

Developing Minds

District 51 Gifted and Talented News



April 2017

Heather Baskin, Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Programming

Important Dates

HS Gifted Ed Orientation

April 13, 2017 5:30-6pm
@ CHS

Last GT Identification Referral Review Team Meeting for 2016-17

April 25, 2017

GT Teacher/Liaison Transition Meetings

May 9, 2017 (See “Did you know...” in this newsletter for more information)

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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In this newsletter....

This is the 4th consecutive month for a Gifted Department newsletter and we are learning and growing. This edition includes several articles written by students and/or suggested by readers. Thank you so much for your input and feedback, keep it coming!

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 bev.jebe@d51schools.org or visit <http://tinyurl.com/D51GTIdeas>.

Did you know...

Identified or Talent Pool? D51 GT Teachers work with and support an array of advanced learners. Some are formally identified gifted and others are supported through a talent pool. That means not every student that works with a GT teacher is identified as gifted. Colorado Department of Gifted Education defines talent pool as “...a group of students who demonstrate advanced or even exceptional ability in a particular area, but at this time do not meet the criteria for gifted identification.” Talent pool support is determined at the school level, interventions are documented, and progress monitoring informs adjusted support. Not sure if your student is formally identified as gifted or in a Talent Pool? Talk to your schools’ GT Teacher.

Transitions Process...Every spring, a day is set aside for D51 GT. Teachers and Liaisons to transition files and information for students changing schools. This focuses mostly on 5th graders going to middle school and 8th graders going to high school, although there are other grade levels discussed (i.e. Fruita Middle School 7th graders going to Fruita 8/9). During these meetings the student’s current GT Teacher informs the incoming GT Teacher/Liaison about formally identified students, talent pool students, and any next steps currently in place for a student (for example, gathering a body of evidence for a future formal identification referral). Students and parents do not attend these meetings, but you are welcome to talk to your GT Teacher regarding important information you want passed along. All 5th grade students, working with a GT Teacher, will receive a letter indicating the recommendation passed onto the middle school GT Teacher.

A Student's Perspective on the MS Elective Aspirations

By Kate Hudak, 8th grader at Redlands Middle School

In third quarter, I was selected for a career class elective-called Aspirations. With Ms. Fleming, we learned about high school, and even college. It was fun, but as we neared the end of the quarter, we (all four of us) were given a task- to build a Rube Goldberg Machine. We watched a couple videos, did some research, and began.

First, we needed to have an outcome. What would our Rube Goldberg Machine achieve? After some thought, we decided that in some way, there had to be confetti. Fun, right? It was a great way to end the quarter. We knew it was going to take hard work to make it happen, and we were up for it. We had good supplies like pool noodles, dominoes, yarn, and marbles.

We decided at first that we would catapult something to begin... But after many, many trials, we scrapped the idea. We ended up at a point where we were stumped, because we did not have any ideas. The chain reactions had reached the end of the table, and the marble would just fall to the floor. Using what we had seen from the videos we had watched, we created a pulley from the ceiling, and created another track, where a marble hit a button on a power strip, turning on the fan to blow the confetti.

Now came the hard part. How do we get the confetti to blow? Our solution--hanging it from the ceiling. We created the perfect system of levers, so when the fan was switched on, something was triggered and would pull the cup down. We thought hard and long, and came up with a complicated system. But after it didn't work, we went simple. A piece of paper tied to a block, and taped to the yarn pulling the cup. The fan would turn on, blow off the paper, make the block fall, and tip the cup. I must say, it worked. After about ten failed trials, it worked. The marble was hit by dominoes, fell down a tube, and hit a bucket. The pulley was pulled, and a marble was launched to hit some dominoes, and a different marble hit the power switch. The paper fell, and the cup tipped, and confetti was everywhere!

It was very exciting to watch, and overall, it was a super fun project. It was funny, how so much effort was put into a chain of reactions, only for one little performance? It was still worth it!! This project caused us to use our brains, problem solve, and have fun!! It was a really great experience, and a fantastic way to end the quarter with a bang!! Aspirations was a super fun class, and I was very interested throughout. It helped me a ton, and boosted my knowledge about my high school and even college. So thanks for the opportunity, really.

Want to see their Rube Goldberg Machine in Action? <https://youtu.be/8Sk3gtCp408>



Josie Luedtke celebrates the release of confetti from their Rube Goldberg Machine.

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D51 Middle School Gifted-Talented Youth: Sporting Ties in the Colorado State Capitol on Legislative Day

By Jen Schumann, Tamara & Cayman Haltiner and Shirley & Chad Nilsen



Top L to R: Cayman Haltiner, Chad Nilsen, Jack Respet, Bottom L to R: Tamara Haltiner, Jen Schumann, Shirley Nilsen

Note added from CAGT webpage: Legislative Day is held in Denver the Thursday after Presidents' Day each February. This day allows students (grades 8-12) a unique opportunity to shadow a state legislator for the day. The application process opens the first week of January. There is also an adult component to the day, where gifted advocates have an opportunity to learn about current legislative initiatives that affect our gifted children.

