



*Peoria Unified School District*

*Every Student, Every Day, Prepared to Meet Tomorrow.*

## **Gifted Services and Programs**

### **Comprehensive Guide**

**Grades K-12**

**Gifted Cluster Program**  
**Apache Gifted Academy**  
**Copperwood Center for Differentiated Instruction**  
**Accelerated Integrated Model**  
**Distinguished Scholar**

**Contact the Gifted Services Office  
623-412-4670**

**Linda Siegwald, Coordinator  
Kendra Bell, Chief Academic Support Officer**

**PEORIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
GIFTED EDUCATION**

**PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS**

The Peoria Unified School District Governing Board has always been committed to providing the best educational environment to maximize the individual potential of each of its students. In the fall of 1996, the Board mandated the creation of a separate Department of Gifted Education to service the needs of the district's gifted students in grades K-12.

Since its creation, the major long-term goal of the department has been to *provide an increasingly comprehensive, challenging K-12 curriculum to meet the needs and enhance the talents of gifted learners*. In order to achieve this goal, the gifted team has concentrated on the following objectives:

1. Searching, refining, and designing multiple screening and selection procedures and instruments to accurately identify gifted students;
2. Developing, refining, and implementing gifted curriculum and service differentiation with respect to content, process, product and environment;
3. Collaboratively developing and supporting site-based programs and interdepartmental projects with administrators, teachers, parents and students to address the unique, diverse needs of gifted learners;
4. Investigating assessment procedures to measure student's growth and program effectiveness.

Since the work to achieve these objectives is ongoing, numerous changes in program procedure and program implementation continue to occur.

After perusing this handbook, our staff would be eager to visit with you to discuss any concerns, suggestions, or ideas that you may have with respect to our program. A meeting can be arranged for you with members of the gifted staff, and/or we can arrange a visit to any of our schools so that you have an opportunity to see some of our programs first-hand.

On behalf of our students, we would like to thank you for your interest, support and advocacy in the area of gifted education.

*Kendra Bell*  
Chief Academic Support Officer  
Peoria Unified School District

## **MULTIPLE SCREENING & IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

According to Arizona law, a “gifted child” means a child of lawful school age, who due to superior intellect or advanced learning ability, or both, is not afforded an opportunity for otherwise attainable progress and development in regular classroom instruction and who needs special instruction or special ancillary services, or both, to achieve at levels commensurate with his intellect and ability. (ARS15-761.7)

Within the Peoria Unified School District, the identification process to determine eligibility for gifted education is an inclusive rather than exclusive procedure. The Peoria Unified School District is committed to identifying students from any ethnic background, socioeconomic condition, or geographic location in the district that are in need of differentiated gifted programs.

Candidates for gifted education are identified through a two-part procedure: the screening process and the evaluation/selection process.

**The Screening Process** is a multi-criteria procedure used to maximize the pool of students to be selected for gifted education. Students are placed in the screening pool based upon the following criteria:

- GPA, grades;
- Aptitude tests;
- ASAP, SAT and other achievement tests above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading and math;
- Attendance records;
- Referrals/nominations from Child Study Team, teachers, parents, administrators, counselors, peers, self, or other outside reference characteristics such as curiosity, sense of humor, perseverance, questioning, etc.;
- Other evidence of interest, discovery, or emerging talent (i.e., astronaut camp, archaeological dig, quick acquisition of a second language, etc).

The appropriate staff member contacts parents of students placed in the screening pool for permission for further evaluation.

**The Evaluation/Selection Process** is the second component of the identification procedure for students to receive gifted education. Students who are placed in the screening pool, and who receive parental consent, are typically given a state of Arizona approved aptitude test, such as the Cognitive Abilities Test, comprised of verbal, quantitative and non-verbal reasoning sub-tests. Testing occurs on an on-going basis with primary testing occurring in November and March for kindergarten through seventh grade and December and August for eighth through tenth grade.

The Peoria Unified School District identifies as gifted **at least** those students who score at or above the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile on national norms, on a test of verbal, quantitative, or non-verbal reasoning adopted by the State Board of Education. (ARA15-770.A-1) Students who do not qualify based on this test may petition for an Administrative Review.

**The Administrative Review** process has been created as an additional instrument to determine student eligibility for gifted education. By request, the process is available for any student who scores at the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile on any sub-test of the Cognitive Abilities Test. Students who score below the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile but are highly motivated and committed to working harder and being challenged may also petition for a review.

The administrative review committee, made up of gifted teachers, and administrators, meets once a month to evaluate each of these students using a standard rubric and matrix developed by the team which may include, but is not limited to, essays, additional testing, interviews, and a portfolio presentation.

