



# Ozark's G-Team

(Guidance To Engage Active Minds)

## Ozark School District's Gifted and Talented Policies and Procedures



*"Everyone is gifted - but some people never open their package"*

*- unknown*



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## INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Responding to the concern for educational programming for gifted and talented students, the Arkansas General Assembly passed Act 106 of 1979. This legislation established the Office for Education for Gifted and Talented Children, headed by an administration to direct the state program. Funds were appropriated to provide financial assistance to school districts to develop and operate programs for gifted and talented students.

Guidelines were developed to provide information to assist districts in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs for gifted and talented students. This document, Education of Gifted and Talented Students: the State Board of Education approved Guidelines for Local Education Agencies, in 1981.

Act 445 of 1983, the Quality Education Act, established minimum standards for accreditation of public schools and authorized the State Board to name a committee to recommend regulations, criteria, and minimum standards. The Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools, which were adopted by the State Board of Education February 22, 1984, include a provision that all districts must provide a program for gifted and talented students.

Act 34 of 1983, First Extraordinary Session (the School Finance Act) provided funding for districts, which are developing or operating programs for gifted and talented students. The Department of Education was directed to set aside annually, beginning in 1984-85, funds for program development, not to exceed \$6 million. Districts, which are operating approved programs, are eligible to receive funds based on an "add on" weight of .25 for each student identified as gifted and talented (funding to be based on no more than five percent of the district's average daily membership).

In June 1986, the State Board of education approved the Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards. This document is continuing to be used as a guide by individual districts in developing and operating gifted and talented programs. It contains standards and recommendations for all components of gifted and talented program. These standards are used to monitor each program every three years. Each program must meet ADE Gifted and Talented Approval standards each year in order to receive the appropriated funding.



**OZARK SCHOOL DISTRICT  
GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM  
PHILOSOPHY**

The programs in public schools are built on a fundamental belief in serving the needs of all our students as unique individuals. We believe that gifted and talented individuals have special characteristics and learning styles and that their potential for accomplishment is such that they require special provisions, experiences, and services not provided for in the regular instructional program.

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 tasks commitment / motivation.

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.

Gifted and talented students must be provided opportunities to interact with their peers and to work with materials, which challenge their abilities and encourage them to expand their abstract thinking and reasoning abilities.

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



## **OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM COMPONENTS' GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1. STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Goal A. Every attempt will be made to train certified personnel in a sequential and continuous program development to enable them to assist in the identification, selection, and programming of gifted and talented students.

### **2. PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Goal A. Parents and resource persons of the community will participate through active involvement in expanding opportunities of gifted and talented students. Parents and community will be involved in programs for the gifted and talented through the formation of an advisory council, volunteer and/or a mentor program.

### **3. IDENTIFICATION**

Goal A. A systematic process will be planned and implemented for identifying those gifted and talented students who have the greatest need for qualitatively differentiated educational experiences and/or services.

### **4. PROGRAMMING**

Goal A. The district will develop and implement a program in which administrators, classroom teachers, and other staff members will jointly plan and provide enriched experiences and/or services.

Objective A. 1. Recognize the need to provide differentiated educational experiences for the gifted and talented of all backgrounds.

Objective A. 2. Establish a program with a long-range goal of providing services for all areas of giftedness for students' kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Objective A. 3. Provide gifted and talented students with multiple differentiated materials, which will allow them to purposefully expand ideas and engage in the exploration of issues and interests at each child's individual level.

Objective A. 4. Provide a wide variety of generalized strategies designed to develop thinking/feeling processes and operations based on student strengths, learning styles, and interests in order to enhance:

- a. Critical and reflective thinking
- b. Divergent and creative/productive thinking
- c. Problem solving and self-directed expanded inquiry
- d. Positive self-concept, sense of individual commitment to self in a changing society, with the teacher as a guide.



