



Extended Learning Program (ELP)
Reference Guide
Fall 2017

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OVERVIEW/STAFF

The West Des Moines Community School District Extended Learning Program (ELP) Reference Guide is designed to provide you with an overview of our ELP Program. The information collected is from a variety of sources. The Extended Learning staff, classroom teachers, administrators, and parents shared input regarding the information in this guide.

Communication is a key ingredient in meeting the varied needs of our students. This guide was developed to provide administrators, teachers, parents, and school community a reference to assist in understanding the extended learning opportunities offered to our students.

1. Building ELP teachers

Elementary Schools

- ✚ Clive/Crestview = Maria Steffen
- ✚ Crossroads/Fairmeadows = Felicia Twit
- ✚ Hillside/Western Hills = Britney Mathiesen
- ✚ Jordan Creek = Jen McLaughlin
- ✚ Westridge = Nancy Foley

Junior High Schools

- ✚ Indian Hills = Mike Cunningham
- ✚ Stilwell = Shannan Belden

High Schools

- ✚ Valley Southwoods = Twyla Wisecup
- ✚ Valley High School = Gina Reinier and Karen Downing
- ✚ Walnut Creek Campus = Twyla Wisecup

2. Building administrator

Elementary School Principals

1. Clive = Janelle Green
2. Crestview = John Villotti
3. Crossroads = Robert Davis
4. Fairmeadows = Brandon Pierce
5. Hillside = Graham Jones
6. Jordan Creek = Paul Wenger or Asst. Tamara Tjeersma
7. Western Hills = George Panosh
8. Westridge = Nathan Ballagh or Asst. Tamara Tjeersma

Junior High School Principals

- Indian Hills = Shane Christensen or Assistant: Zach Sinram
- Stilwell = Eric Boyle or Assistant: Barb Goetschel

High School Principals

- Valley Southwoods = Mitch Kuhnert or Assistant: Bryan Stearns
- Valley High = Tim Miller or Associates: Dave Maxwell/Dave Perrigo/Erica Whittle
- Walnut Creek Campus = Kim Davis

3. ELP Curriculum Lead = Kristine Milburn

4. ELP District Coordinator = Kristine Milburn

5. ELP Administrator = Shane Scott

West Des Moines Community Schools District Vision, Mission, Goals

Vision:

The West Des Moines Community Schools will be a caring community of learners that knows and lifts every child. We will inspire joy in learning. Our schools will excel at preparing each student for his or her life journey.

Mission:

Working in partnership with each family and the community, it is the mission of the district to educate responsible, lifelong learners so that each student possesses the skills, knowledge, creativity, sense of self-worth and values necessary to thrive in and contribute to a diverse and changing world.

Goals:

Using the Mission Statement as our foundation and the Guiding Principles to inform our actions, the district will work toward the realization of the Shared Vision by accomplishing the following goals as set forth by the Board of Education:

- Close the gap between present practices and the Shared Vision.
- Improve student achievement through effective instructional and assessment practices

West Des Moines Community Schools
K-12 Extended Learning Program
Vision, Mission, and Beliefs

Vision:

The Extended Learning Program will provide opportunities for gifted and talented students to become independent, lifelong learners.

Mission:

The West Des Moines Community School District recognizes that every student possesses unique abilities, talents and needs which require an appropriately differentiated program. The Extended Learning Program will facilitate, provide, and support programming for gifted and talented students. This programming includes opportunities and options that differ from and/or complement the regular curriculum in breadth, depth, pace, or in the kind of experience offered.

Beliefs:

We believe...

- gifted and talented learners require differentiated academic experiences as well as opportunities to explore their passions and interests in order to develop their talents, promote self-direction and self-reflection, and to encourage life-long learning.
- gifted and talented learners have specific social and emotional needs, which should be addressed through programming.
- that providing a supportive environment which allows and encourages gifted and talented learners to realize their potential is a responsibility shared among school personnel, family, and community.
- gifted and talented learners need opportunities to collaborate and learn with their intellectual peers.
- that identification for the Extended Learning Program must be an ongoing and systematic process.

“Gifted and talented learners” refers to those students, distinguished from the total K-12 student population, who are identified as possessing outstanding ability and who are capable of high performance. Gifted and talented learners are children who require appropriate instruction and educational services matching with their abilities and needs beyond those provided by the regular school program. Gifted and talented children include those children with demonstrated achievement or potential ability, or both, in any of the following areas or in combination: general intellectual ability, creative thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts ability, or specific ability aptitude.

(Iowa Department of Education – Iowa Code 281-59.2)

West Des Moines Community Schools Extended Learning Program Goals

Program Goal 1:

The West Des Moines Community School District will provide extended learning programming to meet the needs (academic and social/emotional) of gifted students through differentiated learning experiences.

Program Goal 2:

The West Des Moines Community School District will utilize multiple assessments to identify gifted and talented learners and their needs.

Program Goal 3:

The West Des Moines Community School District will provide professional development for teaching staff in differentiation strategies for use with gifted and talented learners.

West Des Moines Community Schools

Extended Learning Program – Student Goals

Below is an overview of goals for our students. Students will have specific goals on the Personalized Educational Learning Plan (PELP) to meet their individual needs.

Goal 1: In order to develop collaboration and leadership skills, the student will...

Outcome:

- Develop ability to work effectively within a team to enhance productivity.
- Develop social skills that enable students to build their leadership skills, interpersonal skills, and ability to effectively relate to others in a variety of situations.
- Manage and resolve conflicts
- Effectively participate in group discussions.

Goal 2: In order to develop complex communication skills, the student will...

Outcome:

- Successfully share information through multiple means, including visual, digital, verbal, and nonverbal interactions.
- Interact effectively with people of diverse backgrounds in a variety of settings.
- Participate in meaningful and engaging interactions.
- Accurately exchanges information and ideas which are appropriate, purposeful, clear, and concise.

Goal 3: In order to develop creative and critical thinking, the student will...

Outcome:

- Challenge assumptions, engage in higher order thinking, develop new insights, and validate perceptions through thoughtful questions.
- Analyze and synthesize multiple sources and points of information.
- Incorporate curiosity and innovation to generate new or original thoughts, interpretations, products, works or techniques.
- Frame critical issues to develop innovative responses.
- Engage in abstract reasoning and divergent thinking.
- Identify and solve complex problems.

Goal 4: In order to develop their intrapersonal skills, the student will...

Outcome:

- Form an accurate perception of their academic abilities, capabilities, and potential.
- Demonstrate initiative, self-direction, and personal responsibility.
- Demonstrate motivation and commitment to achieve.
- Utilize metacognitive skills that foster independent and self-directed learning.
- Respect the unique qualities of self and others.

Goal 5: In order to develop flexibility and adaptability, the student will...

Outcome:

- Respond and adjust to situational needs; changing to meet the challenges of new roles, paradigms and environments.
- Embrace change —expecting and accepting the emotions inherent to change.
- Reflect on positive and negative outcomes of risk-taking.
- Undertake tasks that have uncertain outcomes.

