

LRSD Gifted Programs
What's Inside this newsletter
Little Rock School District

January 2018

Who we serve...

LRSD currently serves the following identified gifted and talented student population: LRSD's Gifted and Talented students comprise 23% of the total LRSD student population. Utilizing the state funding to the fullest, we strive to not only meet needs but to provide our students with the support they need to succeed as they progress from kindergarten to graduation and beyond.

What's Inside

Directors Highlights

1. **School Program Highlights**
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Elementary School Highlights-

Bale Elementary- Bale welcomes Cotinna Johnson as the school's new fulltime GT specialists. Bale also welcome Patti Scherer who provides enrichment support for Kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms.

Baseline Elementary- The GT Selection committee worked together to provide professional development support for teachers in engaging GT students in rigorous learning through various opportunities including Hour of Code, Science Fair, and cluster grouping.

Booker Elementary- Students at Booker are enjoying engaging units of study provided through the Envision curriculum. My Fantastic Elastic Brain, Pet Parade, the Giving Journey Project, Backyard Getaway, and Travel Passport are some of the topics of study.

Brady Elementary- GT Specialist Amber Wilson is working closely with GT students at Brady to align GT studies with their interest areas and academic needs. Improving writing and science skills has been a focus for the fall semester. Student/Teacher

conferencing was utilized in the fall to match student interest areas to areas of independent study to support the skill development of each GT student.

Carver Math and Science Magnet- GT students at Carver organized a recycling program that serves the whole school. Their project has been funded through a grant received during the 2016-17 school year.

Chicot Elementary- GT students at Chicot Elementary have been experiencing project based learning. They have been working hard completing and presenting their projects using the Envision Curriculum. The students were able to show off their wonderful presentation skills to our building administrators, school staff, and some of our wonderful school partners from the UALR department of Education (Dr. John Kuykendall and Dr. John Burgin).

Dodd Elementary- Vex Robotics and the Stock market game have provided students at Dodd the opportunity to compete in regional events.

Forest Heights STEM Academy-Forest Heights STEM Academy GT has emphasized robotics, biomedical engineering, and project-based learning. Students are participating in destination imagination, robotics competitions, and quiz bowl. 6th-8th grade GT seminar students participated in a Winter Bazaar which emphasized entrepreneurship.

Forest Park Elementary- Students at Forest Park are participating in an entrepreneur unit. As part of the unit, local entrepreneurs serve as “sharks” as students present their business ideas. Student earnings collected as part of their business venture are donated to charity at the end of the unit.

Fulbright Elementary- Student learning in the GT program is centered on student interest with students engaged in a variety of studies including hands on science experiments. Students recently discovered that they could build a battery with lemon or apple juice as part of one science study! Game night and Medieval Feast are held each year to share projects and student accomplishments.

Gibbs International Studies Magnet- Students have been engaged in a Harry Potter study that involved them in writing activities requiring creative and innovative thinking strategies.

Jefferson Elementary- GT students at Jefferson have been immersed in engineering and robotics this fall. Students are documenting their work in STEM Notebooks that are used for reflection and assessment.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary- Students have been engaged in a variety of studies utilizing the Envision curriculum as well as involved in STEM units of study

through STEM Starters. Students are also learning to play chess and have participated in LRSD Chess tournaments.

Mabelvale Elementary- Things are moving quickly at Mabelvale. Kg and 1st grade enrichment classes have created school buses, made gingerbread men, and conducted science experiments to test for carbon dioxide. 2nd graders are currently engaged in a science unit called "What's the Matter". After studying problem solving strategies for word problems, note taking, analogies, and preparing for our spelling bee, the 3rd-5th graders are conducting research on magnets, dogs, and other countries so they can present their findings in the form of a Power Point presentation to their classmates.

McDermott Elementary- Students have enjoyed a unit of study about systems that included the study of the LR Transit System. GT students have also launched their own news station to share the daily news throughout the building each day. The Stock Market Game and VEX IQ Robotics have also involved students in new STEM studies.

Meadowcliff Elementary- Students in GT at Meadowcliff have enjoyed studying topics of interest while also participating in Student Council, Recycling Team, and Mathletes opportunities provided by GT Specialist, Kenya Robinson.

Otter Creek Elementary- Our students have enjoyed participating in many different projects. Students in grades 3-5 have participated in different literature studies from Wonder to Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Our second grade students have been learning about the human brain and how it impacts their learning. Students in third grade have also recently started learning the fundamentals of coding through the code.org curriculum.

