



Heather Baskin, Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Programming at D51

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## Important Dates

### Early Access Applications accepted for highly gifted 4 & 5 yr olds

Jan 8- Feb 28, 2018

Contact GT Office for more info

### PSAT 8/9 can be taken by grades 3-6

Tests—Jan. 20 or Feb 10.

Registration due by

Dec. 18 to CBK Office

### Challenge Program Information Meeting

January 29 & 30,

4:30-5:30 pm & 6-7:00 pm

East MS Cafeteria

### GT Scholarship Due Date

February 20, Before 4 pm

GT Office, Emerson Bldg.

East Modular

## Letter from the Coordinator:

Thank you for your feedback on the GT Survey. We had over 2,000 responses and are currently gathering all of the data. Book and game winners will be announced soon.

January may seem too early to begin thinking of school next year, but many school programs begin taking applications soon. Early Access opens up in January for highly gifted 4 and 5 year olds. The East Challenge Program has information nights this month so parents and students can learn more. High Schools have options for International Baccalaureate, STEM Programs, Internships, School of Business, and more. Now is the time to start thinking about all these different options for next year.

## What do you want in the Newsletter?

Do you have a topic that you want covered in an upcoming newsletter? Is there a student you know that would like to write an article? Want to share something great happening with gifted students in our district? Want to nominate a student to be featured in our “Many Faces of Gifted” section? Do you know of a student that has written an amazing poem/story or created a fantastic piece of art that we could feature? Have a question about gifted that you would really like answered? Please let us know at [bevjebe@d51schools.org](mailto:bevjebe@d51schools.org) or visit <http://tinyurl.com/D51GTIdeas>.

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# What GT Resources are Available at Fruita Middle School

**By Roxanne Johnson, Fruita Middle School Gifted and Talented Teacher**

On our last student perception survey, some parents expressed some concern about limited resources for Gifted and Talented students at Fruita Middle School. The teachers and administration at Fruita Middle School know that this concern is far from the truth! It did help us to realize that we were not getting the information out to parents effectively about what we are doing here at FMS to keep ALL students challenged!

First, let's start with Academic Lab. At Fruita Middle School, we have time before and after lunch for students to get the help they need, whether they are struggling in an area, they are right where they need to be or have surpassed grade level expectations. If they fall into that last category, they will be placed in AC Lab C. In AC Lab C, students have the choice to attend one of the following enrichment classes for a quarter: Guitar, Band Ensemble, Comic Book Making, Film Making, Yearbook, Art, Readers Theater, and Tech Ed Projects.

Before and after School clubs include: Art Club, Quidditch, Math Science and Engineering Club, Spelling Bee Club, Crime Stoppers, Wyld Life, Coding Club, Heart and Sole, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Lego League, National Junior Honor Society, WEB Crew, Chess Club and Drama Club. Many of these clubs were initiated by students who had an interest and put into place by a teacher who wanted to nurture those passions.

At Fruita Middle School, not only do we have honors math classes at both grade levels, we have 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade math classes and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students going to Fruita 8/9 for their math.

Fruita Middle School also offers many different electives to challenge students in new areas: Band, Jazz Band, Orchestra, Art, Tech Ed, KFMS (Media Tech) Computers, Choir, Physical Education, Health and Wellness, Intro to Spanish, Speech and Debate, Identity, Brainology, College and Career Aspirations and Community Outreach.

At Fruita Middle School, our mission statement is “excellence in action, where students maximize their academic potential in a safe, respectful learning environment.” We want all students to grow and be successful. Administration, teachers and staff are constantly adapting to meet the needs of the students that we interact with every day!

If your student hasn't already, please encourage them to take a healthy risk and join an after school club or take an elective that they have never tried before! When we learn something new or do something challenging, our brain grows!

# Student Work



Nathan Bailey

GT students at Orchard Mesa Middle School challenged themselves to learn to solve the Rubiks cube.

