

# Gifted and Talented Program Summary

## INTRODUCTION

The Gifted and Talented (GT) Program summary is intended to assist in providing parents an overview and understanding of the identification and selection process of such programs. Based on this understanding Parents are better able to navigate the enrollment process in such programs in meeting unique student needs.

Each school has designed appropriately differentiated curriculum according to the particular needs of their own students. However, to minimize the potential for problems in the areas of identification, programming, and evaluations, and to attain desired consistency levels, each school must develop its program from the directions provided in the guidelines set forth by the State Department of Education. In the State of Hawaii this information can be found in *The Program Guide for Gifted and Talented (December 2007)* by the State of Hawaii Department of Education at [http://gt.k12.hi.us/files/GT\\_Guide.pdf](http://gt.k12.hi.us/files/GT_Guide.pdf)

## VISION, MISSION AND GOALS

The mission of the Gifted and Talented Program is to provide high-quality education in a supportive learning environment and to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to enable the gifted and talented learners to lead productive, fulfilling, and socially responsible lives in a diverse and changing world.

### Criterion:

**1: *The identification process shall be established in writing and approved by the principal prior to the identification of students for the program.***

**2: *The identification process shall include three stages: nomination, screening, and selection.***

**3: *The identification shall be based upon data from a appropriately selected sources and shall include both qualitative and quantitative data.***

## IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

The identification process yields important data about each student for making decisions based on strengths, weaknesses, interests, special talents, special needs, personality, and other information that surface during the process and should lay the foundation for finding the best program option fit for students.

### NOMINATION

Parent/community/school staff and/or Self/Peer and/or Test scores

Parent permission to screen

### SCREENING

Minimum of five criteria gathered by committee with a balance of objective and subjective measures from several sources

### SELECTION

Student data organized on matrix, profile, or case study format.

Identification committee makes recommendations for placement.

Principal approves/revises recommendations

Not accepted / Accepted at this time

Parent permission to participate

Appeals May or may not be accepted

## **PROGRAM OPTIONS**

Once a student is identified as having outstanding capabilities that cannot be met in the regular grade level curriculum, all program options should be considered and the best option selected. No single option will meet the needs of all gifted students.

### **PULL-OUT PROGRAMS**

Students leave the classroom on a regular basis for the purpose of working on differentiated curriculum with other gifted students. The curriculum is differentiated in ways that fit the needs of gifted students. Programs may focus on modifying general academic content or a specific content area. This option provides the opportunity for gifted students to work with their intellectual peers for part of the day and to maintain membership in their grade-level group.

### **ENRICHMENT IN THE CLASSROOM**

A differentiated program of study for gifted students by the classroom teacher within the regular classroom without outside assistance.

### **CONSULTANT-TEACHER PROGRAM**

Instruction is provided within the classroom by the classroom teacher with the assistance of a specially trained consultant teacher who provides extra materials, teaches small groups of students in the classroom, and/or assists the regular teacher in instructional planning.

### **SPECIAL CLASSES**

Special classes provide services to gifted students on a daily basis for one or more periods a day. A trained teacher teaches the class and provides a curriculum that allows for pursuit of studies that are differentiated from the regular grade level according to ability and pacing needs. Special classes are similar to pull-out classes except that the students are not missing or pulled out of their regular class.

### **CLUSTER GROUPING**

Cluster grouping is the practice of placing four to six gifted students in the same regular classroom with a teacher trained to teach gifted students. Other students in the class are of mixed ability. The "cluster" of gifted students allows them to learn together and facilitates planning for the teacher.

### **FULL-TIME GIFTED SERVICE**

Gifted students are grouped together for most of the day except for classes such as art, music, and physical education. Services are targeted to meet the needs of the gifted in every other area. All curriculum can be differentiated to be appropriate for the students' levels of abilities. Acceleration can be used in each content area and processes and products can also be differentiated from what may be required in the regular classes. Teachers are specially trained to work with the gifted.

### **MAGNET SCHOOLS**

Magnet schools focus on specific areas, such as foreign languages, science, advanced mathematics or the arts. Students with special interests in the focus area of the school are encouraged to enroll even if they are outside of the student's geographic attendance area. Students can move through basic mini-courses into in-depth studies of their choosing.

### **MENTORSHIP**

Mentoring can provide valuable experiences to gifted students as they work with a mentor who is willing to share personal values, particular interests, and their time, talents, and skills. The student may leave school for a period of time, perhaps a few afternoons a week, and learns under the supervision of a specialist in the community who is an expert in the student's area of interest.

## **INTERVENTION MODELS**

### **ACCELERATION**

Acceleration refers to the ways the program is structured to provide for gifted and talented students to engage in studies that are at a more advanced level than the one in which they are currently enrolled. Acceleration assumes that gifted children, who, by their identification data, are seen to be achieving or operating at advanced skill levels. Acceleration options include content acceleration, grade skipping, dual enrollment in college, Advanced Placement courses, and compressing or compacting curricula.