The **DISCOVER Assessment** process, designed by University of Arizona's C. June Maker and Aleene B. Nielson, has been incorporated into our standard identification procedure since spring, 1997. A team of teachers within our district have been trained in this process, which assesses students representing minority racial, linguistic, and ethnic populations who historically are under-identified with respect to gifted education.

**Verifiable previous enrollment** in a gifted program with similar identification procedures and standards qualifies a student for immediate placement.

## DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM

The curriculum for gifted students is differentiated from the regular curriculum in the areas of content, process, and product (ARS15-770). While all students might benefit from these modifications, they are non-negotiable for gifted learners.

The majority of identified elementary gifted students are serviced at their home schools through differentiated options such as acceleration and learning centers within the regular classrooms, and through interdisciplinary enrichment curriculum and independent study programs within Gifted Cluster classrooms. Gifted specialists at each site not only provide direct curriculum and instruction programs and services for gifted learners, but also work with regular classroom teachers to enable them to meet the needs of these learners within the classroom. Secondary gifted students are typically serviced through AIM classes, Distinguished Scholar opportunities, and advanced course offerings at each of our five high schools.

### **ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM**

Through integrated thematic units of study such as Oceanography, Archaeology, Space Ages, Architecture, and Greece, students will:

- Use critical and creative thinking to develop a response or solution for a current national or local problem;
- Use the research cycle to develop a given topic and create a technological presentation;
- Demonstrate effective communication through a written essay and oral presentation for a specific audience.

In addition to gifted specialists at each site will work with regular classroom teachers to help provide differentiated curriculum opportunities to our gifted students within the regular classroom as necessary. These options include:

- Acceleration, elaboration and sophistication of content;
- Flexible skills grouping;
- Interest and learning centers;
- Curriculum compacting;
- Formalized independent study;
- Varied, appropriate, and complex products collaboratively developed by student and teacher.

### ***Seventh/ Eighth Grade Services***

Although some of our elementary schools service 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade students through independent study, participation in the Gifted Cluster program and differentiated work within the regular classroom, most of our sites have a separate 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade literature class, as well as opportunities for students to take high school algebra courses. Students who qualify typically take this literature course in lieu of the standard seventh and/or eighth grade reading/language/social studies class.

The Gifted Services model for seventh and eighth grade students generally moves from an enrichment model to an acceleration model in order to align with the programs and opportunities offered at the high school level.

- **7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature Course** designed for highly proficient, adolescent readers, involves reading, reflecting on, and responding to challenging quality literature and authentic documents, commensurate with students' intellectual abilities. Students participate in shared inquiry

discussion of a wide variety of written information, to include materials such as Junior Great Books, editorials, technical journals, and workplace documents. Students demonstrate contextual thinking through debates, dramatic interpretations, and oral presentations, interpretive and evaluative essays, and a wide variety of creative products.

Through integrated thematic units of study, such as Heroes, Tolerance, Law, Drama and Science Fiction, students will:

- Use critical thinking and creativity to solve problems (higher-level thinking, varying viewpoints);
- Access, use, and present information effectively (research component, I-searches, technology);
- Demonstrate effective communication (speaking, writing technology presentation);
- Demonstrate civic and personal responsibility (affective and social skills);
- Display global awareness and cross-cultural understanding

This course is aligned with current state and local reading/language arts standards for grades seven and eight, and serves as a bridge between the elementary gifted and the high school A.I.M. program.

- **Quantitatively gifted students** are placed at appropriate math levels through the regular education courses at each site. Students who can work successfully at a higher-grade level in math are placed at the appropriate level. The goal is for all mathematically gifted students to have an opportunity to complete Integrated Algebra in the eighth grade so that they can successfully take Integrated Intermediate Algebra during their freshman year of high school.

### **HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

There are three basic classroom components to the high school A.I.M. curriculum: Humanities, Science, and Distinguished Scholar.

- **A.I.M. Humanities** is an interdisciplinary component that integrates literature, history, geography, culture study, music and art appreciation. The individual courses are set up in two-hour blocks, typically taught by a two-teacher team.

**Ninth grade students** take A.I.M. English 1-2 (H) concurrently with A.I.M. Global Humanities (H); **tenth graders** take A.I.M. English 3-4 (H) concurrently with A.I.M. World History/Geography (H). Emphasis is placed on the historical development of the cultural aspects of society and on the dynamics of change. Writing research papers is required, along with supplemental and primary source reading materials. This course is designed predominantly for verbally gifted students.

**Juniors** take A.I.M. American Literature (H) and A.I.M. AZ/US History (H). Emphasis is on the historical development of American culture, its impact on American society today, and the possible ramifications for the future. The writing of research papers and literary essays is required along with significant outside reading. These two integrated courses meet the graduation requirements for Arizona/U.S. History and English 5-6. Juniors may opt to take Advanced Placement (AP) Arizona/US History (H) in addition to these offerings.

