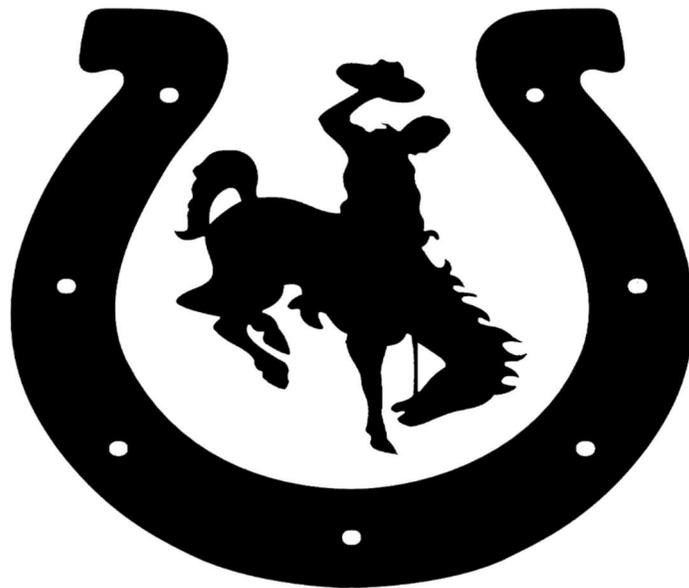


**Smackover-Norphlet  
Gifted and Talented Program  
Parent Handbook**



## **PHILOSOPHY**

The Smackover-Norphlet School District recognizes that gifted students have special needs and abilities which must be carefully addressed. Gifted programs will provide identified students with opportunities beyond the regular curriculum to broaden their knowledge, skills, and experiences. These programs will provide opportunities for students to explore their unique potential and enable them to make positive contributions to society. Emphasis will be on developing independent, self-directed learners by encouraging and supporting in-depth learning and divergent and creative thinking.

Gifted and talented students are outstanding consumers and producers of knowledge and ideas in any worthwhile endeavor. They may have potential abilities in general intelligence, creative, or productive thinking, exceptional leadership, and specific aptitudes. These abilities must be cultivated, nurtured, and developed.

Maximizing the potential of gifted and talented students requires a commitment of school, community, and home; commitment is essential for progress to be effected. The gifted and talented program is designed to cultivate with the student a desire for excellence and a sense of productivity responsibility to self, family, school, community, and to our changing society.

## **ARKANSAS'S DEFINITION OF GIFTEDNESS**

Gifted and talented children and youth are those of high potential or ability whose learning characteristics and educational needs require qualitatively differentiated educational experiences and/or services. Possession of these talents and gifts, or the potential for their development, will be evidenced through an interaction of above average intellectual ability, task commitment and /or motivation, and creative ability.

## **SMACKOVER-NORPHLET SCHOOL DISTRICT'S DEFINITION OF GIFTEDNESS**

We define giftedness as a combination of factors that produce special behavior. These factors include superior ability and achievement, task commitment and creativity. Superior ability and achievement are indicated by test data. Task commitment involves the student's willingness and ability to carry through on responsibilities and projects. In other words, to stay with a job until it is complete. Creativity involves planning, and often producing, something unique and unusual.

## **SMACKOVER-NORPHLET GIFTED AND TALENT PROGRAM GOALS**

We are committed to provide a program for identifying and meeting the needs and interests of our gifted and talented students. The identification and placement of these gifted and talented students will be based on documented objective and subjective evidence of above average intellectual ability, creative ability, skills, products, and task commitment/motivation.

The goals of Smackover-Norphlet School District are:

- 1) To develop the student's thinking, creative, and reasoning abilities as well as his/her decision-making and communication skills,
- 2) To help the student become a more independent and self-directed learner,
- 3) To provide new and challenging learning experiences that are not ordinarily included in the regular classroom curriculum,
- 4) To guide the student in personal growth and social development, recognizing and responding to personal strengths and needs of self and others and
- 5) To provide the format for gifted students to come together to challenge each other and to encounter other students with similar skills and talents.

