

## **Pilot Alternative Gifted Identification Procedures for the Maryville Young Scholars Program**

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**Dates:** These alternative identification procedures will be valid from academic years 2013-14 through 2016-17, then assessed for identified students' outcomes in secondary gifted programs.

**Young Scholars Schools 2013-14:** Airport Elementary, Johnson Wabash Elementary, Bermuda Elementary (Fergusson Florissant School District, FFSD), and Peabody School (St. Louis Public Schools, SLPS). The model will be implemented in more schools as funding becomes available.

**Vision:** The Maryville Young Scholars Program will provide a state and national model for increasing diversity in gifted education programs so that all children have the opportunity to reach their potential, regardless of family background.

**Goal:** The Maryville Young Scholars Program goal is to identify (K-3) and serve (K-5/6) high ability students from groups traditionally underrepresented in gifted programs including those from poverty (identified as F/R lunch status), Black, Hispanic, Native American, and English language learners to prepare them to enter district gifted programs by the beginning of secondary school (sixth grade).

**Program:** The Maryville Young Scholars model has four primary facets:

- 1) Identification. The top 10% of K-3 students at each school site are identified using a valid and reliable brief ability test (e.g., NNAT2, CogAT) and/or the Purdue HOPE Scale.
- 2) Teacher professional development. Teachers at each school site are offered a stipend for successful completion (A or B, two or fewer absences) of graduate coursework taught on-site and leading toward Missouri Gifted Certification (one course per year) to help them better serve high ability students in the regular classroom.
- 3) Summer and after-school programming. Identified Young Scholars are invited to participate in two summer programs. The first is district-based and solely for the Young Scholars. This program is led by gifted certified teachers for 40 to 120-hours depending on resources. Participants complete advanced and enriched curriculum in the core subjects. The second is the Maryville Summer Science and Robotics Program for High Ability Students where they have the opportunity to learn science, technology, engineering, art, and math curriculum with professors, professional engineers and computer programmers, and gifted certified teachers while working with gifted students from around the St. Louis region and beyond. Junior FIRST LEGO League (JFLL) and

FIRST LEGO League (FLL) teams were also started at Peabody as after-school programs focused on the Young Scholars and are planned at other Young Scholars schools dependent upon funding.

- 4) Parent workshops. Each year, we host workshops for the parents/guardians of the Young Scholars with guest speakers on parenting high ability children and on college access.

**Young Scholars Funding To Date:** Direct funding sources: The Saigh Foundation: \$72,500 (2011-present); The Dana Brown Charitable Trust: \$100,000 (2012-14); Emerson: \$30,000 (2013-14). Other funding sources: The Trio Foundation: \$2350 (for the JFLL and FLL teams in 2012); The Parsons-Blewett Memorial Scholarship Fund (tuition for SLPS teachers valued at approximately \$34,000 to date); SLPS and FFPS (transportation, meals, classroom space for the Young Scholars in district-based summer programs), Maryville University's Summer Science and Robotics Program (MSSaRP) (approximately \$10,000 in annual scholarships for Young Scholars to attend); and the Ryan Howard Foundation (\$2000 for transportation of the Young Scholars to the MSSaRP in 2012). Multiple other funding requests are outstanding as of this date.

**Advisory board:** A volunteer Maryville Young Scholars Advisory Board consisting of stakeholders in the Young Scholars Program, gifted education generally, and the education of groups traditionally underrepresented in gifted programs will be formed in the fall of 2013 with the purpose of advising the Young Scholars Program for effectiveness and impact. A special focus of the Board will be to help ensure the success of individual Young Scholars in their potential transition to gifted programs.

**Alternative identification procedures:** By the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade, identified Young Scholars will be identified as gifted if they meet the following criteria:

1. A valid and reliable ability test (e.g., NNAT2, CogAT) within the 95th percentile at the school site (school-based norms) AND a score of proficient or above on the MAP math or communication arts tests.
2. Alternatively, students scoring within the 95th percentile on the HOPE Scale based on school norms and within the 90th percentile based on school norms on a valid and reliable ability test AND a score of proficient or above on the MAP math or communication arts tests.

**Evaluation of the pilot:** The following information will be gathered as part of the evaluation:

- The number of students in the Maryville Young Scholars Program and the number of Young Scholars that qualify as gifted both under this pilot as well as by the current state standard (IQ of 125 or greater) at the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade to enter district gifted programs in 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- Demographic data (race/ethnicity, gender, grade level, Free/Reduced Lunch status)

- Criteria and scores used to identify individuals as gifted (score on the NNAT2, CogAT, or other ability test or the HOPE Scale, and a score of proficient on a math or communication arts MAP test)
- Academic achievement and attitudinal measure: A rating scale, the *Alternatively Identified Gifted Assessment (AIGA)*, will be developed by Dr. Steve Coxon with input from the Maryville Young Scholars Advisory Board and Young Scholars school site stakeholders on the most important measures to be included. The rating scale will be used near the beginning (Sept./Oct.) and ending (April/May) of each academic year to gauge the success and progress of the Maryville Young Scholars identified through this alternative procedure in comparison with their traditionally-identified classmates. The scale range will include: far below peers (-2), somewhat below peers (-1), similar to peers (average/0), somewhat above peers (+1), and far above peers (+2). Both academic and attitudinal items will be included on the AIGA with separate items for each core subject and specialties (such as languages and the arts), motivation and engagement in school, and relationships peers.

Success of the Young Scholars placed in district gifted programs at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> grade will be determined by an overall average among all alternatively identified Young Scholars on the AIGA of -1 or better near the onset of each academic year and 0 or better near the end. These numbers are preliminary targets that may be reevaluated by DESE and Dr. Coxon at the end of each year of the pilot. An average of the four pilot years will determine the overall success of the procedure.