

Flowing Wells Gifted Program Scope and Sequence



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Program Design

Question: What is your district's definition of a gifted student and gifted education?

A gifted child is one who, due to advanced learning ability and/or special talents, does not have the opportunity for otherwise attainable progress and development in regular classroom instruction and who needs special instruction to achieve at levels equal to her/his intellect and ability. To be accepted into the gifted program, a student must score in the 97th percentile on at least one area of the Cognitive Abilities Test (verbal, quantitative or non-verbal) or in the 93rd percentile or above in two areas on the CogAT. Raw scores are considered for borderline students who may have missed qualifying by one or two questions.

Students who had qualified for gifted education services in another school district or charter are eligible for participation in the Flowing Wells program upon verification of similar placement criteria in the other organization.

Question: Describe the Philosophy and Goals for your gifted program.

The education of gifted students differs from regular education in content, process, product and environment as follows:

- All learning styles are respected and students are encouraged to be independent learners and thinkers.
- Problem-solving, flexible grouping, unstructured periods of time, and unusual approaches to learning are encouraged and incorporated into individual, small group and large group learning activities.
- Learning centers are available at multiple levels in a variety of subjects of interest and are supplemental to major units of study. There are numerous field trips and guest speakers.
- Real life applications of learning are made possible through collaborations with community partners including: the Pima County Natural Resources and Parks and Recreation, the Desert Museum, Saguaro National Park West, Oracle State Park, Patagonia State Park, Sabino Canyon and the University of Arizona (including Sky School, Bio 5, and the departments of Engineering, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology).

Question: How do you group and deliver services to your K-2 students?

Kindergarten, first, and second grade students are serviced within the mainstream classroom through differentiated instructional strategies in consultation and coordination with the gifted teacher. Classroom differentiation focuses on higher-level thinking questions, making connections, alternative projects, and open-ended activities. Additionally, the gifted teacher coordinates a push-in rotation model for second grade. All second grade students participate in the rotation during which the gifted teacher works with students in small groups to complete tangram activities; sudoku-type puzzles; and other higher level thinking activities that do not require reading or English proficiency.

Question: How do you group and deliver services to your 3-6 students?

Grade 3-6 students participate in a pull-out program, attending the gifted classroom once a week for a full day. By grouping all gifted students together, extensive opportunities are available for open-ended questions, in-depth analysis, collaboration, and creative projects.

Question: How do you group and deliver services to your 7-8 students?

Grade 7-8 students have multiple opportunities for accessing both accelerated and gifted courses. Accelerated courses in mathematics, science, and English are provided. The 7th and 8th grade Math and Science courses are specifically developed for gifted student placement. Additionally, Mathematics, Engineering & Science Achievement (MESA), is an elective course that allows gifted students to collaborate and pursue project-based activities together.

Question: How do you group and deliver services to your 9-12 students?

Grade 9-12 students have multiple opportunities for accessing Honors and Advanced Placement courses in Mathematics, Science, English, and Social Studies as well as Psychology, and Spanish. In addition, students are provided opportunities through student clubs including Academic Decathlon, Robotics, and Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement.

Question: Describe how you integrate your program standards with the Arizona State Standards at each grade level.

In kindergarten and first and second grades, the Arizona State Standards form the basis for the curriculum with differentiated activities based upon the grade level standards. The grade 3-6 program places particular emphasis on Arizona life science, physical science, geography, and ELA writing standards. The K-6 curriculum is developed based on the appropriate grade level and the needs of the gifted student. The students are allowed and encouraged to move beyond the grade level standards in both the processing and content level expectations. In grades 7-12, the Accelerated, Honors and AP content area courses have a curriculum map linked to the Arizona State Standards that expands the expectations and depth of knowledge of the performance objectives.

Question: How do you involve parents in your program?

Parents are involved in the program in the following ways:

- periodic orientation meetings and open houses
- parent/teacher conferences
- newsletters and course syllabi
- participation in classroom and field trip volunteer work
- participation on the Superintendent Parent Advisory Committee
- progress reporting including quarterly reports, mid-terms, and standardized assessments
- parent perception surveys
- counseling services related to post-secondary opportunities

Curriculum and Instruction

Question: How do you differentiate instruction (pace and pedagogy) to K-2 students?

