**PVHS Program Design**

**Scope and Sequence**

**Introduction**

Gifted education is mandated for all Arizona public school districts including charter schools. Each school and district must both identify gifted learners and provide appropriate educational programs and services for gifted learners that are an integrated, differentiated learning experience during the regular school day. A Scope and Sequence is a local school plan for the gifted program and services. The following plan outlines PVHS’ identification process and curriculum modifications which ensure gifted leaners receive the education commensurate with their abilities within the mission and vision of the school. Copies of the policy, scope and sequence are available at the school office.

**PVHS’ definition of a gifted student and gifted education**

PVHS’s definition of a gifted student and gifted education aligns with Arizona Revised Statute 15-779. As noted in the policy statement, "Gifted pupil" means a child who is of lawful school age, who due to superior intellect or advanced learning ability, or both, is not afforded an opportunity for otherwise attainable progress and development in regular classroom instruction and who needs appropriate gifted education services to achieve at levels commensurate with the child's intellect and ability. "Gifted education" means appropriate academic course offerings and services that are required to provide an educational program that is an integral part of the regular school day and that is commensurate with the academic abilities and potential of a gifted pupil.

The PVHS special education department oversees the design of the instruction and resources provided to a gifted student.

**Philosophy and goals for the PVHS gifted program**

The philosophy of the PVHS gifted program is to provide services that match each identified gifted student’s academic abilities and potential as well as their unique social and emotional needs. The overall goal at PVHS is that every student demonstrates continual growth in academics, vocational and life skills, and career and college standards mastery. Specifically the PVHS gifted program delivers a course of study that represents the needs, diversity, and mission of our school, educating teachers in the unique needs of gifted students, and collaborating with classroom teachers to ensure their practices are responsive to diverse gifted learners. The learning environment provides relevant opportunities for all, especially as they connect to careers and employment. It also provides effective instruction that enables students to meet and exceed AZCCR Standards. PVHS takes pride in establishing an environment where all members embrace diversity, leadership and accountability. The learning environment of PVHS promotes a culture and system of collaboration with staff, student, family and other relevant stakeholders. In May, 2015, PVHS was again accredited as an excellent school in implementing its mission, and supporting the individual academic and vocational success of students of all abilities and educational backgrounds.

**Grouping and delivery of services to PVHS students**

PVHS ensures that programs and services for gifted pupils are provided as an integrated, differentiated learning experience during the regular school day. Most often a student receives instruction in very small classes with students at varying levels where the teacher provides opportunities for differentiated learning based on demonstrated performance in class. A continuum of services is available which includes enriched or accelerated coursework, advanced electives or individualized vocational placement options. Youth Specialists are also available to assist individual gifted students with social service needs to enable them to attend classes daily and overcome barriers which previously kept them from maximizing learning opportunities.

Learning starts with the PVHS core curriculum and outcomes. Instructional strategies for all students focus on higher order thinking skills and, when appropriate, those tailored for the gifted student provide more advanced concepts, challenging applications, and additional courses. Teachers present information in a variety of ways including, but not limited to visual, kinesthetic and auditory. They encourage students to respond and “show what they know” in a variety of ways, e.g., projects, presentations, new applications, and/or models.

**Integration of the PVHS gifted program standards with the Arizona College & Career Readiness Standards.**

When writing and planning curriculum maps, teachers embed the Arizona College and Career Readiness Standards (AZCCRS) within the program’s objectives and outcomes. This approach allows all students access to curriculum and instruction with rigor at an appropriate level to meet their needs. PVHS’ innovative and highly successful vocational and career program provides an intensive and individualized portfolio and internship based curriculum that includes a wide range of year round career experiences. Classroom instructors and highly qualified workplace mentors challenge gifted and other students to maximize their potential within real world applications. Gifted students participate in both formal and informal formative and summative assessments on a regular basis and partner in evaluating their own goals and program.

**Involvement of parents/guardians/18 year old students**

Twice a year surveys are sent to parents or guardians asking them to evaluate the effectiveness of the PVHS program for their individual student. This feedback is analyzed by staff and utilized during Professional Development planning in August and January to modify instruction.

During weekly advising classes every student (and particularly the many students over 18 years of age) reviews his/her portfolio checklist, transcript, and academic and career progress. They take advantage of this best practice to discuss, evaluate their progress and suggest, implement changes to their course of study. Family members, guardians, and interested adult mentors chosen by students living on their own will often drop by the small school sites to speak with staff regarding the student’s progress and course of study. At the time of graduation, each senior participates in an Exit Interview during which they are asked to rate the value of the PVHS program and their individual PVHS experience. The School Board of Directors, who approve this policy, include members experienced and qualified in academic and career programs of study.

