

Gifted and Talented Program Plan Fountain Lake School District



Gifted and Talented Program Philosophy

Every community should be responsive to and responsible for educating its children to their highest possible level. Because the educational interests, needs, and abilities of gifted and creative students require progressive challenges and goals, Fountain Lake School District must develop a differentiated program to meet their specific challenges. Through the application of creative and critical thinking, both the needs of intellectually and creatively gifted students and society may be fulfilled. The emphasis of the Fountain Lake School District's program is placed upon developing a variety of higher level thinking skills in selected curriculum areas. The gifted and talented curriculum will enhance the regular curriculum by providing skills which will enable students to function more effectively in the future. Special attention will be given to not only the cognitive needs, but also the affective needs of the identified gifted and talented students in our district. We will strive to insure we are identifying the hard to identify students: underachieving gifted students, gifted students from diverse cultural and linguistic populations, and gifted students from poverty backgrounds.

Program Design

The program design for our gifted and talented students for grades kindergarten through grade twelve is intended to provide a curriculum that is both differentiated and appropriated for the specialized needs of students who are advanced in their thinking and learning processes. Gifted and talented students are provided opportunities to interact with their peers and to work with materials that challenge their abilities and encourage them to expand their abstract thinking and reasoning. This is accomplished through using various approaches appropriate to the designated grade level. All instructors involved have received training through the Arkansas Department of Education and/or advanced degree training. Secondary Course Content training is sponsored through ADE. Pre-AP and AP is sponsored by The College Board.

A Gifted and Talented Specialist meets with all students in the kindergarten through fourth grade for whole-group enrichment weekly. A pull out, enrichment style program for grade four meets once a week for a minimum of 150 minutes with a licensed gifted and talented instructor. In grades 5 – 8, students meet daily with a gifted and talented instructor providing a minimum of 150 minutes weekly. In addition to these services, the design of the charter program in the middle school, Fountain Lake Digital Prep Academy, requires each student to complete a personal success plan (PSP). Every student, with the guidance of an advisor, devises a plan that is appropriate to their own aptitudes, skill level and interests. This cutting-edge approach lends itself to individualized project-based learning where students' activities are geared to meet the needs of the identified gifted and talented students both in and out of the traditional traditional resource gifted and talented classroom. Grade nine through grade twelve gifted and talented students' needs are met through designated classes in the academic areas of English, math, science, and the fine arts classes of vocal music and art. Pre-Advanced Placement, Advanced Placement, and concurrent college enrollment course

program options are available.

Curriculum Overview

The Fountain Lake School District's program for the identified gifted and talented students features the utilization of gifted strategies within the existing K-12 curriculum, i.e., homogeneous grouping of students in certain required subject areas. Students do not necessarily have to do more work; the emphasis is on different work based on modifying the content and pace for part of the time in three ways: (1) enrichment; (2) acceleration; (3) individual or group interest-based learning.

The existing curriculum is further modified by emphasizing the acquisition and use of higher level thinking skills, divergent thinking and production skills, opportunities for independent study, creative thinking, and skill development in coping with exceptionalities. Basic skills are not de-emphasized; they are integrated through the above-mentioned strategies within the content area.

Curriculum units are designed in the following format for differentiated learning:

Grouping

- individual
- small group
- whole group

Content Modification

- Interest based
- Acceleration (compacting)
- Enrichment

Higher Levels of Critical Thinking

- Evaluation
- Synthesis
- Analysis

- Application

Various Levels of Creative Thinking

- Fluency
- Flexibility
- Originality
- Elaboration

Emphasis on Affective Objectives

- Self-concept
- Critical acceptance (self evaluation)
- Coping with failure
- Coping with exceptionalality
- Risk taking in creative activities
- Awareness of the need for tolerance in our global society

*At least part of the time, the gifted program curriculum must include the above objectives, but not exclude the opportunity to be evaluated on process and progress toward obtaining these objectives. Students are allowed to present products in a variety of ways, not just be tested. Also, the curriculum will develop decision-making skills as part of the content of the curriculum.

Goals and Objectives

1. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- A. **GOAL**-Every attempt will be made to train certified personnel in a sequential and continuous program development to enable them to assist in the identification selection and programming of gifted and talented students.
- B. **OBJECTIVE**
 1. Provide pre-service and in-service staff development for teachers and administrators.
 2. Provide an opportunity for participation in conferences specifically related to gifted education at the state, regional, national, and international levels (AGATE, AAGEA, AAEA, NAGC, etc.)

3. Provide current reference materials related to gifted education to students, teachers, administrators, school patron, and community members.

2. PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- A. **GOAL**-Parents and resource persons of the community will participate through active involvement in expanding opportunities of gifted and talented students.
- B. **OBJECTIVE**- Involve the community in programs for the gifted and talented through the formation of an advisory council, volunteer/mentor program, media releases, and/or surveys.

