced Academic Services Program Goals***

### ***State Goal for Services for Gifted Students***

Students who participate in services designed for gifted students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relations to students of similar age, experience, or environment. High school graduates who have participated in service for gifted students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.

### ***Local Program Goals***

1. Advanced Academic Services students will develop abilities in the following higher level thinking skills that will be applied in highly creative and productive ways:

- Creative thinking skills
- Research skills

- Critical thinking skills
- Independent inquiry

2. Students will conduct research and independent study projects on topics that are extensions of, or different from, those in the regular curriculum and that result in advanced-level creative products. Students will have opportunities to

- Utilize a consistent and systematic approach for gathering, interpreting, and reporting information
- Conduct problem-solving activities and independent projects
- Demonstrate student's ability to plan and carry out projects

3. Students will develop an understanding of self and others, develop self-confidence, and recognize the worth of others. They will

- Become aware of and understand their giftedness in relation to themselves and others
- Exchange ideas with peers and others as a means of intellectual stimulation and Self-development
- Develop interpersonal and communication skills through contacts with peers, teachers, and mentors; and through community involvement
- Develop leadership skills and decision-making abilities

## ***General Program Description and Provision of Services***

### ***K-12 Learning Opportunities***

Silsbee Independent School District shall provide an array of learning experiences and opportunities for potentially Advanced Academic Services students in kindergarten through third grade as well as identified Advanced Academic Services students in grade 4-12 and shall inform parents of the opportunities in the four foundation curricular areas.

Options shall include:

- Instructional and organized patterns that enable identified students to work together as a group, to work with other students, and to work independently
- A continuum of learning experiences that leads to the development of advanced-level products and performances
- In-school and, when possible, out of school options relevant to the student's area of strength
- Opportunities to accelerate in areas of strength
- Parents will be informed of additional educational enrichment opportunities outside of the regular school day/year relevant to the students' area of strength.

A continuum of learning experiences will be provided which lead to the development of advanced-level products and /or performances. Such services will include use of depth and complexity elements to differentiate content, process and products. Appendix B expounds upon the Curriculum Principles and Criteria. Differentiation is documented in lesson plans.

### ***Texas Performance Standards Project Requirement***

#### **Student Project Requirement K-3**

All K-3 students, who participate in the Advanced Academic Services Watch Program, will participate in a Performance Standards Project which is described under the Texas Education Agency Advanced Academic Studies Department. Students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experiences, or environment.

#### **Student Project Requirement 4-8**

All 4-8 Advanced Academic Services students will participate in a Performance Standards Project which is described under the Texas Education Agency Advanced Academic Studies Department. Students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experiences, or environment.

### ***Elementary/Middle School***

Students in grades K-3 are identified as potentially Advanced Academic Services and placed in the Advanced Academic Services Watch Program. The potentially Advanced Academic Services students in grades K-3 are served in a mixed ability classroom.

A student is not formally identified as Advanced Academic Services until after the third grade. All third grade students participating in the Watch Program will be assessed before the end of the year for placement in the Advanced Academic Services program. Advanced Academic Services program identification and placement occurs at the 4th grade level.

Advanced Academic Services students in grades 4-8 will be served through the Language Arts Class in which core-curriculum compacting allows for unit-based studies covering all four (4) core curriculum areas. Thematic unit-based projects will be completed throughout the school year. Optional opportunities are available to 4th, 5th and 6th grade Advanced Academic Services students through advanced math and science classes, and 7th and 8th grade Advanced Academic Services students through Pre-Advanced Placement classes.

Students work individually and in groups with mixed ability students as well as in groups with potentially identified Advanced Academic Services students on differentiated activities, research and enrichment projects.

### ***High School***

Advanced Academic Services students in grades 9-12 are served through Pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement classes in the four core areas and other areas: English 1 Pre AP, English 2 Pre AP, English 3 AP, English 4 AP, French 3 Honors, Spanish 3 Honors, Algebra 2 Pre AP, Geometry Pre AP, Computer Science 1 AP, Computer Science 2 AP, Multimedia Honors, Digital Graphics and Animation Honors, WebMaster Honors, Biology 1 Pre AP, Anatomy & Physiology Honors, Chemistry 1 Pre AP, Chemistry AP, Physics Pre AP, World Geography Pre AP, World History Pre AP, U. S. History Honors, Politics Honors, Economics Honors, Art 4 Honors, Studio Art AP, Band 4 Honors, Choir 4 Honors, Music Theory AP, Pre

Calculus Honors, Calculus AP, Robotics, Independent Study in English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Computer Science.

