

## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP GOALS FOR GIFTED LEARNERS

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### STANDARD 4: LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

*Learning environments foster personal and social responsibility, multicultural competence, and interpersonal and technical communication skills for leadership in the 21st century to ensure specific student outcomes.*

**4.3. Leadership.** Students with gifts and talents demonstrate personal and social responsibility and leadership skills.

4.3.1. Educators establish a safe and welcoming climate for addressing social issues and developing personal responsibility.

4.3.2. Educators provide environments for developing many forms of leadership and leadership skills.

4.3.3. Educators promote opportunities for leadership in community settings to effect positive change.

### ECEA RULES: 2220-R-12.00 GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENT PROGRAMMING

#### 12.01 (9) (d) Leadership Abilities

##### Definition:

- *Leadership is the exceptional capability or potential to influence and empower people (e.g., social perceptiveness, visionary ability, communication skills, problem solving, inter and intra-personal skills and a sense of responsibility, etc.).*

##### Criteria:

- Leadership is demonstrated by advanced level on performance assessments or ninety fifth percentile and above on standardized leadership tests.

### What is a Leader?

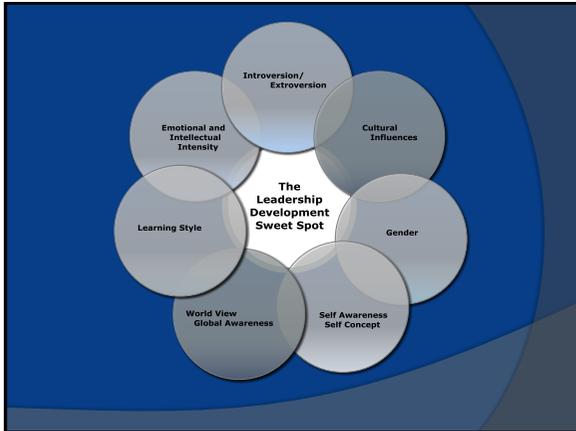
- *Skilled in group dynamics, can inspire others, and relates well to a wide variety of people (Feldhusen & Pleiss, 1994)*
- *Able to communicate well, lead groups in problem solving, structure goals and objectives for a group, and evaluate group progress in achieving its goals (Feldhusen & Pleiss, 1994)*
- *Someone who influences a group to pursue a goal (Karnes & Bean, 1996)*
- "Leadership is found to be an active process and not merely the result of a combination of traits" (Stodgill, 1974, as reported in Sisk, 1985).

- "Leadership can be defined as the ability to direct individuals or groups to a common decision or action. Students who demonstrate giftedness in leadership ability use group skills and negotiate in difficult situations. Many teachers recognize leadership through a student's keen interest and skill in problem solving. Leadership characteristics include self-confidence, responsibility, cooperation, a tendency to dominate, and the ability to adapt readily to new situations" (Center for Exceptional Children, 2008).

- "...it is crucial that any effort to identify gifted leadership abilities includes a strong identification component based on a varied body of evidence sensitive to multiple cultures and populations of students. Leadership can only be improved by using measures that accurately identify persons who display the potential to develop leadership abilities." (Christine Phillips)

### Some Characteristics of Effective Leaders

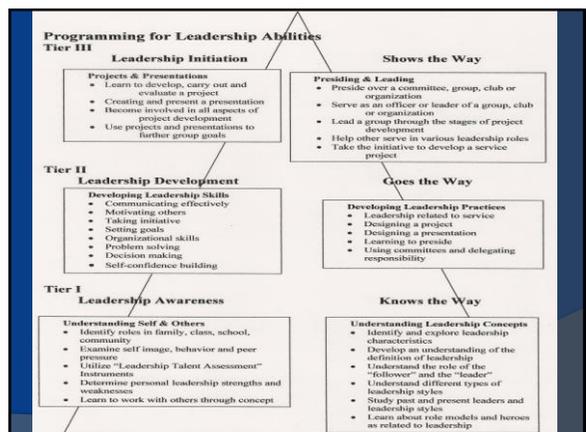
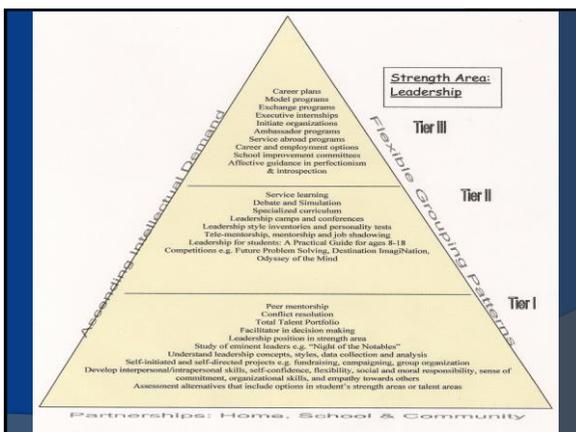
- Curious/Questioning
- Desire to be challenged
- Ability to solve problems creatively
- Ability to reason critically
- Ability to see new relationships
- Flexibility in thought and action
- Understanding of ambiguous concepts and tolerance for uncertainty
- Persistent
- Sociable
- Ability to motivate others
- Communication skills
- Organizational skills
- Self Confident
- Sense of Hope



