

# **Advanced Learning Program (ALP) Guidebook**

**Skokie School District 68**

Updated 2014

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### **Learning Team Overview**

During the winter of 2012, a District 68 Gifted and Talented Learning Team (GTLT) was formed for the purpose of examining the current gifted curriculum and best practice within the field. The overall goal of the team was to set the stage for the curriculum revision process.

The GTLT read and discussed research articles and reports regarding best practices in gifted education. The GTLT examined these best practices in gifted education guided by the NAGC 2010 Gifted Programming Standards. During this process, the team:

- explored definitions of gifted and talented and examined conceptual framework models including those of surrounding districts
- crafted a District 68 mission statement and developed core beliefs surrounding gifted
- studied characteristics of gifted and talented learners and how they combine into profiles of gifted students
- reviewed tools used in identification of gifted and talented; specifically tools for the screening and selection
- discussed a wide-range of programming options
- outlined professional development needs pertaining to the implementation of recommendations outlined by the team

### **Gifted Education in Illinois**

Illinois School Code encourages, but does not require, the establishment of gifted education programs. Of equal importance, there is no state or federal funding available for providing such programs. However, Skokie School District 68 believes that students functioning two or more years beyond their same-age peers need time with like-minded peers.

*Gifted and talented children in the state of Illinois* means children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at **remarkably** high levels of accomplishment when compared with other children and youth their age, experience, and environment. A child shall be considered gifted and talented in any area of aptitude, and

specifically in language arts and mathematics, by performing in the **top 5% locally** in that area of aptitude. (105ILCS5/14A-20)

The Gifted and Talented Implementation Team relied on the NAGC 2010 Gifted Programming Standards. The team examined many materials for identification and took into account several aspects when considering the identification process. These factors included:

- multiple measure of identification (ability, achievement, performance, observations)
- time and ease of administration of assessment measures/identification criteria
- additional cost to district for assessments
- current programming/transition to new criteria
- cultural bias with regard to identification instruments selected
- current staffing plans and the ability to deliver services effectively utilizing current personnel

**Advanced Learning Program Mission Statement**

District 68 believes academically gifted and talented children have unique characteristics and distinct learning needs. The Advanced Learning Program (ALP) is committed to providing students identified as academically gifted and talented with an appropriately challenging curriculum and instruction that meets their intellectual, social, and emotional needs.

**Advanced Learning Program (ALP) Staff**

School	ALP Teacher	Email Contact
Devonshire Grades K-5	Judy Wheatley	jwheatley@skokie68.org
Highland Grades K-5	Jennie Greene	jgreene@skokie68.org
Jane Stenson Grades K-5	Joanne Fuller	jfuller@skokie68.org
Old Orchard Grade 6	Diana Schmidt	dschmidt@skokie68.org
Old Orchard Grades 7-8	Ellen Gaffney	egaffney@skokie68.org

Skokie School District 68 is committed to providing all students with a rich core curricular experience. Additionally, the district is committed to using data to help determine eligibility for the Advanced Learning Program. To ensure that each child has an opportunity to be considered for placement in ALP, all students in grades 2-7 are screened using multiple measures.

**Screening Process for the Advanced Learning Program**

Use of multiple measures that include: ability, achievement, performance and observations:

1. Ability Test Scores (*CogAT 7*)
2. Achievement Test Scores (*MAP*)
3. Teacher Evaluation Form
4. *K-5 Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment* to confirm Guided Reading Level (optional)

### **Selection Process for Advanced Learning**

Use of multiple measures for the purpose of determining eligibility consists of:

1. Ability = capacity *for* learning (*CogAT 7*)
2. Achievement = evidence *of* learning (*MAP*)
3. *ALP Characteristic Checklist* (as needed)

### **Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)**

District 68 utilizes a standardized universal screening assessment in reading and mathematics through a computerized adaptive diagnostic called *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)*. *MAP* is administered three times per year.

### **Cognitive Ability Test 7**

The Cognitive Abilities Test 7 (*CogAT*) is a group ability assessment. After examination of several instruments, the *CogAT 7* was selected as the assessment tool to provide information to *all* teachers regarding student *ability*. Key elements of this assessment are:

- *CogAT 7* measures student's ***learned reasoning abilities*** in three areas most closely related to school success: verbal, nonverbal and quantitative
- *CogAT 7* designed to ensure ***fairness to ELL students***
- ***Ability Profile*** received on all students

*CogAT* will be given to students in transition years (grades 2 and 5), all new students, as well as other students as determined by ALP Team.

### **Identification for Reading and Mathematics**

Formal identification for placement within the Advanced Learning Program (ALP) begins in grade 3. Students in grades K-2 do not participate in the Advanced Learning Program.

### **ALP Individual Scoring Matrix**

A Multiple Data Point Matrix is used to track assessment results for placement within the Advanced Learning Program. Local and national percentile scores on the Cognitive Abilities Test 7 (*CogAT 7*), as well as the last four *MAP* administrations, are the primary data points used for determining eligibility. In unique cases, such as twice exceptional students, individuals will be discussed by a problem solving team. Additionally, an *ALP Characteristic Checklist* evaluation form will be considered, as needed, during the problem solving process.