Optional opportunities are available through dual credit classes, distance learning, and independent study. Parents and students at the high school level are allowed to select the classes in the subject areas of their choosing after a conference with the academic counselor or the principal's designee. This ensures that the students are enrolled in the appropriate approved classes. The parents and students may choose to be removed from the program, which requires a written request that is submitted to the principal and the Advanced Academic Services Coordinator.

### ***Scope of Procedures for Initial Testing and Placement***

These guidelines for nomination, screening, and selection of students for the Advanced Academic Services Program are designed to meet state guidelines and to be in compliance with a comprehensive program for the gifted education for the Silsbee Independent School District. The criteria used to assess students in the areas of general intellectual ability in grades K-12 will include both qualitative and quantitative measures. The identification process is aimed at finding potential for giftedness rather than true giftedness.

### **District Identification Timeline**

"Push-in" enrichment lessons for all K classes	August
Screenings and assessments conducted with all K students	September
Referrals accepted from teachers	September
Advanced Academic Services committee meets on kindergarten (K) pre-screenings	September
Written permission for services is obtained for identified students in K	October
Services begin for identified K students	October by the end of the first six weeks
Referral procedures published in local newspaper and on district website	January
Referrals accepted from parents, teachers, community members, and peers	January
Screenings, assessments and reassessments (3rd graders) conducted after written permission obtained	January - April
Advanced Academic Services Committee meets on grade 1-12 screening	May

Written permission for services is obtained for identified students in 1-12 students	May
Services begin for identified 4-12 students and Watch 1-3 students	August

## Dissemination Information

Anyone may nominate a student for the program at the period of annual referrals listed on the timeline above. Referral forms are available at each campus in the counselor's office. Referral forms may be submitted to the campus counselor only during the time period of referral acceptance. Late referrals will not be accepted.

Parents are informed of the identification policies and procedures in a language and form that the families understand or a translator or interpreter will be provided. The district written Policies and Procedures for the Advanced Academic Services Program is located on the district website at [www.silsbeeisd.org](http://www.silsbeeisd.org). In addition, parent awareness sessions are held annually.

## Nomination/Referral

The Naglieri Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (NNAT3) will be administered to all enrolled students in Kindergarten during the first six weeks. The NNAT3 will also be administered to all enrolled students in grades 1-3 in the spring. Students may be nominated for the program by administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, self, peers, community members, or other interested persons. Nomination will include the parent permission to test letter, the Parent Inventory for Finding Potential, the Teacher Inventory of Learning Strengths, and appropriate grade level data. All forms will be made available in a language and form that the families understand or a translator or interpreter will be provided.

Awareness of the Advanced Academic Services spring screening will occur on the Silsbee ISD website and through the Silsbee Bee. Referral forms are available in the counselor's office in the spring semester. Referrals can originate from administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, self, peers, community members, or other interested persons. Referral forms may be submitted to the counselor's office only during the time periods of referral acceptance. Late referrals will not be accepted. Written parent or guardian permission is required to screen/assess a student.

## Screening

The screening instruments will match the program's services. The criteria used to assess students in the areas of general intellectual ability in grades K-12 will include both qualitative and quantitative measures. The screening process will include, but not be limited to, five of the following measures both objective and subjective: ability test scores, IQ test scores, achievement scores, teacher recommendation, parent inventory, student interview, or student products/portfolios.

Written parental consent shall be obtained before any special testing or individual assessment is conducted as part of the screening and identification process. All student information collected

during the screening and identification process shall be an educational record, subject to the protections set out in board policies at FL.

### **Assessments**

The NNAT3 Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test® is administered to all students in grades K-3.

The diagnostician has the option to use two of the following four assessments:

- TONI-4 Test of Nonverbal Intelligence
- K-BIT Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test
- SAGES Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary Students
- SLOSSON Slosson Intelligence Test

### **Selection/Placement**

Prior to the selection committee meeting, the Advanced Academic Services Coordinator collects the data and collates the information for the committee. An identification number is assigned to the student to assure confidentiality.

### **Selection Committee**

The district Advanced Academic Services selection committee screens the students and places those children who show potential giftedness in a classroom with instruction that is designed to nurture this potential. The Advanced Academic Services Coordinator solicits qualified volunteers to be a part of the selection committee.

