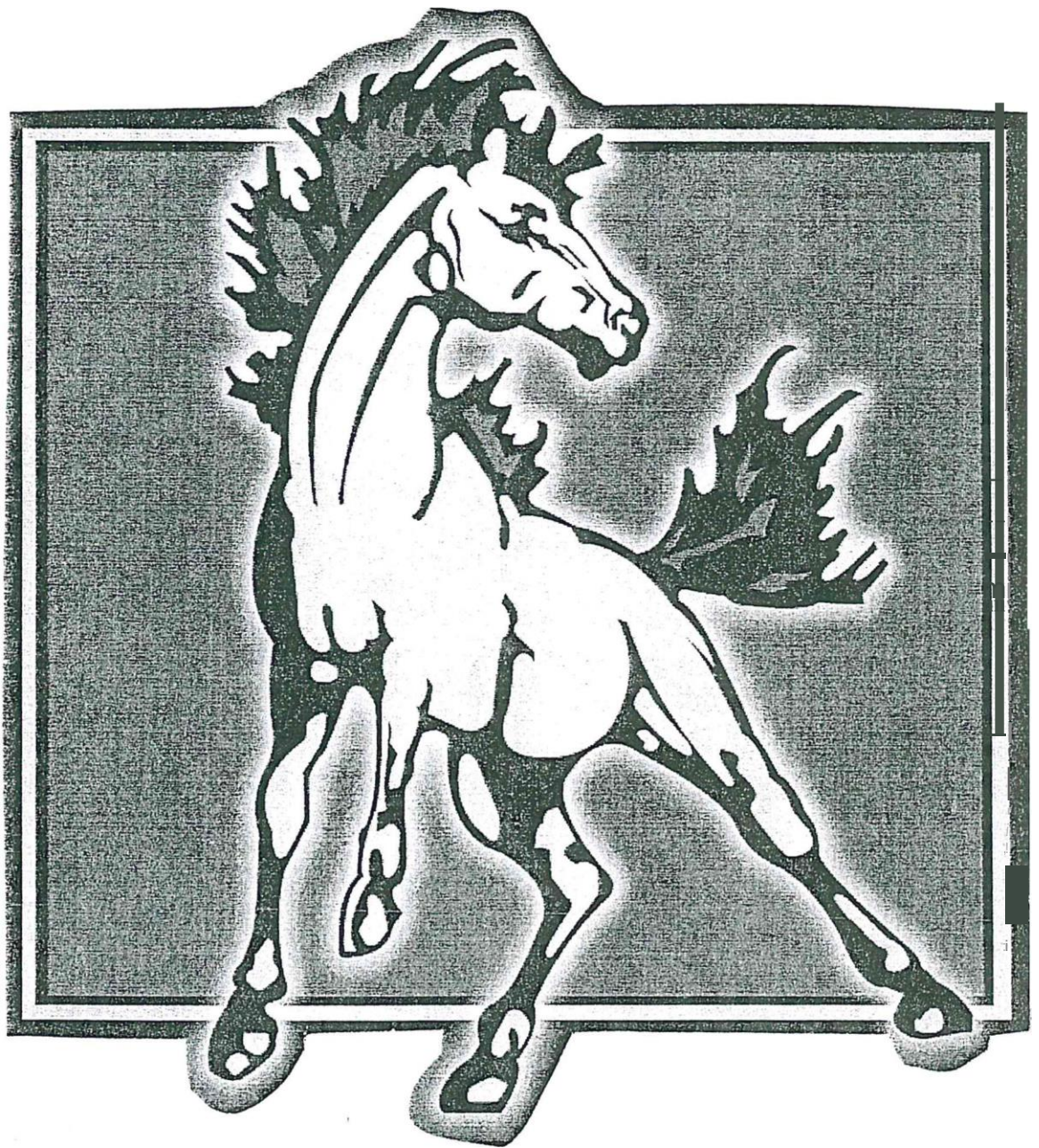


Rivercrest Gifted and Talented Education Handbook



Rivercrest Gifted and Talented Education Philosophy

The Rivercrest School District believes that each student should be offered educational experiences that provide opportunities for the development of the student's full potential. Gifted and talented students are those who, by virtue of abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment, are capable of high performance. Gifted and talented students are found in every segment of the population. Recognizing the potential rewards for the individual and society, the Rivercrest School District believes the abilities of the gifted and talented student must be cultivated, nurtured, and developed. These students require provisions that are different from those normally provided by the regular school program. The gifted and talented program is committed to developing within the student both a desire for excellence and a sense of productive responsibility to self, school, community, and to the changing society.

