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The Gifted and Talented: Children with Unlimited Horizons

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By Lisa Perez

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Student name: Lisa Marie Perez

Approved by: Carl M. Tomlinson

Department of: Literacy Education

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**Honors Thesis Abstract
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Author: Lisa Perez

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Abstract:

Educating gifted and talented students has become a difficult task for teachers. This capstone examines the various methods used to identify gifted students and their needs. Programs and schools that offer assistance in educating gifted students are introduced and explained in detail. *The Gifted and Talented: Children with Unlimited Horizons* presents the method of using a literature curriculum that highlights children's tradebooks as a way to enhance the learning experience for gifted students. Included in the capstone is a booklist of children's tradebooks, summaries and extensions of these books for a model 4th grade social studies curriculum.

To gather information a variety of sources were consulted. I solicited copies of various magazines and journals that specialized in educating the gifted and providing support services for them. I researched the topic in literature sources that concentrated on the study of gifted education. I also searched the Internet for schools that provided gifted education across the country.

I found that many gifted students are lost in the shuffle of regular education. Too frequently, the gifted are not challenged and never reach their full potential. By using tradebooks to enrich and supplement the curriculum, teachers can tap into the learning potential of these children.

Identification of Gifted Students

At least 2.5 million students in the elementary and secondary school population may be considered gifted or talented (Webb, 1996). Between 10-15% of the average school system's student population is composed of gifted children (McAdamis, 2000). However, too often these children are overlooked and pushed aside, resulting in a high rate of dropouts and underachievers among our country's most promising youth. A study by Ellen Winner (1996) confirms a sad finding: gifted children are usually bored and unengaged in school, and they are often underachievers. By identifying these students and working cooperatively with parents, current and future teachers of the gifted can create solutions to this problem. To begin with, gifted children in our schools must be identified early instead of pushed aside and overlooked.

Gifted and talented students are those at the upper end of the ability continuum who need supplemental help to realize their full potential (Eggen, 1999). There are a number of ways that a child can be identified as gifted. An important thing to keep in mind when assessing a gifted student is that he may not be gifted in all areas. Significant differences occur among gifted children. They are probably a more intellectually diverse group than children of average ability (Webb, 1996). For example, a fourth grade gifted student may excel at math but be average in science. A main component in identifying a gifted child is general intellectual ability or talent as measured

by intelligence scores. Additionally, students with general intellectual talent are recognized for their wide-ranging fund of general information and high levels of

vocabulary, memory, abstract word knowledge and abstract reasoning

(McAdamis, 2000). Other sources generally cite IQ test scores labeled and follows:

IQ SCORES	LEVEL CLASSIFICATION
85-99	Lower Normal
100-114	Upper Normal
115-129	Bright
130-144	Gifted
145-159	Highly Gifted
160-above	Profoundly Gifted

Another area of achievement that is considered in determining giftedness is specific academic aptitude or talent. Students with specific academic aptitudes are identified by their outstanding performance on an achievement or aptitude test in one area such as language arts or science. Students who score in the 97th percentile or higher on standard achievement tests are identified as having specific academic aptitude (McAdamis, 2000).

According to Parke (1996), gifted children differ from their peers in three dimensions: the pace at which they learn; the depth of their understanding; the interests that they hold. Gifted learners learn rapidly and easily. They ask questions at a depth much greater than their peers and give

inventive, original, and unusual responses. A gifted student has an extraordinary memory and a vivid imagination. Abstract reasoning, problem-solving and an interest in cause and effect are features of a gifted learner.

Consequently, these children bore easily and may appear to have short attention spans. When human beings are limited and restricted in their development and when they are not allowed to move or reach beyond, they are often bored, frustrated, and angry (Clark, 1983). These characteristics create a need for special, individualized attention for these students.

“Highly gifted” children--those with IQs of 145 or above or who are prodigies in a particular domain--present educators with other problems. School placement and social adjustments are often difficult. Schools are not organized in ways conducive to how these children learn, and school policies often unfairly restrict these children from participating in appropriate educational settings (Kearney, 1996).

The first person that may have the opportunity to identify a student's gifted talents is the child's teacher. It is important for teachers to have an idea of what to look for when identifying a gifted child and what to do when they discover such a child in their class. Much of the actual identification of gifted children is currently done by the teachers, based on their observations of classroom behavior or scores on achievement tests (Webb, 1996). However a recent study shows (Webb, 1996) that teacher nomination correctly identifies less than half of students later found to be gifted through

individual testing. There is speculation that this is due to the fact that students do not demonstrate their gifted talents for fear that they will be singled out by the teacher and their peers.

Programs for Gifted Students

The job of a general education teacher is to design effective instruction that will meet the needs for all students, including those who are gifted and talented. Environment clearly has an impact on intelligence. Intelligence can be heightened through nurturance and hindered through abuse (Webb, 1996). Working with parents is a step that is needed to ensure that the things taught at school to increase the ability of a student are carried over into the home. A wise teacher can offer a curriculum with plenty of opportunities for creative behaviors. To reach all students, a teacher will need to offer activities that address several ability levels at one time and that accommodate a variety of interests. Children need the opportunity to get a closer look at the things they are learning. They need to touch; they need time for creative encounter. Teachers can make assignments that require original work, independent learning, and thought processing, self-initiated projects, experimentation and exploration. As a facilitator, orchestrator, designer or coach, the teacher presents the conditions for learning (Parke, 1996).

The development of cognitive skills is a focus for those educating the gifted. Children with high cognitive abilities have differentiated needs from

those of other children. Gifted learners need to be exposed to new and challenging information and the environment and the culture and varied subjects and concerns (Levande, 1999). They need to be allowed to pursue ideas as far as their interests take them and to pursue inquiries beyond allotted time spans.

Parents may see characteristics of a gifted learner in their children and not realize it. Young children may exhibit creativity by dancing, singing, story-telling, or playing make-believe. Parents can foster the growth of creativity by encouraging curiosity, fantasy, the asking of questions, and by providing opportunities for creative expression. Parents can help find ways of changing uncooperative, defiant behavior, that may inhibit learning, into cooperative, productive behavior rather than relying on punitive methods of control, which can inhibit creativity. It is important for parents to make sure that every member of the family receives individual attention. To ensure that what children do in school relates to everyday life, parents should use school content imaginatively and supplement the school's efforts (Torrance, 1969). An example of such a supplement would be to plan a family outing to a museum or historical site that the child is learning about in school.

