

Handbook for

Parents

of

Gifted Students

in the

Lincoln Public Schools

2005





Written and compiled by the
Gifted Community Review
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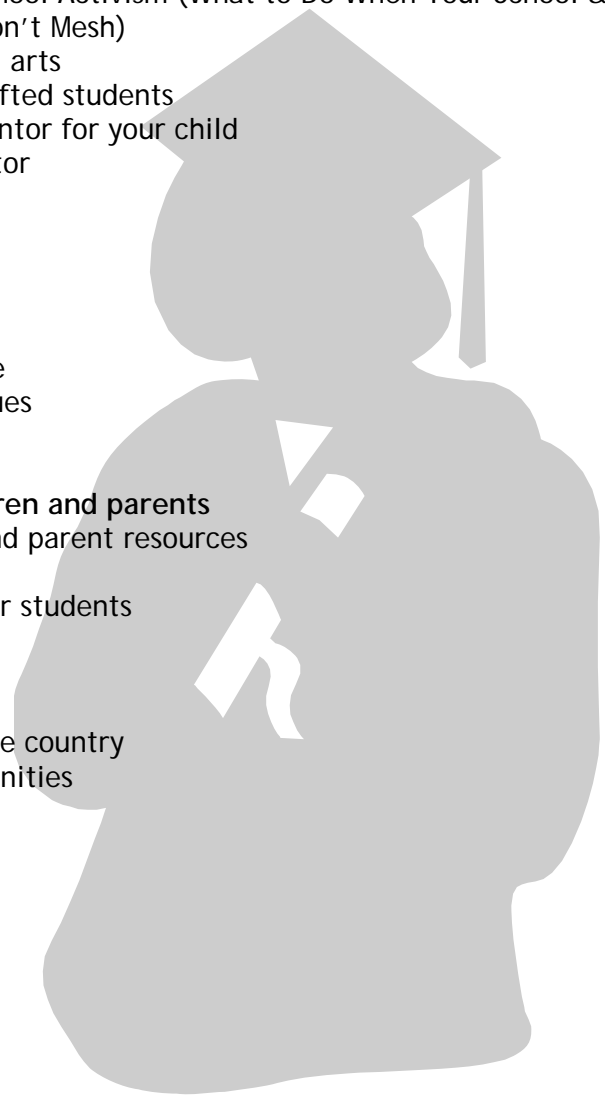
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Table of Contents

Chapter 1	
Introduction	4
Who are we?	4
What do we want?	4
Why do gifted students need a program?	4
Chapter 2	
How do I know if my child is gifted?	5
Commonly seen characteristics of gifted learners	5
Intellectual Traits	5
Social and Emotional Traits	7
Gifted and Learning Disabled	8
Underachievement	10
Misconceptions and Myths	11
Chapter 3	
How children are identified for the LPS gifted program	13
The LPS Board Policy on Gifted	14
Chapter 4	
The LPS gifted curriculum: Working with your teacher, the school, and the district	22
What do they mean by . . . ?	22
The gifted curriculum	23
Elementary	23
Middle School	24
High School	24

Advanced Placement	24
A Short Course in School Activism (What to Do When Your School & Your Child Don't Mesh)	25
Mentors in the visual arts	26
Mentors for highly gifted students	26
Finding the right mentor for your child	27
Working with a mentor	27
Chapter 5	
Special issues	29
Gifted girls	29
Sports overload	29
Preparing for college	29
Social emotional issues	30
Chapter 6	
Resources for children and parents	31
Groups, contacts, and parent resources	31
Books and articles	32
Summer activities for students	33
In Lincoln	33
In Nebraska	35
Near Nebraska	37
Other parts of the country	38
School-Year Opportunities	39
Music Programs	40





Chapter 1: Introduction

Who are we?

This handbook was written by parents for parents to share experiences and information about gifted children who attend Lincoln Public Schools. The author is the Community Review Committee of the LPS Gifted Program—a group of parents of LPS students from around the district, including elementary, middle, and high school children. The Committee was created by the School Board as part of the gifted policy adopted in 1994. Members volunteer to serve. The duties include:

- Assisting with the Parent Forums
- Encouraging and facilitating communication between parents and LPS regarding gifted education
- Providing input to supervisor of the gifted program
- Reviewing the LPS gifted program.

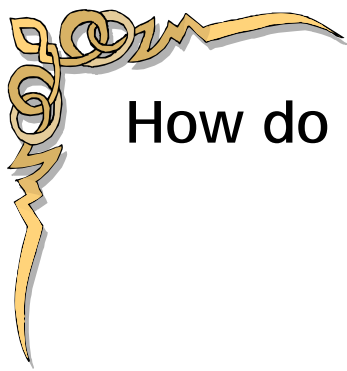
What do we want?

Parents of gifted children want what every parent wants: to educate their children commensurate with their abilities and to nurture their social and emotional growth. These goals should unite parents of children of all learning abilities and styles.

Why do gifted students need a program?

Sometimes parents or even students themselves hear that “smart” children/young adults don’t need any special help or attention, that they can or should be able to take care of everything themselves. This may be true of some children, but often when gifted students find themselves in classrooms that do not address their unique learning styles and thinking patterns, the results can be boredom, frustration, anger, emotional confusion, and even depression. Ironically, these brightest students may tune out and achieve far below their potential, sometimes even dropping out of school. When the system “trains” students to underachieve, the results may be long-term and widespread.

Like all children and young adults, gifted students need to be challenged and nurtured, to learn both that they are unique individuals and that they share common traits with others. While they may learn quickly and have amazing knowledge on topics that interest them, they cannot take care of themselves any more (or less) than other children. They need parenting, guiding, and teaching that fits them individually. Our children need to be challenged and nurtured, and only when their abilities are fully developed can America’s future leadership take its most positive form.



Chapter 2: How do I know if my child is gifted?

Gifted is a simple term to describe a complex group of children, each with his or her own special talents, strengths, and weaknesses. Generally, *gifted* describes children with talents or abilities remarkable among children their age that require special challenges, teaching methods, or opportunities to develop fully. In general, they tend to be in the top 10% of the general population on an intelligence test.

All parents know that their own children are special, but often we hesitate before approaching education professionals to ask, "Is my child gifted?" Yet many gifted children are first identified by their parents.

Commonly Seen Characteristics of Gifted Learners

Some students are easily identified by using the following characteristics (adapted from Clark, 1997; Webb, 1994). Other students, who may have learning disabilities or other exceptionalities, may be more difficult to identify. While lists of various traits typical of gifted students may be helpful in identifying students in need of services, it is important to remember that no student may necessarily possess all the attributes listed, and some high ability learners will demonstrate relatively few of them. Likewise, any of the attributes can possess both positive and negative qualities.

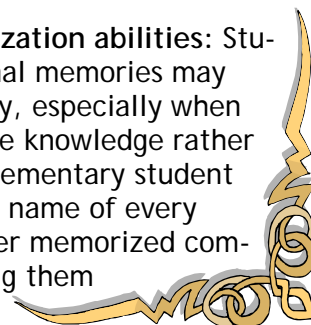
Intellectual Traits

Inquisitive nature: While most children spend time asking "Why?" the gifted learner is often unsatisfied by answers that seek to appease rather than focus on the issue in question. Such students may continue to ask questions until they reach a level of satisfaction with the response.

Advanced vocabulary for their age: Some children sound like little adults. They are fascinated by words and language. As they grow older, students may be voracious readers with extensive vocabularies. Such students may read the dictionary for fun, incorporate large and delightful words into their writing assignments, or naturally use precise terminology in their speaking.

Creative problem solving: Often these children can generate numerous, innovative, or even unusual solutions, which they may apply to debates with their parents. In other cases, a child's response to a parent's "simple" request may result in an unorthodox response that seems entirely reasonable to the child.

Exceptional memorization abilities: Students with exceptional memories may find school quite easy, especially when their teachers require knowledge rather than analysis. One elementary student memorized the Latin name of every shark species; another memorized commercials after hearing them



once. Such students memorize the multiplication tables readily and may wonder why other students don't "get it." However, many very bright students do not also have exceptional memories; and students with exceptional memories may not be facile with analysis. In the movie *The Paper Chase*, for example, one student with photographic memory cannot manipulate the data he recalls into levels of importance and subsequently fails to thrive in law school.

Passionate interests and ability to develop and retain vast storehouses of information about those interests: Their topics may vary from dinosaurs to *Star Trek* to oceanography to art, but these children often become real experts on anything that interests them. They may ask for field trips to local museums on their topic of interest or they may develop an interest-based relationship with an expert in the field. It is not unusual for a child to be all-consuming in his or her quest for understanding a subject and subsequently completely drop the topic as a passion because his or her interest has been quenched—and suddenly a new interest will replace the old one.

Learns new material rapidly and gets bored by repetition: For the student who is a "quick study," the kinds of repetitive experiences found in some classrooms may result in the student's mentally dropping out of the conversation. As a result, he or she may appear to be unengaged, distracting, or hostile, depending upon the context. This may eventually lead to underachievement.

High energy level (sometimes combined with reduced need for sleep): Some gifted children are "no nap" babies and light and short sleepers. Their parents may be very jealous of mothers and fathers whose babies sleep like babies. Such stu-

dents may appear to be hyperactive; Dabrowski referred to this pattern as *overexcitabilities*, which he found to be typical in very bright children. For more information on Dabrowski's theory, see <http://www.stephanietolan.com/dabrowskis.htm>

Keen observer and questioner: These children often display an early interest in national or world events. They may also call attention to inconsistencies that they see demonstrated in policies. Likewise, they may question authority, not only in government, but in parents, teachers, and babysitters.

Intense focus: Students with intense focus may consider an idea in such depth that they may appear to be day dreaming while the class moves on to other topics. Such students may appear unwilling to transition from one subject to another at the same pace as their classmates. Yet the constant moving from topic to topic based on the passing of the hands of a clock may appear to such students as an unreasonable and unnecessarily painful experience.

Long attention span: Students with long attention spans may demonstrate this trait inconsistently; they may appear extremely hyperactive, for instance, except when participating in their interest area, when suddenly, they can concentrate for three hours on a single topic. In such a context, it is quite likely that gifted students become so immersed in the process that they lose track of everything going on around them. Many people would love to have this skill, but in the context of school schedules, students who can concentrate deeply may be put temporarily at a disadvantage when students have to move quickly from one subject to another based on the passing of time.

Intuitive: These children often can see

through glib statements, challenging their adults to deal very directly with them. They innately grasp whatever is under the surface, with no apparent clues. In a gathering of 40 relatives, one student was able to pinpoint that something was wrong with one of her aunts, even though they hadn't talked with each other at the party.

Independent and prefers individualized work: While many students enjoy group activities, gifted learners may thrive on independent activities in which they are given a goal and the offer of assistance as needed. Students who enjoy this type of work will actually work harder when allowed to work independently. It is important to note, however, that this is not a license for allowing the high ability learner to languish in a corner while the rest of the class moves forward. The student should be assisted with goal setting and decision making, as well as research skills, as necessary.

