

A guide for starting and improving

Gifted *and* Talented High School Programs

- *program options*
- *teaching strategies*
- *models*
- *forms and examples*

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This manual is a supplement to
*The Best Practices Manual for Gifted
and Talented Programs in Idaho*

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Foreword

Dear Colleagues:

As of September 1999, only one-quarter of the high schools in Idaho have gifted and talented (G/T) programs. The purpose of this manual is to help districts establish or improve programs for G/T high school students. Districts should keep in mind that this manual supplements *The Best Practices Manual for Gifted and Talented Programs in Idaho*, and references to the latter are periodically made.

Although the 1993 Gifted and Talented Mandate *requires* identified students to be served from ages 5 through 18, the number of G/T high school students *actually* identified and served is significantly low. For example, according to the 1996-97 Child Count, 1,146 identified students were 11 years old, and only 215 identified students were 16 years old. Yet even with limited resources, districts *can* plan and implement programs that meet the needs of G/T high school students. This manual describes specific program options and administrative issues that can help districts establish or improve G/T high school programs.

We hope this manual will help increase the number of G/T high school programs in Idaho.

Acknowledgements

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I wish to thank Margie Strong, who formatted and designed the manual, and Sharon Gregory, who edited the manual.

—*Gary Marx, Former State Specialist for Gifted and Talented Education*

Overview

The purpose of this manual serves a twofold function: to assist districts in establishing or improving their G/T high school programs, and to increase the total number of G/T high school programs in Idaho.

- **Chapter 1: Starting and Administering a G/T High School Program**—Answers common questions about G/T high school programs; provides a seven-step plan for implementing a G/T high school program; and provides practical recommendations that will help G/T high school programs run smoothly.
- **Chapter 2: Program Options**—Describes various program options available in G/T high school programs.
- **Chapter 3: Teaching Strategies**—Describes various teaching strategies that enhance learning for G/T high school students.
- **Chapter 4: Models**—Provides a brief summary of two G/T high school models: the Purdue Secondary Model for Gifted Education and the Autonomous Learner Model.

Additionally, the **appendix** provides information on funding sources, assessment instruments, early college entrance programs, summer residential programs, competitions and miscellaneous opportunities for G/T high school students.

Districts should keep in mind that this manual supplements *The Best Practices Manual for Gifted and Talented Programs in Idaho*, and references to the latter are periodically made.

Chapter 1

Starting and Administering a G/T High School Program

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Section 1. Reasons for Starting or Continuing G/T High School Programs

Unfortunately, the attitude that bright students can make it on their own too often prevails over the legitimate needs of G/T high school students. Not only do such students have specific educational needs, they also frequently need special help with social and emotional issues, career planning, scholarship information and program options. A well-planned G/T high school program can help meet the diverse needs of G/T high school students and provide benefits for other students and teachers.

Advanced Placement courses—important, but not enough

In Idaho most G/T high school programs offer only Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Advanced Placement courses are college-level courses characterized by (1) a faster pace, (2) greater depth and breadth of content and (3) the use of higher-level thinking skills. While AP courses are appropriate for some G/T high school students, such courses rarely meet the needs of students talented in the state-mandated areas of creativity, leadership and the visual and performing arts.

The need for differentiated program options

The G/T high school programs that excel in meeting students' needs offer *differentiated* program options. Yet despite this, some high schools have not moved in this direction. In her book *Growing Up Gifted*, Barbara Clark (1997), a professor from California State University, states that "Many high schools do not individualize their instruction to the degree that students with special needs can receive an appropriate educational experience. Unless specially planned, school experiences seldom challenge bright students" (p. 305).

Gifted and talented high school programs are excellent vehicles for providing the differentiated program options G/T students need, which may involve the following:

- programs that develop skills in problem solving, higher-level thinking, independent study and creativity
- flexible educational environments that allow students to pursue areas of interest
- accelerated curricula to accommodate high degrees of content mastery

Preparing students for competitive careers

Gifted and talented high school programs can help prepare students to succeed in some of the most complex and competitive fields worldwide—technology, science, engineering—as well as in traditional liberal arts areas. Such programs can also help students gain confidence, use their energy productively and take responsibility for their future.

