

# Gifted Education Handbook

A Professional and Parent Resource Guide

The City of St. Charles School District  
Gifted Program



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# **Introduction**

This handbook was developed as a professional and parent resource guide to gifted education in the City of St. Charles School District. This guide will give a better understanding of the district's gifted program; the more we know about gifted students, the better our teaching efforts will become as we provide a distinctive learning environment for these students. Join our efforts in making the total learning environment appropriate and exciting for our gifted students.

## **Gifted Education**

Gifted learners are children and youth possessing outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience or environment. As a result, they require differentiated educational programs to maximize their development.

### **Beliefs about Gifted Children**

- Gifted children need access to differentiated instruction appropriate to their levels of intellectual, physical and social maturity (MSIP)
- It is critical to accommodate individual differences, interests, abilities, learning rates, and learning styles
- Gifted students need contact with their intellectual peers to promote social-emotional development
- Gifted children have specific social-emotional needs that must be addressed/are essential to full development
- Gifted students need attention to the development of practical and social skills in the same way that all students do
- Gifted students need opportunities to apply their abilities to real world problems – VanTassel-Baska
- It is a common preconceived, but not necessarily accurate, notion that gifted students will excel and achieve in all areas

**It is imperative that the home and the school work together to ensure success for the gifted.**

# GIFTED EDUCATION RATIONALE

Gifted learners are best served by a confluent approach that allows for accelerated and advanced learning, and enriched and extended experiences. —VanTassel-Baska, 1988

The School District of the City of St. Charles acknowledges the vital need to address the diverse learning requirements of all students; therefore, providing appropriate programming for gifted learners is an integral part of the educational process. Individual uniqueness of the gifted student is respected and addressed through a differentiated curriculum.

While providing high levels of complexity and challenge appropriate to gifted learners, the district recognizes that students come from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds and possess unique abilities and needs.

Gifted learners are also at-risk of underachievement and require customized programming to ensure their success.

In order to meet the unique needs of gifted students, the district offers gifted programming that transcends traditional subject areas through curriculum qualitatively different from the regular school curriculum by the degree of complexity of content, process, and products to challenge gifted students to achieve their highest potential.

Curriculum for gifted students is specifically designed to challenge advanced learners and provide experiences that require critical thinking, problem-solving, independent study skills, communication, and persistence in the face of challenges. When engaged in high quality gifted services, students will develop their unique abilities, maintain their passion for learning, and have the opportunity to contribute to the strength and vitality of our schools, district and community.

The City of St. Charles Gifted Program does not substitute or replace the excellent classroom instruction and enrichment already provided in the district. Instead, it provides options compatible with the needs, abilities, and interests of gifted learners.

# Overview

**Overall theme: Exploration- SOAR to EXPLORE your DREAMS**

## **Elementary: Explore Our World**

**Grade 1-** Explore the Natural World (weather, endangered habitats/animals, water, dinosaurs)

**Grade 2-** Explore Careers (STEM scientists, Chemists, Botanists, Geography)

**Grade 3-** Explore World Cultures (Third World Countries, Criminal Justice, Archeology, Engineering)

**Grade 4-** Explore Science through the Ages (Simple Machines, Inventions, Space, Forensics)

## **Intermediate/Middle-Explore Ideas**

**Grade 5-** Explore the Past (Brain research- memory formation, Storytelling, Characteristics of Civilization, Archaeology, Primary and Secondary Sources)

**Grade 6-** Explore the Future (How imagination and fiction impact our future, Invention and Innovation, Rocketry, Robotics)

**Grade 7-** Explore How we Think and Learn (Characteristics of giftedness, self reflection, Strategy vs. Randomized- what we can and can't control, Deductive Reasoning)

**Grade 8-** Explore Information (Information bias, News reporting and advertising, how information and opinion affects scientific research- alternative energy)

## **High School-Explore Possibilities**

**Grade 9 -** Explore Self-Advocacy

**Grade 10 -** Explore Expectations & Personal Characteristics

**Grade 11-** Explore Dreams, Goals, Personal Interests

**Grade 12 -** Explore Post-Secondary Options & Means to Achieve and Succeed

# IDENTIFICATION GUIDELINES

## Grades Kindergarten through 4th

**Kindergarten** – All kindergarten students in the district will be screened with a nonverbal online group ability test in January. Gifted facilitators will coordinate the screening. Based on the results, students may be referred for further IQ testing. Eligible students will start in the SOAR program the following school year.