Please list several sample activities to illustrate your description.

Kindergarten, first, and second grades have many opportunities to differentiate instruction including flexible guided reading groups established in the Balanced Literacy program. Guided reading provides for regular differentiation within the overall Balanced Literacy program and clusters students according to instructional levels. All teachers are trained in Balanced Literacy and provide acceleration as appropriate. In mathematics, the core series offers manipulative materials and enrichment activities to encourage more in-depth analysis and problem solving skills. Writing instruction includes writer's workshop strategies to allow for individual attention. Science focuses on open-ended questioning and connections with other content areas. Students are encouraged to explore the world around them through observation and collaboration. Accommodations are in place to meet the needs of students who may be gifted and who also have a disability or who speak a primary language other than English. In addition to the special education services and/or ELD services provided to these students, the emphasis on differentiated instruction and multiple modalities within the general education classroom provides accommodations that allow these students to meet and exceed grade-level standards.

Question: How do you differentiate instruction (pace and pedagogy) to 3-6 students?

Please list several sample activities to illustrate your description.

Students in grades 3-6 are brought together for gifted instruction by grade level. During this time, students focus on open-ended projects for the purpose of making the most of their individual intellectual skills and talents. For example, when deciding on a project to demonstrate learning, students are given a list of possibilities from which to choose. These include possibilities such as making a poster, creating a book, doing an art project, researching a question on the subject, making an illustrated dictionary, making a game, or coming up with their own idea. In day to day activities, students often are given the choice of writing or drawing and labeling in order to explain a concept. Interventions are initiated when needed in order to meet the needs of individual students, including students who are identified as gifted and who also have a disability or who speak a primary language other than English. In addition to the special education services and/or ELD services provided to these students, the emphasis on student choice, differentiated instruction, and multiple modalities within the gifted program provides accommodations that allow these students to meet and exceed grade-level standards. An example would be if a student is an excellent problem solver when doing logic puzzles, but not a good reader, a teacher or assistant would help the student read the clues that would allow the student to solve the puzzle. Similarly, students can substitute technology and oral explanations for written projects. By developing their own learning plans in collaboration with the gifted teacher, students learn to maximize their strengths while also targeting specific areas of growth.

**Question: How do you differentiate instruction (pace and pedagogy) to 7-8 students?
Please list several sample activities to illustrate your description.**

By creating accelerated and gifted courses, the pace of the classroom activity is increased and expectations for intrinsic motivation realized. Students are exposed to increased amounts of literature in English, rigorous mathematics, and inquiry-based science. Classroom activities include multiple formats for presentations, personal investigations, and collaboration. In the 7th and 8th grade gifted courses, students are presented real world problems and expected to design and conduct experiments to solve them. Students are encouraged to transfer classroom learning and join academic competitions sponsored by the University of Arizona and other community partners. Interventions are initiated when needed in order to meet the needs of individual students, including students who are identified as gifted and who also have a disability or who speak a primary language other than English. In addition to the special education services and/or ELD services provided to these students, the emphasis on student choice, differentiated instruction, and project-based learning within accelerated courses provides accommodations that allow these students to meet and exceed grade-level standards.

**Question: How do you differentiate instruction (pace and pedagogy) to 9-12 students?
Please list several sample activities to illustrate your description.**

The 9-12 programmatic approach is similar to the 7-8 grade course formats. In addition, students participating in advanced placement are expected to take the national exam. Each course is designed to reflect the academic rigor and in-depth analysis required for success. Each course develops collaborative structures and makes real world connections. Students explore national statistical studies, pollution, human consumption of resources, and run simulations of supply and demand. In addition, student clubs provide for service projects to help community members, robotic competitions, academic competitions, and career exploration. Interventions are initiated when needed in order to meet the needs of individual students, including students who are identified as gifted and who also have a disability or who speak a primary language other than English. In addition to the special education services and/or ELD services provided to these students, the emphasis on student choice, differentiated instruction, and project-based learning within accelerated courses provides accommodations that allow these students to meet and exceed grade-level standards.