Program Goals

Recognizing that each gifted and/or talented student brings to the learning experience special abilities and needs, the Rivercrest School District will endeavor to meet the following goals through the Program for Gifted and Talented Students:

- Enhance their development in creativity, special talents, higher thinking processes and leadership skills.

- o Provide accurate and meaningful information in order that teachers, parents, students and community members will understand our program.
- ..- Provide for interaction between the students and members of the community through sharing experiences and mentorships, i.e. local authors, artists in residence and faculty .
- ..i To provide experiences/activities that are purposefully designed to expose students to a wide variety of disciplines, visual and performing arts, topics, issues, occupations, hobbies, persons, places and events that are not ordinarily covered in the regular curriculum.
Provide students with the opportunities and environment to pursue in-depth areas of special interest at a rate appropriate to each child's needs which will encourage self-directed, motivated learning in the learner.
- " Provide the gifted and/or talented learner the opportunity to interact with other gifted and/or talented students.
- ii Provide experiences/activities which will encourage the development of a positive self-concept in the learner.
- Provide a curriculum which will enhance the student's ability to interact effectively with others.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED/TALENTED CHILDREN

- o They typically learn to read earlier. They read quickly, and intensely.
- e They commonly learn basic skills better, more quickly, and with less practice.
- ., They are able to construct and handle abstractions than their age mates.
- o They take less for granted, seeking the "how's" and "why's".
- ii They display a better ability to work independently at an earlier age for longer periods of time than other children.
- ., They can sustain longer periods of concentration and attention.
- " They are usually able to respond and relate to parents, teachers, and other adults.
- ., They may prefer the company of older children and adults to that of their peers.
- " They are frequently able to pick up and interpret nonverbal cues and can draw inferences that other children must have spelled out for them.

CREATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

- They are fluent thinkers able to produce a large quantity of possibilities, consequences, or related ideas.
- They are original thinkers seeking new, unusual associations and combinations among items of information. They also have the ability to see relationships among seemingly unrelated objects, ideas, or facts.
- They are flexible thinkers, able to use many different alternatives and approaches to problem solving.
They are elaborative thinkers, producing new steps, ideas, and responses.
- " They are good guessers and can construct hypotheses or "what if" questions readily.
- e They have a high level of curiosity about objects, ideas, situations, or events.
- 3 They are more willing than their peers to express opinions and ideas.
- 1 They are sensitive to beauty.

LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS

- " Gifted and talented children often show keen powers of observation, exhibit a sense of the significant, and have an eye for important details.
- ; They often read a great deal on their own.
- They take pleasure in intellectual activity.
They have rapid insight into cause-effect relationships.
- They tend to like structure, organization, and consistency in their environments.
- " They often have a large storehouse of information regarding a variety of topics that they can recall quickly.
They have a well-developed common sense.

BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS

- They are willing to examine the unusual and are highly inquisitive. Their behavior is **often** well organized, goal directed, and efficient with respect to tasks and problems.
- They enjoy learning new things and new ways of doing things.
- e They have a longer attention and concentration span than their peers.

- They are more independent and less subject to peer pressure than their age mates.
- They have a highly developed moral and ethical sense.
- They may seek to conceal their abilities so as not to "stick out".
- They often have a well-developed sense of self and a realistic idea about their capabilities and potential.

(Prepared by Bruce Boston, Fairfax, Virginia.)

Purpose (2.0)

The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a guide in program development and implementation of the Rivercrest Gifted and Talented Program. Revisions will and should occur as teachers, students, parents, and administrative personnel interact and react to the program and the curriculum. Educators deal with children each as unique as a snowflake. Gifted children also are different and show their giftedness in a variety of ways. Because of this uniqueness in children, it is difficult to pinpoint who the gifted actually are. The identification process described herein is one the Rivercrest Advisory Council for Gifted and Talented Education deemed best for their program's needs.