West Des Moines Community Schools Extended Learning Program Student Screening

The district shall identify students in grades kindergarten through twelve. There will be ongoing assessment for K-12 students. In alignment with best practices for identification, multiple criteria are examined to determine students in need of additional differentiation through our Extended Learning Program. The following criteria will be examined:

- A. General Intellectual Ability
 - Cognitive Abilities Test (formally administered district wide in 3rd and 6th grade, however test can be given K-12)
 - Classroom Input/Data (formative/interim assessments, student work, and teacher recommendation)/MTSS Data
 - Building Team Input
 - Parent Input
 - Student Input
- B. Specific Academic Ability in one or more core content areas
 - Iowa Assessments (Gr. 3-12)
 - Benchmarking Assessments
 - Classroom Input/Data (formative assessments, student work, and teacher recommendation)/MTSS Data
 - Building Team Input
 - Parent Input
 - Student Input
- C. Creative Thinking Ability
 - Classroom Input/Data (student products/performances)/MTSS Data
 - Characteristic Chart/Rubric
 - Primary Enrichment Thinking Skills
 - Building Team Input
 - Parent Input
 - Student Input
- D. Visual or Performing Arts Ability in music and art
 - Classroom Input/Data (student products/performance that demonstrate visual/performing arts achievement/abilities)/MTSS Data
 - Other Evidences of Performing Arts Ability (performances/products produced outside the school environment)
 - Building Team Input
 - Parent Input
 - Student Input
- E. Leadership
 - Classroom Input/Data (student products/performances that demonstrate leadership)/MTSS Data
 - Other Evidence of Leadership (i.e. community/service learning)
 - Building Team Input
 - Parent Input
 - Student Input

The district will continue to study screening tools that allow for appropriate screening of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse, from low socio-economic status, and with disabilities.

The district shall accept scores on assessment instruments provided by other school districts for screening purposes. The district will then proceed with West Des Moines Identification instruments to determine service needs.

Process for ELP Screening for Identification and Programming Needs

The Extended Learning Program Committee will meet three times a year to review data and determine programming needs beyond the general education classroom. The committee may hold additional meetings as needed to determine programming needs.

1. Committee members include: ELP Coordinator, ELP Teacher Leader, and District ELP teachers.
2. Meet: October, February, and April with additional meetings as needed.
3. October meeting: review data of students demonstrating a need for differentiation beyond the classroom. Review current students and assist with Personalized Educational Learning Plan.
4. Spring Meeting(s): review 3rd and 6th grade data to determine programming needs beyond the classroom. Focus on ELP programming needs for students transitioning into grades 7th, 9th, and 10th, as well as additional students grades K-11 who have shown a need for programming beyond the general education classroom.
5. The committee will:
 - a. Identify students in need of intensive targeted instruction with a G/T specialist and in need of a Personalized Educational Learning Plan (PELP).
 - b. Periodically review students who previously received ELP programming and are not currently being serviced through the Extended Learning Program Class in grades 7-12.

Large group screening is conducted in grades three and six. However, any student K-12 who demonstrates a need for intensive targeted instruction with a G/T specialist beyond the general education classroom may go through the screening process. The screening process is ongoing throughout the school year.

1. Classroom and/or ELP teachers:
 - Gathers appropriate data (see flowchart)
 - Completes Teacher Survey
 - Completes Student Data forms
 - ELP Teachers – collects MTSS data and shares with committee
2. Parent/Guardian:
 - Completes Parent Survey
3. Student:
 - Completes Student Survey or Student Interview

3rd & 6th Grade SCREENING:

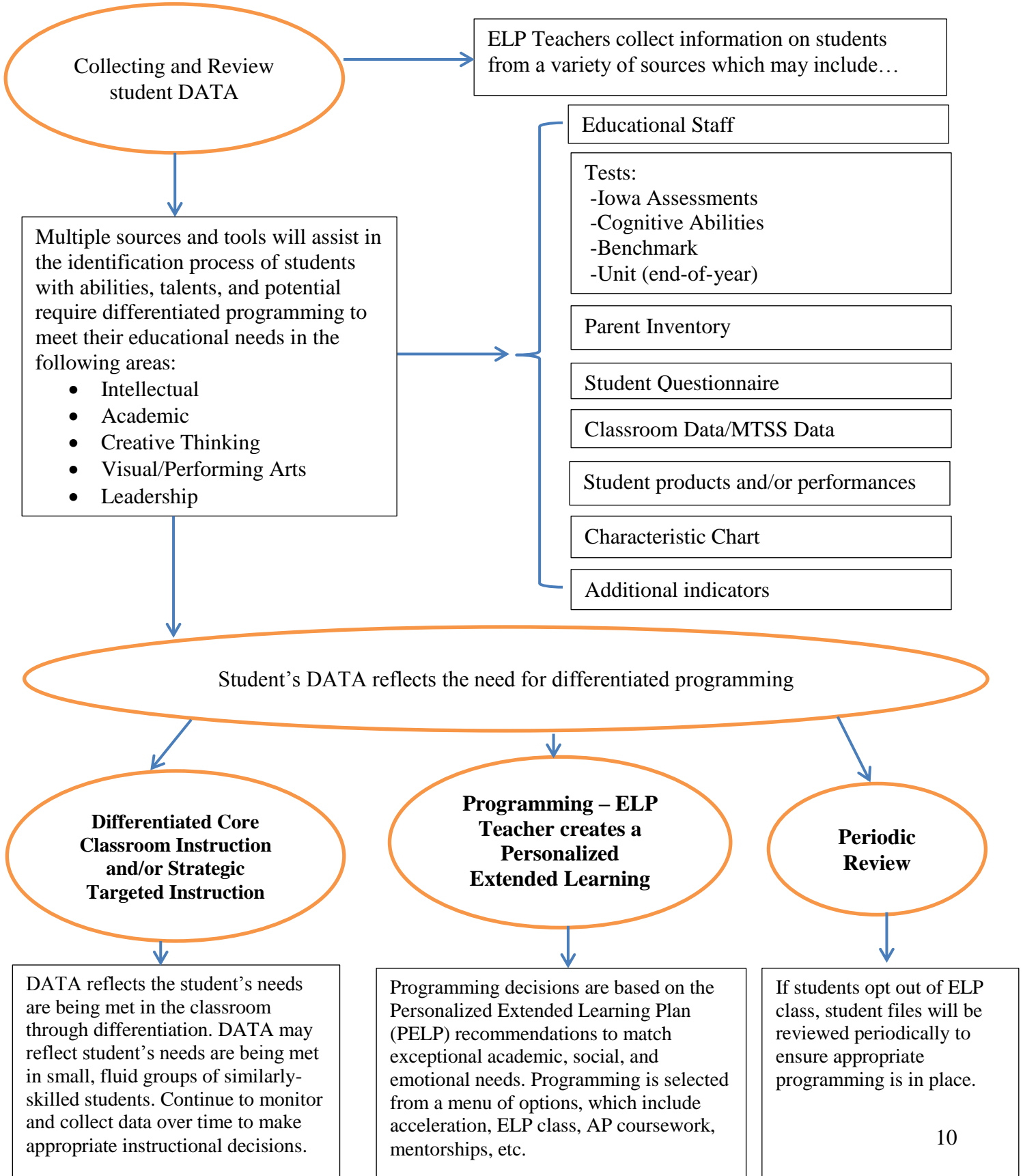
Fall & Winter

- All 3rd & 6th grade parents will receive a letter explaining the Cognitive Abilities Test.
- All 3rd & 6th grade students will complete the Cognitive Abilities Test.
- All 3rd & 6th grade students will be given a student survey to complete.
- Teachers will be given a teacher survey to complete.

Spring

- The ELP Programming Committee will meet to review surveys, test results, MTSS data, and other relevant data for 3rd and 6th grade students, as well as other grade level students K-12 that demonstrate a need for differentiation.
- Parents of students recommended for the programming beyond the general education classroom will receive a letter describing the recommended differentiation for the upcoming school year.

West Des Moines Community Schools Extended Learning Program K-12



Parent/Guardian Information: What to Consider When Identifying a Gifted Child

The West Des Moines Community School District will utilize multiple assessments to identify gifted and talented learners and their needs. We believe that no one test can possibly sample all of the behaviors that a gifted student might demonstrate. Consequently, information needs to be gathered from a variety of sources and from a variety of settings. Parents are a valuable resource in this identification process.