Question: What curricular materials do you use for grades K-2? Be specific.

Students use district adopted materials including Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Into Reading and Pearson's Investigations Math. Additional resources are provided for individual students and teachers and may include logic puzzles, individual literature selections, and appropriate research projects.

Question: What curricular materials do you use for grades 3-6? Be specific.

The gifted program is an interdisciplinary, experiential, science-based program. The following curriculum materials are used for 3rd - 6th grades.

- College of William and Mary Gifted Education Curriculum Materials
- Math Olympiad
- AIMS - Activities Integrating Mathematics and Science
- GEMS - Great Explorations in Math and Science
- National Wildlife Federation NatureScope
- Project WET
- TOPS Learning Systems
- National Science Teachers Association materials
- Project WET and Project WILD materials

These materials are in addition to HMH Into Reading and Pearson Investigations Math.

Question: What curricular materials do you use for grades 7-8? Be specific.

Courses are designed to meet and exceed the Arizona State Standards. Materials are course and teacher specific but include: Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement resources published by the University of Arizona, Prentice Hall and Full Option Science System (FOSS): Next Generation kits which include modules for the investigation of chemical interactions, earth history, planetary science, weather and water, diversity of life and populations and ecosystems.

Question: What curricular materials do you use for grades 9-12? Be specific.

Courses are designed to meet and exceed the Arizona state standards.

Materials are course and teacher specific and include:

Calculus for AP with Calc Chat and Calc View; The Practice of Statistics; History of Western Society Since 1300; Foundations of Economics; Environment: The Science Behind the Stories; Blitzer's Pre-Calculus; Geometry by Big Ideas Math; A Survey of American History; Biology by Scott Foresman; Chemistry in the Community, by the American Chemical Society; World History by Glencoe; Psychology by Myers; Algebra II by Big Ideas Math; Campbell Biology in Focus, AP Edition, by Pearson; Chemistry: The Central Science – AP Edition; Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy; Tamas: AP Spanish Language and Culture; AP Human Geography: A Spatial Perspective; AP Physics 11th Edition; and selected literature.

Additional materials include the following: Academic Decathlon yearly materials, Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement resources published by the University of Arizona, and Robotic supplies based upon FIRST guidelines.

Identification

Question: Describe how your referral process for identification involves parents and staff.

Any staff or family member may nominate a student to be tested for the gifted program.

Question: Describe your process for the identification of K-12 gifted students, including how your process addresses the variety of student environmental backgrounds.

Universal gifted screening with the Cognitive Abilities Test occurs with all second grade students participating in the Spring of second grade with ongoing testing opportunities available by teacher or parent referral annually in grades three through six for students who may have missed the second grade screener or who were not identified in second grade. Placement determinations are made based on students' score on the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). Students must score in the 97th percentile in at least one area of the CogAT (verbal, quantitative or non-verbal) or in the 93rd percentile or above in two areas on the CogAT. Students who had qualified for gifted education services in another school district or charter are eligible for participation in the Flowing Wells program immediately upon verification of similar placement criteria in the other organization. Flowing Wells accepts as valid, scores at or above the 97th percentile on other Arizona Department of Education approved instruments, as well as other organizations' similarly rigorous placement criteria.

Question: Please list all the testing instruments and data points you use for gifted student identification and explain why you chose these instruments.

The Cognitive Abilities Test is used as a screener because it is a non-verbal test of general abilities, making it ideal for use with young students, students who are language learners, as well as students with disabilities. The Cognitive Abilities Test is used for placement determination because it tests in the three different areas of verbal, quantitative and non-verbal intelligence. This allows students who are gifted in different areas to qualify for the program. Flowing Wells also uses alternative intelligence tests and/or non-verbal tests when needed for students who have not tested well on the CogAT but seem to be gifted. Testing opportunities are available at a minimum of three times per year and students are eligible for annual testing, if referred. However, once a student is identified no further testing is needed.

