

# Amphitheater School District COURSE REQUEST FORM

## **I. Rationale: justification of need citing data**

**REACH HONORS ELA 11:** Gifted students have exceptional intellectual, academic, and social-emotional needs that may not be met within Honors (AP) English and on-level English courses. Specifically, an estimated 40% of gifted students have been placed at the secondary level due to a visual-spatial reasoning score, with average to below average scores in verbal and/or quantitative reasoning. Gifted visual-spatial learners can access above grade level content and products through visual-spatial content, processes, and products. Therefore, gifted visual-spatial learners may need an alternative approach to traditional English curriculum. Currently, gifted services at the secondary level are delivered through REACH Honors ELA 9 and 10 courses, Honors Seminar, and college & career advocacy. In the second year of the REACH Honors ELA pilot, students and families are reporting beneficial aspects of the programming, including student-centered learning environments, gifted cohorts (i.e. intellectual peer groups), rigorous learning targets supported by student differentiation and flexible practices (e.g. due dates, student choices, visual-spatial strategies, accommodations built into the classroom practices, etc.). Due to the positive feedback and requests for the REACH ELA programming to extend beyond grade 10, REACH Honors ELA 11 presents a suitable option for our existing gifted cohorts to be served according to their unique academic and social-emotional needs. [Related aspects of Gifted Education law in Arizona have been highlighted in passages below.]

### **Article 4.1 Gifted Education for Gifted Children 15-779.01**

**A.** Because it is in the public interest to support unique opportunities for high achieving and underachieving pupils who are identified as gifted, the governing board of each school district shall provide gifted education to gifted pupils identified as provided in this article.

**B.** The governing board shall modify the course of study and adapt teaching methods, materials and techniques to provide educationally for those pupils who are gifted and possess superior intellect or advanced learning ability, or both, but may have an educational disadvantage resulting from a disability or a difficulty in writing, speaking or understanding the English language due to an environmental background in which a language other than English is primarily or exclusively spoken. Identification of gifted pupils as provided in this subsection shall be based on tests or subtests that are demonstrated to be effective with special populations including those with a disability or difficulty with the English language.

**C.** If a pupil who was previously identified as a gifted pupil by a school district or charter school transfers into another school district, the school district into which the pupil transferred shall determine in a timely manner whether the pupil shall be identified as a gifted pupil in that school district. The school district into which the pupil transferred shall provide gifted education to transfer pupils who are identified as gifted without unreasonable delay.

### **A.R.S. § 15-779.02**

**A.** The governing board of each school district shall develop a scope and sequence for the identification process of and curriculum modifications for gifted pupils to ensure that gifted pupils receive gifted education commensurate with their academic abilities and potentials. Programs and services for gifted pupils shall be provided as an integrated, differentiated learning experience during the regular school day.

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### **The scope and the sequence shall:**

1. Provide routine screening for gifted pupils using one or more tests adopted by the state board as prescribed in section 15-203, subsection A, paragraph 15, and section 15-779.01. School districts may identify any number of pupils as gifted but shall identify as gifted at least those pupils who score at or above the ninety-seventh percentile, based on national norms, on a test adopted by the state board of education.
2. Include an explanation of how gifted education for gifted pupils differs from regular education in such areas as:
  - (a) Content, including a broad-based interdisciplinary curriculum.
  - (b) Process, including higher level thinking skills.
  - (c) Product, including variety and complexity.
  - (d) Learning environment, including flexibility.

Current English 11 courses do not address NAGC standards for the needs of gifted students, nor do they fully meet the expectations with AR 15-779. Therefore, an English class pathway designed to meet the needs of gifted visual-spatial learners would more fully support their intellectual curiosity, academic talents and social-emotional needs for validation and belonging. Overall, a English class pathway designed for gifted students would extend the student-centered model, meeting the needs of at least 40% of gifted secondary students. Of particular note is the 2E (twice-exceptional) gifted students with needs in visual-spatial learning, gifted students with two or more exceptions, as noted in an IEP, 504 Plan, and /or parent documentation. The REACH ELA programming intuitively accommodates neurodiverse students at the earliest opportunity. A student-centered model would provide more opportunities for growth and success. The 2E population is estimated at 10% of the gifted population.

### **II. Description: course goals, objective, format, prerequisites**

**Course title:** REACH Honors ELA 11 -- Weighted Grade

**Course Prerequisites:** Gifted Services placement or teacher recommendation

**Course description:** REACH Honors ELA 11 course designed to complement ELA 11 and AP Language & Composition, featuring rigorous critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and collaborative learning, including a visual-spatial platform; writing emphasis to support college preparation in terms of content, structure, and style. REACH Honors ELA 11 offers curricular experiences in American Literature & Composition as a suitable companion to existing ELA 11 options (i.e., ELA 11, AP Language & Composition). REACH Honors ELA 11 is distinguished for gifted learners:

- Collaborative learning through varied discussion strategies, collaborative assignments, and project-based learning.
- Reading through text, film, music, media, and art, (i.e., audiobooks, graphic novels encouraged).
- Student choices in learning products support students to advocate for demonstrating their ability to meet standards.
- Demonstration of student learning through oral, written, and visual products.
- Accommodations are built-in for neurodiverse students who are not supported by an IEP or 504 Plan. (i.e., 'best practices in gifted education').