Pulaski Heights Elementary- Students recently participated in a unit of study about Cryptozoology. This unit has involved students in doing scientific investigations based on eyewitness accounts. Students also choose how they present the information they have learned.

Don Roberts Elementary- Students at Roberts are involved in a variety of different studies including an ALL ABOUT ME unit for 2nd grade GT Students, Envision Curriculum units including Backyard Getaway, and Break-Out boxes to teach critical thinking skills. Students also have opportunities to participate in Chess, Ninja Warrior, and Sign Language classes offered as clubs.

Rockefeller Elementary- 5th grade GT students completed a study about the Empire State Building. They recorded and displayed their answered questions on quadoramas which we hung from the ceiling. Their final product was a wooden 3-D model of the Empire State Building. They constructed it with very limited help from their GT Specialist, Phil Davis. The quadoramas and the model are on display in the media center. During the fall, several GT students also participated in the Perennial Math team

that competed at UALR. We had a good showing and brought home some podium finishes.

Romine Elementary- Romine GT students hosted a fall Spelling Bee on November 27th. The fourth and 5th grade students were honored by the presence of Commissioner Key, who presented the trophies to the winners. Superintendent Poore acknowledged the students with words of encouragement. Joy Springer, Dr. Christine Deitz, and Lee Etta Lewis served as judges. The parent's participation was extremely high. Ms. Proctor, Romine Principal, donated the trophies the students received.

Stephens Elementary- Stephens Elementary GT students created their own plans for learning as they launched Genius Hour projects. Each student chose careers to explore. From historian to detective to transport engineer, Stephens students have shined as they completed hands-on activities related to those careers and earn badges in a kid-safe online community: DIY.org

Terry Elementary- Second and third grade GT students at Terry Elementary have been participating in an Invention Convention unit of study. Both grade levels discussed the invention process, evaluated different inventions, learned about various inventors before creating their own. 2nd graders were given a box and had to invent a new toy while 3rd graders had to solve a problem with their invention.

Wakefield Elementary- To help celebrate Hispanic History Month, Wakefield developed an understanding of the basic practices and traditions of the Hispanic culture and its influence on the American culture. Students were exposed to the unique contributions of immigrants. Improving writing skills was the main focus.

Washington Elementary- GT students at Washington organized a school wide recycling project and are learning how to play chess. Students have also created vision boards showcasing their goals and dreams.

Watson Elementary- Second through 5th grades have been engaged in the Envision experience, working hard on real-world independent projects. Second graders have been planning parties to celebrate birthdays and all A's report cards. Third grade students have had the opportunity to choose and research a future pet to adopt or purchase. This project gave the students a true picture of the responsibility of being a pet owner. They were required to illustrate their pet's life cycle, research the cost of pet supplies, and design and create a pet toy.. Fourth grade students have been engaged in projects about local and national environmental issues that range from water acidification, air pollution, global warming and much more. They have gathered information about their issues through various media including newspapers, television, magazines, and the internet. Fifth grade students have been engaged in Envisions' Travel Passport project, allowing them to use their imaginations to take them to any

place in the world! Students are traveling to places such as San Francisco, Guatemala, and San Diego to name a few.

Western Hills Elementary-Western Hills GT students have learned the higher-level thinking study strategy “Mind Mapping” and have applied this new knowledge to the materials they are studying in their classrooms. The enrichment classes are off to a winning start. Critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, and communication are evident in every class. The students are learning to brainstorm and are becoming critical thinkers.

Williams Magnet Elementary- GT students have enjoyed the hands-on aspect of the STEM Starters program they have had the opportunity to participate in. STEM Challenges have worked to encourage innovative thinking and have given students opportunities to flex their problem solving muscles.

Middle School Highlights-

Cloverdale Middle School- Differentiated lessons and activities at Cloverdale have involved students in varied activities. An example involved students in bridge building through the engineering design process. Students had to identify a need for a bridge and analyze constraints that affect the bridge design. As part of this example, the students developed plans for the bridge. Another example is that students completed a GRAPES project to demonstrate the understanding of societies at different levels. The project included geography, religion, achievement, politics, economics, and social structures.