Program Definition (3.0)

According to the Arkansas Department of Education, the following definition shall guide in providing services and opportunities for students identifies as gifted and talented in Arkansas: Gifted and talented children and youth are those with high potential or ability whose learning and characteristics and educational needs require qualitatively differentiated educational experiences and/or services. Possession of these talents and gifts, or the potential for development, will be evidenced through an interaction of above-average intellectual ability, task commitment and/or motivation, and creative ability

3.01 Approved teacher of the gifted: This refers to a specialist who has attained certification, passed appropriate state approved assessments and meets standards by the State Board of Education through the Arkansas Department of Education Professional Licensure Department for add-on

endorsement in gifted education.

3.02 Approved Administrator/Coordinator of Gifted Programs: This refers to a specialist who has attained certification, passed appropriate state approved assessments, and meets standards as set by the State Board of Education through the Arkansas Department of Education Professional Licensure Department for add-on endorsement in gifted education and in gifted education administration and which promotes the administration/coordination of programs and services for gifted students in kindergarten through grade twelve.

Community Involvement (4.00)

Parents and community members are informed annually of the program opportunities for gifted and talented students at Rivercrest schools open houses and by way of a brochure. The brochure includes characteristics and needs of the gifted, program goals of the district, and the nomination and identification process. Parents of new fourth grade gifted and talented students are invited to the annual tea that is held for them to meet the school district's GT personnel. Parents are encouraged to drop by the *G/T* room during Parent/Teacher conferences. The Osceola Times has a weekly school page that has information about the program as well as other area school information. Parents are welcome to go on GT field trips with their children.

There is a gifted and talented web site for parents and students that includes nomination and testing information. Also on the website are forms for parent, self, and peer nominations.

Staff Development Plan (5.00)

The GT Coordinator(s) and teacher(s) receive specialized training by attending courses in gifted education suggested for certification, as well as being updated through participation in conferences and workshops. (Example: AGATE, AP.GEA and Crowley's Ridge Cooperative meetings.) 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 needs of the gifted and talented program. Staff development is based on

local education needs of gifted students and altered accordingly. Gifted education is funded at least in part by school districts or educational agencies. Release time should be allotted to teachers for the development of differentiated educational programs and related resources. The gifted program will be a part of the yearly district community meeting in order to make the community aware of program options.

5.1 The South Mississippi School District will provide ongoing opportunities for growth in the area of Gifted and Talented Education by organizing a flexible and varying program to meet the needs of the school personnel. Areas of training appropriate for the entire school staff will be provided, which may include:

- Characteristics and needs
- o Teaching strategies
- Utilization of community resources
- Identification procedures
- Creativity
- a Program Evaluation

It is the gifted and talented coordinator's responsibility to provide a less formal means of staff development such as:

- Adding books and journals to the school's professional library.
- Sharing articles and other professional information.
- o Providing information on gifted and talented workshops.
- 9 Providing short in-building staff meetings.
- .11 Sharing identified students' products with staff.

Junior High School and High School teachers will be trained in PreAdvanced Placement (PreAP), Advanced Placement (AP) or Secondary Content for Gifted Education by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). Educators serving the gifted are expected to attend training sessions and utilize higher order thinking strategies. New educators to the district will be asked to attend sessions offered at the end of the year or at the beginning of the next school year as needed. It is the responsibility of the Curriculum Administrator and the Principals to assure that proper training is acquired and certificates are sent to the Gifted Education Coordinator for documentation. Teachers certified in Advanced placement should renew their certification every five years and submit a Certificate to the Curriculum Coordinator and Gifted Coordinator for the district. Teachers serving through secondary content must obtain training every three years

5.02 Opportunities to increase knowledge of the education of gifted and talented students are provided on a regular basis for school board members, school and district administrators, teachers, and support staff. The gifted coordinator/teacher will be encouraged to attend regional, state, and national workshops and conferences, which will provide staff development opportunities for the GT teacher(s) and other interested staff members. The GT Coordinator will attend meetings sponsored by the local Co-op, AGATE and/or AAGEA to keep updated in current trends and received specialized training in gifted education. Arkansas State University's GT program will be utilized for assistance with professional growth, as well as the Crowley's Ridge Educational Cooperative GT Program. Staff members will also be encouraged to attend sessions provided by educational cooperatives to assist with special training in gifted education. The Gifted and Talented Handbook, as well as the Rules and Regulations: will be distributed to administrators, parents, and educators. Requests to obtain copies may be submitted after the October 15th report. The report is also available by contacting any administrator.