★ Objective A. 5. Establish opportunities for the gifted and talented student to become a “young professional” engaged as an investigator of real problems utilizing appropriate community resource persons serving as volunteers/mentors. ★

★ Objective A. 6. Provide a format for gifted and talented students to come together to challenge and interact with each other. ★

★ Objective A. 7. Provide enrichment exploration for all gifted and talented students through the use of community resource persons to expand student interest areas. ★

★ Objective A. 8. Articulate and coordinate the differentiated gifted program with the regular classroom program and classroom teacher. ★

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★ **5. EVALUATION** ★

★ Goal A. Timely evaluation procedures will be developed and implemented to determine and document the degree of success of the program for gifted and talented students. ★

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★ **OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM GOALS** ★

★ 1. To provide methods which will identify gifted and talented students ★

★ 2. To provide educational programs and differentiated curriculum, which will enable each student to develop his or her abilities ★

★ 3. To provide an enriching and challenging environment with ability peers ★

★ 4. To develop and enhance higher level cognitive, decision-making, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills and research skills ★

★ 5. To provide learning experiences to give the students opportunities to further and enrich their learning beyond the regular classroom ★

★ 6. To provide opportunities to develop and refine potential or existing leadership abilities ★

★ 7. To encourage self-motivation and self-directed learning ★

★ 8. To encourage the student to develop and maintain a positive and realistic self-concept ★

★ 9. To provide an ongoing program of goal setting and evaluation ★

★ 10. To provide opportunities for increasing awareness of career possibilities with regard to a student’s unique abilities and talents ★

★ 11. To produce productive thinkers who are sharing and caring citizens ★





## **OZARK SCHOOL G/T COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT POLICY (4.0)**

In order to be successful, a school program must have commitment from and support of the parents, the school, and the community. This commitment and support for the Ozark G/T Program will be enhanced by good communication between the program, the GT Coordinator/Teacher, the other teachers, the parents, the school administration, and the community. Every effort will be put forth to educate and inform everyone about every aspect of the program and its policies and practices. Frequent and timely notes sent to parents, meetings, staff developments, announcements, presentations, and news releases would do this.

Information about the program is available to the public on the district website. The information includes: a program overview, definition and characteristics of giftedness, program design, the identification process, nomination forms, surveys, handbook, resources, and contact information.

Announcements for nomination opportunities are placed in the local newspaper. They are also posted on the district website and sent through the school mail. A handbook containing information about the program is available upon request for parents, teachers, and other interested parties. Brochures are available in the offices, as well as the parent centers, on each campus.

A GT Advisory Council includes parents and/or other community members along with teachers, staff, and administrators. Parents and community members are invited to contribute to the program by volunteering as a resource, sharing ideas/knowledge/experience, and participating on the Advisory Council. Open House and Parent/Teacher Conferences also provide opportunities for stakeholders to ask questions or share concerns they may have regarding program policies and practices.



## **OZARK SCHOOL G/T STAFF DEVELOPMENT/IN-SERVICE POLICY (5.0)**

For continued professional growth, all school personnel and administrators who come in contact with G/T students or are responsible in some way for their education should periodically attend some type of in-service or staff development workshops. G/T in-service or staff development should help those concerned to understand the characteristics and needs of gifted and talented students. By understanding their characteristics and needs, educators can possibly provide more suitable education to help them to achieve their potential. In-service and staff development also provides information to those concerned about gifted programming, teaching strategies, and how students are identified. The G/T coordinator and/or teacher should also attend in-service and frequently attend G/T coordinator and other professional meetings and conferences to keep up with current developments, concerns, teaching strategies, and opportunities that can benefit the G/T students.

Secondary content teachers serving GT students in the regular classroom will attend at least one state approved workshop on differentiating instruction for gifted students. Pre-AP teachers will attend at least one state-approved training every five years. AP teachers will attend at least one College Board approved training every five years.

The type of staff development and/or in-service planned for and provided by the district coordinator will be based on needs discovered during the evaluation process, the need for periodically updating on G/T concerns and procedures and the need to aide teachers and administrators to understand these students and how to teach and deal with them. Formal or informal staff development or meetings with content area G/T teachers and the G/T coordinator will be conducted at least once a year, at the beginning of the school year, as the needs arise. In-service and staff development provided by the Western Arkansas Educational Cooperative is available to all teachers. It has many G/T program oriented opportunities each year.

Informal staff development will be conducted by adding books and journals on gifted education to our school's professional library and by sharing gifted students' projects with all staff when and where it is appropriate. If interest and/or need are indicated, specific classroom demonstrations and teaching techniques and suggestions will be presented and shared at faculty meetings and with individual instructors.