Dunbar Magnet Middle School- Dunbar Magnet Middle School hosted its 3rd annual Community Festival in September. The Gifted & Talented and International Studies Program Coordinators coordinated Dunbar’s Community Festival and the school-wide assembly honoring two of the Little Rock Nine, who attended Dunbar as children. Mrs. Thelma Mothershed and Elizabeth Eckford were honorary guests. The theme was “The Power of Us”. Additionally, there was a poetry slam and art contest. The poetry slam winners were all GT students. Mrs. Moore’s 7th grade English GT classes, students created Black out poetry and celebrated “Banned Book Week” during September. Mr. Halford’s GT Seminar students participated in the annual World Fest researching and presenting group projects on Russia and Greece. Students celebrated different cultures and ethnicities in Arkansas and around the country. Currently 6th grade GT Seminar students are competing in the yearlong Stock Market game. 7th and 8th grade GT Seminar students are participating in the Youth Entrepreneurship Showcase, Y.E.S. One team placed in the top 25 and will be participating in the Y.E.S. Expo Day this semester. In October Dunbar’s chess team, under the leadership of Mr. Darius McCree, placed second in LRSD’s Chess Tournament. In December, Dunbar’s chess team took the first place trophy in the district’s tournament. In November, all GT students

competed in the International Science Explosion coordinated by Ms. Epperson. GT students conducted international science experiments ranging from engineering and mathematics to health and medicine. Mr. Harris's GT students also designed a variety of complex Rube Goldberg machines.

Forest Heights STEM Academy Middle School- GT Students at FHSA Middle school are enjoying Quiz Bowl, Destination Imagination preparation. During the fall semester they also participated in a Winter Bazaar with student created companies and products. Student teams also participated in the Y.E.S. competition and placed as a top 25 finalist against students from all over the state.

Henderson Middle School- During the fall semester, GT students at Henderson explored their own thinking and how they fit into society by creating life-size figures, album covers, and poetry to reflect each student's core beliefs. Students also explored meanings in literature through journal writings and conducted their own student led parent teacher conferences to highlight their accomplishments.

Mabelvale Middle School- During the fall, students were given an option to either research the 1970's or 1980's. They created a presentation which included the types of clothing, political events and politicians, current events, entertainment- TV, movies, music and commercials, - inventions, cultural values, and economics within their chosen decade. Students not only learned history but gained knowledge on how to create a PowerPoint with hyperlinks, research skills and presentation skills. This study gave the students insight into what life was like during the 70's and 80's and also spurred interesting conversations with their parents and grandparents.

Horace Mann Arts and Science Magnet Middle School- GT students at Mann Middle school participated in honoring Veterans by placing flags in the National Cemetery. During the fall semester 24 students were recognized and selected to participate in the Duke Talent Identification program based on their academic achievement.

Pinnacle View Middle School- Pinnacle View GT Seminar sixth graders completed a study of American Culture by completing the "Exploring America in the 1960s" curriculum unit. The seventh graders explored the 1970s. Each student selected a cultural issue relevant to the decade and then presented to classmates in a way that showcased their unique talents. Sixth and seventh seminar students also took advantage of a Donors Choose invitation to try the new Google curriculum, "Applied Digital Skills". The students loved making interactive stories, using Google Slides that allowed the reader of their adventure to choose how the story continued and ultimately ended. Groups of three worked on the story that began one way, yet eventually branched out in variety of creative and unexpected outcomes. Four classes of sixth grade seminar students and two classes of seventh grade students participated in the YES for Arkansas business plan competition. Through a series of lessons, the students learned to write business plans explaining their product and its competitive advantages. These students also created a prototype for their product that they presented on

Parent's Night at Pinnacle View with hopes of securing investors so they could produce more products! Two seventh grade teams and three sixth grade teams were selected as top 25 state finalists. One group advanced to the top ten of "Most Innovative Idea". Sixth and Seventh graders are currently learning about The Bard. They are just beginning a unit of Shakespeare, which will culminate, with performances of plays based on Hamlet, Macbeth, Twelfth Night, Romeo and Juliet, The Tempest and A Midsummer Night's Dream. The students are expected to make their own costumes and props out of found materials. Along the way they will learn the importance of properly blocking scripts, line memorization, cues, voice inflection and other important theatrical skills.

Pulaski Heights Middle School- GT Students at PHMS have been immersed in a variety of studies. Students have researched historical figures, created rap battles, and conducted research to participate in the National History Day competition. Students are currently working on projects about the Olympics, as well as creating their own Jurassic Park, Animal Shelters, and specialty cupcakes.

High School Highlights-

Central High School- Central High School hosted an AP Parent Night as well as a Recruitment Open House this fall. The purpose of the two events was to provide the community and parents with information about the AP opportunities available to students. A Science Parent Night was also held to assist parents in helping their students in science coursework.