The ELP team would like you to review the differences between the different types of learners compared in the following. If you feel that your child exhibits the characteristics of a **gifted learner** please complete the Parent/Guardian Survey.

“High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Thinker”
By Bertie Kingore, Ph.D.

“Identification of gifted students is clouded when concerned adults misinterpret high achievement as giftedness. High-achieving students are noticed for their on-time, neat, well-developed, and correct learning products. Adults comment on these students’ consistent high grades and note how well they acclimate to class procedures and discussions. Some adults assume these students are gifted because their school-appropriate behaviors and products surface above the typical responses of grade-level students.

While high achievers are valuable participants whose high-level modeling is welcomed in classes, they learn differently from gifted learners. Characteristics exhibited by gifted students are different from those of high achievers. Gifted students’ thinking is more complex and abstract than is typical of high achievers.” (Kingore, 2004)

Parents and guardians, the following chart (Kingore, 2004; Szabos, 1989) will help to explain the differences between high achievers and gifted learners.

If you have questions concerning ELP identification, please contact Dr. Kristine Milburn, 515-633-4052 or milburnk@wdmcs.org.

----- **References** -----

- Johnsen, K. (May/June 2009). Practices for identifying gifted students; No single test can capture a gifted student’s dynamic abilities. *Principal*. Retrieved from http://www.naesp.org/resources/2/Principal/2009/M-J_p08.pdf
- Kingore, B. (Spring 2004). High achiever, gifted learner, creative thinker. *Bertie Kingore*. Retrieved from <http://www.bertiekingore.com/high-gt-create.htm>
- Szabos, J. (1989). Bright child, gifted learner. *Challenge Magazine*, 34. 27.

Parent/Guardian Information: What to Consider When Identifying a Gifted Child

High Achiever...	Gifted Learner...
Remembers the answers	Poses unforeseen questions
Is interested	Is curious
Is attentive	Is selectively mentally and physically engaged
Generates advanced ideas	Generates complex, abstract ideas
Works hard to achieve	Knows without working hard; tests well
Answers the questions in detail	Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives
Performs at the top of the group	Is beyond the group
Responds with interest and opinions	Exhibits feelings and opinions from multiple perspectives
Learns with ease	Already knows
Needs 6 to 8 repetitions for mastery	Needs 1 to 3 repetitions for mastery
Comprehends at a high level	Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas
Enjoys the company of age peers	Prefers the company of intellectual peers
Understands complex, abstract humor	Creates complex, abstract humor
Grasps the meaning	Infers and connects concepts
Completes assignments on time	Initiates projects and extensions of assignments
Is receptive	Is intense
Is accurate and complete	Is original and continually developing
Enjoys school often	Enjoys self-directed learning
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
Is a technician with expertise in a field	Is an expert who abstracts beyond the field
Memorizes well	Guesses and infers well
Enjoys sequential presentation	Thrives on complexity
Is highly alert and observant	Anticipates and relates observations
Is pleased with own learning	Is highly self-critical
Gets A's	May not be motivated by grades

Compiled from Kingore, B. (2004) and Szabos, J. (1989)

Things My Child Has Done (Parent/Guardian)—Adapted from Saylor, 1994

Your child's name _____ Child's birthday _____ Date _____

Your name _____ Relationship to the child _____

This survey is to help us better understand your child. Carefully read each of the following descriptions. Each item is followed by a series of examples. Use the examples to help understand the description in the item. Decide how much you agree that your child is like the description. Mark your agreement on the scale from strongly agree (SA) to strongly disagree (SD). Fill in one circle for each item. If you are unclear about an item, fill in the unsure or don't know circle. Then provide a personal example about a time your child did the things in the item. Try to recall specific incidents or examples about your child. Feel free to add extra pages of stories or examples to tell us more about your child.

My child:

1. **Has quick recall of information.** (For example, immediately remembers facts, a series of numbers, events, words from songs or movies, or parts of conversations heard earlier.)

A personal example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
 SA SD

Unsure or don't know.

2. **Knows a lot more about some topics than do other children that age.** (For example, recounts facts about dinosaurs, sports, electronics, math, books, animals, music, art; or finds out a lot about a particular subject on his/her own.)

A personal example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
 SA SD

Unsure or don't know.

3. **Uses advanced vocabulary.** (For example, surprises older children and adults with the big words used; uses words unusual for a child; knows the correct terms, exact words, or labels for things; acts and speaks like grown up when talking to adults; uses simpler words when talking to peers or younger children.)

A personal example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
 SA SD

Unsure or don't know.

4. **Began to read or write early.** (For example, said or could read individual words at a very young age; started to read before entering school; likes to write or tell stories; learned to read without being taught.)

A personal example and age of the child at the time:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
 SA SD

Unsure or don't know.

5. **Shows unusually intense interest and enjoyment when learning about new things.** (For example, has lots of energy and interest when learning; frequently and persistently asks how and why questions; is not satisfied with simple answers and wants to know detail; loves how-to-do-it and nonfiction books.)

A personal example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
 SA SD

Unsure or don't know.

6. **Understands things well enough to teach others.** (For example, teaches other children how to do things; explains things so that others can understand; explains areas of interest to adults.)
A personal example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
SA SD
 Unsure or don't know.

7. **Is comfortable around adults.** (For example, spends time with and talks to adults who visit the house, likes the company of adults, enjoys talking with adults; understands adult humor; and creates funny sayings or jokes adults can appreciate.)
A personal example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
SA SD
 Unsure or don't know.

8. **Shows leadership abilities.** (For example, other children ask my child for help; organizes games and activities for self and others; makes up the rules, and directs group activities; may be bossy.)
A personal example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
SA SD
 Unsure or don't know.

9. **Is resourceful and improvises well.** (For example, puts together various household objects to make inventions or solve a problem; uses unusual objects for projects; uses objects in unusual ways; makes "something out of nothing.")
A personal example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
SA SD
 Unsure or don't know.

10. **Uses imaginative methods to accomplish tasks.** (For example, makes creative shortcuts; doesn't always follow the rules; good at finding creative ways to get out of work.)
A personal example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
SA SD
 Unsure or don't know.

Things This Young Child Has Done (Teacher)—Adapted from Saylor, 1994

Child's name _____

Your Name _____

School name _____

Your Position _____

Child's Birthday (day/month/year) _____ / _____ / _____

Today's Date (day/month/year) _____ / _____ / _____

The following is a list of characteristics of gifted young children. The examples after each item are there to help you understand that item. A child may not show all of the examples given and they may exhibit the item characteristic in ways not listed. Indicate how much you think this child is like the item by using the scale to the right of each item (mark strongly agree SA to strong disagree SD). Fill in one circle for each item. If you are unclear or haven't noticed how this child compares to an item, fill in the Unsure or don't know circle. Use the space below the item for examples concerning this child, add as many details as you can remember. The space is small, feel free to add extra pages of stories or examples to tell us more.

This child:

11. **Has quick recall of information.** (For example, good short and long term memory; quick to provide facts, details, or stories related to complex events; learns quickly and recalls accurately words to songs, poems, stories, or conversations; points out connections between ideas and events.)
An example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
 SA SD

Unsure or don't know.

12. **Shows intense curiosity and deeper knowledge than other children.** (For example, asks questions incessantly once imagination has been aroused; pays close attention when learning, has an enthusiastic need to know and explore; remembers things in great detail.)
An example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
 SA SD

Unsure or don't know.

13. **Is empathetic; feels more deeply than do other children that age.** (For example, exhibits maturity usually associated with older children; shows unusual hurt or pain when s/he displeases someone; displays pride in advanced accomplishments; is sensitive to others' feelings and shows distress at other children's or adult's distress; will subjugate their needs to the needs of others; reads body language.)
An example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
 SA SD

Unsure or don't know.

