

GATE HANDBOOK



Crystal City School District

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Gifted and Talented Education

Rationale

The Crystal City Gifted Program supports the Crystal City District's commitment *"to recognize the potential within student and prepare them intellectually, physical, and socially to be productive and contributing members of society."* Gifted students' abilities differ from their peers to such an extent that differentiated curricula and instructional strategies are needed to nurture growth and development. In order to meet the unique needs of gifted students, the Crystal City District offers gifted programming and curriculum that is different from the regular school curriculum by the degree of complexity of content, process, and products to challenge gifted students to achieve their highest potential. The Administrative Manual for State-Assisted Gifted Programs states, "By law and tradition, Missouri school districts are expected to provide programs of instruction suitable for the full range of student ability, from handicapped and disadvantaged learners through those who are academically advanced." Further support for differentiated instruction for gifted is found in the state standards of the Missouri School Improvement Program, which states, "each district identifies gifted and talented students at all levels and provides them differentiated instruction suitable for their levels of intellectual, physical, and social maturity."

Gifted Education Defined

It is important to note that differentiated education programs for gifted students are not designed for the typical superior student who is frequently an excellent scholar, can earn "A" grades, and achieve academic honors. The education needs of these students should be met by existing school programs. Gifted programs are reserved for the students who are as far from the superior student in potential as the superior is from the average student. The task is to identify this percentage of students and to provide educational opportunities that will challenge and develop their abilities.

It is also important to note that the straight "A" student is often mistaken with the gifted student. While the "A" student may be gifted not all high achieving students are in fact gifted and not all gifted students are high achieving. Remember grades are only one measure of student learning.

The state regulations governing educational services broadly define gifted children as "those children who exhibit precocious development of mental capacity and learning potential as determined by competent professional evaluation to the extent that continued educational growth and stimulation could best be served by an academic environment beyond that offered through a standard grade level curriculum." As defined by the state gifted education guidelines, the Gifted Program offers services to the gifted students who are most in need of a more challenging academic program of study.

THE THREE-RING CONCEPTION OF GIFTEDNESS

Research on creative-productive people has consistently shown that although no single criterion can be used to determine giftedness, persons who have achieved recognition because of their unique accomplishments and creative contributions possess a relatively well-defined set of three interlocking clusters of traits. These clusters consist of above average, though not necessarily superior, ability, task, commitment, and creativity. It is also important to point out that no single cluster “makes giftedness.” Rather, it is the interaction among the three clusters that research has shown to be the necessary ingredient for creative-productive accomplishment (Renzulli, 1978). This interaction is represented by the overlapping shaded portion of all three rings in Figure A. It is also important to point out that each cluster plays an important role in contributing to the display of gifted behavior. This point is emphasized because one of the major errors that continue to be made in identification procedures is to overemphasize superior abilities at the expense of the other two clusters of traits.

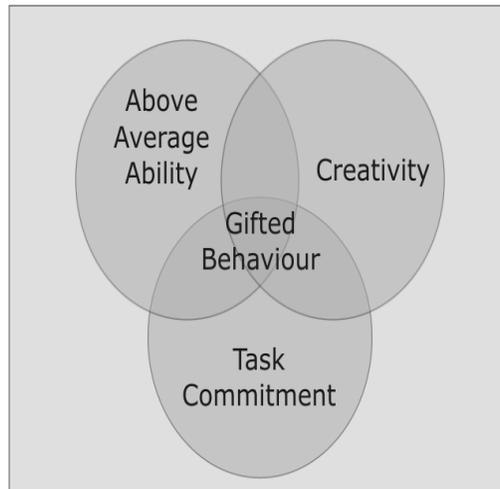


Figure A

1. Well Above Average Ability

Well above average ability can be defined in two ways:

- a. General ability
- b. Specific abilities

A. General Ability

- High levels of abstract thinking, verbal and numerical reasoning, spatial relationships, memory, and word fluency
- Adaptation to and the shaping of novel situations encountered in the external environment
- The automation of information processing; rapid, accurate, and selective retrieval of information

B. Specific Abilities

- The application of various combinations of the above general abilities to one or more specialized areas of knowledge or areas of human performance (e.g., the arts, leadership, administration)
- The capacity for acquiring and making appropriate use of advanced amounts of formal knowledge, technique, logistics, and strategy in the pursuit of particular problems or manifestation of specialized areas of performance
- The capacity to sort out relevant and irrelevant information associated with a particular problem or area of study or performance