- **Honors/AP Math Offerings** for quantitatively gifted students have a compendium of choices in the area of mathematics at the high school. The majority of quantitatively gifted students complete Integrated Intermediate Algebra (402) in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Students are initially placed and moved through the high school mathematics program based on

demonstrated competency. During high school quantitatively gifted students typically take the following rigorous courses.

Intermediate Advanced Algebra (H) includes the following topics: equations, inequalities, systems of equations, factoring, conic sections, arithmetic sequences and series, geometric sequences and series, permutations and combinations, variation, functions (linear, quadratic, exponential, logarithmic, rational, polynomial) and operations on functions. This honors course is for the motivated student who desires a fast-paced instruction and a rigorous curriculum. A TI-82 or a TI-83 graphing calculator is highly recommended. This course meets one of the four math requirements for university admission.

Integrated Advanced Geometry (H) focuses on many of the same concepts that are included in the Integrated Geometry course; however, students will be required to demonstrate a higher level of performance on established outcomes. Included in the course are the strategies of inductive and deductive reasoning to find the measures of angles and segments in polygons and circles. These strategies are extended to solids to find areas and volume. Coordinate geometry and constructions are thematic throughout the course. Other topics covered are parallel lines and geometric probability. This course replaces Integrated Geometry as one of the four math requirements for university admission. This honors course is for the self-motivated student who desires a fast-paced instruction and a rigorous curriculum.

Pre-Calculus (H) includes the concepts of exponential functions, logarithmic functions, sequences and series, conic sections, nonlinear systems, and graphs of special functions. The second semester focuses on the trigonometric concepts of functions, inverse functions, identities, and vectors and their application. A TI-82 graphing calculator is recommended.

A.P. Calculus 1-2 includes the basics of both derivatives and integrals and their application, and other related concepts, such as polynomial rational, logarithmic, exponential, trigonometric functions, and an extensive study of limits and continuity. Students work with several technological programs on calculators and computers, giving them the opportunity to solve and justify solutions for authentic situations. Students are expected to take the Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus AB exam. A TI-82 graphing calculator is highly recommended.

A.P. Calculus 3-4 (H) is an advanced, rigorous course where students study advanced integration techniques, convergence and divergence of infinite series, parametric equations, polar coordinates, vector analysis and spatial geometry, partial derivatives, and multiple integration. Students are expected to take the second part of the Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus BC exam. A TI-82 graphing calculator is highly recommended.

- **A.I.M. Science**, like A.I.M. Math, is a differentiated curriculum designed to meet the unique needs of the gifted student. Students apply knowledge of scientific principles to analyze situations, demonstrate inter-relatedness within and outside of science disciplines and propose solutions, both negative and positive.

A.I.M. Science I: Scientific Inquiry/Problem Solving is an accelerated and in-depth science course. Students are actively involved with experimentation, analysis, and evaluation of major concepts related to chemistry and biochemistry. This course meets the science lab requirement for state universities.

A.I.M. Science II: Chemistry/Intro to Authentic Research (H) builds upon the fundamentals of major chemistry concepts and includes an introduction to organic chemistry. Scientific

investigation and research skills are a major component of this course. This course meets the science lab requirement.

AP Biology, AP Chemistry, and/or AP Physics (A/B) (H) are three courses available to juniors and seniors. Each of the Advanced Placement classes is equivalent to a full-year college course. To receive a full year college credit, most colleges require a score of "4" on the final exam. The content, labs, and final exam are under the aegis of the College Board.

### THE DISTINGUISHED SCHOLAR ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM

The Distinguished Scholar Endorsement Program is an exciting component of A.I.M., which has been designed to provide an opportunity for our most highly competent and academically able students to demonstrate their excellence and earn an endorsement as a Distinguished Scholar.

A Distinguished Scholar Endorsement is based upon the following criteria:

- Have a four-year plan that reflects honors/A.P. courses;
- Maintain a minimum G.P.A. of 3.5;
- Complete a research design portfolio project based on the district's adopted exit outcomes and specific criteria;
- Defend the portfolio project demonstrating academic excellence.

Pursuit of a Distinguished Scholar Endorsement is a rigorous endeavor most appropriate for highly motivated students whose academic abilities and talents span across the entire curricular spectrum. Students who achieve this endorsement will graduate with special honors and recognition during the graduation ceremony.

### CENTER/SITE BASED PROGRAMS

#### COPPERWOOD CENTER FOR DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION (CCDI)

A multi-aged self-contained classroom opened at Copperwood Elementary as the first phase of a Center for Differentiated Instruction in August 2000. Currently the multi-aged classroom serves one hundred sixty second through eighth grade students from across the district. While there is no cost for the program, transportation needs to be provided by parents.