The G/T coordinator is responsible for conducting surveys, assessing needs, planning for, making all arrangements, and if necessary conducting the in-service or staff developments.

Each staff development and in-service should be evaluated by the G/T coordinator and all teachers and administrators involved. This will determine the quality and value of each of the sessions and provide input for planning for future provisions.





## **OZARK SCHOOL G/T PERSONNEL POLICY (6.0)**

The program coordinator and/or teacher must have at least 18 hours of approved college hours in gifted and talented education in order to be certified and meet ADE standards. Teachers of the gifted will demonstrate the following characteristics and abilities:

- Flexibility, creativity and self-confidence
- Extensive knowledge of the subject or program area being taught
- Enthusiasm for teaching
- Formal study and practical understanding of the nature and needs of gifted students
- Teaching strategies that include lecture, discussion, inquiry, and group/independent project management
- Teaching abilities that engage children in higher orders of intellectual activity
- Student centeredness
- Ability to personalize learning tasks in classroom
- Strong self-concept and not easily intimidated
- Sense of humor
- Willingness to devote extra time and effort to working with gifted students

Applications for the position are posted on the district website, AAEA Education job posting and other local media. Principal(s) interview, select, and recommend to the Superintendent. The Superintendent and Central Office Administration interview the applicants and final selections are made and recommended to the Board of Education for approval to hire. Ozark School District is a non-discriminatory equal opportunity employer



## **OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES (7.0)**

The student identification / selection process is a multi-dimensional procedure. A special effort will be made to include students who may be difficult to identify such as underachievers, members of minority groups, the culturally different, handicapped, deprived, the highly creative, and the highly intellectual.

The process includes the creation of a candidate pool through referral and data accumulation. A student may be referred by evidence found in testing results, himself/ herself, parents, teachers, counselors, administration, or any other person in the community. Following referral for services, a permission to test and collect data form is collected. A profile is then developed from various data including ability, academic, benchmark and creativity test scores, grades, student products, observations and rating scales completed by teachers and parents, and/or interviews with the student. Using a case study approach the profile is then reviewed by a screening / placement committee. This committee recommends the appropriate action.

No one item is a decisive factor in the placement of a student in the gifted and talented program. The student need not score high on every criterion for inclusion into the program. For example, teacher ratings may override low-test scores, and good normative data may outweigh negative teacher ratings. The final evaluation decision considers the best interest of the student as an individual and the degree to which it is felt the student would benefit from participation in the gifted program. Written parental consent is acquired before the student is placed in the program.

### **OZARK SCHOOL G/T PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION AND PLACEMENT POLICIES**

Appropriate identification of gifted and talented students is essential in many ways. Just as Special Education students need programs to meet their special needs, G/T students have special needs, which stem from their special aptitudes, interests, and abilities. G/T students deserve to be appropriately identified and given the differentiated opportunities and challenges to help them to achieve their fullest potentials. Also, the success of the G/T program hinges on the appropriate identification and placement of students who will benefit from the program's differentiated curriculum.

The process used in the identification of students for participation in the G/T Program consists of six basic steps:

- (1) Nomination
- (2) Data Collection and Testing
- (4) Portfolio or Profile Development
- (5) Identification
- (6) Placement



## **STEP 1: NOMINATION**

Nominations are accepted at any time for the gifted and talented program, but are especially encouraged during the spring. A student can be nominated for the gifted and talented program by parents/family, district staff, community member, or themselves. Nominating parties receive a nomination form to complete on the student explaining their reasons for nominating the student for the gifted program.

Referrals for the gifted program are sought from a variety of sources including parents, teachers, students, and community members. Information about the identification process is available through email/teacher boxes and on the district's webpage.