Appropriate counseling services

In addition to providing for the *academic* needs of students, G/T high school programs provide important services that may otherwise be unavailable or insufficient. For example, a trained advocate working on behalf of the G/T program can help students with social and emotional needs, addressing such issues as perfectionism and underachievement—issues that can undermine the most gifted of students if not properly addressed. Additionally, advocates can provide information on scholarships, scheduling and appropriate program options.

Benefits for more than just the gifted

Gifted and talented high school programs are good for all advanced learners (not just the gifted), as well as for teachers and schools. First, G/T program options are available for G/T students and *other* interested and motivated students. Second, G/T programs encourage educators to become more flexible by allowing them to address different talent areas within a variety of program options; additionally, educators may feel encouraged and invigorated by working closely with students whom they share a particular talent or a strong academic interest. And third, G/T high school programs help raise educational standards school-wide.

Failure to meet the needs of G/T high school students

Without adequate G/T high school programs, students and communities often pay a high price. When gifted students are not sufficiently challenged, they may exhibit inappropriate behavior and, at the extreme, drop out. According to Nyquist (1973), G/T students make up 10-20 percent of the national dropout population. Well-structured G/T high school programs help students use and develop talents that might otherwise be ignored or discounted by the students themselves.

Conclusion

Idaho law (Idaho Code §33-2003) requires that G/T students be identified and served from the ages of 5 through 18 in five mandated talent areas. However, with planning and flexibility Idaho high schools can do more than simply meet a basic legal requirement: They can create G/T programs that meet students' needs in a genuine and exciting manner. This manual can help high schools implement or improve that process.

References

Clark, B. (1997). *Growing up gifted*. Columbus, OH: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Nyquist, E. (1973). *The gifted: The invisibly handicapped, or there is no heavier burden than a great potential*. Paper presented at the meeting of the National Conference on the Gifted, Albany, NY.

Section 2. Two Essential Elements of G/T High School Programs

A successful G/T high school program includes two essential elements: a G/T district plan and a variety of program options. Both of these elements are discussed below.

The first essential element: a G/T district plan

The first element in starting or improving a G/T high school program is a G/T district plan. The plan should include these components:

- philosophy and definition of gifted
- program goals and objectives
- program development (curriculum and instruction)
- identification procedures
- program evaluation

Chapter 2 in *The Best Practices Manual for Gifted and Talented Programs in Idaho* gives detailed instructions on how to develop a G/T district plan.

When developing or revising a G/T district plan, districts should keep in mind that G/T programs are not “cookie cutter” programs. The philosophy, definitions, goals and identification procedures the district *chooses* will shape the entire K-12 gifted and talented program in each of the five talent areas: academic, leadership, creativity, intellectual and the visual and performing arts. For example, if the goals in the G/T district plan emphasize independent research and problem solving, then the G/T high school program should include independent research and problem solving, even though the expectations and results will vary compared to the elementary and middle school levels.

A G/T district plan encompasses these important functions:

- provides direction and focus for the entire K-12 gifted and talented program in terms that educators and parents can understand;
- makes it clear what the goals and expectations are for G/T students;
- provides the foundation that enables the K-12 faculty to plan for the logical progression of content and/or processes in each of the talent areas;

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- specifies important components of the program, including identification procedures and program evaluation;
- demonstrates that the district is serious about identifying and serving G/T students from ages 5 through 18, as required by law.

The district is responsible for developing a G/T district plan; however, if the district does not have a plan, the high school should develop its own plan rather than delay starting a G/T high school program.

The second essential element: a variety of program options

Gifted and talented high school programs must have a *variety* of program options. Examples of program options include Advanced Placement (AP) courses, independent study, seminar and mentorships—to name a few. A variety of program options are needed to meet the individual needs of students within all five talent areas. Chapter 2 of this manual discusses various program options.

