

SPECTRA

PROGRAM GUIDE

GRADES K-8

MACON COUNTY R-I SCHOOL
MACON, MISSOURI

Gifted Program Coordinator/Teacher: Mrs. Barbara White

PHILOSOPHY

The Macon R-I School District is committed to an educational program that recognizes the unique values, needs and talents of each student. We recognize that academically gifted students need a qualitatively differentiated program that considers individual learning styles and special abilities. The Macon R-I SPECTRA Program is designed to meet the unique educational needs of intellectually gifted children. The program is designed to meet the affective, social, and academic needs of the gifted learner, while recognizing individual differences and unique learning needs. The program will help develop skills in independent study, research, and creative and critical thinking. Students are given greater responsibility for their own learning and have the opportunity to interact with their intellectual peers.

The purpose of the program is to further the life-long learning processes of the gifted. Emphasis will be placed on enhancing self-directed learning. Gifted students will be challenged to develop their abilities for both personal fulfillment and the benefit of society.

The program's name, SPECTRA, reflects the program's goals. SPECTRA will offer a broad range of varied, but related activities or projects which overlap to form a continuous series enabling the gifted student to master critical thinking and problem-solving skills. When a beam of light encounters a prism, a rainbow suddenly appears. Gifted students are like prisms; it is our goal to enable them to cast rainbows.

RATIONALE

The State Special Education Law (H.B. 474), enacted in 1973, authorized the State Board of Education to establish standards for state aid for special programs of gifted students. The following section pertains to programs eligible for state assistance:

Section 162.720 mRSMo states that school districts may establish programs for gifted children "where a sufficient number of children are determined to be gifted and their development requires programs or services beyond the level of those ordinarily provided in regular public school programs." This section further states that the State Board of Education "shall determine standards for such programs. Approval of such programs shall be made by the State Department of Education based upon project applications submitted each year."

The following policies and procedures have been developed for the Macon R-I SPECTRA Program by the SPECTRA Coordinator with the school's administration and have been approved by the Macon R-I School Board. The intent is to provide a framework through which academically gifted students can be identified and provided the opportunity to more fully develop their potential.

DEFINITION

Section 162.675 RSMo defines gifted children as "those children who exhibit precocious development of mental capacity and learning potential as determined by competent professional evaluation to the extent that continued educational growth and stimulation could best be served by an academic environment beyond that offered through a standard grade level curriculum.

CHARACTERISTICS










The following characteristics generally describe gifted children. Not all characteristics may be present in each child.

The gifted child:

- ❖ learns rapidly and easily, and retains and uses what is heard or read without appearing to need much drill.
- ❖ has an advanced vocabulary.
- ❖ thinks clearly, recognizes implied relationships, comprehends meanings, draws accurate generalizations, and thinks abstractly.
- ❖ is intellectually curious, investigative, and asks penetrating and searching questions.
- ❖ is independent, individualistic, and self-sufficient.
- ❖ produces original or unusual ideas or products.
- ❖ has a long attention span in areas of interest.
- ❖ prefers complex ideas.
- ❖ demonstrates proficiency in basic skills beyond his/her grade level.
- ❖ has many varied interests.
- ❖ is more aware of national and world problems and events than his/her peers.
- ❖ sees the relationship of self to the immediate world.

Some of the characteristics of gifted children can result in problems at home or in the classroom. These problems don't make the child any "less gifted," but might make working with the child less enjoyable at times. Below are some difficulties that might result from some generalized characteristics.