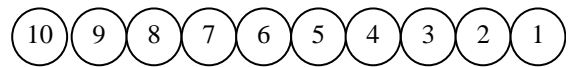
14. **May not always display their advanced understanding in everyday situations.** (For example, becomes cranky or non-compliant when fatigued or stressed; playground behavior may not reflect their verbal reasoning about the same situations; may be frustrated with their ability to meet their own high expectations.)
An example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
 SA SD

Unsure or don't know.

15. **Uses advanced vocabulary.** (For example, correctly uses vocabulary and phrasings adults would expect from older children; surprises adults and children with the big words or phrases they use; likes complex communication and conversations.)

An example:



SA

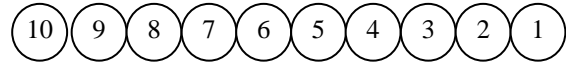
SD



Unsure or don't know.

16. **Reads, writes, or uses numbers in advanced ways.** (For example, reads earlier than most children or if learns to read at the same time as most children does so very quickly; likes to read rapidly to get the gist of a story even though some words are skipped or mispronounced; interest in copying or using letters, words, or numbers; uses computational skills earlier than others.)

An example:



SA

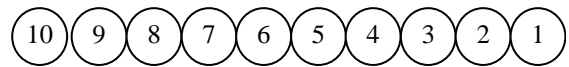
SD



Unsure or don't know.

17. **Advanced play interests and behaviors.** (For example, exhibits play interests that resemble those of older children; likes to play board games designed for older children, teens, or adults; more apt to be interested in cooperative play, complex play situations, or sophisticated play activities.)

An example:



SA

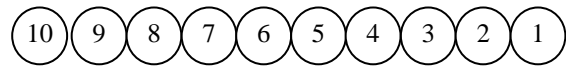
SD



Unsure or don't know.

8. **Shows unusually intense interest and enjoyment when learning about new things.** (For example, spends long periods of time exploring interesting new things; listens for long periods of time to stories and conversations; retells events and stories in great details; entertains self for long periods of time; shows unwavering attention sometimes to the point of stubbornness; sits patiently when reading or listening to books.)

An example:



SA

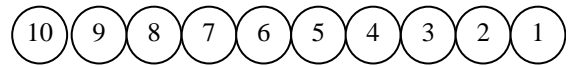
SD



Unsure or don't know.

9. **Has an advanced sense of humor or sees incongruities as funny.** (For example, is humorous in speech, social interactions, art, or story telling; makes jokes, puns, plays on words; sees humor in situations even ones against him/her and laughs at the situation.)

An example:



SA

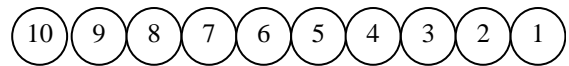
SD



Unsure or don't know.

18. **Understands things well enough to teach others.** (For example, likes to play school with other children, dolls, or stuffed animals; talks like an "expert" or likes to discuss certain topics a lot; explains ideas to adults when s/he doesn't think the adult understands very well.)

An example:



SA

SD



Unsure or don't know.

19. **Is comfortable around older children and adults.** (For example, craves attention from adults; likes to be with older children and adults; listens to or joins in adult conversations; often plays with and is accepted by older children.)

An example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
SA SD
 Unsure or don't know.

20. **Shows leadership abilities.** (For example, has a verbal understanding of social situations; sought out by other children for play ideas; adapts his/her own words and expectations to needs or skill level of playmates; may be seen as bossy; uses verbal skills to deal with conflicts or to influence other children.)

An example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
SA SD
 Unsure or don't know.

21. **Is resourceful and improvises well.** (For example, makes ingenious or functional things from LEGOs or other building toys; uses toys in unique or non-traditional ways; plays with or carries on conversations with imaginary friends; makes up believable endings to stories.)

An example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
SA SD
 Unsure or don't know.

22. **Shows logical and metacognitive skills in managing own learning.** (For example, understands game rules quickly; learns from mistakes in playing games; sees errors or losses as learning experiences rather than failures; monitors difficulty of task to push self to more challenging levels.)

An example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
SA SD
 Unsure or don't know.

23. **Uses imaginative methods to accomplish tasks.** (For example, presents unique arguments in order to convince others to allow him/her to do or get things; finds imaginative ways to get out of doing things they don't want to do; curious with a high energy level that is goal directed.)

An example:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
SA SD
 Unsure or don't know.

Use the rest of this page or its back to tell us anything you think is important about this child that we have not asked about. Please feel free to add any information you think might be useful in giving us a clearer picture of what the child is like. Be as specific as possible in describing the child's interests and accomplishments. If you can share some copies of this child's creative work, we would be delighted to have them.

Areas of Giftedness Characteristics*

GIFTED AREA	CHARACTERISTICS
General Intellectual Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understands complex concepts • draws inferences between content areas • sees beyond the obvious • thrives on new or complex ideas • enjoys hypothesizing • intuitively knows before taught • uses an extensive vocabulary • does in-depth investigations • learns rapidly in comparison to peers • 1 — 2 repetitions for mastery • manipulates information
Specific Academic Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong memorization ability • advanced comprehension — 1-2 repetitions for mastery • intense interest in a specific academic area • high academic capacity in special-interest area • pursues special interests with enthusiasm • operates at a higher level of abstraction than peers • asks poignant questions • discusses and elaborates in detail
Creative Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • independent and/or flexible thinker • exhibits original thinking in oral and/or written expression • generates many ideas to solve a given problem • possesses a keen sense of humor • creates and invents • intrigued by creative tasks • improvises and sees unique possibilities • risk taker • resists conformity
Artistic (Visual/Performing Arts) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Dance • Drama • Music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicates their vision in visual/performing arts • unusual ability for aesthetic expression • compelled to perform/produce • exhibits creative expression • desire for creating original product • keenly observant • continues experimentation with preferred medium • excels in demonstrating the visual/performing arts
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • takes an active role in decision making • high expectations for self and others • expresses self with confidence • foresees consequences and implications of decisions • follows through on a plan • appears to be well liked by peers • ideas expressed accepted by others • sought out by others to accomplish a task

*Adapted from the National Association for Gifted Children

Personal Education Learning Plan

A Personal Education Plan (PELP) is a document for recording student goals and programming options. The PELP is developed to meet the individual student's needs and to respond to the student's interest. The PELP serves as a planning, monitoring, and communication tool for the student, parents or guardians, teachers, and the school. A PELP will be developed for students who have been identified as in need of receiving differentiated programming beyond the regular classroom curriculum.

The building team will review student data and make a formal recommendation for a child to receive differentiated programming. Team members will include school staff, parents, and student (when appropriate). When the decision for a differentiated program has been recommended, the ELP teacher and parents (and student when appropriate) will meet to complete the Personal Education Learning Plan (PELP).

The PELP plan includes:

- Student strengths/interests
- Future plans
- Options for growth

PELP Review

Each year, the school staff, parent(s) and student (when appropriate) will meet to discuss changes for the PELP for students with programming needs. Additionally, the student goals set by the student in consultation with the extended learning teacher are also reviewed.

As the student transitions from elementary to junior high and onto high school, if the student decides to not continue with ELP programming, periodically those students files will be reviewed to determine if their differentiation needs are being met.

West Des Moines Community Schools

Elementary ELP Programming

Grades K-6

Collaboration and Differentiation

The ELP teacher meets regularly with the general education teacher. They will discuss needs of students and brainstorm ways to help provide resources and strategies for modifying assignments and providing challenging opportunities for students who “already know” the curriculum. The ELP teacher will collaborate with teachers in each school based on a student PELP. The Extended Learning teacher will work closely with classroom teachers to monitor student progress and recommend curriculum and teaching strategies to meet individual needs. This information will be documented. The Extended Learning teachers will also take a collaborative approach when conferencing with classroom teachers and parents. The ELP teacher will continue to be of assistance by discussing strategies, research, traits, and characteristics of gifted students.