The adults that are prominent in a child's life have the ability to support or extinguish a child's creativity. As parents and teachers work together, they might concentrate on finding ways to encourage the child's creativity and find ways to expand upon what he is interested in.

How Adults “Kill” Creativity

By insisting that children do things the “right way”
By teaching a child to think that there is only one way to do things
By pressuring children to be realistic, to stop imagining
By making comparisons with other children
By discouraging a child’s curiosity
(Torrance, 1969)

Inclusion

Inclusion is a term to describe a philosophical approach to the education of children with disabilities (Kearney, 1996). The term inclusion describes a professional belief that students with disabilities should be integrated into general education classrooms whether or not they can meet traditional curricular standards and should be full members of the classroom (Friend, 1999). Advocates for inclusion believe that although inclusion students may not be able to do the same level of work as other students in the class, they will benefit from the social interaction with the mainstream students and learn through cooperative learning.

Gifted students and students with special talents fit into a description of students that will benefit from inclusion. Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law that prevents discrimination against all individuals with disabilities in programs that receive federal funds (Friend 1999). Gifted students are considered to have a disability

because they can not learn or be taught in the same way as typically developing children. Section 504 allows gifted children to be taught in a public school without being discriminated against because of their level of intelligence. Because of this law, gifted children have rights to be educated as any other student.

Rather than forcing children into homogenous groups in regular schools or special schools, inclusion gives them the opportunity to interact with their peers in a classroom. Classroom teachers must provide intellectual stimulation to gifted students in the regular classroom. In the ordinary elementary school situation, children of 140 IQ waste half their time in school and those of 170 IQ waste practically all their time in school (Hollingworth, 1942). Only a small percentage of the 2.5 million students in the elementary and secondary education population that are gifted receive special education services (Clark, 1983). To become intellectually stimulating to all students, public schools must provide access to a full range of curriculum, preschool through college. Each student needs to set goals to maintain a track of progress. Just to retain giftedness, not to mention furthering their potential, gifted children must participate in programs appropriate to their level of development (Clark, 1983).

Inclusion allows a child to be assessed with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). An IEP will outline the goals that the child should accomplish during the school year. Contributors to the IEP include

participating adults such as a child's parents, teacher, a school's special education teacher, psychologist and various administrators. In the IEP the parents and the school faculty outline which approach they are going to take to aid in the education of a gifted child. There are many strategies that can be used to accommodate and challenge the gifted learner. Differentiated instruction is used to accommodate learning differences in children by identifying students' strengths and using appropriate strategies to address a variety of abilities, preferences, and styles (McAdamis, 2000).

Gifted Pull-Out Programs

A pull-out program is one that is defined as a program in which students with disabilities leave the general education classroom once or more each day to receive special services (Friend, 1999). Many school districts have programs for their gifted students. The students are removed from their classes as much as once a day or only twice a week. During the time that gifted students are not in class, they work with a gifted education teacher. They may do projects that expand upon the content the students are working on in class or something different. The pull-out programs give students the individual attention they need to grow and expand their knowledge. A gifted education teacher has more of an opportunity to individualize lessons based on a child's intelligence. The effective use of these programs can allow gifted students to receive benefits from the regular classroom experience as well as specialized services.

Horizontal Enrichment and Vertical Acceleration

Two common phrases that are tossed around in the field of gifted education are those of horizontal enrichment and vertical acceleration. Both have their pros and cons, as well as their advocates and detractors.

The practice known as horizontal enrichment has also been called “horizontal curriculum expansion.” The logic behind horizontal enrichment is that curriculum for any grade level leaves out many things that are appropriate for children at that grade level, however time does not warrant all of it to be taught to them. Those in favor of horizontal enrichment believe that the gifted child should be given the opportunity to learn things that are left out of the curriculum for his grade level. The benefits of this approach are that a child will receive more knowledge than his peers. He will be able to see a concept or learn about an idea from a different source or perspective. However, there are many concerns about placing a gifted child into this type of enrichment.

First, when a teacher must educate a student who is determined to be gifted or even highly gifted, simple enrichment will not be enough to capitalize on the knowledge and abilities that the child has. Half of gifted children have taught themselves to read before school entry (Webb, 1996) and a typical gifted child has learned everything in the second grade curriculum before entering the second grade and learned it without specific instruction by an adult (Kaufmann, 1998). A gifted learner with such capabilities is

likely to have absorbed all the knowledge of a second grade curriculum and will therefore be just as bored with enrichment material as she will be with the standard material.

Second, enrichment requires children to use materials and complete activities designed for “normal” kids of the same age as the gifted children. These activities would not present a challenge to a gifted learner. Gifted children learn at a more in-depth level than their peers. When using the concept of enrichment, the students may be learning more material, but the concepts and knowledge are still on a level that is far below their own thought processes. It is not unusual to find students in the same classroom with very special learning needs in addition to students several grade levels above their academic peers in skills and readiness levels (McAdamis, 2000). No matter how interesting the subject matter is, the material will not be interesting if it is written in babytalk (Kaufmann, 1998).

On the other side of the curriculum spectrum is the idea of vertical acceleration. This term is most commonly and incorrectly referred to as “skipping a grade.” Also called vertical curriculum expansion, vertical acceleration occurs when students study material that is part of the normal curriculum for an older student. The enforcement of this practice can take place in a number of different forms. Vertical acceleration can mean that a child moves at his or her own pace through individualized course material, tests out of any unit with a high enough score on the pre-test, takes above

level coursereview in the age-level classroom, moves to a higher grade level for one or more subjects or skips one or more grades (Kaufmann, 1998).

The controversy with vertical acceleration is the concern that there will be damage done to the child's social development if he is placed in a classroom of older children. The fear is that gifted children will become alienated and will not be able to relate to their peers. In contrast, horizontal enrichment is largely ineffective at reducing the percentage of gifted children who become alienated underachievers or dropouts as they reach their teens (Kaufmann, 1998). However, virtually all research done on acceleration, specifically grade-level acceleration, indicates that it works well in the short and long run for the majority of gifted students.

One of the biggest advantages of vertical acceleration is that it is easily reversible. If the teacher of the higher grade-level is supportive of the move, and a child wants to move ahead, the school can place a child ahead one year on a trial basis. If the move works, and the child feels comfortable, all parties will be able to tell within 8-10 weeks. If something is not right and the child does not feel comfortable, she can rejoin the lower grade level at no penalty.