- A district selection committee composed of at least 3 professional educators who are Advanced Academic Services teachers who have completed the thirty hours of training and the 6 hour yearly update, a counselor or administrator, and Advanced Academic Services Coordinator or designee will select students for the Advanced Academic Services Program upon completion of all eligibility forms and testing.
- Non-voting committee advisors will consist of the student advocate of record.
- Committee members will have received training in the nature and needs as well as being familiar with the state guidelines for Advanced Academic Services programs.
- The responsibilities of this committee will be to review the initial screening data and make selections. Before each committee meeting, the members will review the Silsbee ISD Advanced Academic Services philosophy, definition, and characteristics.
- The student advocate will be responsible for presenting student candidate information to the committee.

### **Selection Process**

- The selection committee will review the student folders after an identification number is given to each student to assure confidentiality. No names are given.
- Demographic information will be included.
- Presentation of data will be both subjective and objective data.
- Questions from the committee regarding subjective data must be non-identifying, data-related.



- The committee will cross-reference additional data sources which include, but are not limited to achievement scores, bilingual or ESL eligibility, free/reduced lunch eligibility, and/or additional test data.
- The committee will review parental or peer nomination data.
- The selection committee after considering the preponderance of the data will choose the candidates for consideration of potential giftedness.
- The committee makes candidate decisions as an empowered and collaborative group.
- Decisions of the committee are by majority vote.
- No single committee member will carry the burden of the decision making process.
- All non-abstaining members must sign the "Selection Committee Student Recommendation Form" once a majority decision has been reached.
- If a committee member is related to a child under candidate consideration, he or she must withdraw from the selection process for that student.
- If a committee member feels that he or she recognized a student candidate, the member must immediately declare the intent to abstain from voting and leave.
- **The selection committee must adhere to Silsbee ISD policy concerning the security of student information.**
- No student related information or committee-related discussions or decisions may leave the committee meeting.

## **District Committee Decision Options**

Kindergarten students will be identified as potentially Advanced Academic Services and served by the second six weeks of each school year in the Advanced Academic Services Watch Program. Kindergarten students will be evaluated within the first six weeks and placed after testing in the first six weeks. Identified Advanced Academic Services students will be offered a place in the Advanced Academic Services class at the beginning of the school year after the students are tested. In grades K-3, potentially identified Advanced Academic Services students will be placed in the Watch Program. A student is not formally identified as Advanced Academic Services until after the third grade.

**Advanced Academic Services Watch:** the subjective and objective data indicate potentially gifted (grade K-3)

All students potentially identified in grades K-3 will be served in a Watch Program under the Place/Observe Status. The Watch Program begins with Kindergarten and goes through the third grade.

**Advanced Academic Services Status:** the subjective and objective data indicate giftedness (grades 4 and above)

A student is not formally identified for Advanced Academic Services until after the third grade. All third grade students participating in the Watch Program will be assessed before the end of the year for placement in the Advanced Academic Services program. The identification process is aimed at finding potential for giftedness rather than true giftedness.

**Monitor Status:** inconsistent subjective data and/or objective data; however, potential is indicated.

- Place and observe: student is placed in the Advanced Academic Services program and receives full services for a stated period of time.
- Additional Data Needed: the committee indicates a need for further data gathering and gives direction as to the collection of data.

**Regular Classroom:** the subjective and objective data indicate the student would be best served in the regular classroom at this time.

***Committee decisions that do not involve initial placement***

**Furlough:** student is removed from the Advanced Academic Services Program for a period of not more than one (1) year. At the end of the year the student will be reassessed and will re-enter or exit the program.

**Exit:** student is removed from the Advanced Academic Services program

**Notification**

Parents and campus principals shall be notified in writing of the decision of the Advanced Academic Services selection committee. Letters will be mailed home to parents and a list sent to principals. Participation in any program services provided is voluntary. The district shall obtain written permission from the parents and/or student before the student is placed in Advanced Academic Services program.

**Placement**

- Identified Advanced Academic Services students will be offered a place in the Advanced Academic Services class.
- In grades K-3, potentially identified Advanced Academic Services students will be placed in the Watch Program.
- Participation in any program services provided for Advanced Academic Services students is voluntary. The district shall obtain written permission of the parents and/or the student before a student is placed in a gifted program.

