Rector School District

Gifted and Talented Resource Booklet



Lance Mabrey- GT Coordinator

P.O. Box 367 Rector, AR 72461

Work: 870-595-3358

lmabrey@rector.k12.ar.us

**Find us at: rectorgt.weebly.com**

**What Does Being Gifted Mean?**

This booklet is intended to be a resource for all stakeholders in the Rector School District’s Gifted and Talented Program. It is our goal to correctly identify and serve gifted students within our district in a fair and unbiased manner. All students will have opportunities to display giftedness so that proper referral and recommendations can be made in the interest of best serving the student’s cognitive and affective needs. When considering the referral of a student, it is important to consider the definition of giftedness.

According to the ADE, giftedness is defined as: Gifted and talented children

and youth are those of high potential or ability whose learning characteristics

and educational needs require qualitatively differentiated educational experiences and/or services. Possession of these talents and gifts, or the potential for their development, will be evidenced through an interaction of

above average intellectual ability, task commitment and/or motivation, and creative ability.

With this definition in mind, listed below are some characteristics that may be displayed by students who are gifted in one or more areas or subjects. If you know of a student who is showing these characteristics, please refer them for possible further testing. All testing and correspondance will be done in a confidential manner with the utmost importance placed on the integrity of the process and all parties involved.

**Cognitive Traits:** very observant, extremely curious, intense interests, excellent memory, long attention span, excellent reasoning skills, quickly and asily identifies relationships in ideas or objects, excellent problem solving skills, learns quickly, and above average intelligence

**Creative Traits:** fluent and flexible thinking, can generate unusual ideas and solutions, vivid imagination, keen sense of humor, adventurous or takes risks, sensitive to aesthetics, independent, and uses things in different contexts

**Leadership Traits:** evaluative approach to self and others, conceptualizes societal problems, self-confident, responsible, cooperative, directs activities, often has solutions, often uninhibited in giving opinions, organizes others, good social skills, articulates ideas clearly, enthusiastic, and determined

**Academic Traits:** extensive vocabulary, reads early, reads rapidly over wide range of topics, asks “what if” questions, enjoys learning new things, skeptical or evaluative, sustains concentration for lengthy periods, hard to move on to another topic, and able to comprehend subject matter at advanced levels

**How the Rector School District Serves Gifted Students**

**Kindergarten and First Grades**: Every student in kindergarten and first grades attends weekly whole group enrichment classes with the GT Coordinator. Lessons include such activities as: Talents Unlimited, Primary Heaven, science, history, brainstorming, higher level questioning, creative and open ended assignments, stories, poems, vocabulary extension, problem solving, communication, forecasting, decision making, planning and implementation.

**Grades 2-6**: Students who are placed in the GT program attend weekly pullout classes with the GT Coordinator for a total of 150 minutes per week.

**GT Pull out Activities Include Such Topics As**: character and affective education, creative and critical thinking, research and independent learning, honing effective communication skills, technology, team building, social skills, mentoring, educational field trips, special events and projects, community service and participating in local and regional competitions.

**Grades 7-12**: Students who are placed in the GT program have the opportunity to attend weekly affective meetings with a GT teacher and are served through secondary course content documentation by core content classroom teachers. GT students are highly encouraged to take pre-Advanced Placement, Advanced Placement, college preparatory classes and concurrent classes. GT students have additional opportunities such as special projects, competitions, special events and field trips.

**Academic Plan**: GT students struggling to meet the demands of the GT program or regular classroom may be placed on a temporary academic plan to better meet the needs of the student. Detailed academic plan policies are available upon request.

**Exit Policy**: Students, parents, guardians, or the GT Coordinator may request that a student be exited from the program. Detailed exit policies are available upon request. Parents/guardians have a right to appeal any exit decisions.

**Professional Organizations**

**National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC):**

The staff and leaders of NAGC support and develop policies and practices that encourage and respond to the diverse expressions of gifts and talents in children and youth from all cultures, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic groups. The NAGC supports and engages in research and development, staff development, advocacy, communication, and collaboration with other organizations and agencies who strive to improve the quality of education for all students. This organization makes gifted learners a national priority. The website for this organization is [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org), and it contains an abundance of informations for administrators, educators, and parents concerning anything to do with educating gifted students. It has many resources to assist parents and teachers with identifying giftedness, common myths, and information explaining why gifted education is so important in schools.

**Arkansans for Gifted and Talented Education (AGATE):**

 AGATE is an independent organization promoting excellence in education, particulary as it relates to gifted and talented children and youth in Arkansas. This organization works to educate its members and the Arkansas community as to the nature and needs of gifted and talented children and youth, and to develop a communtity that recognizes, nurtures, and rewards the fulfillment of the unique individual potential of each child.The website is found at [www.arkansasgt.weebly.com](http://www.arkansasgt.weebly.com), and it provides a newsletter with valuable information concerning gifted education in Arkansas. It also provides many other useful websites that relate to gifted education.

