

What is the purpose of Extended Learning Program (ELP) and how are services provided?

Extended Learning Program Mission Statement

We have a responsibility to provide educational programming which will respond to the unique needs of students and maximize their potential. Giftedness is not a static label. We make inferences about student needs based on potential, accomplishments, and performances over time. Students whose abilities clearly lie beyond the traditional student population may require differentiated educational opportunities and support facilitated by the Extended Learning Program. These opportunities may vary in kind, degree, delivery, and duration.

Extended Learning Program Delivery of Services

The district philosophy towards Extended Learning Program is that students' needs be met as much as possible through the regular classroom, with the ELP staff serving as resources or facilitators in the learning process. Our method of delivery provides for students to be served at three levels: to be observed by classroom teachers (***General Enrichment***), to be served in the classroom for those with specific academic strengths (***Strength Area***), and to be pulled into the ELP resource room as well as have program modifications for those in the highest level of service (***Extended Studies***). In past years, ELP staff have been able to maintain contact with students at the General Enrichment and strength levels through pullout or in-classroom sessions or direct contact/planning with the teachers. Time requirements with our highest level of students mean the ELP teachers will spend limited time directly serving students at the General Enrichment and Strength Area levels. Our identification letters this spring, as well as our time spent with students next year, will reflect the issue of delivery of services. Classroom teachers have all been informed of the need for their role as the primary instructor of their students to be strengthened. Training and materials to work with high-ability students will continue to be offered as we all work together to meet the needs of our high-ability students.

Extended Learning Program Levels of Service

- ***Extended Studies:*** Some students require a Personalized Educational Plan (PEP) to best meet their needs. These students are strong in all academic areas and require a differentiated curriculum to progress academically.
- ***Strength Area:*** Some students excel in one or more specific academic areas. ELP support is provided through the classroom teacher with extensions, enrichments, or teaching strategies.
- ***General Enrichment:*** Students who do not currently exhibit characteristics that require academic modifications may need enrichment or extensions in the classroom from time to time. Teachers look for potential needs.

How are students (grades K-7) identified for ELP services?

Extended Learning Programming Identification (Grades K-7)

Each spring students are reviewed for possible extended learning programming services, and letters are sent to those that are identified on a level of service. The letter will explain options available for your child. These options depend upon levels of service identified, so the letters are specific for each child. The ELP staff provides direct service to a few children, while the classroom teacher works with many children.

As a parent, if you are interested in providing input in characteristics you have observed, you may request a form from the ELP staff or a classroom teacher. If your child has been nominated through test scores or teachers, this will automatically occur. You may have filled out a form last year, and if so, you don't have to fill it out again unless you have input for us. The following section explains the identification process. Our identification is based upon multiple criteria. A committee of ELP and classroom teachers reviews the data. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Kathy Paul, ELP Coordinator.

Process for identification

Review of multiple criteria by ELP staff and coordinator. Students are serviced depending upon need demonstrated and options available.

1. Classroom teachers complete Extended Learning Observation Inventory

Teachers mark characteristics of gifted learners, provide comments, and nominate students. Teachers may request additional assessments for specific populations.

2. Teacher recommendation based on products, processes, motivation and grades.

Multiple examples of high quality products, initiative to complete extensions, evidence of high-level thought process, and rapid acquisition of knowledge are used.

3. Parent Information Characteristics that show up in the home provide valuable insight. Parents are asked to give specific examples when possible. A parent may request a nomination form/fill out one electronically regarding his/her child.

4. ELP staff recommendations Observed characteristics, performances, and products.

5. Iowa Assessments Serves as an indicator of student needs. Very high scores do not necessarily reflect a need for curriculum adjustments, as Iowa assessments are a general achievement test not specific to our district. Consistent high scores along with high MAP scores give us an indicator of high ability.

6. MAP – Measures of Academic Progress Scores are specific to Johnston standards and benchmarks. While many students score in the *Hi* range, reading and math scores that are two standard deviations above the norm are generally a strong indicator of very high ability.