## **STEP 2: DATA COLLECTION AND TESTING**

Following referral for services, a permission to test and collect data form is collected. Data will be collected from as many sources as are relevant to the individual candidate. A case study approach will then be used to start the identification process. Objective and subjective data will be collected for each nominee from as many sources as possible including:

- (1) Achievement Test Scores
- (2) Intelligence Tests or School Ability Tests
- (3) Creativity Evaluation Instruments
- (4) Teacher and/or Parent Rating Scales
- (5) Academic Performance
- (6) Peer Ratings
- (7) Interview with Student
- (8) Other Relevant Information
- (9) Data collected from GT Enrichment

## **STEP 4: PROFILE DEVELOPMENT**

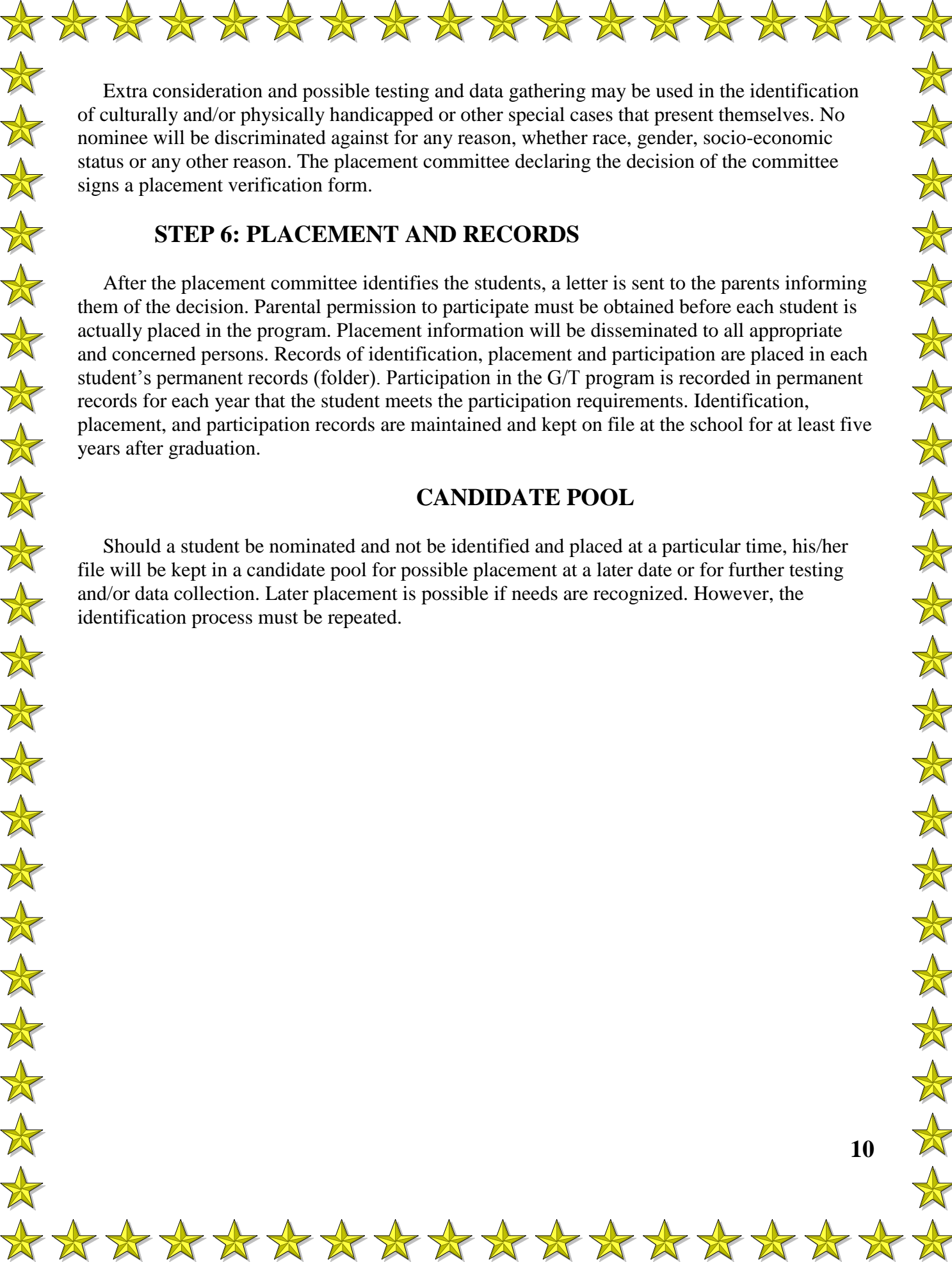
The data is then transferred for each student to a profile or characteristic matrix sheet, which presents the information in an easy to understand format. The screening or placement committee will use the profile for identification purposes.

