

Developing Minds

District 51 Gifted and Talented News



March 2017

Heather Baskin, Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Programming

Important Dates

Early Access Testing

March – April, 2017

CHS STEM Applications Due

March 9, 2017

HS Gifted Ed Orientation

March 27, 2017 6-7pm

@ GJHS

HS Gifted Ed Orientation

April 13, 2017 5:30-6pm

@ CHS

HS Gifted Ed Orientation

May 10, 2017 6-7pm

@ PHS

HS Gifted Ed Orientation

May 11, 2017 6-7pm

@ Fruita 8/9

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Thanks for your responses....

Last month we asked for feedback, through surveys, about D51 gifted education. The surveys were open for a little over two weeks, starting Jan 26th and ending on Feb 10th. The questions on the GT survey came directly from the Colorado Department of Education Office of Gifted Education, as part of their resources for a district self-assessing. I was on the team that vetted these questions for the whole state and can attest to the amount of work that went into their creation aligning the questions with state mandates. As we start to look at the results, trends of celebrations are emerging and also areas for focused improvement. Results will be shared more completely in an upcoming newsletter, but here is a sneak peek at the comprehensiveness of the results...

- 421 Parent responses and 698 student responses
- 330 Teacher and Administrator responses
- Elementary, Middle School, and High School are equally represented in all parent, teacher, and administrator surveys
- 317 Elementary students responded
- 245 Middle School students responded
- 136 High School students responded
- Our parent responses represent 93% of the schools in D51
- All traditional MS & HS are represented in student surveys (8 MS & 5 HS)

Please see the “Using GT Survey Data” article in this newsletter to learn more about next steps. Each survey participant could enter their name in a drawing for prizes. Congratulations to our lucky students, parents, and educators that won books or games:

Francesca Shiekh	Eleanor Taylor	Joseph Alejo	Amy Warinner
Anthony Santistevan	Jeffery Fiantaca	Lorenzo Gomez	Brannan Allen
Hunter Howard	Raelin Willow	Will Ness	Sullivan Smith
Issac Ruiz			

Gifted? And going to High School?

All current gifted 8th grade students and their parents are **required** to attend a High School Gifted Ed Orientation Night, current 9th-11th grade students are welcome to attend also. You may attend any of the nights but the one for your high school will have school specific information. Topics covered include:

- What does GT programming look like in high school?
- Gifted student diversity
- Academic planning
- Enrichment opportunities
- Does my child still have an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) in high school?
- What is an ALP consultation?
- Social and emotional needs of gifted students
- Who is my child's GT contact at high school?

Please see "Important Dates and Events" on the front page of this newsletter for the scheduled dates and times. If you have any questions contact your school's GT Teacher, a HS GT Liaison, or the GT Office 970-254-6903 or bev.jebe@d51schools.org.

Did you Know...

Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented (CAGT) has been around for over 40 years and is a leading voice for gifted education in Colorado. This association is open for parents and educators to become members. Membership carries these benefits:

- Communication on GT events, calendars, gifted issues, and state-wide events
- Annual Conference with events for parents and educators
- State-wide advocacy and support
- Networking and Educational opportunities
- Leadership opportunities

CAGT also has affiliate associations across Colorado. These affiliates connect and support local people to benefit gifted children and their families. The Western Colorado affiliate (WCAGT) has had dwindling membership and interest over the past few years. The current WCAGT board of directors posted this announcement on their Facebook page:

It is true that the official Western Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented is dissolving at the end of June. This very difficult decision was not made lightly or hastily. We have had many discussions with CAGT, school board members, and other applicable school district personnel in the last few months and the fact of the matter is that the amount of time and resources that are involved in keeping the official group together has become too great of a task for the few who have been willing to put in the time and continued effort.

The last thing that any of us want to do is abandon gifted learners, and in fact we cannot because we all have gifted learners! We foresee the next phase of this group (on Facebook), while not an official affiliate of CAGT, will continue to provide a place where we can share support, resources, and learnings from our experiences...On a side note, we have partnered with CAGT to ensure that there is seed money available to start WCAGT again if there is a strong group of folks that want to bring it back.

You do not have to live in the area of your affiliate, so any D51 families could join any other affiliate across the state. There are often parent informational and student enrichment events being held across our state. This is another chance to be involved and supported. Additionally, this is an opportunity for parents or community members interested in reviving and reinventing WCAGT to have more local support (current board of directors would be available to help with transition). If you are interested, please contact CAGT at contact@coloradogifted.org or 303-520-4887. Visit their website for more information <http://www.coloradogifted.org/>.

STEM Education at Central High School

Although this is not a program for gifted students, it can support the characteristics of some gifted students. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (sometimes Art is added as a STEAM program). This interdisciplinary program emphasizes conceptual understanding, investigations, service/internship/apprenticeship, and inquiry. There are three different focus options for students to choose (Science, Mathematical, and Arts/Humanities) and the ability to choose a full STEM program or STEM elective.

For more information visit their website <http://chs.mesa.k12.co.us/Departments/stem/index.htm> or contact the coordinators (Tracy Arledge, Trish Burns, Phil Johnston) at 970-254-6200 or tracy.arledge@d51schools.org, tricia.burns@d51schools.org, phil.johnston@d51schools.org.

