

PEAK Program

(Personalized Enrichment and Advancement of Knowledge)

Family Information



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Mission

Liberty Public Schools is committed to an educational program that recognizes the unique value, needs, and talents of each student. We further believe that each student, regardless of race, creed, intellect, or socioeconomic status, has a right to opportunities that will develop their potential to the fullest extent. Liberty's program for gifted students strives to create a positive environment in which each student has the opportunity to develop higher-level critical and creative thinking skills, participate in differentiated exploratory activities based on individual needs and interests and enhance a healthy self-concept in order to become a self-directed learner who fully appreciates and utilizes personal potential.

Philosophy

Students who come to school with advanced knowledge and unusual learning capacity need a curriculum that is differentiated and matched to their learning characteristics. Those characteristics include the capacity to handle content at an advanced level and pace, the ability to explore areas in significant depth, the tendency to ask and grapple with difficult questions, and the desire to use leadership abilities to make a difference in the world at large. At the same time, gifted students are unique and as different from one another as they are from the population as a whole. They demonstrate different characteristics depending on their cultural, educational, and economic backgrounds.

Communication

A variety of communication tools will be used to foster a strong parent-to-school partnership such as phone calls and electronic communications. The school will utilize phone calls or conferences when sensitive information will be shared to protect student confidentiality. Email will continue to serve as an effective means of communication for general, non-sensitive information.

PEAK-Specific Communication

- PEAK Smore newsletters will provide families with program updates.
- PEAK teachers can be reached via their email addresses, listed on the cover of this handbook.
- PEAK conferences will be offered once a year, either in the fall or spring. Additional conferences can be held, as needed.
- For questions related to program-wide procedures, please contact Melissa Englert, Gifted Coordinator, at melissa.englert@lps53.org or 816.736.5322

Procedures

1. **Attendance:** Students are expected to be in attendance each PEAK day unless they are ill or there is an extreme emergency. Please let your child's PEAK teacher know if they will be absent. Guidance about student attendance and absences can be found in the [Elementary School Handbook for Parents](#).
2. **PEAK Transportation:** Students will attend PEAK at Ridgeview Elementary on a designated day of the week. They will be taken by bus to and from Ridgeview on their PEAK day. The bus will arrive at their home school in the morning and take them to Ridgeview. The bus will return PEAK students to their home school in the afternoon for regular dismissal procedures.
 - a. PEAK students are expected to adhere to all district transportation expectations and guidelines. For more information, see the School Transportation section of the [Elementary School Handbook for Parents](#).
3. **Specials:** Students will not attend specials on their PEAK day.
4. **Lunch:** PEAK students will have access to their lunch account at Ridgeview. Students can make their lunch choice in the cafeteria, or they can bring a sack lunch if they prefer. Families are welcome to send a snack with their child on PEAK days since they eat later in the day.
5. **Recess:** In accordance with LPS Wellness Guidelines, 30 minutes of recess will be scheduled for students while they are at PEAK.
6. **PEAK Cancellations:** PEAK classes may be canceled for special events at the district, building, or grade level.
 - a. In the event of inclement weather, PEAK classes will be canceled when Liberty Public Schools are closed. If school is dismissed early due to inclement weather, PEAK students will be bussed to their home elementary buildings for dismissal.
 - b. If there is a major building event at students' home elementary school, it may result in the cancellation of PEAK classes (e.g. Fun Run, Field Day, dress rehearsal for school musical).
 - c. On occasion, PEAK may be canceled for a specific class or grade level due to a special event at students' home elementary school (e.g. specialized field trip) or PEAK conferences.
7. **Early Release Days:** On scheduled, district early release days, students will attend a shortened PEAK day. They will be bussed back to their home elementary buildings for early dismissal.
8. **Medication:** If a child needs to take prescription or over-the-counter medication during school, their family needs to collaborate with the nurse at their home elementary building to complete a medication form. Medications must be in their original containers and should be accompanied by a pharmacy label or note from the physician. The nurse at the student's home elementary school will collaborate with the nurse at Ridgeview Elementary and the parents/guardians to ensure the continuity of medical care.

Discipline

The [Elementary School Handbook for Parents](#) provides information about discipline procedures, and these procedures remain in place while students are in PEAK. If a student needs support in developing successful behavior habits, the PEAK teacher and building administrators from Ridgeview Elementary and the student's home elementary school will work as a team to provide the needed structure and support to help students learn how to accept responsibility for their actions. Parents/guardians will be kept informed of any concerns and will be asked to partner with the school in helping their children learn to make productive choices. Student discipline is outlined in [district board policy](#): JG, JG-R1, JGA-2, JGB, JGD, JGE, JGF, JGGA.