7. Miscellaneous tests/ records from previous schools Other available data will be considered, such as Cognitive Abilities Tests, other out-of-level tests or data from previous schools.

How are students (grades 8-12) identified for ELP services?

Extended Learning Program Identification Procedure (Grades 8-12)

The following process, conducted annually, is used to identify students in grades 8-12 who are in need of Extended Learning Program services:

In January:

TEACHER nomination:

The ELP teacher will distribute teacher identification forms to classroom teachers. Teachers will fill out forms for any student they wish to nominate for identification.

If a teacher believes a student would benefit from an alternate form of identification, (NAGLERI or other-culture-fair, ELL etc.) that should be noted on the form, so alternative assessment may occur.

STUDENT/PARENT nomination: Any student or parent may ask any teacher for nomination forms for ELP.

Nomination guidelines:

General intellectual ability/aptitude in academic subjects

Ability in a specific subject, i.e. math or literature

Iowa Assessment scores above 90% in most cases

MAP scores above 90%

Strong classroom performance demonstrated through assignments and discussion OR

Ability to excel that is not being demonstrated consistently (underachieving/at risk)

ELP or classroom teachers will distribute student and parent information.

Feb/ March:

Interested students/parents return forms to the building ELP teacher. The ELP teacher compiles data using nomination forms, test scores, and performance data and determine final program placement.

Eligible students are notified by the ELP teacher and may sign up for ELP classes and opportunities. If he/she chooses not to take a class at the time, a student may take one in the future. Students are still considered part of the ELP program and may take part in any related activities.

What do students say about ELP?

What the students say about the Extended Learning Program....

- The years I have been in the Johnston School District ELP have been one of the most valued programs I have been through. I am able to work on projects and books on my level and it is really fun. The projects we do are challenging but they are very educational to me and I learn a lot. I am really glad we have ELP in our schools! (6th grader)
- The way this program has helped me as it gives me more challenges. Through ELP I have had many opportunities I would usually not receive. (6th grader)
- I like the challenge, and it's fun. (8th grader)
- It challenged me and gave me options to get to know other people at my level. (9th grader)
- ELP offered an opportunity to “escape” from the classroom in elementary and middle school, and provided a chance for interaction with other high-level students. (10th grader)
- ELP has been a great place for me to feel comfortable in school. (11th grader)
- I found the research and presentation assignments to be the most challenging and rewarding. I liked spending weeks and months learning all I could about one area. In classes, we didn't really get to learn that much detail. I also liked being able to use my creativity in presentations. I loved searching for the perfect picture to represent 10 seconds of my History Day presentation. I also liked the competitive activities like “We the People Constitution Competition” or Knowledge Bowls. I liked being able to interact with other high school students. That way I knew that there were other high schoolers who enjoyed some of the same things I did. (young adult)
- I really enjoyed Mock Trial and History Day. I think I enjoyed the teamwork and competition part of it. It also gave me a goal to shoot for, sort of a reason to put in all that extra work. (young adult)
- The projects were much more interesting to me than regular classroom assignments. Also, I enjoyed that the projects could be tailored to my interests. For example, for History Day I could research any topic that interested me and present it as I wanted (in my case by writing a paper). In Mock Trial, I could learn about debate and rules of law. (young adult)
- I liked being around other students who were academically inclined as well. It gave me a group to fit in, a place where it was OK to be smart and want to succeed at school. (young adult)
- I participated because it gave me the opportunity to study topics of interest to me that may not have fit into a particular class curriculum. There was a lot of freedom to choose what I wanted to do. My senior year the class just wouldn't fit into my schedule, but it was still a great resource for me. (young adult)
- A chance to meet other kids, especially upperclassmen when I first started high school, partially motivated my involvement in ELP. Aside from that, I wanted a place I could go to get away from the stresses of the rest of the school. In middle school it was more of a way to escape dull class work and have discussions on a higher level than most students were able to participate in. I also participated in projects or competitions that had subject matter I found interesting. Activities to put on resumes were also a motivation. (young adult)

What are some commonly used terms and definitions?