**Appeals**

- Educators, parents or students may appeal any final decision of the district selection committee regarding selection for or removal from the Advanced Academic Services Program within three weeks of the decision,
- Written appeals must first be made to the Advanced Academic Services Coordinator, 415 Hwy 327 West, Silsbee, Texas 77656, who will then present the request to the selection committee.
- Those persons using the appeals process have the option of appearing before the committee and presenting a brief statement of evidence.
- The committee reserves the right to delay action pending further research and consideration of input.
- Any subsequent appeals must be made in accordance with FNG (LOCAL) beginning at Level Two.

## ***Additional Policies and Procedures***

### **Transfer Students**

- Transfer students who move in from another district and who were in the Advanced Academic Services Program in their previous school district are temporarily placed in the district's program for a period of one (1) year.
- In January, the Advanced Academic Services teacher will evaluate the student and make a recommendation for removal from the program or for screening/placement. Then the procedures for nomination and screening as outlined in the administrative procedures and guidelines are followed.
- When an Advanced Academic Services student transfers to another district either in or out of the state of Texas, that district is provided with the student's assessment data.

### **Reassessment**

The district shall not perform routine reassessments. All third grade students participating in the Watch Program will be assessed before the end of the year for placement in Advanced Academic Services program. At the end of each school year, students in kindergarten through eighth grade, are annually recommended by the Advanced Academic Services teacher for continued placement or removal in the Program.

### **Furlough**

A furlough may be granted at the request of the Advanced Academic Services teacher, parent and/or student. A student may be furloughed for a one (1) year period of time. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed and the student may re-enter the Advanced Academic Services Program or be exited from the program. Reasons for the furlough may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Student illness
- Emotional problems stemming from self, school, or home illness in the family
- Death in the family

Students, parents or teachers must specify in writing to the Advanced Academic Services Coordinator, 415 Hwy 327 West, Silsbee, Texas 77656, the reason for the furlough. The Advanced Academic Services Coordinator will present the request to the district selection committee.

If the student is granted a furlough, the date of re-entry to the program must be indicated for a period of not more than one school year. If the student does not re-enter the program at the end of the furlough, he/she will be exited. The student will then need to reapply or be screened again for placement into the Advanced Academic Services Program.

### **Exit Procedure**

Monitoring student performance shall be the responsibility of the campus principal and the Advanced Academic Services teachers; however, the district committee will make final decisions regarding exiting a student from the program. Valid reasons for exit are as follows:

- Parental written requests for withdrawal
- Student written requests for withdrawal with parental permission
- Advanced Academic Services teacher recommendation based on observation of student's behavior, performance, products, and the submission of data to support the recommendation

Parental consultation is required prior to any recommendation for exiting a student, and it is the first step in removing a student from the program. Parents/guardians and students will have an opportunity to meet with the committee or its representative before the student is exited. Exiting a student from the Advanced Academic Services Program should only be considered after other place and observe options have been tried. It will be approached with the student's welfare as the primary concern.

After a student has been exited from the Advanced Academic Services program, the student is required to remain out of the program for one full year. The child will then reapply and proceed through the selection process.

All requests to exit the program must be handled by the district Advanced Academic Services selection committee. If the reason for exiting the program is other than parent or student request, the following criteria will be reviewed:

- Standardized test scores
- Teacher checklists
- Student work samples
- Other criteria as needed

## ***Advanced Academic Services Program Management and Teacher Guidelines***

### **Professional/Staff Development**

In order to effectively meet the needs of gifted children, educators, including teachers, administrators, counselors, and other staff, must have high-level training in gifted education. The Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT) recommends that school districts provide professional development experiences in gifted education that are comprehensive, focused, and coordinated.

Prior to assignment in the program, teachers who provide instruction and services that are part of the program for gifted students will have the state requirement of thirty (30) clock hours of staff development that include training in each of the five core areas:

- Nature and needs of the gifted (characteristics)
- Identification and assessment of the gifted
- Differentiated curriculum for the gifted including curriculum development and performance based assessment
- Social and emotional needs of the gifted

- Creativity

Teachers without required training who provide instruction and services that are part of the Advanced Academic Services program must complete the thirty-hour (30) training within one semester. Teachers who provide instruction and services that are part of the Advanced Academic Services program for gifted students will receive a minimum of six (6) hours annually. Campus principals will be responsible for documenting that campus staff members who are part of the Advanced Academic Services Program have the required hours.

Administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions must have a minimum of six (6) hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students and program options for Advanced Academic Services students.