PRIMARY PEAK PROGRAM CURRICULUM

PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Personal Growth and Development activities are personalized to meet individual student needs. Lessons help learners set and evaluate goals, demonstrate grit, improve performance, work effectively in groups, and integrate the knowledge of self, gifted issues, and strategies for personal problem-solving.

SCHOLARLY THINKING

Promoting scholarly thinking through creativity and curiosity develops deep thinkers who ask questions and seek answers. Learners will explore a variety of thinking strategies such as questioning, inductive and deductive reasoning, FFOE (fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration), SCAMPER, logic, and critical thinking.

UNIVERSAL THEME

Universal Themes are highly abstract, one-word ideas that can connect across (and within) any discipline.

- **2nd Grade:** Second grade students will tackle the universal theme of **Structures**. Essential questions will guide the exploration and research of natural and human-made structures around the world and across various disciplines. Investigations of topics under this theme will vary in scope and depth but may include famous structures, natural structures, animal architecture, and biomimicry.
- **3rd Grade:** Third grade students will gain a deeper understanding of themselves as learners and of their role in a world of the highly-interconnected theme of **Systems**. Students are introduced to the framework of systems thinking and investigate the interdependence of natural and human-made systems. Students also learn new metacognitive strategies they can apply to enhance and deepen their appreciation for multiple perspectives and the positive and negative effects of changes over time. Investigations under this theme may include human body systems, the electrical system, animal taxonomy, ecosystems, and others selected by learners.

MATH

PEAK math is a personalized learning time that involves choice and voice as students explore numbers in new and complex ways. Students participate in a variety of math investigations including problem-solving, geometry, real world math, number systems, algebra, and more. Students will have the option to compete in a national math competition (Noetic) as well.

SCIENCE

Second grade learners will explore Lego Moon Mission, robotics, and simple machines. Third graders will participate in a variety of inquiry-based investigations. Learners will delve into the scientific method and engineering design process through hands-on learning experiences.

STEAM

PEAK students in grades 2-5 take charge of their learning by selecting and exploring a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, or math) area of interest in a hands-on way. Options include traveling artists, coding, digital storytelling, engineering, stop motion animation, robotics programming, microbiology, 3D printing, video game design, and more! Students are responsible for selecting an area of interest, designing their learning plan, seeing it through, and reflecting on their work.

INTERMEDIATE PEAK PROGRAM CURRICULUM

PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Personal Growth and Development activities are designed to meet individual student needs. Lessons may help students set and evaluate goals, demonstrate grit, improve performance, work effectively in groups, and integrate the knowledge of self, gifted issues, and strategies for personal problem-solving.

SCHOLARLY THINKING

Promoting scholarly thinking through creativity and curiosity develops deep thinkers who ask questions and seek answers. Learners will explore a variety of thinking strategies such as questioning, inductive and deductive reasoning, FFOE (fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration), SCAMPER, logic, and critical thinking.

UNIVERSAL THEME

Universal Themes are highly abstract, one-word ideas that can connect across (and within) any discipline.

- **Fourth grade** students will tackle the universal theme of *Frontiers* (unanswered questions, discoveries, knowledge). Through the research process, learners will investigate unanswered questions.
- **Fifth grade** students will tackle the universal theme of *Power*. Through the research process, learners will investigate the power of “me,” the power of teamwork, the power of math and science, the power of the visible and invisible, and much more.

MATH

Math is a personalized learning time that involves lots of voice and choice. In fourth grade, learners choose from a variety of units: the national Noetic math competition, number systems, CSI math, and shopping spree. In fifth grade, learners deepen their understanding and application of math in the following units: Noetic math competition, 10 things mathematicians and scientists should know but are rarely taught, and algebra.

SCIENCE

Intermediate learners will participate in a variety of inquiry-based investigations. Learners will delve into the scientific method and engineering design process through hands-on learning experiences.

STEAM

PEAK students in grades 2-5 take charge of their learning by selecting and exploring a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, or math) area of interest in a hands-on way. Options include traveling artists, coding, digital storytelling, engineering, stop motion animation, robotics programming, microbiology, 3D printing, video game design, and more! Students are responsible for selecting an area of interest, designing their learning plan, seeing it through, and reflecting on their work.

Depth and Complexity

Thinking Strategies



The eleven prompts of Depth and Complexity are designed to move students toward expert thinking. Each prompt is a lens to focus students on a particular aspect of a topic.

Depth: Learners go deeper to uncover more details and new knowledge related to the investigation.

