



Heather Baskin, Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Programming at D51

Table of Contents

Important Dates	Page 1	Passion Project—Thunder Mtn	Page 2	Ideas for Newsletter	Page 3
Letter from the Coordinator	Page 1	Want More Information?	Page 3	Opting Out Questions	Page 4
Many Faces of Gifted	Page 2	GT Survey Winners	Page 3	Student Work	Page 5 & 6
				Bank of Colorado Winners	Page 6

Important Dates

Early Access Applications accepted for highly gifted 4 & 5 yr olds

Due by Feb 28, 2018
GT Office Emerson Bldg.
East Modular

PSAT 8/9 can be taken by grades 3-6

Tests—Feb 10. Test will be taken at Basil T. Knight Bldg.

GT Scholarship Due Date

February 20, Before 4 pm
GT Office, Emerson Bldg.
East Modular

MS Scholastica Tournament

March 2,
10 am
Bookcliff Activity Center

Letter from the Coordinator:

Many of you have heard of the re-organization plan presented by Ken Haptonstall at the school board meeting January 10th. This re-organization applies to the majority of D51 administration (outside of schools) and aims to align our transforming system to the new district mission. These changes will be implemented for the 2018-2019 school year (until then, our current structure will remain). Like many other departments, the gifted department will be changing in the "who" and "how" it supports students, schools, principals, teachers, and parents. This does not change the "what" is supported. The bottom line is to support students and improve learner outcomes. There are still state laws, regulation, and accountability for gifted education. This includes rules for communication, identification, Advanced Learning Plans, programming, accountability, budget, and more. However, there will no longer be a "Coordinator of Gifted Programs" position (again, there are many positions that will be eliminated not just in the gifted department). In the new model, there are multiple positions that will directly and indirectly support gifted.

The timeline currently has all of these positions hired by the first of April and Dr. Haptonstall is planning on regular updates during school board meetings.

He concluded this presentation by saying,

"This is a major shift for our education system. None of these decisions have been taken lightly and considerable thought has gone into the development of a structure that supports student learning. With all the change, there will be hurdles, but we have the capacity to overcome any hurdles and make our system a true performance based system that supports ALL students learning at high levels."

If you are interested in more information, please watch the video presentation from January 10th

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfZo6-omn_0&feature=youtu.be

The Many Faces of Gifted



My name is Lila Mottram, and I am a 5th grader at Tope Elementary School. I was identified as gifted when I entered 1st grade with the district Early Access program.

“Gifted” to me means that I have something special that is unique to me and GT helps bring out that side of me.

At school, I get to learn the way I want to learn. I want to figure out things on my own instead of being shown. PBL (Problem Based Learning) helps me with that. I get a problem and I come up with a solution on my own. In PBL, I was presented with the following problem: How can we protect trails for generations to come? I presented my solution to a panel of experts. In my mind, I thought my solution was viable but, I found out that another group’s solution was more viable because they put up posters. The outcome of the PBL was very interesting to me.

A struggle for me is that sometimes school is a bit easy and other times it is more challenging.

I feel my best attribute is that I’m friendly. It is important to me to be friendly otherwise, I would be alone.

I have set academic and personal goals for myself. This year I want to learn all of my multiplication facts. In addition, I want to complete “5 minute math” at home every day to improve my math skills. My personal goal is to complete 52 hikes in 2018.

Passion Project Leads to Drama Club at Thunder Mountain Elementary



Dramarama at Thunder Mountain

By Scarlet Storey, 5th grade

I started trying to write and perform plays in second grade when I still lived in Rangely, Colorado. It was not taken very seriously by the student actors. I was discouraged.

When I moved to Grand Junction, I started working on a play that I wrote called “Our Life of Dogs” as my passion project in GT with my new friends. After the performance of this play, which was presented in front of the entire fourth grade, we asked for questions and comments. One of our classmates asked if we were going to do a play outside of GT so that other kids could participate. We thought this over and decided to start a drama club that rehearsed during lunchtime.

Our first play was called “Rock, Sword, Firecracker,” which was about the fictional origins of the game Rock, Paper, Scissors. During the rehearsal process, we decided that our drama club needed a name. We called it Dramarama.

Eventually, there was so much interest in Dramarama that some third graders, who had also written plays in GT, wanted to start their own drama club, so I helped them get started. While “Rock, Sword, Firecracker” was the last play we did that year, this year we have been able to do a play almost every month. All the plays are run and performed by students. What started as a GT class project has now expanded to impact many more students.

I wouldn’t have been able to do this or even had the courage to try again doing plays in Grand Junction if it weren’t for my amazing GT teacher, Mrs. Mitchell, who helped me start this off. I am very grateful for the opportunity that GT provides to learn and grow in my passion areas.