**Grades 1-4 Student Referrals** - Any 1st through 4th grade teacher or parent who feels their student/child should be referred to the gifted program, can complete a referral form.

**\*Students cannot be referred more than 2 times within a 4 year span.**

### Referred Student Requirements:

- At or above their monthly reading target for grades 1-3
- Score Advanced or Proficient in either Communication Arts or Math (or both) from the MAP for grade 4.
- If a parent requests their child to be tested and they are below their monthly reading target or do not meet the MAP requirements, they cannot be referred at this time.

### Referral Deadlines:

- **Fall referral forms need to be completed by October** in order for students to be evaluated for placement in the gifted program starting in January.
- **Spring referral forms need to be completed by February** in order for students to be evaluated for placement in the gifted program starting in August.

### Parent/Teacher Notification:

- Gifted facilitators will send permission forms to parents notifying them of referral.
- Gifted facilitators will notify parents of their child's screening/testing results.
- Gifted facilitators will also notify schools of the students' final results.

### Screening Process:

- Gifted facilitators will administer the online group ability test at each school.
- IQ testing will follow for those who move on to that level. (Outside testing results from a private individual/institution are not accepted.)
- A psychological examiner will administer the individual IQ test at each school.
- Results will be applied to the Gifted Matrix to determine placement.

## **Grades 5th through 8th**

**Grades 5-8 Student Referrals** - Any 5th through 8th grade teacher or parent who feels their student/child should be referred to the gifted program, can complete a referral form. **\*Students cannot be referred more than 2 times within a 4 year span.**

### **Referred Student Requirements:**

- Score Advanced or Proficient in either Communication Arts or Math (or both) from the MAP for grade 5-8.
- If a parent requests their child to be tested and they do not meet the MAP requirements, they cannot be referred at this time.

### **Referral Deadlines:**

- **Spring referral forms need to be completed by February** in order for students to be evaluated for placement in the gifted program starting in August.

### **Parent/Teacher Notification:**

- Gifted facilitators will send permission forms to parents notifying them of referral.
- Gifted facilitators will notify parents of their child's screening/testing results.
- Gifted facilitators will also notify schools of the students' final results.

### **Screening Process:**

- Gifted facilitators will administer a group ability test to the student.
- IQ testing will follow for those who move on to that level. (Outside testing results from a private individual/institution are not accepted.)
- A psychological examiner will administer the individual IQ test.
- Results will be applied to the Gifted Matrix to determine placement.

## **Grades 9th through 12th**

### **Prerequisites:**

- Previous enrollment in City of St. Charles School District Gifted Program
- IQ of 130 +/- 5
- WISQ score in 95%+
- Reading composite score of 95%+
- Prior enrollment in Gifted program in another school district

# Courses for Gifted Students 9-12

adopted June 9, 2016

## **GIFTED ENGLISH 1**

(Communication Arts) 1 unit; Grade 9

Prerequisite: Students must be identified as gifted through the district gifted identification protocol and have permission to enroll.

This course will exceed expectations for English 1 while simultaneously meeting the affective needs of the gifted. The course will prepare students for success in Advancement Placement and college level English courses. Gifted English 1 will further the students' reading, writing, language, speaking and listening skills. Reading instruction will utilize literary and informational texts. Writing may include instruction in narrative, informative, or argumentative techniques, and students will use research to construct formal essays. The study of language will encompass vocabulary acquisition and use as well as conventions of standard English. Speaking and listening will include both formal and informal presentations. Students will be required to take an "End of Course" exam provided by the State of Missouri at the completion of English 1.

## **GIFTED ENGLISH 2**

(Communication Arts) 1 unit; Grade 10

Prerequisite: Students must be identified as gifted through the district gifted identification protocol and have permission to enroll.

This course will exceed expectations for English 2 while simultaneously meeting the affective needs of the gifted. The course will prepare students for success in Advanced Placement and college level English courses. This course satisfies the graduation requirement and consists of instruction in literature, nonfiction, writing, language study, research, and speaking and listening. Literature will include selections of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. The emphasis will be on the analysis and evaluation of text. Key writing concepts include various modes of discourse and students will produce analytical, expository, research, and persuasive essays. Students will evaluate various types of media, strengthen vocabulary, and participate in informal and formal speaking and listening activities. Students will be required to take an "End of Course" exam provided by the State of Missouri at the completion of English 2.



**GIFTED EXPLORATION & EXPANSION: 2 separate classes are available for the students: Gifted Exploration and Expansion 9-10 & Gifted Exploration and Expansion 11-12**

(Elective) 1/2 unit; 9-12; prerequisite: students must be identified as gifted through the district gifted identification protocol and have signature of teacher.