2. Creativity

- Fluency, flexibility, and originality of thought
- Openness to experience; receptive to that which is new and different (even irrational) in the thoughts, actions, and products of oneself and others
- Curious, speculative, adventurous, and mentally playful; willing to take risks in thought and action, even to point of being uninhibited
- Sensitive to detail, aesthetic characteristics of ideas and things; willing to act upon and react to external stimulation and one's own ideas and feelings

3. Task Commitment

- The capacity of high levels of interest, enthusiasm, fascination, and involvement in a particular problem, area of study, or form of human expression
- The capacity for perseverance, endurance, determination, hard work, and dedicated practice
- The ability to identify significant problems within specialized areas; the ability to tune into major channels of communication and new development within given fields

- Setting high standards for one’s work, maintaining an openness to self and external criticism, developing an aesthetic sense of taste, quality and excellence about one’s own and work of others

Program Goals and Curriculum

The specific goals of the GATE program are integrated into all curriculum areas and are as follows:

- Information Processing-ability to gather, organize, analyze and apply information;
- Problem solving-ability to identify, define, analyze, develop, and assess possible solutions;
- Critical Thinking-ability to use critical/reflective thinking focused on deciding what to do or believe; including supporting ideas with facts and logic with the capability to explain relationships;
- Communication-ability to plan, create, and present verbal visual, and written information to share thoughts and ideas with others in order to cultivate the leadership potential in students;
- Responsibility-ability to work productively, independently as well as in a group, to demonstrate leadership skills

The GATE program is designed to introduce students to topics linked to real-world themes that require higher level thinking, analysis of information, critical thinking and problem solving. Learning is enhanced through differentiated instruction, team activities, research, developing projects, and sharing ideas.

Program Design

The Crystal City School District is committed to providing an educational program in which students may grow to become productive and contributing members of society. The Gifted Program strives to provide challenging curriculum. The program is designed to provide a variety of learning opportunities that help students realize their potential, develop their abilities, and encourage academic rigor.

Elementary Program (Grades K-8)

Students in Kindergarten through 8th grade participate in a “pull out” program known as GATE. A certified gifted educator provides curriculum that focuses on communication, research skills, thinking skills and problem solving, creative expression, and affective education. In addition, classroom teachers offer higher levels of tasks or skills for gifted students through clustering of students and differentiated instruction. Identified student will receive a minimum of 150 minutes per week of gifted services, as required by the state of Missouri.

Students who participate in the GATE program are involved in a full academic school day. Their work during GATE often requires additional homework on special projects. Each classroom teacher must make important and sensitive judgments regarding homework.

High School Program 9-12

Students who are a part of the gifted program in grades ninth- twelfth will participate in gifted services through Academic RTI and Advanced Placement Courses. Students will receive programming focused on problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, and activities addressing the social and emotional needs of gifted learners.

General Identification (K-12)

The Crystal City School District uses a systematic process for the identification of gifted students that is composed of multiple criteria, including objective measures and a competent, professional evaluation. Students selected for the Gifted Program are not selected as a reward for either good performance or model behavior but because they have special needs. Therefore, the goal of the identification process is to apply comprehensive and unbiased procedures to find students who possess superior abilities and/or potential in the areas of general intellectual ability. The critical decision to be made is whether the student's ability is at a level that warrants special educational provisions. Students identified as most in need of services are invited to participate in the program.

District Wide Screening

The district will provide screening for all students to ensure that all potentially gifted students have an opportunity for consideration. All available data, including information contain in the permanent record, will be considered during the screening process.

The district will use a variety of screening methods that reduce the chance of bias and provide an opportunity to identify the strengths of all students, including those students difficult to identify and traditionally under-represented, such as students with limited English proficiency, students from culturally diverse backgrounds and students with learning disabilities.

District Wide Screenings

1. Nationally normed achievement test scores.
2. SAGES 2- Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary School Students
3. Demonstrates creativity and problem solving.
4. Recommendations from teachers, administrators, and/or parents/guardians.

General Mental Ability- Including a minimum full-scale intelligence quotient (IQ) score at or above 125.

