DCSD
Elementary Discovery Program
November 2018
Discovery Program Information

- Gifted Definition/Characteristics
- Gifted Programming Overview
- Discovery Program Details
- School/Site Details
- Application Process
Definition

“Gifted and talented students are those students whose abilities, talents and potential for accomplishment are so exceptional, or developmentally advanced, that they require special provisions to meet their educational needs.”
Characteristics of the Gifted

- Possesses strong problem-solving abilities
- Learns rapidly with little repetition
- Displays a high degree of creativity
- Is persistent in seeking task completion
- Strives toward perfection
- Is passionate in one or more areas of interest
- Possesses a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics
- Uses advanced vocabulary
Characteristics Continued

- Displays keen sense of humor
- Is tenacious
- Prefers older companions
- Reads early or avidly with greater comprehension
- Has insatiable curiosity and persistence
- May question authority
- Demonstrates intense emotional or physical sensitivity
- Is concerned about global issues
You Know Your Child is Gifted When

April 17, 2009 – Amelia Ann Ashton asked her mother 53,297,518 questions in 15 minutes.
What Guides Our Work

Douglas County School District is committed to:

● helping students acquire the knowledge and abilities to be responsible citizens who contribute to our society.

● collaborating to serve a full continuum of learners where students feel safe, valued, and connected in order to reach their highest potential.

● providing student-focused programming that meets the unique needs of all learners.
What Guides Our Work

NAGC Gifted Program Standards

The first guiding principle states, “Rather than any single gifted program, a continuum of programming services must exist for gifted learners.”
Gifted Programming in DCSD

● Neighborhood Schools Programming

Gifted and Talented support staff collaborate/consult with classroom teachers to appropriately extend the content for identified gifted students, utilizing a menu of programming options, including, but not limited to:

- Differentiated instruction
- Curriculum compacting
- Content acceleration
- Grade level acceleration
- Mentorships
- Advanced level courses

- Tiered assignments
- Cluster grouping
- Flexible grouping
- Independent study
- Project-based learning
- Leadership opportunities
Gifted Programming in DCSD

Elementary Discovery Program

The Discovery Program is designed to meet the needs of highly gifted students whose abilities are so advanced they require special provisions to meet their needs. These students have likely exhausted the resources available through neighborhood school programming and require a center based, self-contained, full day programming environment to meet their unique needs.

The program is located regionally at four of the district’s elementary schools.
Elementary Discovery Program

The Elementary Discovery Program is designed for highly gifted learners in grades 2 – 6 and offers:

• Instruction in a full-day, self-contained/center based classroom

• Curriculum that is academically rigorous and promotes critical thinking

• Meaningful peer interaction that supports social and emotional development for gifted learners

• Pacing and complexity appropriate for highly gifted learners

• Strategies for life-long learning
Daily instruction and learning opportunities in the Discovery Program are aligned to the NAGC Gifted Programming Standards, Colorado Academic Standards, and instructional goals rather than relying on a specific packaged curriculum.
Curriculum and Instruction Goals

- To promote critical thinking and reasoning at advanced levels
- To develop effective communication skills
- To develop research skills and methods
- To develop creative thinking and problem solving skills
- To develop cognitive skills that foster independent learning
- To develop an understanding of self and others
- To provide for mastery of academic standards at a pace, depth, and complexity appropriate to the capacity of the gifted learner
- To develop an understanding of interdisciplinary connections
Curriculum and Instruction: Language Arts

Conceptual units of study that foster interdisciplinary thinking, examination of complex issues, problem finding, and problem solving to stimulate discussion, debate, reasoning, and related skills of persuasion

- Integrated Theme Based Units
- Shared Inquiry Discussions
- Socratic Seminars
- Teacher-developed novel units
- Writing/Reading workshop format
- Advanced vocabulary development
- Advanced writing and research
Curriculum and Instruction: Mathematics

“Students need a chance to experience the joy of investigating rich concepts in depth and applying innovative mathematical reasoning and justification to a variety of scientific, engineering, and other problems.” ~NAGC

- opportunities to reason abstractly and quantitatively, persevere in solving difficult problems, and construct and critique viable arguments to support reasoning
- opportunities to delve deeply and creatively into topics, projects, and problems of interest
- opportunities for problem finding and problem-solving skills and strategies to stimulate mathematical reasoning, spatial reasoning, and work with number theory
- acceleration in content and pacing including early exposure to probability, statistics, and logic
Placement Decisions for the Discovery Program

Multiple Criteria from a body of evidence:

• Norm Referenced Parent observation scale
• Norm Referenced Teacher observation scale
• Student writing sample (to be provided by the teacher)
• Student questionnaire
• Evidence of Advanced Cognitive Ability
• Evidence of demonstrated advanced performance/achievement (school-based assessments, PARCC/CMAS, achievement test results, portfolios)
Student Profile

Students in the Discovery Program have needs beyond what can be met in the regular classroom. Student characteristics include:

- Measured cognitive aptitude in the top 2-5% of age peers
- Demonstrated advanced performance/achievement in multiple areas
- Thrives on challenging learning/thinking opportunities
- Strong task commitment
- An extraordinary degree of intellectual curiosity
- An unusual ability to perceive essential elements and underlying structures and patterns in relationships and ideas
The Discovery Program Application & Process
“Our greatest natural resource is the minds of our children.”

~ Walt Disney
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