Question: How do you inform parents and staff of your referral and identification process?

Parents learn of our referral and identification process from the regular classroom teacher, through school newsletters, parent conferences, open houses, site council meetings, and parent-teacher organization meetings.

Question: Once eligibility is determined, how do you inform parents of the decision and then handle an appeal of that decision?

Parents are notified in writing to inform them of their child's eligibility to participate in the gifted program. If a student does not meet the criteria for placement, the child's parent, guardian, teachers or principal may appeal for further screening.

Social and Emotional Development

Question: How do you provide for the unique affective needs of your gifted students K-6?

Our differentiated instructional model, with gifted teacher support, provides developmental support for our youngest students. The strong relationship between the student-parent-teacher allows the child to grow in both academic and social confidence. Our interdisciplinary, science-based classroom lends itself well to an experiential approach to learning for students in grades 3-6. Students are pulled out one day a week, by grade level, in order to work and interact with peers of a similar intelligence level. Cooperative learning strategies are frequently used in our gifted classroom.

Question: How do you provide for the unique affective needs of your gifted students 7-8?

Gifted students are in both heterogeneous and homogenous courses. This provides students the opportunity to interact with the diverse student body, while working closely with other gifted students. Courses are designed to engage students through activity-based projects and accelerated pacing. Individual classroom teachers create smaller learning communities to personalize instruction and the teacher-student relationship.

Question: How do you provide for the unique affective needs of your gifted students in grades 9-12?

In addition to the classroom experience, gifted students establish learning communities through student activity clubs. The club sponsors develop strong relationships to support students while providing opportunities for gifted students to work together in teams in both competitive and non-competitive environments. Counselors work with students to explain the goals and enrollment advantages of advanced placement courses, project-based courses (newspaper, graphic design, yearbook, MESA), and provide personalized support for career exploration.

Question: What specific orientation activities do you provide for parents and teachers regarding gifted students' affective needs?

In addition to open house and parent conferences, we provide literature lists about gifted students and learning, and have a library of gifted education books for parents and teachers to check out.

Question: How do you monitor, identify and provide assistance to "at risk" gifted students?

We have created an open-ended referral process for parents, students and teachers. We also have discussions with individual classroom teachers and parent conferences for the purpose of providing assistance to "at risk" gifted students.

Professional Development

Question: How do you regularly provide opportunities for regular classroom teacher and gifted teachers to receive specialized training about working with gifted students?

Each year an on-going dialog is established by the elementary gifted teacher meeting with each school's faculty to review the characteristics of a gifted child. Teachers are provided commonly asked questions and misinformation about addressing the needs of gifted students. In addition, individual dialog between the gifted teacher and the mainstream teacher continues throughout the school year.

Question: Please list the titles of the training you conducted last year and those planned for the current year.

The gifted teacher attends the state and/or regional gifted conference. In addition, mainstream classroom teachers are trained in Essential Elements of Instruction, Balanced Literacy, Investigating Mathematical Practices, STEMAZing 3-D Science, curriculum development, technology integration, and Advanced Placement Data Analysis and Planning.

Question: How have your training events targeted the needs of administrators, counselors, psychologists and support staff?

School administrators participate in teacher trainings and they also receive additional training during meetings with the assistant superintendent – which include program evaluation and scope and sequence review.

Question: Do teachers who have primary responsibility of teaching gifted learners or do they have or are they working towards earning an AZ Gifted Education K-12 Endorsement?

The elementary gifted teacher has an AZ Gifted Education K-12 Endorsement. Secondary staff are highly qualified and appropriately certified to teach accelerated and advanced placement courses.

Question: Describe the feedback received from post training evaluations. What did the participants say about the effectiveness?

Feedback is collected in the form of perceptual surveys. Participants tend to be positive and see the value of differentiated activities. Differentiation is still demanding on the teacher with the myriad of other needs within the classroom. In addition, challenges are voiced in the elementary model with students being pulled-out and at the secondary level for not enrolling in challenging courses.

