

DEFINITIONS OF GIFTED

National Association for Gifted Students

Students who have cognitive abilities significantly above the norm and/or who have demonstrated an exceptional aptitude or talent are considered gifted and/or talented. They thrive on complexity and depth and need the abstract thinking approach to learning used in gifted education classes.

Gifted Definition – District 67

The Explore and Quest Programs in District 67 identify and serve children with gifted intellectual ability, high level thought processes, and divergent-abstract thinking in the areas of Language Arts and/or Math. Children who excel in creativity and the arts are well served with differentiation within the district curriculum.

IDENTIFICATION

Formal identification begins at the end of second grade for third grade placement in Explore Math and LA. Additionally, some students are flexed in for a time, based on formal and informal criteria in Language Arts in third grade only. During the 2006-2007 school year, we added human resources, as well as additional support for grades 3 and 4. Each elementary school now has a full-time K-4 Enrichment Resource Teacher (ERT) who is specially trained in gifted education. The Explore curriculum is implemented in grades three and four. The Quest curriculum is implemented in grades five through eight.

IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

Student performance based on classroom data and observations that document high level thought processes, e.g. the ability to see patterns, identify and consider multiple solutions, make valid generalizations, insightful observations, and draw logical conclusions is one component of our identification system. Classroom evidence must support that the student demonstrates a *need* for the Explore Quest curriculum in either Language Arts and/or Mathematics.

Testing Data includes NWEA MAP tests, cognitive ability tests, off-level performance tasks, and in some cases, individually administered testing by a school psychologist. Because our testing is unique to our program, we require that this testing be administered by our district staff. Placement requires scoring at or beyond two standard deviations above the mean. Because the curriculum is accelerated one or two years above grade level, in addition to high aptitude, we also identify whether achievement and performance levels are *beyond* grade level in either Language Arts and/or Mathematics.

When a student has **almost** enough points to qualify for the program, placement is determined by the Quest Review Committee, which is made up of professionals from each of our schools. This committee undertakes an in-depth search for facts about the child to help determine the most appropriate placement. We also use the Quest Review Committee when the placement of a child is contested by a parent or professional.

The integrity of the Explore/Quest Program rests on the fairness and objectivity of our identification process. **Only the Quest Review Committee has the authority to make an exception on a child's placement.**

FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- Since aptitude testing is normed based on age, older children at a grade level do not have an advantage, and younger children are not penalized.
 - Enrollment is not driven by numbers or percentages of our population, but by students who demonstrate the *need* for a differentiated curriculum.
 - Re-evaluation of placement is an on-going process dependent upon the child's response to the thinking required by the Explore/Quest curricula. The result of participation is that the student becomes or remains high performing and achieving beyond grade level. If either of these criteria is missing, the teacher and parents will be notified and a plan to achieve success will be developed.
 - Classroom modifications for all children, i.e. enrichment, thinking skills, instruction, compacting, and/or acceleration are determined by student performance, not the Explore/Quest identification system.
 - No child is placed in our program without both objective data and professional judgment that supports this placement.
- * **Students are screened once a year in the spring except new students who are screened when they arrive.**

EXPLORE/QUEST GOALS

As a result of participation in the Explore/Quest Program, students will demonstrate growth in achievement in their areas of strength. The Explore/Quest Program requires students to grow in academic effort, persistence, organizational skills, academic risk-taking, independence, interpersonal skills, tolerance for ambiguity and behaviors of critical and creative thinking.

PHILOSOPHY

District 67 is committed to an educational vision that recognizes the value, needs and talents of each child and strives to assist the child in reaching his/her full potential. Explore/Quest, our programs to meet the needs of highly advanced students, embraces this vision and is an integral part of this commitment.

District 67 recognizes the diverse academic and social/emotional needs of our highly gifted-abstract thinkers. In response to these needs, Explore/Quest provides a Language Arts and Mathematics curriculum which is differentiated in pace, depth, and content level, and in which both enrichment and acceleration are the norm. Through the curriculum, academic environment and various support services, Explore/Quest works to foster within students a desire for academic excellence, the confidence to take risks, a sense of responsibility, and a healthy self-concept. The program challenges gifted-abstract thinkers to translate potential into performance.

PROGRAM IMPACT

Through assistance and encouragement from resource staff, all students will have opportunities to explore and develop their talents.

Resource staff are available to collaborate with classroom teachers in meeting the educational needs of *all* children in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Teachers of our Explore/Quest students are specially trained in gifted education. In addition, our K-4 Enrichment Resource Teachers (ERT's) are also specially trained in gifted education.

Through our resource staff, all teachers will become aware of various learner characteristics that necessitate modifications in curriculum and instructional strategies that provide appropriate academic challenge.

Explore/QUEST

For Individual Excellence



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