The district uses the following tests of general mental ability:

1. Wechsler Intelligence Scales
2. Stanford-Binet Intelligence Tests
3. Kaufman Assessment Battery of Children

Academic Ability- Including a norm-referenced test with a cut-off score at the 95th percentile or above on the composite score or on majority of subtests. The district uses the following tests of academic ability:

1. Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT-III)
2. Gray Oral Reading Test (GORT-V)
3. KTEA

Creativity, Reasoning and Problem Solving Ability- Including results of instruments indicating outstanding ability in one of the following areas related to the design of the district's gifted program:

1. Creative and productive thinking
2. Advanced insights
3. Outstanding imagination
4. Innovative or creative reasoning ability
5. Advanced perception of cause and effect relationships
6. Problem solving
7. Abstract concepts

The district may use the following creativity/problem solving assessments:

1. Torrance Tests of Creativity Thinking

Students are eligible for placement in the gifted program if they meet the general mental ability requirement, academic ability requirement, and the creativity/problem solving ability assessment.

Placement

The Crystal City School District offers the following placement options:

K-8

Resource Room Teacher (RRT) model-Pull-out program where the teacher of gifted students spends all of his or her time (150 minimum minutes per week) in the gifted resource classroom.

Kindergarten students will not be placed until second semester so the first semester can be used for identification. Evaluations and services begin second semester.

Nominations

Students may be referred to the Gifted Program for screening by a teacher, administrator, or parent/guardian. Nomination forms may be submitted any time during the year. Nomination forms must be completed and returned to the Special Services Office. Nominated students require parent/guardian permission for testing. Parents/guardians receive written notification of the referral and approval of testing is secured.

Outside Testing

Families may seek outside testing at their own expense. Outside testers must be certified psychological examiner, school psychologist or licensed psychologist. If families decide to move ahead with private testing, the examiner should send a letter to the Director of Special Services providing a brief summary of the student's test results. Attached to this letter should be a copy of the completed test protocol. A evaluation interpretation of scores should be included.

Transfer Students

The transfer student will be placed in the district's gifted program if all the following are met:

1. The student was previously placed in a gifted program in a Missouri school district.
2. The program in which the student was placed is similar to that offered by the district.
3. The student meets or exceeds the district's placement criteria.
4. The student and parent/guardian agree to the placement.

Transfer students will be eligible if they otherwise qualify in subsequent years. Any student, who qualifies, leaves the program and then wishes to return to the program must requalify under program guidelines.

Reassessment

Students previously tested for the Gate program can be reassessed no sooner than one calendar year the date of the previous test.

School Requested

Once students are identified for the Gifted Program the Crystal City School District staff makes a commitment to work with them for success. However, students may, occasionally, not be performing in accordance with the standards established for the Gifted Program. *Students must maintain a B- or above in all subject areas.* If that is not attained, these students are placed on probation. Students will be allowed to continue participation in the Gifted Program as long as they are making positive

contributions to the program, acting in a responsible manner while participating in the program and maintaining appropriate levels of achievement in the regular education program. A student that has been placed on probationary status has until the next reporting period to show improvement. If a student hasn't improved his/her grades, he/she will be placed on academic suspension at that time. Academic suspension will allow the student to an additional reporting period to improve; however, he/she will not attend GATE classes/activities to insure classroom instruction is not missed during this time. Students who are unable to improve grades at the end of the academic suspension period will be formally withdrawn from the program.

Parent/Guardian Request to Withdraw from Program

The parent/guardian of a gifted student may request that his or her child be withdrawn for the Gifted Program at any time. This request should come in writing to the Director of Special Services. While parents/guardians may withdraw a student from the program at any time, withdrawals are considered formal exits from the program. Re-entry will be allowed for students who requalify under the program guidelines.

Participation of Non-Public Students

Gifted education and related services are available to students enrolled in non-public schools or are currently being home schooled. These students must reside or attend a school in the Crystal City School District and follow the same identification procedures as district students.

Non-public students who take part in the Gifted Program must:

- Be a resident or attend school in the Crystal City School District
- Meet or exceed selection criteria as defined by the district.
- Provide their own transportation to screening/testing and classes.
- Register at the school where they will be receiving services prior to participating in the Gifted Program.