Parent and Community Involvement

Question: How do you make your program philosophy, goals and recruitment procedures available to all parents?

We have a yearly open house for parents, parent-teacher conferences twice a year, and a newsletter about what we are doing in the program that goes home three times a year. In addition, a written brochure is available at each school.

Question: How do you provide access to your scope and sequence for all parents?

The gifted scope and sequence is published on the district website. Additionally, a newsletter and monthly calendar giving specific information about the elementary gifted program activities are sent to all parents. At the secondary level, course syllabi are provided for each course for students and parents. Additional information is available upon request.

Question: Describe how you incorporate parents into a support or advisory group.

The district utilizes all parents, instead of an advisory group, for program review and evaluation. Parents participate through surveys, open houses and conferences.

Question: How do you involve parents and the gifted community in the evaluation of your program?

Gifted students, parents and staff complete a survey, in the spring of each year. The results are tabulated and shared with faculty and interested parents.

Program Assessment

Question: What data sources do you use to assess your program's effectiveness?

Surveys of parents, students and teachers are done each year. State assessment scores, advanced placement scores, advanced placement syllabus reviews, and graduation rates are reviewed.

Question: Describe how you use test data, both norm- referenced and criterion referenced in your evaluation process.

Norm-referenced and criterion-referenced State test scores are evaluated to measure student success in meeting the state academic expectations.

Question: How do you use informal measures like surveys, open forums and teacher interviews to gather data?

We look for trends, common strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement in parent, student, and teacher surveys. Data are collected at the high school by individual student conferences to evaluate perceptions, enrollment trends, career education and academic success. We also use direct observation of the program in action.

Question: What are your key indicators that your program is positively affecting students?

The key indicators that our elementary program is positively affecting students are student interest and excitement in the program, positive feedback from parents, students staying with the program with few dropping out and regular attendance in class with few absences. Parents say that they have no problems getting their children up and ready on the day their children come to the gifted program. We average a 1-2 percent drop-out rate. Key indicators at the secondary levels include high enrollment interest (classes are not required) and high classroom achievement levels (course grades).

Question: Describe the performance standards you have for all gifted students.

All students will pass the State academic achievement test and the goal is exceeding the standard. In addition, students meet established individual learning goals and evaluate themselves with rubrics on projects and with self-evaluations at the end of each semester at the elementary level. The goal is for all students in advanced placement to score a 3 or better on Advanced Placement exams. In addition, Flowing Wells offers a differentiated diploma, and gifted students are expected to earn the Gold Diploma which meets entrance requirements for all major four-year universities.

Budgeting

Question: What percentage of your supplemental allocation is used in the following categories: capital expenditures, direct student services, professional development and district coordination?

The Group B add-on weight, established for school year 2021-2022, will be used to support capital purchases (90-95%), including licensing for testing, classroom technology, and supplemental instructional materials. The remaining funds will be spent on professional development for the Gifted Teacher as available. No dollars will be spent on district coordination.

Question: Describe the structure of your gifted education staffing including the ratio of teaching staff to the number of gifted students.

Pull Out (Elementary) = At the elementary level, we use one gifted specialist to provide services within grade level groups. The average teacher student ratio is 1:15.

Secondary (Course Specific)= Course sections address gifted students but are not exclusively gifted and although encouraged, staffing does not require gifted certification. The average teacher student course ratio is 1:24.

Question: To what extent does the district support the funding of your gifted program? Please elaborate: be specific as to staff and financial resources.

The gifted program is given a supply budget with district funds at the beginning of each school year. It is also given a transportation budget for its numerous field trips. Classroom space and furniture is provided through the district funds. Additional resources like establishing a mini-computer lab or robotic materials for gifted student access are provided through a combination of district budget and grant funding.

The elementary gifted teacher's salary is funded 100% by the district. The secondary teachers are funded 100% by the district including testing and classroom supplies. The district funds all textbooks and district supported-curriculum to allow classroom teachers to purchase supplemental classroom supplies and provide enrichment activities.