Want More Information?

D51 GT Website <https://connect.d51schools.org/sites/shared/gt/Pages/default.aspx>

CDE's Gifted Parent's Corner <https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/parents>

GT Survey Winners

In November, we conducted a GT Survey. At the end of the survey, participants were given the opportunity to enter a drawing for books and games. Congratulations to our winners:

Heather McPherson	Teacher	Chance Nichols	Student
Nyalie Craig	Student	Matthew Chacon	Student
Nicole Robinson	Teacher	Maylin Peppelman	Student
Ezequiel Perez	Teacher	Trish Burns	Counselor
Ashton Steed	Student	Marki Lyons	Parent
Jessica Warner	Student	Royce Bair	Student
Mallory Cawood	Student		

What do you want in the Newsletter?

Do you have a topic that you want covered in an upcoming newsletter? Is there a student you know that would like to write an article? Want to share something great happening with gifted students in our district? Want to nominate a student to be featured in our "Many Faces of Gifted" section? Do you know of a student that has written an amazing poem/story or created a fantastic piece of art that we could feature? Have a question about gifted that you would really like answered? Please let us know at bev.jebe@d51schools.org or visit <http://tinyurl.com/D51GTIdeas>.

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Thinking of Opting Out of State Testing?

We are now approaching the time of year when we prepare for the state's standardized test – Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS), also referred to as PARCC. Students and parents frequently groan and wonder what they can do to get out of taking the tests. Often parents consider opting their student out of taking these state-mandated tests. Be sure that you carefully consider your options and their consequences.

When you opt your student out of taking the state's test(s), the schools are missing a chance to see that student's performance on that test. It's a bit like a teacher looking at a jigsaw puzzle with some of the pieces covered up. Those pieces could be simply more of a large blue sky, or it could be some tree branches that do not appear in the rest of the puzzle. Without seeing all the pieces, we are not sure what all is there.

The teachers do their best to plan appropriate instruction for each and every student, but if we're missing part of the data, it's an incomplete plan. When students are being considered for honors math classes in middle school, formal identification as gifted and talented, or Challenge School admission, students without CMAS scores are missing part of their data. We may have to wait longer for the data to appear in other realms (NWEA, STAR, or other tests). The missing data is not considered as a negative factor, but as an unknown factor.

Last spring fifth grade students being considered for 6th grade Honors Math needed to have at least two of the following criteria:

- A 5th grade STAR SS 763 OR i-Ready SS 501
- A 4th grade CMAS (PARCC) Score of Level 4 (Met) or 5 (Exceeded)
- 70% or higher 6th Grade Readiness Assessment

Students missing out on that CMAS score would still have needed qualifying STAR or i-Ready scores and a qualifying score on the 6th Grade Readiness Assessment.

One of the most common methods of formal identification as gifted and talented requires a cognitive test score of 95th percentile or above and at least two different measures from criterion- or norm-referenced achievement tests, norm-referenced observation scales, and/or a qualifying performance evaluation. A Level 5 score on CMAS (Exceeded Expectations) would count as a qualifying score. Without that score, we would have to wait for another qualifying score.

Another consideration is the opportunity to prepare your student for high-stakes testing in high school. CMAS is an opportunity for students to try out an intensive online test without all of the negative consequences. A former Appleton teacher was famous for coaching his students on upcoming tests with these words: "Let's celebrate! It's a test! It's an opportunity to show what you know!"

The decision is yours, but I would encourage you to carefully consider all of the factors.

Sue Jerome
Gifted and Talented Teacher
Appleton/Chatfield Elementary Schools

Student Work—Short Story

Writing by Coco, 5th grader, Broadway Elementary

Sunlight snaked through the thick canopy, dust particles dancing in its rays. I was ripping leaves from the limbs of a tree, taking my leisurely time. No predators came very near to the forest, as it was crowded with many herbivores, too many to handle. Occasionally a small group of raptors would approach, believing they stood a chance, being just shy of a dozen in number.

A fleck of something glowing landed on the leaf in front of me. I watched as it went out like a ripple, devouring the leaf, leaving the edges charred black. The smell of burning met my nostrils, an unnerving smell.

I whipped around, breaking into a gallop. I was at the pond in no time, looking around frantically for my father, who was next in line to be the group's leader.

"Shane?"

"What's up with him?"

"What's going on?"

I was oblivious to the confused and questioning looks I was receiving. My father emerged from the gathering, making his way through the crowd towards me. He was moss green, with the same coloured plates I had. "Shane, what's going on?" I paused, causing most of the herd to move closer in anticipation, waiting. "A spark. I saw a spark. Dad, do you think the volcano could be erupting?"