Personnel (6.00)

6.1 The person who will teach the homogeneously-grouped identified students must hold a current Arkansas teaching license, pass appropriate state approved assessments, and meet performance standards as set by the state of Arkansas. Administrators/Coordinators will keep all certificates and transcripts on file. Educators trained in the PreAP/AP/Secondary Content must receive appropriate training and submit certificates to the curriculum coordinator and GT Administrator/Coordinator.

6.2 Personnel who administrate/coordinate the program for GT students (K-12) must hold a current Arkansas teaching license, pass appropriate state approved assessments, and meet performance standards as set by the State Board of Education through the Arkansas Department of Education, Professional Licensure Department for add-on endorsement in gifted education and in gifted education Administration, and promote the administration/coordination of programs and services for gifted students in kindergarten through grade twelve. Qualifications for the position of coordinator/teacher of the GT Program shall include a degree, passing appropriate state assessments and receiving endorsement in gifted education with experience in teaching. Qualified candidates must meet the performance standards as set by the State Board of Education through the Arkansas Department of Education, Professional

Licensure Department for add-on endorsements in gifted education and in gifted education administration. The position demands that the coordinator/teacher be flexible, approachable, and generous with time and resources. In addition to time spent in planning the overall structure of the district gifted program and direct services to gifted students; the coordinator/facilitator(s) will perform a variety of duties that promote integration of the gifted program with the regular education program.

These duties include:

- a) Working with classroom teachers, counselors, administrators, and other personnel
- b) Locating resources and preparing materials and methods for teaching the gifted
- c) Developing an appropriate curriculum for teaching the gifted students
- d) Arranging in-school and out-of-school experiences
- e) Facilitating special projects and events within the gifted program
- f) Attending workshops and conferences to keep informed of new rules, regulations, etc.
- g) Compiling screened and referred information regarding students, and keeping ongoing records of the students/identification of the gifted
- h) Contacting parents and staff about placement results
- i) Supervising independent studies and mentorship
- j) Conducting or arranging staff development activities under the supervision of the curriculum coordinator and/or principals
- k) Meeting with the identification committee and advisory board at least once a year
- l) Preparing the Program Approval for the State Department of Education
- m) Updating policies and procedures for the gifted education department
- n) Purchasing and contracting services and supplies for the local GT budget

The administrator shall be responsible for finding the candidate who best meets qualifications through normal hiring practices, with consideration of personal characteristics associated with gifted educators according to the district's school policy. These characteristics should be considered by the school district as they relate to program goals and objectives:

- a) A sincere concern for gifted children and youth
- b) Enthusiasm for gifted programming
- c) The ability to be flexible in time, pace, materials, instructional patterns, etc.
- d) Confident and skillful public relations
- e) Good sense of humor
- f) Acceptance of diverse ideas and behaviors and ability to deal with student criticism
- g) Possessing a high degree of professionalism
- h) Willingness to meet Arkansas certification requirements for gifted education
- i) Successful teaching experience
- j) Willingness to attend workshops and conferences related to GT education
- k) Willingness to assist with extra-curricular programs as needed
- l) Valid Arkansas teaching license

Teaching style should include:

- a) student, not teacher centered
- b) give students choices and responsibilities
- c) provide for individual differences by using a variety of resources
- d) emphasis on independence, not conformity

6.3 All prospective employees must fill out an application form provided by the district, in addition to any resume provided, all of which information is to be placed in the personnel file of those employed. If the employee provides false or misleading information, or if (s)he withholds information to the same effect, it may be grounds for dismissal.

Rivercrest School District is an equal opportunity employer and shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability. In the event of an opening in a position in the South Mississippi County School District the superintendent or his/her designee shall interview prospective employees that are certified in the respective fields and make recommendations to the board for hiring. Criteria for teachers of the gifted must meet the minimum standards of:

- a) Six graduate hours in gifted education completed by June 1 of first year of teaching gifted/talented students.
- b) Twelve graduate hours in gifted education completed by June 1 of the second year of teaching gifted/talented students.
- c) Eighteen graduate hours in gifted education completed by June 1 of the second year of teaching gifted/talented students.
- d) Must be recommended by the building principal to the superintendent of schools for final hiring procedures. This recommendation will be based on:
 - o A willingness to accept responsibilities of a teacher of the gifted as stated in job description.
 - Must be a good communicator with parents, teachers and students.
 - Must be enthusiastic about teaching.