Social and Emotional Traits

Typically, high ability learners are characterized by a constellation of attributes that may contribute both to their emotional well being and to their difficulty in adapting to their social environment. These attributes may include any or all or none of the following:

Strong sense of humor: One teacher of the gifted remarked that the fastest way to identify students for inclusion into the program was to seek out those who "get the jokes." Such students delight in puns and wit; even their scathing political comments will be tinged with humor. Students with a strength in this area may use it effectively to avoid fights.

Creativity: Creative students often initiate their own learning and ask unusual

questions. Ironically, participation in school has a tendency to decrease students' creativity over time. While creative children are typically of above-average intelligence, bright children are not necessarily also creative.

Openness to new experiences, solutions, ideas: Some students revel in the fact that a mathematical (or English or science) problem can be solved through a variety of routes. For these students the question, "What is **another** correct answer?" comes as a welcome relief in classrooms. In response to a complex problem, some gifted children may propose a new idea or product, even going so far as to develop a prototype—just to see if it could really work. It's important to consider whether the idea is really implausible or whether the student's idea is just ahead of the rest of us. Consider most people's first reaction to the idea of an airplane a century ago.

Challenge authority: Typically, both parents and teachers will get further if they provide a reason for the decisions that affect bright children. While time does not always permit such lengthy explanations, they do help children grow in their understanding of the kinds of thought processes that feed into rational decision making.

Internal locus of evaluation: Instead of working for grades, some gifted students may focus on working to their own level of expectation. In such cases, the individual may be consumed with a project long after it was supposed to be turned in, or the student may decide not to do it at all, because in his or her estimation, the learning would not be commensurate with the energy required. Being motivated to learn without external reinforcers is one aspect of this internal locus of evaluation. In one case, a student with a typically good work

ethic was observed to be sitting idly while others were working on an assignment. When asked about this decision, the student explained that the task had nothing to do with the goals for the quarter. The teacher showed him on her planner how the task was directly related to the stated goals, and he was happy to resume working.

Ability to defer closure: Living with ambiguity comes naturally to some bright students, who can happily function knowing that paradoxes exist all around them. While others want a clear cut response, these children may be quite happy not to know the “one right answer” until some undetermined point in the future.

Sensitivity: Because of heightened sensitivities, these students may become frightened that the world will end, become obsessed with raising money for the latest tragedy on the globe, or wake up screaming at night if they see the news. None of these scenarios is unusual, but if your child demonstrates such reactions, it may be best to curtail news watching and reading for awhile.

Preference to overlook details: Because many of these students are global thinkers, they may find that details get in the way of their large ideas. It may be helpful for parents to guide students from big idea down to the necessary details when they are required for assignments.

Asynchronous development: It often astonishes adults when the five year old who has read everything on dinosaurs throws a screaming tantrum because of a minor change in schedule, yet this sort of uneven development is quite typical for advanced learners. Motor skills may lag cognitive development, which can cause frustration with writing assignments.

Multipotentiality: While it is difficult for some people to be sympathetic about viewing this trait as a problem, when students need to begin to make choices about courses and careers (“How can I choose between advanced English and choir?”), having advanced capabilities in multiple areas can hinder their growth in any one area. Rather than close one door, students may divide themselves to the point of exhaustion or may choose to participate in multiple areas without ever working to a proficiency level they might be capable of. The “jack of all trades, master of none” often describes such students.

Peer Relations: The question of who is a peer may appear early in the life of high ability learners, as they may select peers based on common interests and attitudes rather than on the basis of chronological age. As a result, students may appear at odds with the expectations of how—and with whom—they spend their free time. For some, more introverted students, an active social life may appear to be far less valued than an active literary life. In other cases, the student, who naturally relates well with adults, may choose to spend free time with a specialist in his or her field of interest.



Perfectionism: Some children may develop unrealistically high expectations of themselves, often due to their past performances. It is important to distinguish between the child who maintains high personal standards in multiple areas (as a result of wanting to do one’s personal best whenever possible) and the child who feels external pressure to achieve. In the second case, the student may become paralyzed and eventually become unwilling to turn in anything that is not “perfect.” This excessive self-criticism can become debilitating and may result in

course failures and lowered self-esteem.

Gifted and Learning Disabled

Contrary to what many people believe, learning disabilities occur only in people

"I know I'm as smart as my friends, but I can't explain what I mean."

of average to above-average intelligence. But because the two areas—giftedness and learning disabilities—tend to mask each other, it is often the case that GT LD students may not have been identified for services in either area. What typically happens is that during the early years of schooling when the cognitive tasks are easier, the student's intelligence is high enough to compensate for the learning disability—but the learning disability keeps the students from appearing to be stellar. When the student moves into fourth grade, schools require reading for content in subjects like social studies and science; in this context, the learning disability will manifest itself, but the intelligence will keep the student from being identified with a learning disability. The combination of these two factors at work together serve to make the student extremely frustrated.

Many types of LD exist, including Asperger's Syndrome, processing difficulties, dyslexia, nonverbal learning disorder, and others. The symptoms vary widely with the type of disability. Following are some broad characteristics associated with these learning disabilities. While much information is available on the Internet, learning disabilities still constitute a relatively new field, about which we are learning more every day.

Asperger's Syndrome: Disturbing the af-

fect, Asperger's Syndrome results in students who do not understand social cues. They may speak too loudly or stand too closely. Such students often cannot understand metaphorical language, yet may be very bright. Such students may find it difficult to understand how someone else feels.

Processing difficulties: Processing difficulties come in a wide array of configurations. Put briefly, students have difficulty with either input or output: "I know what I want to say, but I can't say it." They may become extremely frustrated, because they understand material but are unable to demonstrate it on multiple choice tests (in some cases) or essay test (in other cases). It is helpful if teachers vary the testing style and provide students with notes or at least outlines of the notes.

Nonverbal learning disorder: Students with Nonverbal Learning Disorder (NVLD) are often very bright and demonstrate an advanced vocabulary and memorization skills quite early. However, they demonstrate difficulties relating to other children and have difficulties with fine motor coordination. Students with NVLD have difficulty adapting to changes. As courses become more difficult during intermediate years, these students find it difficult to follow direction, perform math assignments, or understand their peers or teachers because of impaired social skills. Their handwriting may be quite laborious and difficult to read. NVLD manifests itself in a variety of ways including anxiety and depression. Students understand details but may not see the big picture. Although they may read early, they may also be slow readers who struggle later on with comprehension. Students with NVLD profit greatly from having family and teachers talk ideas through; they are oriented to oral language and will often perform bet-

ter on writing assignments if they have access to a computer.

Dyslexia: Commonly thought of as reversing letters, dyslexia has many different manifestations, including difficulties with spelling, decoding, and fluency. A reading disorder, it is neurological in origin, so it is unhelpful to suggest that students “work harder.” The best help appears to be phonological training early in the educational experience (grades k-2).

Language-based problems affect between 15 and 20% of the total population of people. According to the International Dyslexia Association, “of the students with specific learning disabilities receiving special education services, 70-80% have deficits in reading.”



Dyscalculia: Students with dyscalculia have difficulty solving arithmetic problems and grasping math concepts. Math concepts and rules are difficult to recall, as are basic math facts. Students with dyscalculia tend to be on and off: their math operations work one day but not the next.

Dysgraphia: Students with dysgraphia have difficulties with handwriting, forming letters, and writing within a specific space. Letters may be distorted or incorrect. When students first learn handwriting, they will have more than the typical problems. Some may resort to drawing individual letters, a painstaking process. In schools, the use of a computer for writing assignments appears to be the most helpful intervention. Although the origin of dysgraphia is unknown, it is thought to be neurological and may be related to other sequencing problems.

Visual Spatial Orientation: While not a learning disability, a visual spatial orientation may create learning difficulties in school, because schools typically provide

work that is sequential in nature. Students who are visual spatial often enjoy taking things apart and putting them back together correctly. They see things three-dimensionally. They learn concepts “all at once,” rather than step by step. Visual spatial students find it easier to learn difficult material than easy material, and they may be late readers.

Underachievement

Underachievement, defined as a discrepancy between ability and achievement but often seen as the tendency for a student to do less than he or she is capable of, is one of the most difficult problems for parents of gifted students. One of the functions of school is to ensure that students learn how to face a challenge and how to work hard toward a goal. Unfortunately, when students are routinely required to practice skills they have already mastered, they learn to believe that school is/should be easy; as a result, they fail to develop a work ethic or a belief in their ability to rise to a challenge. Additionally, a mismatch exists in many classrooms across the country between the difficulty of textbooks, the repetition of curricular material in these texts, and the needs of talented learners. As a result, when some students do confront a difficult task (often in middle or high school), many believe that they are incapable of meeting the goal, because they are “not smart anymore.” While they feel overwhelmed, their peers who have developed the work ethic and self-efficacy may be more comfortable and successful.

Students begin to underachieve for a variety of reasons. In some cases, the students do not want the teacher to see that they are bright, because they perceive that the reward for finishing early is more of the same kind of work or tutoring students who do not understand the assign-

ment. Sometimes students do not see the point of the assignment and how it could be relevant in their later careers. Students may believe that the teacher does not like them, or they do not like the teacher. In some cases, students have developed the belief—through past experience—that school does not require an effort, so they fail to put forth an effort on anything. When they fail, they say, “I used to be good at this.”

When classrooms focus on doing well on achievement tests to the exclusion of creativity or high level thinking and production, many students fail to thrive because of boredom. This is particularly true in classes that focus on the “one right answer” or rote, repetitive learning. Students may complain that “school is boring,” but it is important to distinguish whether the students are bored because they have not learned to find the topic interesting yet or because they have already mastered the content.

Another side effect of underachievement is that teachers may perceive the child as being unable to do the work. Well, they may say, I know it say’s she’s gifted, but that was obviously a mistake.

If your child appears not to be engaged in the learning process, it is important to ascertain why. Various factors can contribute to underachievement, but to reverse underachievement it is helpful—but not always necessary—to know the origin of the problem. A number of interventions have proven effective, depending on the circumstances.

- **Goal valuation:** For students who do not see the value of their coursework to their future careers.
- **Self-efficacy:** For students who do not believe in their abilities to perform well.
- **Curriculum compacting:** For stu-

dents who need more challenging classes.

- **School perceptions:** For students who believe the teacher does not like them or who believe that the school is not conducive to learning.
- **Self-regulation:** For students who need to learn how to manage their time, how to avoid becoming distracted, how to set and achieve goals.

Researchers at the University of Connecticut have studied underachievement to ascertain what works to reverse these behaviors. Access the interventions at <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/siegle/NRCGTUnderachievementStudy.htm>.

In general, teachers can also help by providing opportunities for creativity, freedom of choice, academic challenges, and enjoyment in learning. For all these reasons, Lincoln Public Schools offers differentiated curriculum options and teachers trained to work with high ability learners. However, if you see your son or daughter beginning to underachieve, it is important to talk with both your child and his or her teacher to stop that behavior as soon as possible.