7th graders work to solve the cube independently. (Upper left photo)

Students designed mosaics using 9 cubes. (Tyler Ziek, Nathan Bailey, and Wiley Mead)

Wiley Mead and Breccan Sparks (lower right photo) completed a 36 cube mosaic with gradient colors.

Persistence and working through challenges were key to successful completion. GT standards of participating in challenging activities and stretching toward becoming more competent in multiple talent areas were educational bonuses to the fun of playing with cubes. Cubes were provided by Rubik's Lending.



Tyler Ziek



Wiley Mead

## The Many Faces of Gifted

My name is Rebecca Montgomery, and I am an 8th grader at Mount Garfield Middle School. I plan to attend Palisade High School and further my education by attending college, eventually becoming a veterinarian. I have been a part of the GT program since I was in 4th grade.

“Gifted” to me means that I am a faster learner than the “average-level” student. I think that I comprehend things quicker than others, and it allows me to move at a faster pace. I do not think that this means I am smarter than them, but that I can learn at a faster pace. “Gifted” to me, doesn’t mean that I am a fast learner at everything, but only the things that I am identified as “gifted” in.

When I was first put into a “gifted and talented” class, in 4th grade, I remember being pulled from class with 1 other student and going to a trailer and sitting in a small backroom, learning things such as long division, and reading advanced books and reflecting on them. I wasn’t officially identified until 6th grade, but I do remember being given an ALP, and asked what I wanted on it. I felt that my needs were met and my teachers really worked with me, to make sure it was a good fit for my learning style.

In the D51 gifted program, I have struggled with the assumption that I always need harder work, and I always understand everything I am taught. Many teachers think that this means I need more work, when in reality I need harder work. Sometimes when I don’t understand something in class, it feels as if teachers are thinking that I will understand, or that I must understand because I am gifted, which is not always the case.

## GE-SAC

GE-SAC (the Gifted Education State Advisory Committee) met again in December for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of their 2017-18 quarterly meetings.

The work session portion of the meeting was mainly devoted to the active collaboration of this committee with members from the CDE Office of Federal Programs in the creation of the FIRST EVER chapter on Gifted Education for the State of the State Report. It is a statistical analysis, comparing our success in educating gifted learners with that of all other students, during the 2016-17 school year.

We also heard from Jacquelin Medina, Director of Gifted Education at CDE about what is happening around the state. The #1 issue is currently an emphasis on improving teacher training – for ALL teachers. Providing them with instructional strategies to meet the needs of gifted learners, especially those found in the “underserved” categories (free and reduced meals, rural, specific disabilities, migrant, and homeless). #2 is dealing with identification. Expanding from the traditional academic areas of Language Arts, and Math to identifying students in 14 different categories is a challenge, especially in our small and rural districts. Did you know that 140 of the 150 school districts in Colorado are classified as small and/or as rural? A BIG challenge!

Jane Goff, State Board of Education, reported the #1 crisis in Colorado schools is currently teacher shortage. We have 5,000 vacancies per year across the state. CDE is looking at this problem with a focus on Recruitment, Retainment, and Development of Educational Leaders.

Respectfully submitted by

Kaye Wergedal, Community Representative for Congressional District 3

## School Highlight: Challenge Program at East Middle School



By Tina Sleigh

### What is The Challenge Program?

The Challenge Program is a MCVSD 51 program for academically gifted middle school students and is housed at East Middle School. Students must apply to be in this program; typically 5th graders apply for their 6th grade year and stay for three years. Students only need to apply in 6th grade, but may re-apply in 7th or 8th grade if they are not accepted in 6th grade. There is only one core of students in the Challenge Program at each grade level, so space is limited. Once accepted, students attend all core classes together (Literacy, Math, Social Studies, and Science). However, they attend their elective classes with the EMS population.

**Mission of the Challenge Program...** The mission of The Challenge Program at East Middle School is to meet the needs of gifted middle school students by pursuing high academic and ethical standards in a rigorous, creative environment. Our focus is to provide challenging, higher level curriculum, as well as support for social and emotional needs.