The Smackover-Norphlet School District will abide by the guidelines set forth by the Arkansas Department of Education that governs gifted education programs.

## **GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED/TALENTED CHILDREN**

- They typically learn to read earlier. They read quickly, and intensely.
- 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 take less for granted, seeking the "how's" and "why's".
- They display a better ability to work independently at an earlier age for longer periods of time than other children.
- They can sustain longer periods of concentration and attention.
- They are usually able to respond and relate to parents, teachers, and other adults.
- They may prefer the company of older children and adults to that of their peers.
- They are frequently able to pick up and interpret nonverbal cues and can draw inferences that other children have to have spelled out for them.

## **CREATIVE CHARACTERISTICS**

- They are fluent thinkers able to produce a large quantity of possibilities, consequences, or related ideas.
- They are original thinkers seeking new, unusual, associations and combinations among items of information. They also have the ability to see relationships among seemingly unrelated objects, ideas, or facts.
- They are flexible thinkers able to use many different alternatives and approaches to problem solving.
- They are elaborative thinkers producing new steps, ideas, and responses.
- They are good guessers and can construct hypotheses or "what if" questions readily.
- They have a high level of curiosity about objects, ideas, situations, or events.
- They are more willing than their peers in expressing opinions and ideas.
- Sensitive to beauty.

## **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.
- They take pleasure in intellectual activity.
- They have rapid insight into cause-effect relationships.
- They tend to like structure, organization, and consistency in their environments.
- They often have a large storehouse of information regarding a variety of topics that they can recall quickly.
- 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 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 have a highly developed moral and ethical sense.
- 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.

## **IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURE**

Nominations for the program are taken from parents, teachers, peers, and the students themselves. The general public is made aware of the identification process online through The Buckaroo Blog. The school population is notified through email and daily announcements. Students in grades 3-12 may be nominated at any time. Students in second grade are nominated during the spring semester for placement in the third grade. School personnel, teachers, parents, and students are provided with a chart of identification process procedures; this includes characteristics of the gifted.

There is ongoing opportunity for consideration of placement. Data collection is taken from a variety of sources. Data collection includes student work samples, current standardized test scores, a nonverbal abilities assessment, grades, a creativity test, a parent questionnaire, and a teacher rating scale. All current data is used to determine the placement of a child according to the appropriate program options.

Students are identified using a blind identification process. The Placement Committee will make a decision on placement based on multi-criteria with the stipulation that no single criterion or cut-off score will be used to include or exclude a student. Parents, teachers, and administration are notified by letter of the decisions of the placement committee regardless of placement decision. A parent/guardian must give written permission before a student is placed in the gifted program. Once permission is given, the student is placed in the program and this is noted on the student's permanent record. A student review is completed each year which provides documentation for continuation of gifted services. Once a student is identified, records of placement are kept on file for five (5) years post-graduation.

Parents/guardians/students may appeal the decision of the placement committee and may request a conference with the committee.

Students nominated (but not placed) for the GT program will be placed in the Talent Pool and will be reviewed periodically by the coordinator.

Identified gifted and talented students transferring into the Smackover-Norphlet School District may participate in the GT program if they qualify under the identification process for Smackover-Norphlet schools after review of their prior testing information. If transfer students do not meet or exceed the identification process, he/she will go through the necessary testing for identification purposes. Transfer students previously not identified for a GT program must be enrolled in the school district for a minimum of a 9 weeks grading period before being nominated for the GT program.

## **APPEALS PROCEDURE**

It is the right of a parent/guardian to appeal the decision of the identification committee. In such case, the following procedure will be observed:

- 1) Conference with GT Coordinator regarding the placement decision.
- 2) If the appellant still questions the decision, then inform Principal and Superintendent that a formal appeals process will begin. This will include a written statement of the appeal including additional information sharing why the appellant feels the student should have been placed.
- 3) All data that was initially used in the placement decision and any newly available data will be reviewed by the Placement Committee which is chaired by the GT Coordinator. The decision of the committee will be communicated in writing to the appellant.