<i>Ability Grouping</i>	Grouping students by need, interest, or ability for a particular learning activity. Groups vary depending on instructional needs. This flexible grouping is unlike TRACKING in which a fixed group is maintained for all learning activities.
<i>Acceleration</i>	Allowing students to move through material at a pace faster than age-mates and at a rate matching their abilities.
<i>Affective learning</i>	The domain of learning that addresses attitudes, feelings, values, appreciation and perception of self and others; as opposed to COGNITIVE which refers to learning and knowledge of concepts and facts.
<i>Advanced Placement (AP)</i>	College-level courses offered in high school. Students may receive college credit after scoring high enough on final exams.
<i>At Risk</i>	Students who are not succeeding in school and may potentially drop out, do poorly in their academic, personal, social, career or vocational development.
<i>Cluster Grouping</i>	Assignment of a small group of students with similar abilities, interests or needs to the same classroom.
<i>Cooperative Learning</i>	Assigning a common task to a group of students. Often each student in the group is given a role in completing the task. Traditionally the students in the group are of various ability levels.
<i>Differentiation</i>	Making modifications in the curriculum either in content, product, process, or pace to accommodate the abilities of the learner.
<i>Enrichment</i>	Learning activities not found in the core curriculum that are more in depth or from an additional discipline used to supplement a student's educational experience.
<i>Gifted and Talented</i>	Those children who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, visual and performing arts, leadership, or specific academic aptitude, and who require services, or activities beyond those ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities. (As defined by the U.S. Office of Education)
<i>Heterogeneous/ Homogeneous Grouping</i>	Heterogeneous grouping places students together based on chronological age or grade level. Homogeneous grouping places students with others like themselves based on criteria such as academic ability, special needs or interests.
<i>IQ (Intelligence Quotient)</i>	A score on a standardized test designed to measure academic potential computed by the mental age divided by the chronological age times 100. The Cognitive Abilities and the Stanford-Binet are examples of intelligence tests. Cognitive ability test scores are used more frequently than IQ scores in identifying and evaluating students.
<i>Learning Styles</i>	The preferred style of learning. Some learners are visual, others auditory.
<i>Mentor</i>	A person with expertise who relates in a one-to-one relationship with a student or adult to share learning, encourage, and give emotional support.

What are some commonly used terms and definitions? (continued)

<i>Out-of-Level Testing</i>	Assessment done at a higher grade or ability level other than chronologically. A fourth grader, who might top out of a normal fourth grade exam, could take a 6 th or 7 th grade test to obtain a more accurate picture of ability.
<i>Personalized Education Plan (PEP)</i>	A unique plan, usually in writing and signed by the teacher and parent, designed especially for an individual student's needs.
<i>Portfolio assessment</i>	A collection of student work or products that can be used for evaluation.
<i>Pull Out Program</i>	An educational plan in which students of similar needs and ability are "pulled out" of the regular classroom at certain times to meet in another location with a teacher.
<i>Specific Academic Aptitude</i>	Ability to do exceptionally well in a particular subject are such as mathematics, science or reading.
<i>Standardized Test</i>	A specially constructed test, either intelligence or achievement test, using the performance (norms) of other individuals as the standard by which the student is compared. ACT (American College Testing Program) and SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) are standardized tests taken by high school students for college admission and placement. Middle school students taking these tests may be selected for placement in talent searches, summer institutes or other academic programs. A CRITERION REFERENCED TEST (usually designed by the teacher or educational agency) is one in which the student is compared to a pre-determined standard of performance (example: end of year social studies test).
<i>Selective Producer</i>	A student whose performance on a task depends upon interest or desire. A topic of interest may be thoroughly explored, while one that does not appeal may receive minimal effort. This type of student may not be successful when always grouped with "high performers".
<i>Strength Area</i>	A specific subject of high performance by a student, such as reading, math, or science.
<i>Underachievement</i>	Discrepancy between a child's school performance and some index of his or her actual ability. Usually occurs in all areas.