The PVHS website, maintained and monitored by PVHS Staff, includes a section in which anyone can ask questions, share concerns or may provide information.

**Differentiation of instruction in pace and pedagogy**

Teachers are trained to provide diverse students with differentiated programming. These services involve modification to content, process, product and environment. Training of teachers in this pedagogy starts in New Teacher Orientation, is supported and honed by formal and informal observation, feedback from Administration and monthly Professional Development sessions. All teachers are required to have an SEI Endorsement and be trained in SDAIE techniques. SDAIE strategies and best practices, such as described in Marzano’s, “Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-BASED Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement,” must be embedded in all lesson plans.

Pace and course adjustment in academics is available in computer-based PLATO Learning: Advanced Biology, Advanced Calculus, Advanced Chemistry, Advanced English Literature and Composition, Advanced US History and through Specialized Vocational Placement options. However the most important element determining pace and pedagogy is the selection of teacher candidates, and year round training of current teachers based on their demonstration of differentiation of instruction for each of their students daily. This is core to the mission and vision of PVHS.

**PVHS Curricular materials utilized for grades 9-12**

Curriculum maps used by every teacher describe in detail the higher level learning objectives, content, application, and assessment for students. Progress is based on demonstrated mastery by each student. The small classes enable the teachers to be intensely involved in utilizing any and all resources to assist students to learn and perform up to their highest abilities.

In addition to the classroom curriculum, each Advanced PLATO course provided within the Edmentum online educational system, provides appropriately levelled and contextually relevant text, materials and resources. Individual teachers provide additional enrichment and extension activities that are both teacher and student driven.

**PVHS process for the identification of gifted students**

Gifted students are identified in several ways. Students may be referred by parent, guardian, teachers, peers, or themselves.

PVHS utilizes the attached checklist within the gifted identification process to assure consistency of screening.

All students are routinely screened for exceptionality. Parents are notified by formal letter of screening results that are remarkable and invited to participate with staff in educational planning for the student. Prior to testing Consent to Evaluate is signed.

Identified gifted students are served if they score at the 97 percentile or higher in the verbal, quantitative, or spatial areas on state-approved ability tests.

Screening of academic skills takes place within the first 45 days of enrollment of all students and may be requested at any time thereafter. Enrolled students may also be nominated for consideration as a gifted pupil by parent/guardian, teachers or peers; and they can nominate themselves.

Teachers/site teams may complete the “PVHS Gifted Characteristics Checklist” adapted from Dr. Joseph Renzulli’s “Scales for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students.” Other evidence in support of the student’s abilities is considered, for example, grades and current and past performance, past and current school records, standardized testing results, portfolios, authentic work samples, as well as an interview with the student. Additional meetings with staff, student and/or parent may be held.

The special education department including the school psychologist, after reviewing the existing data, may choose instruments from the Arizona Department State Approved Test List for the Identification of Gifted Students in Arizona**.** A student who sores at or above the 97th percentile on a standardized cognitive abilities test may qualify.The choice is guided by the assessments that the Team agrees will best measure a particular student’s talents, regardless of the individual student’s primary language, education, cultural or socio-economic background, 504/IEP/ELL status. Examples include, the Wescher Intelligence Scale for Children, 4th Edition, Woodcook-Johnson Test of Cognitive Abilities, Bateria IIIWodcock-Munoz Pruebas de Hailidades Cognitivas, or the CogAT that yield scores in the verbal, quantitative, and spatial aareas. A measure of non-verbal abilities such as the Naglieri Abilities Test 2 may be appropriate and also, the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test or Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scales (GATES).

**Involvement of parents and staff and students in the referral process for identification; Informing parents, staff and students of the referral, eligibility and appeal process**

The PVHS gifted education policy is a part of the Student Handbook and given to all students. It is required that the parent/guardian/ 18 year old student sign that they understand the information in the Handbook. A two-day Student Orientation is held for students before classes start. A broad spectrum of information and services are described in detail at that time. Parents and guardians are encouraged to come with their student and all participants are urged to ask questions. Parents and guardians are welcome at any time to further review their student’s progress. Students themselves discuss their courses of study and progress at weekly advising classes throughout the year.

Screening all students for exceptionality is embedded in the PVHS Policies and Procedures. A professional development workshop describing the characteristics and identification of gifted students is provided to staff. Embedded in the New Teacher Orientation trainings are resources, including the National Association of Gifted Children (nagc.org) website, and the “Coaching Tool for Classroom Supporting Gifted Education” from Project Bright Horizon.

