

LaRue County Schools
Gifted and Talented Services
Parent/Student Handbook

Education: A Lincoln Heritage
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MISSION STATEMENT

The primary goal of the gifted program is to provide opportunities for gifted learners to meet the needs that cannot be met in the regular classroom program. Such a program should:

1. Expand and extend the student's learning beyond the standard curriculum
2. Provide flexible curricular and extracurricular grouping and differentiated curriculum experiences commensurate with the student's interests, needs, and abilities
3. Help the student to attain, to a high degree, the goals established by statute and the Board of Education

GIFTEDNESS

The national definition for giftedness as stated in the Jacob K. Javits Education Act of 1988 is that gifted and talented students are students who can be defined as exceptional—that is, they can be identified as possessing demonstrated or potential ability to perform at an exceptionally high level in five general areas:

1. General Intellectual—requires exceptional reasoning ability
2. Specific Academic—based on high achievement in specific content areas
3. Creativity
4. Leadership
5. Visual/Performing Arts—includes art, drama, music, and dance

CHARACTERISTICS OF VARIOUS AREAS OF GIFTEDNESS

VISUAL PERFORMING ARTS

- Outstanding in sense of spatial relationships
- Unusual ability for expressing self, feelings, moods, etc., through art, dance, drama, music
 - Good motor coordination
 - Exhibits creative expression
- Desire for producing “own product” (not content to copy)
 - Observant

LEADERSHIP

- Assumes responsibility
- High expectations for self and others
- Fluent, concise, self-expressive
- Foresees consequences and implications of decisions
- Good judgment in decision-making
- Likes structure
- Well liked by peers
- Self-confident
- Organized

CREATIVE THINKING

- Independent thinker
- Exhibits original thinking in oral and written expression
- Comes up with several solutions to a given problem
- Creates and invents
- Challenged by creative tasks
 - Improvises often
- Does not mind being different from the crowd

GENERAL INTELLECTUAL ABILITY

- Formulates abstractions
- Processes information in complex ways
- Observant
- Excited about new ideas

- Enjoys hypothesizing
- Learns rapidly
- Uses a large vocabulary
 - Inquisitive
- Self-starter

SPECIFIC ACADEMIC ABILITY

- Good memorization ability
- Advanced comprehension
- Acquires basic-skills knowledge quickly
- Widely read in special-interest areas
- High academic success in special-interest areas
- Pursues special interests with enthusiasm and vigor

GOVERNING LEGISLATION

KRS 157.200 Definitions... Gifted and talented student means a pupil identified as possessing demonstrated or potential ability to perform at an exceptionally high level in general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, creative or divergent thinking, psychosocial or leadership skills, or in the visual or performing arts.

KRS 157.220 Functions of the Department of Education in special education programs

KRS 157.224 Statewide plan for exceptional education programs

KRS 157.230 Special education programs of school districts

704 KRS 3:285 Programs for the gifted and talented

Revised Administrative Regulation on Gifted Education: 704 KAR:3.285

The revised regulation:

- ✓ Requires school districts to have identification procedures for all five categories of gifted behavior including: general intellectual, specific academic aptitude, creativity, leadership, and visual and performing arts
- ✓ Requires school districts to provide a range of services to address the needs of students identified in the five areas. (Districts may choose how services are delivered.)
- ✓ Eliminates the priority of service. Services must be offered in all areas.
- ✓ Requires the establishment of a “talent pool” in the primary program based on informal measures which broadens the view of giftedness and provides opportunities for a wider range of gifted and talented behaviors to emerge among a greater number of the student population.
- ✓ Permits the use of formal, normed measures only as a diagnostic tool to determine the instructional needs of individual children in the primary talent pool.
- ✓ Requires the incorporation of authentic assessment practices in the identification and evaluation process
- ✓ Prohibits the use of formal, normed measures in the primary talent pool except to diagnose need for appropriate services
- ✓ Prohibits full-time, everyday self-contained classrooms for students in the primary program
- ✓ Allows for “special schools” and full-time “self-contained classroom” options in grades 4-12.

WHY SHOULD THE PUBLIC SUPPORT GIFTED EDUCATION?

This question is often asked in a confrontational manner by those who believe that gifted children do not need special educational programs and services. Some sincerely feel that truly gifted children will remain gifted and fulfill their educational needs on their own. Others feel that if teachers are doing their job, gifted students should be able to get by without the special attention that other atypical learners need. The following are some ideas that those who hold such views should be asked to consider.