Misconceptions and Myths:

All gifted children like school and do well there. Not all high ability learners perform well in school. A number of obstacles may limit achievement, including boredom if the curriculum moves more slowly than the cognitive pace of the individual child; perfectionism that may prevent a student from turning in assignments when they do not meet up with the student’s expectations; learning disabilities; and relationships with the teacher and other students in the class, who may be impatient with the talented learner’s need to move more deeply into the con-

tent.

Smart students develop evenly. High ability learners often develop asynchronously and may feel frustrated at their inability to perform physically what they can conceive of cognitively. When handwriting is physically difficult, it's easy to assume that the problem is one with the act of composition. Try asking your child to dictate his or her ideas to you to determine if the problem is conceptual or physical. Likewise, many students develop cognitively before emotionally; they may use an advanced vocabulary yet cry when something relatively minor goes wrong.

The teacher/school knows what's best for my child. The best expert on the individual child is the parent. Teachers also know and support the children they teach and have the ability to compare students to others of their same age, but many of the behaviors that define a child's strengths may not be visible in the classroom context. The best scenario occurs when the parent and school system work together to nurture the student. The parent will always, however, have the role of the student's educational advocate.





Chapter 3: How children are identified for the LPS gifted program

Lincoln Public Schools has a long tradition and commitment toward excellence in educating gifted students. The LPS Gifted Program begins with Policy 6300, revised from a previous policy and adopted by the Lincoln School Board in January 1994. This handbook explains that policy on a parent-to-parent basis.

Children are formally identified as gifted and eligible for the services of the LPS Gifted Program by several means. They can be recommended for identification by anyone—a parent, a teacher, or themselves. The recommendation should be made to the gifted facilitator or principal of your child’s school. You can also directly contact Dr. Joan Jacobs, the Gifted Consultant for Lincoln Public Schools (436-1822), if you have questions your gifted facilitator or principal cannot answer, but it is always advisable to start any inquiry at your own school building.

Option 1: When a student is recommended for gifted identification, the building’s gifted facilitator helps the teachers with the data gathering process. Students are then evaluated based on their grades and class performance, outstanding products, behavioral checklists, or standardized achievement test scores.

It is the stated policy of the School Board to include children within the gifted program who are high achievers in the classroom and who need and would benefit by these services, not just students who

score well on standardized tests. As a parent, you should consider recommending your child for the program if, in your opinion, she or he meets many of the traits of gifted children.

Option 2: When an approved IQ test is given (Option 2), a score of 130 or above is the benchmark for admission to the Gifted Program. Additional services are offered for highly gifted students (who score 145 or above). These tests can be administered by LPS psychologists, upon parents’ requests or permission (if requested by a teacher or others). See Policy 6310.1 later in this chapter for more information.

Sometimes when children are evaluated for the program, their test scores or grades or work products do not immediately qualify them for services, but the student, his or her parents, or a teacher still feels the child belongs in the program. What can you do? There are several possibilities. You can request retesting by LPS; typically waiting at least a year is recommended between administrations of the same test, to ensure its validity.

You can also arrange for evaluation of your child by a psychologist in private practice, at your own expense. The Nebraska Association for the Gifted (NAG) can provide referrals to qualified psychologists. Calling the University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL)’s Educational Psychology Department would be helpful.

Also, LPS Student Services Department has a list of qualified psychologists.

Such a private evaluation should include an initial meeting between the psychologist and the parent to brief you on the test, followed by a testing session with your child, and concluding with a final appointment to give you the results and feedback. The psychologist should brief you in advance to bring your child to the test healthy, well rested, not hungry, and ready to answer questions about school and learning. If you have a private evaluation done, it is your choice whether to share the results with LPS or not.

Option 3: If you move from another district in which your child participated in the gifted program, you may submit the qualifiers that were used for inclusion. Often these are reports of test scores that can be requested from the registrar at the previous school.

Option 4: Another potential route to qualifying your child for the gifted program is to petition the district Steering Committee, which includes counselors, administrators, principals, and the gifted consultant. The Committee meets monthly. Your building's gifted facilitator can arrange to get your child's case on the committee's agenda. The Committee considers any information offered by you, your child's teacher, gifted facilitator, and anyone else knowledgeable about your child. If you have the support of your child's school, it helps enormously. You can also assemble a portfolio of your child's work, special projects, and other information.

You are welcome to attend the hearing, through this is not mandatory. Your child is also welcome, if you choose. The 20-minute hearing occurs with all parties sitting around a table. You, your gifted facilitator, or your principal opens the dis-

ussion with a brief statement of the case. Others in attendance present their information, and committee members ask questions. It is not unusual for parents to find the appeal process intimidating, but it helps to remember two points: you are the expert on your child, and everyone present is trying to be helpful. After the committee asks questions, it continues the discussion in private, and renders a decision later in the day. Your gifted facilitator will inform you of that decision.

The committee may identify a child as qualified for the gifted program, change the status of a child from gifted to highly gifted, or otherwise decide what services of the program are most suitable for a particular child. Of course, it may also decide your child is not eligible for the program. There is no formal appeal process except to appeal to Dr. Barbara Jacobson and then to Dr. Marilyn Moore. Data gathering may continue, and additional information may be presented at another date.

The LPS Board Policy on Gifted

Policy 6300 Gifted Program



The Lincoln Board of Education recognizes that the student population includes students with exceptional academic abilities. These students have a need for educational services that are consistent with their ability levels and learning characteristics such as thinking abstractly, having the ability to study a topic in depth, and learning rapidly. These students shall be provided appropriately challenging curricula and instruction that are congruent with their learning abilities and styles and that shall be provided in classes composed of these students, taught by teachers trained to recognize and meet the needs of these students. Requests for exceptions to "classes" must be submitted to the

Gifted Steering Committee and may be approved in an elementary or middle school when based on the presence of an insufficient number of gifted students to form a differentiated class. Each school shall prepare a plan for delivery of services to gifted students, and the plan shall be approved by the Gifted Steering Committee.

Referral, Identification, and Placement of Students in the Gifted Program

Efforts to refer and identify students for the gifted program will be made at each grade level. Multiple criteria shall be used for identification purposes, and identification efforts shall be inclusionary. Outstanding abilities are present in students from all cultural groups and across all economic strata. Students will be placed in the gifted program congruent with their identified needs.

Referral, Identification, and Placement Criteria for Gifted Program

A. Referral Process

A student may be referred by parent/guardian, staff member, community member, peer, or by self-nomination.

A student may be referred for consideration based on any of the following.

1. Student products of high quality
2. Evidence of outstanding performance
3. Evidence of high ability, as determined by use of differentiated characteristics checklists
4. Standardized group aptitude test scores in the 9th stanine
5. Standardized group achievement test scores in the 9th stanine

B. Data Gathering Team, Building Based

Each school will establish a data gathering team, consisting of a building administrator, building facilitator, classroom teacher(s) and others. The make up of this group may change depending on the students who are being considered. It will be the responsibility of this team to facilitate the referral and identification of gifted students in the building.

C. Identification and Placement Criteria for Gifted Services

The criteria to be followed by the school data gathering team for identification and placement of students for gifted services and the differentiated curriculum are:

1. Meet district criterion on at least two of the following:

- Standardized achievement score(s) in 9th stanine on total reading, total math, total language, and/or total battery
- Student products or evidence of outstanding performance with supporting data, submitted by staff, parent/guardian, peers, self and/or community members
- Outstanding records of past performance (e.g., grades, performance in class)
- Evidence of ability as indicated on the differentiated characteristics checklists

or

Score at the 98th percentile or above on an approved individual psycho-

logical test or other appropriate test selected by the school psychologist, as follows:

Stanford-Binet V, full scale scores of 130 or above

Wechsler IV, full scale score or general ability index score of 130 or above

or

Verbal Comprehension Index score of 130 and a full scale score of 120 or above or a Perceptual Reasoning Index score of 130 and a full scale score of 120 or above



145 or above

or

Perceptual Reasoning Index score of 145 or above

E. Identification by District Administrative Steering Committee for the Gifted and Highly Gifted Program

If a student does not meet the specified criteria for identification and gifted program services seem warranted, then staff members, the student, and/or parents/guardians may submit data to the District Steering Committee for the Gifted Program.

2. Identified students who transfer to schools or articulate within the district and identified students who enroll from out of district will be provided gifted program services.

The District Administrative Steering Committee for the Gifted Program will consider the following information on which to base decisions for provided gifted program services:

- Demonstrated accomplishment(s)
- Expert testimony or reports
- Outstanding scores on objective tests
- Other evidence

D. Identification and Placement Criteria for Highly Gifted Services

The criteria used for identification and placement of students in the highly gifted program are:

Score three standard deviations above the norm on an approved individual psychological test as follows:

Stanford-Binet V, full scale of 145 or above

Wechsler IV, full scale or general ability index of 145 or above

or

Verbal Comprehension Index score of

F. Facilitating School Experiences for Students with High Ability and Low Achievement

Students who have abilities that would qualify them for the gifted program and who achieve at a low level will be referred to the data gathering team who, working with parents/guardians, will determine the school experiences that best meet the student's needs. This referral will result in identifying the student for the gifted program and placing the student in gifted program services unless par-

ents/guardians and staff determine that such identification and/or placement will not meet student needs. Student progress will be reviewed annually by the data gathering team.

Regulation 6310.2

Communications with Students in the Gifted Program and Their Parents about Referral, Identification, and Placement Criteria and Procedures

At the beginning of each school year, the district will provide written information to parents/guardians about gifted program referrals, identification, and procedures, including ways parents/guardians or students may facilitate the referral and identification process. In addition, information regarding the functions of the District Steering Committee, the alternate criteria for identifying students and the appeal process will be made available to parents/guardians.

At the beginning of each year and/or when a student enrolls, the principal/designee will provide to parents/guardians with a brochure or school newsletter, information describing the school's gifted program, gifted program referral, identification, and procedures, including ways parents/guardians or students may facilitate the referral and the identification process.

Policy 6320

Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

Program services in curricula and instruction will be designed to accommodate the student's ability levels and learning characteristics, such as thinking abstractly, having the ability to study a topic in depth, and learning rapidly. The program services may differ depending on the

needs of the student and the gifted or highly gifted designation. Program services include:

- Differentiated curricula and instruction
- Acceleration
- Flexible grouping that will include homogenous grouping
- Mentoring
- Providing appropriate courses and activities, including those at local state-supported colleges and universities
- Personal Learning Plan



Regulation 6320.1

Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

The services that will be provided by the district for students who are placed in the gifted program are:

Differentiation of curricula and instructional strategies.

Curricula and instruction will be differentiated in the following ways:

- The content objectives taught
- The processes, appropriate instructional strategies and resources used in teaching
- The expectations (activities and experiences) required of students
- The products and assessments required of students
- The learning environment

Differentiated English/Language Arts and Mathematics curriculum will be

available to kindergarten through sixth grade students.