Section 3. Expanding a G/T Program to Include the High School

Gifted and talented programs have typically been implemented in the elementary grades. The following seven steps describe how to expand the G/T program to include the high school.

Step 1: Revise the G/T district plan to include a K-12 focus. Review the G/T district plan, which includes the following elements:

- philosophy and definition of gifted
- program goals and objectives
- program development (curriculum and instruction)
- identification procedures
- program evaluation

After this review, revise the G/T district plan to ensure that it addresses the elementary, middle *and* high school levels. Keep in mind that the philosophy, definitions and goals in the G/T district plan provide the direction and focus for the entire K-12 program. For example, if the goals in the G/T district plan emphasize independent research and problem solving, then the G/T high school program should include independent research and problem solving, even though the expectations and results will vary compared to the elementary and middle school levels.

A committee representing different levels (elementary, middle and high school) and different positions may be formed to review and revise the G/T district plan. The committee may include administrators, teachers, parents, counselors and other individuals. All committee members should have, or should be willing to have, some training in gifted education. (For information on writing a G/T district plan see chapter 2 from *The Best Practices Manual for Gifted and Talented Programs in Idaho*.)

Step 2: Identify existing program options and align them with the G/T district plan. Identify high school program options already in place and align them with the philosophy, definitions and goals in the G/T district plan. High school program options may include Advanced Placement, mentorships, independent study, competitions and other options (see p. 24 for a list of options).

Step 3: Develop and implement new program options and align them with the G/T district plan. Develop and implement new program options that would meet the needs of G/T high school students in one or more of the five mandated talent areas. Make sure that the new program options align with the philosophy, definitions and goals identified in the G/T district plan.

Step 4: Implement a system that identifies G/T high school students. The system used to identify G/T high school students should align with the G/T district plan and the G/T high school program options. For example, identifying students who are talented in leadership requires different assessment instruments than identifying students talented in specific academic areas. (For information on identification and assessment see chapter 4 from *The Best Practices Manual for Gifted and Talented Programs in Idaho*.)

Step 5: Identify a trained advocate for G/T high school students. The district should identify a trained advocate to help G/T high school students with (1) scholarship information, (2) career awareness and (3) matching specific student needs with appropriate program options. The advocate could be a counselor or someone who assumes similar responsibilities.

Step 6: Provide training in gifted education for all personnel involved with the G/T high school program. Training in gifted education should be provided for all personnel involved with the G/T high school program, which may include Advanced Placement (AP) teachers, honors teachers, general education teachers, counselors and administrators.

Step 7: Ensure articulation occurs in the different talent areas in grades K-12. The district G/T program should ensure that elementary, middle and high school levels work together. Cooperation among the K-12 faculty of the G/T program will help ensure that the logical progression of specific talent areas occurs for G/T students. For example, students talented in math will have a challenging curriculum from 1st through 12th grade; students talented in creativity will have their talents developed from 1st through 12th grade.

A summary of the seven steps needed to start a G/T high school program

1. Revise the G/T district plan to include a K-12 focus.
2. Identify existing program options and align them with the G/T district plan.
3. Develop and implement new program options and align them with the G/T district plan.
4. Implement a system that identifies G/T high school students.
5. Identify a trained advocate for G/T high school students.
6. Provide training in gifted education for all personnel involved with the G/T high school program.
7. Ensure articulation occurs in the different talent areas in grades K-12.

Section 4. Six Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions pertaining to G/T high school programs are frequently asked by school personnel. (Page numbers refer to sections in this manual unless stated otherwise.)

1. Why should the district identify and serve G/T high school students when many program options are currently available for advanced learners at the high school level?

First, while some program options are typically available in high school, the degree of *differentiated* instruction for advanced learners is often insufficient to meet their needs. Differentiating instruction for advanced learners may include organizing and developing lessons around concepts, themes and/or issues; integrating critical and creative thinking with content; and providing opportunities for accelerated and in-depth study. Barbara Clark (1997), a professor at California State University, Los Angeles, states:

Many high schools do not individualize their instruction to the degree that students with special needs can receive an appropriate educational experience. Unless specially planned, school experiences seldom challenge bright students. In many cases, identifying students with special needs is the only way to insure that these needs are met (p. 305).