Vertical acceleration can benefit learners in all aspects of their learning experience. When parents and educators use the terms "skipping a grade," they do so incorrectly. The child is not skipping any of the material that is taught in the grade that he or she may test out of, for he or she may have already learned the curriculum before entering the grade. By putting

their child in a position to benefit from vertical acceleration, parents are giving her the opportunity to learn at the level that her mind is capable of. They will give their child the opportunity to be challenged in her learning experiences.

Sophistication and Novelty

Sophistication and novelty are two less popular gifted education strategies, but they may work for an individual student. Sophistication is a strategy in which the teachers help the students to see the principles or systems that underlie the content being learned by the rest of the class (Friend, 1999). In an elementary school class that is reading a story and answering questions about the main idea and vocabulary, a gifted child may be asked to identify how the plot, character, and setting are intertwined in the story. This system tries to aid a gifted child in understanding why he needs to learn the material or from what idea it originally derives. At times, this strategy can be looked at as a type of enrichment.

Novelty is an approach in which the teachers give students opportunities to explore traditional curricular content in alternative and unusual ways (Friend, 1999). This approach allows students to use teaching and learning tools, such as technology and computers, in creative ways. For example, a child may be asked to develop a Power Point presentation for the rest of the class that explains the concepts being taught in science class. A child may also use conventional resources in innovative ways. A child may

research the views and perspectives of a historical figure. The teacher may then interview the child in front of the class with the child responding based on the information that he has learned about his character.

Modification	Math	Science	Language Arts	Social Studies
Acceleration	Algebra in fifth grade	Early chemistry and physics	Learning grammatical structure early	Early introduction to world history
Enrichment	Changing bases in number systems	Experimentation and data collecting	Short story and poetry writing	Reading biographies for historical insight
Sophistication	Mastering the laws of arithmetic	Learning the laws of physics	Mastering the structural properties of plays and sonnets	Learning and applying the principles of economics
Novelty	Probability and Statistics	Science and its impact on society	Rewriting Shakespeare's tragedies with happy endings	Creating future societies and telling how they are governed

Telescoping

Telescoping is a practice that reduces the amount of time a student takes to cover the curriculum. Courses often overlap in content and skills from one grade to the other. Gifted learners may not need as much time to retrace their steps and refresh their memory about the previous year's lesson. An example of telescoping is when a child completes math for the 4th and 5th grade level in one year. This strategy can be used effectively in conjunction with acceleration (McAdamis, 2000).

Compacting

Compacting is a strategy designed to streamline the amount of time a child spends on regular classroom curriculum. This strategy allows students to demonstrate what they know by doing assignments in those areas where work is needed and then by using the remaining time to do work in other curricular areas. When working with a compact curriculum, the teacher needs to decide what the student needs to know in the areas that are being compacted. Next, the teacher must find out what information the student has already mastered by testing, observing and analyzing performance. The teacher will provide assignments for the student that deal specifically with the information that the student has left to master. The process of compacting can be used to develop an IEP for students that focuses on enrichment and projects that a student will complete after mastering the area that was completed.

Because gifted learners in a school are often an unidentified part of the school population, it is difficult to create a single program to reach all students in need. A multiple programming approach allows the teacher of a full inclusion classroom, which includes gifted learners, to develop a constellation of programs that all students with varying needs, abilities and interests can participate in. Teachers who offer differentiated curriculum and instruction view students as individuals with their own skills, interests, learning styles and talents (McAdamis, 2000). In addition to these programs

and strategies, a teacher may suggest that the child become part of an after-school activity, such as student council, school newspaper, or drama club.

Clarke (1983) developed the following standards for gifted education programs:

- The programs should be articulated with general education programs.
- Programs should be comprehensive, structured and sequenced across grade levels.
- Programs should be an integral part of the child's school day.
- Programs should be based around the individual student's needs.
- The program's resources and implementations are distributed equitably throughout school districts.
- Programs incorporate a blend of communities and school-based support services in development and delivery.
- A specialist in gifted education is consulted in program policy development.
- Ongoing program evaluation and assessment to continue improving the program. (p. 169)

Schools for Gifted Students

An alternative to gifted programs that can be implemented in regular schools is the school that is designed for students at the higher end of the IQ spectrum. A number of schools in the United States educate only gifted and

highly gifted students. One such school, Quest Academy in New Mexico, is a private school that offers a curriculum base that emphasizes scholarship and creativity in academics and the arts.

Quest Academy is an independent day school that serves students in grades K-8 who show exceptional intellectual capability. The curriculum is based on a traditional liberal arts education with equal emphasis on the sciences, the humanities, and the arts. All students at Quest Academy are gifted. The staff teaches self-acceptance and empathy, kindling the positive aspects of giftedness while minimizing the traits that hinder social development when the gifted children interact with typically developing students. A school such as Quest Academy offers a variety of programs that vary with the differing needs and abilities of each age group. They focus on responding to individuals at all levels. The curriculum for Quest Academy is delivered, at a minimum, one year above typical grade level standards and is flexible enough to accommodate students working several levels beyond their chronological age.

Children who wish to enroll at Quest Academy must meet admission requirements. The requirements include: completing an application form, a parent questionnaire, teacher recommendation forms, and granting permission to release copies of student records. The baseline for admittance is an IQ of 125 or greater. After all the data are gathered, the child is observed for two days in a Quest classroom at their current grade level.

Making the choice to educate a student in a specific school for gifted students is not an easy one. The benefit, of course, is that the needs of the child will be addressed, and he will be challenged to meet the criteria established before him. This rules out the chance for boredom, underachievement and dropping out. More likely to be seen among a state's education facilities is that of a charter school.

Metrolina Regional Scholar's Academy in North Carolina is a new charter school to serve the intellectual, academic, and socio-emotional needs of highly gifted students in the Charlotte area (Metrolina, 2000). A charter school is a deregulated public school. It is typically endorsed or "chartered" by a public agency and has more freedom and flexibility than other public schools. The difference between a charter school and a private school, such as Quest Academy, is that it may not charge tuition and cannot discriminate among those who apply for admission. Metrolina Scholars Academy opened for the 2000-2001 school year. Admission criteria include an IQ score of 145 and parent, teacher, and self-nomination forms. Applicants with an IQ between 130-145 undergo a more thorough review. After this review, the decision is made as to whether the child should be placed in a lottery or on a waiting list. The class size will be approximately 20 students per grade with a total of 140 student in grades K-6 chosen from a lottery of qualified applicants. All qualified applicants are placed in a lottery from which 140 names are chosen.

Metrolina Academy plans to provide an exceptionally challenging education for children of extremely high academic or intellectual ability. They aim to meet the distinctive intellectual, social, and emotional needs of their students by providing a supportive environment.