- **Big Idea:** An overarching statement about a topic. Moves students toward abstraction and away from specifics.
- **Essential Details:** The most important aspects of a topic. Moves students away from abstraction and toward evidence.
- **Language of the Discipline:** The vocabulary an expert would use to discuss his/her field. May include acronyms, jargon, phrases, names of tools, or even important people.
- **Rules:** The laws, hierarchies, norms, etc. within a topic. These are things that we expect to be followed. What happens when rules are followed and broken?
- **Patterns:** Details we expect to repeat within a topic. A pattern can break without necessarily creating a problem.
- **Ethics:** The problems, ambiguities, or dilemmas of a topic. Students should be considering pros and cons, resolving issues of fairness, or pondering “what is right?”

Complexity: Learners connect concepts across disciplines.

- **Change Over Time:** Focus on breadth, asking learners to consider how a topic has changed or not changed as time has passed.
- **Multiple Perspectives:** Asks students to consider the same topic from multiple points of view.
- **Unanswered Questions:** What we don't currently know about a topic. What we want to know about a topic. Promotes curiosity.
- **Across Disciplines:** How does this topic represent an intersection of other fields?
- **Trends:** What are the changes in the topic? What forces are causing changes?

*Permission was given by: Ian Byrd and Lisa Van Germert from Gifted Guild's Guide to Depth and Complexity

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

Many of the activities in PEAK refer to Bloom's Taxonomy. This is simply a way to "think about thinking". Using Bloom's, we make sure students understand basic information and think at higher levels. Here is a brief description of these six levels.

REMEMBER

This is simply recalling or identifying information. When you define, list, label, or match, you are at the knowledge level.

UNDERSTAND

As the label implies, you now show you understand the material. Summarizing, paraphrasing, and predicting are all examples of comprehension.

APPLY

This is putting to use what you know, whether it is facts, rules, or principles. Applying rules to a new situation, solving math problems, illustrating, and making charts and graphs are examples of application.

ANALYZE

Analysis is when you break the material into parts. Comparing and contrasting is probably the most common example. However, you also analyze anytime you categorize, classify, outline, or sort.

EVALUATE

Evaluation involves using what has been learned to form opinions, judgments, or decisions. The key here is to use definite criteria. Some words associated with this level are choose, critique, defend, rank, recommend, or support.

CREATE

When you create or synthesize, you put the parts of what you have learned into a new whole. This might mean you form new patterns or structures, see abstract relationships, uniquely communicate an idea, or create an original product.

CHARACTERISTICS YOU MIGHT SEE IN GIFTED CHILDREN

- **Advanced Language**
Displays an advanced vocabulary and an ability to use more complex language effectively in a variety of situations; naturally uses similes, metaphors, and analogies to express relationships.
- **Analytical Thinking**
Ability to discern components of a whole; strives to determine relationships and patterns in procedures, experiences, ideas, and/or objects. The student may not be "organized", yet enjoys organizing and planning events and procedures.
- **Meaning Motivated**
Shows curiosity and an inner drive for thorough, independent understanding; asks penetrating, intellectual questions, and demonstrates an extensive memory.
- **Perspective**
Displays an ability to understand and incorporate unexpected or unusual points of view through oral language, writing, manipulatives, and/or art.
- **Sense of Humor**
Demonstrates understanding of higher levels of humor and application of a finely developed sense of humor, either through the production of original jokes, riddles, puns, or other humorous effects or through understanding the subtle humor of others.
- **Sensitivity**
Intensely sensitive to the needs of others, demonstrates a strong sense of justice, and sets high standards for self and others.
- **Accelerated Learning**
Demonstrates mastery and an ability to learn and understand material and concepts beyond the facts and knowledge typical and expected for that age group.

Adapted from *Kingore Observation Inventory* by Bertie Kingore, 1993

SOME CHALLENGES OF DEALING WITH GIFTED CHILDREN

The child who...

shows superior reasoning powers

can solve problems quickly

shows persistent intellectual curiosity

has a wide range of interests

has an advanced vocabulary

learns quickly

grasps math concepts easily

is creative and imaginative

sustains concentration for lengthy periods

sets high standards for self

has a keen sense of humor

is sensitive

may also be the child who...

is impatient; seems stuck-up or arrogant; challenges your authority

gets bored and frustrated

drives you crazy with questions; asks inappropriate questions

seems scattered and disorganized

talks too much; find it hard to communicate with age peers

resists assignments that don't present opportunities for new learning; dislikes drill and practice; does inaccurate or sloppy work

has little patience for regular math lessons or homework

goes too far; lacks interest in mundane assignments

has tunnel vision; hates to be interrupted

sets unrealistically high goals; avoid taking risks; lacks tolerance for others' mistakes

uses humor inappropriately to gain attention or attack others

is easily hurt; has trouble handling criticism; feels powerless to solve the world's problems

Adapted from *When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers* by Jim Delisle and Judy Galbraith