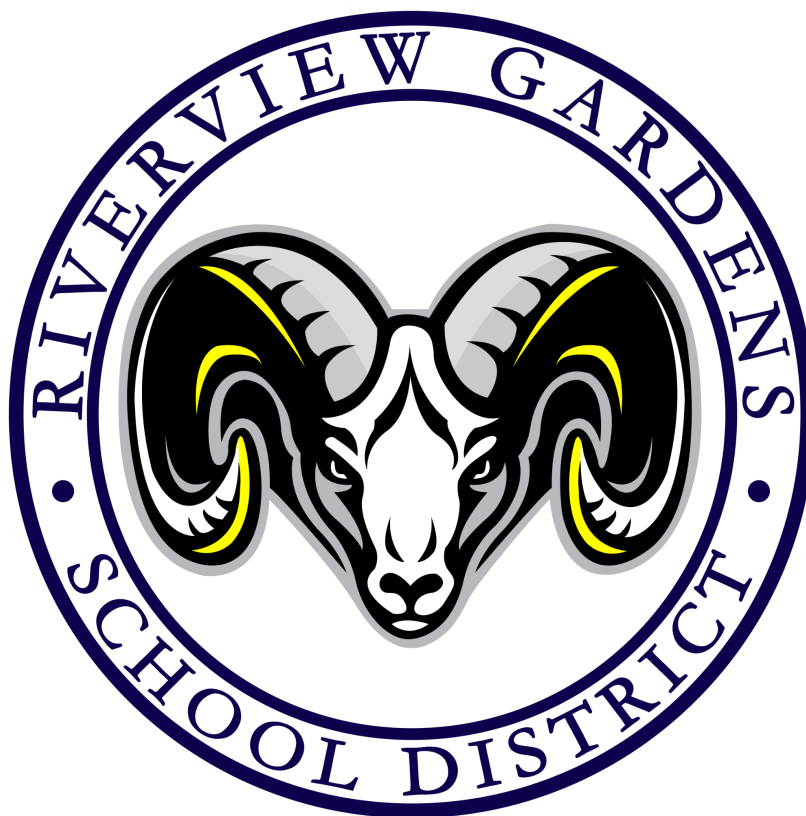


K-12 Gifted Education Program Manual

R.E.A.C.H

Reaching Educational-Academically-Challenging Heights



Riverview Gardens School District
1370 Northumberland Drive
St. Louis, MO 63137



"I happen to like the label gifted because it means to me that the child did nothing to deserve it. It means the child has a gift that was given to him, and because of the gift, he has certain responsibilities. He is not better than, merely different from."

-Walter Barber



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Riverview Gardens School District Mission and Vision Statements

Vision Statement

The Riverview Gardens School District collaboratively educates and empowers our scholars to thrive in challenging environments.

Mission Statement

Riverview Gardens School District will be a district where:

- There are high expectations for all.
- There will be healthy, loving, empathetic, and kind relationships.
- Where students are at the center of our decisions.
- Supports are provided so students become grade-level ready.
- There is transparency, accountability, timely, clear communication, and high levels of customer service.
- All stakeholders have a voice.
- There is a focus on college and career readiness.

R.E.A.C.H. Mission and Vision Statement

Vision Statement

The Riverview Gardens REACH Program will provide educational opportunities to meet the needs, abilities, and interests of gifted students to lead them in their quest to become lifelong learners.

Mission Statement

The Riverview Gardens REACH Program provides differentiated learning for gifted scholars in an environment that promotes creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, and a growth mindset to prepare students to compete and contribute in a global society.

Goals & Values

Values

- Preparing gifted scholars for an ever-changing world
- Encouraging gifted students to problem-solve
- Encouraging gifted students to embrace the exceptionality

Goals

The goals of the REACH Program of the Riverview Gardens School District are to be addressed in the following three interrelated areas:

Cognitive: To promote the cognitive skills of our students through:

- Research
- Technology
- Problem-solving
- Critical thinking

Creative: To develop the creative abilities of our students through:

- Divergent thinking
- Creative problem solving
- Creative drawing and art activities

Affective: To cultivate the students' understanding of self and others through:

- Personal and social responsibility
- Increased self-esteem
- Interpersonal group activities
- Leadership training
- Moral and ethical questioning

To accomplish these goals, the following strategies will be used:

The Learning Environment will be:

- Student-centered
- Goal-oriented
- Multi-disciplinary and Multi-Sensory
- Intellectually challenging, providing a variety of hands-on learning experiences
- Encouraging independent research and growth

The Teaching process will:

- Emphasize higher-level thinking skills in all studies
- Encourage discovery and allow for diverse learning styles
- Provide a variety of independent, small group and whole-group learning experiences
- Incorporate available technology into areas of study

Gifted Program District Policies/Procedures

Policy IGBB - Program for Gifted Students (Adopted 11/2011; Last Revised 11/2019)

The Board of Education is committed to improving student learning opportunities for all students in the district and authorizes a program for meeting the educational needs of identified gifted students in an educational environment beyond that offered in the regular classroom. The Board of Education will make every effort to provide the level of monetary support necessary to sustain the gifted program.

