

# Common Questions Parents Ask

## *How do I know if my child is gifted?*

Sometimes it is hard to determine if a child is very bright or actually gifted. Check out the Bright Child vs Gifted page to make that determination. Also, anyone can refer a child for screening. Once a child is referred, five different areas are considered. A child must qualify in two of the five areas before they are identified as gifted.

## *If my child is identified as gifted, what does that mean?*

Once a child is identified as gifted, a profile/plan of action is created. This is basically an individual learning plan that is designed to meet the needs of that child. A mandate was recently passed that requires Advanced Learning Plans for all GT students by December of 2008. This is very similar to the profile/plan of action but has a new name, ALP.

## *What are the advanced learning opportunities at Park County Schools?*

Each child is unique and a plan of action or ALP is designed based on the needs of individual students. Pull-out for enrichment in the child's area of strength might be recommended for some children. If they are advanced by a year or more, moving up a grade in that area of strength is sometimes the best enrichment. Other opportunities are working with mentors from the community, working ahead in A+ computerized curriculum and distance learning or AP courses at the high school level. Extracurricular activities include advanced reading groups, chess club and scrabble at lunch, Knowledge Bowl in the high school and Destination Imagination after school for grades 2-12.

## *How will my child benefit from gifted programming?*

When a child is gifted, it is important to keep them challenged so that they learn a good work ethic, reach their potential and stay interested in learning. If identified as GT, a student's progress is monitored every year to see if they are being challenged.

## *My child was identified for gifted services elsewhere; is he/she automatically included in the school's gifted program?*

No. The state now requires a body of evidence to show how a student was identified as gifted. When moving to a new school, bring a copy of GT paperwork from your last school that shows how a student was identified. This may speed up the process and may eliminate part of the needed screening.

## *Will the gifted programming services mean more work for my child but not qualitatively different work?*

A gifted student should not be loaded down with a lot of extra work. They should be given work that is at their level.

## *How do we address the non-academic exceptionalities of my child?*

Talk with the Park County RE-2 GT coordinator, Laura Wedow. She may be able to give you ideas on common non-academic traits of GT students.

*In what ways can we work/communicate together?*

Don't be afraid to talk with all of your child's teachers about your needs and concerns. Set up appointments on a regular basis. Also, ALPs are reviewed each year and you will be contacted for input or suggestions.

*What are criteria for grade skipping or other forms of acceleration?*

The screening process should help us identify areas of strength. After a student is identified as gifted, the coordinator will communicate with the classroom teacher on the best plan for each student. Before grade skipping takes place, we use the Iowa Acceleration Scale, A Guide for Whole-Grade Acceleration K-8, to determine if a student is a good candidate. After all data is collected, a collaborative decision is made on what is best for the student.

*How do I assist my child in transitions to the next level of schooling?*

Help them develop good study habits and show your excitement for learning. It is also important to help them advocate for themselves. When talking with your child, rather than focusing on how smart they are, emphasize their accomplishments from the hard work they put into something. When they do finally reach a level that is challenging, this will help them face the challenge rather than giving up.

*How is appropriate instruction provided if my child does not want to participate in a specific g/t program or magnet school?*

Differentiation should be provided in the classroom to meet the needs of all students. In our district, we don't always have enough students to offer a "program"; rather we focus on individual needs and services.

*If my child is twice-exceptional, how will his/her needs be met?*

During the process of completing the Advanced Learning Plan for a gifted student, this would be taken into account.

*What kind of assessment is used to monitor my child's progress, especially if state assessment scores are weak?*

Park County Schools use MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) testing each year to help monitor the progress of the students. Classroom assessments are also used.

*What resources or support systems are available to parents of gifted children?*

The website for Park County Schools does have a gifted and talented section that offers resources. Also, check with the Park County GT Coordinator, Laura Wedow (836-4417) for possible support systems.

*What are some ways I can support my child's strengths outside the school environment?*

Be on the look out for summer activities that will keep your child involved and excited about learning. 4-H activities are extensive and available right in Fairplay. Week long workshops and camps are usually available in Breckenridge in the summer. Each summer a camp in Greeley, Colorado is held for GT students in grades 5-10.