## **ANNUAL REVIEW POLICY**

Monitoring of student progress for the gifted in the classroom is an ongoing process throughout the year. Each student receives an evaluation each nine weeks. Parent and teacher conferences are held twice per year.

If the student seems to be having problems in the gifted program, then conferences are set as needed to discuss student progress with teachers, parents and administrators. In April, students in the gifted program are reviewed to determine whether their needs are being met by the participation in the GT Program. If any of the data reviewed indicates that placement is no longer in the best interest of the student, then change of placement might be considered. The procedures outlined in the GT exit policy will be followed.

Annual Review data will be noted in individual student folders. Even though school-wide parent/teacher conferences are held two times each year, a parent may request a conference at any time throughout the year with the GT Coordinator.

## **EXIT POLICY**

A student may be considered for exit procedures at any time evidence indicates that the educational needs of the student are not being met. If a parent requests removal, the request must be filed in writing with the GT Coordinator and placed in the student's folder and the student will no longer participate in the program. If data indicates that placement is no longer meeting the needs of the student, a student may be exited from the program.

The Placement Committee, chaired by the GT Coordinator and including Principals, the Curriculum Director and two (2) classroom teachers will meet and review multiple criteria including two (2) objective measures and two (2) subjective measures -- one of which measures creativity. No single criterion will be used to exit a child from the program. After reviewing this data, the committee will make a decision about what placement would be most appropriate for meeting the needs of the child and sign the profile sheet indicating their decision. Parents will be notified of the decision of the committee.

If it is determined that student will be exited, a copy of the removal request and record of the placement committee's decision will be filed in the student's folder. If a parent disagrees with the committee's decision, then they may follow the district GT appeals procedures. When a student is exited from the program the GT Coordinator will ask the appropriate school personnel to remove the GT designation from student's name from school.

## **PROGRAM DESIGN**

This program 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.

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. Because no single program option can ever meet all of the needs of all gifted children, the Smackover-Norphlet 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.

All identified gifted students will receive at least 150 minutes per week of direct instruction. The Smackover-Norphlet 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 Advanced Placement classes, Advanced Placement classes, Secondary Content Classes, and Concurrent Credit Courses.

The Smackover-Norphlet Gifted and Talented Program is designed to identify and to meet the needs of those students that are identified as needing specially designed instruction beyond that provided in the regular classroom to meet their educational needs. Placement in the program is intended to focus attention on the special educational requirements of each identified gifted student.

## **CURRICULUM**

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 21st Century skills and themes. 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.

## EVALUATION

The Gifted Coordinator is responsible for conducting an extensive evaluation of the gifted program that provides accurate, timely, and relevant information to decision-makers for improving program options offered to gifted students. This evaluation will be based on program goals and/or objectives. Annual evaluation data will provide the data for the required evaluation report. The purpose of this evaluation is two-fold, including both a determination of the program's effectiveness and assessment of student growth.

- A. All components of the gifted program are evaluated including identification, staff development, program options, program goals and objectives, curriculum, community involvement, program expenditures, and the evaluation process/plan. Data for consideration is 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 stakeholders vary. Some procedures that might be used include surveys, focus groups, questionnaires, charts, anecdotal data, checklists, and/or informal discussions. Evaluation findings are compiled, analyzed, and communicated to the appropriate audiences. The overall 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 goals and/or objectives for the program.
  
- B. Evaluation of student growth is based on appropriate and specific criteria and includes self-appraisal, teacher appraisal, and criterion referenced and/or standardized instruments. Student progress is assessed, with attention to mastery of content, higher level thinking skills, creativity, and affective growth. The Smackover-Norphlet School District realizes that a gifted student's progress cannot be fully assessed by standardized tests only. 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. Participation in the gifted program is noted on student transcripts and permanent records.