Evaluation of professional development activities for Advanced Academic Services education will be ongoing, and the results of the evaluation will be used in making decisions regarding future staff development plans.

Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT) recommends the following as additional staff training for teachers who have met the five core components:

- Resources
- Classroom strategies (by content area)
- Research
- Portfolio assessment
- Special populations (learning disability, at risk, economically disadvantaged, etc.)
- Curriculum compacting
- Program design and evaluation
- Working with parents of the gifted
- Testing and interpretation
- Counseling
- Implementing change
- Mentorships
- Product Assessment Creative skills and critical thinking
- Appropriate uses of cooperative learning
- Characteristics of good teachers of the gifted

### **Parent and Community Involvement**

Parents will be given an opportunity to be a part of the Advanced Academic Services Advisory Committee. This committee will serve as an advisory body to the Advanced Academic Services Program and a conduit between the school Advanced Academic Services Program and the larger community. The members will facilitate awareness of the program's activities and ensure that it reflects the values of the community. The committee will provide feedback to the district on the Advanced Academic Services Program, focusing on the following:

- How well program meets the needs of the students
- Where the program needs improvement
- Future directions for the program

Meetings will be held a minimum of two times a year at the Silsbee Administration Office in the Boardroom. The committee will consist of approximately 18-20 members that represent each

campus. The representation should include members from a culturally diverse population and people with a willingness to practice active listening skills and participate in building consensus. Sample members of the Advanced Academic Services Advisory Committee may include the following:

- Parents (of students currently enrolled in the school district)
- Faculty (Advanced Academic Services teachers, counselors, fine arts teachers)
- Administrators (principals, superintendent, Advanced Academic Services Coordinator)
- Local Business alliances (advocates for youth)
- School Board Representatives
- Other (advocates of education for Advanced Academic Services students)

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation of the Advanced Academic Services Program will be ongoing throughout the academic year. Evaluations will be based on input from, but not limited to, the following: Parents Students Teachers Administrators Advanced Academic Services Advisory Committee Evaluation information shall be shared with the Board, administrators, teachers, counselors, and students in the program as well as the community.

## ***Appendix A***

# Traits of Giftedness

No gifted individual is exactly the same, each with his own unique patterns and traits. There are many traits that gifted individuals have in common, but no gifted learner exhibits traits in every area. This list of traits may help you better understand whether or not your child is gifted.

Cognitive	Creative	Affective	Behavioral
Keen power of abstraction	Creativeness and inventiveness	Unusual emotional depth and intensity	Spontaneity
Interest in problem-solving and applying concepts	Keen sense of humor	Sensitivity or empathy to the feelings of others	Boundless enthusiasm
Voracious and early reader	Ability for fantasy	High expectations of self and others, often leading to feelings of frustration	Intensely focused on passions—resists changing activities when engrossed in own interests
Large vocabulary	Openness to stimuli, wide interests	Heightened self-awareness, accompanied by feelings of being different	Highly energetic—needs little sleep or down time
Intellectual curiosity	Intuitiveness	Easily wounded, need for emotional support	Constantly questions
Power of critical thinking, skepticism, self-criticism	Flexibility	Need for consistency between abstract values and personal actions	Insatiable curiosity
Persistent, goal-directed behavior	Independence in attitude and social behavior	Advanced levels of moral judgment	Impulsive, eager and spirited
Independence in work and study	Self-acceptance and unconcern for social norms	Idealism and sense of justice	Perseverance—strong determination in areas of importance
Diversity of interests and abilities	Radicalism		High levels of frustration—particularly when having difficulty meeting standards of performance (either imposed by self or others)
	Aesthetic and moral commitment to self-selected work		Volatile temper, especially related to perceptions of failure
			Non-stop talking/chattering

Source: Clark, B. (2008). *Growing up gifted (7<sup>th</sup> ed.)* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

## Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Children

There are numerous lists of characteristics or distinguishing features and attributes of gifted and talented children. Teachers and parents should interpret any single list, including this one, as exemplary rather than exclusive. Few gifted children will display all of the characteristics. Understanding the characteristics of gifted and talented children will help parents and teacher sharpen their observations of these children in two distinct ways:

1. While characteristics do not necessarily define who is a gifted child, they do constitute observable behaviors that can be thought of as clues to more specific behaviors.
2. These characteristics are signals to indicate that a particular child might warrant closer observations and could require specialized educational attention, pending a more comprehensive assessment.