Differentiated English, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science curriculum will be available to seventh and eighth grade students.



Acceleration

Modifications in curriculum and instruction will be made in accordance with individual student needs. Options available are:

- Move rapidly through a sequence of objectives at a pace consistent with the learning ability of the student that will likely be beyond grade level
- Receive a compacted version of a course, unit, or activity. Compacting in district curriculum will provide modifications in the regular curriculum materials by reorganizing and combining similar objectives to provide economical and effective use of instructional and practice time.
- Advance (skip an elementary or middle school grade or grades)
- Apply for a waiver for a middle school or high school course(s). A transitional plan will be put in place to devise a waiver process.
- Exemptions can be brought before the Steering Committee.

The principal, in consultation with the curriculum specialist, appropriate department chair, building facilitator, and the gifted consultant, will approve grade level advancements, waivers, grades, and credits earned.

Grouping

Student grouping will be flexible, except for the purpose of instruction in the differentiated curricula and/or acceleration, at which time students will be grouped with other gifted students.

Mentoring

A mentor will be offered for highly gifted students who have exceptional academic needs (including those who are under-achieving), that cannot be met through the standard curriculum and instructional options. Up to five hours per week of individual instruction will be offered in lieu of class instruction, during the time the class meets, as part of the school day, at the school site. Mentors will be offered in the disciplines of English/language arts, foreign language, mathematics, science, and social studies. Any variation of the above must be approved by the steering committee.

Appropriate Courses and Activities

In grades 9-12, areas required for graduation will offer differentiated and/or Advanced Placement classes. Differentiated sections of electives may be offered at the discretion of the school.

Highly gifted students, with permission from the principal/designee in consultation with the gifted consultant and the curriculum specialist may take appropriate courses in other buildings; and/or take up to 12 credit hours per calendar year of local, state-supported college or university course work. Any variation of the above must be approved by the steering committee.

Tuition will be paid by the district. Students will purchase materials needed for the class; they may submit the receipts

for reimbursement by the district. If the student receives district reimbursement, the materials become the property of the district. Materials purchased by the district become the property of the district. Students wishing to keep the materials may purchase them. Transportation will be provided by the student.

Post-secondary courses may be used as credit toward graduation at the rate of five high school credit hours for every three college credit hours completed. Courses will be included on the student's high school transcript.

A Personal Learning Plan (PLP) will be written for students who:

- Are advanced (skip) an elementary or middle school grade
- Are granted a waiver for a middle level and/or high school course(s)
- Qualify for a mentor
- Take a course at another administrative level (i.e., an elementary student taking a middle level course)
- Are participating in post-secondary course work
- Demonstrate competence in elementary social studies or science
- Have instructional needs in elementary English/language arts and mathematics that cannot be met through the differentiated curricula

The principal/designee will be the PLP manager and the PLP will be reviewed annually by the principal, designee and/or the building program design

team.

Each school will establish a gifted program design team whose purpose will be to:

- Determine the procedure for referral and identification
- Plan program services in curriculum, instruction, and guidance/counseling
- Plan professional development options for certified staff
- Plan the evaluation procedures for determining the success of program services
- Communicate the building plan to parents.

Articulation

The district will create procedures to ensure smooth articulation between administrative levels.



Regulation 6320.2

Guidance/Counseling Services for Gifted Program

- A. Guidance/counseling staff will provide services to:
- Students in the gifted program
 - Students with high ability and low achievement
 - Parents/guardians of students in the program
 - Staff members who work with students in the program
- B. The services to be provided will be adapted to be consistent with the needs and learning characteristics of students in the gifted program and will focus on:
- Academic and educational planning

- Career planning
- Personal-social growth

Guidance/counseling staff will deliver services related to these three areas of emphasis by:

- Counseling with individual students and groups of students in the gifted program
- Communicating with parents/guardians of students in the gifted program in group for individual sessions
- Consulting with staff members
- Providing, in cooperation with principals and gifted program facilitators, workshops for staff and for parents/guardians of students in the gifted program



Policy 6330

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Staff Selection and Assignment for Gifted Program

The selection and recruitment of personnel to work with gifted students in the differentiated curriculum will be based on criteria that includes:

- Knowledge and skills related to gifted education
- Knowledge of the content to be taught
- Interest in working with students in the gifted program

A teaching endorsement in gifted educa-

tion is preferred.

The principal will assign staff members to teach and counsel students in the gifted program. Only qualified teachers, trained in the differentiated curricula, will be assigned to teach the differentiated curricula.

The role of the administrator is to monitor the training of staff and assess the performance of qualified staff assigned to instruct students in the gifted program.

Policy 6340

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Staff Development Services for Gifted Program

The district will implement a comprehensive system of staff development offerings for teachers, counselors, facilitators, media specialists, psychologists, and administrators. Starting in the fall of 1994, within three years after their employment, new staff members must have completed Level One outcomes, which are included in the tenure requirement courses. Level One and Level Two outcomes are expected, but not required, of those teachers who are tenured at the time this policy goes into effect.

A two-tiered, outcome-based staff development program will be provided for all staff to be completed within a designated period of time. Level One outcomes are expected of program design teams, data gathering teams, and all other certified staff. Level Two outcomes are expected of the gifted program consultant, consulting teachers, itinerant teachers, teachers of the differentiated curriculum, and

gifted program facilitators.

Level One and Two outcomes may be waived based on successful experience and course work.

Level One outcomes will be incorporated into the existing tenure requirements for Instructional Decision Making.

Policy 6350

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Support Committees to the Gifted Program

A district administrative steering committee will serve in an advocacy role, ensure due process, and advise the supervisor for the gifted program. A community review committee will review gifted program services and facilitate parent and school communication.

Regulation 6350.1

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

District Administrative Steering Committee for the Gifted Program

The District Administrative Steering Committee serves in an advocacy role, ensures due process, and advises the consultant for the gifted program.

The Steering Committee has the following functions:

- Review individual student cases and recommend action when mutual agreement cannot be reached at the building level
- Advise and review procedures for the gifted program
- Review topics suggested for and

assist in planning the agendas for meetings of the Community Review Committee

- Approve exceptions to classes as stated in Policy 6300

Regulation 6350.2

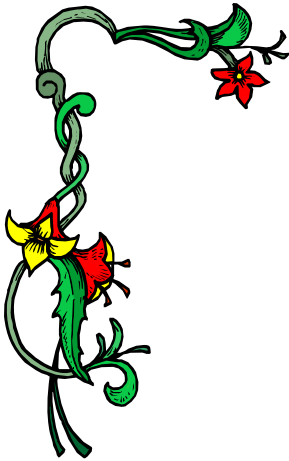
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Community Review Committees

The Community Review Committee has the following functions:

- To be knowledgeable about the policies and procedures used to administer the district's gifted program
- To review, recommend, and submit ideas to the Consultant for the Gifted Program, the Director of Curriculum, and the Director of Student Services, the workability of the services currently being provided to gifted students and the services being proposed in the areas of curriculum, counseling, referral, identification, and placement
- To facilitate parent and school communication
- To plan Parent Forums





Chapter 4: The LPS Gifted Curriculum:

Working with your teacher, the school, and the district

When students are identified as gifted, parents experience yet another layer of jargons and procedures. This section will clarify some of the parlance and procedures with which you may not already be familiar.

“What do they mean by...”

Differentiated: Classes in the gifted curriculum are different from the regular curriculum in pacing and depth. *Differentiation* refers to the practice of modifying existing lessons to accommodate the learning styles and pace of gifted learners. First, lessons may be *compacted*: because many gifted students learn and understand material quickly and deeply, not everything in the text needs to be taught or addressed. Teachers may pre-test and then select portions of the regular curriculum to teach. Covering the required course material takes much less time and less repetition. Throughout the district, these courses are referred to as *diff* courses. If your child is enrolled in a *diff* course, there will be a *d* next to the course name on the report card.

Acceleration: The student may be advanced a grade; may be provided books and materials from a higher grade level in one course; may attend honor classes, fo-

cus schools, after-school and summer enrichment courses, and/or have a mentor.

In the Lincoln Public Schools, some students travel to another school for part of the academic day; such is the case with a seventh grader who attends high school for advanced math, science, or language classes.

Another option is for a group of five or ten students to meet with a professor or community mentor for advanced learning. Insisting that intellectually and academically capable students remain with their age-peers can result in boredom, behavior problems, harassment, and disengagement from school. There is an understanding that acceleration may be reversed or stopped at any time if it does not serve the positive purpose of nurturing the child. Therefore, there must be cooperation and mutual respect between the school and home.

Acceleration can take many forms, including grade skipping, self-paced instruction, subject acceleration (skipping a grade in one subject area), mentoring, credit by examination, and more.

Informal acceleration is much more com-

mon than is grade skipping. Before grade skipping can occur, a variety of issues must be examined from multiple perspectives to ensure that the child is likely to succeed in the new placement.

Mentors: Children identified as *highly gifted* are offered the services of a special, one-on-one teacher called a mentor, usually for an hour of academic instruction per day. Issues related to mentors are discussed later in this chapter.

PLP: A PLP is a *Personal Learning Plan*, which must be prepared for any student who qualifies for a mentor (highly gifted students), skips a grade, takes an advanced course, takes a university course, etc., or meets other requirements (See Policy 65320.1.f.). PLPs must be approved by parents and reviewed annually.



The Gifted Curriculum

The Lincoln Public Schools gifted program has significant differences at the elementary, middle/junior high, and senior high school levels. It also differs, to a sometimes surprising degree, among schools at the same level, based on such factors as the number of identified students in the school, the philosophy of the school's administration, the parents' expectations, and the attitude and abilities of the teaching staff. LPS places considerable authority and responsibility with the principal of each school, and the Gifted Policy reflects this philosophy by setting broad guidelines, then requiring each school to fashion its own plan for carrying out the Board's policy. This can lead to wonderful schools that display excitement and innovation by brilliant educators and administrators, along with happy and well-adjusted gifted students who are being accepted and nurtured. If not, a brief dis-

ussion of your options for transferring among LPS schools is located at the end of this chapter.

Elementary

At the elementary level (grades K through 5), the Gifted Policy calls for *differentiating* the teaching of English/language arts and mathematics. For at least 50 minutes per day, in math and in reading, gifted students are to be grouped together for special instruction and materials in those areas. The Gifted Policy does not dictate that all gifted children of a certain age be placed in the same homeroom, instead preferring "flexible" grouping, which leaves the decision to the building-level administrators. Because some classes may not have enough gifted students to make a whole class, the gifted students may be in a classroom with students of average learning ability. However, the Policy does require that gifted children be grouped together for teaching of the differentiated curriculum, which should occur daily (or, if the equivalent time is divided up every other day during the week, 250 minutes per week). It was not the intent of the policy to have 20 gifted students spread out among three, four, or five classrooms. The policy sets only minimum standards so as not to be dictatorial, and it is up to the schools to provide the appropriate environment for maximum learning and emotional development.

