Mt. Vernon-Enola

School District

Gifted and Talented Policy Handbook

**2016-2017**

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“The main part of intellectual education is not the acquisition of facts but learning how to make facts live."
-- Oliver Wendell Holmes

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**Mt. Vernon-Enola School District**

**2016-2017**

**Superintendent**

Larry Walters

**High School Principal**

Jennifer Raby

**Elementary Principal**

Rob Rollins

**GT Coordinator**

Cathy Flenor

The Mt. Vernon-Enola School District is committed to excellence in education. Due to that commitment, the district strives to help every student reach his/her full potential, and therefore, the district recognizes the need to provide for gifted and talented students is essential. The district believes that gifted and talented children require special provisions, experiences, and services not provided for in the regular instructional program. The district recognizes and supports the concept of differentiated curricula for students placed in the gifted and talented program. Extension of the depth and complexity of the learning experience is accomplished by promoting higher order thinking skills, critical and creative problem solving, opportunities to study areas of self interest, and a sense of individual self worth.

**DEFINITION OF GIFTEDNESS**

According to the *Gifted and Talented Rules and Regulations: Program Approval Standards*

*(ADE 1999)*, “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 the following:

1. Above average intellectual ability

2. Task commitment and/or motivation

3. Creative abilityRenzulli

Gifted Behavior

MVE Program Goals

1. To expose students to areas of study beyond those prescribed in the regular classroom.
2. To develop self-directed learning.
3. To provide a learning environment which promotes intellectual challenges.
4. To encourage the student to develop a positive self-concept.
5. To provide the students with the opportunity to interact with other gifted and talented students.

MVE Program Objectives

1. Provide services and in-service though staff development for teachers and administrators.
2. To identify all gifted and talented students who have the greatest need for qualitatively differentiated educational experiences and/or services.
3. To involve the community in programs for the gifted and talented through information of an advisory council, volunteers, media releases, and surveys.
4. To provide a wide variety of program options.
5. To evaluate the program so that it is responsive to students’ needs.

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**HOW DO WE MEET THE NEEDS OF A GIFTED STUDENT?**

Gifted children need special education services:

**Enrichment**

Opportunities to study content that adds to or goes beyond that which is taught in the

regular classroom

**Acceleration**

Opportunities to study new material that is typically taught at a higher grade level than

the one in which the child is currently enrolled

**Individualization**

Recognition of the student’s needs based upon his/her readiness level and interests

**Remediation**

Focus on closing any gaps which may have occurred during previous learning

**Social/Emotional Needs**

Focus on the affective needs of gifted students

**Research**

Acquisition of research skills necessary to explore areas of interest

Adapted from Feldhusen: *Excellence in Educating the Gifted* (1989)

MVE Program Description

**Grades K-2: Whole Group Enrichment Program**

The G/T Specialist designs whole group enrichment lessons emphasizing creativity, problem solving, logic, and critical/reflective thinking. All K-2 students receive weekly enrichment lessons.

**Grades 3-6: Elementary G/T Program**

The G/T Specialist designs small group and individual lessons for students identified as gifted and talented. The district’s goal is to serve at least 5% of our elementary school population. Students meet in small groups for a minimum of 150 minutes per week. Lessons are designed with the G/T Standards as a foundation and the student’s interests and needs as inspiration. The small group interaction is designed to meet the student’s social and emotional needs while the curriculum offers acceleration and enrichment. The G/T specialist also offers support for highly capable students. This consultation model is built on the premise that G/T students are gifted all day everyday and that the differentiation of classroom curriculum is instrumental to their success. Identified elementary students may also be involved in ancillary programs operated through the G/T program such as quiz bowl and chess club.

**Grades 7-12: High School G/T Program**

Identified G/T students in grades 7-12 are served through the Pre-AP/AP Program and secondary course content courses. Pre-AP/AP courses are offered in mathematics, English, science, and social studies in grades 9-12. Grades 7-8 are served through certified secondary course content classes that offer differentiated lessons to identified G/T students. Identified G/T students in grades 7-12 also attend G/T meetings once a month that are facilitated by the G/T Coordinator. Identified G/T students are given the opportunity to participate in ancillary programs such as quiz bowl and Arkansas Governor’s School.



**BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A GIFTED STUDENT**

**Academic Ability**

Masters and recalls factual material quickly

Sees cause and effect relationships; wants to know “why” and “how”

Reads often; doesn’t shy away from difficult material; may read at an advanced level and/or prefer non-fiction

Has a highly-developed vocabulary and the ability to use verbal skills to solve conflicts, influence others, etc.

Analyzes newly-learned material easily

Understands relationships of numbers and concepts of time

Makes connections between prior knowledge and new information

**Motivational Characteristics**

Shows interest in adult issues (politics, religion, etc.)

Asks questions; curious

Focuses on topics of interest

Is independent and self-assertive

Has a strong sense of justice

Can be self-critical; perfectionist

**Creativity Characteristics**

Is adventurous; a risk taker

Has a mature sense of humor

Is curious about a wide variety of topics

Expresses unique artistic perspectives

Recognizes other points of view

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(Adapted from the *Renzulli Hartman Rating Scale*)

**PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION**

For the purposes of identification, special programming, and intervention, the Mt. Vernon-Enola School District’s definition of *gifted and talented* is consistent with the state of Arkansas’ definition:

“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” (*Gifted and Talented Rules and Regulations:*

*Program Approval Standards*).

Identification of gifted and talented students in the MVE School District is an ongoing process extending from grades K-12, serving at least 5% of the student population. Written identification

and placement procedures for the G/T program are available to all stakeholders. As pursuant

with state rules and regulations, a public announcement is made notifying stake holders of the

nomination process. Nominations are accepted from stakeholders such as parents, school

personnel, community members, peers, or by self-nomination. Once a student has been

nominated, data is collected in a non-discriminatory manner. Placement is made by a committee

consisting of, but not limited to, G/T Coordinator, a counselor, classroom teachers, and the

principal. Identification procedures are uniformly implemented across the district. Once a student is identified, records of placement are kept on file for five (5) years post

graduation.

**Gifted and Talented Identification Procedures**

The first stage of identification in the elementary school consists of gathering subjective and objective data. Through observations during G/T whole group enrichment (K-2), the G/T Coordinator and classroom teacher discuss information to be placed on the *Kingore Observation Inventory* checklist. During flexible groups (K-6), information is gathered and kept in anecdotal form by the classroom teacher and G/T Specialist. Objective data, such as current standardized achievement tests, formative assessments, and norm-referenced tests are also documented.

At the conclusion of second grade, formal identification begins with a pre-referral conference in

which the classroom teacher and the G/T Specialist review information gathered since

kindergarten. Once student data has been reviewed, recommendations are made for additional

testing and possible placement in the gifted program. At this time, stakeholders may also

recommended students for testing. Parents must give written permission before G/T testing can

be administered.

Objective information collected, beginning at the end of first grade, consists of augmented state

assessments, the *Otis Lennon School Abilities Test, 8th Edition (OLSAT),* and the *Williams Tests of Creativity, Exercise in Divergent and Thinking*. Additional data may also be collected from the *Slosson Intelligence Test, Revised*. Subjectiveinformation is gathered via the *Renzulli Hartman Rating Scale*, the *Kingore Observation Inventory*, by grades, and by anecdotal records kept by the G/T specialist and classroom teachers.

Once objective information is gathered from testing and subjective information has been quantified, placement meetings are held. Students are identified using a blind identification process. No single criterion or cut-off score is used to include or exclude a student. Parents and teachers are notified by letter of the decisions of the placement committee. Staffing forms are completed which provide justification for placement/non-placement of students in the gifted program. A parent/guardian must give written permission before a student may be placed in the gifted program. A student review is completed each year which provides documentation for continuation of gifted services.

**Identification of Special Needs Population (K-12)**

Students with special needs are screened in the same manner as the general population. Students

with learning disabilities and/or other mentally handicapping conditions, who could be considered twice exceptional (gifted and LD), are placed when giftedness can be positively identified through objective/subjective data and motivation. Programming is based on the handicapped student’s strength areas and the ability of the district to provide facilities, equipment, and personnel to meet the educational need of that individual in the least restrictive environment.

**ACCELERATION POLICY**

**Pre-Referral Qualifications**

Prior to an acceleration referral, a student should demonstrate achievement and ability in the following areas.

A. High performance in all core subject areas for the previous/current school year

B. High intellectual ability on assessments administered through the gifted program

**Referral**

A student may be referred for acceleration by a parent, administrator, counselor, or teacher.