My suggestion caused an uproar. "That's outrageous! It hasn't erupted in at least a thousand years!"

"Is it true? Could the volcano be erupting...?"

"Absurd. That's a kid with too lively an imagination."

The scent of burning still lingered in my nostrils, the pond bed which I stood upon soft under my feet. I continued to hear the murmuring, watching as dinosaurs crowded into groups. "Silence!" Everyone turned to my father. "We must ask Patrio what he thinks of this." almost as if being summoned, a large green-gray Camarasaurus emerged from the trees. The gathered dinosaurs fell back, making a path and lowering their heads in bows.

"Patrio-" Patrio interrupted my father, calmly stating his words. "I have been listening my colleague." Heads turned up from their bows, waiting impatiently for answers. "And I believe the volcano's eruption could be upon us. It could be true." he disappeared back into the trees without another word. I didn't know much about him, but he fascinated me.

"He's so old he's probably gone mad. The volcano isn't gonna erupt!"

"Are you so sure? It could erupt." One muttered.

"Stop being such a worry wart. It'll be fine..." I watched as two gossiping parasaurolophus' walked away.

The sudden roars of fright and horror answered everyone's skepticism about the volcano. I galloped to the edge of the forest, watching hazy shapes flee from the edges of the great mountain, whose peak was steaming dark grey smoke. The smoke rose like a storm cloud, blocking out the sky. Rubble and debris flew from its top. It wouldn't be long till lava would be flowing down its sides. I had to get them somewhere safe. I rose my beaked-head towards the sky, a roar erupting from deep in my chest. It echoed over the valley, and other herbivores looked towards the sound, moving towards it. I felt pride swell in my chest, I had just called a meeting.

"This meeting was held by a juvenile?" Disgruntled agreement rose up. "We don't have time for juveniles to joke around, this is serious business." others began to turn away, ready to leave. "Wait!" I called after them. They paused, turning around. "I have a plan. To save us from the volcano erupts." a skeptical ankylosaurus spoke first. "We're listening kid, don't waste our time." his face was so expressionless, it looked as if it was carved from stone. I inhaled, then exhaled slowly. "Alright. We must go to the Great Plains, and wait out the eruption. It's separated from here by a ridge, which should block off the lava if it even gets that far."

Once again, I heard disagreement. "Fine. Whoever agrees with me, stand behind me. Whoever disagrees, stand opposite of me." the dinosaurs shuffled about, and I was surprised to find Patrio ambling towards my side. "New times call for change." he announced. Adults seemed appalled, most of them standing on the opposite side. Some hesitated, before making their way over. "Patrio's right, no matter how much I hate to admit it." grumbled an exasperated female, huffing as she came to my side.

Gradually, almost everyone had come to stand behind me. Only around three other plant eaters remained. "I will not leave my home." One declared, picking up his foreleg and slamming it down onto the ground in emphasis. A triceratops stepped forwards from the opposite side, seeming hesitant and torn between which side to choose. She seemed to consider, her eyes glazed over with thought, as she sauntered over to our side. 'Yes!' I thought, overflowing with joy, which I struggled to contain. "We leave at sunset. Meet at the canyon." I stated firmly.

I was nervous, leading them towards the wall of mountains. Our footsteps thrummed the ground, and we moved as one living, breathing creature towards the ridge. The ground began to slope upwards, and i continued on, swelling with pride. Everything was going great, until we had to cross the cliff face. Some dinosaurs needed to be ushered on. Even so, we made slow

(Continued next page)

Student Work—Short Story *(continued)*

progress. When night fell, we wouldn't be able to see, and the group could slip and fall. "Come on! You can do this!" I assured them, knowing there wasn't much else I could do.

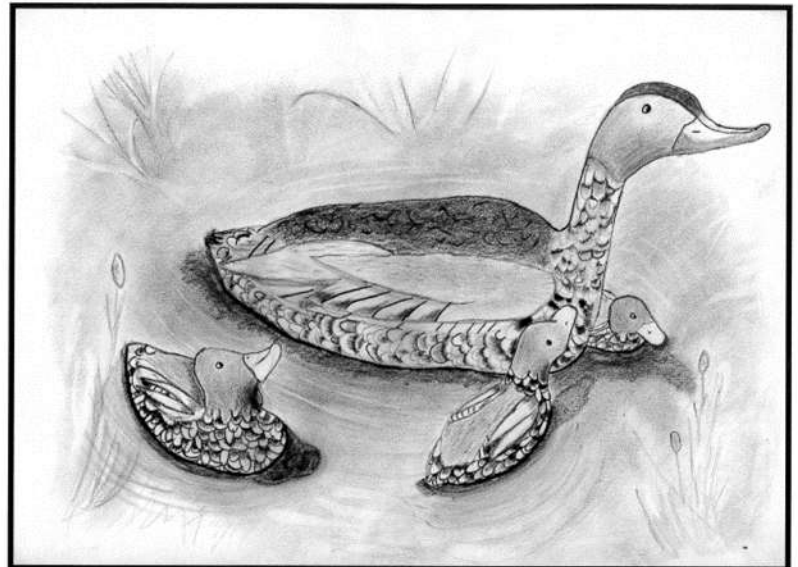
We managed to clear the cliff face, with a wavering slimmer of the sun left. Pinks, oranges and yellows cascaded across the sky, purples following close behind. The peak was close, and the descent down would most likely be easier. I couldn't help but release a breath of relief when we reached the top. Others had stopped in awe. "Look!" I heard someone exclaim. I swung my head over. There was the Great Plains! The sunset reflected off the water pools, making the plains seem like even more of a safe haven.