Typically, the elementary differentiated literature ("diff lit") curriculum includes reading selected books that are advanced for the students' age/grade level, either in terms of concepts or in terms of language use. During diff lit, students also practice skills for comprehending and discussing the reading in small groups. Special writing programs are also a typical part of the elementary diff lit program. The gifted curriculum should also include

compacting of grade-level material, so that students are not bored by slow pacing and needless repetition of material they have already mastered.

Diff math is also accelerated and compacted; part of the mathematics curriculum should be offered in a gifted group, at a challenging level, and the rest of the teaching should be “compacted” to avoid repetitive worksheets that reinforce already-mastered skills. The regular math curriculum includes pre-tests that demonstrate content the students already know, so that compacting can be ensured.

Middle School

The Gifted Policy states that middle schools (grades 6 to 8) shall offer differentiated curriculum to gifted students grouped by ability (not mixed or heterogeneous groups). When small populations of gifted students exist at a particular grade level, they will typically be joined by additional students who have advanced capacity in that subject matter.

Beginning in seventh grade, differentiated sections are also offered in social studies and science, as well as in English and math. On report cards, differentiated sections are designated by a *d* after the name of the course (e.g., *English 8d* is a differentiated section; *Math 7* is not).

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) *Parent Information Guide #3* states, “More harm than good is done by denying acceleration to bright students.” Rather than locking students into age level classes, students should be able to take any class they are *qualified* to attend. There is not a tried and true formula on whether a child should be accelerated. Flexibility and acceptance for the student

should be of primary concern.

Elements of Math: Students who wish to take Elements of Math must plan to enroll in Lux Middle School and East High School. This program runs for four years. Students begin the program in grade 7 and continue through grade 10. New students are not admitted to it after grade 7.

High School

For high school students, the Policy states that differentiated or Advanced Placement (AP) classes should be offered in those areas required for graduation, and that differentiated classes within elective subject matter can be offered at the discretion of the school. In practice, gifted high school students in LPS have a great number of options. They may elect to take courses at any of the high schools (consulting the annual publication that lists all the courses). However, manipulating the schedules from two different schools can prove challenging, but it is certainly an option, particularly for sections that are limited. Students not previously identified as gifted may selectively request admission to differentiated or Advanced Placement classes, at the discretion of the teacher, the counselor, and/or the building administrators.

Block Schedule: Southwest High School operates on a block schedule, which means that students take fewer subjects at a time but complete an entire academic year of a subject in one semester.

Advanced Placement (AP) courses work in partnership between the College Board and universities. Offered in high schools, they enable students to gain college credit by passing a standardized AP test in May (typically around \$80). While taking the test is optional, passing with a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale means college credit in



that subject at many universities—but be sure to check if the college or university that your son/daughter is considering will accept these scores for credit.

AP tests will enable the student to skip certain entry-level college courses, and upon admission to college can immediately be placed in more advanced courses. As a result, many students are able to begin their freshman year with almost sophomore level credits.

According to the U.S. Department of Education's *Answers in the Toolbox Study* (1999), a high school curriculum of "academic intensity and quality" is the most powerful predictor of bachelor's degree completion—even more than GPA or ACT/SAT scores. Moreover, the savings in tuition and time can amount to a great deal when students pass multiple tests. For students on free/reduced lunch programs, the testing fees are reduced or waived entirely.

Highly gifted high school students may also take local college courses for high school and college credit, with LPS paying the expenses, up to the rate charged by UNL. Gifted students may also petition the Steering Committee to be allowed to take college courses.

Focus Schools exist to provide alternatives to the comprehensive high schools. Each is set up differently. For more information on any of the focus schools, call Principal Dick Spearman at 436-1637.

The Arts and Humanities Focus Program: The program is designed for juniors and seniors and generally runs from 10 to 3. This daily schedule allows students to take at least two classes at their home high school prior to the start of the program

each day. The Arts & Humanities Focus Program does accept sophomores that are academically prepared and possess the maturity required to thrive in an environment where motivation, self-directed learning and time-management skills are imperative to student success. The school is located at 643 S 25 Street, Suite 15; the phone number is 436-1785.

The Information Technology Focus Program (ITFP) provides high school students with learning opportunities in the areas of interactive media, web page development, graphic design, networking, computer programming and distance learning.

The ITFP is characterized by interactive, collaborative, student-centered, on-line learning. The emphasis is on the development of lifelong learning skills that allow students to adapt easily to technological change. Students take their required courses at their assigned high school and attend ITFP at the end of the day. Summer programs also exist. The school is located at Federal Trust Building, 134 South 13th Street.

The Science Focus Program (Zoo School) is a small community of mature learners participating both in a traditional and non-traditional style of learning. Students play an active role in defining their learning environment and education, with ongoing projects and science studies. The school is located at the zoo: 1222 S 27 St, 68502. For more information call 436-1780.

A Short Course in School Activism (What to Do When Your School & Your Child Don't Mesh)

Bright children are not always easy to educate (or to parent), and the brighter the child, the less likely he or she is to fit comfortably into the typical classroom.

Recognizing that teachers, schools, and students differ widely, parents sometimes face difficult decisions about what is best for their children. In general, if you have concerns or want changes to occur, we advise starting at the level closest to your child—the classroom—and working your way up the administrative ladder only as much as necessary.

Visiting your child's teacher, observing the classroom, and even volunteering in the classroom, if at all possible, can give you valuable insights into your child's situation and can often produce remarkable changes. Your presence gently reminds a busy teacher that your child is part of a family, with resources and allies beyond the school walls. Also, it is amazing to see how your child functions with his or her peers in a large classroom.

If a problem or question can't be (or isn't) resolved at the classroom, you may have to start up the administrative ladder. To be credible and effective at each higher level, you need to be able to demonstrate that you've sought solution at the lower rungs, or you're likely to be sent back down.

At the building level, each LPS school has a gifted facilitator, who should be very knowledgeable about that school's gifted plan, about your teachers' implementation of that plan, and about your gifted child. Above the teacher and facilitator is your school's principal, the key figure in how seriously and effectively the gifted curriculum is being prioritized throughout your school.

Districtwide, Dr. Joan Jacobs is the Gifted Supervisor. She is essentially the "principal" of the gifted program, working with each building's gifted facilitator and

principal, offering instruction for teachers on the theory and practice of gifted education, and generally administering the program. The Steering Committee exists to make exceptions to policy when warranted. See your facilitator for more information.

Dr. Jacobs' superior is Barb Jacobson, Director of Curriculum. Above the building principals is Dr. Marilyn Moore, Associate Superintendent for Instruction. Dr. E. Susan Gourley is Superintendent of the Lincoln Public Schools. Advising LPS on the Gifted Policy and its implementation is the Community Review Committee. If requested, we can provide a forum for parents with issues or problems regarding the program. Our roles are to listen, to advise, and to facilitate communication.

The budget-setting and policy-making body for LPS is the seven-member School Board, elected by us—the citizenry—who are the ultimate bosses, and funders, of a public school system. Immediate changes for individual students are more often achieved at the classroom level than through the School Board, but parents need to be active, involved, and knowledgeable throughout the system.

Among your options for addressing serious problems within your child's classroom are to work with the principal to move your child to a different classroom.

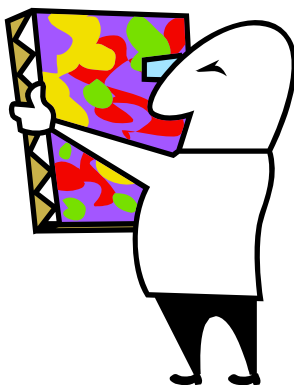
As a further resort, you also have rights to transfer to another school in LPS (even without moving to a different area). Depending upon their capacity and enrollment, various elementary and middle schools may be open for transfers school-wide or on a class-by-class basis. Check with Student Services at LPS District Office. Each school's principal can tell you

the status of the grades in question. Of course, if you relocate your residence into the boundaries of a school's area, your child will typically be enrolled there, regardless of how crowded the school might be. Check with Student Services to be sure before you purchase. Parents face difficult choices without certain answers.

Some useful books on parenting are listed in chapter 6 and a more comprehensive list can be found on the LPS gifted web site (<http://sites.lps.org/gifted/>).

Mentors for Students in the Visual Arts

Students are identified as gifted in the visual arts through a juried selection of their art portfolios; students selected through this competition are provided a visual arts mentor who works with the student two hours per week during school hours.



While IQ scores are not part of qualifying for this program, the student does need to be able to demonstrate that missing four hours of class each week (2 for the mentor, 2 more for studio time) will not negatively affect his or her academic performance. The program is a small one; positions open only when a student leaves the program. The program serves students in the elementary grades.

Applications for the visual arts mentor program are available in September from the building gifted facilitator. Students must submit the application and an art portfolio demonstrating what they have

worked on in recent years. When possible, it is helpful to the committee if students include the age at which they completed various products, as well as the context (e.g., "My art class was working on imitating Picasso's style"). The committee will first review all portfolios and will then select finalists to be interviewed about their art. Based on these interviews, the committee will select a number of students likely to benefit most from working with an art mentor.

Mentors for Highly Gifted Students

Students who are identified as "highly gifted" based on their IQ scores or Steering Committee review have the option of working with a mentor during regular school hours for up to one hour per day, to pursue a selected subject area in depth, within the disciplines

of English language arts, foreign language, mathematics, science, and social studies.

A Personal Learning Plan (PLP) is prepared by the mentor and the school facilitator, and reviewed and approved by the parent, to guide the mentor/student process.

Finding the Right Mentor for your Child

If your child qualifies for a mentor, one must be found for him or her. LPS maintains a list of qualified mentors in each subject area and their availability. LPS Human Resources Department has a list and is formally responsible for obtaining the mentor. However, depending

upon the subject, grade level, and time of day that your student has available, it may be difficult to find someone to fill that position. Should this happen, you and your child may want to consider a second (different) area of interest.

You may take an active part in the selection process, including interviewing mentors. If you know students whose children have worked with mentors in the same academic area, you may want to call them to inquire how their experience was with particular mentors and subjects. While the facilitator will accomplish this eventually without you, your participation may speed the process and will probably increase your satisfaction with the outcome.

You can also assume major responsibility for recruiting a mentor, which can be a real service to your child and to other children served by the Gifted Program. Anyone to be paid by LPS must meet LPS requirements, including education requirements (college graduate or upper-class student, mentoring within his or her major) and security checks. However, within those parameters, you can conduct your own search, recommending someone to LPS Human Resources staff for their review. You may know talented people connected with businesses, government, or our local colleges and University who might be in a position to help you, or who could recommend suitable mentors. Stay in touch with your gifted facilitator, as he or she must participate in the final choice. Finally, keep in mind that as you recommend people to the program, there is a necessary time lag, while the mentor submits transcripts and LPS does a background check.