Second, Idaho's G/T mandate dictates that districts must identify students in five talent areas and provide services for all identified G/T students from ages 5 through 18 (Idaho Code §33-2003).

2. The district's high school students are too busy to take more classes, let alone G/T courses. What do you recommend?

The key to successful G/T high school programs is flexibility. For example, allowing students to challenge courses and to compact content could free time for independent study or advanced courses. (See sections scheduling (p. 19), challenging a course (p. 21) and curriculum compacting (p. 56).)

3. How can the district implement a G/T high school program when it can't afford to hire another staff person?

While hiring another faculty person would be the ideal, program options can be implemented using existing staff:

- Present faculty can teach Advanced Placement (AP) courses, honors classes and seminar.
- Specific faculty members can meet periodically with students involved in mentorships (p. 31) and independent study (p. 40).

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- Counselors can help gifted students select appropriate classes, set future goals and identify scholarships to colleges and universities.

Implementing program options may require a creative approach. For example, distance learning may be used to teach an AP course; school psychologists may administer tests; and community members may facilitate competitions.

Though the district may not be able to hire another staff person, it is still essential that someone oversee the district's K-12 gifted and talented program. Also, all staff members who work with gifted students should receive training in gifted education.

4. What money is available to fund inservice training to prepare school personnel to better meet the needs of the gifted?

Several possible funding sources are listed below. However, because funding sources change, please contact the G/T specialist or the state G/T homepage for updated funding sources: <http://www.sde.state.id.us:2500/GiftedTalented/>. (Also, see funding sources on p. 82.)

Federal level

- Eisenhower Grant (Title 2) may be used to fund inservice training. (Title 6 may be used for G/T programming.)
- The Science/Math Consortium for NW Schools (Title 2) is a matching grant that may be used to fund inservice training in science and math. This may include funding training for Advanced Placement classes, honors classes and technology instruction pertaining to G/T students and science or math.

State level

- In 1999, the legislature allocated \$500,000 to fund training for general education teachers, G/T teachers, parents and administrators. Every district will receive money based on half its total enrollment and number of gifted students identified and served.
- The Experiments in Creative/Innovation Programs is a grant that may fund gifted programs. Districts may receive up to \$10,000 to fund new and creative programs.

5. Who may teach or facilitate the different program options at the high school level?

Teachers who have the appropriate content certification and expertise, and training in gifted education may teach or facilitate different program options. In some cases teachers are required to have a G/T endorsement. Specific examples follow:

- *Advanced Placement teachers:* Instructors teaching Advanced Placement (AP) courses are encouraged (but not required) to have training in the needs and characteristics of gifted students, differentiating curriculum, and integrating critical and creative thinking skills in the curriculum. Because Advanced Placement courses are usually offered for all students, not just G/T students, an AP instructor is not required to obtain a G/T endorsement.
- *Direct services providers:* A G/T endorsement is recommended for instructors who provide “direct services” to gifted students. Direct services include teaching, facilitating and/or consulting. The G/T endorsement requires 20 semester hours in G/T education—15 required credits and 5 elective credits. Direct services providers will be *required* to have a G/T endorsement by July 1, 2004.
- *K-8 teachers, facilitators and others:* An elementary or middle school G/T facilitator or a community member can facilitate a competition or an independent study at the high school level, but is not qualified to teach in a specific content area unless appropriately certificated.

6. How does state law and local policy affect G/T high school programs?

As of September 1999, Idaho law requires all students, including the gifted, to complete 42 credit hours with a set number of credits per content area. Typically, most districts in Idaho require more credit hours. Local policy is established by the district’s board of trustees and may affect the G/T program. For example, local policy can allow gifted students to challenge courses and to receive credit for program options that are part of the gifted program, e.g., mentorships or independent study.

