

East Mountain High School Gifted Procedures & Program

1. Gifted Referral Procedure

The gifted referral process at East Mountain High School (EMHS) is designed to provide an equitable and efficient means of identifying students in grades 9-12 for potential placement in the gifted education program. This procedure is aligned with New Mexico's TEAM manual guidelines while considering the unique student population at EMHS.

Step 1: Referral Process

At EMHS, any staff member, educator, family member, or student may initiate a gifted referral. Referrals are an important step in ensuring that all students have access to opportunities in gifted education. The following outlines the steps for initiating and processing a referral.

A. Referring a Student:

- **Who can refer:** Referrals may be made by educators, school staff, family members, or the student themselves.
- **Criteria:** Referrals should be based on observed strengths in areas such as intellectual ability, creative thinking, problem-solving, leadership, or specific academic or artistic talents.
- **Referral process:** Referrals may be made in writing via email to any teacher or administrator, and such referrals will be forwarded to the Director of Special Education.
- **Notification:** Upon receipt of a referral, the school will inform the student's family and record the referral date for tracking purposes.

B. Communicating the Referral Process:

- **Family Communication:** Families are provided with information about the referral process, including what gifted education entails, and characteristics of gifted students.
- **Staff Training:** EMHS will ensure that staff members are knowledgeable about the characteristics of giftedness and the process for identifying gifted students. This includes recognizing students who may not fit typical gifted characteristics but still demonstrate high potential in less conventional ways.

C. Initial Review by the School Gifted Team (SGT):

The School Gifted Team at EMHS consists of teachers, counselors, and other qualified staff members who are knowledgeable about gifted education and state guidelines.

Responsibility: The SGT reviews all referrals and determines what additional data is needed to build a comprehensive profile of the student's abilities. The team ensures that all potential areas of giftedness are considered, including those that may not be immediately visible.

Step 2: Gathering Evidence for Qualification

Once a referral is made, the SGT begins collecting a body of evidence to assess the student's potential eligibility for gifted education services. Multiple sources of evidence, both qualitative and quantitative, are used to ensure a thorough evaluation.

Quantitative Evidence:

- Standardized test scores, such as achievement on the Pre-SAT, STAR reading or math tests, or other statewide assessments, as appropriate for high school students.
- Any extant formal or informal performance assessments that measure the student's capabilities in problem-solving, critical thinking, and specific subject areas.

Qualitative Evidence:

- Observations of the student's classroom performance, work samples, and relevant anecdotal information.
- Input from teachers, family members, and the student themselves to provide a fuller picture of the student's strengths.

Step 3: Communication of Results

The SGT will make a decision to propose to parents/guardians to perform a formal evaluation for gifted based on the compiled evidence. Once the educational diagnostician has informed parents of the evaluation process and methods, parents will be asked to sign an informed consent form for the evaluation.

If the compiled evidence leads the SGT to believe a gifted evaluation is not in order, a prior written notice will be issued to parents/guardians, and the student will be referred to the EMHS talent pool wherein they can access much the same opportunities as a gifted student.

2. Eligibility for Gifted Education

To determine eligibility for the gifted education program at East Mountain High School (EMHS), the educational diagnostician assesses students' abilities across the six key areas of giftedness. The eligibility process includes gathering both qualitative and quantitative evidence, guided by the New Mexico Gifted Education Technical Assistance Manual.

Once a referral to the educational diagnostician is made, the SGT works to build a comprehensive body of evidence to assess eligibility. This includes both test scores and qualitative data, such as teacher observations and student work samples. If a student meets the qualifications in any of the six areas, they are referred to the Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) team for further planning.

If a student does not meet the criteria for immediate qualification, they may be placed in the EMHS Talent Pool, where their progress will be monitored. The Talent Pool provides ongoing support for students who show potential and require or desire extra enrichment opportunities while at EMHS.

3. Program Model

The gifted education program at East Mountain High School (EMHS) is a collaborative effort involving school administrators, teachers, and gifted education providers. It is designed to meet the unique needs of gifted students in grades 9-12, providing opportunities for academic, creative, and social-emotional development in alignment with the New Mexico Gifted Education Technical Assistance Manual.

At EMHS, gifted services are delivered through a combination of challenging academic coursework and enrichment opportunities, offering students the flexibility to pursue their talents and interests. The program includes both in-class differentiation and extracurricular activities designed to enhance learning.

The roles and responsibilities for implementing the gifted education program include:

School Leadership: School administrators oversee program implementation, ensuring that gifted students' needs are met, and teachers are supported in delivering appropriate instruction.

Classroom Teachers and Gifted Education Providers: Teachers differentiate instruction in the classroom and collaborate with the School Gifted Team (SGT) (including student's case manager) to monitor student progress. Gifted education providers may offer additional support when students require more specialized services.

Academic Services for Gifted Students

Gifted students at EMHS have access to a variety of challenging and enriching academic and extracurricular activities, including:

Opportunities in the Classroom: The Gifted IEP team considers student needs for enrichment in the classroom. These can include opportunities for extended depth of research, choice of research subjects, choice of project outcomes, choice of projects to work on after having completed assignments, and other opportunities for deep learning and creative expression.

Honors and AP Classes: EMHS offers a range of honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Honors classes cover more complex content at a faster pace and in greater depth, while AP courses offer college-level material and may provide opportunities for college credit. Although these classes are not specifically designed for gifted students, they offer the academic rigor that many gifted students seek.

Competitive Academic Teams: Speech & Debate, Robotics, MESA, Student Council, Model United Nations, and Youth & Government: These competitive programs offer opportunities for students to develop leadership, critical thinking, and collaborative skills.

Clubs and Leadership Programs: Students can participate in the National Honor Society, Diversity Club, SAGA (Sexuality and Gender Awareness), the Recording Arts Music Program, Chess, and more. EMHS encourages students to create their own clubs based on personal interests.

These academic & extracurricular options provide gifted students with avenues to explore their passions, develop leadership skills, and engage in creative problem-solving beyond the classroom. The above opportunities are available to any EMHS student, and students in the talent pool are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these programs.

Case Management: EMHS gifted students work with their case manager to develop goals and to meet them, to discuss post-secondary planning, and to navigate their growth as a student during their four years of high school.

Self Advocacy and Self Knowledge: Gifted students take the lead in both drafting their annual IEP and in running the meeting. They gather feedback from teachers and self-assess their progress toward goals.

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Standards: The gifted education program at EMHS follows the standards set by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), ensuring that all stakeholders contribute to the academic, social, and emotional growth of gifted students. Ongoing professional development for staff supports the implementation of best practices.

In summary, EMHS is committed to fostering an inclusive and challenging program that meets the diverse needs of its gifted students, ensuring they have the opportunity to thrive in both academic and extracurricular environments.