## **STEP 5: PLACEMENT**

The placement committee will study all information and data collected in the profiles. The placement committee consists of teachers, the counselor, administrators and the G/T Coordinator/teacher. The students are placed on the basis of specific and consistent criteria in several areas, which can indicate giftedness as outlined in the local definition, which includes:

- (1) Above average intellectual ability
- (2) Creative thinking ability
- (3) High achievement
- (4) Task commitment or motivation

No single criterion or cut-off score may be used to exclude a student from identification and placement. For example, teacher ratings may override poor test scores, and good normative information may outweigh negative teacher and/or parent ratings.



Extra consideration and possible testing and data gathering may be used in the identification of culturally and/or physically handicapped or other special cases that present themselves. No nominee will be discriminated against for any reason, whether race, gender, socio-economic status or any other reason. The placement committee declaring the decision of the committee signs a placement verification form.

## **STEP 6: PLACEMENT AND RECORDS**

After the placement committee identifies the students, a letter is sent to the parents informing them of the decision. Parental permission to participate must be obtained before each student is actually placed in the program. Placement information will be disseminated to all appropriate and concerned persons. Records of identification, placement and participation are placed in each student's permanent records (folder). Participation in the G/T program is recorded in permanent records for each year that the student meets the participation requirements. Identification, placement, and participation records are maintained and kept on file at the school for at least five years after graduation.

## **CANDIDATE POOL**

Should a student be nominated and not be identified and placed at a particular time, his/her file will be kept in a candidate pool for possible placement at a later date or for further testing and/or data collection. Later placement is possible if needs are recognized. However, the identification process must be repeated.



## **OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM DESIGN AND STUDENT OPTIONS (8.0)**

The program design for our gifted and talented students for grades kindergarten through twelfth grade is intended to provide a curriculum that is both differentiated and appropriate for the specialized needs of students who are advanced in their thinking and learning processes. Gifted and talented students are provided opportunities to interact with their peers and to work with materials, which challenge their abilities and encourage them to expand their abstract thinking and reasoning. This is accomplished through using various approaches appropriate to the designated grade level. All instructors involved have received training through the Arkansas Department of Education and/or advanced degree training.

**K-2 Whole Group Enrichment:** The Gifted and Talented Teacher/Specialist meets with the Kindergarten - Second grade students for whole-class enrichment for at least thirty minutes weekly. The goal is to collect data on potentially gifted students and expose students to critical and creative thinking skills. Classroom teachers actively promote higher order thinking skills on a daily basis.

**3-5 Pull-Out:** A pull-out program for grade three – five meets for a minimum of one-hundred fifty minutes weekly with the certified Gifted and Talented Teacher, which is required by law. Enrichment and pullout resource room activities are geared to meet the identified gifted and talented students.

**6-12 Differentiation in the classroom, Pre-AP, AP, Concurrent Credit:** Grades six through twelve gifted and talented students' needs are met through designated classes in the academic areas of English, Math, Science, and Social Science as well as through other specialized classes, which include Pre-AP, AP, acceleration, concurrent enrollment in college courses, and student competitions. The way in which each identified Gifted and Talented student meets his or her requirement(s) is documented and participation in the Gifted and Talented program is recorded in the permanent records.



## CURRICULUM PLAN AND DIFFERENTIATION (9.0)

The Ozark School District recognizes that G/T students need a differentiated curriculum. A curriculum should be planned for them not on the basis of content that suits the majority of pupils, but on the basis of their advanced accomplishments and interests, which require different content and different opportunities. An adequate curriculum must be diverse, advanced, and complex enough to reflect the abilities of the gifted and talented. The content of the curriculum should provide interest and challenge, not “more of the same”.

There are several schools of thought on the type of curriculum appropriate to gifted and talented students. One places importance in developing the curriculum on a basis of the individual interests and independent study. Another places importance on the more “advanced” approach by allowing and providing students with opportunities to study and move faster than their peers in particular educational disciplines. Still another method takes the “seminar” or group study approach. The Ozark program strives for a balanced approach recognizing that all of these approaches have substantial value to the G/T students and that each individual G/T student has different gifts, talents and needs.

