

# **Gifted and Talented Program Handbook**



**Carlisle School District**

# Carlisle School District Gifted and Talented Policies

## **Philosophy**

The programs in public schools are built on a fundamental belief in serving the needs of all our students as unique individuals. We believe that gifted and talented individuals have special characteristics and learning styles and that their potential for accomplishment is such that they require special provisions, experiences, and services not provided for in the regular instructional program.

We are committed to providing a program for identifying and meeting the needs and interests of our gifted and talented students. The identification and placement of these gifted and talented students will be based on documented objective and subjective evidence of above average intellectual ability, creative ability, skills, products, and task commitment/motivation.

Gifted and talented students are outstanding consumers and producers of knowledge and ideas in any worthwhile endeavor. They may have potential abilities in general intelligence, creative, or productive thinking, exceptional leadership, and specific aptitudes. These abilities must be cultivated, nurtured, and developed.

Gifted and talented students must be provided opportunities to interact with their peers and to work with materials which challenge their abilities and encourage them to expand their abstract thinking and reasoning abilities.

Maximizing the potential of gifted and talented students requires a commitment of school, community, and home; commitment is essential for progress to be affected. The gifted and talented program is designed to cultivate within the student a desire for excellence and a sense of productive responsibility to self, family, school, community, and to our changing society.

This handbook outlines the Carlisle School District Gifted Program policies designed in compliance with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Gifted Program Approval Standards as revised in 2009. The parenthetical references next to each portion of the the handbook reference a section of the Program Approval standards in which those portions coincide.

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## **Definition (ADE 3.00)**

According to the Arkansas Department of Education, “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.”

## **Community Involvement (ADE 4.00)**

A key element in any successful program for students is the continuing communication and mutual support among the school staff and administration, the parents, the students, and the community. To enhance our curricula, parents and community members are solicited as resources and audiences for student product/projects presentation.

The parents and community are given ongoing opportunities for awareness and involvement in the gifted program and activities through the school website, local news media, meetings, and newsletters. Evidence of these opportunities is collected and filed.

An advisory council including parents and community members is established each school year with at least one documented annual meeting. The advisory committee is an effective tool to help the program serve the needs of gifted students. This district suggests that the role of the advisory council is threefold – awareness, advocacy, and advisory. The coordinator will keep on file the list of members of said advisory committee, sign-in sheets, and the minutes from each meeting.

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## **Staff Development (ADE 5.00)**

The Carlisle School District provides ongoing and continuous opportunities for professional growth in the area of Gifted and Talented by organizing a flexible and varying program to meet the individual needs of school personnel.

The District G/T Coordinator is responsible for staff development through formal sessions, faculty meetings, handouts and professional literature. Areas of gifted training appropriate for the entire school staff could include: (1) characteristics and needs; (2) identification procedures; (3) curriculum and teaching strategies; (4) creativity; (5) utilization of community resources; (6) program evaluation; (7) district's philosophy and program model for gifted; and (8) overview of state requirements. The coordinator will also make arrangements for consultant services and provide information about regional and state workshops and conferences. Opportunities to increase knowledge of the education of gifted and talented students will be provided for school board members, school and district administrators, teachers and support staff on a continuing and regular basis.

Less formal staff development is encouraged by adding books and journals on gifted education to the school's professional library; placing reprints of pertinent articles in teacher boxes; sharing resources via email; presenting short, specific classroom demonstrations and teaching techniques at regular building-level faculty meetings; and sharing products of gifted students' learning with all staff.

The coordinator is encouraged to attend regional, state and national workshops and conferences which enable her to utilize best practices for meeting the needs of gifted learners and administering the gifted program.

Documentation of staff development is kept on file.

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## **Personnel (ADE 6.00)**

The Carlisle School District acknowledges that the GT Coordinator and other personnel who teach homogeneously grouped gifted students must have the appropriate certification as listed in Arkansas Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards. The coordinator will keep all certificates (and transcripts with ALP when necessary) on file.

The GT Coordinator will be responsible for planning, development and implementation of the overall structure and curriculum of the district's gifted program. A written job description for the administrator, coordinator and/or teacher(s) is kept on file. The candidate must have (or be in the process of) attained licensure, passed appropriate state approved assessments and met standards as set by the State Board of Education through the Arkansas Department of Education Professional Certification Department for add-on endorsement in gifted education.