6.4 Job Descriptions

Administrator/Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education

The Administrator/Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education reports directly to the Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent. The Administrator/Coordinator directs the day-by-day management of the gifted and talented education program and enforcement of the policies of the district.

Duties and responsibilities of the Administrator/Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education include, but are not limited to, the following:

I. School-community relations

1. Conduct community awareness of the GT program and its activities
2. Organize and chair the advisory committee
3. Coordinate services and programs with community organizations and other
4. Agencies to provide diversity and enrichment in the curriculum and to promote the public schools
5. Encourage active parent/community volunteer participation in the GT program
6. Provide a liaison between parents and the GT program in the schools; regular teachers and GT teachers; the administration, GT program personnel, and the community at large
7. Communicate regularly with the school board

II. Staff personnel development

1. Assist with the interview process and recommend teachers for the GT program
2. Acquaint staff members with the state district procedures, rules, and regulations
3. Prepare handbook of the Rivercrest School District's gifted and talented education program
4. Prepare annual timeline of program activities and deadlines
5. Evaluate staff performance and suggest methods for improving instruction and/or classroom management skills
6. Assist program *staff* with communicating effectively with community, parents, building administrators, and co-workers
7. Assist in resolving conflicts
8. Counsel with teachers and make recommendations
9. Conduct teacher in-service in gifted education for identification and implementation of program
10. Provide support and resources for teachers with gifted students in their classrooms
11. Assist program staff in meeting Arkansas Department of Education certification requirements
12. Provide opportunities for program staff to attend workshops, classes, and meetings to stay informed about current trends, practices, and research in gifted education

III. Pupil personnel development

1. Accept referrals of students for the GT program
2. Establish case studies on students who have been screened for GT identification
3. Conduct assessments of students for identification and establish profiles
4. Chair the selection committee for identification of students for the GT program
5. Monitor reports of student progress
6. Make specific suggestions for dealing with students who are not being appropriately served
7. Provide/obtain reports for/from other agencies about children being served to provide continuity of services

8. Encourage student participation in optional program activities

IV. Educational program development

1. Plan the overall structure of the district GT program in consultation with teachers, administrators, and parents
2. Supervise the provision of appropriate services
3. Maintain file of confidential student records
4. Become informed about and aware of new trends, developments, regulations, and legislation affecting the district's GT program through professional materials, coursework, and membership/participation in local, state, and national seminars, conventions, and workshops
5. Visit classes and be aware of progress in each class
6. Arrange for field trips that are needed for the GT program
7. Contact local colleges, universities, and museums for educational experiences available to GT students
8. Evaluate the district program and individual school programs to strengthen service to GT students by obtaining data from teachers, students, and parents
9. . Serve on administrative committees with general education responsibilities to provide advocacy for the GT learner

V. Business and program management

1. Prepare all administrative work inherent in the GT program (such as writing proposals for funding, submitting reports of attendance, evaluate data, etc.)
2. Develop and enforce program procedures, rules, and regulations
3. Authorize the purchase of materials, supplies, and equipment
4. Make checks of program materials and equipment for care and replacement

6.5 Administrators and teachers of the gifted will be provided regularly scheduled time for duties other than direct services to the identified students. Curriculum development and differentiated educational planning times will be provided for the GT Administrator and teacher to coordinate and align enrichment programs. Additional planning time will be allotted as needed for the program administrator/coordinator as aligned with district policies for departmental chair responsibilities. Building principals are encouraged to be flexible in scheduling to accommodate the demands of the Gifted and Talented Administrator and/or teacher.

Facilitator/teacher of Gifted and Talented Education

The facilitator/teacher in the Gifted and Talented Education Program reports

directly to the Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education and to the building principal where assigned. The teacher implements a differentiated educational program for gifted and talented students in the district.