**Interested in knowing more?** We will be hosting **FOUR** information meetings for the 2018-2019 school year. Please choose a day and time that works best for you. We highly recommend parents and students attend a meeting. Questions will be answered and applications will be distributed at the meetings.

Where: **East Middle School cafeteria, 830 Gunnison Avenue**  
When: **Monday, Jan 29 and Tuesday, Jan 30**  
**4:30 – 5:30 PM**  
**6:00 – 7:00 PM**

There is plenty of space and no need to RSVP. If you can't attend a meeting, you may pick up an application at East or from your school's Gifted/Talented teacher beginning January 30<sup>th</sup>.

## D51 Gifted-Talented Advisory Committee (GTAC) Update

By Jen Schumann, Gifted-Talented Advisory Committee Co-chair

GTAC members are in the midst of sub-committee work in preparation for an anticipated advisory report to the D51 Board of Education in early spring of 2018.

The underserved sub-committee has been meeting as a group after researching patterns of learners with advanced learning characteristics not reached by traditional educational methods. In late winter, the sub-committee plans to delve deeper into the subject by speaking to Dr. Jenny Ritchotte, a professor at the University of Northern Colorado who has published collegiate work on her studies of the underserved. Dr. Ritchotte's *Reversing the Underachievement of Gifted Middle School Students*, published in *Gifted Child Today* (2015), is one example and can be accessed at: <http://bit.ly/2AStOGU>. Dr. Ritchotte is also a parent of gifted students and recently published a website [bravephilosophers.com](http://bravephilosophers.com), which highlights possible strategies for parents to advocate for their children in and out of school.

The crosswalk sub-committee will be doing an analysis of the D51 Learning Model and how its tenets correlate with the thirteen different elements of gifted programming that the Colorado Department of Education evaluates school district performance by when they undergo CGER audits in every CO county. Those elements can be accessed by visiting the Colorado Department of Education Gifted Education site at: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/about>. The Crosswalk sub-committee is eager to correlate the CO Gifted Programming Elements with the [D51 Teaching and Learning Framework](#) which was the focus of last year's labor at the district level regarding the PBL initiative. Recently, the D51 Teaching and Learning Framework was commended in an article for moving "away from traditional ways of thinking about professional development and toward the type of professional learning that we hear about in Finland and New Zealand". This article and the D51 Teaching and Learning Framework can be accessed at: <https://www.competencyworks.org/professional-development/an-update-on-d51-the-teaching-learning-framework/>.

GTAC's next full-committee meeting is on Feb. 26, 2018 at the Emerson Building in the conference room at 4:30-6pm. Interested observers are welcome to attend. In the meantime, any questions for GTAC can be addressed via email to either GTAC Co-Chair: Jen Schumann, [jenniferschumann1@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferschumann1@gmail.com) or Kaye Wergedal, [kwegy@gmail.com](mailto:kwegy@gmail.com).

## Want More Information?

D51 GT Website <https://connect.d51schools.org/sites/shared/gt/Pages/default.aspx>

CDE's Gifted Parent's Corner <https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/parents>

# 10 Facts you may not know about gifted children but should

**Written by Celi Trépanier**

*“But you are gifted, you should be at the top of your class!”*

I’ve been writing about gifted children for a few years now, and the more I write, and the more I connect with parents of gifted children, the more I realize just how misunderstood giftedness is, even among professionals who should have sufficient knowledge of giftedness in children. We need to shed light on what giftedness really is, and try to dispel the [myths and misconceptions](#) many believe about gifted children.

*“Sam is in my class this year. He’s gifted, so thankfully I won’t need to worry much about him because I do have a few students who will really need my help!”*

The following is a list of facts, traits and issues many would not recognize as a part of giftedness in children. Why such a list? It’s time to banish the many widely-held inaccurate perceptions of the gifted child. The pervasive but misguided idea of the gifted child—the child who excels in school, is well-behaved, is a natural leader and is emotionally mature—is the elephant in the room and that elephant needs to leave. We need the facts to prevail so that gifted children can have, as all children should, the education and support they need to grow up to be happy and thriving adults.

