

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

4.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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. This can be accomplished by having an active parent group and annual parent meetings. To enhance our curricula, parents and community members are solicited as mentors, coaches, resources, and audiences for student product/projects presentation. The Omaha District Gifted Program is committed to promoting parent and community communication and involvement.

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

4.02 Parents and community members are informed annually of program opportunities, allowing parents/community members the opportunity to ask questions, make suggestions, and gain information about our program. Meeting agendas and other communications are kept on file.

4.03 An advisory committee including parents and community members is established each school year with at least one documented annual meeting. The advisory committee is an effective tool in helping 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.

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

5.00 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

5.01 and 5.02

The Omaha 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 gifted and talented annual professional development plan is based on feedback from the stakeholders, including professional growth plans, program evaluation report, and overall school professional development plan. 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 District G/T Coordinator is responsible for staff development through formal sessions, faculty meetings, handouts and professional literature. The coordinator will also make arrangements for consultant services and provide information about regional and state workshops and conferences. Training for the teacher of the gifted will be provided as needed.

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/emails; presenting short, specific classroom demonstrations and teaching techniques at regular building-level faculty meetings; and sharing gifted students' projects with all staff.

The coordinator and facilitator is encouraged to attend regional, state and national workshops and conferences which provide staff

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

development opportunities for the G/T facilitator(s) and other interested staff members.

The staff is encouraged to attend staff development sessions that are conducted by professionals with special training in gifted education.

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.

Documentation of staff development kept on file will include an annual plan, certificates of attendance, rosters, and programs.

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

6.00 PERSONNEL

6.01, 6.02, 6.03

The Omaha School District acknowledges that personnel who teach homogenously grouped gifted students and personnel who coordinate and/or administrate the district gifted and talented program must have the appropriate certification as listed in standards. Administrator/Coordinator will keep all certificates (and transcripts with ALP when necessary) on file.

6.04 The selection of administrators, coordinators, and teachers of the gifted is defined clearly. Qualities such as the ability to be flexible of time, pace, materials, 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.

6.05 A written job description for the administrator, coordinator and/or teacher(s) is kept on file.

6.06 The Omaha School District provides Gifted Coordinators/Administrators with regularly scheduled time for duties other than direct services to the identified students. A copy of the facilitators' schedule is kept on file. In addition to time spent in planning the overall structure of the district gifted program and direct services to gifted students, the coordinator/administrator will perform a variety of duties that promote integration of the gifted program with the regular education program. These duties include:

- a. working with classroom teachers and other personnel;
- b. locating resources;
- c. arranging mentorships and other out-of school learning experiences;
- d. supervising independent studies and mentorships;

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

- e. leadership of the identification process;
- f. conducting community awareness activities;
- g. conducting staff development activities;
- h. program documentation;
- i. development of appropriate curriculum; and/or
- j. involvement in Advanced Placement and/or International Baccalaureate program planning and implementation.

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

7.00 IDENTIFICATION

Because Arkansas Gifted Standards require identification of gifted students, the Omaha School District considers the task of identifying gifted students extremely important. The district also maintains that it is the parents' right to be included in the process and informed of the outcomes which could affect their child. The process for identifying students has several stages. School personnel, teachers, parents, students, and community members are provided with information concerning the identification process, including characteristics of the gifted.

Procedures for Identification:

7.01, 7.02

1. **Nominations/Referrals:** Nominations/Referrals are accepted from teachers, school personnel, parents, students, and community members. The coordinator can also use the review of student assessment scores to refer students, along with the data retrieved from enrichment. Although the district might set specific times for blanket testing or the requesting of referrals, referrals are encouraged and accepted at all times during the school year **(7.09)**. It will be the responsibility of the gifted coordinator to seek these referrals and begin the identification process in a timely manner. A referral form should be completed on each individual and submitted to the gifted coordinator. Nomination forms are available on the district website.

2. **Permission:** Once the nomination/referral form is completed and submitted to the coordinator, the coordinator notifies the parent by letter. At this point, the parent/guardian is asked to sign the permission to assess form and a parent/guardian inventory **(7.08)**. Permission is requested to collect relevant data, administer various

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

tests, and share pertinent data with a professional selection committee. This permission must be granted in writing before the data collection process can begin.

- 3. Data Collection:** If the parents/guardians sign and return the permission form, then the data collection process begins. As standards require, the use of at least two objective (one of which must assess creativity) and two subjective measures, must be used in the identification process. Data collection includes, but is not limited to current standardized test scores, an ability test, grades, creativity test, data collected through enrichment, and parent and teacher checklists. It is the objective of the Omaha School District to insure that the gifted and talented identification procedures are non-discriminatory with respect to race, culture, economic background, religion, national origin, sex, or handicapping **(7.06)**.

The coordinator is responsible for collecting data, overseeing any assessments given, and compiling the results in an orderly fashion to be shared with the identification committee **(7.04)**.

- 4. Identification Committee:** The identification committee of at least five members, chaired by the gifted coordinator and including administrators, teachers, and/or counselors will review the compiled data collection of the nominated/referred student. The list of committee members are kept on file annually **(7.03)**. All current data is used to determine the placement of a child according to the appropriate program options. It is important to note that student placement decisions are based on multiple criteria. No single criterion or cut-off score is used to include or exclude a student from identification **(7.05)**. The identification committee will make professional decisions on the identification and placement of students **(7.03)**.

