



Memorandum

**Office of the Superintendent
Vashon Island School District No. 402**

Date: March 9th, 2005
To: Parents & Community Members
From: Dr. Mimi Walker, Superintendent
Re: Survey on "Gifted" Student Program

The Committee, known as the "Highly Capable Committee," composed of staff, administration and parents, has been meeting once a month for the past year to discuss the Vashon Island School District's program offerings for identified "gifted" students. Recently, after review of our data, including COGAT scores and surveying 23 other school districts, we put together a Philosophy Statement. We are only at the first step in the formulation of a plan and really want your input!

Attached you will find a brief synopsis comparing a "bright" child with a "gifted" child. We have also included the data reviewed. Finally, we have put together the list of current offerings for eligible students.

Again, this is just our first step in the process after hours and months of enriching dialogue on this topic. Next, we will meet to review and synthesize your input and take the next steps, which include criteria eligibility and program descriptions for all three schools.

DEADLINE FOR RESPONSE TO THIS SURVEY: March 23rd, 2005
Please send your input to info@vashonsd.org

MW/cr
Attachments

VISD
Academic Challenge Program
Descriptors of the Bright and Gifted Child

THE BRIGHT CHILD

- knows the answers
- is interested
- is attentive
- has good ideas
- works hard
- answers the questions
- top group
- listens with interest
- learns with ease
- 6-8 repetitions for mastery
- understands ideas
- enjoys peers
- grasps the meaning
- completes assignments

- is receptive
- copies accurately
- enjoys school
- absorbs information
- technician
- good memorizer
- enjoys straightforward, sequential presentation
- is alert
- is pleased with own learning

THE GIFTED CHILD

- asks the questions
- is highly curious
- is mentally and physically involved
- has wild, silly ideas
- lays around, yet tests well
- discusses in detail, elaborates
- beyond the top group
- shows strong feelings and opinions
- already knows
- 1-2 repetitions for mastery
- constructs abstractions
- prefers adults
- draws inferences
- initiates (not necessary completes) projects
- is intense
- creates a new design
- enjoys learning
- manipulates information
- inventor
- good guesser
- thrives on complexity

- is keenly observant
- is highly self-critical

NOTE: Not all descriptors will be true for any one student.

***By: Janice Szabos
Distributed at 1998 CAG Conference by
Redlands Unified School District***

Book: *Growing Up Gifted* by Barbara Clark (Anecdotal Data-Real Stories)

Due Date: Wednesday, March 23rd

ACADEMIC CHALLENGE PROGRAM SURVEY
March, 2005

1. What has been your personal experience with gifted/challenge programs?
2. What is your philosophy of the Academic Challenge (aka Highly Capable/Gifted) Program?
3. How would you define a “Gifted” child?
4. How do you see these students being identified?
5. What grade level or age do we identify kids for services?
6. How are these students' needs being met in your building?
7. In your role, what do you do to address the needs of "gifted" students?
8. What classroom/group dynamics (management) issues do you use to address "gifted" students' needs?

Note: If you would like to be interviewed, rather than fill out this form, please contact Mimi via email and a Committee member will set up a time with you.

Academic Challenge Program Philosophy Statement

Academic Challenge Program of the Vashon Island School District:

As in all of the District's programs, we strive to produce a year's growth for a year's participation and accountability for our students. As part of our efforts to reach each student's needs, we provide an Academic Challenge Program. Our data specific to Vashon Island based on cognitive and ability testing reflects the need for such a program. Students placed in this program demonstrate a high degree of intellectual capability, and they meet eligibility criteria for the Vashon Island School District student population.

These students participate in an academic program that includes critical and creative thinking, as well as intellectual challenge. This program is not to serve as the reward for hard work, but is a needs-based program for those students who meet the criteria and must have an academic challenge component in their schedule. These students will have an opportunity to engage in advanced problem solving, in-depth study, and pursue a curriculum matched to their intellectual abilities. Strategies will be used that encourage the development of new and original ideas. The School District will also provide support for the awareness of self, sensitivity towards others, and for the unique social-emotional needs and development of the whole child.

Students involved in the Academic Challenge Program will be met at their present level of performance and be expected to progress steadily throughout the school year. Students will be accountable for grade-level expectations, as well as new and different curriculum at a breadth, depth, acceleration, and challenge that match their learning needs. Students with these like abilities will spend a portion of their academic time together.