- **Gifted learners must be given stimulating educational experiences appropriate to their level of ability if they are to realize their potential.** Giftedness arises from an interaction between innate capabilities and an environment that challenges and stimulates to bring forth high levels of ability and talent. These challenges must be available throughout the individual's lifetime for high levels of actualization of ability and talent to result. According to research on the nature of intelligence and the brain, we either progress or we regress depending on our participation in stimulation appropriate to our level of development.
- **Each person has the right to learn and be challenged to learn at the most appropriate level where growth proceeds most effectively.** Our political and social system is based on democratic principles. The school, as an extension of those principles, must provide an equal educational opportunity for all children to develop to their fullest potential. This means allowing gifted students the opportunity to learn at their level of development. For true equal opportunity, a variety of learning experiences must be available at many levels.
- **Currently, slightly over 50 percent of gifted students in the United States are reported to be receiving education appropriate to their needs.** Many researchers consider gifted students to be the largest group of underachievers in education.
- **When given the opportunity, gifted students can use their vast amount of knowledge to serve as a background for unlimited learning.** When the needs of gifted children are considered and the educational program is designed to meet these needs, gifted students make significant gains in achievement, and their sense of competence and well-being is enhanced.

Bright Child or Gifted Learner?

Bright Child

Knows the answers
Is interested
Is attentive
Has good ideas
Works hard
Answers the question
Top group
Listens with interest
Learns with ease
6-8 repetitions for mastery
Understands ideas
Enjoys peers
Grasps the meaning
Completes assignments
Is receptive
Copies accurately
Enjoys school
Absorbs information
Technician
Good memorizer
Enjoys straightforward, sequential presentation
Is alert
Is pleased with own learning

Gifted Learner

Asks the questions
Is highly curious
Is mentally and physically involved
Has wild, silly ideas
Plays around, yet tests well
Discusses in detail, elaborates
Beyond the group
Shows strong feelings and opinions
Already knows
1-2 repetitions for mastery
Constructs abstractions
Prefers adults
Draws inferences
Initiates projects
Is intense
Creates a new design
Enjoys learning
Manipulates information
Inventor
Good guesser
Thrives on complexity
Is keenly observant
Is highly self-critical

By Janise Szabos

PRIMARY TALENT POOL

The primary talent pool is a service for high potential students. The primary students are not *formally* identified until the end of third grade. Talent pool students are students who have shown high potential and an accelerated learning level. The participation in the talent pool does not mean that the child will be formally identified upon exiting primary. In the talent pool, the student will participate in enrichment activities with the other gifted and talented students.

Students are placed in the talent pool when three pieces of evidence are found indicating high potential in one or more of the five areas of giftedness. One of the three pieces must be a recommendation from the teacher.

Evidence may also include such things as: portfolio pieces, report cards, anecdotal records, products such as artwork or tapes of performances, awards, and parent questionnaires.

Exiting Primary Formal Identification Procedure

Upon exiting primary, all third grade students will be screened with the Standard Raven Matrices for general intellectual placement by the school counselor. Students who score in the 9th stanine and have a 96% score or above, and show exceptional reasoning ability will be formally identified pending two other pieces of evidence including a recommendation from their teacher.

To be identified for a *specific academic* area, students must have a 9th stanine and 96% score on content area subtests, and two forms of supporting evidence including a recommendation from their teacher.

Creatively gifted and talented students are screened by teacher and specialists, and must also provide supporting evidence.

Leadership gifted students must be identified by their leadership abilities in various situations.

The *Visual/Performing Arts* students are recommended based on their exceptional ability in the area identified. After the referral has been made, a letter of recommendation is obtained from a specialist (music, art teacher, etc.) in the identified area, and supporting evidence must be provided.

Exiting Primary Service Options*

Acceleration Options

Various forms of advancing through material or grade levels prior to the prescribed time based on early mastery, such as pretesting in content and being excused to go on to higher level activities, curriculum compacting or linear acceleration, simultaneous or dual enrollment in courses at different grade levels including postsecondary, early exit from school, and grade skipping.

Advanced Placement and Honors Courses

Courses emphasizing college-level content based on college board curricula and tests (advanced placement), or the provision of more challenging material through higher levels of content, process and product (honors courses).

Collaborative Teaching and Consultation Services

A gifted education teacher provides differentiated direct instruction in a regular classroom to a cluster group of identified gifted students in conjunction with the regular classroom teacher.

Special Counseling Services

Effectively-based counseling assistance planned in coordination with the gifted teacher provided by a counselor familiar with the characteristics and socio-emotional needs of gifted and talented students.

Differentiated Study Experiences

Educational experiences which extend, replace, or supplement learning beyond the standard curriculum.