3. IDENTIFICATION

- A. **GOAL**-A systematic process will be planned and implemented for identifying those gifted and talented students who have the greatest need for qualitatively differentiated educational experiences and/or services with consideration for students from diverse backgrounds.
- B. **OBJECTIVE**-Develop procedures and criteria for identification of the gifted and talented using appropriate instruments and establishing specific methods for identification.

4. PROGRAMMING

- A. **GOAL**—The district will develop and implement a program designed to provide enriched experiences and/or services.
- B. **OBJECTIVE**
 1. Recognize the need to provide differentiated educational experiences for the gifted and talented of all backgrounds.

2. Establish a program with a long-range goal of providing services for all areas of giftedness for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade.
3. Provide gifted and talented students with multiple differentiated materials which will allow them to purposefully expand ideas and engage in the exploration of issues and interests at each child's individual level.
4. Provide a wide variety of generalized strategies designed to develop thinking/feeling processes and operations based on student strengths, learning styles, and interests in order to enhance:
 - a. Critical and reflective thinking
 - b. Divergent and creative/productive thinking
 - c. Problem solving and self-directed expanded inquiry
 - d. Positive self-concept, sense of individual commitment to self in a changing society, with the teacher as a guide.
5. Establish opportunities for the gifted and talented student to become a "young professional" engaged as an investigator or real problems utilizing appropriate community resource persons serving as volunteers/mentors. (Example: Artifact Box Exchange, FPS, Schoolwide project leaders, Chess)
6. Provide a format for gifted and talented students to come together to challenge and interact with each other. (Examples may include: Quiz Bowl Competitions, Chess Tournaments, FPS, etc.)

7. Provide enrichment exploration for all gifted and talented students through the use of community resource persons to expand student interest areas.
8. Articulate the differentiated gifted program to the regular classroom program, classroom teacher(s), and administrator(s).

5. EVALUATION

- A. **GOAL**—Evaluation procedures will be developed and implemented to determine and document the degree of success of the program for gifted and talented students.
- B. **OBJECTIVE**
 1. Develop and utilize written instruments, both subjective and objective, for periodic evaluation of the program.
 2. Use all evaluation data to review and modify the gifted and talented program as needed.

Identification Procedures:

The student identification/selection process is a multi-dimensional procedure. A special effort will be made to include students who may be difficult to identify such as underachievers, members of minority groups, the culturally different, and handicapped, deprived, the highly creative, and the highly intellectual.

The process includes the creation of a candidate pool through referral and data accumulation. A student may be referred by himself/herself, parents, teachers, counselors, administration, peers or any other person in the community. Existing

information gathered about those referred in a case study approach will be reviewed by a screening / placement committee. This committee will recommend appropriate action.

Data accumulated and analyzed includes state mandated standardized achievement test scores, ability test scores, teacher rating scales, creativity test scores, parent questionnaires, and student questionnaires. No one item is a decisive factor in the placement of a student in the gifted and talented program. The final evaluation decision is done by a committee that considers the best interest of the student as an individual and the degree to which it is felt the student would benefit from participation in the gifted program. Written parental/guardian consent is required prior to administering assessments and to student placement in the gifted program.

Program Evaluation

The purpose of program evaluation is to provide accurate, timely, and relevant information to decision-makers for improving program options offered gifted students.

The program evaluation is to provide information so that modifications and adjustments can be made in the program and to examine overall program effectiveness. The evaluation plan will contain procedures for assessment in both program options and student progress.

The GT Program Evaluation plan includes questionnaires that will be evaluated annually and provide data based on program objectives and on the following components of the program: identification, program options, program goals and objectives, curriculum, community involvement, program expenditures, and the evaluation process/plan. Along with these questionnaires workshop evaluations will also be used to evaluate Staff Development.

Information collected through questionnaires will be disseminated and used to make decision about the GT Program. From this report, the district is able to determine if the goals and objectives of the program are being achieved; if students are being effectively served; and the kinds of program modifications that should be made.

The following evaluation instruments will be used in the evaluation process:

- 1) Advisory Council Focus Group
- 2) Student Questionnaire
- 3) Parent Questionnaire
- 4) Teacher K-12 Questionnaire
- 5) Administrator/Principal/Counselor/Board Member Questionnaire

The information from each instrument will be tabulated and analyzed by the GT Coordinator. A narrative showing the strengths and weaknesses of the gifted program will be written and a summary of the report will be available to anyone requesting this information. Modifications that are to be implemented will be addressed annually.

Student evaluation will consist of the following: Student Annual Assessment form from regular classroom teacher focusing on student progress with attention to mastery of content/self growth and student self-evaluation surveys to show perceived growth skills (research, independent learning, creative and critical thinking) as well as data analysis. Students who are participating in the gifted program will have student transcripts and permanent records as well as advanced content courses documented and student evaluation results will be reported to parents.