The selection of administrators, coordinators, and teachers of the gifted is defined clearly in accordance with the Carlisle Public School's employment policies and practices. Qualities such as the ability to be flexible of time, pace, materials, and instructional patterns will be considered. They should be accepting of diverse ideas and populations. Personnel hired to work with gifted students should possess a genuine concern for gifted children and youth.

## **Identification (ADE 7.00)**

The student identification process is a multi-dimensional, non-discriminatory 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, handicapped, deprived, the highly creative, and the highly intellectual. As stated in GT Standard 7.06, "procedures used in the identification process are non-discriminatory with respect to race, cultural or economic background, religion, national origin, sex, or handicapping condition."

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The process for identification begins with a referral for services. A student may be referred by himself/herself, peers, parents, teachers, counselors, administration, or any other person with knowledge of the student. Once a parent has signed and returned the permission to test form, data is then accumulated. Using a case study approach, existing information gathered about those referred will be reviewed by a placement committee. This information will be presented without identifying the student, therefore ensuring that decisions made are based solely on data. The placement committee will recommend appropriate placement.

Data accumulated and analyzed includes standardized achievement test scores, teacher inventories, creativity test scores, parent questionnaires, grades, anecdotal data, student questionnaires, and data collected in whole group enrichment. No one item is a decisive factor in the placement of a student in the gifted and talented program. The placement committee's decision considers the needs of the student as an individual and what placement will best meet those needs. Written parental consent is required prior to data gathering as well as prior to student placement in the gifted program.

### *Appeals Procedure*

Parents/Guardians may appeal placement decision through the following process:

- A. Request an initial conference with the GT coordinator regarding the placement decision. Those included in this conference would be the parent/guardian questioning the committee decision, the GT Coordinator, and the appropriate administrator(s).
- B. After this informal meeting, if the parent(s) still feels placement in the gifted program is the best way to meet the student's needs, then a written appeal can be filed by the parents/guardians to the gifted coordinator, including any additional data or information that the parent feels indicates the student is in need of the services of the program.

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- C. The Gifted Coordinator will compile available data for the appeals committee to review. This data will include at least two objective and two subjective measures (one of which must assess creativity). All data used in the initial placement decision, as well as any newly available data, will be included.
- D. An appeals committee of at least five professional educators (including some initial committee members and some new committee members) will be formed to review the appeal. The committee will once again be chaired by the gifted coordinator and include the appropriate administrator(s). The parent/guardian making the appeal may address the appeals committee, but will not be present as the committee reviews all the data and determines the placement decision.
- E. The decision of the appeals committee must be based on multiple criteria with no single criterion or cut-off score used to include or exclude a student. The decision of the appeals committee will be communicated in writing to the parent/guardian making the appeal.

### *Annual Review*

Identification of gifted and talented students is an ongoing process extending through twelfth grade. Each identified student's placement will be reviewed at least annually and/or when specifically requested to update or modify the student's educational plans. If evidence indicates that current placement may not be best for meeting the student's needs, then policies for exit from the program will be followed.

### *Policies for exit of the program*

Although attention is given to carefully placing students in the program due to evidence that they need qualitatively differentiated educational services, situations may arise when placement in the program no longer seems to be the most appropriate way to meet the needs of the student. As with determining placement in the gifted program, multiple criteria will be

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used in determining if exiting the program is in the best interest of meeting the student's needs. One factor will not cause a student to be excluded from the program. A student with signed parental permission to no longer participate in the program will be allowed to exit program without committee decision.

When determining if an exit from the program may be best for meeting the needs of the student, a conference will be held in an effort to discuss the data that indicates that current placement may not be meeting the needs of the student. Those present at the conference may include the student, classroom teachers, GT teachers, parents, administrators, counselors, etc. An action plan may be developed. The plan will be in writing and the student, parent, GT teacher, and any other involved parties will sign that they are informed of the plan. This action plan will not change the student's placement. If data continues to indicate that current placement may not be best for meeting the needs of the student, he or she may be exited from the program. All pertinent data, including at least two objective and two subjective measures (one of which must assess creativity), will be compiled and presented to the placement committee of at least five professional educators including administrators, teachers, and/or counselors, and chaired by the GT Coordinator. The placement committee will review the data and determine what placement is most appropriate for meeting the needs of the student. make a decision about what is in the best interest of the student.