The program will:

1. Provide a minimum of 150 minutes per week of contact time in which gifted program personnel works exclusively with identified gifted students.
2. Include a systematic process for the identification and selection of gifted students at all grade levels. The identification process will include alternative identification plans designed to identify gifted students who are traditionally under-identified and underserved, such as students with language differences, cultural differences, special educational needs, and those from families living in poverty.
3. Utilize instructional personnel with the appropriate certification for the gifted program services they are providing.
4. Have class sizes and caseloads in accordance with Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) guidelines.
5. Include activities beyond the level usually provided in regular school programs that particularly contribute toward meeting the identified unmet needs of participating students.

Role of the Gifted Education Coordinator

The superintendent will designate a member of the district's professional staff to serve as the coordinator of gifted education. The coordinator is responsible for:

1. Overseeing the gifted education program.
2. Facilitating the process by which parents/guardians may request a review of the decision that determined their student did not qualify to receive services through the district's gifted education program.
3. Completing and submitting the application for a gifted education program through Core Data in a timely manner.
4. Reporting instructional positions and assignments of gifted program personnel through Core Data in a timely manner.
5. Completing an annual evaluation report before June 30 of each year that will be available in the central office.
6. Maintaining in the central office a description of the program's goals, learner objectives, and activities as well as the annual program evaluation report.

Role of the Gifted Education Specialist

- Design a unique curriculum based on data to meet gifted student needs with opportunities to participate in project-based learning.
- Review building schedules to ensure there is no overlap among class meeting times and that there is adequate time between classes. This includes days when alternate schedules are used and when individual teams and grade levels adjust for special events.
- Encourage nomination of students for gifted program screening/evaluation and provide the means to teachers and staff at least once each semester.
- Facilitate the gifted screening process and communicate with parents as noted in the Identification process above.
- Notify school personnel responsible for updating students' GT identification and class schedule in Tyler SIS.
- Advocate with building administration, teachers, and staff for the gifted program's and individual students' needs.
- Attend school data team meetings for students who are serviced and communicate regularly with teachers and parents about the progress of the student.

Parent/Guardian Request for Review

- Parents/Guardians who receive notice that their student has not met the eligibility requirements to receive gifted services will be informed that they may request a review of that decision by contacting the district's coordinator for gifted education or an administrator in the school the student attends. If the request is made to an administrator, the administrator will forward the request to the coordinator.
- The coordinator will arrange a conference with the parents/guardians to explain the identification process used by the district, including benchmarks and standards used by the district to identify the students eligible for services.
- The coordinator will provide the parents/guardians with information specific to their student, including the results of any testing, assessment, or evaluation of the student, and will assist the parents/guardians in interpreting the results.
- The coordinator is not permitted to discuss any information about other identifiable students but may share aggregated information, such as how many students were considered for the program and how many were accepted.
- The coordinator will share information with the parents/guardians regarding any enrichment activities, clubs, and student groups available to all students that, based on the student's results, might be of interest to their student. The coordinator will also share information about the district options for student acceleration.
- If, during the review, the coordinator identifies any error in the eligibility determination process that may have resulted in an incorrect determination, the coordinator will

arrange to have the student re-evaluated for eligibility. Otherwise, the initial eligibility decision will stand.

Administrative Procedure IGBB-AP(1) - Gifted Identification Screening

The Riverview Gardens School District uses a systematic process for the identification of gifted students that is composed of multiple criteria, including objective measures and a competent, professional evaluation.

Initial Screening

The district will provide screening for all students to ensure that all potentially gifted students have an opportunity for consideration. All available data, including information contained in the permanent record, will be considered during the screening process.

The district will use a variety of screening methods that reduce the chance of bias and provide an opportunity to identify the strengths of all students, including those students who are difficult to identify and traditionally under-represented, such as students with limited English proficiency, students from culturally diverse backgrounds and students with learning disabilities.