On Thursday, February 23, 2017 three BMS eighth graders represented Mesa County at the 18th annual Legislative Day at the Capitol, hosted by Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented (CAGT). In an essay which Chad Nilsen wrote in his application to shadow a CO legislator, he shared “My father works for our school district, so I have heard firsthand from him how the low funding makes it hard to hire people or care for our schools. I understand there is a bill, HB17-1003, trying to pass that addresses teacher shortages. I can see why this bill is needed. In sixth grade, we had a shortage of math and science teachers, so my class got our science teacher halfway through the year. Another bill that I would like to discuss is SB17-029 (sponsored by Senator A. Kerr) that addresses funding for full day kindergarten. This

is something our district is working towards right now. Also, since I am in the Gifted and Talented program I would like to know if the Colorado State Legislature is working on any bills involving the gifted and talented programs.” Such curiosity led towards Chad being able to see the workings of the day in the State Capitol shadowing Senator Kerr.

Chad’s takeaway learning from attending such an event? Chad shared that he learned the following: “how a bill is passed, that the legislators debated in a friendly manner even if they disagreed on a topic, and that the legislators are open to questions and wanted to learn about the students’ ideas”. Chad also learned that Senator Kerr advocates for school funding and served on the education committee last year. Chad also observed how legislative aides were actively communicating via social media to reach the public. Ultimately, he “plans to encourage other students to attend this event in the future”.

Mrs. Nilsen, Chad’s mother who served as a chaperone during the event attended a Gifted-Talented Advocacy Session in the Capitol where she learned more about “the public school finance model and how funding is distributed, where Colorado falls compared to other states, and that legislators are working on education concerns and would like ideas on how to improve education”. She found it interesting that many of the legislators who visited with the public during the Advocacy Session shared that they had been identified as Gifted-Talented learners growing up and wanted to make sure Gifted-Talented needs are being met.

Mrs. Schumann, BMS Gifted-Talented teacher also attended the Gifted-Talented Advocacy Session and was concerned about the information presented by Lisa Weil of Great Education Colorado which included upcoming state budget cuts upwards of \$200 million in the coming year. Mrs. Weil reported that it is due to Colorado’s tax structure, specifically TABOR Article X, Section 20 and the Gallagher Amendment of 1982, influencing the fact that schools around the state are still operating below pre-recessionary budget costs per student. Six Colorado legislators on the state budget committee will have to figure out how to divide tax revenue between education, transportation, public safety, and other areas. They have no power to increase the funding unless the voters make a change.

Mrs. Schumann observed gifted-talented youth advocating at the Capitol regarding their Wheat Ridge High School’s Gifted & Talented Center, in Jefferson County, possibly closing. Mrs. Schumann encourages all Mesa County residents,

(Continued on next page)

D51 Middle School Gifted-Talented Youth: Sporting Ties in the Colorado State Capitol on Legislative Day (Continued)

(Continued from previous page)

including youth to visit the Great Education Colorado's website at: <https://www.greateducation.org/>. Why? When you visit this website you'll have the opportunity to see the challenge that our CO budget committee legislators face in deciding how tax revenue is spent via computer simulation. Sound dry? Well then, let's read the first message you'll read when you visit the website: "Your mission is to create a state budget that makes Colorado a national leader".

Cayman Haltiner and his mother, Tamara, were able to find a picture of his great-grandfather in the Capitol. Archie Lee Lisco served as CO House Representative from 1964 to 1966. Cayman's grandfather was happy to see a picture of Cayman next to his father. Mrs. Haltiner said her father "hadn't seen the picture in over 25 years. Neat moment for our family for sure!" Cayman learned that legislators like his great-grandfather face involvement which goes much deeper than voting on issues and noted committee meetings, special events, and so much more he hadn't realized were a part of the civic duty. Mrs. Haltiner said, "I thought this was a great opportunity for Cayman and the other students to learn more about CO and their state government and enjoyed spending time with the BMS group. I thoroughly enjoyed sitting in the House and Senate Galleries and also being able to watch the finance committee in action."



Cayman Haltiner points to a picture of his great-grandfather in the CO State Capitol, Arche Lee Lisco, who served as a CO House Representative from 1964-1966

All Legislative Day attendees representing Mesa County and BMS extend their gratitude to the D51 Gifted & Talented Department for funding this incredible learning opportunity!

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Kirk Golba
210-0727

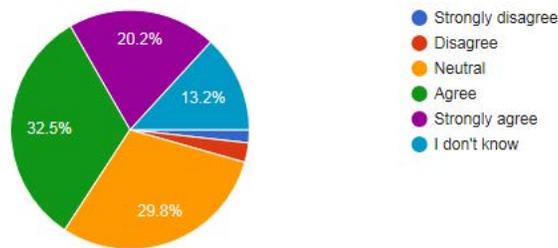
1. Consider important college characteristics you want in a college
2. Understand your learning style and find colleges that embrace that
3. Prioritize and use the college characteristics as a filter when choosing your college list
4. Create a list that has two Safeties, three Targets, and two Reach colleges

As we have written before, CDE recently 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 are helping provide this information.

