



## Supporting and Promoting Advanced Readiness in Kids

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## FINDING STRAND RESOURCES



## Strand Goals

- To share the background, structure, and purpose of Project SPARK and its foundation in the Young Scholars Model
- To discuss key elements of the Young Scholars Model and its implementation in various settings
- To explore questions and dilemmas related to early identification and response to advanced potential
- To practice strategies for recognizing and responding to advanced potential in diverse populations



## Project SPARK: Supporting and Promoting Advanced Readiness in Kids

- Focus on **early awareness/identification/intervention** to support high **potential**
- Emphasis at **grades K-2** in schools with high populations from **underserved** groups
- Application/scaling up of the Young Scholars Model in 4 Connecticut school districts
  - *Access* to advanced learning opportunities
  - *Affirmation* of high academic potential
  - *Advocates* for students



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<p style="text-align: center;">Gifted Behaviors Continuum</p> <p style="text-align: center;">← Continuum of Intensity, Frequency, and Complexity of Demonstrated Behaviors →</p>					
Behavioral Areas	Emergent (1) Exhibits and discovers behaviors demonstrated sporadically at times	Novice (2) Application behaviors observed occasionally; acquires and integrates knowledge	Maturing (3) Acquires behaviors observed frequently; extends and refines learning	Independent (4) Synthesizes and evaluates behaviors observed consistently; uses knowledge strategically	GGBRS Connections Student demonstrates exceptional
Perceptive	Recognizes basic patterns in the environment	Applies understanding of similarities and differences	Seeks and examines novel patterns and relationships	Transfers patterns and relationships to new situations; looks beyond the obvious to notice verbal and nonverbal subtleties	<b>Ability to Learn</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Memory</li> <li>In-depth knowledge</li> <li>Persistent intense focus</li> <li>Sensitivity to environment</li> <li>Ability to adapt to new cultures</li> <li>Ability to learn quickly/easily</li> <li>Acquisition of a new language</li> <li>Ability to independently make connections</li> </ul>
Strategic	Employs informal thinking strategies to solve problems	Investigates alternative solutions to problems	Analyses situations, searches for additional information, and diligently works to find solutions to problems	Analyses and researches potential solutions, tests theories, and verifies multiple conclusions to complex problems	<b>Application of Knowledge</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reasoning skills</li> <li>Problem solving strategies</li> <li>Ability to interpret symbols</li> <li>Understanding of abstract concepts</li> <li>Technology skills</li> <li>Ability to transfer learning to other situations</li> <li>Communication through the arts</li> </ul>
Communicative	Expresses ideas simply but clearly	Expands on ideas and provides additional information	Expands on ideas, compares and contrasts, and gives examples	Introduces and elaborates on complex ideas, providing examples, counter-examples, and inferred characteristics	<b>Creative/Productive Thinking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See the familiar in unusual ways</li> <li>Ability to think independently of peers</li> <li>Inventive skills</li> <li>Fluency and flexibility in thinking</li> <li>Expression of ideas, feelings, and beliefs</li> <li>Sense of humor</li> <li>Generation of new ideas</li> <li>Ability to perceive and manipulate patterns</li> </ul>
Resourceful	Recognizes and uses available resources to complete a task	Completes tasks using available resources in a traditional manner	Adapts resources to use in a new and different way	Draws from experiences and transfers understandings to new situations, situations	<b>Motivation to Succeed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to lead groups</li> <li>Ability to meet personal and academic challenges</li> <li>Independent exploration/research skills</li> <li>Adult conversation skills and pose</li> <li>Sense of irony</li> <li>Adaptation skills</li> <li>High standards in areas of strength and interest</li> <li>Initiative, self-direction, and confidence</li> </ul>
Creative	Explores ideas and materials freely	Expands on ideas and adds details	Uses fluency and flexibility to view ideas in new and unusual ways	Demonstrates innovative ideas to show new relationships and uses	
Curious	Asks questions on topics of interest	Demonstrates curiosity and actively seeks new ideas	Asks deep questions to initiate investigation and meaningful dialogue	Asks complex questions to explore, test, and evaluate sustained investigations	
Leadership	Interacts effectively with others on assigned tasks	Initiates ideas and is sensitive to the contributions of others	Refines and extends the idea of others to build and foster the talents of a group	Organizes groups in various settings to implement plans of action, seeing complex tasks through to completion	
Resilient	Remains on task when faced with a difficult task	Demonstrates ability to work through difficult times in and out of the school environment	Recovers quickly from environmental and personal challenges	Endures strength in times of personal hardship and maintains integrity	

## Sample Lesson: Colorful Categories



## Lesson Features to Note

- Critical/Creative Thinking Strategy Icon
- Behaviors to Observe
- Additional emphases related to strategies, behaviors, access for language learners, etc.



## Additional Sample Lessons

- In a group, explore your sample lesson. Consider the following (to share with the group):
  - How does the lesson encourage students to demonstrate evidence of advanced potential?
  - To what degree and in what proportion of students would you expect to see the indicated behaviors?
  - Do you agree with the behaviors listed, or are there others from the GBRS paperwork you would expect?





Nurture Guide Support

## The Model in Schools

Each school tailors the model to the individual needs of the school and community:

- Cluster the students in classes and co-teach
- Multi-age groupings
- Small group meetings, weekly or monthly
- Looping
- School-wide enrichment challenges
- After-school and summer programs

11

## Making SPARK Work

- Slow process of engaging teacher investment
  - Inviting feedback
  - Professional development offerings
  - Summer teaching opportunities
  - Working on increasing understanding of gifted ed fundamentals



## Summer Teachers

District	Summer 2015	Summer 2016	Summer 2017
1	3/3	3/4	3/5
2	2/3	3/4	4/4
3	2/6	3/6	5/6
4	NA	1/4	1/3

- Priority for summer hiring given to K-2 teachers from treatment schools
- Chart at left shows ratio of summer teachers in that category by year and district



## Making SPARK Work

- Managing both expectations and vision
  - Summer program ... and what else?
  - Parent communication
  - Encouraging district investment
  - Working on increasing understanding of gifted ed fundamentals



## Evidence of Effectiveness

- Research Evidence
  - Achievement data in math and reading
  - Identification for local gifted programs
  - Observation data
- External Evaluation
  - Teacher surveys and focus groups
  - Parent surveys
  - Administrator interviews



## Project Accomplishments to Date



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