It sounds a bit daunting, perhaps, to suggest that you come up with the mentor yourself, but this can work beautifully if you know clearly what you want for your child in terms of curriculum, teaching strengths, and even personality. You know your own child best. Bringing in a good new mentor is a tremendous service to the community. Good mentors are kept very

busy, and LPS always need more. All mentors must go through the regular LPS employee process, which requires transcripts, recommendations, and a background check; this can take awhile.

Mentors come and go, as it is intense work and modestly compensated. It is wise to maintain an active file of possible mentors, so you will have a starting point if your mentor resigns. Other parents of mentored students are good sources for referrals. Parent Forum nights are a good time to network.

Working with a Mentor

Stay in touch with your child's mentor and require feedback, both for yourself and for the classroom teacher. You should encourage regular contact between your child's mentor and classroom teacher, to share your student's progress and advise each other.

Some mentors will have excellent ideas on curriculum to share with your child, or you may wish to take a lead in making suggestions. Good advisors include your gifted facilitator and principal, the district's curriculum consultant, the gifted consultant, and the teachers at the secondary school your child will attend (assuming yours is an elementary student) including the head of the department in your child's mentored field. Other mentors in your child's field of study may also provide good suggestions.

As students move into high school, the use of mentors declines, because the courses tend to be more advanced.



Chapter 5: Special Issues

Being a member of a specific subgroup can make an enormous impact on how students react in a program for the gifted. Many external forces affect their attitudes, responses, and interpretations. A brief overview of some of the considerations follows.

Gifted girls

As Barbara Kerr points out in *Smart Girls, Gifted Women*: "Girls are subtly taught to relate their failures, but not their successes, to ability. Make sure your child knows that she does have the capability to succeed, and that achievements are due to her ability instead of luck. In a Berkeley study, only 8% of women vs. 57% of men had 4 years of high school math. This locked 92% of college women out of many academic options that required 4 years of math. Studies indicate that gifted girls' IQ scores drop in adolescence. Researchers hypothesize that this is the time that girls begin to perceive being gifted as undesirable for themselves. Highly gifted girls do not usually receive recognition for their achievements and often aspire to careers having moderate rather than high status."

In *Work Left Undone*, Sally Reis notes that many gifted females are "unaware of, ambivalent about, or frightened by their potential" (1998, p. 55). Many equate ambition with selfishness. Research suggests that girls who are involved in gifted pro-

grams and numerous extracurricular activities have less frequent loss of confidence in their abilities than do other girls.

Sports Overload

Participation in sports is a wonderful way for students to socialize, to learn how to be a team player, and to develop skills, coordination, self-esteem, and fitness. Lincoln students are fortunate to have a tremendous variety of organizations and sponsors for these activities. However, parents should realize that the rewards system and pressures can "capture" students and parents. Sports can drain students' energies and sap their strength to such an extent that students become too preoccupied and too tired for efficient learning in the classroom. Mental work takes a lot of time and energy. We should reward our scholars with recognition so that peer acceptance and self-esteem will be a way of life for our high achieving students.

Preparing for College

Students interested in college should take the most rigorous academic courses offered. It will not work to the student's long-term advantage to take only "safe" courses, in which an "A" grade is assured. It is better to go for the top mark in the hardest course and fall short than to receive an "A" in an easier course. The depth of material offered in the toughest

courses provides the greatest exposure to the type of information and analysis sought on the college entrance examinations, as well as preparing students to succeed in college.

Students and parents interested in applying to nationally competitive colleges sometimes wonder if straight A's on easier courses are preferable to even a few B's on advanced courses. College admission offices emphasize that they know the difference in the types of courses, and prefer students willing to take the challenging ones. College admissions considerations aside, bright students will serve themselves better educating themselves for a lifetime by taking the most sophisticated courses offered.

However, some highly competitive colleges screen applicants by class rank and grade point average (along with standardized test scores) to form the preliminary pool of candidates for closer examination. Occasionally this may lead colleges to overlook fine students with less than a 4.0 G.P.A. LPS employs a weighted grading scale to encourage and reward students who attempt difficult classes in grades 9 through 12. Students have further options to test out of or waive classes that they have already mastered.

Social Emotional Issues

Parents of gifted children often worry that their children suffer teasing at school or find few friends among their age-mates. Gifted kids may report feeling a strange or "weird" in relation to their classmates. The more extreme the children's "gifts," the more severe these problems may be.

Some parents respond by shying away from involving their children in special gifted programs. But research indicates

that unless our children grow up appreciating and developing their own unique characteristics, including their intelligence, they have little chance of becoming happy, productive adults. Participating in gifted programs is not correlated with attitude problems, depression, or affective issues.

Dr. Linda Silverman advises that three key factors are essential to the healthy social development of gifted children. These include a warm and respectful home environment that teaches appreciation of people of all abilities and backgrounds. Second, gifted children need opportunities, especially in elementary years, to relate to intellectual peers, not just to children of their own age. At the time in their lives when their own self-concept is forming, children need to see their gifts and talents as accepted, enjoyable, and shared with others—not as strange or weird. Finally, adolescent gifted children need to exercise self-acceptance in mainstream settings. Only when they come to understand their own differences will gifted children be able to recognize and accept differences in others.

Parents concerned about social and emotional issues can find good advice in many of the books listed in chapter 6. For more specific help, call Dr. Joan Jacobs (436-1822) for suggestions on particular topics. School counselors and LPS psychologists can offer perspective, advice, and referrals. Sharing ideas and experiences with the parents of other gifted children can also be invaluable. One of the best places to do this is at gifted parent forums, held regularly throughout the school year. The dates are posted in the gifted newsletter.





Chapter 6: Resources for Children and Parents

Groups, Contacts, and Parent Resources

The gifted department sends out a newsletter to parents of identified students several times each year. These newsletters include articles concerning giftedness as well as web sites that may provide educational opportunities. If you have particular requests for the newsletter, please contact Dr. Joan Jacobs, the gifted supervisor at 436-1822.

Following are a number of additional resources that you may want to consider in your search for information on particular topics. NAG, NAGC, and SENG are probably the organizations most likely to provide the information you seek. In addition, web sites of interest are included as well.

Nebraska Association for the Gifted (NAG)

NAG is a state-wide organization for educators, administrators, and parents. Yearly membership is \$25 and is open to all persons. The annual conference is held each February. Write to 11683 Capitol Avenue, Omaha, NE 68154 or call (202) 785-4268. Or visit the web site at <http://www.nebraskagifted.org/membership.html>. It is filled with information relevant to the area.

National Association for Gifted Children

(NAGC)

NAGC is a national organization of parents, teachers, educators and others concerned with issues involving gifted children. Parent memberships cost \$25 and include four issues of *Parenting for High Potential* as well as discounts on NAGC publications. Visit the web site at <http://www.nagc.org> or call (202) 285-4268.

University Of Nebraska At Kearney

At the graduate level, the Special Education Department offers advanced studies in the areas of gifted and talented education and special education. For more information, write to UNK, Office of Graduate Studies and Research, Special Education, Founders Hall, Kearney, NE 68849-1230.

Supporting Educational Needs of the Gifted (SENG)

SENG will put parents on the email list, if you're interested in updates. In addition to conferences, they provide a list of frequently asked questions and articles of interest. Write to SENG, P.O. Box 6074, Scottsdale, AZ 85261 or call (773) 857-6250. The web site also provides a terrific array of information for parents: <http://www.sengifted.org/>

Uniquely Gifted

This organization provides resources

for gifted students who have special needs, including ADD/ADHD, learning disabilities, Asperger Syndrome, etc. You can find information on on-line support groups as well as information on diagnosis and treatment. Visit the web site at <http://www.uniquelygifted.org/>.

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children:

The web site is available at <http://www.worldgifted.org/xwebix.htm>.

National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT):

Located at the University of Connecticut and sponsored by the US Department of Education, the NRC/GT investigates and develops new methods of identifying and teaching gifted students. The center produces a wide variety of materials, both practical and research-based. They also provide a forum for asking questions and having researchers respond. Visit the web site at www.ucc.uconn.edu/~wwwgt/nrcgt.html

Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development

The school of education at the University of Connecticut conducts research and offers training for teachers of gifted students. The web site provides articles and information of use to those concerned with gifted education: www.gifted.uconn.edu.

Davidson Institute for Talent Development

The institute is a nonprofit US organization that provides free services to gifted young people. A number of yearly scholarships—The Davidson Fellowships—are offered to young people under the age of 18 in increments of

\$50,000, \$25,000 and \$10,000 . Also available is a free database of resources (GT-CyberSource) for and about the gifted, their parents and the professionals who serve them. www.davidson-institute.org

Hoagies Gifted Education Page

Hoagies provides an “all-things-gifted” resource including articles and links. Visit the web site at <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org>.

Books and articles

A more comprehensive list is available from your facilitator or from the LPS gifted web site



(<http://sites.lps.org/gifted/>) Look for *resources*, then *bibliographies*. Listed here are some of the most important works that are more general in nature.

Alvino, J. (1996). *Parents' guide to raising a gifted child: Recognizing and developing your child's potential from preschool to adolescence*. New York: Balantine Books.

Baum, S., Reis, S. M., & Maxfield, L. (1998). *Nurturing the gifts and talents of primary grade students*. Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press, 1998.

Clark, B. (1997). *Growing up gifted*. (5th ed.). New York: Merrill.

Colangelo, N., Assouline, S. G., & Gross, M. U. M. (2004). *A nation deceived: How schools hold back America's brightest students*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa.

Colangelo, N., & Davis, G. A. (2002). *Handbook of gifted education*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Davidson, J., Davison, B., & Vanderkam, L. (2004). *Genius denied: How to stop*

- wasting our brightest young minds.*
New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Davis, G. A., & Rimm, S. B. (2003). *Education of the gifted and talented*. Fifth Edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Developing Mathematically Promising Students*. (1999). (L. J. Sheffield, ed.) Reston, VA : National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM).
- Goertzel, V., Goertzel, M., Goertzel, T., & Hansen, A. (2004). *Cradles of eminence: Childhoods of more than 700 famous men and women*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.
- Gross, M. U. M. (2003). *Exceptionally gifted children*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.
- Halsted, J. W. (2002). *Some of my best friends are books: Guiding gifted readers from preschool to high school*. Second Edition. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.
- International handbook of giftedness and talent* (2000). Heller, K. A., Monks, F. A., Sternberg, R. J., & Subotnik, R. F. (Eds.). (2nd ed.). New York: Elsevier.
- Hipp, E. (1995). *Fighting invisible tigers: A stress management guide for teens*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing.
- Neihart, M., Reis, S. M., Robinson, N., & Moon, S. M. (Eds.). (2001). *The social and emotional development of gifted children. What do we know?* Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Olenchak, F. R. (1998). *They say my kid's gifted: Now what?* Washington, D.C.: The National Association for Gifted Children
- Reis, S. M. (1998). *Work left undone: Choices and compromises of talented women*. Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press.
- Rogers, K. B. (2002). *Re-forming gifted education: How parents and teachers can match the program to the child*. Scottsdale, ZA: Great Potential Press.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1982). Lies we live by: Misapplication of tests in identifying the gifted. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 26(4), 157-161.
- Van Tassel-Baska, J. (1998). *Excellence in educating gifted and talented learners* (3rd ed.). Denver: Love Publishing.
- Webb, J. T., Gore, J. L., & Karens, F. A. (2004). *Grandparents' guide to gifted children*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.
- Webb, J. T., Meckstroth, E. A., & Tolan, S. S. (1994). *Guiding the gifted child: A practical source for parents and teachers*. Scottsdale, AZ: Gifted Psychology Press.
- Webb, J. T., Amends, E. A., Webb, N. E., Goerss, J., Beljan, P., Olenchak, F. R., & Lind, S. (2004). *Misdiagnosis and dual diagnosis of gifted children and adults: ADHD, bipolar, OCD, Asperger's, depression, and other disorders*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.
- Winner, E. (1997). *Gifted Children, Myths and Realities*. New York: Basic Books.