Characteristic

high energy and motivation, interested in problem solving		resistant to drill and repetition (though there may be gaps in basic skills)
broad knowledge and interest range		appears to be a "know it all"
large vocabulary and advanced verbal ability		dominates conversation
independent		may rebel against direction; preference for solitude (loner)
high level of conceptualization		doesn't pay attention to details
intellectual curiosity		bored with simplistic explanations
diversity of interests		hops from one interest to another; doesn't always complete assignments
pleasure in intellectual tasks		impatient with "busy work"
creative and inventive		rejects class content, convergent lesson, or traditional work

STUDENT NEEDS

Gifted students have specific needs. It is recognized that gifted students need:

- ❖ Activities which enable them to operate at complex levels of thought and feeling.
- ❖ Opportunities for divergent production.
- ❖ Challenging group and individual work, which demonstrates process and product.
- ❖ Discussion with intellectual peers.
- ❖ Opportunities to see the interrelationships in all areas of knowledge.
- ❖ Special courses in areas of strength and interest that accelerate the pace and depth of the content.
- ❖ Greater exposure to new areas of learning both in and out of the school structure.
- ❖ Opportunities to apply abilities to real problems.
- ❖ Experiences to develop skills in critical and creative thinking, research, problem-solving, coping with exceptionality, decision making and leadership.

***REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED
IN REGULAR CLASSROOM***

- ❖ According to national figures, twenty percent of high school dropouts are gifted. It could be realistic to expect a certain percentage to be unmotivated and dissatisfied with their school experience.
- ❖ It is reasonable to expect classroom work to be average to above average, unless the student is working at their instructional level. If they are working at their instructional level, they should be doing above average or better work.
- ❖ It is realistic to expect the intellectually gifted to be avid readers. They may be reading a book when time is given to complete the assignment, or they may do the majority of their reading away from school.
- ❖ Since they hate drill and repetition, it can be expected students will rush through that type of work...and make numerous mistakes.
- ❖ It is reasonable to expect some of them to be perfectionists. Their assignments may be handed in late or not at all, because they do not please the student. Time escapes them because all work must be perfect. This often makes them anxious and inhibits them from trying something new.
- ❖ It is realistic to expect students to have learning strengths and weaknesses, as do all children.
- ❖ It is realistic for these students to set unrealistic goals for themselves. They often expect too much from themselves.
- ❖ These students usually have many hobbies and projects outside of school. It is realistic for them to consider these activities far more important than homework assignments.
- ❖ It is realistic to expect the intellectually gifted to be more dependent upon adults because they need adult help in order to complete research or projects.

***UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED
IN REGULAR CLASSROOMS***

- ❖ It is unrealistic to expect the intellectually gifted to be enthusiastic about drill and repetition.
- ❖ It is unrealistic to expect the gifted to excel in every subject area. They have special interests and are usually persistent in following them.
- ❖ It is unrealistic to expect the intellectually gifted to do their best with work that is too easy or that they already know.
- ❖ It is unrealistic to expect them to make the best grades. Grades reflect the completion of assigned tasks, not cognitive ability.
- ❖ It is unrealistic to expect all gifted students to have outstanding handwriting and spelling. They exhibit a wide range of skills in these areas, as do other students.

PROGRAM GOALS

The goals for the gifted program are:

1. To identify gifted students.
2. To provide differentiated programming to help meet the needs of gifted students.
3. To provide appropriate curriculum materials, equipment, and facilities to help meet the needs of gifted students.
4. To provide the opportunity for community, parents, and staff to become aware of the special needs of gifted students.
5. To assist gifted students in understanding and accepting themselves and others.

SCREENING

Students are chosen for testing for the SPECTRA program by

- ❑ teacher or parent referral.

and

- ❑ 75th percentile on majority of subtests on the Screening Assessment for Gifted Education Students (SAGES)

or

- ❑ they have achieved a score of 120 or above on the Kaufmann Brief Intelligence Test (K-BIT)

TESTING

Candidates are given the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-IV Test (WISC- IV) or the Stanford-Binet. A minimum full-scale score or GAI (WISC) at the 95th percentile is necessary to be eligible for the SPECTRA program.

Transfers

Students moving into the Macon R-I School District who meet the criteria may join the program if they participated in a state-assisted gifted program at their previous school.

PLACEMENT

Students who qualify are permanently placed in the program. They may, however, be removed from the program for performance problems in the SPECTRA program. If a student does not meet the criteria for placement in the SPECTRA program, he/she may be tested again if referred.

STUDENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To develop the student's critical thinking, creative reasoning, problem solving, and logic skills, the student will:
 - a. Use inductive and deductive reasoning processes.
 - b. Utilize the steps of various problem-solving techniques to take risks, to arrive at decisions, and to predict outcomes.
 - c. Use convergent and divergent thinking processes to initiate and produce original and/or unique ideas and products.
2. To develop the student's communication skills, the student will:
 - a. Demonstrate skills in oral and written communication.
 - b. Participate in large and small group discussions and utilize group dynamics effectively.
 - c. Assemble in small groups to exchange ideas and knowledge.
3. To develop the student's personal growth and social development, the student will:
 - a. Participate in experiences that promote understanding of human beliefs.
 - b. Participate in making choices and plans appropriate to personal growth and development.
 - c. Understand the responsibilities of effective citizenship.
 - d. Use opportunities to demonstrate leadership skills.
 - e. Recognize the values of individuals who make unique contributions to society.
4. To develop the student's ability to become an independent and self-directed learner, the student will:
 - a. Apply research and inquiry skills.
 - b. Develop and evaluate realistic goals and strategies based on interests and abilities.
 - c. Use the opportunity for experiential learning to expand existing interests and pursue new interests.
5. To develop the student's understanding of the interdependency of disciplines, events, systems, and societies, the student will:
 - a. Participate in large and small group discussion about the relationships of events and their impact on societies.
 - b. Demonstrate understanding of interdependency through a personal, class, or community project.

THE CURRICULUM

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education states that curriculum for gifted students should adhere to certain basic tenets, which are listed below:

1. Gifted students should be allowed to progress through knowledge and comprehension activities quickly.
2. Pretests should be used in basic content areas to determine the level of knowledge already present. Curriculum should be compacted to provide time for students to move on to higher levels of thinking and more complex problems.
3. Students should be provided the opportunity to meet on a regular basis with other gifted students.
4. Gifted students should be allowed the freedom to choose their own topics of study or their own methods of studying and evaluating.
5. Curriculum for gifted students should include activities in creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving.
6. Students should be exposed to a wide variety of topics, people, and activities,
7. Students should receive instruction on how to cope with the label "gifted". Their affective needs should be addressed on a regular basis.
8. Gifted students are concerned about global issues such as war, death, etc. at an earlier age than other children are. These concerns should be addressed in a gifted curriculum.
9. Units of study should be cross-curricular.
10. Units of study should be organized around broad themes, ideas, and issues.
11. Because of their longer attention span, they should be given longer blocks of uninterrupted time to pursue their study, research, and interests.
12. The focus should move away from the central role of teaching and into the less dominant role of facilitating.
14. Students should be allowed to learn specific skills (such as computer programming, word processing, typing, foreign language, etc.) when they experience a need for it rather than having to wait for the appropriate grade in school.
15. Creative and critical thinking skills should be included in the curriculum at all levels.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Although no formal grade is given for SPECTRA, progress reports will be sent to parents on a regular basis. Students are expected to demonstrate diligence and responsibility in completing unit projects. Students who consistently fail to work up to their potential may be released from the program.

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS

SPECTRA students are responsible for understanding the concepts of class work missed while they are at the SPECTRA program, but are not required to make-up daily work.

GIFTED ASSOCIATIONS

GIFTED ASSOCIATION OF MISSOURI

The Gifted Association of Missouri is an advocacy base for gifted children and programs for gifted students within the state of Missouri. Special projects for gifted students are carried out through task force committees of parents, teachers, and supporters of gifted education statewide.

GAM in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, sponsors an annual conference for educators and parents each fall. GAM members receive a newsletter (GAMBIT) quarterly for ideas and information exchange. Annual dues are \$20.00 for adults and \$10.00 for students. The Gifted Association of Missouri, P.O. Box 1495 Jefferson City, MO 65102

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) is a national organization concerned with the development of gifted children at home and in school. Membership includes a subscription to Gifted Child Quarterly. This organization is open to parents, teachers, and other interested in gifted education. National Association for Gifted Children, 4175 Lovell Road, Box 30-Suite 140, Circle Pines, Minnesota 55014.