It is the expectation in the West Des Moines school district that differentiation occurs in each classroom to meet the needs of unique learners. ELP staff and resources will assist in meeting student needs for differentiated programming beyond the regular classroom curriculum. The Extended Learning teacher will work closely with classroom teachers to monitor student progress and recommend curriculum and teaching strategies to meet individual needs. ELP teachers should also take a collaborative approach when conferencing with classroom teachers and parents.

Programming Options

May include, but are not limited to:

1. Classroom differentiation, including such modifications of the regular curriculum as compacting those areas where the student can demonstrate advanced proficiency.
2. Short term or long term group work led by classroom and/or ELP teachers.
3. Extracurricular programs provided within the school district.
4. Pullout groups, typically two hours per week. Groups generally are less than ten students and may encompass multiple age levels.
5. Short-term, flexible pullout study groups are also used and may include students from different grades.
6. Acceleration by grade or subject area such as early access to challenging courses.
7. Mentor program.
8. Study and research a variety of careers.
9. Extracurricular activities
10. Independent studies

West Des Moines Community Schools Secondary ELP Programming

Programming Options

May include, but are not limited to:

1. Classroom differentiation, including such modifications of the regular curriculum as compacting those areas where the student can demonstrate advanced proficiency.
2. Short term or long term group work led by classroom and/or ELP teachers.
3. Extracurricular programs provided within the school district.
4. Acceleration by grade or subject area such as early access to challenging courses.
5. Accelerated Pathways and Honors Diploma; Scholars Distinction.
6. Extended Learning class/Honors Seminar (VSW & VHS).
7. Extracurricular activities.

Extended Learning Classes (Grades 7-8)

In seventh and eighth grade, students may choose to enroll in the Extended Learning class, which meets every other day. The class will focus on intellectual, specific academic needs, creative thinking, visual/performing arts needs of the individual students. The Extended Learning class at the Junior Highs is structured around the Autonomous Learner Model designed by George Betts.

Students will be offered an array of choices that will enrich core content, develop creative and critical thinking and allow them time to work on projects related to the topics they are passionate about.

EXTENDED LEARNING/ HONORS SEMINAR (Grades 9-12)

At Valley Southwoods and Valley High School, students may choose to enroll in the Extended Learning class, which is structured around the Autonomous Learner Model designed by George Betts. This model is based on five areas: Seminars, Enrichments, In-Depth Projects, Orientation, and Individual Growth. The Honors class at Valley High School overlaps with the ELP class, although Honors students will additionally be working toward the Senior Honors project/exhibit.

- **Seminars:** Seminar topics are selected from the following areas—Futuristic, Problematic, Controversial, General Interest, and Advanced Knowledge—for student-directed discussion.
- **Enrichments:** Students engage in activities centered on leadership, community service, and cultural events to extend their involvement into the broader community.
- **In-depth Projects:** An in-depth project is a chance for students to pursue a passion, and yet have a set of external deadlines in place to serve as a guide in that pursuit. Projects are authentic in nature and have merit beyond the walls of the ELP/Honors classroom. They may involve but not be limited to leadership or service opportunities, academic competitions, or an extension of coursework.
- **Orientation:** The social-emotional complexities of giftedness are examined, as well as the lives of gifted role models in society. Students also evaluate their own plans for education both in and out of school to see how that best suits their own giftedness.
- **Individual Growth:** Students consider connections between college and careers. Topics covered may include but not be limited to college options, test prep, scholarships, AP course selections, DMACC dual enrollment, summer enrichments, college essays, resume writing, career viability, internships and job shadowing.

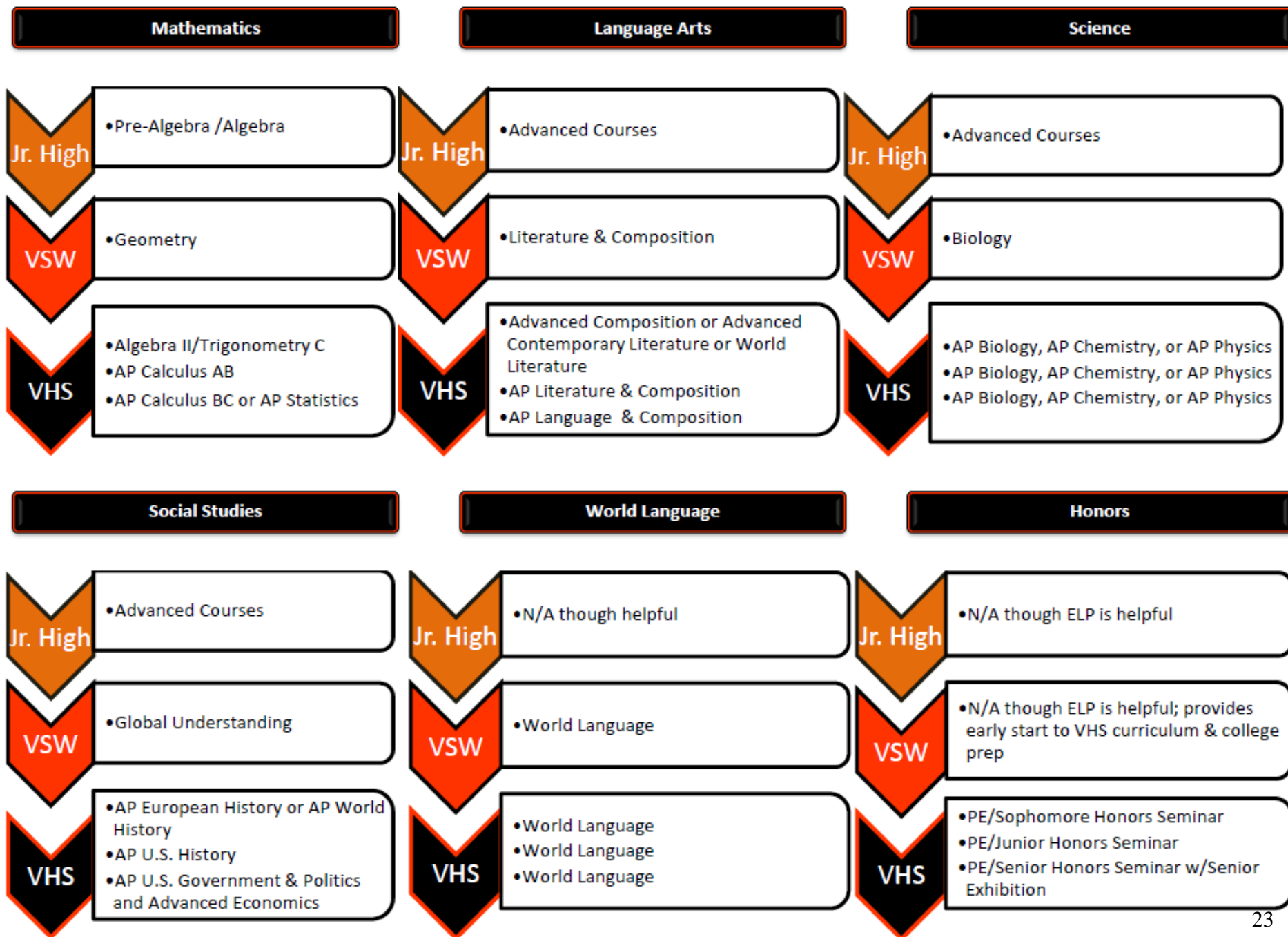
In grades nine through twelve, the class meets on either Orange or Black days. One half credit is earned each semester.