The district uses the following screening methods:

- Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) scores
- Grades
- Anecdotal records
- Demonstrations of creativity or creative problem-solving through observations
- Recommendations from teachers and other personnel, parents/guardians, and peers
- STAR Renaissance

The district uses the following screening methods designed to select students who are hard to identify or traditionally under-represented:

- World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)
- Course-specific or fine arts assessments
- NNAT3 - (3rd grade screener)
- Kindergarten Screener (K-Screener)

Individual Evaluation

Qualifying students are selected to undergo individual evaluations based on the screening results. The program coordinator and district staff will determine which students will receive individual evaluations. The district will use various evaluation methods to differentiate between the academically superior students whose educational needs are met by regular classroom programs and gifted students who require additional developmental

opportunities. Students will be individually evaluated in the following areas (students must meet three areas of criteria to qualify):

- **General Mental Ability** - including a full-scale score on an individualized intelligence test at or above the 95th percentile. The district uses the following tests of academic ability:
 - Slosson Intelligence Test
 - Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, 2nd Edition
- **Academic Ability** - Including a norm-referenced test with a 95th percentile or above cut-off score on the composite score or most subtests. The district uses the following tests of academic ability:
 - STAR Assessment
 - MAP (Missouri Assessment Program)
- **Creativity, Reasoning, and Problem-Solving Ability** - Including results of instruments indicating outstanding ability in one of the following areas related to the design of the district's gifted program:
 - Creative and productive thinking
 - Advanced insight
 - Outstanding imagination
 - Innovative or creative reasoning ability
 - Advanced perception of cause-and-effect relationships
 - Problem-solving
 - Kindergarten Screener
- **REACH/Gifted Characteristics Checklists**

The district uses the following creativity/problem-solving assessments:

- Williams Test of Divergent Thinking
- Other Ability- including documented evidence of exceptional performance in the general academic area, a fine arts area, or another area of the gifted program. The district uses the following to identify gifted students in this area:
 - Portfolios of student work
 - Formal observations by people knowledgeable of the characteristics of gifted students
 - Demonstrations or presentations
 - REACH Characteristics Checklists

Students are eligible for placement in the gifted program if, based on individual assessments, including alternative assessments, they meet the district's criteria for placement in the gifted program.

Student Placement

The district offers the following placement options:

1. **Resource Room Teacher (RRT) model** - Pull-out program where gifted students spend a set amount of time in the room with a full-time gifted teacher in a designated gifted resource classroom.

Grade Levels: K-8

2. **Gifted Resource Teacher (GRT) model-** The teacher of gifted students works with students and teachers in a resource capacity on a flexible schedule.

Grade Levels: 9-12

3. **Program for Exceptionally Gifted Students (PEGS) model** - Full-time specialized instruction for exceptionally gifted students. Specific scores are required to attend this facility out of the district.

Grade Level: 1-8

Kindergarten students will be placed in the second semester. The first semester is used for identification and evaluation.

Transfer Students

Generally, transfer students will be placed in the district's gifted program only if all of the following criteria are met; however, the district will make exceptions as required by law or policy (for foster care students or transfer students in the household of an active duty member of the military, for example):

1. The student was previously placed in a gifted program in a Missouri school district.
2. The program in which the student was placed is similar to that offered by the district.
3. The student meets or exceeds the district's placement criteria.
4. The student and parents/guardians agree to the placement. Transfer students will be eligible if they otherwise qualify in subsequent years.

Overview

The Riverview Gardens School District is committed to an educational program that recognizes each scholar's unique values, needs, and talents. The gifted student possesses extraordinary abilities to think creatively and critically. Riverview Gardens recognizes that providing a differentiated learning environment can best meet their cognitive and affective needs. This environment will allow gifted students regular opportunities to interact with and be stimulated by their intellectual peers.

The REACH Program provides an educational climate conducive to nurturing gifted students' full potential. It creates an environment where students can use their strengths, explore their personal development, risk new areas of thought and action, and feel challenged to pursue independent study.

Each of the nine elementary schools should have a designated REACH classroom. The State of Missouri Guidelines requires that identified gifted students receive 150

minutes per week of gifted services from certified instructors. The students are provided services through the “pull-out” model. The classes for grades six through twelve are held at Central Middle, Westview Middle, and Riverview Gardens High School.