Gifted and At Risk

Private and charter schools provide an alternative to educating a gifted learner outside that of a public school classroom. Schools with a focus on gifted education can provide greater emotional and social stability for their students because they have resources to accomplish this goal. Socially and emotionally, gifted and talented students can be well liked and emotionally healthy, or they can be unpopular and at a risk for serious emotional problems (Friend, 1999). Gifted students often are perceived as “different” and may be rejected by other students (Dixon, 1996). All provisions for gifted students-- ability grouping, acceleration, pull-out programs, full-day programs, special schooling, homeschooling-- are held suspect on the grounds that they will prevent the child’s social adjustment. The gifted child naturally sets high expectations for himself and his peers. When these expectations are not met, the child becomes frustrated and withdrawn altogether.

America’s best and brightest students sometimes are among the students most at risk (Dixon, 1996). In the typical classroom, gifted students find the slow pace and rigid time allocations stifling. They become at risk when the teacher can no longer appeal to their learning style, and they learn

the curriculum faster than it can be taught to the rest of the class. They may become bored, disruptive or withdrawn.

Socially, some gifted students have the ability to recognize and respond to the feelings of others thus making them good at making friends. Other gifted children may have the preconceived notions that they are different from their classmates and that it is impossible for them to fit in with their peers. They may deal with this by developing a negative attitude toward their classmates. Some gifted students become at risk because they are antisocial. They are alienated by their differences from their peers and may be bored. About 40 per cent of the students who exhibit antisocial behavior at a young age will develop delinquency or drug problems (Dixon, 1996). Perhaps the most important aspect of schools like Quest and Metrolina is their ability to deal with gifted students' need for social acceptance.

The Parents' Role

Many parents of gifted children are unable to send them to special schools due to lack of financial support and/or facilities. The parents and teachers, along with administrators of a school district, must work together to reach the best solution for a child that is discovered to be gifted. Many parents feel that the teachers in a regular classroom are not paying the right amount of attention to a child or are going about the education of a gifted learner the wrong way. In most situations, there are parents who have no idea what it takes to educate a wide range of gifted learners, and there are

others that can be tapped as valuable resources when it comes to dealing with their gifted learner. The parent can play an essential part in any change in school systems' policies that will introduce new services to the gifted and talented (Miller, 1981). It is important for parents to work with a school and its administrators.

The Reading Experience

When faced with the many ways that a gifted learner can be educated, the parents, teachers and children can become overwhelmed and frustrated. In searching for a solution, many have come upon books as a guide. The study of literature must be a vital component of both elementary and secondary curricula (Clendening, 1983). A gifted learner needs to be challenged. Adaptations to a curriculum can provide teachers, students, and parents with ideas and avenues to explore such challenges.

Using tradebooks to expand the information covered in any part of the school curriculum can prove beneficial to gifted students. Although the idea of using tradebooks can be implemented with any part of the curriculum, I have selected the theme of "Regions of the United States" to illustrate my points. This is a typical topic for a 4th grade social studies curriculum.

Why Tradebooks?

Tradebooks will enhance the learning experience of a gifted learner. Gifted students' delight in reading is consequently shortchanged, and basic quality literary experiences all too frequently are ignored, forgotten, or just

overlooked (Clendening, 1983). Tradebooks offer a child a different perspective on facts and stories presented by a textbook produced by a manufacturer. A tradebook allows a child to receive an expanded view of what the textbook covers. For example, if a text talks about a specific time in history, such as the Civil Rights Movement, a teacher might suggest a gifted learner read *Spite Fences* by Trudy Krisher. The tradebook offers the student an account of events from a story that happens during the time period that he has just read about. The gifted learner now has the facts presented in the textbook as well as the perspective of a child during the same time period.

Tradebooks may also be used in what is called bibliotherapy.

Bibliotherapy is when a teacher or adult offers a child a book to read where the main character in the story is dealing with a problem or feeling that a child is experiencing. The relation that a child might make to the character in the story can be used to help him cope with peer pressure, fitting in, or other social and emotional problems that he might encounter.

Textbooks present facts, but they are still written and compiled by an author or editor. The author has the right to include whatever information that he finds pertinent to the subject he is writing about. He also has the right to leave out whatever information he wants to. Textbook series can still be considered "good" series and not contain ALL the information about topics that it presents. Tradebooks can aid in providing additional information.

Using the issue of the Civil War for example, one can look at the information

in a textbook and notice that while it presents much of the information available about the Civil War, it does not talk about the effects of the war on the people or what happened during the post-war stages. A teacher might then suggest a student read *Shades of Gray* by Carolyn Reeder to learn more about the Post-Civil War era and the adjustments that the people of that era had to make.

A textbook can also present a bias on a subject by not providing both sides of the story or not covering controversial events at all. Tradebooks can be used to provide students with both sides of the story and different opinions about a given topic.

Using the Library

With the idea of the reading experience comes the chance to explore a public resource that is beneficial to gifted learners as well as typical students. The community public library is a place that has to be used to be appreciated. A golden key to the library is indeed a gift for any child, but it is an inestimable treasure for the child who is gifted and talented (Miller, 1981). A library can offer a child the answers to all his questions and furnish him with the information that will last him a lifetime. Of all the institutions, the library is the one in which parents of gifted children can best involve themselves in their children's education.

The Teacher's Role

Teachers might find ways to offer their gifted students ways to challenge themselves by offering a literature curriculum specific to the interests of the child and subject matter being addressed. A literature curriculum is based on a selection of books chosen by the teacher. The books chosen in some way deal with the curriculum being discussed. They might give the student horizontal enrichment by expanding on the content area being discussed in class or vertical acceleration by increasing the level of difficulty of the subject being taught. Along with the reading of a tradebook in a literature curriculum, the teacher can offer the student an extension activity to enhance his experience with the book. When a student is asked to complete an extension activity, he can put himself into the story or see the main point from a different view. Extensions will offer a gifted learner a chance to be creative whether it be by creating a portrait of what a setting from a tradebook looked like in his mind or describing the events of the story in the form of a television broadcast that he will put on for the rest of the class.