Low and thick trees dotted the landscape, sticking out like sore thumbs. The view of the plains compelled the group, and they rushed down the mountain ridge in haste, towards their new home. I ran down the ridge, at a fast gallop among the others. Other, foreign-looking dinosaurs looked up in surprise, making way, and greeting us with friendly hellos. The grass waved to us, as welcoming as the foreign dinosaurs around.

GT Students Win Bank of Colorado Calendar Competition

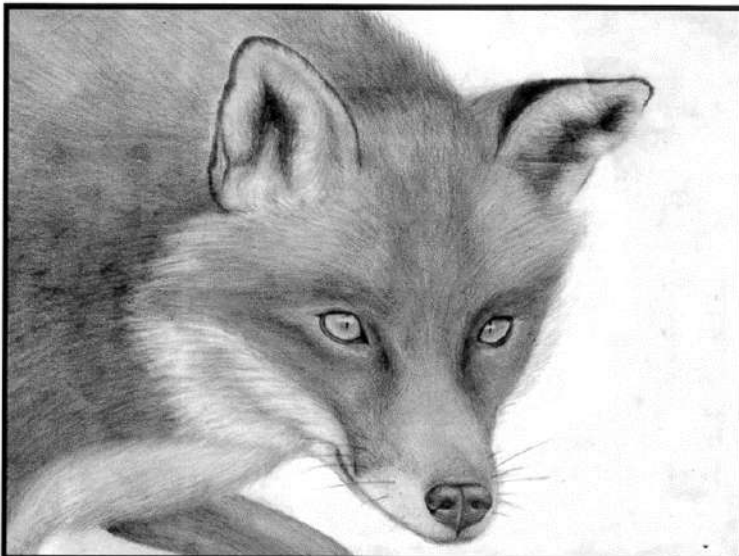
Congratulations to these three GT students who won first place in the Bank of Colorado Calendar Competition. Copies of the calendars with all the first place winners can be found at most schools and at Bank of Colorado locations.

Sofia Reece 5th Grade—Wingate Elementary



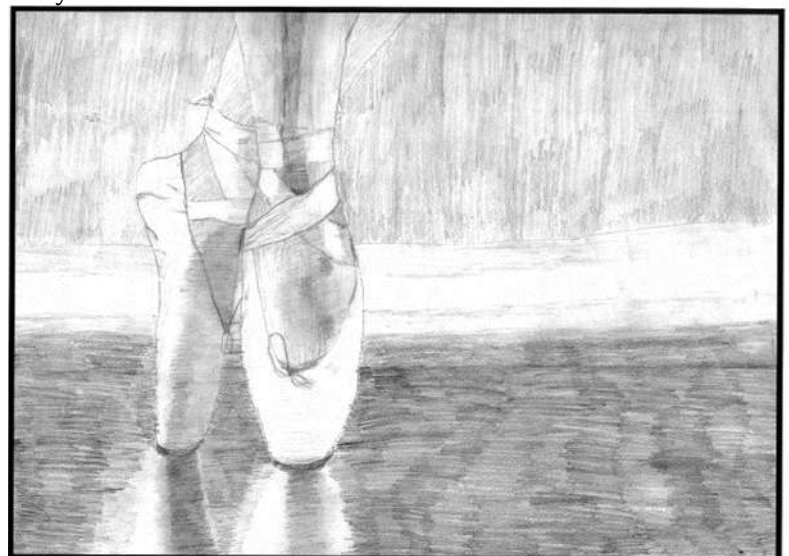
Sofia Reece 5th Grade - Wingate Elementary School

Natalie McConnell 12th Grade—Fruita Monument HS



Natalie McConnell 12th Grade - Fruita Monument High School

Maya Znamenacek 7th Grade—East Middle School



Maya Znamenacek 7th Grade - East Middle School