### **Problem Solving**

Assessments are snapshots of a student's performance on a given day and time. Occasionally, the observations of a child's day-to-day classroom performance and the learner's assessment data are inconsistent. Since data may not always provide the whole picture of a learner, an ALP or

classroom teacher(s) can bring a student up to be discussed for participation in the program on a probationary basis. Prior to a meeting being scheduled, teachers will:

1. Complete the *Qualification Matrix for ALP*
2. Distribute *ALP Characteristics Checklist*
3. Consult with the ALP teacher for suggestions to be implemented within the classroom such as differentiation ideas and/or supplemental instructional materials
4. Schedule classroom observation to be conducted by ALP teacher and psychologist (when available)
5. Collect work samples of exceptional work and bring to meeting to share
6. Schedule entire ALP team and building principal meeting to discuss data and observation
7. Document meeting and decisions
8. Notify parents

### **Transfer Students**

When a student identified as gifted by a previous school district transfers into District 68, the student's records shall be reviewed by the ALP teacher within the building to determine if placement in ALP is appropriate. The student will be screened for placement based on a modified ALP Matrix. Additional testing may be necessary and will be conducted during this time frame. Parental permission will be obtained for additional testing and communication of results will occur prior to them being placed within ALP.

### **Programming/Curriculum Delivery**

#### **Kindergarten – Grade 2:**

Students performing significantly above grade level are supported in the classroom through consultation between the classroom teacher and the ALP teacher. The ALP teacher can be used as a resource for differentiation, but the primary responsibility falls to the classroom teacher.

#### **Reading - Grade 3:**

Students who qualify for participation in the ALP program meet with the ALP teacher for 90 minutes of enrichment each week.

#### **Reading/Language Arts - Grades 4 - 5:**

Students who qualify for participation in the ALP program receive 240 minutes a week of replacement reading/language arts instruction. A variety of curricular resources are utilized to meet the needs of students.

#### **Mathematics - Grades K-5:**

*Math in Focus* is a rigorous Common Core-aligned mathematics curriculum that provides sufficient content as well as problem solving challenges for most of our advanced learners. Students in grades 3-5 receive 240 minutes of pull-out accelerated and enriched lessons based on the core curriculum each week.

#### **Old Orchard Junior High - Grade 6:**

The program includes a 110 minute replacement for the integrated Language Arts and Social Studies (ILS) curriculum. Within this class, students will participate in a deeper study of Egypt, Greece, Rome, and the Middle Ages, and China as well as other extended units. Each day students are expected to participate through writing, speaking, listening as well as reading and writing for homework. With a historical undertone, students evaluate actions and reactions in global studies, current and past.

### **Old Orchard Junior High - Grades 7-8:**

Students are pulled from their core Reading and Language Arts block and Social Studies classrooms on a rotating and unit-by-unit basis. The units in Reading and Language Arts emphasize critical thinking, creativity and higher level analysis of fiction and nonfiction text. Students practice communicating their ideas in writing or speaking on a daily basis. In Social Studies, events covered in the core curriculum are studied and emphasis is placed on evaluation of history. Students are also asked to do a research project as part of every unit.

Students in grades 7-8 with strong math and science abilities are also pulled twice a week from Science to participate in *Project CARE*. *Project CARE* is a two year curriculum that teaches students the design process of engineering, Python computer programming, and robotics. In 7th grade, students use the Lego Mindstorms kits to create and program a model wheelchair. As part of this unit students gain an understanding of the human body, physical disabilities and some of the advancements in biomedical engineering to help people with physical disabilities. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students apply their understanding of the design process and coding to create and program a robot using the robotics kit. All units in Project CARE place an emphasis on computational thinking and data analysis.

### **Programming/Curriculum Delivery (Tier 3):**

Students who have unique learning needs may require an individualized learning plan. ALP teachers will work with the student and core teachers as needed. The gifted specialist will work collaboratively with classroom teachers to develop an individual learning plan for such students incorporating these dimensions as required by individual learning needs. The elements to be developed for will include:

- Part One: Present Levels of Educational Performance
- Part Two: Academic Growth, and Social Emotional/Socialization
- Part Three: Learning Outcomes
- Part Four: Educational Plan/Specially Designed Instruction

### **Exit/Furlough Protocols**

Any decision to modify or change placement is a collaborative effort involving ALP staff, parents, administrators, and the student. If placement change is necessary, a transition plan with timelines will be developed to ensure a smooth transition back to the general education classroom/team. Parents maintain the right to request their child be removed from the Advanced Learning Program at any time.

The purpose of a furlough is to provide a student in the ALP the opportunity to be removed from the program, temporarily, without penalty. This may occur at any time; for example, a student is unable to maintain satisfactory progress due a significant life event such as a health issues or social/emotional concern. A furlough may be granted at the request of the student and/or parent. A student may be furloughed for a period of time deemed appropriate by ALP team. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed and the student may re-enter the program, be removed from the program, or be placed on another furlough.