Since differentiation should not only be in degree but in kind, care will be taken to avoid “more of the same”. Regular classroom teachers are encouraged to modify the work assigned to the gifted and talented students, whenever possible, to provide challenge, and/or eliminate drill work when it is not needed. If at all possible, scheduling should be done in such a way that students do not miss classes that are important to them. When a student is pulled from a particular class for G/T, that teacher is reminded to take into consideration that the student is also doing work in G/T class and does not need to be punished for being gifted and talented by having to do even more work. Teachers are encouraged to not require these students to make up missed work unless the teacher believes that a particular assignment is extremely important. Within reason, the decision to require or not require a missed assignment to be made up is left up to the individual teacher and the students involved.

Curriculum opportunities are planned with the abilities, accomplishments, and interests of the G/T students in mind. Differentiation is made in the following ways:

1. Content
  - a. Level of complexity
  - b. Pace of learning
  - c. Degree of abstractness
  - d. Topics not ordinarily part of the regular curriculum (or at that level)
  - e. Organized by themes and ideas
  - f. Multidisciplinary
  - g. Student as teacher and/or self-directed



2. Process:

- a. Critical thinking
- b. Creative thinking
- c. Independent study
- d. Problem-solving
- e. Logic
- f. Investigative or research

3. Products:

- a. In-depth studies with appropriate product outcome
- b. Using new and/or different techniques, material, and forms
- c. Creative, artistic, and/or theatrical
- d. Self-chosen specific areas of interest or talent development
- f. Different types of communication and/or audiences



## OZARK SCHOOLS G/T PROGRAM EVALUATION PLAN (10.0)

In order to have a strong and effective program for the gifted, accurate, timely and relevant evaluations will be conducted. At the end of each year, all components of the program will be evaluated and analyzed. The components of the gifted and talented program to be evaluated include:

1. (4.00) Community Involvement
2. (5.00) Staff Development
3. (6.00) Personnel (G/T teachers)
4. (7.00) The Identification Process
5. (8.00) Program Options
6. (9.00) Curriculum
7. (10.00) The Evaluation Process

At the end of each school year, a variety of instruments including surveys, checklists, and interviews will be conducted and sent to all known interested persons to determine the value and effectiveness of the program and to evaluate the policies and practices of the program. Data and information will be gleaned from as many of the following as possible:

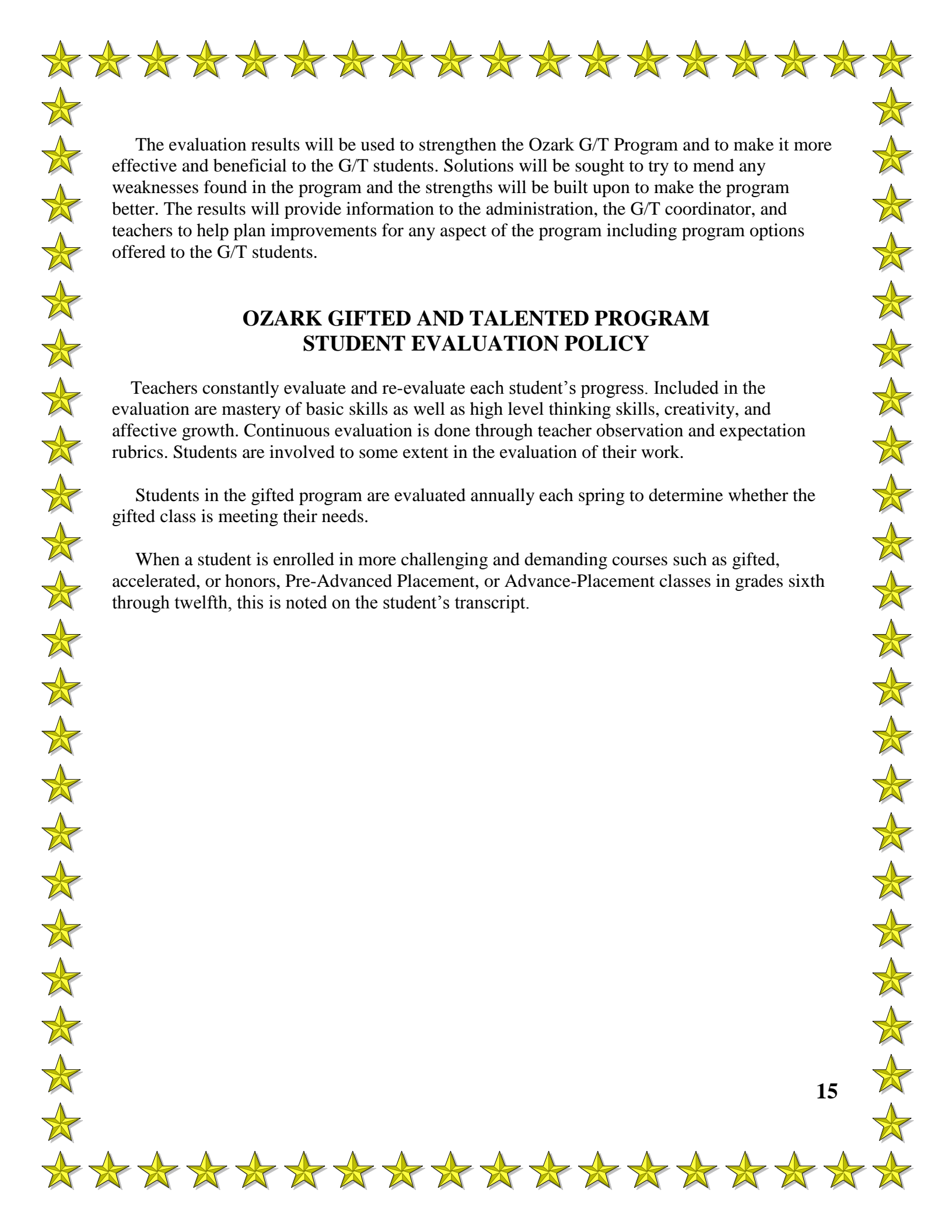
1. Parents
2. Teachers
3. Administrators
4. Counselors
5. Community members
6. GT students
7. Program self-evaluation by the G/T Coordinator