The implementation of exiting standards may change this pattern. According to Tom Farley, Chief, Bureau of Curriculum and Accountability, exiting standards *may* allow students, including G/T students, to challenge courses by demonstrating mastery of specific competencies.

Reference

Clark, B. (1997). *Growing up gifted*. Columbus, OH: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Section 5. Grade Weighting

Some school districts in Idaho use grade weighting to encourage students to take advanced courses by minimizing the worry about grade point average (GPA). The grade-weighting systems of Boise High School and the Des Moines Public Schools system (Iowa) are described below:

Boise High School grade-weighting system

In a straight 4.0 system, some students opt to take less rigorous courses in an attempt to preserve their GPA. The Boise High School grade-weighting system encourages students to take Advanced Placement (AP) courses by minimizing the risk to their GPA.

Boise High School awards an incentive weight of +1 for all high school courses that are designated and taught as Advanced Placement courses under the College Board AP Program. Under this system, a student who takes AP courses may earn a cumulative GPA of greater than 4.0 when AP courses are averaged with general education courses. If a student fails a grade-weighted course, no credit is granted. On the student's transcript, the grades are listed as AP courses:

AP Biology B 4.0

AP Literature A 5.0

College and university admission forms often ask about the rigor of high school courses. While most colleges and universities use their own weighting system for high school courses for purposes of *admission*, some *scholarships* are based on grade point alone.

Des Moines Public Schools' grade-weighting system

The Des Moines Public Schools elicit input from all disciplines in deciding which courses to weight. The Des Moines Public Schools use the following system:

1. Advanced Placement courses under the auspices of the College Board AP Program are given an incentive weight of +1 when calculating a student's GPA.
2. All courses taught as part of the International Baccalaureate Program are given an incentive weight of +1.
3. All courses taken for dual enrollment credit (high school and college) are given an incentive weight of +1.

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4. Specified courses from each discipline that are considered advanced or honors courses are given an incentive weight of +0.5. These courses are initially recommended by department heads, in consultation with their department members and the district supervisor for their discipline. The supervisor for high school education makes the final recommendations, with ultimate approval by the superintendent and the board of education.

Weighting the most difficult courses in each discipline involves all departments in the grade-weighting process—regardless of whether a particular department mainly serves college-bound or vocational students.

Reference

Des Moines Public Schools. (1993). *A recommendation to the teaching and learning cabinet*. Des Moines, IA: Des Moines Public Schools, District Committee to Study Weighted Grades.

Section 6. Scheduling

Planning and flexibility in scheduling classes can help high schools improve their G/T programs—even schools with very limited resources and program options.

Encouraging flexibility and accountability in scheduling

The following ideas encourage flexibility and accountability in scheduling:

- Establish simple guidelines, criteria and procedures.
- Implement zero hour (a class period before the regular school day that may be used to schedule G/T program options).
- Implement block scheduling (block scheduling makes it easier to provide 90-minute classes, necessary for the in-depth and independent study for G/T students).
- Develop contracts with students to encourage understanding and accountability. Include scheduling waivers in the contract as appropriate. For example, the contract might permit a student to skip homeroom to attend an Advanced Placement (AP) class scheduled for the same period. The student, the student's parents, the counselor and the principal should sign the contract.

Pitfalls to avoid

The following scheduling pitfalls should be avoided:

- scheduling two AP courses during the same period
- scheduling AP courses and electives popular with G/T students during the same period
- strictly enforcing prerequisites for required courses
- scheduling courses based solely on grade-level requirements
- operating middle schools and high schools in the same district on different schedules (G/T middle school students sometimes take courses at the high school)
- restricting early admission for middle school students into high school classes
- rigidly applying attendance requirements and tardy limits for G/T students, which may restrict off-campus opportunities such as mentorships

- being inflexible in any scheduling practice

(For more information on scheduling see “Counseling the Gifted High School Student” on p. 44.)

