PROCESS FOR IDENTIFICATION

Identification and development of academic talent is an ongoing process. It is expected that children will cycle in and out of the program as they mature and the levels of support and academic challenge they need change. Some may demonstrate ability in STEM, others in Humanities. A smaller number of students will excel in both fields, and are referred to as having general intellectual ability and qualify for extended studies and a personalized educational plan. An annual review of multiple criteria is a research-based best practice. Referrals may come from teachers or parents, or secondary students. ELP staff communicates with parents, who may make a referral electronically through the district web site or request one from staff. Characteristics that parents observe provide valuable insight. Staff collects data including standardized test scores and meets with teachers and with math and language arts specialists. If data shows strengths in specific area(s), programming recommendations are made. Teachers and parents are contacted regarding students' academic needs and placement. Services depend upon need demonstrated and options available.

PATHWAY 1 for ELP identification

When possible, a z-score (distance from the mean) is calculated from each of these assessments: Iowa Assessments, MAP, and CogAT. The mean of each student's z-scores is then calculated. Students who have a mean z-score in approximately the top 4% of the district are, identified for services. Additional data points are reviewed including teacher recommendations, for students with mean z-scores in approximately the top 5-8% of the district. Students who may not have high standardized test scores but are exhibiting characteristics of gifted learners may be recommended by teachers or parents and reviewed on an individual basis.

*Iowa Assessments (Discontinued after 2018. Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress- ISASP- will be administered this spring, but no data will be available until fall 2019): The Iowa Assessment at-grade level test serves as an indicator of student achievement. Iowa Assessments is a general achievement test, and norms are not specific to our district. Many students score above 90th percentile in JSCD. Using our local population, a student in the 95th percentile may not need extensive accommodations when compared to other classmates. Consistent high scores in multiple standardized tests, such as Iowa Assessments, ISASP or MAP scores are useful to provide an indicator of high ability and form the initial basis of an ELP placement.

*MAP – Measures of Academic Progress: Scores are specific to Johnston standards and benchmarks. While many students score in the *Hi* (75th percentile or above) range, reading and math scores that are two standard deviations above the norm are a strong indicator of very high ability.

*Cognitive Abilities Tests: Cognitive Abilities Tests (CogAT) are not achievement tests, but aptitude tests that measure the natural ability to reason, think and solve problems. They provide reliable data to indicate a need for advanced programming, especially if other information is incomplete or inconsistent.

Other Identification Sources:

*Teacher Recommendation: This is based on products, processes, motivation and grades when applicable. Teachers are trained in the identification process and are able to provide information on high quality products, initiative to complete extensions, evidence of high-level thought process, and rapid acquisition of knowledge. Teachers complete the Extended Learning Observation, derived from research literature on characteristics of the gifted. Teachers may request additional assessments or reviews for specific students.

*ELP Staff Recommendation: Observed characteristics, performances, and products over time are noted. Staff watches for trends in consistent, high scores in student data to help determine strengths.

*Student Information: Student motivation and initiative is important, thus students in secondary buildings can provide information about themselves through a form on the JSCD web site to assist in appropriate placement to maximize their strengths.

*Records from Previous Schools: Available data, such as out-of-level tests or information from previous schools may assist in appropriate placement.

Pathway 2 for ELP identification

*Case Study Approach Students with a unique circumstance, i.e. English Learners, twice-exceptional, or underachieving will be reviewed individually by a committee of educators. The data, including relevant observations, test scores, teacher and/or parent recommendations from pathway 1 will be utilized when possible as part of thestudent profile. Interviews with student/and/or parents and previous teachers may be conducted. Students will be compared against others of similar subgroups. In some cases, students may be placed on a trial basis. Updated 1/15/2019