Distance Learning

Learning opportunities offered through the use of computer technology and satellite transmission or optical fiber transmission.

Pull Out Service

Service provided for *generally intellectual* gifted students. The students participate once a week in enrichment activities provided by the gifted and talented resource teacher.

Seminars

Discussion-based sessions on specific topics focusing on advanced content and higher level process skills.

Travel Study

Academically-based United States and overseas travel which may result in high school or university course credit.

Special Schools or Self-Contained Classrooms

Special schools or classrooms designed to:

- Serve gifted students in grades 4-12 in specific academic areas

- Develop specific areas of giftedness such as visual and performing arts

*This list is recommended by the state but all options are not always available.

THE GIFTED STUDENT SERVICE PLAN (GSSP)

What is the Gifted Student Service Plan?

A Gifted and Talented Student Services Plan (GSSP) is a yearly educational plan which matches a formally identified gifted student's interests, needs and abilities to differentiated service options and serves as the communication vehicle between the parents and school personnel. The teacher providing the service option uses information in the GSSP related to the identified gifted students interests, needs and abilities to differentiate the curriculum and design extensions which will provide continuous progress for the student. The GSSP *should not* contain confidential information such as achievement test scores.

Why is a gifted student now required to have a GSSP?

KRS 157.200 *Exceptional Children and Youth* includes within the definition of "exceptional child" a category of "exceptional students" identified as gifted and talented. A student might be identified as gifted in one or more of the following 5 categories: general intellectual, specific academic, creative thinking, leadership, and the visual/performing arts. 707 KAR 1:320 *Individual education program*, requires that Individual Education Programs be developed for all students included in KRS 157.200. For gifted student, the Individual Education Program is called a Gifted Students Services Plan (GSSP).

Who is required to have a GSSP?

It is now mandatory for *all* students who have been formally identified as gifted in grades 4-12 in one or more categories to have a GSSP beginning in the fall of the 2001-2002 school year. School districts are responsible for assuring that each formally identified gifted student has a GSSP. A local district may decide if Primary Talent Pool students will also have a GSSP.

Is there an official GSSP form?

There is not an official GSSP form and districts may design their own. 704 KAR 3:285 does require that information related to the interests, needs and abilities of an identified gifted student *must* be obtained from the student's parent or guardian for inclusion in determining appropriate service options for each student.

What are differentiated service options?

"Differentiated service options" means educational experiences which extend, replace, or supplement learning beyond the standard curriculum. The regulation states that local school districts shall implement multiple service delivery options with no single service option existing alone, district wide, or at any grade level. These service delivery options shall be differentiated to such a degree as to be consistent with the language and intent of KRS 157.200 (1) both grouping for instructional purposes, and multiple services options may include such alternatives as: various acceleration options, Advanced Placement and Honors Courses, collaborative teaching and consultation service, special counseling services, differentiated study experiences in the regular classroom, distance learning, enrichment services delivered in a pull-out classroom or other appropriate instructional setting, seminars, travel study options, special schools or self contained classrooms grades 4-12 only. The service option(s) assigned are intended to provide opportunities for continuous progress based on the identified gifted students' needs, interests, and abilities. School-based councils are responsible for determining the services and curriculum offered in their building. It is very important that council members understand the various gifted service options allowed in the regulation and that there must be multiple service options at every grade level to be in compliance with 704KAR3:285.

May each school have its own committee and address only their students when writing the GSSP?

The regulation states a school district *or* a school shall have a selection/placement committee made up of a gifted education coordinator or a gifted education teacher and representatives from classroom teachers, administrators, counselors, special education teachers and other appropriate personnel who follow district policies and procedures to formally identify and determine the level and type of service options for gifted students.

Formal identification begins in the 4th grade so the majority of students needing formal identification will be those students going into 4th grade. However, formal identification can occur in any grade level 4-12. Once a student has been formally identified in one or more areas of giftedness, only yearly gifted services need to be assigned. Personnel responsible for the design and delivery of appropriate service options develop the GSSP and include parental input. Those persons writing the GSSP should have a knowledge of the interest, needs and abilities of the student and also which service option(s) would best provide the opportunity for continuous progress for that student.

What type of documentation do we need to keep if a student chooses not to participate in the service option?

The committee should have documentation that an appropriate service option has been offered. A signature by the student and/or parent on the GSSP stating the student chooses not to participate in the service option provides a procedural safeguard for the school district.

What happens after the GSSP is completed?