**Council for Exceptional Children (CEC):**

The CEC is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of individuals with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. CEC advocates for appropriate governmental policies, sets professional standards, provides professional development, advocates for individuals with exceptionalities, and helps professionals obtain conditions and resources necessary for effective professional practice. CEC's mission is to improve, through excellence and advocacy, the education and quality of life for children and youth with exceptionalities and to enhance engagement of their families. Visit this organizations website at [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org) for additional resources and information regarding the education of special needs students.

**Websites Providing Addtional Information, Support, and Activities**

* [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)

National Association for Gifted Children

* [www.arkansasgt.weebly.com](http://www.arkansasgt.weebly.com)

Arkansans for Gifted and Talented Education

* [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

Council for Exceptional Children

* [www.hoagiesgifted.org](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org)

Hoagies’ Gifted Education Page

* [www.ri.net/gifted\_talented/rhode.html](http://www.ri.net/gifted_talented/rhode.html)

Rhode Island State Advisory Committee on Gifted and Talented Education

* [www.gifted.uconn.edu](http://www.gifted.uconn.edu)

Neag Center for Gifted and Talented Development

* [www.tip.duke.edu](http://www.tip.duke.edu)

Duke University Talent Identification Program

* [www.arkansased.org/divisions/learning-services/gifted-and-talented-and-advanced-placement](http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/learning-services/gifted-and-talented-and-advanced-placement)

Arkansas Department of Education

* [www.sengifted.org](http://www.sengifted.org)

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted

* [www.davidsongifted.org](http://www.davidsongifted.org)

Davidson Intstitute for Talent Development

* [www.giftedstudy.org](http://www.giftedstudy.org)

Summer Institute for Gifted

* [www.engr.uark.edu/home/4051.php](http://www.engr.uark.edu/home/4051.php)

University of Arkansas Engineering Girl Camp

* [www.engr.uark.edu/home/4927.php](http://www.engr.uark.edu/home/4927.php)

University of Arkansas Robotics Engineering Camp

* [www.ualr.edu/slufy](http://www.ualr.edu/slufy)

UALR Summer Laureate University for Youth

* [www.hendrix.edu/AGS](http://www.hendrix.edu/AGS)

Arkansas Governor’s School

* [www.apcentral.collegeboard.com/home](http://www.apcentral.collegeboard.com/home)

Advanced Placement Central

* [www.gifteddevelopment.com](http://www.gifteddevelopment.com)

Gifted Development Center

**Websites for Parents to Use at Home**

* [www.rocketcenter.com](http://www.rocketcenter.com)

U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, AL (Summer Enrichment)

* [www.discoveryparkofamerica.com](http://www.discoveryparkofamerica.com)

Discovery Park of America in Union City, TN (Museum)

* [www.citymuseum.org](http://www.citymuseum.org)

City Museum in St. Louis, MO (Museum)

* [www.usfirst.org](http://www.usfirst.org)

First LEGO League Robotics (Enrichment)

* [www.kidsource.com/kidsource/pages/ed.gifted.html](http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/pages/ed.gifted.html)

Kid Source Online (Various Activities)

* [www.mensaforkids.org](http://www.mensaforkids.org)

Mensa for Kids (Various Activities)

* [www.paperrollercoasters.com](http://www.paperrollercoasters.com)

Paper Roller Coasters (Enrichment)

* [www.cty.jhu.edu](http://www.cty.jhu.edu)

Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (Enrichment & Online Classes)

* [www.parentinggiftedkids.com](http://www.parentinggiftedkids.com)

Parenting Gifted Kids (Various Activities)

* [www.rfwp.com](http://www.rfwp.com)

Royal Fireworks Press (Enrichment/Books)

* [www.exquisite-minds.com](http://www.exquisite-minds.com)

Exquisite Minds of Gifted and Creative Children (Various Ideas)

* [www.timeforkids.com](http://www.timeforkids.com)

TIME for Kids Magazine (Various Activities)

* [www.brighthubeducation.com](http://www.brighthubeducation.com)

Bright Hub Education (Various Activities)

* [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)

Khan Academy (Enrichment Lessons)

* [www.memphismuseums.org](http://www.memphismuseums.org)

Memphis Museums in Memphis, TN (Museum)

* [www.epsiloncamp.org](http://www.epsiloncamp.org)

Epsilon Mathmatics Camp (Summer Enrichment)

* [www.stlouisfed.org/education](http://www.stlouisfed.org/education)

Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (Enrichment)

* [www.nea.org/home/stem.html](http://www.nea.org/home/stem.html)

National Education Association: STEM (Various Activities)

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Question 1:** What are the different ways gifted students are served within our district?

**Answer-** For Kindergarten and 1st Grade, every student attends weekly whole group enrichment classes with the GT Coordinator. Lessons include science, history, brainstorming, higher level questioning, problem solving, communication, etc.

