

# Ozark's G-Team

(Guidance To Engage Active Minds)



*Ozark  
Hillbillies*

**OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED  
Parent Handbook**



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**OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM COMPONENTS’  
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**1. STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Goal A. Every attempt will be made to train certified personnel in a sequential and continuous program development to enable them to assist in the identification, selection, and programming of gifted and talented students.

**2. PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Goal A. Parents and resource persons of the community will participate through active involvement in expanding opportunities of gifted and talented students. Parents and community will be involved in programs for the gifted and talented through the formation of an advisory council, volunteer and/or a mentor program.

**3. IDENTIFICATION**

Goal A. A systematic process will be planned and implemented for identifying those gifted and talented students who have the greatest need for qualitatively differentiated educational experiences and/or services.

**4. PROGRAMMING**

Goal A. The district will develop and implement a program in which administrators, classroom teachers, and other staff members will jointly plan and provide enriched experiences and/or services.

Objective A. 1. Recognize the need to provide differentiated educational experiences for the gifted and talented of all backgrounds.

Objective A. 2. Establish a program with a long-range goal of providing services for all areas of giftedness for students’ kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Objective A. 3. Provide gifted and talented students with multiple differentiated materials, which will allow them to purposefully expand ideas and engage in the exploration of issues and interests at each child’s individual level.

Objective A. 4. Provide a wide variety of generalized strategies designed to develop thinking/feeling processes and operations based on student strengths, learning styles, and interests in order to enhance:

- a. Critical and reflective thinking
- b. Divergent and creative/productive thinking
- c. Problem solving and self-directed expanded inquiry
- d. Positive self-concept, sense of individual commitment to self in a changing society, with the teacher as a guide.

Objective A. 5. Establish opportunities for the gifted and talented student to become a “young professional” engaged as an investigator of real problems utilizing appropriate community resource persons serving as volunteers/mentors.

Objective A. 6. Provide a format for gifted and talented students to come together to challenge and interact with each other.

Objective A. 7. Provide enrichment exploration for all gifted and talented students through the use of community resource persons to expand student interest areas.

Objective A. 8. Articulate and coordinate the differentiated gifted program with the regular classroom program and classroom teacher.

## 5. EVALUATION

Goal A. Timely evaluation procedures will be developed and implemented to determine and document the degree of success of the program for gifted and talented students.

### **OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM GOALS**

1. To provide methods which will identify gifted and talented students
2. To provide educational programs and differentiated curriculum, which will enable each student to develop his or her abilities
3. To provide an enriching and challenging environment with ability peers
4. To develop and enhance higher level cognitive, decision-making, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills and research skills
5. To provide learning experiences to give the students opportunities to further and enrich their learning beyond the regular classroom
6. To provide opportunities to develop and refine potential or existing leadership abilities
7. To encourage self-motivation and self-directed learning
8. To encourage the student to develop and maintain a positive and realistic self-concept
9. To provide an ongoing program of goal setting and evaluation
10. To provide opportunities for increasing awareness of career possibilities with regard to a student’s unique abilities and talents
11. To produce productive thinkers who are sharing and caring citizens



## **OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES (7.0)**

The student identification / selection process 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, the highly creative, and the highly intellectual.

The process includes the creation of a candidate pool through referral and data accumulation. A student may be referred by evidence found in testing results, himself/ herself, parents, teachers, counselors, administration, or any other person in the community. Following referral for services, a permission to test and collect data form is collected. A profile is then developed from various data including ability, academic, benchmark and creativity test scores, grades, student products, observations and rating scales completed by teachers and parents, and/or interviews with the student. Using a case study approach the profile is then reviewed by a screening / placement committee. This committee recommends the appropriate action.

No one item is a decisive factor in the placement of a student in the gifted and talented program. The student need not score high on every criterion for inclusion into the program. For example, teacher ratings may override low-test scores, and good normative data may outweigh negative teacher ratings. The final evaluation decision considers the best interest of the student as an individual and the degree to which it is felt the student would benefit from participation in the gifted program. Written parental consent is acquired before the student is placed in the program.

## **OZARK SCHOOL G/T PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION AND PLACEMENT POLICIES**

Appropriate identification of gifted and talented students is essential in many ways. Just as Special Education students need programs to meet their special needs, G/T students have special needs, which stem from their special aptitudes, interests, and abilities. G/T students deserve to be appropriately identified and given the differentiated opportunities and challenges to help them to achieve their fullest potentials. Also, the success of the G/T program hinges on the appropriate identification and placement of students who will benefit from the program's differentiated curriculum.