Parents/guardians are notified of the results of any gifted screening by a formal letter that communicates the screening results and invites parents to collaborate with staff to design an educational plan. In addition, staff meets with eligible students and families to ensure they understand the opportunities and services available for their child or for themselves in the case of the individual student. If a parent, student or staff member does not agree that the data fully documents the student’s ability, they may ask for another meeting to discuss further testing or submission of evidence. There is also an appeals process.

The PVHS website is maintained and monitored by PVHS Staff. It includes the policy for Gifted Education. The website includes a section in which anyone can ask questions, share concerns or provide information.

**Providing for the unique affective needs of your gifted students**

Students receive direct and indirect services for academic, career, and personal/social development from the Youth Specialists, staff in the PVHS special education department and PVHS Administration. In addition, staff site teams and specific staff members identify and advocate for individual FOCUS students. Services inside and out of school emphasize: study skills, social skills, self-awareness, career development, goal setting, decision-making and social skills. The PVHS program also provides guidance and encouragement in assisting students in the selection of a variety of vocational placements, in County internships, for example and leadership opportunities within the community. PVHS partnerships with outside stakeholders are also utilized to overcome barriers to the gifted students achieving their potential, e.g.,Youth On Their Own.

**Orientation activities for parents and teachers and students regarding gifted student’s affective needs**

Yearly PD focuses on identification, resources and services for gifted learners.

Literature and other resources from National Association for Gifted Children (nacf.org), for example, are embedded in the New Teacher Orientation and during scheduled teacher classroom observations to refine use with the gifted student.

**Identifying, monitoring, and providing assistance to “at risk” gifted students**

All staff, including special education and classroom teachers, Youth Specialists, and Administration collaborate and meet to plan, intervene and problem solve on behalf of the student. Differentiation and SDAIE strategies are embedded in PVHS instruction. The multi-modal structure requires students to show what they know in a variety of ways. We present and guide students in rigorous content that requires them to answer critical thinking questions, to construct their own meaning, to use models and visual aids, and to incorporate technology. Teachers give positive reinforcement and instructive feedback designed to encourage independent motivation and social and emotional strength.

**Providing opportunities for PVHS classroom teachers, administrators, counselors, and support staff to receive specialized training in working with gifted students**

Under the supervision and guidance of Administration, new teachers are required to participate in the full New Teacher Orientation process and proficiently complete activities on New Teacher Checklist, including those focused on gifted student learning.

Feedback is given from Administration regarding the effectiveness of differentiation in lessons observed. In-service training is provided monthly and twice a year (for a week) to all staff. Most recently all staff was trained in the use of the “PVHS Basic Toolkit” to further solidify the regular classroom use of research-based strategies proven effective with all students.

State-wide, special education teachers are required to attend the ADE Director’s Institute to learn strategies from international experts in instruction such as Carol Ann Tomlinson, Anita Archer, Richard La Voie and Nora Ramirez.

In addition to formal training, there are a variety of scheduled site meetings and informal individual discussions with regard to differentiated teaching, small group work, individual projects and identification of gifted students.

When planning professional development offerings, all requests from staff and other stakeholders are taken into account.

**Assessing the PVHS gifted program effectiveness: data sources and evaluation process including tests, surveys, and teacher interviews**

Parents are surveyed twice a year to rate the effectiveness of the overall program and for individual students.

PVHS regularly analyzes and evaluates data. One source is PLATO reading, writing and math, for example. Student scores are displayed in a number of ways. Comparative tracking includes, but isn’t limited to: progress of individual students, student progress as it relates to individual attendance and student’s completion of coursework.

ELL and 504 students and students on IEPs are compared to their past progress compared to peers, with the rest of the population tested to determine strengths, needs and trends. Individual students are tracked by comparing their own grades and the rate of course completion and credits earned.

**Key indicators that your program is positively affecting students**

Procedures and standards for evaluation of gifted students include performance tasks which meet established outcomes. This includes, for example, progress reports, student reflections and self-evaluations, pre/post course assessments and other on-going formative and summative assessments embedded in the course curriculum, and formal and informal feedback and assessments. PVHS expects all students to master established outcomes.

**Budgeting for the PVHS gifted program**

As part of our efforts to provide in-depth services to all of our students, we leverage funds from multiple sources including local Pima County general funds, state, IDEA and in kind contributions. We give priority within the state equalization funding to ensure that the individual’s academic, vocational, social and emotional needs are met as part of the implementation of our mission.

**District Support**

Our school district, since its inception, has integrated 16 best practices that directly impact the individualization of the instructional program for each student. This is driven by the conviction that these practices support the teachers in their ability to differentiate instruction for gifted as well as all other students. Some examples include classes of 15 students or less, the direct instruction model, highly qualified teachers who teach higher order thinking, interactive collaboration and on-site case managers, etc.