*“I’m tired of hearing about her gifted child. What can be so hard about raising a smart kid? They always do well in school.”*

1. It is widely acknowledged that giftedness is an inherent attribute. Although a few believe giftedness can be achieved through nurturing, the overwhelming consensus is that giftedness is present at birth, an inherited trait. Chances are very high that one or both parents of a gifted child, as well as siblings, are also gifted. Approximately 2% of the population is said to be gifted regardless of race, culture or socioeconomic status. It is a neurodiversity which does not discriminate.

2. Gifted children do not always excel in school. Being gifted is no guarantee of success in school or later in life. For many various reasons, a gifted child will not always score well on tests, ace every assignment or turn in his homework. Despite having above-average cognitive abilities, if a gifted child’s educational needs are not met appropriately, he may not show exceptional achievement in school. Many gifted children underachieve in school and often drop out.

3. Gifted children can and do have learning disabilities. As with any child, a gifted child may have learning disabilities which can negatively influence their achievement in school. Unfortunately, gifted children with learning disabilities, also referred to as twice-exceptional, often go unidentified because their advanced cognitive abilities often mask their learning disabilities. It is common that neither the giftedness nor the learning disability are recognized or addressed in school.

4. Gifted children often develop asynchronously. Asynchronous development is an imbalance or uneven growth of developing traits, skills and abilities—a gifted child’s intellectual abilities can be years ahead of their emotional maturity and social skills. A 12 year old child who understands high school algebra and science, but is unable to sleep at night alone without a nightlight, a fan and all of his stuffed animals is an example of asynchronous development in a gifted child.

5. Gifted children can have overexcitabilities (OE’s). These are the emotional intensities and sensitivities set off by various forms of physical and psychological stimuli. A constant buzzing sound which causes extreme irritability and the inability to move on until the sound is located and stopped; the strong emotional reaction of shaking and vomiting from seeing a neighbor’s dog lying in the road after being hit by a car; and the gritty texture in her mom’s turkey gravy which causes a gifted teen to totally refrain from eating the family’s holiday dinner are all examples of OE’s.

## 10 Things you should know (cont'd.)

6. Gifted children often have difficulty finding like-minded friends. Gifted children, with their intellectual, emotional and developmental differences, can have a difficult time finding friends or same-age peers who share and understand their intellectual interests and quirky traits. Shared social experiences can be hard to find. Parents of gifted children find this common situation the most painful to watch their gifted children experience.
7. Gifted children often feel like they don't fit in. They realize early on that they may be out of step or out of sync with children their own age. Feelings of isolation and not belonging can eventually lead to emotional struggles, depression, dropping out of school and even suicide.
8. Gifted children are gifted in and out of school. It is not only an educational designation or label administered by schools to identify high-achieving children. The emotional intensities, asynchrony and social struggles leave school with the gifted child and follow him home. Being gifted is who they are, not how well they do in school.
9. Being gifted is not a net-positive situation. Looking back at the above list, there are many facts about giftedness which demonstrate that being gifted is not an all-good-all-the-time situation. Being smarter or able to grasp and master concepts and skills above grade level is not a guarantee that any child has it made and will be successful in life.
10. Raising a gifted child is not easy. Given the educational considerations, overexcitabilities, social struggles and asynchrony, life with a gifted child can easily come with its share of bumps in the road. Additionally, the reality that so many only see the stereotypical gifted child—the child who has it made—means parents find little support or empathy among other parents or adults when they need it most.

Giftedness has its upsides and its downsides. It has many attributes which are misunderstood by many and are often not associated with giftedness in children. Because of this, the education of our gifted learners has been a global concern for some time. Every child should be able to receive an education which best meets his or her needs and offers the best chance to reach their full potential. Gifted children should, too.

*Trépanier, Celi. (2017, November 3). 10 Facts You May Not Know About Gifted Children But Should. Retrieved from <https://www.fractuslearning.com/2015/11/16/facts-about-gifted-children/>*