After formally identifying a student as gifted in one or more areas, the selection committee should use a parent inventory and other formal and informal documentation to assign a service option(s) and then fill out the student's GSSP. It is very important to remember the purpose of the GSSP is to provide documentation of matching differentiated services to the identified gifted student's interest, needs, and abilities. *A gifted child's strengths are his/her needs.*

After assigning the appropriate service option, copies should be sent to each teacher who will be providing the service(s), the parent or guardian, the principal of the school providing the service option, and a copy should be placed in the student's record. The teacher assigned to provide the service option is responsible for differentiating the curriculum and providing extensions for each student in the class who has a GSSP.

Who should sign the GSSP?

The GSSP should be signed by all persons filling out the form and the educator responsible for providing the service options. The student's parent or guardian should be provided an opportunity to sign the form and the gifted student might also be asked to sign the GSSP.

Who is responsible for checking to see if the GSSP is being carried out?

The educator assigned to provide the service option is responsible for recording extensions which they are providing *for each identified exceptional student* in their classroom. The person responsible for evaluation of the teacher providing the service should check to see what extensions are being provided to all exceptional students in the classroom.

When do you meet with parents?

The regulation does not require a meeting with parents or guardians. The regulation *does* require that there are to be procedures for obtaining information related to the interests, needs, and abilities of identified students. Also, the parents or guardians must be notified annually of services and of specific procedures to follow in requesting a change in services. Procedures shall also ensure that school personnel report to a parent or guardian the progress of their child related to the GSSP at least once each semester.

PARENT GUIDE TO GIFTED EDUCATION

VOCABULARY

Ability grouping: Grouping students by need, interest, or ability for particular learning activities or for instructional purposes. Groups should be formed and reformed in the classroom to meet various instructional needs. (This is not tracking in which students are placed in a fixed group that is maintained for all learning activities and remains in place over time.)

Acceleration: Allowing students to move through material at a pace faster than age-mates and at a rate equal to their abilities (i.e. higher-level activities, compacting, dual-enrollment to obtain high school and college credit, grade skipping, and early exit from school.)

ACT and SAT: American College Testing and Scholastic Aptitude Test are both standardized tests traditionally taken by high school students and used by colleges in determining admissions and placement. Now also given to middle school gifted students for selection and placement in talent searches, summer institutes, and other academic programs. Taking tests higher than their grade level provides gifted students with the opportunity to show their abilities since they usually top out on a test given on their grade level.

A.P.: (Advanced Placement): The College Board program of college level courses offered in high school in which students, after receiving a certain score on the national AP exams in May, can be offered college credit at many institutions nationwide.

Authentic Assessment: Process of evaluating student learning using student products or performances (such as writing, art projects, dance recital, etc.) rather than traditional standardized tests.

Cluster Grouping: The year-long assignment of a small group, usually four or more, of students with similar interests, needs, or abilities to the same classroom for the purpose of receiving differentiated instruction.

Collaborative Teaching: Gifted education teacher and a regular classroom teacher working together to differentiate instruction for a cluster of identified gifted students.

Compacting: Reducing the amount of curriculum material by proving content mastery. By reducing repetition of content, students are challenged to their full potential. Students can be pretested on content to show what they already have mastered. The focus of study would then be the content that hasn't yet been mastered.

Differentiation: Making changes in the curriculum, either in content (what they learn), process (how they learn), or product (how they show what they've learned) to meet the needs of the individual student.

Distance Learning: Learning opportunities offered through the use of computer technology (such as web based instruction) or satellite transmission.

Enrichment: Learning activities not found in the core curriculum that are more in-depth or from an additional discipline used to supplement the gifted student's educational experience.

Extensions: Modifications in instruction and materials to ensure gifted students have the opportunity to learn at an appropriate level and pace for them to reach higher goals.

Gifted and Talented: Those students that give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as general intellect, creativity, visual and performing arts, leadership or specific academic aptitude, and who require services or activities beyond those ordinarily provided by the school in order to fulfill their full potential.

Gifted and Talented Student Services Plan (GSSP): An educational plan designed specifically for an individual student's needs.

Heterogeneous/Homogeneous Grouping: Students placed together based on their age or grade level are grouped heterogeneously. But homogeneous grouping places students with others like themselves based on academic ability, special needs, or interests.

High Potential Learners: Students in the top twenty-five percent of the primary student population that demonstrate the need for differentiated instruction to further develop their abilities.

Independent Study: A self-directed course of study under the supervision of a teacher or under the guidance of a college or university.

