

**Gifted High School Task Force Recommendations
Spring 2011**

Vision- The Las Cruces Public Schools exemplifies a world-class educational system where all students are prepared to succeed in a diverse and increasingly complex global society and affirms that a **high-quality education is the fundamental right of every child.**

Mission: The Las Cruces Public Schools, in partnership with students, families, and the community, provides a **student-centered learning environment that cultivates character, fosters academic excellence, and embraces diversity.**

While some have criticized academic acceleration [*gifted education*] as an intervention for children of wealth, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, it is parents of economic means who can afford to provide for acceleration if a school doesn't. They can move their child to a private school, pay for mentoring, or pay for accelerative summer classes and extra curricular resources. Poor children, though, often have no hope of experiencing a challenging curriculum if their school says no.
A Nation Deceived: how schools hold back America's brightest students

Current LCPS Profile of Students who are Gifted:

Minority Representation

Total Number of Students in District by Ethnicity					
Caucasian	African/Amer	Hispanic	Asian	Native	Total
5579	601	17973	293	207	24,706
Total Number and Percentage of Students who are Identified as Gifted					
45% gifted	1.6% gifted	48.5% gifted	4% gifted	.7% gifted	7.4% Total gifted
828 students	31 students	892 stdts	73 stdts	14 stdts	2011-12 Projected 6.4% gifted (-175 stdts)
Percentage of Gifted by Ethnicity					
15% of ethnic group	5% of ethnic group	5% of ethnic group	25% of ethnic group	7% of ethnic group	

Advanced Education Services (AES) Focus Outcomes: The following outcomes have been reviewed by the Gifted High School Task Force (GHSTF) and accepted as focus and guiding principles for AES High School Teachers:

I. ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT- gifted students will have access to meaningful and challenging learning through *differentiated curriculum* that is designed to address their intellectual and functioning level(s). The function of the AES teacher is to promote academic support through:

- Direct instruction (teaching in gifted cluster groups, not necessarily gifted only)
- Acceleration
- Collaboration with general education teacher

(LCPS Resource - *IKE placement, promotion, acceleration and retention.*)

II. SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT – gifted students will have holistic supports to address their unique development and needs. AES teachers provide advisement regarding asynchronous development, leadership, character, self-efficacy and other aptitudes through small group activities and access to gifted curricula.

III. TRANSITION/ CAREER DEVELOPMENT- gifted students will have advisement to explore vocational prospects. The AES teacher’s role is to facilitate post secondary opportunities through a K-12 plan and IEP that aligns interests and preferences to the individual’s strengths and talents. Students will identify and access resources to successfully transition into their designated post-secondary setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS: To support these outcomes, the LCPS GHSTF recommends the following initiatives:

1. **Curriculum-** Propose the addition of three Gifted Tagged (G-Tagged) High School Course Electives. The purpose of these classes is to provide additional supports regarding focus areas; particularly for low SES, students who need challenging coursework not currently available, and sub-populations (i.e. underachievers, minority.) Courses will be designed through Blackboard (or a similar format) and available at all high schools. Students will have the option to take classes at a zero hour and graded or pass/fail:

- **College Success** - (dual credit) designed to support Next Step Plans, college applications, and readiness.
- **Community Service** – (High Schools that Work recommendation) provides research opportunities, mentoring, and independent study.

If any single area of the gifted population bears special attention from the school, community, and state; underserved low-income high-ability students need multilevel support since they and their families often lack important resources to accomplish academic achievement without focused advocacy efforts. (Phelps, 2007)

- **Circle of Courage** - Support for Underachievers/FTAP – (Tier 2 RTI) addresses needs of students who need additional supports to negotiate the school environment.

Although we note these classes are appropriate for all students, it is our expectation that after courses are developed, they will be extended to other populations. The recommended class size will be approximately 25 students; priority will be given to gifted students with open slots filled through instructor's approval (open for general education.)

2. **AES Staffing-** AES teachers will continue to case manage up to 35 students and may be designated to support gifted services in the school setting through *one of the following assignments*:
 - Teach one gifted tagged class (as noted above) to include *core courses* (classes in which gifted students could be clustered for instruction) or
 - Assist one period with the Career Resource Center or
 - Facilitate one class period for gifted distance learning opportunities (as outlined by Dr Oxford.)
3. **Staff Development-** Provide highly qualified teachers of the gifted:
 - Gifted Endorsement- effective July 2012, teachers who work with the gifted must have their Gifted Endorsement. Committee is developing a Blackboard class, *Foundations in Gifted Education*, to expedite the acquisition of endorsement through the PRAXIS exam.
4. **Summer Academy (as funding allows)-** Provide opportunities for extension activities to address the needs of gifted students (to include FTAP students and subpopulations) during summer months. This allows exploratory opportunities for challenging curriculum, creativity, critical thinking, and career exploration. Students would be provided activities that are nonexistent or limited on the high school campus without burdening students who already carry a heavy academic load during the school year.