

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #213 (2000-2001)

March 12, 2001

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: PROPOSED STATE PLAN OF SERVICE
FOR GIFTED FOR THE 2001-2004 SCHOOL YEARS

RECOMMENDATION:

As required by law, it is recommended that the Anchorage School Board approve the attached State Plan of Service for Gifted Students for the 2001-2004 school years. The Plan is comprised of three sections: Child Find Plan, the Procedures and Criteria used to evaluate potentially gifted students, and the Ranges and Types of services for gifted students. A brief description of these sections is described on the following pages.

PERTINENT FACTS:

Part I: Child Find Plan

The Gifted Program utilizes referrals from parents and teachers to identify students who are eligible for gifted services. Referrals are also accepted from private schools and home schools. Child Find activities are conducted through annual newspaper notices and information available in all public schools. The Gifted Program also utilizes local television and radio appearances, program videos, and a program handbook in order to disseminate information.

The referral process includes a referral form, a teacher checklist, a health screening, written parent permission to evaluate, and a conference with the parent. Upon receiving a completed referral packet, gifted resource staff administer standardized achievement and ability tests. After the child qualifies, a multidisciplinary team, including the parent, meets to review the need for gifted services and to write the formal Individualized Education Plan. The IEP includes the student's present level of performance, and his individual goals for program placement. (See State Plan for IEP paperwork documents).

Part II: Procedures for Standard Placement

In order to qualify for gifted services, along with demonstrated need, the student must have a qualifying score on the "Teacher Checklist", the Test of Cognitive Skills/2, the Cognitive Abilities Test, and the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement. Scores at or above the 96th percentile are considered to be qualifying scores. A multidisciplinary team meets to determine eligibility and to write an IEP. The Gifted Plan of Service also delineates procedures for "Nonstandard Placements". Nonstandard placements may be made for students in Title I schools, bilingual students, students with disabilities, underachieving students, and students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Nonstandard placements require a demonstrated special need for gifted services and additionally, the student must have one qualifying score on the gifted matrix. In some cases, a portfolio can be used to demonstrate need for services. In other cases, a comparison might be made between the student's grade level achievement score and those of his peers. A score of 1.5 years above the current grade placement is considered significant.

Part III: Range and Types of Services

Incorporating Gifted Needs Into Today's Education (IGNITE) Program

Elementary students in grades 2-6 who meet the above criteria receive services via the IGNITE pullout enrichment program. Students attend classes one day a week for 2-3 hours. Students may be served at their home school, or may be bused to a nearby site for IGNITE classes. Students receive instruction in higher-level thinking skills offered through a variety of curriculum topics and themes. Ability and interest differentiate curriculum. There are currently approximately 1,300 students in the IGNITE Program.

The Individualized Acceleration (IA) Program

In addition to the above mentioned criteria, to be placed in the IA program, a student must have achievement and ability scores above the 98th percentile and an IQ score at or above 143 ± 3 to qualify. There are currently 112 students in grades preschool through sixth grade in this self-contained program. The program is housed at Rogers Park Elementary School. Students in the IA program are academically performing 2-3 years beyond their same-age peers.

Curriculum centers on adopted district curriculum in combination with compacting, acceleration and enrichment.

The Middle Level Gifted Program

Standard placement requires the student to have a demonstrated need for gifted services, a qualifying teacher checklist, and qualifying achievement and ability test scores. These scores must be above the 96th percentile in one of four areas: Total Reading, Total Language, Science, or Total Battery. If these conditions are met, a multidisciplinary team meets with the parent and student to write the formal IEP for the student.

Requirements for nonstandard placement at the middle level are the same as for the elementary gifted program.

The High School Mentorship Program

To participate in this program, a student must have one qualifying test score at the 95th percentile and also meet high performance standards. The level of performance is determined by interviews, written recommendations, grade transcripts, and a product or experience review. An IEP is written for qualifying students, following the same procedures as for students at the elementary level.

The majority of the students receiving these services are seniors in high school. The goal is to assist the seniors in exploring career opportunities and areas of interest to the student. Adult community mentors are selected in career fields of interest to students. Students focus time outside the school day to work closely with the mentor and produce a significant product demonstrating knowledge in the field of study.

The Secondary Highly-Gifted Program

Highly gifted students at the secondary level whose needs cannot be met by AP or Honors classes alone may be referred for placement with other students with like abilities at their particular school in certain core classes. Eligible students must have been previously identified as highly gifted and have a current IEP. Curriculum compacting may be utilized to enable these students to participate in accelerated classes and early placement in AP classes. This program is being developed at Romig Middle School and West High School.

These students often require flexible scheduling in order to participate in classes beyond their current grade assignments.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The State Plan of Service for Gifted Students for the 2001-2004 school year was completed with the following community input:

Parent meetings: February 12, February 13, and February 26
Staff meeting: February 9

A Parent Survey was distributed to all program students and at parent meetings to determine satisfaction with various components of the gifted program.

CHANGES

The recommended State Plan of Service continues with current services with exceptions in the following:

- IA qualifying IQ score changed from 145 to 143 +/- 3. This is similar to the qualifying score from 1997.
- The elimination of the identification of middle school gifted students in the area of math. It has been determined that the district not provide gifted math classes, but rather place students in appropriate level classes according to demonstrated ability within the regular education program. The Gifted Program will continue to identify middle school students in the areas of Language Arts and Science.

FUTURE CONCERNS

The Gifted Program office recognizes the need for some significant changes in the proposed Plan of Service. These changes are as follows:

- 1.) It is anticipated that Benchmark test scores will be substituted for California Achievement Test scores in the identification of students.
- 2.) A change in the delivery model at the elementary level may be needed if staffing remains static while the number of identified students continues to increase.
- 3.) An identification matrix is needed for secondary high school students who require cluster grouping to meet their academic goals.

These changes were not recommended at this time as the gifted state statutes are currently being reviewed and will possibly change by next year. The administration will need to again review the gifted program in light of the new statutes and will address the above issues in this context next year.

CC/PM/RR/JG

Attachment: State Plan of Service for Gifted for the 2001-2004 School Years

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