Section 7. Challenging a Course

Gifted high school students often require much less review and repetition than their classmates. For example, Sally Reis et al. (1993) found that many G/T students fail to learn anything new in a course until January. Instructors spend a significant amount of time reviewing basic course content, and gifted students, who do not require lengthy periods of review, must wait until the new material is presented.

Allowing a student to challenge a course meets two important goals: (1) it ensures that the student has mastered course content; and (2) it frees the student's schedule so that he or she has more time for advanced classes, independent study, mentorship opportunities or other G/T program options. Currently, students may challenge courses *only* if district policy permits; however, the implementation of exiting standards may change this pattern (see p. 16, item 6). If the district does not permit challenging a course, teachers may consider implementing curriculum compacting (p. 56) as an alternative.

Authority to determine mastery

The responsibility to determine mastery typically rests either with the class instructor alone or with the department as a whole. More than one method of assessment may be used in determining proficiency. A score of at least 80 percent on the testing criteria is an example of a guideline for meeting course mastery. A student who masters the district's competencies for a particular course is awarded credit for the course.

When may a student challenge a course?

District policy may specify that students can challenge a course (1) at any time, (2) during the regular school year, (3) during the first week of the course or (4) some other period. Policy may permit students to challenge a course regardless of whether they have enrolled in or attended the course. Challenging a course before it begins, or soon after it starts, allows a G/T student time to enroll in an advanced course or some other program option. The teacher should inform students at the beginning of the semester of time lines, if any, for challenging the course. If a student has successfully challenged a course late in the semester, independent study or mentorship options may still be available.

Suggested guidelines for challenging a course

One or more of the following assessments may be used to determine mastery:

- state- or district-developed competencies relevant to the course
- the final test that will be given to students who choose not to challenge the course

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- district or department standardized test
- a student portfolio detailing what the student has previously completed relating to the course
- pre- or post-tests developed by textbook authors or the class instructor
- a written report or summary by the student of key concepts or ideas
- an oral conference or interview with the student over key concepts or ideas
- endorsement by an expert or mentor that the student has mastered the course
- other assessment instruments appropriate to the course, such as auditions for fine arts courses

Reference

Reis, S., Westberg, K. L., Kulikowich, J., Caillard, F., Hebert, T., Plucker, J., Purcell, J. H., Rogers, J. B., & Smist, J. M. (1993). *Why not let high ability students start school in January? The curriculum compacting study.* (Research Monograph No. 93106). Storrs: University of Connecticut.

Chapter 2 Program Options

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Section 1. An Overview of Program Options

Gifted and talented programs at all levels—elementary, middle and high school—need to offer differentiated instruction; however some program options are best suited, or *only* suited, to G/T high school programs. The following program options may be implemented in a G/T high school program. Program options must align with the philosophy, definitions, goals and identification procedures in the district G/T plan. Local board policy will determine whether required or elective credits will be awarded for a particular program option.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses—College-level courses provided at the high school level for which students may receive college credit by examination (p. 27). These courses are typically taught by high school teachers; however, companies like Vulcan NW Incorporated offer AP courses through the Internet, 1-800-453-1454.

Competitions—Organized opportunities for students to enter local, regional, state or national contests in a variety of talent areas (p. 93 and p. 99).

Computer Courses—Advanced courses accessed over the Internet, e.g., Stanford's Education Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY), 650-329-9920; Vulcan NW Incorporated, 1-800-453-1454. For more information see the G/T state homepage at <http://www.sde.state.id.us:2500/GiftedTalented/>.

Correspondence Courses—High school courses taken by correspondence through an approved university.

Distance Learning—Advanced courses telecast from different locations in the state or nation.

Dual Enrollment—An opportunity to take college courses while in high school and receive both college and high school credit (Idaho Code §33-203) (p. 47).

Early College Entrance Programs—Programs that provide gifted high school students with the opportunity to simultaneously earn college credits and credits required for high school graduation. Students in Early College Entrance Programs take courses at the college, instead of the high school (p. 87).