J.A. Fair School of College and Career Academics High School- Fair High School hosted an AP Retreat for AP teachers from McClellan, Hall, and Fair to analyze AP exam scores and instructional reports. Presentations and assistance was also provided to teachers by content specialists from Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science.

Hall High School- Hall High school gifted and talented student assisted in planning a college and career fair. The students visited college booths in the gym. Career speakers ranged from Chiropractors to Musicians. A variety of student products of learning were also created as part of various classes. On example involved GT students in creating cells using edible items as they studied plant and animal cells as part of their PAP Biology classes.

McClellan High School- McClellan invited the GT Department to present at a Parent Involvement Night held during the fall semester. As part of the event, a table of materials and resources about opportunities provided through Pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement courses was shared. McClellan also has an active Destination Imagination team.

Parkview Arts Science Magnet High School- GT students at Parkview participated in a variety of multi-disciplinary performances and activities, including Tales from the Crypt, Arkansas Adventures, Medieval Feast, debate, quiz bowl, robotics, & Destination Imagination. These performances and activities allowed GT students to collaborate in creating authentic products of their learning. GT teachers at Parkview attended an AP retreat to analyze and improve attendance and performance in our many AP classes.

LRSD Gifted Programs underwent a number of changes this fall...new program director, new district office location, new staff members in schools, and a new promotional campaign highlighting LRSD Gifted Programs and Advanced Placement. Our office is excited about the happenings of the fall semester and looking forward to an amazing spring! Here's a quick listing of some of the "G"reat "T"hings moving us forward in serving students and families:

- LRSD Gifted Program Facebook and Twitter Pages share program news via social media. GT Webpage updated.
- Focus group sessions utilized to gather perceptual data concerning the program and its services.
- Why AP? Campaign launched to increase knowledge of benefits of Advanced Placement:
 - Student Ambassadors represent AP courses to promote enrollment
 - LRSD Gifted Programs supported AP Parent Nights and LRSD Magnet Fair
 - Buddy AP Teacher program launched to connect staff in supporting AP success
 - Promotional videos recorded to promote AP
- PD to support identification and program options provided for specialists in September, October, and December.
- New program monitoring binders for staff, electronic submission of program artifacts and records.
- School based Advisory Councils support the work of specialists at each campus.
- Program presentations conducted at individual schools for all stakeholders (parents, teachers/staff, community members) to increase knowledge of identification and program options. District level presentations shared with various departments including counselors and administrators.

- Planning for continued support of PAP and AP through Laying the Foundation Trainings and Advanced Placement Trainings Institutes to be offered during the summer of 2018 for PAP and AP teachers.
- Continued Partnership with STEM Starters grant program provided by UALR provides PD, equipment and materials to support learning. (7 Schools- Terry, Forest Park, Fulbright, King, Mabelvale, Williams and Otter Creek.)
- 64 Staff Members work in full time and part time capacities to provide GT services to students in the LRSD. Of those 64 staff members- 25 GT staff members currently hold Masters Degrees in Gifted Education, 26 staff members are certified in GT, and 13 GT Staff members are currently working on certification in the field of gifted and talented.

Destination Imagination 2018

LRSD brought Destination Imagination (DI), a creative problem solving curriculum/competition non-profit program to the district in 2007. Since then, we have had as many as 40 plus team to participate. This year we have 21 teams participating on all three levels, Elementary, Middle and High school. The number of teams fluctuates from year to year, but continues to be a program that has excited volunteers and students alike. During the last 10 years, we have been fortunate enough to have teams of GT students to compete not only on the regional and state levels, but the national/global levels as well.

Upcoming Competition Dates

January 20th- Creativity Day in Arkansas- Greenbrier, AR (Invitational)

March 3rd- Regional Tournament

April 7th- State Tournament

May 23-26th- Global Finals

Best of luck to all our innovative teams!!!!

District AP Exam Results show Qualifying Exams on the Rise

What is Advanced Placement? Advanced Placement courses offer high school students a rigorous, college-level curriculum to help prepare them for college. Advanced Placement courses also provide the opportunity for students to earn college credit for

the courses they complete. By earning qualifying exam scores of 3, 4, or 5 for each course, students can gain credit for taking introductory college courses, enabling them to skip pre-requisite courses, save tuition funds, and finish college earlier.