- ### Characteristics of Social and Emotional Development that Impact Leadership Development
- Intensity
  - Sensitivity
  - Perfectionism
  - Self Confidence
  - Self Perception
  - Self Awareness
  - Sense of Justice
  - Moral Concerns
  - Abstract Thinking Ability
  - Empathy/Fairness
  - Sense of Justice
  - Ethical Expectations

- ### Leadership, the Underachiever and the Introverted Learner
- Provide time for a response to a prompt.
  - Acknowledge, in the group, even small contributions.
  - Expand the acknowledgement later, privately.
  - Value and note not only the perceived leaders but also those who contribute in other ways such as gathering the supplies, making a comment or suggestion that moves the group closer to the goal.
  - Underachievers often lack confidence and strong self concept. Encourage and acknowledge their contributions.

- ### Philosophical Underpinnings of Leadership Development
- Leadership is a developmental process.
  - Leadership is best learned through authentic experience.
  - Leadership education requires awareness, development, and initiation.
  - Leadership skills are best developed through guidance and practice.
  - Leadership is a lifelong learning process.
  - Leadership is best identified through observation.
- From CDE Gifted Education Reference Series: Creativity, Leadership, Visual and Performing Arts, p. 22.



## Strategies for Leadership Development

- **Biographies of Great Leaders** (Education)  
Where they always leaders? What other roles did they play? What characteristics did they have in common? How were their values similar or different? What kind of leadership style did they represent? How did their leadership styles differ? How did they engage other people in their cause? What risks did they take in making their decisions? If the result was not what they expected, what was their response?
- **Fairy Tales** (Education)  
For younger students (although older kids like to revisit these too) read tales from various cultures and genres and ask similar questions as above.
- **Classroom Management** (Behavior)  
Students to take responsibility for classroom set up and organization
- **Simulations and Role Playing** (Behavior)  
Weave them into curricula areas to cover multiple goals. Check out <http://www.interact-simulations.com> for reasonably priced units.

## Strategies (continued)

- **Problem Based Learning Activities** (Behavior)  
Students engage in solving real world ill-defined problems. Sample challenges can be found at the link below  
<http://lib.artsanddesign.queensu.ca/department/education/CEU/ceupage2.htm>  
[www.odysseyofthemind.com](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com)  
<http://www.tspni.org>
- **Moral Dilemmas** These can be presented both in real world problems, simulations, literature circles and other venues. Discussions can help in both hearing and understanding other perspectives, learning to disagree, and values clarification. (Education and Behavior)
- **Service Learning**
- **Science, math, theatre, art, music, writing, community and CIVIC involvement** have built-in avenues for demonstrating leadership of traditionally gifted students through team activities, competitions, contests and the like. (Behavior and Education)
- **Mentorships/Internships** (Behavior)

## Reminders

- Leadership goals must be developed as a result of strong personal relationship between the teacher and the student, with a deep understanding of who the child is, their values, personality, learning styles, self awareness, understanding on where they are on the introversion/extroversion continuum, intensities and sensitivities, cultural background, and other "soft" data.
- Leadership is developmental. Start where the student is now building leadership education and leadership behaviors from that point. *Sarah will work with one other student to organize the costumes for the spring class play.*
- Explore in each situation whether it is the students role to lead, follow or motivate. *John will volunteer on one committee for the school booster club annual fundraiser.*
- A small gain for one person may be as significant as a big leap for another.

## Reminders

- Consider more of a case management model when evaluating potential, especially leadership. A gifted student may demonstrate leadership in another arena beyond school – scouts, 4-H, community of faith, community based athletics, dance or other programs.
- Projects should offer an opportunity for students of different learning styles to benefit equally.
- Opportunities for non-traditional gifted learners (underachievers, emotionally gifted, girls, twice exceptional, minority, poverty, etc.) should be intentionally developed and implemented. *Clara will organize a spring classroom food drive for the Down and Out Animal Shelter.*
- Look at multiple criteria when evaluating leadership potential. Bernal and Reyna (1974) identified several characteristics as typical among gifted Hispanic American children: "They exhibit leadership ability, although often in an open or unobtrusive manner, with strong interpersonal skills."
- Remember the sweet spot.