The process used in the identification of students for participation in the G/T Program consists of six basic steps:

- (1) Nomination
- (2) Data Collection and Testing
- (4) Portfolio or Profile Development
- (5) Identification
- (6) Placement

## **STEP 1: NOMINATION**

Nominations are accepted at any time for the gifted and talented program, but are especially encouraged during the spring. A student can be nominated for the gifted and talented program by parents/family, district staff, community member, or themselves. Nominating parties receive a nomination form to complete on the student explaining their reasons for nominating the student for the gifted program.

Referrals for the gifted program are sought from a variety of sources including parents, teachers, students, and community members. Information about the identification process is available through email/teacher boxes and on the district's webpage.

## **STEP 2: DATA COLLECTION AND TESTING**

Following referral for services, a permission to test and collect data form is collected. Data will be collected from as many sources as are relevant to the individual candidate. A case study approach will then be used to start the identification process. Objective and subjective data will be collected for each nominee from as many sources as possible including:

- (1) Achievement Test Scores
- (2) Intelligence Tests or School Ability Tests
- (3) Creativity Evaluation Instruments
- (4) Teacher and/or Parent Rating Scales
- (5) Academic Performance
- (6) Peer Ratings
- (7) Interview with Student
- (8) Other Relevant Information
- (9) Data collected from GT Enrichment

## **STEP 4: PROFILE DEVELOPMENT**

The data is then transferred for each student to a profile or characteristic matrix sheet, which presents the information in an easy to understand format. The screening or placement committee will use the profile for identification purposes.

## **STEP 5: PLACEMENT**

The placement committee will study all information and data collected in the profiles. The placement committee consists of teachers, the counselor, administrators and the G/T Coordinator/teacher. The students are placed on the basis of specific and consistent criteria in several areas, which can indicate giftedness as outlined in the local definition, which includes:

- (1) Above average intellectual ability
- (2) Creative thinking ability
- (3) High achievement
- (4) Task commitment or motivation

No single criterion or cut-off score may be used to exclude a student from identification and placement. For example, teacher ratings may override poor test scores, and good normative information may outweigh negative teacher and/or parent ratings.

Extra consideration and possible testing and data gathering may be used in the identification of culturally and/or physically handicapped or other special cases that present themselves. No nominee will be discriminated against for any reason, whether race, gender, socio-economic status or any other reason. The placement committee declaring the decision of the committee signs a placement verification form.

## **STEP 6: PLACEMENT AND RECORDS**

After the placement committee identifies the students, a letter is sent to the parents informing them of the decision. Parental permission to participate must be obtained before each student is actually placed in the program. Placement information will be disseminated to all appropriate and concerned persons. Records of identification, placement and participation are placed in each student's permanent records (folder). Participation in the G/T program is recorded in permanent records for each year that the student meets the participation requirements. Identification, placement, and participation records are maintained and kept on file at the school for at least five years after graduation.

## **CANDIDATE POOL**

Should a student be nominated and not be identified and placed at a particular time, his/her file will be kept in a candidate pool for possible placement at a later date or for further testing and/or data collection. Later placement is possible if needs are recognized. However, the identification process must be repeated.

**OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM  
DESIGN AND STUDENT OPTIONS (8.0)**

The program design for our gifted and talented students for grades kindergarten through twelfth grade is intended to provide a curriculum that is both differentiated and appropriate for the specialized needs of students who are advanced in their thinking and learning processes. Gifted and talented students are provided opportunities to interact with their peers and to work with materials, which challenge their abilities and encourage them to expand their abstract thinking and reasoning. This is accomplished through using various approaches appropriate to the designated grade level. All instructors involved have received training through the Arkansas Department of Education and/or advanced degree training.

**K-2 Whole Group Enrichment:** The Gifted and Talented Teacher/Specialist meets with the Kindergarten - Second grade students for whole-class enrichment for at least thirty minutes weekly. The goal is to collect data on potentially gifted students and expose students to critical and creative thinking skills. Classroom teachers actively promote higher order thinking skills on a daily basis.

