

Knox County R-I School District
Programs and Services Evaluation Form

Program: SPARK program for Gifted/Talented

Person(s) responsible: Betsy Ayers

Number of Employees: Certified: 1 Teacher Non-Certified_____

Number of students enrolled/participating in the program: 27 students (grades 1-8)
in 2012-13

Program: Local _____ State _____ Federal _____

Goals and Objectives (Can it be measured with data?):

The overall goal of our gifted program is to identify gifted students and provide a differentiated curriculum to them; that is, to provide a program emphasizing higher levels of thinking and student investigation of material either in greater depth or range than what is taught in the regular classroom. Student objectives include developing improved critical thinking and problem solving skills, motivation, creativity, and communication skills.

Evaluation Criteria (What gauges success?):

SPARK units are evaluated by pre and post tests, quizzes and often performance evaluations of projects and classroom challenges. A yearly SPARK Evaluation ranked checklist is administered to each SPARK student regarding academic and personal skills that involves both student self-evaluation and teacher evaluation.

Types of data collected: (Check all areas that apply)

- Surveys of staff, community, students, business
- Standardized assessments, assessment statistics
- Longitudinal performance data
- Participation or placement rates
- Financial revenues/expenditures
- Internal evaluations by staff
- External evaluations by others
- Attendance rates
- Dropout rates
- Suspension/expulsion/discipline rates
- Participation rates in co-curricular/extracurricular activities
- Special program participation rates
- College/vocational attrition rates
- College/vocational completion rates
- Student attitude and interest surveys
- other

Procedures used to evaluate the collected data:

Teachers are surveyed regarding gifted students when those students enter the gifted program (Teacher Nomination Form) and periodically thereafter (Teacher Opinion Survey). Parents are periodically polled using the Parent Opinion Survey and data is also collected from students on the SPARK Student Questionnaire, Interest Surveys, the SPARK Student Program Evaluation and in class discussions. The gifted education teacher tracks students nominated and tested for SPARK, SPARK participation, attendance and drop-out rates for SPARK, and borderline students who may have the opportunity to test again for SPARK.

Who collects the data? Betsy Ayers

Who reports the data? Betsy Ayers

Who analyzes the data? Betsy Ayers and Nancy Goodwin

Success of program based on the data (benefits):

Student Year-End Surveys were positive. The majority of students felt the time they spent in SPARK was about right and that the work they were expected to do was challenging, but appropriate. Students gave positive feedback on some themes for this year including “Shakespeare” (8th grade), and “Greek Mythology” and “Architecture” (grades 4-7). Student feedback is taken very seriously and student and other teachers’ ideas are regularly incorporated into the program to help insure student participation.

Another way to judge the program is by active student participation in area and state competitions and in presentations at our own school: 7th and 8th grade participated in the Stock Market Game (1st and 2nd place in our district) and all students in both 7th and 8th grade entered the InvestWrite Essay contest that connects well to the Stock Market Game. SPARK grades 6-8 competed in the MACC Robotics Day Challenge winning top honors (Grand Champion and Runner Up). All SPARK students in grades 7-8 entered the ‘Creative Communication’ Poetry Contest this April with eight out of the nine students being notified that their poem was chosen to be published. Elementary SPARK classes made presentations for other classes this year on the subjects of wild turkeys and also Greek mythology in order to apply their knowledge productively.

Recommended changes needed to achieve the goals and objectives of the program:

I am very happy with the operation of the gifted program this year. The two-days-per-week schedule that I have in accordance with my part-time status has served the students well and actually provided more flexibility in scheduling since I was able to come in extra this Spring to work on the time-consuming testing of primary grade students.

One change I would love to see implemented is the continuation of student participation in the MACC Robotics Competition in high school (the contest is open to elementary through high school students). Students get a strong foundation in this technology challenge in SPARK, and would benefit from a continued and advanced challenge in high school.

Action to be taken:

I am pleased that the “A-B” day SPARK schedule has worked well in all SPARK classes this year and plan to continue that schedule in the future.

Offering the MACC Robotics Contest to high school students would require not only finding a teacher sponsor or course inclusion, but also obtaining more robotics kits.

Change made in the last two years:

First grade students who have been nominated for SPARK by their classroom teachers continue meet with the gifted education teacher for at least four classes to increase their comfort level with the type of thinking required on ability tests and myself as the test giver. This has provided a positive experience for these primary students and will be continued.

SPARK scheduling in both Middle School and Elementary has been helped by scheduling SPARK during Study Skills and differentiated instruction time in the Elementary. These class times reduce stress for SPARK students and help guarantee the high level of participation in SPARK by gifted students.

Cluster grouping of gifted students into the same class has grown and definitely helps with scheduling SPARK time and benefits students since they can more easily remind each other of SPARK and of work to be made up and can also contribute to improved self esteem in gifted students.

Student-centered curriculum will continue to be offered in SPARK along with established units; for example the middle school unit last year on “Careers”, “Greek Mythology” and “Poetry” and this year’s “Shakespeare” study and “Architecture” unit were the result of student requests.

Date presented to the Board of Education: May 21, 2013 _____