Learning Styles: The preferred style of learning (i.e., verbal/linguistic, kinesthetic/movement, spatial/visual, musical, mathematical/logical, natural, existential/living in the real world.)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. I understand that my child has shown he/she is above average in one or more of the five areas. Please explain the five areas.**
 1. General Intellectual: Sometimes called critical thinking. If your child is identified as GI, he/she has shown above average logic, reasoning, and problem solving abilities.
 2. Specific Academic: this means any subject area—math, reading, science, social studies, etc.
 3. Creativity: Above average ability to think of new, unusual ideas or solutions with lots of details.
 4. Leadership: A talent for organizing and directing others, especially in problem solving situations.
 5. Visual and Performing Arts: Above average ability in art, music, dance, or drama

- 2. Does being in the Talent Pool mean my child is gifted?** We are not labeling your child as gifted. We are recognizing that your child has demonstrated above average talent or higher than average potential in one or more of the 5 areas, and because of this, he or she may need changes in how or what is taught in the classroom.

- 3. If my child is in the Talent Pool, will he/she automatically need Gifted/talented services in 4th grade?** No. At the end of third grade, students take a formal standardized test. Scores made on that test determine if a student needs G/T modifications or if that student needs to be tested further. Ideally the Talent Pool comprises 25% of the student population. At the beginning of the 4th grade, however, only 5% of students will be identified as needing General Intellectual or Specific Academic services. Therefore, it is not unusual for a student to participate in a Talent Pool but not be identified for G/T services in the intermediate grades.

Why? The idea behind the Talent Pool is to “cast a wider net” and try to find and nurture student talents at a young age. We want to try to include students, not to exclude them. The need for a student to be in a Talent Pool is based mainly upon teacher observation and examples of student work. No formal test is given.

- 4. If my child doesn't qualify for G/T services in 4th grade, does that mean he or she failed?**

Not at all. It just means that your child can succeed in school without a lot of modifications.

- 5. How do you decide which service options my child will have?** We strive to match the service options with your child's needs, interests, and abilities. (Note: We provide a student interest survey for you and your child to fill out.) We then meet as a committee to decide which services are right for your child.

- 6. Who is responsible for delivering the changes my child might need?** Primarily the classroom teacher is responsible for seeing that the individual needs of every student are met. The district G/T administrator and district G/T coordinator are available to help with strategies and resources.

WEBSITES AND RESOURCES OF INTEREST TO FAMILIES OF GIFTED/TALENTED CHILDREN

- Hoagies www.hoagiesgifted.org
- GT World www.gtworld.org
- The Gifted Child Development Center
www.gifteddevelopment.com
- National Association for Gifted Children
www.nagc.org
- Council for Exceptional Children www.cec.sped.org
- Center for Gifted Studies at Western Kentucky
University www.wku.edu/gifted/
- Kentucky Association for Gifted Education
www.wku.edu/kage
- Legislation: Kentucky www.lrc.state.ky.us

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS AND GRIEVANCES

- A . Parents and/or students (grades P-12) may petition for identification. Students and teachers may petition or appeal on behalf of a student, provided written parental approval is secured. Parents and/or students may also submit an appeal regarding appropriate and adequate services for gifted students.
- B. The appealing party shall submit in writing to the Gifted and Talented Coordinator specifically why he/she believes that screening results are not accurate, or why the services provided are not adequate/appropriate to meet the needs of the student, or why an exception should be made, and/or reconsideration given.
- C. The Gifted and Talented Coordinator shall compile a student profile and present that along with the petition or appeal to the school's Gifted and Talented Selection Committee. The profile shall include a recommendation with substantiating evidence from the child's present and previous teachers.
- D. The school's Gifted and Talented Selection Committee shall hear appeals according to policies adopted by the SBDM aligned with district policies.
- E. If the student is not selected for the program by the school's Gifted and Talented Selection Committee or services are not appropriate, a written appeal may be made to the district Gifted and Talented Administrator or assistant superintendent within ten working days of notification.
- F. If the student is still not selected for the program or services are not appropriate, a written appeal may be made within ten working days after the District Selection Committee's rejection to the Board of Education which will have the final decision in the case.

District contacts:

Helena Freedlund, Larue County Gifted/Talented Coordinator
358-3196 email: helena.freedlund@kyschools.us

Trish Fulkerson, Larue County District Coordinator
358-4111 email: trish.fulkerson@kyschools.us

PARENT SURVEY

In order to determine appropriate services related to your child's gifted learning, please list any interests, needs, or abilities that would be integral to your child's gifted education.

Interests_____

Needs_____

Abilities_____

STUDENT AND PARENT FULFILLMENT

I have read and acknowledge receipt of the Larue County Schools Gifted and Talented Services Parent/Student Handbook.

Please sign, date, and return this page to your child's school counselor.

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