Parents and/or classroom teachers may appeal the exit decision. Procedures for appeals of placement decisions will then be followed.

### **Program Options (ADE 8.00)**

The program design for our gifted and talented students for grades kindergarten through twelfth is intended to provide a curriculum that is both differentiated and appropriate for the specialized needs of students who are advanced in their thinking and learning processes.



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Gifted and talented students are provided opportunities to interact with their peers and to work with materials which 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.

While there is opportunity for consideration of placement at any time, as required by GT Standards, the following program options are used to serve students in K-12. The Gifted and Talented Coordinator meets for whole-class enrichment with kindergarten weekly for 40 minutes and first and second grades monthly for 30 minutes. As required by GT Standards, all students in K-2 receive at least 30 minutes of enrichment each week. First and second grade enrichment will be taught during Art, Music, & Guidance for the remaining weeks. Whole group enrichment allows for long-term data collection that is helpful in the gifted program identification and placement process. The curriculum used in whole group enrichment is focused on helping all students develop critical and creative thinking skills. Classroom teachers actively promote higher order thinking skills on a regular basis.

A pull-out program for grades three, four, five, and six meets for a minimum of one-hundred fifty minutes with a certified Gifted and Talented Instructor. Curriculum is developed to meet the needs of the identified gifted and talented students.

Grades seven through twelve gifted and talented students' needs are met through designated classes in the academic areas of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Many seventh and eighth grade students are registered in the Focus Enrichment classes taught by the GT Coordinator. Pre-Advanced Placement, Advanced Placement, and concurrent credit courses are among the program options available. Teachers of the 4 core subject areas (english, math, science, and social studies) are required to document the differentiation they provide for gifted

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students each nine weeks. Advanced Placement is documented with College Board approved syllabi. Students in these grades also participate in meetings with the Gifted and Talented Coordinator each semester.

### **Curriculum (ADE 9.00)**

The gifted and talented curriculum is designed to extend and/or replace the regular curriculum. It is differentiated in content, process, and/or product. Content is differentiated in breadth or depth, in tempo or pace, and/or in kind. Processes for gifted students stress creativity and higher level thinking skills. Students investigate problems in depth and develop products which are communicated to appropriate audiences. Gifted curriculum should demonstrate the overall ideas of cross-curricular, project-based, and technology infused student work. A written scope and sequence is in place and utilized to ensure a continuation of skills for each grade level (Kindergarten through twelfth grade) ranging from introduction to development to application.

### **Evaluation (ADE 10.00)**

The GT Coordinator is responsible for conducting an extensive evaluation of the gifted program that provides accurate, timely, and relevant information to decision-makers for improving program options offered gifted students. This evaluation will be based on program goals and/or objectives. Annual evaluation data will provide the data for the required evaluation report submitted to ADE, Office of Gifted and Talented and Advanced Placement. The purpose of this evaluation is twofold, including both a determination of the program's effectiveness and assessment of student growth.

All components of the gifted program are evaluated including identification, staff development, program options, program goals and objectives, curriculum, community involvement, program

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expenditures, and the evaluation process/plan. Data for consideration are obtained from a variety of instruments procedures and informational sources. Input should come from students, teachers, administrators, parents, school board members, local gifted advisory committee, and other community members, statistical analysis of enrollment, and achievement data. All stakeholders are given an opportunity to participate in the evaluation process using a variety of procedures because different components of the program call for different techniques and access to stakeholders vary. Some procedures that might be used include surveys, focus groups, questionnaires, charts, anecdotal data, checklists, and/or informal discussions. Evaluation findings are compiled, analyzed, and communicated to the appropriate audiences. The overall program evaluation is shared with the ADE Office of Gifted and Talented as required in the program approval application. This evaluation is also shared with the other stakeholders in a variety of ways and provides the data for goals and/or objectives for the program.

Evaluation of student growth is based on appropriate and specific criteria and includes self-evaluation, teacher appraisal, and criterion referenced and/or standardized instruments. Student progress is assessed, with attention to mastery of content, higher level thinking skills, creativity, and affective growth. It is in agreement with the program objectives and addresses the process not only the product. The Carlisle School District realizes that a gifted student's progress cannot be fully assessed by standardized tests only. Student assessment does not always come in the form of letter grades given, especially for elementary students in pull-out. Student progress is reported to parents and teachers. Participation in the gifted program is noted on student transcripts and permanent records.