### **General**

- They typically learn to read earlier with a better comprehension of the language. As many as half of the gifted and talented population have learned to read before entering school. They often read widely, quickly, and intensely and have large vocabularies.
- They commonly learn basic skills better, more quickly, and with less practice.
- They are better able to construct and handle abstractions than their age mates.
- They are frequently able to pick up and interpret nonverbal cues and can draw inferences that other children have to have “spelled out” for them.
- They take less for granted, seeking the “hows” and “whys”.
- They display a better ability to work independently at an earlier age and for longer periods of time than other children.
- They can sustain longer periods of concentration and attention. Their interests are often both widely eclectic and intensely focused.
- They frequently have seemingly boundless energy, which sometimes leads to a misdiagnosis of “hyperactive”.
- They are usually able to respond and relate well to parents, teachers, and other adults.
- They may prefer the company of older children and adults to that of their peers.

### **Creative**

- 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 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 seem to thrive in problem situations.
- They are good guessers and can construct hypotheses or “what if” questions readily.
- They often are 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 often display intellectual playfulness; they fantasize and imagine readily.
- They can be less intellectually inhibited than their peer in expressing opinions and ideas and often exhibit spirited disagreement.
- They have sensitivity to beauty and are attached to aesthetic dimensions.

### **Learning Characteristics**

- They 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 youngsters 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 the 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 it systematically.
- They have a well-developed common sense.

### **Behavioral Characteristics**

- 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 are able to be conforming or nonconforming as the situation demands.
- They have a highly developed moral and ethical sense.
- They are able to integrate opposing impulses, such as constructive and destructive behavior.
- They often exhibit daydreaming behavior.
- They often have a well-developed sense of self and a realistic idea about their capabilities and potential.

## **Appendix B**

### **Curriculum Principles and Criteria**

The following principles and criteria for curriculum will be followed in the district's program:

***Principle I: The differentiation of the core curriculum for Gifted/Talented students is based on a strong theoretical foundation.***

#### **Criteria**

- Based on the characteristics and needs of gifted students.
- Time is provided for regular classroom teachers and teachers of the gifted to coordinate their instruction.
- Extends, reinforces, and/or enhances curriculum, though care must be taken to assure that gifted students have mastered the essential knowledge and skills included in the core curriculum.
- Produces measurable outcomes.
- District has scope and sequence (K-12) for the content to be studied, the processes to be mastered, and the products to be generated.

***Principle II: Provisions are made for the differentiation of content for Gifted/Talented student.***

#### **Criteria**

- Move beyond merely factual information toward broader concepts and generalizations.
- Acceleration of knowledge and/or skills that correlate with the student's mental rather than chronological age, complement the student's interest, and/or satisfy the student's quest for advanced or complex information.
- Providing for in-depth expansion of student knowledge.
- Relating what is learned in one area of study to other areas and by crossing the boundaries of different disciplines to promote the application and transfer of learning.
- Multi-level resources used that are varied and that are beyond those reserved or designated for the regular curriculum.

***Principle III: Provisions are made for the differentiation of process for Gifted/Talented students.***

#### **Criteria**

- Opportunities for students to develop critical thinking.
- Training for students in creative and productive thinking.
- Empowering students to conduct more extensive guided and independent research.

***Principle IV: Provisions are made for differentiation of products for Gifted/Talented students.***

#### **Criteria**

- Complex products that provide evidence of the differentiated content and process that have been acquired.
- Products that are often audience-targeted.

- Product development using new experiences, resources, and technology not ordinarily used in product development.
- Product selection based on analysis of student need and interest.
- Product assessment using student and/or teacher designed criteria for self and peer product assessment.
- Accept and use critiques in a productive manner.

***Principle V: Provisions are made for affective growth of Gifted/Talented students.***

**Criteria**

- Development of insights into one's strengths, weaknesses, interests, learning styles, and preferences.
- Understanding of the student's responsibilities in a complex and diverse society and as a gifted/talented individual.
- Opportunities for career and leadership assessment and training as well as appropriate mentor roles.
- Opportunities to investigate the relationship between one's self and others.

***Principle VI: The learning environment support and enhances the differentiation of curriculum for Gifted/Talented students.***

**Criteria**

- Nurtures the cognitive and affective development of gifted students.
- Learning resources both cost effective and consistent with the program goals and student objectives.
- Use of materials and resources that are differentiated from those used in other options including general education, honors courses, and/or Advanced Placement courses.

(source unknown)