**3-5 Pull-Out:** A pull-out program for grade three – five meets for a minimum of one-hundred fifty minutes weekly with the certified Gifted and Talented Teacher, which is required by law. Enrichment and pullout resource room activities are geared to meet the identified gifted and talented students.

**6-12 Differentiation in the classroom, Pre-AP, AP, Concurrent Credit:** Grades six through twelve gifted and talented students' needs are met through designated classes in the academic areas of English, Math, Science, and Social Science as well as through other specialized classes, which include Pre-AP, AP, acceleration, concurrent enrollment in college courses, and student competitions. The way in which each identified Gifted and Talented student meets his or her requirement(s) is documented and participation in the Gifted and Talented program is recorded in the permanent records.



## **CURRICULUM PLAN AND DIFFERENTIATION (9.0)**

The Ozark School District recognizes that G/T students need a differentiated curriculum. A curriculum should be planned for them not on the basis of content that suits the majority of pupils, but on the basis of their advanced accomplishments and interests, which require different content and different opportunities. An adequate curriculum must be diverse, advanced, and complex enough to reflect the abilities of the gifted and talented. The content of the curriculum should provide interest and challenge, not “more of the same”.

There are several schools of thought on the type of curriculum appropriate to gifted and talented students. One places importance in developing the curriculum on a basis of the individual interests and independent study. Another places importance on the more “advanced” approach by allowing and providing students with opportunities to study and move faster than their peers in particular educational disciplines. Still another method takes the “seminar” or group study approach. The Ozark program strives for a balanced approach recognizing that all of these approaches have substantial value to the G/T students and that each individual G/T student has different gifts, talents and needs.

Since differentiation should not only be in degree but in kind, care will be taken to avoid “more of the same”. Regular classroom teachers are encouraged to modify the work assigned to the gifted and talented students, whenever possible, to provide challenge, and/or eliminate drill work when it is not needed. If at all possible, scheduling should be done in such a way that students do not miss classes that are important to them. When a student is pulled from a particular class for G/T, that teacher is reminded to take into consideration that the student is also doing work in G/T class and does not need to be punished for being gifted and talented by having to do even more work. Teachers are encouraged to not require these students to make up missed work unless the teacher believes that a particular assignment is extremely important. Within reason, the decision to require or not require a missed assignment to be made up is left up to the individual teacher and the students involved.

Curriculum opportunities are planned with the abilities, accomplishments, and interests of the G/T students in mind. Differentiation is made in the following ways:

1. Content
  - a. Level of complexity
  - b. Pace of learning
  - c. Degree of abstractness
  - d. Topics not ordinarily part of the regular curriculum (or at that level)
  - e. Organized by themes and ideas
  - f. Multidisciplinary
  - g. Student as teacher and/or self-directed

2. Process:

- a. Critical thinking
- b. Creative thinking
- c. Independent study
- d. Problem-solving
- e. Logic
- f. Investigative or research

3. Products:

- a. In-depth studies with appropriate product outcome
- b. Using new and/or different techniques, material, and forms
- c. Creative, artistic, and/or theatrical
- d. Self-chosen specific areas of interest or talent development
- f. Different types of communication and/or audiences

**OZARK SCHOOLS G/T PROGRAM  
EVALUATION PLAN (10.0)**

In order to have a strong and effective program for the gifted, accurate, timely and relevant evaluations will be conducted. At the end of each year, all components of the program will be evaluated and analyzed. The components of the gifted and talented program to be evaluated include:

1. (4.00) Community Involvement
2. (5.00) Staff Development
3. (6.00) Personnel (G/T teachers)
4. (7.00) The Identification Process
5. (8.00) Program Options
6. (9.00) Curriculum
7. (10.00) The Evaluation Process

At the end of each school year, a variety of instruments including surveys, checklists, and interviews will be conducted and sent to all known interested persons to determine the value and effectiveness of the program and to evaluate the policies and practices of the program. Data and information will be gleaned from as many of the following as possible:

1. Parents
2. Teachers
3. Administrators
4. Counselors
5. Community members
6. GT students
7. Program self-evaluation by the G/T Coordinator

The results and information gathered will be analyzed and compiled in a clear and concise way to be communicated to:

1. The Advisory committee
2. Faculty
3. School Administration
4. School Board
5. Community

To disseminate the accrued evaluation results a summary report will be posted on the District's Website and/or presented at a school board meeting and at the annual school report to the public in the fall. A summary report is also sent to the APE Office of Gifted and Talented in the annual Application for Program Approval that is sent in by October 15 of each year.