Duties and responsibilities of the teacher in gifted and talented education include, but are not limited to, the following:

I. Pupil services

1. Implement the Rivercrest School District's procedures for identifying gifted and talented students
2. Analyze, use, and apply relevant objective and subjective data to assess students' abilities, creative potential, and task commitment and to recommend appropriate placement
3. Implement district goals for the gifted and talented education program
4. Create and maintain an atmosphere conducive to creative risk-taking and divergent thinking
5. Analyze students' individual interests, abilities, and learning styles
6. Provide activities leading to the development of critical thinking skills, creative thinking skills, communication skills, and independent learning skills
7. Encourage student independence and self-directed learning
8. Involve students in self-evaluation of products
9. Recognize and assist with the special counseling needs of the gifted and talented

II. Curriculum Development

1. Modify curriculum to provide differentiated educational experiences designed to meet individual needs
2. Select, develop, or adapt instructional materials appropriate for the needs of GT students
3. Integrate goals of the GT program with those of the regular instructional program
4. Serve as a resource person to classroom teachers for appropriate methods and materials
5. Identify community and regional resources that will enhance the students' talents.
6. Encourage student participation in out-of-school learning experiences

III. School-Community Relations

1. Meet with parents to discuss program objectives and procedures
2. Keep parents informed on a continuous basis of the student's growth
3. Encourage active volunteer participation in the GT program

IV. Professional Development

1. Participate in professional activities that are related to gifted and talented education
2. Keep informed of latest research and curriculum developments in gifted and talented
3. education
4. Plan cooperatively with the GT Program Coordinator and other staff members
5. Assist with in-service education for instructional staff.

Identification (7.00)

Student Nominations

Nominations are sought from a variety of sources to ensure that all potentially gifted and talented students have an opportunity to be considered. Nominations may be made by teachers, principals, peers, self, parents or community members. All students completing the third grade will be considered for placement. After a student has been nominated, the screening process begins. It involves a case study approach using multiple criteria based on the District's definition, program goals, and characteristics of giftedness. Procedures for obtaining information about students include at least two objective assessment methods, and a creativity test. Achievement test scores are used to indicate performance. Procedures for obtaining additional information about students include subjective data such as teacher rating scales, parent questionnaires, and product evaluations. 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.

Instruments Used For Student Identification

Data is collected on nominated students to determine if this interaction is present. The following instruments and procedures are used for this purpose.

Ability

- Standardized Achievement Test
- Benchmark Scores/Achievement
- Intelligence Test
- Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students
- (Learning Characteristics Scale)
- School Ability Test
- Parent Information
- Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (K-BIT)

- » Kingore Observation/Inventory (KOI)
- Other appropriate/available information

Task Commitment and/or Motivation

- Grades
- 9 Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (Motivational Scale)
- Parent Information
- 10 Portfolio
- a Other appropriate/available information

Creativity

- " Creativity Assessment Packet
Torrance Test of Creativity
- Williams Test of Creativity
- 9 Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (Creativity Scale)
- Parent information
- Other appropriate/available information

The information is compiled to form a profile of the student and is reviewed for reasons a child should participate in the program as opposed to reasons s/he should not participate. Placement is based upon documentation of expressed need or potential.

Non-discriminatory Instruments of Identification

- 11 Achievement tests should be used to indicate students' performance: Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Benchmark or other statewide achievement test.
- Torrance Test of Creative Thinking will be administered by the G/T Teacher. The TICT samples a variety of verbal and figural dimensions of creative thinking.
- e Renzulli Teacher/Parent Screening - Scales for identifying student strengths in the areas of learning, motivation, creativity, leadership, art, music, drama, planning, and communication.
- Kaufman Brief intelligence Test (K-BIT) - Quick measure of verbal and nonverbal intelligence. Administered individually, by professional with graduate level training in testing or guidance.
- Otis Lennon School Abilities Test (OLSAT-8), grades K-12, ceiling = 150 Assesses verbal and nonverbal reasoning abilities that are related to success in school. Administered in a group setting.
- a Product Evaluation - Products such as poetry, slides/tapes, photo essays, and/or science projects may be used to document ability, creativity, and motivation.

- Kingore Observation Inventory - An easy-to-use assessment and differentiation process with the ability to identify gifted potentials in minority students and students from poverty who are frequently difficult to identify through standardized tests. It is valued by educators for its effectiveness and efficiency.
- Interest Inventory- An interest inventory will be administered to determine areas of interest.