Why AP? This is a question that we asked of our AP students this fall as they were interviewed for AP recruitment videos to be released this spring. Some of their reasons for enrolling in AP coursework were:

- The opportunity to study topics of interest in more depth
- Interaction with their intellectual peers that supported their goals and ideals
- The challenge provided by the classes and the support given by teachers
- Chance to earn college credit

Each spring, LRSD administers AP exams for 36 different AP courses offered across the district. Although the Advanced Placement program is open to ALL LRSD students, students who participate in gifted programming often choose this program option

We are proud to report that LRSD increased the number of qualifying AP scores of 3, 4, and 5 by 61 exams in May of 2017.

Year	Qualifying Scores
2016-17	1474
2017-18	1535

Additional AP News-

AP Scholars- During the 2016-17 school year, our district celebrated 310 AP Scholars. An AP Scholar is a student who received scores of a 3 or higher on three or more exams.

AP Ambassadors: Fifteen students were recently named AP Ambassadors. These students come from all five high schools and serve as student spokesmen and women sharing the benefits of taking an AP course. These students most recently participated in the LRSD Magnet Fair on October 28, 2017.

Zoom Sessions- All LRSD AAIMS schools will begin their AP course zoom sessions this January. Four sessions in each course offered in Mathematics, English, and science will be offered to support AP students in preparing for AP exams in May.

Support for AP Staff

AP Retreats- In September, three AP retreats took place that provided insight into analyzing the previous year's exam scores. AP teachers created action plans to attain higher results for this school's year exams.

AP Trainings- At the end of October, AP History teachers were able to attend an AP History Summit at UALR with College Board AP exams writers. Upcoming professional development includes hosting an AP Reader Panel. We are fortunate to have AP readers in our school district. Through collaborative efforts, we hope to train other teachers how to assess mock AP exams to provide support to students

For more Information about LRSD Gifted Programs:

- Visit our program webpage at www.lrsd.org
- Follow-LRSD Gifted Programs Facebook Page
- Follow- LRSD Gifted Programs Twitter Page

Or, contact our office:

LRSD Gifted Programs
3001 S Pulaski St.
Little Rock, AR 72206
501-447-3990

<http://www.lrsd.org/?q=content/chess-home-page>

Registration Deadline
Tournaments Dates

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Checkmate!!! LRSD Chess-making moves at Jefferson Elementary

LRSD Chess hosted 2 tournaments during the fall semester. Both tournaments were well attended with an average of 100-120 students registered for each event. The halls and cafeteria of Jefferson Elementary were packed with excited students, parents, and volunteers from both LRSD and community schools. Upcoming Chess Registration and Tournament dates are as follows:

REGISTRATION DEADLINE	TOURNAMENT DATE
Friday, January 12, 2017	January 20, 2018
Friday, January 26, 2018	February 10, 2018
Friday, February 26, 2018	March 10, 2018
Friday, March 30, 2018	April 14, 2018

Registration for participation is \$10 per student per tournament. Information about LRSD Chess, tournament rules, and registration may be located on the LRSD Chess webpage located at:

<http://www.lrsd.org/?q=content/chess-home-page>

Information about LRSD Chess may also be accessed on their Facebook page- LRSD Chess.

Staff Highlights

LRSD Gifted Programs welcomes the following staff members to new positions within our program:

- Ashley Atkins- Don Roberts Elementary GT Specialist
- Yasmine Buttes- Cloverdale Middle School GT Seminar Teacher
- Jessica Cazer- Forest Heights Middle School GT Specialist
- Romona Cheneval- LRSD Gifted Programs Director
- Patricia England- Pulaski Heights Middle School GT Teacher
- Melissa Epperson- Dunbar Middle School GT Teacher
- Deokie Fleming- Pulaski Heights Middle School GT Teacher
- Todd Ferguson- McClellan High School GT Facilitator
- Carolyn Harshaw- Dunbar Middle School GT Teacher
- Cotinna Johnson- Bale Elementary GT Specialist
- Neva Johnson- LRSD Gifted Programs Administrative Assistant
- Cindy Kilpatrick- Dunbar Middle School GT Teacher
- Joshua Penticoff- Don Roberts GT Specialist
- Carey Sellers- Pulaski Heights Middle School GT Teacher
- Caryn Taulbee- Dunbar Middle School GT Teacher
- Kelly Taylor- Hall High School GT Facilitator
- Hollie Wolfe- Pulaski Heights Middle School GT Teacher
- Eric Steward- Pulaski Heights Middle School GT Teacher
- Nona Whittaker- Romine Elementary GT Specialist

Resources to Support Gifted

For more information to support gifted students, the following organizations provide LRSD Gifted Programs welcomes the following staff members to new positions within our program:

Arkansans for Gifted and Talented Education- www.agatesite.org

National Association for Gifted Children- www.nagc.org