The evaluation results will be used to strengthen the Ozark G/T Program and to make it more effective and beneficial to the G/T students. Solutions will be sought to try to mend any weaknesses found in the program and the strengths will be built upon to make the program better. The results will provide information to the administration, the G/T coordinator, and teachers to help plan improvements for any aspect of the program including program options offered to the G/T students.

**OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM  
STUDENT EVALUATION POLICY**

Teachers constantly evaluate and re-evaluate each student’s progress. Included in the evaluation are mastery of basic skills as well as high level thinking skills, creativity, and affective growth. Continuous evaluation is done through teacher observation and expectation rubrics. Students are involved to some extent in the evaluation of their work.

Students in the gifted program are evaluated annually each spring to determine whether the gifted class is meeting their needs.

When a student is enrolled in more challenging and demanding courses such as gifted, accelerated, or honors, Pre-Advanced Placement, or Advance-Placement classes in grades sixth through twelfth, this is noted on the student’s transcript.

**OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM  
EXIT PROCEDURE**

To exit the gifted and talented program a request may be made by the student, parents and/or the gifted and talented teacher or an administrator. The exiting procedure should be in several steps.

- a. An exit request is made.
- b. A conference with gifted teacher, parent(s), student, counselor, and/or principal will be held and an action plan will be implemented.
- c. If the attempt to remedy the situation is unsuccessful, the GT placement committee will meet to discuss the situation and possible solutions or a decision to exit the program is made.
- d. The parents may challenge the exiting decision, if necessary, by an appeal to the superintendent.
- e. The exit forms must be signed by the parents, and the GT Coordinator/Teacher.
- f. To reenter the program the student must go through the identification and placement process again.

**POSSIBLE REASONS FOR EXITING**

- 1. If a teacher of the gifted and talented class feels the program is not meeting the student's needs, he/she may recommend that the student be returned to the regular classroom program full time. The teacher of the gifted will present data consisting of anecdotal records, student's work, copies of notes or letters to parents, etc. supporting his/her request for removal from the gifted program. The anecdotal records may include attitudes and motivation behaviors exhibited by the student.
- 2. The student and parents feel that the student's needs are being met in the regular classroom and the extra time spent in the Gifted and Talented program is creating a hardship on the student.

**OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM**  
**Appeals Procedure**

1. Parent will communicate the problem to the building principal in writing or in person. This communication should address the specific needs of the child that are not being met.
2. Building principal will contact the program planner and discuss the complaint made by the parent.
3. The building principal and the placement committee will again review thoroughly the case study that was completed on the student. The selection committee may review pertinent data and may administer additional nondiscriminatory tests. Based on the consensus of the placement committee the decision then to be placed in the program or uphold the initial decision will be made.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

(Produced for the Office of Gifted and Talented, U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare by the Council for Exceptional Children)

There are numerous lists of characteristics or distinguishing features and attributes of gifted and talented children. Teachers and parents should interpret any single list, including this one, as exemplary rather than exclusive. Few gifted children will display all of the characteristics. Understanding the characteristics of gifted and talented children will help parents and teachers sharpen their observations of these children in two distinct ways: (1) While characteristics do not necessarily define who is a gifted child, they do constitute observable behaviors, and (2) these characteristics are signals to indicate that a particular child might warrant closer observation and could require specialized educational attention, pending a more comprehensive assessment.

### General Characteristics of Gifted / Talented Children

- They typically learn to read earlier with a better comprehension of the nuances of the language. As many as half of the gifted and talented population have learned to read before entering school. They often read widely, quickly, and intensely and have large vocabularies.
- They commonly learn basic skills better, more quickly, and with less practice.
- They are better able to construct and handle abstractions than their age mates.
- They are frequently able to pick up and interpret nonverbal cues and can draw inferences, which other children have to have spelled out for them.
- They take less for granted, seeking the “hows” and “whys”.
- They display a better ability to work independently at an earlier age and for longer periods of time than other children.
- They can sustain longer periods of concentration and attention.
- Their interests are often both wildly eclectic and intensely focused.
- They frequently have seeming boundless energy, which sometimes leads to a misdiagnosis of “hyperactive”.
- They are usually able to respond and relate well to parents, teachers, and other adults. They may prefer the company of older children and adults to that of their peers.

