

Advanced Learning Matters in Re-3J



April 2018

This newsletter is published by the Office of Exceptional Student Services-Gifted with the goal of sharing with parents ways to partner with teachers in promoting high-level learning for gifted and high-ability learners. We'd also like to share learning experiences that currently engage and challenge learners with high levels of thinking, creativity, and production.

BRINGING STRATEGIES FOR GIFTED LEARNERS INTO ALL CLASSROOMS

This year, across the district our GT Liaisons have worked hard to strengthen their knowledge and strategies for working with Gifted Learner's. In addition, they have also made it a priority to share successful strategies with colleagues as well, in hopes of getting more and more teachers aware of and comfortable with trying new strategies within their classrooms. In November 2017, GT Liaison's participated in a professional learning focused on "fast learner's" or students who work through things quickly. Rather than providing "more" work for these students, liaisons were presented with several evidence-based strategies for engaging students who are Gifted. Throughout the remainder of the year, liaison's have put new strategies in place and were asked to share their experiences with their colleagues. A major goal for the district in regards to programming for Gifted Learner's is centered on building more capacity, awareness, and knowledge of best instructional practices among all staff. Some of the other topics we are looking to explore in the coming months and year are: Perfectionism, Atypical Interests, Social Isolation, and Lack of Motivation.

GIFTED LIAISONS are available in each school to answer your question, provide information about the Gifted Program, and discuss your child's needs.

- Hoff Elementary **Carrie Hassebrock, carriehassebrock@re3j.com**
- Hudson Academy **Brenna Morris, brennamorris@re3j.com**
- Lochbuie Elementary **Jessica Dreher, jessicadreher@re3j.com**
- Weld Central Middle School **Deanna Damour, deannatferries@re3j.com**
- Weld Central High School **Cassandra Barfoot, cassandrabarfoot@re3j.com**

HERE'S WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN SCHOOLS!

At **Hoff Elementary**, 5th grade students have been working on STEM projects including constructing incline planes, pulleys and axles, wheels, levers, and coding with computers. They are currently building rovers for Mars out of edible objects. Soon they will be researching STEM careers and presenting the information to their peers.

Hudson's fifth grader's have continued their work with "Gifted Kids' Survival Guide". This seminar has been a wonderful opportunity for the 5th grade students to work on their affective goals from their ALPs as well as spend time with students who they can relate to and who challenge them on a deeper intellectual level. Hudson is fortunate to have such wonderful 5th grade teachers (Nathaniel Nelms and Avery Butler) who are willing to be flexible and give time and opportunities to the gifted students they service in their classrooms.

Lochbuie offers an after school STEM club for creative thinkers. Third grade has been implementing the "Jacob's Ladder Reading Comprehension Program". This is used when working in small groups in order to provide differentiated instruction for advanced learners. Third grade is also offering extension activities for students within the GT "Talent Pool". Those students have an opportunity to create STEM inspired projects. They are currently working with Robotics.

This month, **High School** students have started their "Think Tank" Journals. Students are asked to take what they are learning in class and think ahead, beyond, and out of the box. Each week, students are given a journal prompt on Google Classroom, where they focus on their strength area class (Math and/or English) and show mastery, depth, and complexity - on their own terms- to learn well and enjoy. This is not meant to be more work, extra credit, or punishment. It is an opportunity to write about what they are learning in a fun way. Students are also expected to share their journal prompts at least once a month to an authentic audience, such as teachers, peers, or parents. Please encourage them to write and share each week! Students will also have the opportunity to share with peers as we start meetings to monitor their progress and struggles. This allows them to share their journal entries and gives them a supportive network of peers with whom they can think with and have more critical and creative discussions with. This strategy is based on best practices for GT education and judging by the responses from students I met with today, they are ready and excited to take on this venture.

Weld Central Middle School students have been working on dissections and learning about body systems and organisms in their science labs. They have the unique opportunity to bring "Transplantation Science" to the school. The goal is to enhance students knowledge of organ, eye and tissue donation and transplantation. This program participation has a significant impact for the nearly 120,000 people in the United States who are awaiting lifesaving organ transplants.



HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY ASPECTS OF PERFECTIONISM

Children who are gifted can be put at particular risk for perfectionistic behaviors, in part, due to achievement expectations reinforced by teachers, parents, and sometimes even peer groups. Perfectionism can manifest in children and young adults in several ways. It is important to be able to recognize and discuss the difference between healthy and unhealthy perfectionistic behaviors so that we can help our children and also teach them how to help themselves. Consider the information below.

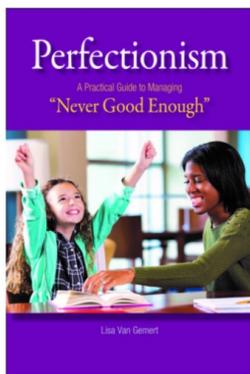
Students who exhibit **HEALTHY PERFECTIONISM** have high expectations for their work and self-confidence in their abilities to stay motivated to complete tasks and ultimately reach their goals.

When students have developed **UNHEALTHY PERFECTIONISM** they may appear overly stressed, avoid taking risks (for fear of failure or disappointment), and procrastinate. High levels of stress and/or unyielding expectations can ultimately lead to depression and anxiety disorders and greater risks for substance abuse or eating disorders.

Here are some **TOOLS FOR PARENTS** to help encourage **HEALTHY PERFECTIONISM**

- ⇒ De-emphasize grades and external evaluations, focus instead on growth and the satisfaction from completing work— especially before the work is evaluated and grades are returned.
- ⇒ Don't be afraid to model your mistakes for your children. Provide examples of imperfection in role models from books and movies and make failure and mistakes a teachable moment and one that is often part of everyday life.
- ⇒ For students who tend to procrastinate, help them create timelines for the completion of work and help them divide large tasks into manageable sub goals.

Find more information and Parent TIP sheets at www.nagc.org



Lisa Van Gemert, or as she refers to herself as “the Gifted Guru”, is an educator, author, speaker, and mom of gifted kids. This is a great resource for parents of children who struggle with unhealthy perfectionism. You can check out more topics and resources on her webpage www.giftedguru.com

Social-Emotional Wellness is Important for All of Us

Unhealthy perfectionism doesn't just affect children who are gifted. Many adults struggle with these issues as well. Dr. Brene Brown, a research professor from the Houston Graduate College of Social Work describes perfectionism as “the 20-ton shield” and although we think it protects us from being hurt or having to face feelings of “never good enough”, it ultimately keeps us from living our lives whole-heartedly.

Check out Brene's interview as it appeared on “Super Soul Sunday” https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/29/brene-brown-daring-greatly-perfectionism-oprah_n_3468501.html

TWELVE TRAITS OF GIFTEDNESS

These Twelve Non-Biased Traits of Giftedness are borrowed from the work of Mary Ruth Coleman, Ph.D. at the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. Not all gifted students show evidence of all these traits which may be demonstrated in positive and negative ways at home and in the classroom. These traits are strengths to be nurtured. While all children show these traits to some degree, gifted students may show them earlier and more intensely than age peers.

- Motivation
- Interests
- Sensitivity
- Communication Skills
- Memory
- Problem-Solving Ability
- Humor
- Intensity
- Inquiry/Curiosity
- Insight
- Reasoning
- Imagination/Creativity

Gifted Webpage with Information for Parents

<http://re3j.com>—>Departments—>Exceptional Student Services—> Gifted and Talented