### **ENRICHMENT**

Enrichment refers to the opportunities to study additional topics not covered in the regular curriculum, but not necessarily advanced topics. These opportunities allow for the horizontal growth of students in subject areas. Enrichment can be experiences that replace, supplement or extend learning in depth and breadth. The experiences should respond to students' specific gifted and talented characteristics.

### **INDIVIDUALIZATION**

Individualization refers to meeting the needs of the gifted by providing individualized instruction focused on new learning tasks at the next higher level of difficulty or progression and that is tailored to the individual child. Individualization might be based on the student's interests, learning style, and special talents. Although there are few totally individualized classrooms, teachers will use this approach at various times.

### **REMEDIATION**

Remediation might seem to be inconsistent with gifted programs as gifted and talented students generally test and perform at high levels. A broad view of the evaluation, however, may reveal weaker areas of functioning. Students should be allowed to soar in the areas of strengths but may need to be helped to improve basic skills in other areas.

### **GUIDANCE**

Underlying any program organizational pattern are services and experiences that help students to develop better understandings of themselves and others. Uneven developmental patterns of the gifted, as well as the degree of difference from age peers, create a situation where counseling and guidance services are important ongoing provisions to address their social and emotional needs. Other topics, such as career opportunities and planning for college, can be explored through individual and group meetings.

## IDENTIFICATION ASSESSMENT MEASURES

Various types of measures are used to assess students in the identification process to determine their giftedness or talents and the fit with the particular services provided by the school. To guide the selection of measures, the school's program should be clearly defined and articulated as measures should match student potentials to be served by the program. The program goals set the direction for the types of talent or ability to be identified.

Other factors to be examined in the selection of measures are the reliability and validity of the instruments as well as the practical considerations of test administration.

### Frequently Used Measures and Procedures:

**Standardized test instruments** can provide indications of a student's abilities in the area tested at that age, if selected and applied appropriately. Examples of inappropriate use are applying mathematics scores for language arts programs and relying heavily on visual-spatial measures for highly verbal services.

**Essays** can provide information not only about the students' writing abilities, but also about their knowledge, interests, motivations, and insights. Essays and other writing samples should be rated against a set of criteria.

**Interviews** can be informative and helpful in assessing students, particularly those students in the generally under-represented groups of the student population (e.g., different cultures, low socio-economic status, limited English proficiency, learning and other disabilities). Interviews can help to uncover abilities and capabilities that are not revealed on the tests or are not readily observable.

**Auditions** provide students the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and talents in the performance areas. Performances should be rated against a set of criteria.

**Rating scales** that provide opportunities for teacher input on superior academic performances in specific subject areas and other qualities like creativity and motivation are generally a part of the collection of data. *Like other measures, rating scales need to be used appropriately.*

## Acknowledgements

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

U.S. Department of Education.... Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education  
Program  
<http://www.ed.gov/program/javits/index.html>

## **IDENTIFICATION PROCESS: SAMPLE LETTERS TO PARENTS**

### **Sample 1**

Dear Parent(s):

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_, has been recommended for consideration for the Gifted/Talented Program at Elementary School. This program serves students in grades 4-6. Selected students will meet with the G/T teacher for four 1-hour sessions each week. During that time, they are taught a differentiated curriculum stressing higher level thinking skills, technological skills, and the language arts.

Students in grades 4 through 6 are selected for the G/T Program based on the following items:

Teacher rating on learning characteristics and communication-precision skills

Review of academic records

Mental Ability Test

Review of standardized test scores

SAGES Screening Test

Writing Sample

Please discuss the advantages and disadvantages of participation in the G/T Program with your child. It requires extra work for the student and commitment from the parents. Participation in both the screening process and the GT Program is voluntary. However, once a commitment is made to become a member of the program, outstanding performance and follow-through are expected of the students selected.

If you will allow your child to be screened for the G/T Program, please fill out the attached Parent Permission for Evaluation form (permission to test) and return it as soon as possible to:

Student Services Coordinator

Phone:

You will be notified of the outcome of the evaluation process by letter.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Principal

### **Sample 2**

Parent Permission for Evaluation

To: Principal

You have my consent to administer additional tests as part of the Gifted and Talented Program identification process. I understand that the test results will be held strictly confidential.

Parent Signature

Date:

### **Sample 3**

Dear Parent(s),

Thank you for your interest in the Elementary School G/T Program. Our school's G/T Screening Committee has completed the evaluation of all the students nominated for the program.

I am pleased to inform you that your child did meet the criteria to participate in our G/T Program. An orientation meeting for students and parents will be held soon. Please see the enclosed flyer for details. I look forward to seeing you then.

If you have any questions, please contact me at..

Sincerely,  
Principal