This course is an elective designed to provide in-depth exploration of post high school opportunities, research and develop possible solutions to real world challenges, allow expression of their giftedness within and without the school environment, and enter into mentorship programs. Students will explore their strengths/weaknesses, personality styles, and interests in relationship to post high school. In demonstrating their individuality, they will develop a personal portfolio. After researching real world challenges, they will propose and implement possible solutions.

Advocacy skills will be developed and academic/scholarship competitions explored by interested students. Mentorship will be based on student passion. Program expectations will advance commensurate with student growth. The curriculum will be individualized based on student need, interest, and other academic course expectations.

Students are encouraged to enroll both semesters to allow for development of long term projects such as putting into action a solution that correlates with a real world challenge. Students must meet the criteria for identification as gifted as established by the state of Missouri.

**Please note that students are encouraged to take Gifted Expansion and Exploration (GEE) more than once for elective credit.**

# TRANSFER STUDENT POLICY

The Transfer Student Policy for the City of St. Charles School District will follow DESE Guidelines for Gifted and Talented Programs. The DESE Policy for Transfer Students is stated below:

## **DESE Transfer Gifted Student Policy**

Students who transfer to a school with a gifted program shall be placed in the receiving district's program if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The student must previously have been placed in a gifted program in a Missouri school.
2. The areas addressed by the two programs must be similar: i.e., both are general academic programs; both are fine arts programs; or both are specific academic programs.
3. The student meets or exceeds the selection criteria established by the receiving school for placement in its gifted program.
4. The student and parents agree to such placement.

## **Out of State Transfer of Gifted Students:**

Students who transfer from out of state will be evaluated on an individual basis. There is a possibility that out of state transfer students will need to participate in the district screening and testing process.

## **Transfer Students not Previously Identified as Gifted**

Transfer students, who have not previously been identified as gifted, may be nominated for testing by a parent or guardian. The nominated student will participate in the gifted screening and testing process/schedule, according to their current grade.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **SOAR**

- 1. Will students miss regular instruction and will they be required to make-up missed work in the regular classroom?** The program is offered in a pull-out format in which students from each grade level are instructed one day per week and will miss their regular classroom instruction. Students should not have to make up all of their regular classroom assignments but should be responsible for finding out what they missed.
- 2. How will the students be transported to the SOAR program at Harris Elementary School?** Students will be picked up by a “SOAR Bus” designated to pick up SOAR students only. Students will be picked up from their home school and will then be dropped off at Harris by 9:00. The SOAR program dismisses at 2:30 for students to catch their regular bus or ride home.
- 3. What day of the week do the children attend SOAR?**
  - Monday: Fourth Grade
  - Tuesday: Third Grade
  - Wednesday: Second Grade
  - Thursday: First Grade
- 4. Will the students be reevaluated each year?** The SOAR facilitators will be in communication with the homeroom teachers throughout the year to check on student progress.

While retesting is not done, all SOAR students are expected to be working on grade level. Should there be a serious decline in a child’s performance in and/or outside of the SOAR program, he/she may be placed on probation and possibly rotated from the program.

Students who remain in good standing will continue through the gifted program.
- 5. How will parents be able to see what students are doing and learning when they are at SOAR?** SOAR Night is an opportunity for students to share what they are learning and doing in SOAR with their parents, teachers, and administrators. It is an open house format held at Harris Elementary in the spring.

## **QUEST/APEX**

**1. Will students miss regular instruction and will they be required to make-up missed work in the regular classroom?** The program is offered in a pull-out format in which students miss approximately 3 hours of regular instruction per week. Students should not have to make up all of their regular classroom assignments, but this will vary by grade and subject.

**2. What is the schedule for QUEST/APEX?**

**Day of the Week:** Each grade level meets on a different day each week- for example, 5th grade on Monday, 6th on Tuesday, etc. However, the day a specific grade level meets is subject to change from year to year. See your student's schedule for details.

**Time of Day:** Each grade level is divided into two groups. One group meets in the AM session and the other meets in the PM session. However, they switch every week, so they are not always missing the same classes. By doing this, a student only misses a specific class once every two weeks. See your student's schedule for details.