Accelerated Pathways and Honors Diploma

Accelerated Pathways at Valley Southwoods and the Honors Diploma at Valley High School offer eligible, high achieving students challenging learning opportunities in the core areas of the curriculum. The Accelerated Pathways Program allows eligible students to take advanced courses in Biology, Literature and Composition, Global Understanding and Geometry. These courses prepare students to take Advanced Placement classes in 10th grade and are required to participate in the Valley High School Honors Diploma.

See junior high and high school course guides for additional information.

WDMCS HONORS DIPLOMA PLAN



Extended Learning/Enrichment Opportunities

Various extended learning opportunities are available to students depending upon their particular needs. Students who need challenges beyond the regular curriculum may find these opportunities beneficial. These options are available in varying degrees at individual buildings. Enrichment opportunities are designed to assist district educators and parents to work together to coordinate services based on needs of students. The opportunities listed below are a sampling and are not limited to what is listed on the preceding pages.

Acceleration

Moving students through the curriculum at a faster rate, which typically includes offering standard curriculum to students at a younger than usual age or lower than usual grade level. Acceleration typically occurs by advancing ahead to join other students studying at the next grade level in a specific subject (most commonly math) or an entire grade level.

Advanced Placement, Honors Diploma, Scholars Distinction

See Valley High School Course Catalog.

Art Scholarships

The Moines Art Center offers scholarships each year for students who apply. PTA's may also purchase scholarships. Art teachers then select students based on ability, motivation, and possibly financial need. Art scholarships may also be funded directly via Extended Learning funds through Personal Education Plans.

B.E.S.T.S.

BESTS is an acronym for the Belin Blank Elementary Student Talent Search. Students qualify to participate in standardized testing administered by [iEXCEL](#) by earning a score at, or above, the 95th percentile on any subtest or a standardized achievement test such as the Iowa Assessment Test. BESTS is an above level, multiple choice test for students in grades 3-6 designed to discover students who need further educational challenge to fully realize their potential. The test is intended to be a challenging and fun experience. It is expected that most students will not be able to correctly answer a large portion of the items. Students who have participated receive mailings concerning educational opportunities.

Community Courses

The West Des Moines Community School District provides students with information about a variety of after school and summer classes, which are available in and around the area. Classroom teachers may distribute flyers from the Des Moines Art Center, the Des Moines Playhouse, the Science Center, and other organizations.

Compacting

A procedure used to streamline the curriculum for high ability students. Curriculum compacting begins by determining the goals and objectives of the regular curriculum and then assessing students for mastery of the objectives. More challenging options are substituted for the regular curriculum. Compacting also supports the district goal of personalized learning by allowing students more time to pursue learning based on personal interests as well as strengths.

Contests

Information on various contests will be sent home with students.

Curriculum Differentiation

Making modifications in the curriculum, either in content, process, or product, to meet the needs of individual students. Content is what the students learn and the mechanisms through which that is accomplished. Process describes the activities that are designed so that students use key skills to learn essential ideas and information. This may include moving through the curriculum at a faster pace. Products are the ways that students

demonstrate and extend what they have learned, and may not always be tangible items. Modifications should be made when students' needs are evident. Modifications increase the likelihood that the student will understand higher level concepts and skills more thoroughly.

Extended Learning Collaboration

The Extended Learning teacher meets with a classroom teacher upon request to discuss needs of targeted students. The Extended Learning teacher, in collaboration with the classroom teacher, will help provide resources and strategies for modifying assignments and providing challenging opportunities for students.

Flexible Small Groups

The classroom teacher and EL teacher will collaborate and plan small group enrichment lessons based upon student needs. Sometimes the EL teacher will lead "whole class" lessons for further enrichment and to assess student needs.

Honor Concert

Each spring students are selected from the sixth grade (district wide) to participate in Honor Choir, Honor Handbell Choir, Honor Orchestra and Honor Band. This event allows students who have demonstrated high skills and leadership in their respective groups to join with others to work on selections for the sixth grade Honor Concert held at Valley High School each May.

Independent Projects

Students may conduct self-directed studies that are planned and monitored by the student and teacher. Projects may be developed for solving community problems, uncovering new questions, or researching a topic of interest.

Job Shadowing

Assistance may be provided for students to visit one or more career professionals at their job sites, in connection with a career unit or related to other learning needs. Elementary students may be excused from a day of school for job shadowing, at the discretion of the principal.

Mentors

Students with unique needs may be matched with an adult or older student who is able to arrange and facilitate specialized learning opportunities within or beyond the school.

Mock Trial

Mock Trials are designed to introduce students to our legal system by providing a challenging, academic competition. The program offers students an opportunity for personal growth and achievement, emphasizing the importance of research, presentation, and team work. In addition to teaching students about contemporary public issues and the legal system, the program encourages teachers and students to develop learning partnerships with professionals from the community. Lawyers from communities throughout Iowa contribute their time as coaches and judges at the tournaments. Judges from Iowa's District Courts also participate. These linkages between the schools and the legal profession show students that the community is committed to their educational success.

Peer Tutoring

Some older students may be motivated to work with younger students and may be capable of assisting them in developing their skills. For example, students in grades 4-6 might volunteer to work with grade 2-3 students in math or reading. Participation as a peer tutor should only be set up for students who are eager to develop their service and leadership skills in this way. Peer tutors should also be provided with other differentiated learning opportunities within their areas of academic strength.

Project/Event Groups

Students may be invited to join in a specific English Learner (EL) project or event group. The students will attend EL sessions with the identified students until the project/event is completed. In order to participate, the student must be recommended by the classroom teacher and the EL teacher.

Special Interest Clubs

West Des Moines Community Education staff, or individual teachers or parents may set up classes/clubs at various schools. Some examples of classes/clubs include art, chess, technology, books and drama.

Student Council/Government

The Student Council may be utilized to meet leadership needs of those students that participate. Council members represent the student body. They brainstorm to solve problems such as improving student behavior, improving the physical school building, or solving problems related to curriculum, classroom safety or classroom rules. The council members communicate with peers and adult leaders.

Summer Enrichment Adventures (SEA)

SEA is a summer program for high achieving, motivated students in the WDM area who will be entering grades 1-8 in the fall. Students in grades 4-8 must either be identified for a gifted program or score at or above the 90th percentile on their IA Assessments or other IA Assessments area related to the desired class or have a teacher recommendation. Students entering grades 1-3 who do not have test scores may enroll only if they enjoy fast-paced, challenging experiences. Classes are two weeks in length and are held in June. Contact Teaching and Learning Services.

Taking the Road Less Traveled

A one-day career conference for girls in grades 6-9, held at Iowa State University. The conference sessions focus on math, science, technology, architecture and engineering. (Student program selection varies.)

World of Choices

A district-wide elementary ELP event held annually to increase student awareness about various career choices. Students have the opportunity to listen to various speakers.

Acceleration Protocol Overview

Please review these procedures carefully prior to beginning the acceleration protocol. If you have any questions, please reach out to your building's ELP specialist or district ELP Program Coordinator, Kristine Milburn (milburnk@wdmcs.org; 515-633-4052).

1. The referring person (usually a parent or teacher) contacts the building principal. The Referral for Acceleration is completed by the referring teacher (or classroom).
2. The school-based PLC/MTSS/Student Data Team will gather and review data. Data should indicate that acceleration is a “need” and not a “want.” Identifiers such as ESOL, 504, IEP, etc. should not preclude a student from acceleration. If the PLC/MTSS/Student Data Team recommends consideration for acceleration, the building principal will notify parents in writing within 10 school days.
3. If the PLC/MTSS/Student Data Team recommends consideration for acceleration, the building principal schedules a placement meeting with the appropriate individuals. At the placement meeting, a decision on whether to accelerate will be discussed and made. If acceleration is determined, the placement team will also determine a transition plan for acceleration.
4. All required data points **MUST** be administered and documented *prior to* the school-based PLC/MTSS/Student Data Team meeting.
5. At the conclusion of the placement meeting, The appropriate acceleration form is completed, signed, and filed in the cumulative folder.
6. If the PLC/MTSS/Student Data Team's recommendation is not to consider acceleration, parents are advised that they may appeal to Building Principal. If the Placement Committee's recommendation is not to accelerate, parents are advised that they may appeal to the Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Services.
7. Acceleration decisions may be revisited when new data presents new evidence that acceleration may be appropriate. The procedures for acceleration will begin with updating the data page. The MTSS Data Team will review the new evidence and review the recommendation.

