

Gifted and Talented Education

Bradford Public Schools

GT Handbook



“The relatively few gifted students who have had the advantage of special programs have shown remarkable improvements in self-understanding and in ability to relate to others, as well as improved academic and creative performance. A good program for the gifted increases their involvement and interest in learning through the reduction of the irrelevant and redundant.”

-Sidney P. Marland, Jr.

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INTRODUCTION

This resource manual is a handbook for those persons involved in the education of the academically gifted child in the Bradford Public School System. It is intended to be a mere opening of the box rather than a complete examination of the contents of gifted education.

Giftedness comes in many packages. Artists, actors, athletes, musicians, leaders, and those with high intellectual ability have three things in common. They possess above average intellectual ability, task commitment, and creativity. Giftedness occurs when these three components interact.

Each child is a gift with unique individual needs and wants. This handbook is directed to those in the community, school and home who must provide for the academically gifted in Bradford. Many of the suggestions are already in use in classrooms and homes throughout our district. We hope this book will serve as a tool to reinforce and support the efforts of all the stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community).

PHILOSOPY

The program in public schools is built on a fundamental belief in serving the needs of all of our students as unique individuals. We believe that children are our greatest natural resource and that an appropriate education must be provided to ensure that each student has an opportunity to reach his/her potential. The gifted program is designed to challenge these students who have unique needs, abilities and talents through a variety of learning approaches. We also believe the following about gifted children:

- that they have unique academic and emotional needs
- that they should be provided a differentiated curriculum that is designed to meet both their cognitive and affective needs
- that successful services for the gifted children are comprehensive and based upon current research in gifted education
- that they learn best in an instructional environment that encourages and nurtures complex and creative thinking
- that they need time to interact with intellectual peers to nurture and support their unique cognitive needs
- that they should be encouraged to explore individual areas of interest
- that they need to spend time with their age/grade peers to nurture and support their social development

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.

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

ARKANSAS'S DEFINITION OF GIFTEDNESS

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.

BRADFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT'S DEFINITION OF GIFTEDNESS

We define giftedness as a combination of factors that produce special behavior. These factors include superior ability and achievement, task commitment and creativity. Superior ability and achievement are indicated by test data. Task commitment involves the student's willingness and ability to carry through on responsibilities and projects. In other words, to stay with a job until it is complete. Creativity involves planning, and often producing, something unique and unusual.

BRADFORD GIFTED AND TALENT PROGRAM GOALS

We are committed to provide 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.

The goals of Bradford School District are: 1) to develop the student's thinking, creative, and reasoning abilities as well as his decision-making and communication skills, 2) to help the student become a more independent and self-directed learner, 3) to provide new and challenging learning experiences that are not ordinarily included in the regular classroom curriculum, 4) to guide the student in personal growth and social development, recognizing and responding to personal strengths and needs of self and others and 5)to provide the format for gifted students to come together to challenge each other and to encounter other students with similar skills and talents. 6) The Bradford School District will abide by the guidelines set forth by the Arkansas Department of Education that governs gifted education programs.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED CHILDREN

Typically, gifted children exhibit characteristics and behaviors that are indicators of their giftedness. However, not all gifted children will exhibit the same characteristics all of the time. Also, they do not always exhibit acceptable characteristics and behaviors. Sometimes, gifted children may exhibit what appears to be boredom, indifference to classroom procedures, inability to remain on task, and failure to complete daily assignments.

Some common characteristics of gifted children are:

Cognitive Traits

Very observant
Extremely curious
Intense and wide range of interests
Excellent reasoning skills
Well-developed powers of abstraction, conceptualization, and synthesis
Quickly sees relationships in ideas, objects, or facts
Fluent and flexible thinking
Elaborate and original thinking
Excellent problem solving skills
Learns quickly and with less practice and repetition
Unusual and/or vivid imagination

Social and Emotional Traits

Interested in philosophical and social issues
Very sensitive, emotionally and physically
Concerned about fairness and injustice
Perfectionist
Energetic
Well-developed sense of humor
Usually self-motivated
Relates well to parents, teachers, and other adults

Language Traits

Extensive vocabulary
May read early
Reads rapidly and widely
Asks "what if" questions

Additional Traits

Enjoys learning new things
Enjoys intellectual activity
Displays intellectual playfulness
Tends to question authority
Skeptical, critical, and evaluative
Has facility with numbers

Identification Procedure

The student placement process for the gifted and talented students 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, handicapped, deprived and those with different socio-economic backgrounds. Identification procedures are uniformly implemented across the district.

The process consists of three stages: Referrals, Screening, and Placement

Referrals to the G/T Program may be made by teachers, parents, other students, and people from the community, and by self. This process is an ongoing process extending from grades K-12, serving at least 5% of the population. Students who have been identified in other districts and move to Bradford will automatically be screened but must follow the same placement procedures as those students who are currently enrolled in the district. After the referral has been made, a letter of consent must be signed by the parent /guardian before any tests can be administered.