QUEST: AM- 8:05-11:00 AM, PM- 12:10-3:05 PM

APEX: AM- 2nd-4th period, PM- 6th-8th period

**QUEST/APEX Nights- Will be held in the Spring at each school.**

# Resources for Gifted Students and Parents

Gifted Resource Council  
[www.giftedresourcecouncil.org](http://www.giftedresourcecouncil.org)

Gifted Support Network  
[www.giftedsupportnetwork.org](http://www.giftedsupportnetwork.org)

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)  
Gifted Education Programs  
<http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/gifted/>

National Association for Gifted Children  
[www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)

Gifted Association of Missouri  
[www.mogam.org](http://www.mogam.org)

Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development  
<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu>

SAGE: St. Louis Association for Gifted Education  
[www.giftedsage.com](http://www.giftedsage.com)

Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)  
<http://www.sengifted.org/>

Davidson Institute for Talent Development  
<http://www.ditd.org/>

Hoagies Gifted Education Page  
<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>

Project MEGSSS – A Special Math Program that is offered in St. Louis  
<http://www.megsss.org/>

# Glossary of Terms

**Ability Grouping:** Grouping students by need, interest, or ability for a particular learning activity. Groups can be formed and reformed to meet various instructional needs.

**Acceleration:** Allowing students to move through the material at a pace faster than age-mates and at a rate commensurate with their ability.

**Affective:** The domain of learning that addresses attitudes, feelings, values, appreciation and perception of self and others; as opposed to cognitive, which refers to learning and knowledge of concepts and facts.

**Authentic Assessments:** Process of evaluating student learning using student products or performance rather than traditional standardized tests.

**Brainstorming:** An activity used to generate many creative ideas that have no right or wrong answers and are accepted without criticism.

**Cluster Grouping:** The assignment of a small group of students with similar interests, abilities, or needs to the same classroom.

**Compacting the Curriculum:** Reducing the amount of curriculum material used allowing the student to show mastery of the content.

**Cooperative Learning:** Assigning a common task to a group of students who are of various ability levels. Often each student in the group is given a role in completing the task.

**Differentiation:** Making modifications in the curriculum, either in content or pace, to accommodate the abilities of the individual learner.

**Enrichment:** Learning activities not found in the core curriculum that are more in-depth or from an additional discipline used to supplement the gifted student's educational experience.

**Learning Styles:** The mode of learning or preferred style of relating to life. Some learners are visual, others auditory, some relate in a concrete-sequential manner, others in an abstract-random way.

**Pull-Out Program:** An educational plan in which students of similar needs and ability are "pulled out" of the regular classroom at certain times throughout the week to meet in another location with a specialized teacher.

**Self-Contained:** A setting where students remain in one classroom and are taught all disciplines by the same teacher.

**Twice Exceptional:** A term used to describe a student that is both gifted and disabled. These students may also be referred to as having dual exceptionalities or as being GT/LD.

# Buildings, Gifted Facilitators, and Contact Information

## Harris Elementary School

2800 Old Muegge Road  
St. Charles, MO 63303  
(636) 443-4700

Mrs. Janet Stahlschmidt, Elementary  
(636) 443-4740  
[jstahlschmidt@stcharlessd.org](mailto:jstahlschmidt@stcharlessd.org)

Mrs. Chem Schultz, Elementary  
(636) 443-4737  
[cschultz@stcharlessd.org](mailto:cschultz@stcharlessd.org)

## Jefferson Intermediate School

2660 Zumbahl Road  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
(636) 443-4400

Mr. Matthew Lenger, Intermediate  
(636) 443-4436  
[mlenger@stcharlessd.org](mailto:mlenger@stcharlessd.org)

## Hardin Middle School

1950 W. Elm Street  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
(636) 443-4300

Mr. Matthew Lenger, Middle School  
(636) 443-4363  
[mlenger@stcharlessd.org](mailto:mlenger@stcharlessd.org)

## St. Charles High School

725 N. Kingshighway  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
(636) 443-4100

Mrs. Donette Goodlett, High School  
(636) 443-4113  
[dgoodlett@stcharlessd.org](mailto:dgoodlett@stcharlessd.org)

Mrs. Gillian Deal, High School  
(636) 443-4117  
[gdeal@stcharlessd.org](mailto:gdeal@stcharlessd.org)

## St. Charles West High School

3601 Droste Rd.  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
(636) 443-4200

Mrs. Gillian Deal, High School  
(636) 443-4117  
[gdeal@stcharlessd.org](mailto:gdeal@stcharlessd.org)

## **District Leadership**

Dr. Jeff Marion, Superintendent  
(636) 443-4033

Dr. Danielle Tormala, Assoc. Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
(636) 443-4031

Mr. Ted Happel, Gifted Coordinator K-12  
(636) 443-4105