Acceleration and Transition Plan Talking Points

The following will be taken into consideration when determining a transition plan for the accelerated student:

- During the Placement Conference, all stakeholders, including parents, will discuss the following:
 - Short-term goals
 - Long-term goals
 - Possible academic gaps: Does the student have a support system in place to fill in possible learning gaps?
 - Social/emotional needs: Do parents, teachers, counselors have significant concerns regarding social/emotional adjustments? What support might this student need to alleviate concerns?
 - Achievement: Accelerated students should be expected to achieve, relative to their new grade peers, at a high level generally comparable to their performance in their previous grade.
 - Transition to new district/new building: Does the transition plan include appropriate preparation for a smooth adjustment to new district/new school?
 - Timeline for acceleration: Does the student need support prior to acceleration? Is the timeline reasonable and equitable?
 - Support for parents: What do parents need to provide appropriate academic, social, and emotional support for students? This includes supports for parents of ESOL students.
 - Other concerns: e.g., physical size, sibling in the proposed accelerated grade level or two+ grades above or below the child, special identifiers (IEP, 504, ESOL, etc.), extracurricular considerations

- Following the placement conference, the Building Principal will meet with the homeroom and receiving grade level teacher to facilitate transition.
 - The homeroom and receiving grade level teacher will determine how to identify and address possible academic gaps.
 - The homeroom and receiving grade level teacher will collaborate with the school counselor to address the student's social/emotional needs related to the transition.
 - The Building Principal and receiving grade level teacher will establish a communication protocol for concerns. This protocol will be shared with parents.

Contact your building principal or ELP teacher for more information.

West Des Moines Community Schools Elementary Schools to Junior High Schools Transition Plan

I. Parent meetings

- A. Spring meet with elementary school staff to discuss acceleration options and programming
- B. Fall meeting to orientate parents (and students) to the ELP Programming

II. Student meetings

- A. Spring orientation and visitations
- B. On-going contacts regarding contests, summer school opportunities, etc.

III. Acceleration policies

- A. Math - qualified students may opt to take Advanced Pre-Algebra, Algebra C, Geometry C, and Trig/Alg2 C, and Calculus while at the junior high schools as 6th graders based on the following criteria:
 - 1. National percentage score based on a standardized test.
 - 2. Performance percentage from district constructed test.
 - 3. Teacher Recommendation

- B. Language Arts - qualified 8th grade students may take the course "English 9 in Grade 8" based on the following criteria:
 - 1. Teacher recommendation
 - 2. National percentage on standardized test of reading
 - 3. National percentage on standardized test of language arts
 - 4. Score on Iowa Writing Assessment

(Notice: all qualified students and their parents are informed of their acceleration options through a letter and orientation meeting. Bus Transportation is provided between district school buildings for students.)

IV. Ability grouped/enrichment classes

- A. Language arts - high ability groups are identified based on teacher recommendations, standardized test scores in reading and language arts, and the Iowa Writing Assessment results
- B. Math - high ability groups are identified based on teacher recommendations and test scores

V. Other contacts/interventions

- A. Individual parent contacts regarding ELP identification, tutoring, grades, counseling, etc.
- B. On-going student counseling
- C. Homeroom contacts

West Des Moines Community Schools Junior High Schools to High Schools Transition Plan

I. Parent Meetings

- A. Fall open house is held to outline the curriculum in the high school program.
- B. Fall conference nights are held to meet with individual parents and discuss concerns.
- C. Midyear showcase is a night where high school instructors explain course offerings for the upcoming school year.
- D. Parent conferences upon request

II. Student Meetings

- A. Orientation and visitations
- B. Eleventh and Twelfth grade students meet with the counselors to discuss post graduation plans.
- C. Individual meetings are held throughout the year to discuss report cards, college plans, teacher concerns, and student questions.
- D. On-going contacts regarding contests, summer school opportunities, scholarships etc.

III. Acceleration Policies

- A. Acceleration begun in the middle school is continued through course selection at the high school.

Note: Bus transportation is provided between district school buildings.

Extended Learning Program Exit Criteria

Exit Criteria: To determine if a student is no longer demonstrating a need for Extending Learning Program services (extending their learning beyond the regular classroom curriculum), the following criteria will be utilized. Two or more of the criteria areas must exist in order to end services. However, possessing any of these characteristics could result of a change in programming rather than exiting the program. When the determination is made to end services, the flag in Infinite Campus will be removed.

I. ELP Classroom:

Difficulty keeping up with ELP classroom demands

No interest in the ELP class work-not attending the class

No interest in the autonomous learning model (high school-specifically in the area of in-depth project)

II. General Education Classroom:

Struggling with general education classroom work

Student is not demonstrating critical thinking

Needs are met in the general education classroom

III. Test Results:

IA Assessments-student is on or below grade level

Cognitive Abilities-below 115 SAS

ELP District Administrator Responsibilities

- Provides oversight for ELP instructional programming.
- Collaborates with ELP Coordinator in maintaining current ELP reference guide.
- Assists with teacher evaluation as assigned.
- Facilitates a district-wide culture that supports accommodations/modifications/teaching practices to support gifted/talented learners.
- Assists in the selection of personnel as assigned.
- Develops and manages the budget related to ELP programming.
- Works collaboratively with district and building leadership in the development and implementation of ELP programming.
- Reviews and evaluates pupil progress reports periodically, as needed.
- Maintains up-to-date knowledge base and professional growth for gifted and talented students and programming.
- Supports, supervises, and advises ELP Coordinator in the administration of his/her duties.

ELP Coordinator Responsibilities

- Provides leadership for ELP instructional programming.
- Analyzes data to make decisions regarding the implementation of ELP programming.
- Coordinates procedures for the selection and adoption of instructional materials that supports ELP programming.
- Works collaboratively with personnel in maintaining current ELP reference guide.
- Facilitates the preparation for state accreditation visit. Work towards implementation of state accreditation visit recommendations.
- Collaborates to design and implement formative and summative evaluation of ELP programming.
- Assists administrative staff and teachers in interpreting and effectively utilizing standardized tests and other evaluative instruments.
- Collaborates with building and district administration, teachers, and parents to identify cognitive and affective needs and to seek feedback to improve ELP programming.
- Facilitates a district-wide culture that supports accommodations/modifications/teaching practices to support gifted/talented learners.
- Serves as a liaison to state and national agencies and professional organizations. Maintains active involvement with curriculum personnel and curricular development at the state, regional, and national levels.
- Works collaboratively with the district ELP Administrator in managing the budget related to ELP programming.
- Works collaboratively with building principals in the development and implementation of ELP programming.
- Reviews and evaluates pupil progress reports periodically, as needed.
- Works collaboratively with Community Education to determine appropriate summer school programs based upon needs of the students, as needed.
- Maintains up-to-date knowledge base and professional growth for gifted and talented through graduate work, professional organizations, seminars, and/or related professional literature.
- Serves as a liaison for ELP parent groups.
- Supports ELP team in meeting the needs of students.