Definition/Characteristics of Giftedness

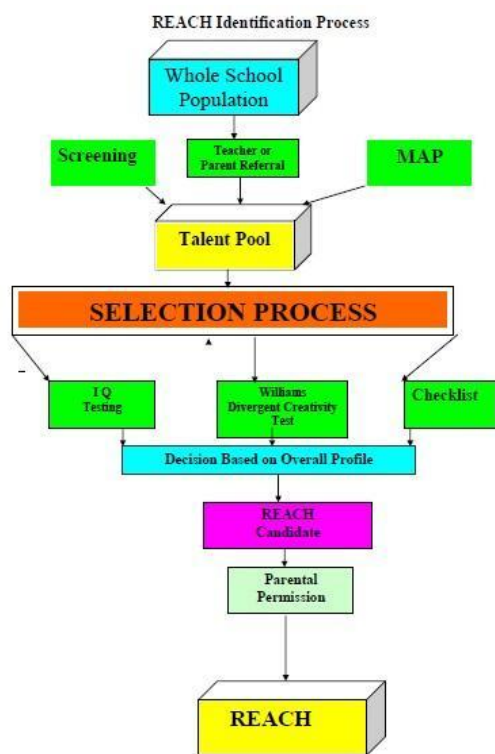
Gifted students are defined in Section 162.675, RSMo. "as those students who exhibit precocious development of mental capacity and learning potential as determined by competent professional evaluation to the extent that continued educational growth and stimulation could best be served by an academic environment beyond that offered through a standard grade level curriculum.

The following list of characteristics results from experience and research in the area of gifted education. Although the following characteristics generally describe gifted children, only some of these characteristics may be present in every gifted child. Compared to the norm, gifted children may display the following traits:

- Learn rapidly and easily
- Have an advanced vocabulary
- Possess a wealth of information about a variety of topics
- Demonstrate an exceptional sense of humor
- Are keen and alert observers
- Produce original or unusual products
- Can sense discrepancies and grasp underlying principles
- Prefer complex ideas
- Ask penetrating and searching questions
- Have rapid insight into cause-effect relationships
- Concerned about adult issues
- Have a long attention span in areas of interest
- Are intellectually playful and creative
- Can logically dissect complicated material
- Use unique and unusual ways of solving problems
- Are not afraid of being different or of taking risks. Demonstrate high proficiency in some basic skills.



Identification Process (as pictured below)



03/08

During the first semester, the REACH specialists visit all kindergarten classrooms. A variety of informal assessments are used to help identify potential REACH scholars. Counselors may assist with this procedure when necessary.

Students entering grades one or above may be referred by a teacher, counselor, principal, or parent at any time during the school year. All potential REACH candidates must have a checklist with observable characteristics of gifted children completed to be assessed further.

Once referred and screened, candidates may be assessed with particular achievement and ability tests. If the candidate scores in the 95 percentile on an IQ test and in the range specified as a top achieving percentile compared to his/her local peers on 2 out of 3 of these assessments, the student is eligible for placement in the program.

Once a letter of parental consent has been signed, the candidate will be placed and continue in the program year after year as long as attendance and evaluations meet program expectations.

Click [HERE](#) to Nominate a Scholar

Gifted Classroom Expectations

What are the team expectations for scholars in the gifted program?

- Students are fully engaged in the gifted program by attending scheduled classes. (Excessive absences will result in a meeting with the Gifted Education Team)
 - Students participate in class through discussion and completion of projects.
- REACH is a voluntary program for students who meet the state guidelines. Once

a student has committed to be part of the REACH program, the expectation is that the scholars attend on their assigned REACH day.

- Students are respectful to gifted specialists and peers during class.
- Students put forth effort during gifted classes and competitions.

When expectations are not met, the following will happen:

1. The student will receive a verbal warning about the unmet expectation.
2. The gifted Specialist will have a one-on-one meeting with the student to review expectations and develop a plan of action to assist the student with success.
3. If the same expectations are unmet, the gifted specialists will contact the parent to inform the parent of the situation.
4. If the issue continues, the gifted education team will meet to discuss the next steps. The gifted education team can consist of the following:
 - a. Gifted Education Coordinator
 - b. Gifted Education Specialists
 - c. School Counselor
 - d. Principal
 - e. Classroom Teacher
 - f. Parent/Guardian

The Gifted Education Specialists reserve the right to remove students from REACH activities in case of disruptive behavior that requires immediate attention. Disruptive behaviors include

- Fighting
- Aggressive behavior/speech
- Refusal to comply with directions or redirection

Repeated offenses can result in suspension from the gifted program and possible removal from the program.

Student Evaluation

REACH students are evaluated at the end of each semester. The evaluation form is sent home. This evaluation includes a list of process skills at which the REACH student either shows strength or needs improvement. A list of REACH performance areas includes an evaluation of how the child performed on each one, plus a narrative explaining the student's growth and development. The REACH teachers evaluate using a three-letter system:

- E** – student exceeded the set expectations
M – student met the set expectations

U – student performed under set expectations

Since the expectations at REACH are extremely high, meeting expectations for any assignment is a great accomplishment. The evaluation methods used in the REACH program DO NOT translate into academic grades.