### Creative Characteristics

- They are fluent thinkers, able to produce a large quantity of possibilities, consequences, or related ideas.
- They are flexible thinkers, able to use many different alternatives and approaches to problem solving.
- They are original thinkers, seeking new, unusual, or unconventional associations and combinations among items of information. They also have an ability to see relationships among seemingly unrelated objects, ideas, or facts.

- They are elaborative thinkers, producing new steps, ideas, responses, or other embellishments to a basic idea, situation, or problem.
- They show a willingness to entertain complexity and seem to thrive in problem situations.
- They are good guessers and can construct hypotheses or “what *if*” questions readily.
- They often are aware of their own impulsiveness and the irrationality within themselves and show emotional sensitivity.
- They have a high level of curiosity about objects, ideas, situations, or events.
- They often display intellectual playfulness, fantasize, and imagine readily.
- They can be less intellectually inhibited than their peers in expressing opinions and ideas and often exhibit spirited disagreement.
- They have sensitivity to beauty and are attracted to aesthetic dimensions.

### **Learning Characteristics**

- Gifted and talented children often show keen powers of observation, exhibit a sense of the significant, and have an eye for important details
- They often read a great deal on their own, preferring books and magazines written for youngsters older than themselves.
- They take great pleasure in intellectual activity.
- They have well developed powers of abstraction, conceptualization, and synthesizing abilities.
- They have rapid insight into cause-effect relationships.
- They tend to like structure, organization, and consistency in their environments. They may resent the violation of structure and rules.
- They display a questioning attitude and seek information for the sake of having it as much for its instrumental value.
- They are often skeptical, critical, and evaluative. They are quick to spot inconsistencies.
- They often have a large storehouse of information regarding a variety of topics which they can recall quickly.
- They show a ready grasp of underlying principles and can often make valid generalizations about events, people, or objects.
- They readily perceive similarities, differences, and anomalies.
- They often attack complicated material by separating it into its components and analyzing it systematically.
- They have a well-developed common sense.

### **Behavioral Characteristics**

- They are willing to examine the unusual and are highly inquisitive.
- Their behavior is often well organized, goal directed, and efficient with respect to tasks and problems.
- They exhibit an intrinsic motivation to learn, find out, or explore and are often very persistent. “I’d rather do it myself” is a common attitude.
- They enjoy learning new things and new ways of doing things.
- They have a longer attention and concentration span than their peers.



- They are more independent and less subject to peer pressure than their age mates. They are able to be conforming or nonconforming as the situation demands.
- They have a highly developed moral and ethical sense.
- They are able to integrate opposing impulses, such as constructive and destructive behavior.
- -They often exhibit daydreaming behavior.
- They may seek to conceal their abilities so as not to “stick out.”
- They often have a well-developed sense of self and a realistic idea about their capabilities and potential.

(Prepared by Bruce Boston, Fairfax, Virginia)

## **SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO BE A GIFTED PARENT**

### **1. CONDUCT, BEHAVIOR, DISCIPLINE**

- a. Remember that your children need love and controls.
- b. Provide consistent discipline: firm and fair, but neither too harsh nor too permissive.
- c. Set reasonable standards of behavior, discuss them with your child and enforce them.
- d. When infractions occur, handle them with rational discipline.
- e. Discuss the importance of laws, rules and conventions (e.g., driving on the right side of the road; courtesy; respect for the rights of others).

### **2. SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT**

- a. Help your child to find friends who are his intellectual peers, if not his age peers.
- b. Encourage social membership in worthy groups.
- c. Teach him/her to get along with children and people of all levels of intelligence and socioeconomic status.

### **3. EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW**

- a. Be a good example of what you want your children to be: speak correctly; behave as you would like them to behave, etc.
- b. Participate with your children; let them share your hobbies and interests.
- c. Find other worthy model figures of both sexes for him or her to look up to.

### **4. ADVOCACY**

- a. Work to provide better community understanding and appreciation of the role of gifted children, youth and adults in society.
- b. Support community, state, state department of education and governmental action for gifted children, including laws, funding and activities.
- c. Participate in advocacy groups like Arkansans for Gifted and Talented Education (AGATE).
- d. Advocate guidance and special education for gifted students.
- e. Encourage and advocate for more challenging and strenuous educational curricula.