There are not many teachers that are certified in gifted education specifically. Therefore, it may be difficult for a regularly certified classroom teacher to serve her gifted students correctly without tapping into resources from various places. Districts often have special services for gifted students. Elgin U-46 serves its gifted students in kindergarten through third grade

with a program called "Challenge Explorers." A gifted teacher comes to the school once a week and works with the students as they are pulled out from their class. The gifted teacher also offers the classroom teacher ideas and information that might be used to challenge gifted students in the classroom. Another resource for teachers is the Prufrock Press. This publisher offers support to gifted education by providing teachers with identification instruments that test students to determine their talents and abilities. It also publishes best-seller books and magazines that address the study and findings of gifted education research and advancement. In addition to the research aspect, Prufrock also sells materials that will aid a teacher in providing the challenge that a student needs. With kits and books that provide problem solving and thinking exercises for all levels of giftedness, this publisher provides a brilliant resource for teachers looking to enhance the learning experience of gifted students.

The gifted learner deserves the opportunity to develop to his full potential. The identification of gifted children in America's school districts is the first step to assuring each child performs at a level commensurate with his capabilities. The cooperation between parent, teacher, and child will insure an environment that will nurture the development of a gifted child. A variety of programs are available to accommodate the needs for each individual child. Programs that offer enrichment or acceleration and schools for the gifted give gifted children the support they need to reach their

potential. Teachers have the ability to influence and enhance the educational and literary experiences of gifted children for a lifetime. The teachers can give the gifted students the training and knowledge that they need to challenges of the future, explore in all directions, and contribute their full talents to the world.

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Booklist and Extensions

To use with chapter 4:

Bealer, Alex W. *Only the Names Remain: The Cherokees and the Trail of Tears*. Little, Brown and Co.: Boston, 1972. (Cherokee Indians)

Horizontal Acceleration

This book concisely covers the period from centuries before the arrival of the first white man in 1540, to the removal of most traces of the Cherokee Nation from Georgia after 1837, through the Trail of Tears, a journey that took one life in four among those who attempted it.

Extensions

1. Choose a partner who has read the same book. Develop issues to debate. One person takes the side of the Cherokee and one of the Government.
2. Identify some of the things that the Cherokees did to keep their land. What are some other ways they could have fought against the government? Would the results have been the same?

To use with chapter 8:

Beatty, Patricia. *JAYHAWKER. William Morrow: New York, 1991.*

(Civil War-Kansas) Vertical Acceleration

In the early years of the Civil War, teenager Lije Tulley becomes a Jayhawker, or an abolitionist raider, freeing the slaves from the neighboring state of Missouri. After freeing the slaves, he goes undercover there as a spy.

Extensions

1. Complete a research project about the role of spies in the Civil War. You may use books, magazines and the Internet. Design a way to present your information in a way other than a written paper.

To use with chapter 4:

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963*.

Delacorte Press: New York, 1995. (Civil Rights-Alabama) Vertical

Acceleration

Ten-year-old Kenny and his family, the Watsons of Flint, Michigan, live during the time of the Civil Rights Movement. The children, Kenny, Joetta, and Byron, an official "juvenile delinquent," do not understand the trials and tribulations that people of their culture are going through in the South. When Mom and Dad decide it is time for a visit to Grandma's house in Alabama. When they reach Birmingham, Alabama, they all have experiences that bring them together as a family. The most tragic experience comes when a bomb goes off in the church where Joetta is thought to be

attending Sunday school. Kenny has to cope with the aftermath of experiencing such a horrific event.

Extensions

1. Write a letter to the men who bombed the church. What would you say to them? How would you act towards them?
2. Research the Civil Rights Movement and find out what was going on in 1963 in Birmingham, AL. Some questions to consider would be: What was life like for the Black versus life for the Whites? What were some of the issues that were causing controversy? Who were the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement?
3. Pretend you are a news reporter for a television station in Birmingham. Give a newscast to the class as if you were at the scene of the bombing.
4. Using a Venn diagram, compare and contrast the Watsons to your family. Consider things like size of family, culture and heritage, era of time, and geographic location.

To use with chapter 3:

Fox, Paula. THE SLAVE DANCER. Bradbury Press: New York, 1973.

(Slavery-Louisiana) Vertical Acceleration

Jessie Boiler often played his fife to earn a few pennies down by the New Orleans docks in the 1800's. One afternoon a sailor asked him to pipe a tune. That evening, Jessie was kidnapped and dumped aboard *The Moonlight*, a slave ship, where a hateful duty awaited him. He was on a slaver and his job was to play music for the exercise periods of the human cargo, the African American slaves that were to be sold at auction.

Extensions

1. If you play a musical instrument, compose a melody that the slave dancer might have played aboard the slave ship to exercise the slaves.
2. Develop five discussion questions about the history of slave trade and its evolution to use in a literature circle with your peers.

To use with chapter 7:

Hesse, Karen. OUT OF THE DUST. Scholastic Press: NY, 1997.

(Oklahoma-Dust Bowl) Horizontal Acceleration

A free verse poem that reads as a novel, *OUT OF THE DUST*, tells the story of Billie Jo, a girl who struggles to help her family to survive the dustbowl years of the Depression. Fighting against the elements on her Oklahoma farm, Billie Jo takes on more responsibility when her mother dies in a tragic accident. Billie Joe's silent, windblown father is literally decaying with grief and skin cancer before her eyes. When she decides to flee the lingering ghosts and dust of her homestead and jump a train west, she

discovers a simple but profound truth about herself and her life. She must not run away from it.

Extensions

1. Write a brief description of what you would have done to combat the dust storms and the treachery that they caused to the crops and stock. Use information that you have learned about erosion, water preservation and weather conditions.
2. Draw or paint a portrait of what you think one of the dust storms would have looked like. Use the descriptions that were used in the free verse poems to give you an idea.
3. Write a free verse poem to describe an event that has happened in your life.
4. Write a newspaper article that would inform the rest of the country what life was like in the Dust Bowl during the Great Depression.

To use with chapter 8:

Hunt, Irene. ACROSS FIVE APRILS. Berkley: New York, 1964.

(Civil War-Illinois) Vertical Acceleration

Young Jethro Creighton grows from a farm boy to a man when he is left to take care of the family farm in Illinois during the difficult years of the Civil War. His brothers go off to war. One of his brothers fights for the South while the other becomes a deserter. When Jethro's father has a heart attack, Jethro is the only man left to take care of the potato farm and the family.

Extensions

1. Imagine that you are Jethro Creighton. Keep a day-by-day journal about the things that you must do to take care of your family during the Civil War.
2. Pretend that you are Jethro's brother who went to fight for the South. Write a letter home to your family to convince them that you have made a decision that is best for you.
3. Stories that her grandfather told inspired Irene Hunt to write this book. Retell a story, on paper or to the class, that someone has shared with you or that you have shared with someone else. Tell how it has had an effect on you.