Withdrawal from Program

Withdrawal from the REACH Program can occur for two reasons: parental decision and/or the recommendation of the REACH staff.

Option 1: Parents may withdraw their child at the end of any quarter if they feel the gifted program is not benefiting the child. A written request or a withdrawal conference is necessary to notify the REACH staff of the family's decision.

Option 2: Withdrawal would occur if the REACH staff believes the gifted program is no longer in the student's best interest. If a child is not productive in the REACH Program for one quarter, the following will occur:

- a) a student conference will be held
- b) the parent will be notified by phone or letter
- c) the student will be placed on probation for one grading period
- d) after the probationary period, a decision will be made regarding the student's continuation in the program.

Gifted Curriculum Components

The REACH Curriculum is designed to:

- Challenge academically advanced learners and provide experiences that require information gathering, problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, and technology.
- Align with the Missouri Learning Standards
- Correlate with various depths of knowledge (DOK 2,3 &4)
- Enrich and accelerate core subject matter in content areas
- Include instructional strategies that provide alternative approaches to address student abilities, interests, and learning styles.
- Incorporate strategies that enable students to apply their learning to real-world challenges.
- Provide students opportunities to work independently and collaboratively as leaders.

Each grade level will explore the following curriculum content areas at the appropriate developmental level.

Informational Literacy

- Formulate research plan
- Acquire information
- Organize information
- Analyze information
- Apply information

Problem-Solving

- Brainstorming
- Demonstrate fluency and flexibility
- Visual displays
- Divergent thinking
- Divergent making

Critical Thinking

- Predict outcomes
- Analyze information
- Synthesize information
- Self-evaluation
- Develop logical arguments
- Reason deductively

Communication

- Oral presentations
- Written expression
- Visual displays
- Creative writing and drawing
- Drama

Responsibility

- Work as an individual
- Work as a group member
- Work as a leader

Social-Emotional

- Self Awareness
- Social Capacity
- Mindsets
- Life Success Skills
- Emotional Well-being

REACH Performance Skills Cycle

- Each curriculum unit is written with a pre-and post-assessment designed to gauge prior knowledge and the transfer of that knowledge once instruction has been completed.
- Activities and projects are assigned to measure the process skills domains above.
- Students set SMART goals to measure progress at the semester's midpoint and then reflect on whether they've reached their goals regarding these process skills.
- While creativity is not measured, students are expected to take risks and approach their projects innovatively and be given the tools to experiment with new forms of presentation of their project.
- In addition, STEAM and hands-on opportunities are peppered throughout the curriculum to offer new and different methods of learning and presenting their knowledge.

Regular Classroom Expectations

The REACH Program is academically based. Students attending gifted classes **are not responsible** for completing the work assigned in the regular classrooms (within the Riverview Gardens School District) when the child attends the REACH class.

However, the REACH student is responsible for the concepts, principles, and strategies the regular education/ or related arts teacher develops on the day she or he is at REACH. Activities (such as tests, quizzes, in-class assignments, etc.) given when a child is in attendance in the REACH classroom are not to be averaged into the child's grade.

If a scholar struggles with missing assignments in the class the scholar is being pulled from; the regular classroom teacher should request a meeting with the Gifted Support Team, consisting of the parent/guardian, classroom teacher, principal, guidance counselor, student, and gifted education teacher. During this meeting, a plan should be established to assist the scholar with completing classroom assignments. The Gifted Support Team should schedule a follow-up meeting four weeks after the initial meeting to check progress.

Curriculum Compacting

Curriculum compacting is a teaching strategy whereby regular classroom teachers pretest student mastery over an academic unit or chapter, such as a spelling unit or a social studies chapter, to assess prior knowledge.

Suppose the student shows 85% to 90% mastery of the unit or chapter. In that case, the curriculum is "compacted" by allowing the student to move into more challenging spelling words or higher-level assignments related to the chapter.

As advocates for the constant needs of gifted learners, the REACH staff would encourage all teachers to explore the possibility of "curriculum compacting" for their students who attend the REACH Program.

The REACH staff is happy to serve as a resource to any classroom teacher who wants further information about challenging gifted students and meeting their learning needs with "curriculum compacting." Please feel free to call for this help anytime—whether you are a parent or a teacher of a gifted child in the REACH Program.

Gifted Competitions

Throughout the year, students will participate in the following competitions with their gifted peers around the St. Louis Region

- Creative Convention (Grades 1-4)
- Academic Challenge Cup - "Equations" (Grades 3-8)
- Academic Challenge Cup - "Linguishtik" (Grades 3-8)