The results and information gathered will be analyzed and compiled in a clear and concise way to be communicated to:

1. The Advisory committee
2. Faculty
3. School Administration
4. School Board
5. Community

To disseminate the accrued evaluation results a summary report will be posted on the District's Website and/or presented at a school board meeting and at the annual school report to the public in the fall. A summary report is also sent to the APE Office of Gifted and Talented in the annual Application for Program Approval that is sent in by October 15 of each year.





The evaluation results will be used to strengthen the Ozark G/T Program and to make it more effective and beneficial to the G/T students. Solutions will be sought to try to mend any weaknesses found in the program and the strengths will be built upon to make the program better. The results will provide information to the administration, the G/T coordinator, and teachers to help plan improvements for any aspect of the program including program options offered to the G/T students.

## **OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM STUDENT EVALUATION POLICY**

Teachers constantly evaluate and re-evaluate each student's progress. Included in the evaluation are mastery of basic skills as well as high level thinking skills, creativity, and affective growth. Continuous evaluation is done through teacher observation and expectation rubrics. Students are involved to some extent in the evaluation of their work.

Students in the gifted program are evaluated annually each spring to determine whether the gifted class is meeting their needs.

When a student is enrolled in more challenging and demanding courses such as gifted, accelerated, or honors, Pre-Advanced Placement, or Advance-Placement classes in grades sixth through twelfth, this is noted on the student's transcript.



## OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM EXIT PROCEDURE

To exit the gifted and talented program a request may be made by the student, parents and/or the gifted and talented teacher or an administrator. The exiting procedure should be in several steps. With the exception of a parent. (If a parent requests to end GT services for their child, no committee meeting is required.)

- a. An exit request is made.
- b. A conference with gifted teacher, parent(s), student, counselor, and/or principal will be held and an action plan will be implemented.
- c. If the attempt to remedy the situation is unsuccessful, the GT placement committee will meet to discuss the situation and possible solutions or a decision to exit the program is made.
- d. The exit forms must be signed by the parents, and the GT Coordinator/Teacher.
- e. To reenter the program the student must go through the identification and placement process again.



**OZARK GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM  
APPEALS PROCEDURE**

1. Parent will communicate the problem to the building principal in writing or in person. This communication should address the specific needs of the child that are not being met.
2. The placement committee will again review thoroughly the case study that was completed on the student. The selection committee may review pertinent data and may administer additional nondiscriminatory tests. Based on the consensus of the placement committee the decision then to be placed in the program or uphold the initial decision will be made.