To use with chapter 4:

Krisher, Trudy. SPITE FENCES. Delacorte Press: New York, 1994

(Civil Rights-Georgia) Vertical Acceleration

Thirteen-year-old Maggie Pugh had lived in Kinship, Georgia, all her life. In all that time almost nothing had changed. If you are poor, you live on the west side of town. If you are rich, you live on the hill in the north end and get to go to the boating club in Troy. If you are white, you use one bathroom at Byer's Drug and if you are

colored, you use another. All that starts to change in the summer of 1960. It is the summer that Maggie must decide whether or not to tell anyone about the horrible thing that she saw. Most of all, it is the summer that Maggie's camera becomes a tool that becomes a way for her to find her independence and a different kind of truth.

Extensions

1. Is there a division in your town like the one in Kingston? If so, why? Answer these questions and write a letter to the leader in your community. Address concerns that you might have about violence, community involvement, and discrimination.
2. Maggie wanted to use photography to portray a situation that intrigued her. Shoot photos or a film that tells a story about something in your life that made you curious. Present it without using words.

To use with chapter 6:

Reeder, Carolyn. SHADES OF GRAY. Avon Camelot, 1989. (Post-Civil War-Virginia) Horizontal Enrichment

At the end of the Civil War, twelve-year-old Will, having lost all his immediate family, reluctantly leaves his city home to live in the Virginia countryside. He stays with his aunt and uncle, whom he considers a traitor because he refused to take part in the war. Will encounters a Yankee soldier, a troublesome bully, and other challenges, as he learns his new way of life in the country.

Extensions

1. Write a letter to Will persuading him to change his view about "Yankees."
2. If you were President of the United States in 1866, what are some plans that you would come up with to rebuild the country? Develop a list of the things that you would fix and repair and the order in which you would accomplish them. Explain why you would accomplish them in that order.

To use with chapter 6:

Speare, Elizabeth George. THE WITCH OF BLACKBIRD POND. Houghton, 1958. (Puritan Connecticut) Horizontal Enrichment

In 1687 in Connecticut, Kit Tyler, feeling out of place in the Puritan household of her aunt, befriends an old woman considered to be a witch by the community. She suddenly finds herself standing trial for witchcraft.

Extensions

1. Using the Internet and other textual resources, write a two to five page paper about the life of a Puritan child. Include things such as daily chores, dress, schooling, and family responsibilities.
2. Write a journal entry about a time when you were accused of something that you did not do. Tell about what you were accused of and how you felt about it.

To use with chapter 12:

Uchida, Yoshiko. JOURNEY TO TOPAZ. Creative Arts Company, 1971. (The West during World War II) Vertical Acceleration

Yuki Sakane is looking forward to Christmas when her peaceful world is suddenly shattered by the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Uprooted from her home and shipped with thousands of Japanese Americans to a desert concentration camp called Topaz, Yuki and her family face new hardships each day.

Extensions

1. Compare and contrast the way the Japanese people were treated in the United States to the way that Adolf Hitler treated the Jewish people in Europe.
2. Do you think that the treatment experienced by Yuki and her family will ever be experienced in our country again? Develop a defense of your opinion and cite specific instances in our country's history that support your view.