Assurances

Student information is kept on file with access limited to staff concerned with the education of the student and to parents of the student.

Instruments and procedures used in the identification of gifted and talented students are nondiscriminatory with respect to race, cultural or economic background, religion, national origin, sex, or handicapping condition.

Student data and placement decisions are kept on file for at least five years . or for as long as needed for educational decisions.

Disseminating Instructionally Useful Information

Procedure: information that would be helpful to the regular classroom teacher in meeting the needs of a student that has been considered for placement will be given to the regular classroom teacher by the *G/T* Program Coordinator. This may be done verbally through a casual conversation or through a scheduled conference with the teacher, depending on the nature of the information and other factors. The information may be given to the teacher in written form after a conference or conversation.

Student Placement

The Identification Committee is composed of at least five educators chaired by a trained specialist in gifted education. Members of the committee are made aware of the identification policies and procedures and the nature of the program.

The Identification Committee uses a case study approach, considering all student information collected, in order to make its decision. Each student's case study is given a number so that the committee does not know the names of the students during the identification process. The committee is asked to look for all information that they could check as reasons for placing students in the program (as opposed to items that would keep them out). The committee then reviews the items checked to see if enough data indicates that gifted education services would be appropriate at this time. No single criterion or cut-off score is used to exclude a student from placement.

Parent Notification and Consent

Parents are notified by letter of their child's eligibility for program participation and provided with a parent consent form. Students are placed in the program upon receipt of a positive response on the parent consent form.

Parents of students not selected for the program are notified by letter.

Appeal Process

If a parent chooses to appeal a non-placement decision made by the Gifted and Talented Screening Committee, the data for the student in question will be reviewed by an Appeals Committee which will be made up of at least 5 professional educators and chaired by the Gifted and Talented coordinator. The Appeals Committee will meet to discuss the appeal as soon as possible. In cases where no resolution is reached, the District procedure for appeals will be followed.

1. The building principal will appoint at least 5 professional educators who are the child's classroom teachers, professionals who may or may not have also been members of the Identification Committee along with the GT coordinator
2. Data collected for the student in question will be reviewed to determine what might keep the student out of the Gifted and Talented Program rather than what might get the student in
3. Person(s) who requested the appeal are given the opportunity to state reasons for the appeal
4. Consider the possible solution of probation for a 9-week grading period to determine if the student struggles in either the gifted and talented pullout class, in the regular classroom, or both classes
5. Appeals Committee will meet again at the end of the probation period to determine if placement in the Gifted and Talented Program is the best option for the child

Annual Review of Student Placement

Once a student enters the program, he/she will be evaluated throughout each year. The evaluation form is designed in a format so that the student and parent will receive an update every nine weeks. The evaluation shows the student's performance in GT class by way of strengths and weaknesses (areas of needed improvement), as well as grades posted on Rivercrest's website through EDline. At the end of each school year, the GT teacher will review standardized ability and achievement test scores, performance in class, and quarterly evaluations, as a

basis for continuation or termination of placement. Included on the quarterly evaluation is an Annual Report section marking the placement decision for the next school year.

Exit Procedures

A student may be considered for exit procedures at any time if evaluation provides evidence that he/she is not best served educationally by the program. Listed below are the steps that may be taken.

1. GT teacher documents reason(s) for student concern.
2. Appropriate modifications are made and documented.
3. GT teacher conferences with the student and/or parent if a necessary level of progress is not evidenced following program modifications. The student is made aware of areas of needed improvement and a timeline is set for a specified level of improvement.
4. If progress following the timeline is not adequate, gifted education services are determined inappropriate for the student and placement in the G/T Program will be terminated. Parents are notified by letter of an explanation of the decision to remove the student and provided with an opportunity to meet with appropriate members of the staff concerning the decision.
5. Students removed from the G/T Program will be placed in the nomination pool and the following year their needs will be re-evaluated.

A student or parent may also express concerns that could warrant exit procedures. A student's concerns would be discussed with the parent before any decision was made. If a parent decided that they no longer wanted their child to participate in the G/T Program, the child would not be required to participate.

Program Options (8.00)

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, to work with materials that 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. Current services provided in the South Mississippi County School District's Gifted and Talented Programs:

GRADES K-3

^ Gifted Education Specialist conducts thirty to forty minute whole group activities once a week in the regular classrooms. Activities are geared toward higher-level thinking and developing creativity.