- 5. Dissemination of Information:** After the decision of the identification committee is made, parents **(7.08)**, teachers, and

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

school personnel are notified of the identification committee results. If placement in the gifted and talented program is recommended, parental permission for participation in the program must be obtained. Instructionally useful information about individual students obtained during the identification process is communicated to the instructional staff regardless of final placement decision **(7.07)**.

6. **Placement Appeals:** Parents/Guardians may appeal placement decision through the following process **(7.08)**:
- 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 disagree with the committee decision, then a written appeal can be filed by the parents/guardians to the gifted coordinator, including information sharing why they believe the student should have been placed.
 - C. The Gifted Coordinator will collect any further data that might help in the identification process, including additional testing when possible.
 - 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 appeals committee will once again be chaired by the gifted coordinator and include the appropriate administrator/s. The parent/guardian making the appeal has the right to address the appeals committee, but will not be present as the committee makes the final placement decisions.
 - E. The decision of the appeals committee will be communicated in writing to the parent/guardian making the appeal. This decision will be final.

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

7. **Annual Review:** Identification of gifted and talented students is an on-going process extending through grades 12. Each identified student's placement will be reviewed at least annually and/or when specifically requested to update or modify the students' educational plans. These annual review decisions will be made by the Identification Committee using multiple criteria. If evidence indicates that placement decisions were not in the best interest of the student, then exit procedures will be followed and final placement decisions will be made by the identification committee. Annual placement decision will be noted in individual student folders. **(7.00 #12 B)**
8. **Exit Policy** - 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 in the best interest of the student. Emphasis will be placed on meeting the needs of the student. As with determining placement in the gifted program, multiple criteria will be 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. **(7.05)** 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 in the best interest of the student, a conference will be held in an effort to address areas of concern and facilitate improvement. Those present at the conference may include the student, classroom teachers, GT teachers, parents, administrators, counselors, etc. An action plan will be developed and a timeline will be set. 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 there is no improvement, the student may be

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

exited from the program. If the exit was initiated by the school, then all pertinent data (including at least two objective and two subjective measures) will be compiled and presented to the identification committee of at least five professional educators, chaired by the gifted specialist. The identification committee will review the data and 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.

9. **Transfer students** will be evaluated and considered for participation, but not automatically placed. Records will be requested and the selection committee will determine whether a decision can be made with existing records or if further testing will be needed. If further testing is needed, parental permission will be required and the identification procedures will be followed **(7.01-7.09)**.

10. **Record Keeping:** The Gifted and Talented Coordinator will keep all records of placement decisions and data on each student nominated and placed in the program. Records are kept for a minimum of five years or for as long as needed for educational decisions. Appropriate confidential destruction of the records will take place at the end of the above stated time frame. Transcripts and all permanent records of identified gifted students will reflect participation in the program.

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

8.00 PROGRAM OPTIONS

8.01 Gifted children are as different from each other as they are from other children. They have needs for differing amounts of homogeneous grouping, and at various stages of development their interests differ. The gifted program is systematically organized, with the long range goal of providing a rigorous and relevant education in preparing our gifted students to become college and career ready. 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. **(8.01)**

8.02 A table of organization is developed which clearly delineates roles, responsibilities and coordination procedures. A copy of the table of organization is on file. **(8.02)**

8.03 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. **(8.03)**

8.04 Because no single program option can ever meet all of the needs of all gifted children, the Omaha 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 **(8.04)**. All identified gifted students will receive at least 150 minutes per week of direct instruction **(8.05)**. The Omaha 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 Secondary Classes, as well as other options. The Omaha Gifted Program is designed to identify and to meet the needs of those students that are identified as needing

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

pecially designed instruction beyond that provided in the regular classroom to meet their educational needs. Placement in the Omaha Gifted Program is intended but to focus attention on the special educational requirements of each identified gifted student.

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

9.0 CURRICULUM 9.01, 9.02, 9.03

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 creative thinking, critical thinking, research/independent learning, communication, technology, and affective development. 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.

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

10.0 EVALUATION 10.01 -10.07

10.01-10.02 The gifted coordinator is responsible for conducting an extensive annual evaluation of the gifted program that provides accurate, timely, and relevant information to decision-makers for improving program options offered gifted students **(10.01)** this evaluation will be based on program goals and/or objectives **(10.02)**. The purpose of this evaluation is two-fold, including both a determination of the program's effectiveness and assessment of student growth.

10.03 All components of the gifted program are evaluated annually including identification, staff development, program options, program goals and objectives, curriculum, community involvement, program expenditures, and the evaluation process/plan **(10.03)**.

10.04 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 stakeholder vary. Some procedures that might be used include surveys, focus groups, questionnaires, charts, anecdotal data, checklists, and/or informal discussions **(10.04)**.

10.05 Evaluation findings are compiled, analyzed, and communicated to the appropriate audiences. The overall annual 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 annual goals and/or objectives for the program. **(10.05)**

Evaluation of student growth is based on appropriate and specific criteria and includes self-appraisal, teacher appraisal, and criterion referenced and/or standardized instruments **(10.04)**.

Omaha School District Gifted and Talented Policies

- 10.06** Student progress is assessed, with attention to mastery of content, higher level thinking skills, creativity, and affective growth **(10.06)**. The Omaha District realizes that a gifted student's progress cannot be fully assessed by standardized tests only. **(10.06)** 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. **(10.05)**
- 10.07** Participation in the gifted program is noted on student transcripts and permanent records. **(10.07)**