Summer Activities for Students

While this booklet divides summer and academic-year opportunities, some of the listings for summer may also provide school-year offerings for students. *Prices listed reflect 2005 figures.*

In Lincoln

All Girls, All Math Program

The UNL annual mathematics summer camp for girls offers a week-long camp for girls in grades 10-12. For more information visit <http://www.math.unl.edu/pi/outreach/agam> or call UNL at 472-3731.



Bright Lights

Serving elementary and middle school students in Lincoln, Bright Lights offers hands-on summer learning adventures in a

variety of topics in half-day, week-long formats. Interesting educational activities are provided in intensive, three-hour blocks of time, allowing students to pursue focused interest beyond the school classroom. Teachers are chosen for their ability with students and their passion to engage students in their field of expertise. In addition, day camps exist in engineering, medicine, and architecture. Students enroll by course, and need-based scholarships are available. Registration begins April 1, and the application form is available on line. Many courses close quickly. Half-day classes for one-week are \$90; full-day camp is \$180. For more information, call 402-420-1115. Additional information is available at www.brightlights.org



Folsom Children's Zoo

A number of classes and camps for children exist. Classes extend from preschool to age 12 and include a variety of topics: pony clinics, photography, zoologist club, and much more. The zoo crew offers the opportunity to help others enjoy their zoo experience. From the web site (www.Lincolnzoo.org), click on *education*. Or call 402-475-6741.

Gere Public Library

Teen volunteer opportunities are offered to teens of all ages and abilities:

- Students who need to fulfill citizenship issues credit for graduation can volunteer with various departments and branches of Lincoln City Libraries. See your high school for details. Students wishing to complete their Citizenship Issues hours at Gere Branch Library should look at the Gere Branch Library Fall Citizenship Issues Orientation page: www.lcl.lib.ne.us
- Students in grades 6-12 who are interested in a long-term assignment lending their time and talents to benefit their neighborhood are encouraged to

contact their local library about the Youth Volunteer Program. The purpose of this program is to provide the library with assistance while teaching youth basic library skills and giving them an active role in their community. Tasks vary from organizing materials to helping with bulletin board to reading and reviewing materials.

- Interested teens can also participate in a dialogue with library staff concerning library programs and services for their age group. Contact your library for more information. To volunteer, contact Outreach Services at 441-8546 or call the library of your choice for more information.

Chess Camp

The week-long Chess Camp is open to K-12 students; full-day camp runs from 9-4 each day and costs \$240. Half Day Camp meets from 9-12 and costs \$150. Players receive top-level instruction geared to their level; they participate in tournament, speed, computer, blindfolded, and team chess games and in numerous recreational activities. The camp is suitable for players at all levels—from beginner to expert. To register for the camp send the child's name, grade, school, home address, telephone number, and e-mail address along with a check payable to the Lincoln Chess Foundation at P.O. Box 22331, Lincoln, NE 68542.

Economics Is Everywhere! Camp

Hosted by the UNL Center for Economic Education, this camp is open to students who are post-6th grade to post-8th grade. A one-week camp held in Lincoln, the economics camp takes students on a journey into the exciting world of economics as it relates to money, entertainment, government, sports, and the global economy. Each of the five days includes an array of activities, speakers, and field trips designed to increase understanding of how economics touches all our lives. The cost

is \$180, which includes field trips, materials, lunches, and snacks. Need-based scholarships may be available. Contact Dr. Tammie Fischer, Director, UNL Center for Economic Education, 472-2333, tfischer1@unl.edu

Pioneers Park Nature Center

Various classes exist for all ages and all abilities, as well as guided hikes, activities, demonstration, classes, and winter camps. All programs have a common theme of interpreting natural history of the Central Great Plains. In addition, summer camp programs focus primarily on 6 to 12 year olds, and junior counselor positions are available for 13 and 14 year olds. All camps focus on environmental education, using hands-on activities led by trained staff. Registration begins March 1 and continues throughout the summer. The mission of Pioneers Park Nature Center is to interpret the natural history of Nebraska and the Central Great Plains; to promote the enjoyment, appreciation, and awareness of our natural environment; to practice and foster a conservation ethic; and to provide a sanctuary for wildlife and a peaceful retreat for people. Call Nancy Furman, Coordinator for more information: 441-7895 or visit the web site at www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/parks/nature/natcenter/index.htm

Big Red Summer Academic Camps: Held at UNL, these career exploration camps allow students in grades 9-12 to immerse themselves in a specific topic such as movie making, fashion design, golf, culinary, horsemanship and many others; the camp culminates with a capstone event in which the student can showcase his or her work. These are residence camps, which provide housing and food for all participants. The fees range from \$200-475 depending upon the camp cho-

sen. For more information, see bigred-camps.unl.edu.

In Nebraska

Nebraska Scholars Academy:

Held at Hastings College, this academic week-long summer camp is open to students in Nebraska who will be in the eighth grade in fall. The curricular offerings are designed to provide high ability students challenging and enriching opportunities in communications, mathematics, or science. Students must qualify. The cost in 2005 was \$425. For more information, contact Linda Engel, 402-644-2500 or Rich Lloyd, 402-461-7360.



The Wind on the Buffalo Grass Summer Enrichment Camps for High Ability Learners Grades 6-8:

Focusing on the arts, the Wind on the Buffalo Camps are week-long. Students may select writing, visual arts, or music. Need-based scholarships are available. Cost is \$245. For more information, contact Ann Kester, McCook Community College, 1-800-658-4348, ext. 8166

Peter Kiewit Institute

This camp sponsors a one-week summer program, Academy of Excellence, which pairs outstanding junior students with their favorite science/math teacher in a program that exposes both to Information Technology and Engineering topics. The Institute is working toward securing funding for an additional program in robotics for junior high school teachers and students for a workshop on the TEKBOT robot-learning system. More info. available at: www.pki.uneb.edu.

Central Honors Institute

Central Community College hosts the Central Honors Institute (CHI) on its campus in Columbus, Nebraska. CHI is a one-week

residential academic camp for Nebraska students who have completed the sixth or seventh grades and have demonstrated academic accomplishments, leadership and maturity among their peers. Students must complete an application and submit a recommendation from a recent teacher or counselor to be eligible to attend the camp. They focus on either math or communications. Tuition for the 6-day camp is \$275. To learn more, download the brochure in .pdf format:

<http://www.cccneb.edu/programs/els/chi/Brochure1stPage.pdf> or contact Lori Neid at (402) 562-1224 or 1-800-642-1083, ext. 1224; Email: lneid@cccneb.edu.

Joslyn Art Museum:

Joslyn annually hosts two two-week-long art career camps for high school students. The camps acquaint students with careers in the visual arts through experiences at the Museum and at several other sites in Omaha. Joslyn's encyclopedic collection is the springboard for introductory studio experiences in areas such as drawing, painting, clay, sculpture, and computer graphics. Students learn from Museum staff, visit professional artists and art-related work sites, and do a two-day "job-shadow" with an artist of their choice. College credit is earned through Metro Community College, and high school credit is earned through some school districts.

Day Camps: In addition, Joslyn offers day camps in art for students of all ages. Day camps are designed to introduce students to the Museum's collections and teach arts skills and concepts at age-appropriate levels. Most camps meet Monday-Friday for one week. Financial assistance may be available. See the web site for more information.

<http://www.joslyn.org/educat/class.htm>

Aim For The Stars Science and Math Camp, University of Nebraska at Omaha's Durham Science Center

Eight weeks of camp are offered throughout the summer for students between grades pre-fourth through pre-eighth. Sessions cover a variety of science topics and emphasize hands-on learning to excite students about math and science. See more details at the UNO web site: <http://www.unomaha.edu> or contact kriegler@unomaha.edu. For information about camps for **ninth graders** call 402-554-4999 or 1-877-UNO-CAMP (866-2267).

Ad Astra and Arete at Creighton University

Summer sessions are held for qualified gifted students in grades 7-9 (Ad Astra) and in grades 10-12 (Ad Arete). Courses vary from foreign languages to computer programming, the arts, and more. The \$530 includes room, board, tuition, supplies, and admission to special events. For more information see:

www.creighton.edu/SummerSessions or call 402-280-2843.

Doane College Leadership Academy (UPDATE)

The academy is open to all students who will be entering their sophomore, junior, or senior year of high school, and it is designed for students interested in exploring the rewards and responsibilities of leadership. Programs combine sports, games, intellectual activities, and social events. Contact Scott Schmer at 402-826-8271.

Nebraska Theatre Caravan/First State Summer Theatre Academy

The Caravan is the professional wing of the Omaha Community Playhouse. Students have the opportunity to work with the professional actors and technicians of the Omaha Community Playhouse and the Playhouse's professional touring wing, The Nebraska Theatre Caravan, and become part of an original production commissioned specifically for the First Stage Academy. For two weeks in the summer,

students ages 12-18 will work intensively with theatre artists. Auditions normally are scheduled in April, and the Academy runs two weeks in June and two weeks in July. Applications are available in January. Direct questions to Roxanne Nielsen at 553-4890 ext 139 or 131 or email at caravan@omahaplayhouse.com. For additional information, see the web site: http://www.omahaplayhouse.com/nebraskatheatre caravan/caravan_main.asp?contentid=10

Space Trek Simulated Space Mission

Set at Dana College in Blair, NE, Space TREK is an exciting technology program for students currently in the third through ninth grade. Eight daily workshops prepare students to engage in virtual reality imagery and launch simulated space missions on the Horizon shuttle. Approximately 105 students are placed in each workshop with 15 students per workshop. Recreational activities are offered in the evening. Tuition is \$500 in includes meals, snacks, lodging, notebook, dividers, computer disks, disk storage, T-shirt, and airport shuttle service. Application deadline is April 30. For more information, contact Dr. Kay Ferguson at 402/426-7279 or 426-7280 or by email at kferguso@acad2.dana.edu

Near Nebraska

Summer Enrichment Program (SEP)

Sponsored by the University of Northern Colorado, SEP selects students in grades 5-10 who would benefit from different educational programs. Some scholarships exist. For more information, call 970-351-2683 or visit www.unco.edu/sep



Crow Canyon Archaeological Center

Located in just a few miles from Mesa Verde National Park, Crow Canyon allows

school groups (grades 4-12) to experience archaeology in one- to five-day programs. Check out their web site at www.crowcanyon.org or call 800-422-8975.