The CGER report we received identified “Programming” as a “Next Step Priority Area” specifically to “Develop and review ALPs as a collaborative effort of teachers, parents, students, and other personnel, as needed.” The survey has begun to give us a picture of our current state of collaboration on the ALP. We asked each of these groups if they had input and/or ability to collaborate with others about Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs). Here were the responses...

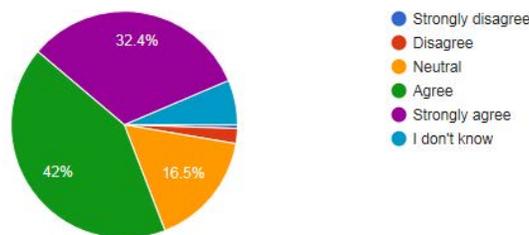
Survey Responses from Elementary Students

I help write my goals in my Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). (114 responses)



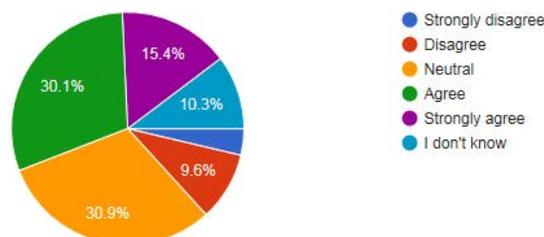
Survey Responses from Middle School Students

I had a significant role in the development of my Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). (188 responses)



Survey Responses from High School Students

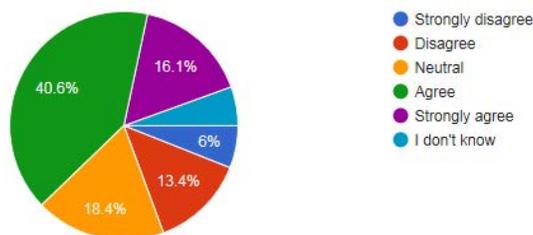
I had a significant role in the development of my Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) in Naviance. (136 responses)



GT Survey Update (Continued)

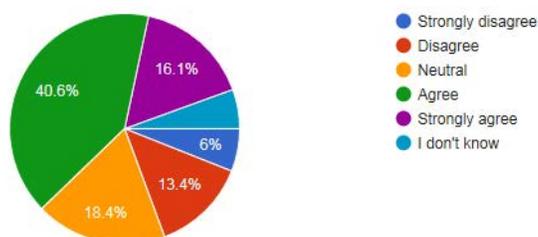
Survey Responses from Parents

I am given the opportunity to provide input on my student's ALP. (217 responses)



Survey Responses from Teachers (non-GT Teachers)

I am given the opportunity to provide input on my student's ALP. (217 responses)



We will continually use this survey data to set goals and action steps for improvement. The following are already in progress:

- Reach out to districts that have high engagement and collaborative processes. Ask for guidance, protocols, and procedures used.
- Develop standard process, procedures, and evaluation cycle for collaboration in the development, progress monitoring, and review of ALPs. Include plans for processes and procedures to transition as our district develops Performance Based Learning (PBL).
- Provide training and resources for GT Teachers/Liaisons and schools to implement process and procedures.
- Develop a communication plan that includes many different modalities for engagement.

D51 Scholarships for Gifted and Talented Development

In our January 2017 newsletter there was information about our mission, “To build capacity in recognizing, nurturing, and supporting youth with gifts and talents so they may develop their individual potentials.” That newsletter outlined the responsibility to foster, develop, and nourish strengths within gifted and potentially gifted students. Every spring, for at least the last ten years, the Gifted and Talented Department has used state gifted grant funds to offer scholarships to directly support this responsibility. These scholarships are available to D51 students entering 1st through 12th grades. Please contact the GT Teacher/Liaison at your school for more information and to obtain an application (due May 5th, 2017).



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The Many Faces of Gifted

This month's student spotlight includes answers from AJ Young, 7th grader at Fruita Middle School. Thanks, AJ, for taking the time answer some questions about gifted and your perspective.

Give some information about you. What makes you unique? What else would others find interesting to know about you? *I am probably one of the only students at this school that can speak fluent German, my eyes tend to change colors depending on what color of clothes I am wearing, I've never fired a gun in my life and I don't have a hunting license. I am very fascinated with WWII weaponry and tanks. I frequently make analogies related to Germany. I was born in Alaska.*

What does "gifted" mean to you? *It means smart and talented. It means you are good at some things naturally but there are also things that you are not good at. You can learn quickly.*

What do you know/remember about being identified gifted? *I was identified when I was in 1st grade and it seemed like they weren't really sure what to do with me.*

What do you see as highlights of gifted programs in D51? *Getting together with other gifted kids and chatting about things that they also find interesting.*

What have you struggled with in D51 gifted programs? *Not much actually. Everything offered has been beneficial.*

I/my family found the best support *in music.*

The best thing about you is *I learn things about the speed of how quickly a German soldier would learn things.*

The one thing you wish you could change about yourself is *Trick question. I don't want to change anything about myself.*

If you had one wish for GT programs or GT students it would be *more funding for the GT program.*

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?

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>

NAGC Resources for Parents <http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources-parents>

Hoagies Gifted Education Page <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>