GRADES 4-6

Identified students in grades 4-6 participate in 150 minutes a week Academic Pull-Out Program. Students receive instructional services different from those provided in the regular classroom. Learning experiences are designed to nurture creativity, foster higher order thinking skills, and to provide appropriate enrichment experiences. Students have the opportunities to work at their level of abilities and in their area(s) of interest and talent.

GRADES 7-12

Identified students in grades 7-12 receive services through designated course content classes in the academic areas of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies in Pre-Advanced Placement or Advanced Placement classes. The GT coordinator/teacher meets once a month and cooperates with teachers to enhance areas of study using GT processes and provides information to students they may find helpful.

Curriculum (9.00)

Curriculum Description

The curriculum for the Rivercrest School's Gifted and Talented Program extends the regular classroom curriculum. The curriculum is differentiated in content, process, and product. Not only must the curriculum differ in degree, but in kind. According to the Rules and Regulations set by the ADE, Office of Gifted and Talented Program, it is important to avoid simply "more of the same." The gifted curriculum must be "in place of" rather than "in addition to" required classroom work. The curriculum is set up in five major areas: Critical Thinking Skills, Creative Thinking Skills, Logical Thinking Skills, Affective Development, and Independent Study. Each of these areas includes goals, objectives, and specific skills. The activities in which the students participate cover the skills under each program goal.

4th-6th grade INDEPENDENT PROJECTS: This unit allows students to focus on personal interests. Each topic chosen is developed through a number of student activities that vary in difficulty and learning style. The activities are intended to help each student become more skillful in interpretation of materials, application of independent study skills, and synthesizing ideas for creative thinking.

4th -6th grade CLASS/GROUP PROJECTS: Students have the opportunity to take FIELD TRIPS that relate to and reinforces the teacher chosen group project.

4th -12th grade QUIZ BOWL COMPETITION: Students receive the opportunity to compete with area schools in an academic competition that requires fast thinking, quick recall, and the ability to assimilate information from widely different areas into a new and unique solution.

4th -6th grade PROBLEM SOLVING: Students complete problems that require important skills of associative, inductive, and divergent thinking. They learn to recognize important ideas, examine the ideas from different points of view, and then find connections between the ideas.

K-12th grade ODYSSEY OF THE MIND COMPETITION: Students are given the opportunity to compete in an international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Kids apply their creativity to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics. They then bring their solutions to competition on the local, state, and World level. Thousands of teams from throughout the U.S. and from about 25 other countries participate in the program.

4th – 6th grade CHESS CLUB: We use chess as a learning tool to teach higher level thinking skills, advance math and reading skills, and build self-esteem in students.

Evaluation (10.00)

Evaluation Plan

Program Evaluation: Evaluation is the collecting, analyzing and reporting of data for the purpose of making decisions about educational programs. It is a process to be carried out so that improvement of services to students will result through the continuation, elimination, or changes of those conditions that affect student learning.

The evaluation design for the Program of Gifted and Talented Students in the South Mississippi County School District is to provide information so that decisions can be made as to how well the program is meeting its goals and objectives.

Questionnaires with items which are criteria for the major goals of the program are used. These questionnaires are sent to all persons involved in the program including: Parents, the Advisory Board, the regular classroom teacher, the GT program teacher, the Identification Committee, Administration, and the School Board.

Student Evaluation: The evaluation of students' progress in the G/T Program will be based upon their achievement of program objectives which are outlined in the Scope and Sequence. The students' progress in developing process skills will be evaluated as well as the quality of their products. The G/T teacher will send evaluation reports to the parents for class activities or projects throughout the school year. Quarterly reports indicating the students' progress in relation to program goals will be sent to parents. The evaluation shows the student's performance in G/T class by way of strengths and weaknesses. At the end of each school year the G/T teacher will review standardized ability and achievement test scores and performance in class as a basis for continuation or termination of placement. Included on the quarterly evaluation is an Annual Report section marking the placement decision for the next school year. G/T participation will be documented on all permanent records. Through the evaluation of students we hope to not only keep parents informed of their child's progress, but also to gain information that will enable us to more effectively meet the needs of gifted and talented students.