The request must be made to the G/T Coordinator by May 1 in order for acceleration to be considered for the following school year.

**Acceleration Committee**

Once a referral for acceleration is made to the G/T Coordinator, a committee will be formed. The committee will include, but is not limited to, the following:

A. G/T Coordinator

B. Building Principal

C. Counselor

D. Teachers

**Procedure**

A. Upon referral, all available information will be collected and reviewed by the G/T Coordinator. The district reserves the right to conduct further testing if warranted.

B. Parents and teachers may be asked to fill out a rating scale on characteristics of

giftedness.

C. The counselor and G/T Coordinator may consult with the student.

D. Committee members will review records, grades, assessments, and written

comments from parents, teachers, and/or students.

E. The committee will meet to discuss appropriate placement for the student. Parents

of the student may request to address the committee members prior to the acceleration

meeting.

F. A decision will be made by the committee after review of the data collected.

G. Parents will be notified of the placement decision by the G/T specialist within

fourteen (14) days of the initial committee meeting.

**Factors Considered by the Acceleration Committee**

In reaching a decision, committee members shall consider the following:

A. Teacher recommendation in favor of acceleration

B. Minimum of two high composite test scores (preferably the 99th percentile) on

standardized nationally normed exams

C. Objective data which supports superior academic achievement

D. The degree of student’s social and emotional maturity

E. Level of student’s motivation

F. The effects of acceleration on family dynamics

G. Review of student’s graduation status should acceleration take place

H. The amount of parental/guardian support

**EXIT POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Exit from the Mt. Vernon-Enola School District’s Gifted Program (K-12) may be initiated by the G/T coordinator, classroom teacher, or parent. School personnel should base a recommendation for discontinuation of services upon proper documentation, such as, completion of unsatisfactory annual reviews, demonstration of a lack of motivation and/or task commitment in the G/T classroom, or evidence that the student not working to his/her potential in the regular classroom.

Before the exit procedure is initiated, a conference will be held with the parent in an effort to

improve student performance. If the performance continues with no improvement, the student will be placed on probation or exited from the program. A student will not be exited from the gifted program without the request for a parent conference.

Parents and/or classroom teachers may appeal the exit decision. The appeal will be heard at the

building level by an exit committee, which may include the G/T Coordinator, counselor, building administrator, and classroom teachers.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**My child has just been identified as gifted. Now what do I do?**

Parents should learn as much as possible about giftedness, the school’s gifted program, and ways

in which they can be proactively involved in their child’s education.

**How do I refer a child for the gifted program?**

A person interested in referring a child for the gifted program should contact the G/T Coordinator.

**What if my child isn’t selected for the program? Will he/she be considered next year?**

A student who is not selected must be re-nominated in order to be considered for the program

each year.

**How often does the district select students for the gifted program?**

The Gifted and Talented Placement Committee convenes whenever a need arises. The committee will always meet at the beginning of the school year to make placement decisions based on the previous year’s nominations and testing results. During the meeting, the committee will also review the records of any student that has transferred into the district who was identified as gifted in his/her former school.

**Is my child required to make up work completed in the regular classroom while he/she was**

**attending G/T classes?**

The Arkansas Gifted and Talented Rules and Regulations state G/T assignments should be in lieu

of, **not in addition to**, regular classroom assignments; however, on occasion it may be necessary for students to complete a classroom assignment. You may contact your child’s G/T Coordinator if this becomes an issue for your child.

**How can I monitor my child’s progress in the G/T program?**

The G/T Coordinator will maintain a website regarding the activities in the G/T classroom (grades 2-6). Students will also receive a progress report (grades 2-6) each grading period.

**How often will my child receive gifted services?**

The Arkansas Department of Education’s Rules and Regulations for Gifted and

Talented Education mandates that identified gifted students receive a minimum of 150 minutes of G/T services weekly.

**How do I know my child is receiving a quality “gifted education”?**

Arkansas Standards for Accreditation require districts to evaluate the gifted and talented program annually. All stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, administrators, and members of the community) are encouraged to evaluate the program through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The results of the data collected is compiled into an annual report and submitted to the

State Department of Education, Office of Gifted and Talented; in addition, each school district’s

gifted and talented program is monitored by the state department every three years.