Enrichment Classes—A group organized from one or more classrooms that meets on a regular basis to provide experiences beyond the established curriculum.

Guidance and Counseling—Planned activities, sessions and policies that assist G/T students in planning their academic career before, during and after high school, and that also address specific social-emotional needs of G/T students (p. 44).

Honors Class—Differentiated curriculum and accelerated content designed for able students. Honors classes may be designed for specific content areas (English and chemistry) or the visual/performing arts (art and choir).

Chapter 2: Program Options

Independent Study—Individually contracted in-depth study of a topic, which may include solving real-life problems. High school students may meet periodically with a faculty advisor who provides guidance (p. 40).

Interdisciplinary Studies—Classes that provide opportunities for the acquisition of a broad base of knowledge through the study of a wide range of subjects. Often, content is organized around problems, themes and/or broad-based issues.

Interest Groups—Any group organized from one or more classrooms on the basis of interest in a topic. Interest groups are usually short term in duration.

International Baccalaureate Diploma Program—A rigorous pre-university course of studies leading to examination. Suitable for highly motivated high school students ages 16 through 19 years. Designed as a comprehensive two-year curriculum that allows its graduates to fulfill requirements of various national education systems (p. 29).

Leadership Activities—Leadership activities may include community service, debate, public speaking, peer mediation, facilitating meetings and increasing awareness of leadership styles. Leadership activities may be in-school or extracurricular, may constitute a class or part of a class, and may be for credit or not for credit (p. 48).

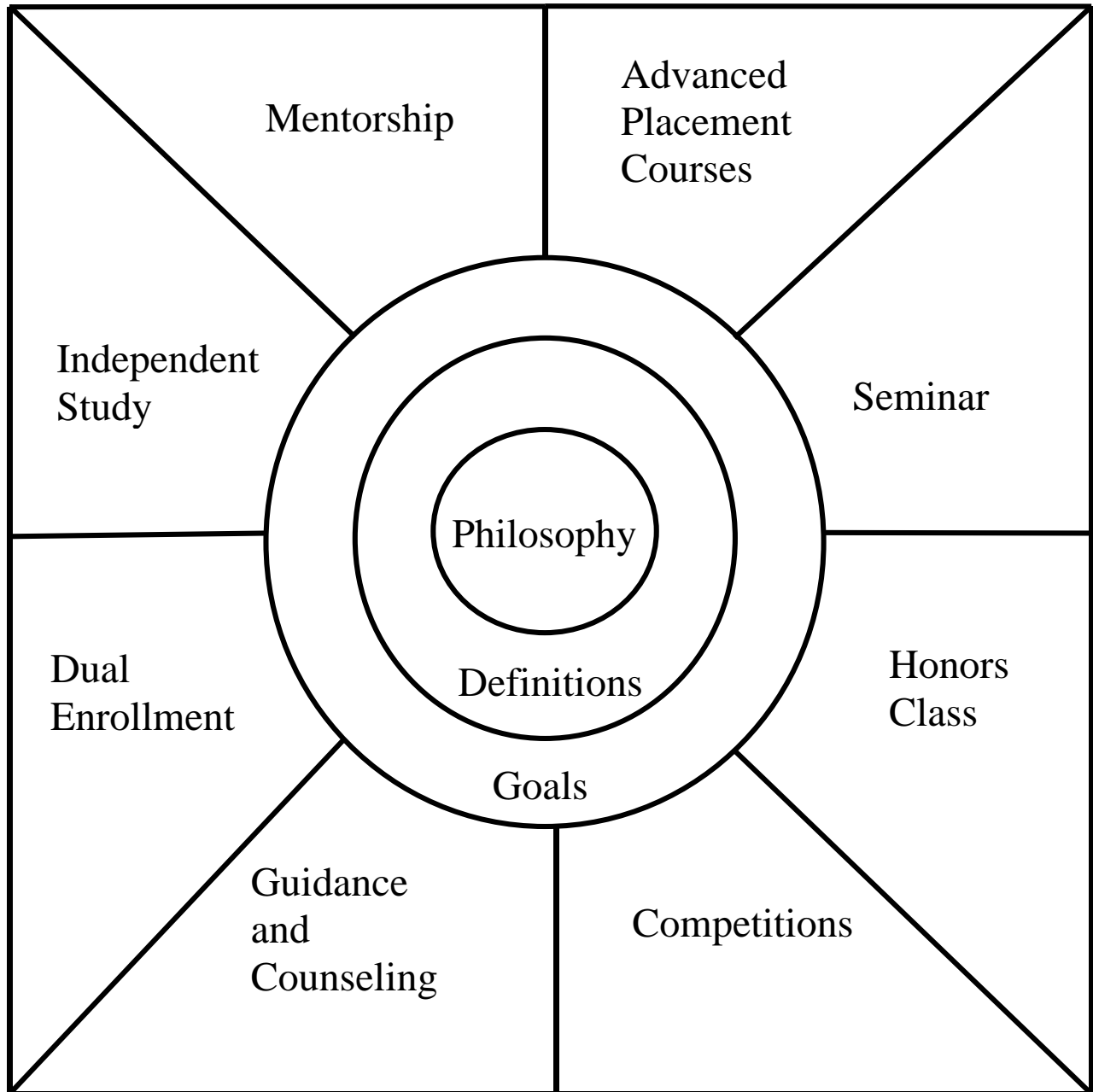
Mentorships—A program that pairs individual students with someone who has advanced skills and experience in a particular discipline and can serve as an advisor, a counselor and a role model (p. 31).