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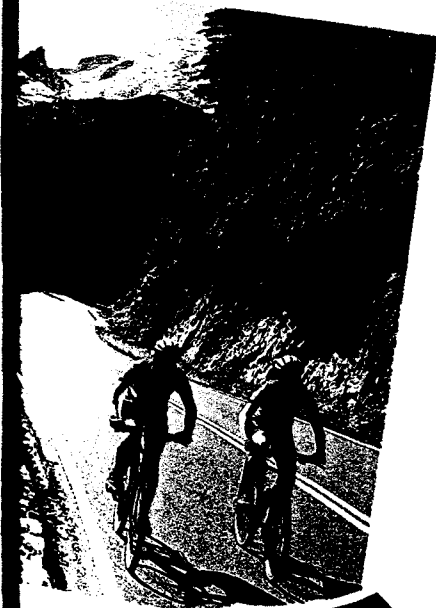
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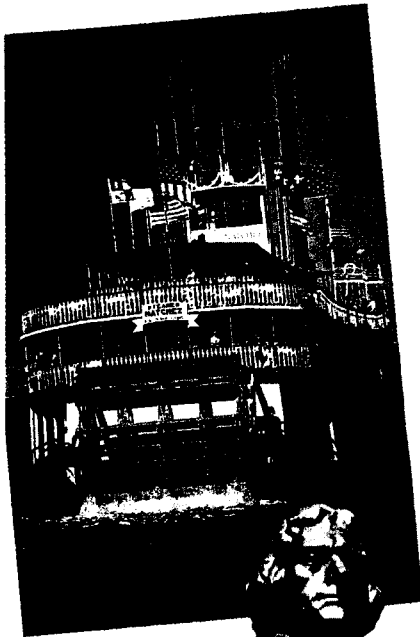
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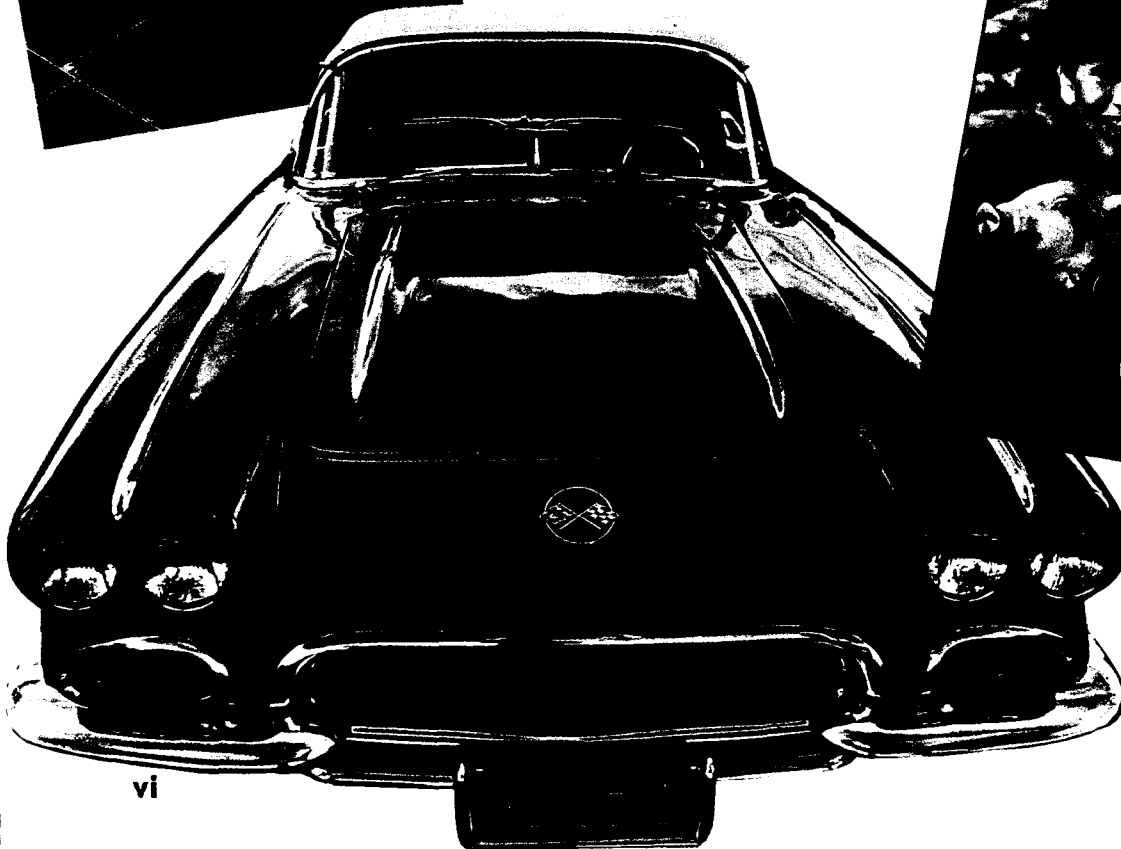
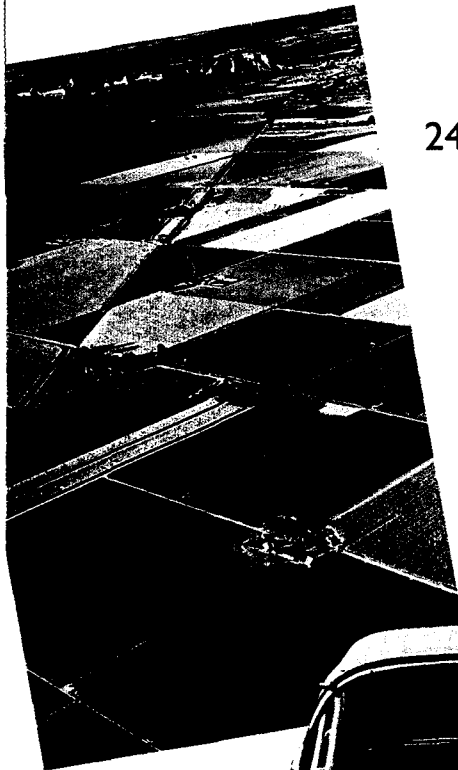
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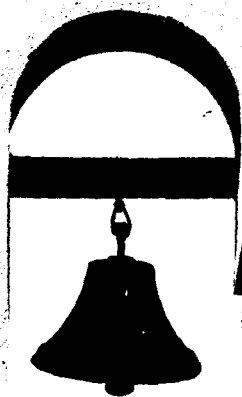
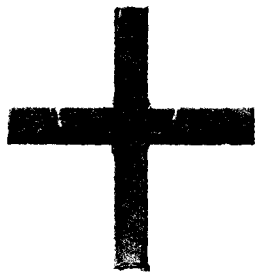
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Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy

www.scholarsacademy.org

Application Packet

Guidelines:

For each child you want to attend the school...

- 1) Fill out an application form (blue)
- 2) Fill out a parent nomination form (green)
- 3) Have your child's teacher fill out a teacher nomination form (pink). Please have the teacher send the nomination form directly to the school.
- 4) If your child has completed third grade or above, have him/her fill out a student nomination form (yellow)
- 5) Obtain your child's test results from cognitive abilities or IQ tests

OR

Arrange to have your child tested individually. Several testing facilities are listed in this packet. Costs vary.

- 6) Please fill out the Resource Survey. The children need your help to make this school the best it can be. (We understand that it is difficult for some parents to volunteer. This form will not have an effect on a decision about your child's admission, but we do want to be able to draw on all the resources we can.)

Enclose all of the above forms (except the teacher nomination) and test results in an envelope and mail to Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy at:

MRSA
P.O. Box 480268
Charlotte, NC 28269
www.scholarsacademy.org

Make sure you include copies of all test results, not just the final score. DO NOT send originals.

Be sure to submit all items for the application packet before June 10, 2000. If the applicant pool is larger than the spaces available, MRSA is required by North Carolina law to conduct a lottery (per class/grade) of those children who meet eligibility requirements. You will be notified by mail after June 30, 2000, regarding your child's application status.

MRSA admits qualified students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy Application for Admission

Student's Name: _____

Student likes to be called: _____

Birth date: _____ Age as of October 15, 2000: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

School Attended 1999-2000: _____

Student's gender is: _____ Female _____ Male

Parents' marital status: Married Separated Divorced Single Widow(er)

Student lives with: _____

Student's ethnicity is: African-American Asian American Caucasian
Hispanic Native American Other

Language(s) spoken in student's home: _____

Please identify any learning disabilities, health or physical challenges, processing problems or unique learning styles of which our staff should be aware. (This information will not be used to screen out your child, but to assist us in better understanding his/her needs.) Use an additional page if necessary.

Father's Name: _____ Mother's Name: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ City: _____

Phone: _____ Phone: _____

Occupation: _____ Occupation: _____

Parent (s) attended an information meeting on [date] _____

How did you find out about this school? _____

You will be notified of the admissions status of your child after June 30, 2000.

Completion of this form and submission of evidence of giftedness do not guarantee admission. Admission is based on test scores, nomination forms, space available in grade/class and lottery.

MRSA admits qualified students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy
Resource Survey

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Occupation (optional):

Please respond if you are interested in volunteering your skills or services in the following areas.

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Architectural | Typing/Data Entry |
| Electrical | Computer Hardware/Maintenance |
| Plumbing | Computer Software/Training |
| Contracting | Painting |
| HVAC | Enrichment classes |
| Marketing | Library/Media |
| Fund raising | Photocopying/Filing |
| Legal | Bldg. Maintenance |
| Accounting | Human Resources |
| Landscaping | All-purpose Volunteer |

Please list any other skills or services you would like to donate:

Please list any companies or individuals you know of that might be interested in making a donation of any kind:

Please contact the school at (704) 571-3838 if you would like to provide more information about potential resources we could utilize to make this a better place for children.

**Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy
Self-Nomination Form**

(to be completed only by children currently in third grade or above)

Name _____ Date _____
 Current Grade _____ Age _____
 School _____

	Never	Sometimes	Frequently
1. I am a good student.	1	2	3
2. I am curious about many things and like to learn about new things.	1	2	3
3. I like to talk with adults and ask them questions about things I am learning or want to learn.	1	2	3
4. I am bored in school.	1	2	3
5. I like to know how and why things happen; I like to search for answers.	1	2	3
6. I like the challenge of hard problems, assignments, and materials.	1	2	3
7. I like to use my imagination to write plays, poetry, make up games, etc.	1	2	3
8. Other people recognize that I am an intelligent person.	1	2	3
9. I enjoy working with mechanical and/or scientific things.	1	2	3
10. I enjoy abstract or mathematical problems.	1	2	3
11. I like to work independently on special projects.	1	2	3
12. I enjoy debating or discussing an idea.	1	2	3
13. I feel different from other children my age.	1	2	3
14. I enjoy "losing myself" in a good book or in my imagination.	1	2	3
15. I have a good sense of humor.	1	2	3
	Never	Sometimes	Frequently

Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy Parent Nomination Form

Child's Name _____
 Current Grade _____
 School _____

Date _____
 Age _____

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Becomes bored with routine tasks	1	2	3	4	5
2. Is non-conforming, individualistic	1	2	3	4	5
3. Becomes easily frustrated with others	1	2	3	4	5
4. Is alert beyond his/her years	1	2	3	4	5
5. Likes school	1	2	3	4	5
6. Is aware of problems others often do not see	1	2	3	4	5
7. Uses unique and unusual ways of solving problems	1	2	3	4	5
8. Sets high standards for self	1	2	3	4	5
9. Chooses difficult problems over simple ones	1	2	3	4	5
10. Likes to have his/her ideas known	1	2	3	4	5
11. Sticks to a project once it is started	1	2	3	4	5
12. Is self critical	1	2	3	4	5
13. Talked in sentences earlier than other children	1	2	3	4	5
14. Has a good sense of humor	1	2	3	4	5
15. Is emotionally sensitive; may overreact	1	2	3	4	5
16. Likes to pretend	1	2	3	4	5

30. Describe any of your child's unusual accomplishments, present or past.

31. Describe any special problems or needs your child has.

32. What does your child do to entertain him/herself?

33. Describe how your child has demonstrated an interest in social, moral and ethical issues.

34. Why do you think your child needs this type of program?

**Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy
Teacher Nomination**

Student's Name _____ Date _____
 Current Grade _____ Age _____
 Teacher Signature _____ School _____

Some questions have two parts. The descriptions in italics represent the more difficult aspects of these characteristics. Please only mark one section per question, either (a) or (b), but not both.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Has vocabulary or knowledge in a specific area that is unusually advanced for age or grade.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Has knowledge about things of which other children are unaware.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Gets along well with other children.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Is eager to tell others about discoveries.	1	2	3	4	5
5. (a) Is emotionally sensitive.	1	2	3	4	5
(b) <i>May overreact.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
6. Has a ready grasp of underlying principles and can quickly make valid generalizations about events, people, or things; looks for similarities and differences in events, people, and things.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Is a keen and alert observer; usually "sees more" or "gets more" out of a story, film, etc. than others.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Reads a great deal on his/her own; does not avoid difficult material; may show a preference for biography, autobiography, encyclopedias, and atlases.	1	2	3	4	5
9. (a) Grasps concepts quickly, easily, without much repetition.	1	2	3	4	5
(b) <i>Bored with routine tasks and may refuse to do rote homework.</i>	1	2	3	4	5

18. Please list the child's achievement level in

Reading _____ Math _____

19. Please describe any indications of learning problems or learning disabilities that you have observed in this child.

20. Please describe any behavior problems that you have seen this child exhibit.

21. Please describe the social/emotional developmental level of this child.

Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy is a public charter school that offers full-time educational programming to meet the needs of highly gifted children, ages 5-11. Students will have opportunities to explore the curriculum at a faster pace and in greater depth and complexity than is typically possible in a regular classroom.

22. Do you think this child needs a special program for highly gifted children?
Why or why not?

23. Please include any other pertinent information you think we need to know about this child.

**Please return this form directly to:
Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy, P. O. Box 480268, Charlotte, NC 28269.**

MRSA admits qualified students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

Tests and Testers

The sources listed below are for reference only and are not a recommendation or endorsement by Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian(s) to determine the individual or organization that can best serve their needs.

Charlotte Psychological Services
1300 Baxter Street
Charlotte, NC
(704) 333-1443
Morris F. Britt, Ed.D

Fairview Psychological Services PA
447 S. Sharon Amity Road
Charlotte, NC
(704) 362-2618
Patricia Powell Hundley, MA

Career-Educational and
Psychological Evaluations
2915 Providence Road
Charlotte, NC
(704) 362-1942
Betty Long

Child and Family Development
7006 Shannon Willow Road
Charlotte, NC 28226
(704) 541-9080
309 S. Laurel Avenue
Charlotte, NC 28207
(704) 332-4834

Cotswold Psychological Associates
2915 Providence Road
Charlotte, NC 28211
(704) 365-8662
Janet Athey

ABC Tutoring
700 Wallace Road
Charlotte, NC 28212
(704) 568-1291
Kathleen Hack

If you are getting new testing for your child, we recommend one of the tests listed below. If your child has already been tested with another aptitude/cognitive abilities test, we would be happy to review the results and let you know if that information will adequately assist us in evaluating your child's application for admission. **A full scale, individual IQ test provides the most complete information**, but if you are unable to afford this, you may want to consider the subtests from the WISC-R listed below. MRSA will provide a **one-time** administration of the Otis-Lennon Scholastic Abilities Test (OLSAT) and the Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (NNAT), which are **group** tests. To arrange for your child to do this, please call (704) 571-3838, by **April 28th**.

Stanford-Binet, Fourth Edition

Stanford-Binet L-M

Differential Abilities Scale (DAS)

The Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (NNAT)

Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Third Revision (WISC-III)

Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale for Intelligence, Revised (WPPSI-R)

The Slosson Full Range Intelligence Test (S-FRIT)

The subtests Block Design, Comprehension, Information, Similarities, and Vocabulary of the Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children, Revised (WISC-R)