Flower With a Power Project

Each of our traditional middle schools have three different elective classes taught by the GT Teacher. These three electives are titled Identity, Community, and Aspirations. Curriculum has been developed for the electives with three different essential understandings. In the “Community” class, learners address local, state, or national issues of their choice. Individuals and/or groups identify, research, and set goals to impact this issue.

Bookcliff Middle School’s Community class has named themselves team F.L.O.O.F (this stands for Fluffy, Loving, Outgoing, Optimistic Friends). They are working on a project to address a problem: Only 4% of national funds go towards childhood cancer research. They wish to increase that percentage by raising funds to donate to Children’s Hospital for childhood cancer research. The group has done a lot of research and even skyped with doctors at Children’s Hospital. This group has held numerous bake sales at the school. They also organized and held a Flower Power Party on February 10th. Many came to this party to make origami flowers for children receiving cancer treatment at Children’s Hospital in Denver, participated in fun activities, and ate pizza. Watch a video of all the fun and activities from their party here <http://tinyurl.com/FLOOFparty>. Their current donations for Children’s Hospital childhood cancer research is over \$1,000. They are planning on delivering the flowers and money raised this spring.

You can help them out by donating at their Go Fund Me “Power With A Flower” at <https://funds.gofundme.com/dashboard/FLOOFforPWAF#>. Want more information about team F.L.O.O.F. and their efforts? Contact Jen Schumann at jennifer.schumann@d51schools.org or 970-254-6220.

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Using GT Survey Data

In August, CDE did a comprehensive review (CGER) of our Administrative Unit (AU) showing what they saw as strengths and next steps. CGER includes information from parents, teachers, students, and administrators. However, our AU includes three districts and the data is not separated by district. We wanted more information on the perception of each group on how gifted education is in D51 specifically. The recent surveys will help provide this information. We will be spending quite a bit of time looking at the information and comparing it with what the CGER report told us. There are key characteristics of this survey data to keep in mind:

- **Self-Perception:** *The data is each person's opinion about their current experience with no external verification processes to establish accuracy.*
- **Baseline data:** *This is the first administration of the self-assessment tool, so context for growth is not established.*
- **Limits for interpretation:** *Each person interprets the scale given differently.*
- **Vocabulary:** *There is a certain set of vocabulary that goes with any educational area, not everyone is familiar with the vocabulary associated with gifted education.*

These are the actions we are planning to take with this data:

- **Part of a body of knowledge** – we will use the data to confirm or question other data and findings
- **Explore systems and trends** – we might see a trend across groups answering a certain way or a difference in levels answers
- **Increase in understanding/vocabulary** – we are already getting feedback from all groups that had questions about content in the survey, digging into the data may help highlight other areas that need to be addressed due to mis-information or lack of information
- **Use to support all of our growth** – this data does not give us a grade or indicate a 'gotcha' in what isn't happening, instead it will indicate strengths and areas for growth

With all of the responses we received, we want to make sure to use the data in an informed and ethical way. It will take us time to sort through everything, but are really excited about the possible growth that can result. Stay tuned...

Camp Invention for K-6th Graders

This great opportunity is coming to our area this summer! This one week day-camp challenges and develops student's creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills. Camp Invention is the only nationally recognized, non-profit elementary enrichment program inspired by the brightest thinkers around, the National Inventors Hall of Fame Inductees. Their top priority is to inspire future innovators and build their confidence in the natural ability to dream and create. This camp will be June 5-9th at Wingate Elementary from 9am-3:30pm. Contact Noelle Westcott for local information Noelle.westcott@d51schools.org or 970-261-8796. Visit their website to get national information and/or register <http://campinvention.org/>.

Note: Our newsletter next month will include information on student scholarships for camps like Camp Invention.

The Many Faces of Gifted

This month's featured student article was written by 5th grade Loma student, Julie Renwick. Thanks, Julie, for taking the time to share this student with us and showcase your writing.

Landon Hawk is a 5th grade student at Loma Elementary. His 4th grade teacher, Miss Bullock, said that, "(He) is always the first one to be found teaching a student a new strategy to help them solve their own problems." His mother, Rebecca Hawk, said that, "He wants to know not only how something works, but why it works."

To Landon, the word 'gifted' means: "a person might have some talents that make them stand out". To follow this, Landon has an above- grade-level math score, which he feels shows that he is very good at math, and he has some talents in this area that make him stand out. Landon was first put in an advanced math program when he was only in 1st grade! Landon sees the highlights in GT that they do multiple subjects, and that all students are considered for the program. At this point in the year, Landon couldn't recall anything that he has really struggled with, yet, which is extraordinary. His one wish for GT or GT students is for the program to incorporate smaller groups of kids, and more one on one learning.

Landon is interested in many things, among them are: playing baseball, basketball, and soccer, of which his favorite sport is baseball. His favorite teams are as follows: for baseball, the Colorado Rockies, for basketball, the Golden State Warriors, and for football, the Denver Broncos. Landon recently got a new basketball for his birthday, and tickets to a Golden State Warriors game, which he is very excited about.

Landon would like others to know that his favorite brand is Under Armour, and that he loves the Star Wars movies. His favorite animal is a shark, which he doesn't think many people would know about him. Landon is eleven years old, and he was born on January 23rd. He's looking forward to the coming year starting middle school!

Do you know a student that should be featured in this section? Please send your nomination to bev.jebe@d51schools.org or visit <http://tinyurl.com/D51nominate>.

Want more information about gifted in D51 and Colorado?

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>



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