Seminar—Special courses where students focus on one area of study. Students research, discuss and debate specific topics related to the area of study (p. 42).

Summer Programs—Enrichment and accelerated courses offered at various universities around the country. Students typically live on campus and benefit from interacting with others of similar ability (p. 88).

District G/T Program (K-12)

The philosophy, definitions and goals contained in the G/T district plan help direct the specific program options that may be implemented in grades K-12 (see p. 24 for a list of program options).



Section 2. Teaching Advanced Placement Courses

Advanced Placement (AP) courses are college-level courses appropriate for G/T students and other motivated students. The goal of AP courses is not only to prepare students for the AP exam (highly recommended for all students enrolled in the AP courses), but also to facilitate independent investigation and lifelong learning. Therefore, AP instructors should expect students to strive for content mastery and should facilitate a process-oriented approach to learning. The ideal AP instructor balances content presentation with students learning at their own pace.

In addition to a faster pace, AP courses are characterized by (1) greater depth of content, (2) greater breadth of content and (3) the use of higher-level thinking skills. Students not only learn specific facts, they learn the tools of scholarship, enabling them to ask relevant questions about specific topics and to research answers to those questions.

Specific techniques

The following 10 techniques should be incorporated into an AP course:

1. Use a thematic rather than a chronological approach to teaching history classes.
2. Incorporate questioning strategies at Bloom's higher levels of thinking (analysis, synthesis and evaluation).
3. Integrate multiple disciplines into the area of study.
4. Strengthen inquiry skills, e.g., use Socratic questioning (p. 62).
5. Use logic and reasoning exercises.
6. Encourage creative problem-solving skills (p. 61).
7. Use supplementary texts in addition to the main text.
8. Encourage independent research skills and the use of a variety of sources.
9. Focus on open-ended tasks, e.g., a project in which the student is free to draw his or her own conclusions.
10. Encourage a variety of products to demonstrate mastery of the content.

Selecting and training AP teachers

Teachers selected to teach AP courses should not only be content experts and have an interest in the courses they are teaching; they should also have an interest in teaching able learners. Teachers should be willing to spend more time and effort preparing for AP courses than for regular classes.

It is highly recommended that AP teachers attend Saturday workshops and summer institutes sponsored by the College Board. For information on workshops and summer institutes, contact the State Specialist for Gifted and Talented Education at 208-332-6920 or the College Board at 212-713-8000.