After parents return this consent letter, the screening process can begin. The following criteria are included in the screening process:

- Ability Assessment
- Creativity Test
- Teacher Inventory
- Parent Inventory
- State Assessments
- Interview/Observation
- Grades
- Kingore Observation Inventory
- Portfolio of Student Products
- Additional information as deemed necessary

Once objective information is gathered from testing and subjective information has been collected, placement meetings are held. The placement committee will be comprised of at least five members comprised of classroom teachers, administrators, counselors, and chaired by the GT Coordinator.

Students are identified using a blind identification process. The Placement Committee will make a decision on placement based on multi-criteria with the stipulation that no single criterion or cut-off score will be used to include or exclude a student. Parents, teachers, and administration are notified by letter of the decisions of the placement committee regardless of placement decision. A parent/guardian must give written permission before a student is placed in the gifted program. Once permission is given, the student is placed in the program and this is noted on the student's permanent record. A student review is completed each year which provides documentation for continuation of gifted services. Once a student is identified, records of placement are kept on file for five (5) years post-graduation.

Parents/guardians/students may appeal the decision of the placement committee and may request a conference with the committee.

Appeals Procedure

It is the right of a parent/guardian to appeal the decision of the identification committee. In such case, the following procedure will be observed.

- (1) Conference with GT Coordinator regarding the placement decision.
- (2) If the appellant still questions the decision, then inform principal and Superintendent that a formal appeals process will begin. This will include a written statement of the appeal including additional information sharing why the appellant feels the student should have been placed.
- (3) All data that was initially used in the placement decision and including any newly available data will be reviewed by the Placement Committee which is chaired by the GT Coordinator. The decision of the committee will be communicated in writing to the appellant.

Annual Review Policy

Monitoring of student progress for the gifted in the classroom is an ongoing process throughout the year. Each student receives an evaluation each nine weeks. Parent and teacher conferences are held twice per year (September and March).

If the student seems to be having problems in the gifted program, then conferences are set as needed to discuss student progress with teachers, parents and administrators.

In April, students in the gifted program are reviewed to determine whether their needs are being met by the participation in the GT Program. If any of the data reviewed indicates that placement is no longer in the best interest of the student, then change of placement might be considered. The procedures outlined in the GT exit policy will be followed. Annual Review data will be noted in individual student folders.

Even though School-wide parent/teacher conferences are held two times each year, a parent may request a conference at any time throughout the year with Mrs. Debbie Roberts, the GT Coordinator.

EXIT POLICY

A student may be considered for exit procedures at any time evidence indicates that the educational needs of the student are not being met.

If a parent requests removal, the request must be filed in writing with the GT Coordinator and placed in the student's folder and the student will no longer participate in the program.

If data indicates that placement is no longer meeting the needs of the student, a student may be exited from the program. The Placement Committee, chaired by the GT Coordinator and including principal, the counselor and 2 classroom teachers will meet and review multiple criteria including two (2) objective measures and two (2) subjective measures one of which measures creativity. No single criterion will be used to exit a child from the program.

After reviewing this data, the committee will make a decision about what placement would be most appropriate for meeting the needs of the child and sign the profile sheet indicating their decision. Parents will be notified of the decision of the committee. If it is determined that student will be exited, a copy of the removal request and record of the placement committee's decision will be filed in the student's folder. If a parent disagrees with the committee's decision, then they may follow the district GT appeals procedures.

When a student is exited from the program the GT Coordinator will ask the appropriate school personnel to remove the GT designation from student's name from school.

PROGRAM DESIGN

This goal is designed to guide the development of gifted students from the time they are identified through graduation from high school. Annual goals and/or objectives are developed based on the program evaluation. Evidence is kept on file.

Identified students' placement in program options is based on their abilities, needs and interests, and resources of the district. Evidence of student assessment data is kept on file.

Because no single program option can ever meet all of the needs of all gifted children, the Bradford School District tries to vary the programming options that are best suited at each campus. These programming arrangements are designed to promote interaction among gifted students and both their intellectual and chronological peers. All identified gifted students will receive at least 150 minutes per week of direct instruction. The Bradford School District currently meets the needs of the gifted population through a variety of documented program options including: whole group enrichment, pull-out program, Pre-AP, AP or Secondary Content Classes.

The Bradford Gifted Program is designed to identify and to meet the needs of those students that are identified as needing specially designed instruction beyond that provided in the regular classroom to meet their educational needs. Placement in the Bradford Gifted Program is intended to focus attention on the special educational requirements of each identified gifted student.

CURRICULUM

The Gifted and Talented curriculum is designed to extend and/or replace the regular curriculum and is based on the adopted scope and sequence including 21st Century skills and themes. This scope and sequence along with state standards provide the foundation for an aligned curriculum. The curriculum developed for all programs is differentiated in content, process, and/or product. Gifted curriculum should demonstrate the overall ideas of cross-curricular, project-based, and technology infused student work.

EVALUATION

The gifted 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. The purpose of this evaluation is two-fold, including both a determination of the program's effectiveness and assessment of student growth.

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

- B. Evaluation of student growth is based on appropriate and specific criteria and includes self-appraisal, 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. The Bradford School District realizes that a gifted student's progress cannot be fully assessed by standardized tests only. Although 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.