

Gifted and Talented Education in Arkansas

Compiled by **AAGEA**
(Arkansas Association of Gifted Education Administrators)

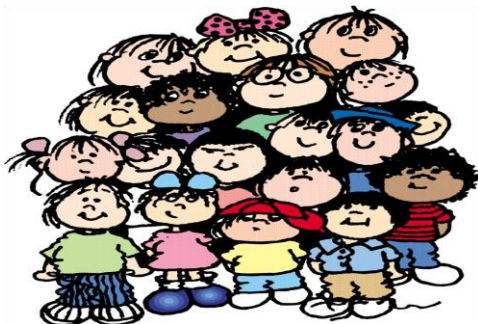
Arkansas defines Gifted and talented children and youth as those of high potential or ability whose learning characteristics and educational needs require qualitatively differentiated educational experiences and/or services. Possession of these talents and gifts, or the potential for their development, will be evidenced through an interaction of above average intellectual ability, task commitment and /or motivation, and creative ability.

Arkansas supports gifted education services through funding provided by legislative mandates:

- Act 106 of 1979 established the Office for the Education of Gifted and Talented Children and Act 445 of 1983 established the original standards for accreditation of public schools that were approved in 1984.
- Act 917 of 1995 changed the funding process for local school districts regarding gifted and talented students. The new law requires expenditures that replace previous funding.
- Arkansas Department of Education provides limited funding for regional specialists to support districts to serve the needs of gifted students.

Current data indicates that Arkansas school districts serve approximately 475,000 students, with between 9-10% of those identified and served as gifted and talented. Gifted programming and services for students in grades K-12 are required for every district. Program Coordinators or Directors are required for each district. Many districts provide services by employing gifted education teachers as well as a coordinator or director.

Arkansas funds each district for services to gifted students through a formula providing monies at a rate of 15% of foundational funding times 5% of the third quarter Average Daily Membership (ADM). This is an expenditure requirement that is reported out.



...as much as the world has benefited from the contributions of gifted individuals, it is disturbing...to realize that the population least likely to learn and achieve its potential is the highly gifted. – Joseph Cardillo, [Gifted Children: Nurturing Genius \(Part One\)](#)

RATIONALE FOR SERVICES

- Developing and nurturing high performance supports the future prosperity of our nation, state, community, and of individuals.
- Most gifted students are not developing to the level their potential would indicate is possible. (http://edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2011/20110920_HighFlyers/Do_High_Flyers_Maintain_Their_Altitude_FINAL.pdf)
- In the normal distribution of ability and/or of achievement, 68% score near the mean; students far from the mean require different educational experiences to develop optimally or at all.
- All children deserve the opportunity to learn something new each day.
- Schools have a responsibility to meet the learning needs of all students. Gifted children are found in all income, cultural, and racial groups; gifted children may also have one or more disabilities.
- Most teachers say their brightest students are bored and under challenged. (<http://www.edexcellence.net/publications/high-achieving-students-in.html>)
- Most teachers have no training in working with gifted learners. (http://www.edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2008/200806_highachievingstudentsintheeraofnochildleftbehind/20080625-farkas-pp.pdf)
- In classroom observations, most learning activities are not differentiated for gifted learners. (<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=538>)
- Gifted students show greater achievement gains when they have opportunities to learn together. Ability grouping for the gifted is an evidence-based practice. Grouping must be accompanied by more in-depth curriculum and more rigorous instructional methods for gains to occur. (http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2013/05/20/fp_olszewski.html) (Synthesis of Research on Educational Practice, Karen Rogers GCQ, Volume 51, Number 4, Fall 2007)
- Greater learning gains occur when challenge is provided daily in the talent area.
- Gifted students benefit from opportunities to pursue individual interests in depth.
- Acceleration combined with enrichment (tied to content) is needed for optimal growth.
- Gifted learners respond well to a faster pace of instruction with more complex and in-depth content.
- Further differentiation of gifted services, curriculum, pacing, and instruction is necessary to meet individual needs. This is true even within programs such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate.
- Some gifted students will need additional and ongoing supports in order to be successful.
- Teachers of gifted students need ongoing specialized professional development led by qualified individuals with deep content knowledge and experience in gifted education.
- Learning experiences should be developed and articulated across K-12 for systematic talent development.
- Gifted students benefit from differentiated guidance and counseling services and deliberate cultivation of intrapersonal skills that support a commitment to high achievement.
- With the focus on student growth for all students, it is important to be aware that the sub-population of gifted students risk growing the least.
- The majority of GT students spend a high percentage of their time in the regular education classroom. Therefore, it's essential that teachers and other school personnel are familiar with the characteristics of giftedness and possess an array of strategies to address and meet the students' learning differences and needs.

(Information gathered from www.nagc.org)