The goal of this program is to provide students who have advanced intellectual, academic, and/or creative capabilities, which cannot be successfully realized in a traditional setting, the opportunity to dynamically interact with a team of gifted specialists as well as peers of similar aptitude within a rigorous, interdisciplinary learning environment in order to reach their highest levels of learning and accomplishment.

Differentiation in environment, instructional methods, course content, process, and product expectations provide appropriate educational experiences for these students. Standard curriculum is compacted for students who demonstrate mastery and proficiency in basic skills. Students are provided with a rigorous interdisciplinary core curriculum of Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and Math. They also have an opportunity to explore areas of interest in depth through independent research. Students have an opportunity to interact with regular age/grade level appropriate peers at the site during recess, lunch, art, music, and physical education as well as during special activities such as DARE and outdoor education.

Entrance Criteria: While any gifted student may be referred for consideration of eligibility for the Center program, the Department of Gifted Services will automatically review students who:

- Exhibit extreme asynchronous behavior with respect to their emotional, social, and intellectual development;
- Are diagnosed as twice exceptional (i.e. LD/GT);
- Reside at sites where differentiated learning does not occur;
- Require differentiated curriculum for more than fifty percent of the day;
- Exhibit over-excitabilities attributed to their giftedness;
- Have a 140+ IQ;
- Score at or above the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile on two of the three subtests or have a combined score of 276 percentile points or above on the Cognitive Abilities Test;

Those who are interested in participating in the self-contained center need to engage in the following formalized referral process:

1. The person referring the student, prepares a student profile which includes a screening instrument, student work samples, achievement data, a personal letter from the student documenting interest in learning, and a narrative which explains the reason the student needs this service. Any other special circumstances or information for the committee to consider would also be important.
2. The referral packet is submitted directly to the teachers of Gifted Services. Referrals may be made at any time, but will be reviewed at set times during the year.
3. A Referral Team of district personnel, composed of a psychologist, two gifted services teachers, the Teacher on Assignment for Gifted Services, the home site administrator, reviews the referral and other personnel as needed.
4. A notice is sent to the parents of the Referral Team's recommendation. If the student is determined to be eligible for placement, parents may accept or reject placement. Eligible students are placed in the eligibility pool and are placed into the program as an appropriate opening occurs. Students who are placed in the program will be evaluated on an ongoing basis to measure academic growth, model effectiveness with respect to the learner, and to determine continued placement within the program.

**Program Assessment:** It is the expectation that the self-contained classroom will benefit the students within the program as well as the school, and will serve as a model for additional satellite programs throughout the district. Assessment of program effectiveness will be designed around these expected outcomes:

- Higher academic gains on standardized testing measures;
- More specific individualized instruction and direct teaching;
- Challenging, extended curriculum;
- Differentiated content, process, product, and learning environment;
- Higher levels of self-confidence and self-reliance among students;
- Increased parent involvement and satisfaction;
- Access to a model for educational excellence, and best practice research;
- Increase in teacher expectations of students;
- Higher level of teacher satisfaction and enthusiasm.

Program assessment tools and techniques will be designed and implemented in cooperation with the Department of Research and a comprehensive report of the findings will be published for Council and the Governing Board.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Attendance**

Students who meet the criteria established by the legislature are to be provided differentiated educational services. Gifted education is part of the students' regular program and regular attendance is required.

### **Behavior Expectations**

Behavior must be appropriate to the situation and setting. While talking to others may be acceptable in a group-learning situation, it is not acceptable in a more directive lesson. Students in the program are given three guidelines for appropriate behavior:

1. The student is responsible for personal and interactive behavior;
2. The student will display the appropriate learning behaviors in any situation. If the student is not aware of what is appropriate, the teacher will clarify what is expected;
3. The student will allow others to maintain appropriate behaviors.

If a student is unable for whatever reason to maintain appropriate behaviors, the teacher will work with him/her to determine what will improve the situation. If the student persists in demonstrating inappropriate behavior, a conference with the student, teacher, school administrator, and parents will be convened to deal with the situation on an individual basis.

### **Homework Parameters**

Students in the K-2 Search and Project I.D.E.A.L. programs will not be expected to make up guided or independent assignments when they miss a class to attend resource class. They will, however, be expected to learn the concepts that are presented and to take any tests that they have missed.

### **Maintenance**

Students are expected to maintain an A, B, or C in graded gifted classes. A grade of D or F will signal a review process with parents in conference. Intervention strategies will be investigated, implemented, documented, and assessed by the teacher and review team, if necessary, to maximize the opportunity for success of every student within the program.

Students may not be arbitrarily removed from a gifted class. Termination or reduction of gifted education must be a collaborative decision involving the student, parents, teachers, and administrators.

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We encourage you to share your thoughts, feelings, and support of all the gifted programs within the Peoria Unified School District. Should you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact the gifted staff at your school, Mrs. Linda Siegwald, Coordinator for Gifted Services (623)412-4670.