With 2nd through 6th Grades, students who are placed in the GT program attend weekly pullout classes with the GT Coordinator for a total of 150 minutes per week. These classes focus on character and affective education, creative and critical thinking, research and independent study, educational field trips, special events, and projects.

For 7th through 12th Grades, students who are placed in the GT program attend monthly affective meetings with the GT Coordinator and are served through secondary course content documentation by core content classroom teachers. GT students also have available to them, Pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement courses.

**Question 2:** What kind of training does a teacher need to work with gifted students?

**Answer-**  Gifted students need guidance from well-trained, challenging teachers who understand their educational needs. In our district, the GT Coordinator/Teacher holds a BSE in Elementary Education and a MSE in Gifted, Talented, and Creative. Research indicates that teachers who have recieved training in gifted education are more likely to foster higher-level thinking, allow for greater student expression, consider individual student strengths and weaknesses, and provide a variety of learning experiences to challenge students. All regular classroom teachers will be given training each year pertaining to identification, instruction, and affective needs of gifted students within their regular classroom setting.

**Question 3:** How are students selected to participate in the gifted program?

**Answer-** There is a process that is followed with identifying gifted students. It is always done in a fair and unbiased manner by a committee. First, a student must be referred by a teacher, parent, peer, or self. Next, the GT Coordinator will notify parents of their child’s referral and will request permission to do further testing. Once persmission has been granted, rating scales will be given to the parents and the teacher. The GT Coordinator will also administer a creativity measure and an IQ test. Other factors, such as grades, AR points, STAR tests, Benchmark/IOWA standardized test scores, and portfolio items, will also be taken into consideration. Once all of this data in organized onto a profile sheet for each student, a committee comprised of teachers, administrators, and counselors will have the deciding placement decisions for each student. This is done by blind selection, meaning no identifying information is given that would reveal the student’s identity. Once placement decisions have been made, the parents will be notified of the committee’s decision. If their child was recommended for placement within the gifted program, parental approval must be obtained before the child will actually begin being served in the gifted program.

**Question 4:** Aren’t gifted programs elitist?

**Answer-** Gifted education programs are meant to help all high-ability students. Gifted learners are found in all cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic groups. In our district, we use at least two subjective and two objective measures to better identify giftedness in diverse cultures. All committee decisions are unbiased and based on the information provided to them. The committee holds the highest integrity in making determinations about placement into the gifted program, regardless of culture, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

**Question 5:** Can a student be gifted and still have poor grades?

**Answer-** Yes, and that concept is known as underachievement. Underachievement describes a discrepancy between a student’s performance and his actual ability.  The roots of this problem differ, based on each child’s experiences.  Gifted students may become bored or frustrated in an unchallenging classroom situation causing them to lose interest, learn bad study habits, or distrust the school environment.  Other students may mask their abilities to try to fit in socially with their same-age peers.  No matter the cause, it is imperative that a caring and perceptive adult help gifted learners break the cycle of underachievement in order to achieve their full potential.

**Question 6:** Can a gifted student also have a disability?

**Answer-** Some gifted students also have learning or other disabilities. These “twice-exceptional” students often go undetected in regular classrooms because their disability and gifts mask each other, making them appear “average.” Other twice-exceptional students are identified as having a learning disability and as a result, are not considered for gifted services. In both cases, it is important to focus on the students’ abilities and allow them to have challenging curricula in addition to receiving help for their learning disability.

**Question 7:** Why is gifted education so important?

**Answer-** Children are not all the same, and every child has unique needs and strengths.  Gifted students are special-needs students but they have the same right to learn as all other students.  Inappropriate classroom instruction harms them in many ways.  Failure to provide appropriate instruction causes these students to lose interest in school or in learning, unnecessarily reduces their achievement, often leads students to become depressed or frustrated, and undermines their trust in adults.  Access to appropriate curriculum and instruction is a right, not a reward.  When students are taught at an appropriate level, they become engaged in learning throughout their lives.

**Question 8:** If I think my child may be gifted, what should I do?

**Answer-** As a parent, you are your child's biggest advocate to what's best for their education.  It is important to notice learning patterns as well as behavior patterns of your child.  Below are some characteristics that a gifted child may exhibit:

* discusses in detail, elaborates
* shows strong feelings and opinions
* beyond the group
* draws inferences
* prefers adults
* is highly curious
* 1-2 repititions for mastery
* manipulates information
* thrives on complexity
* constructs abstractions
* is highly self-critical
* plays around, yet tests well
* good guesser
* already knows
* is keenly observant
* has wild, silly ideas

You may want to set up a conference with your child's teachers to compare their observations and opinions with your own. If after the discussions you want to make a formal referral, contact the school about the procedure for referring a child for participation in the gifted program. The next step would be granting permission for further testing to appropriately identify their giftedness.

Hope you find this booklet useful and beneficial. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please contact Lance Mabrey- GT Coordinator at 870-595-3358.