University of Iowa Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education

Ranging from chess to foreign languages to Advanced Placement, the courses are recommended for students in grades 4 through 11. Read more at <http://www.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/programs/index.html#summer>

The College for Youth

The College for Youth, a part of Morningside College in Sioux City, will be offering a selection of college-level courses this summer for students currently in grades 8-12. This opportunity enables students to start their college experience early, and to experience the friendly atmosphere at a small liberal arts college. Admissions criteria for the program are primarily based on self-identification. Need-based scholarships may be available. For more information, contact Dr. Gary Turner, College for Youth—Pathways, Morningside College, 1501 Morningside Avenue, Sioux City, IA 51106 or by phone at (712) 274 5203. Email is turner@morningside.edu.

CY-TAG and Explorations! at Iowa State University

Cy-TAG is for 7th-11th grade and Explorations! is for 7-10th grades. The goal of the OPPTAG program is to match students with appropriate learning experiences and emphasize an approach to teaching that underscores strengths and encourages high achievement. Additionally, all programs offer extracurricular enrichment experiences that broaden students' knowledge of the world. The program offers unique, flexible, and challenging academic experiences by incorporating hands-on experimentation as well as individual and col-

laborative projects. Iowa State also offers **Adventures!** for younger students, grades 2-6. It is a week-long program. Students become eligible by scoring in the 90th percentile on the ITBS or other grade-level achievement assessment. Contact Keith Davis, Joann Seeman, Zachary Osborn at 515-294-1772 or visit their web site at www.opptag.iastate.edu.

Northwest Missouri State University Upward Bound Math and Science Program
Upward Bound Math and Science (UBMS) is a six-week residential program for sophomores and juniors held at Northwest Missouri State University. Upward Bound provides a hands-on learning experience for high school students including weekend field trips to destinations such as Worlds of Fun, Starlight Theater, Challenger Center, and Omaha Zoo. The program is designed for students who are in the modest to low-income range and/or are potential first-generation college-bound students. The students should be interested in a math, science, or computer-related careers after college. They will need to have taken and passed college preparatory math and science classes each year of high school. The enrollment deadline is typically January 31. Contact James Clark, Project Director, at 660/562-1632 or 562-1538. Visit the web site at www.nwmissouri.edu/~ubms or email questions to davison@mail.nwmissouri.edu.

Other Parts of the Country

Summer Institute for the Gifted

A residential program, students in grades 4-11 can gain valuable experience in campus living while taking courses at Vassar, Bryn Mawr, Drew, Oberlin, University of California—Berkeley, or Amherst College. For more information, call



866-303-4744 or visit <http://www.giftedstudy.com>

Presidential Classroom in Washington, D.C.

Presidential Classroom provides high school students the chance to explore the political process firsthand. Presidential Classroom's specially designed 7-day curriculum revolves around six distinct group activities, each challenging students to think critically and participate in lively discussions about current issues and policies. Students will meet with Washington insiders, visit the House in action, and see the monuments. About 60% of participants receive need-based financial aid. Apply by February 1 for a discounted rate. Scholarship deadline is March 1. The University of Virginia (UVA) offers the option of college credit. Contact Presidential Classroom at 1-800-441-6533 or visit the web site at <http://presidentialclassroom.org>

National Student Leadership Seminars, Washington, D.C.

The non-profit, award-winning Washington Workshops Foundation, founded in 1967, provides informative, Washington, DC seminar programs for high school and junior high/middle school students. With recognized national leaders, the seminars inspire experiential learning through challenging dialogue sessions, national site visits, and student simulations. Seminars are limited to 120 students and are held on the Trinity College campus. Students choose from Congressional or Diplomacy Seminars. Tuition is approximately \$1100. Visit the web sites: <http://www.nylf.org> and <http://www.workshops.org/index.html> or contact the Washington Workshop Foundation at 1-800-368-5688

National Youth Leadership Forum on Medicine

The National Youth Leadership Forum on Medicine (NYLF/MED) is held each summer at medical centers in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston-Galveston, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Phoenix-Tucson, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. High school participants with strong academic background can expect a hands-on curriculum that includes presentations by internationally-recognized speakers, clinical and research visits, medical school visits and simulation activities. For more information, call 1-800-745-4918 or visit the web site at www.nylf.org

Duke Talent Search

Duke TIP Summer and Weekend Programs provide academic year and summertime opportunities to satisfy the intellectual appetites of academically talented students throughout their secondary school years. The academic environment values and encourages engagement, self-direction, independence, and excellence. Duke TIP offers learning opportunities for a range of ages in a variety of settings. Summertime scholar opportunities abound for students in grade 8-12. Students qualify with required SAT or ACT scores. Qualifying test scores vary by program. Tuition ranges between \$2,350-2,650 for Summer Studies, \$1,700-\$2,850 for Field Studies and Institutes programs, and \$5,950 for the PreCollege program. Check the program description for tuition and additional fees. Financial aid is available; awards range from \$500-\$2,550. For more information, visit the web site: <http://www.tip.duke.edu/SandW/SummerAndWeekend.htm>

School-Year Opportunities

Science Olympiad

With a goal of creating passion for learning science and improving science educa-

tion, Science Olympiad creates science tournaments at the elementary and secondary levels at building, district, state, and national levels. Emphasizing teamwork, Science Olympiad provides students with problem solving and hands-on activities. To assist in organizing a Science Olympiad team, call 248-651-4013 or visit the web site at www.soinc.org/. The Nebraska web site is <http://nerds.unl.edu/sciolympiad/index.html>. Jim Woodland provides expertise within Nebraska; he can be reached at 402-471-4329.

Destination ImagiNation and DI Rising Stars

Destination ImagiNation, or DI, is an international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from preschool through post-college. Students take what they know and what they are good at and learn to apply it to solve challenges, working together and cooperatively with a team and pushing the limits of imagination to best not their competition, but themselves. Teams of up to seven members work together to apply creativity, critical thinking and their particular talents to select and solve one Team Challenge as well as Instant Challenges. They bring their solutions to competition at the regional, state, and global levels. The DI Rising Stars program provides similar non-competitive challenges and curriculum kits for younger students. Visit the national web site at <http://www.idodi.org> or the Nebraska web site at <http://www.ncaps.org>

Lincoln Duplicate Bridge Club

This bridge club offers lessons for beginners as well as games for beginners and novices. The club is primarily adults, but they are happy to offer assistance to middle or high school students who would like to learn how to play. Students have the

option of enrolling in club classes when they are offered, or students could start their own bridge club at school. Because typical bridge games can easily run to 2 hours in length, parents should consider whether their children have a suitable attention span. For more information, call 402-489-5733. The mailing address is 237 South 70th, Suite 205, Lincoln.

Mensa

Mensa has three stated purposes: to identify and foster human intelligence for the benefit of humanity, to encourage research in the nature, characteristics and uses of intelligence; and to promote stimulating intellectual and social opportunities for its members. The society welcomes people whose IQ is in the top 2% of the population, with the objective of enjoying one another's company and participating in a wide range of social and cultural activities. Mensa is primarily directed to adult members, but national meetings always include activities for children. Local Mensa organizations can form special interest groups (SIG) for any group of people who share an activity or interest. This is a good way for high ability learners to interact with other students at their intellectual level. Visit the national web site at <http://www.mensa.org/> or try to Nebraska site: <http://www.nwim.us.mensa.org/>

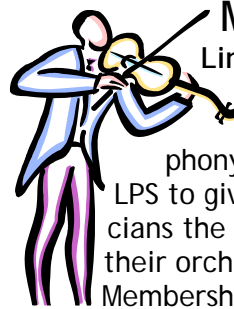
Junior Great Books

The Great Books Foundation is dedicated to helping people learn how to think and share ideas by educating them to become participants in shared inquiry. Through text-based discussion, shared inquiry strengthens critical thinking, promotes reading and the appreciation of literature, and provides students with a powerful instrument for social engagement and life-long learning. The Great Books organization has a junior program for K-12 and has reading lists for local clubs or readers. Clubs and programs can be started at the school

or community level. Check out the web site: www.greatbooks.org/typ/

MATHCOUNTS

MATHCOUNTS® is a national math enrichment, coaching and competition program that promotes middle school mathematics achievement. After several months of coaching, participating schools select students to compete individually or as part of a team in one of the more than 500 written and oral competitions held nationwide and in U.S. schools overseas. Winners at the local level proceed to state competitions, where the top 4 Mathletes® and top coach earn the right to represent their state or territory at the national level. For more information, see the web site at <http://www.mathcounts.org/>.



Music Programs:

Lincoln Youth Symphony (grades 9-12)

The Lincoln Youth Symphony was organized in 1957 by LPS to give talented young musicians the opportunity to extend their orchestral music performance. Membership is available to students in grades 9-12 by audition only. The orchestra rehearses two and a half hours each week during the academic year. The orchestra's extensive travel history has included visits to Vienna, Austria, Prague, Czechoslovakia, and Budapest. LYS completed a successful performance trip to Beijing, China. Visit the web site at <http://lys.org/>

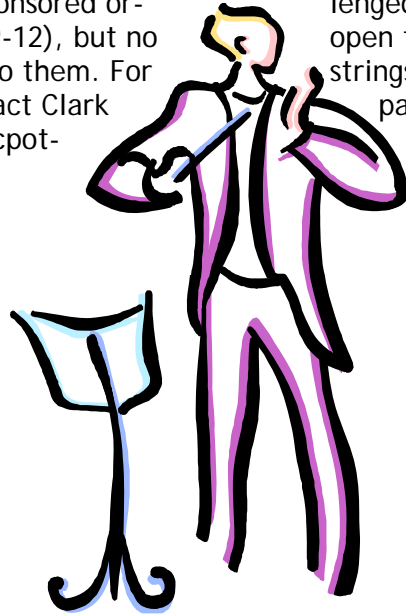
Junior Youth Orchestra

The Junior Youth Orchestra is a select, auditioned ensemble for musicians in grades 6-9 who are involved in their respective public school music programs. JYO meets for 1 and 1/2 hours each week and typically performs three times a year. Rehearsals begin in September and

the final concert is in late April. Its purpose is to provide a learning environment where more repertoire may be performed. JYO musicians typically audition to become a member of the Lincoln Youth Symphony (another LPS-sponsored organization for grades 9-12), but no spots are guaranteed to them. For JYO information, contact Clark Potter at 472-0222 or cpotter1@unl.edu.

Youth Ensemble of Strings (YES)

Founded 15 years ago, the Youth Ensemble of Strings is one of the music extension programs of LPS. Students playing in the YES orchestra can expect to be challenged musically and technically. It is open to students in grades 5-8 who play strings. Students in YES are required to participate in their school's instrumental music program. For more information, call 436-1632.



Notes