Building Principal Responsibilities—ELP

- Become knowledgeable about the needs of ELP students and gifted programming.
- Become acquainted with rosters of ELP students in the school.
- Provide and join in staff development to stimulate interest in and concern for the ELP students.
- Urge teachers to provide qualitatively-differentiated programs for the gifted/talented in their classrooms; praise and reward their efforts.
- Collaborate with district personnel in identifying gifted/talented students and implementing programs for them.
- Encourage and assist teachers in securing appropriate instructional materials for gifted/talented students and ELP programming.
- Provide budget resources for supplies, materials, technology, travel, and equipment to enhance the gifted/talented program.
- Meet with parents to explain the program to them.
- Work collaboratively with other personnel in objectively evaluating the program.
- Work collaboratively with ELP coordinator and ELP administrative support person to administer any standardized assessments.
- Work cooperatively with ELP team (ELP teacher and ELP coordinator) to identify and facilitate acceleration cases as needed.
- Facilitate communication in all aspects of ELP student needs with ELP teachers.
- Build and promote a culture that supports the varied needs of gifted and talented students.
- Foster an environment which respects the gifted and talented learner in all classrooms and activities.

ELP Curriculum Lead Responsibilities

- Support appropriate functions and processes in PLCs by helping the facilitators maintain the focus on the Four PLC Questions (What do we expect our students to learn? How will we know they are learning? How will we respond when they don't learn? How will we respond if they already know it?)
- Provide input during PLCs around curriculum and assessment.
- Research and be knowledgeable about content standards, NAGC standards, and ELP programming.
- Provide ELP programming and NAGC standards support to instructional coaches to assist with teacher development.
- Assist in the curriculum development and alignment process.
- Support the implementation of curriculum to ensure fidelity.
- Assist with program evaluation.
- Plan and deliver professional development to meet district or building needs in conjunction with ELP teacher, building administrators, and instructional coaches.
- Provide on-going support to teacher leaders and building administrators for PD implementation.
- Research and recommend ELP programming and curriculum support.
- Assist with parent advocacy groups and gathering parent feedback to improve ELP programming.
- Collaborate with TLS to facilitate and support district vision/goals/PD efforts in differentiating to meet the needs of gifted/talented students.

ELP Specialist Responsibilities

- Meet regularly with classroom teachers, parents, and administrators to articulate the ELP programming.
- Annually evaluate the ELP program. Make necessary changes to ensure student programming meets the needs of students.
- Assist in the identification, screening and placement of ELP students.
- Maintain accurate and an up-to-date student files.
- Send rosters to the ELP Coordinator and building principal.
- Keep updated records of student's PELP.
- Utilize research based instructional materials for ELP students.
- Work collaboratively with all school personnel in interpreting ELP students' abilities and areas in need of improvement in regards to their programming needs.
- Collaborate and team-teach with classroom instructors to provide specialized experiences for gifted/talented students.
- Pull out students in groups to provide special activities.
- Serve as a resource person for teachers, support staff, administrators, and community.
- Provide liaison in arranging for special resources and enrichment experiences for gifted/talented students.
- Plan and conduct, with building administrators, inservice needs assessment and provide teacher inservice in regards to meeting the needs of gifted/talented students.
- Assist counselors in the evaluation of transfer students for ELP programs.
- Meet with parents to discuss the ELP program and their child's student progress in the program.
- Act as an advocate for the gifted/talented program in the community.
- Grow as a professional, learning best practices for gifted and talented learners.

Classroom Teacher Responsibilities--ELP

- Recommend students for comprehensive evaluation.
- Communicate with the ELP teacher regarding specific student needs/concerns.
- Collaborate with ELP teacher in planning and presenting instruction for gifted learners.
- Plan and deliver appropriate instructional activities based on the student's needs and characteristics.
For example:
 - Exercise higher level thinking skills,
 - Establish opportunities for creative production,
 - Respond to students' differing learning styles,
 - Provide flexible paced learning.
 - Guide students in specific skills of independent, self-directed learning.
- Provide enrichment activities. For example:
 - Explore topics extending beyond the regular curriculum.
 - Engage in critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, research skills.
 - Support activities that aid students in understanding their uniqueness and their place in society.
- Support curriculum efforts of ELP teachers.
- Be receptive to the use of opportunities for expanded learning experiences for ELP students.
- Recognize and respond to students' needs for personal growth and social/emotional development.
- Work collaboratively with parents and ELP teachers to interpret the child's abilities and weaknesses and to differentiate curriculum/instruction based on best practices for ELP students.

Counselors, Psychologists, Social Workers, ESOL, Staff Responsibilities--ELP

- Communicate regularly with the ELP teacher.
- Recognize and support the social/emotional needs of ELP students.
- Assist with developing the PELP plans, when necessary, in conjunction with the ELP teacher, to meet the needs of students.

Parent Involvement Opportunities

District Wide Parent Advocacy Group

The West Des Moines Community Schools recognizing the important role parents have in regards to their child's education established a district parent advocacy group. The goals of the parents group is to connect parents of gifted/talented students, provide clear communication regarding district ELP programming, and increase community awareness of the needs of gifted/talented students.

The group meets regularly throughout the school year (4 times a year). The goal of the parent meetings are to explain the philosophy and goal of the district ELP program and to solicit parent input regarding the program. Meetings are held to further explain and/or acquire information concerning the district ELP program.

District wide events may be organized by the extended learning teaching team in coordination with the parent advocacy group.

The gifted/talented coordinators realize the importance of parents and families to the success of children. As recognition of this need, the Gifted/Talented program will continue to support and encourage a partnership between staff, student, and parent.

West Des Moines ELP Parent Partnership

The goal of the group is to provide:

- A forum where parents can learn more about gifted education to better advocate and parent their children
- A safe place to find support from one another and to network for ideas
- A way to share ideas so that building representatives can take them back to our district advocacy group meetings to inspire changes for our district's ELP education program
- Inspiration for parents to partner with the district to create opportunities/enhancements for ELP students

Parent Involvement at School

The ELP teacher and parents (and student when appropriate) will meet to complete the Personal Education Learning Plan (PELP). The plan will be reviewed annually.

Each extended learning teacher is encouraged to bring parents together at each site to share perspectives and characteristics of gifted children, challenges and opportunities for gifted and talented students and to provide communication to the parents. Extended learning teachers will also meet with parents individually on request to discuss their child's needs and progress.

Individual parental conferences are held throughout the year to discuss student progress and to clarify issues related to gifted/talented students. Other parental dialogues occur as the need arises. Such meetings may be arranged at the discretion of the gifted/talented coordinator or the parents to discuss items of concern - to explain test results, scheduling options, etc.

Work with the teachers to keep the lines of communication open and friendly. Serve on committees and study groups that interest you and may impact your child's education. Get to know your child's teachers and school principals. Communicate frequently with your school's extended learning teacher(s). Most importantly, advocate for your child's right and need to a challenging curriculum. Gifted students have the same right to struggle and learn new concepts and skills as do other children.

At Home

You can support your child by being involved with what your child is learning. Offer encouraging words or assistance with special projects.

Talented and Gifted Organizations, Memberships, and Networking

Parents have an important role in the education of their gifted child. Parents work together to support changes in legislation, implement special curriculum and promote individualized education for students. It is important to be informed of the district's policies and potential changes that may affect gifted education. Ask appropriate questions. Serve on a state or regional committees. Communicate frequently with your child's teachers. The following are organizations that help network parents with similar interests in gifted education:

National Organizations:

National Association for Gifted Children

www.nagc.org

National Research Center on the Gifted & Talented

<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu>

State Organization:

Iowa Talented and Gifted Association

<http://iowatag.org/>

Other Organizations:

The Belin Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development

www.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/

Hoagies Gifted Education

www.hoagiesgifted.org

SENG Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted

<http://www.sengifted.org/>