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- The course refrains from rote memorization, timed tasks, comprehensive testing instruments in favor of process-based learning (i.e., student-centered learning, critical thinking, creative problem solving, and collaborative learning).

**Course objective:** REACH Honors ELA 11 supports gifted students in a pathway to college and career readiness through REACH Honors ELA programming by employing student-centered practices, self-advocacy, emphasis on critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and collaborative learning.

### **Course format:**

Q1: Early American Experience

- European and American myth
- The American Wilderness (Native Americans, the Explorers)
- The American Journey (Settlers, Protestant colonies, Salem Witch Trials)
- Featured literature: *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller (example of text)

Q2: American Gothic

- Dark Romanticism (i.e., Nathaniel Hawthorne, Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, Joyce Carol Oates, etc.)
- Literature & Issues of the Day

Q3: Bright America: Transcendentalism

- The Transcendentalists in literature, poetry, and informational texts (i.e., R.W. Emerson, H.D. Thoreau, Louisa May Alcott, etc.)
- Featured literature: *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and/or *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (example of text)

Q4: The American Dream

- Speeches, letters, informational texts
- The American 'Hero' (i.e., emerging archetype)
- Featured literature: *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry (example text)

**Course techniques:** REACH Honors ELA 11 employs various gifted teaching strategies including: Theory of Knowledge style discussions and applications, Creative Problem-Solving, Depth & Complexity, Personalized Learning Model (Student-Centered Learning), Analogies, Overarching Questions, Art & Thinking, Thinking like a Historian, Interdisciplinary Thinking, & Project-Based Learning.

### **III. ARTICULATION – reference to state standards, specific skills sets, and articulation with other courses**

#### **NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards Programming -**

##### **Standard 3: Curriculum Planning and Instruction**

**Introduction:** Educators need to develop and use a comprehensive and cohesive curriculum that is aligned with local, state, and national standards, then differentiate, accelerate, and/or expand it. Curriculum must emphasize advanced, conceptually challenging, in-depth, and complex content. Educators need to possess a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies in delivering the curriculum (a) to develop students' talents, enhance learning, and provide students with the knowledge and skills to become independent, self-aware learners, and (b) to give students the

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tools to contribute to a diverse and global society. The curriculum, instructional strategies, and materials and resources must engage a variety of gifted learners using practices that are responsive to diversity.

### **Standard 3: Curriculum Planning and Instruction**

**Description:** Educators apply evidence-based models of curriculum and instruction related to students with gifts and talents and respond to their needs by planning, selecting, adapting, and creating curriculum that is responsive to diversity. Educators use a repertoire of instructional strategies to ensure specific student outcomes and measurable growth.

### **Student Outcomes Evidence-Based Practices**

**3.1. Curriculum Planning.** Students with gifts and talents demonstrate academic growth commensurate with their abilities each school year. Educators use local, state, and national content and technology standards to align, expand, enrich, and/or accelerate curriculum and instructional plans.

3.1.2. Educators design a comprehensive and cohesive curriculum and use learning progressions to develop differentiated plans for Pre-K through grade 12 students with gifts and talents.

3.1.3. Educators adapt, modify, or replace the core or standard curriculum to meet the interest, strengths, and needs of students with gifts and talents and those with special needs such as twice exceptional, highly gifted, and English language learners.

3.1.4. Educators design differentiated curriculum that incorporates advanced, conceptually challenging, in-depth, and complex content for students with gifts and talents.

3.1.5. Educators regularly use pre-assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments to identify students' strengths and needs, develop differentiated content, and adjust instructional plans based on progress monitoring.

3.1.6. Educators pace instruction based on the learning rates of students with gifts and talents and compact, deepen, and accelerate curriculum as appropriate.

3.1.7. Educators integrate a variety of technologies for students to construct knowledge, solve problems, communicate and express themselves creatively, and collaborate with others in teams locally and globally.

3.1.8. Educators consider accommodations and/or assistive technologies to provide equal access to learning opportunities with twice-exceptional learners and other students with developmental differences.

**3.2. Talent Development.** Students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth in social and emotional and psychosocial skills necessary for achievement in their domain(s) of talent and/or areas of interest.

3.2.1. As they plan curriculum, educators include components that address goal setting, resiliency, self-management, self-advocacy, social awareness, and responsible decision making.

3.2.2. Educators design learning experiences for each stage of talent development to cultivate social and emotional and psychosocial skills that support high achievement and talent development.

**3.3. Responsiveness to Diversity.** Students with gifts and talents develop knowledge and skills for living in and contributing to a diverse and global society.

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3.3.1. Educators develop and use curriculum that is responsive and relevant to diversity that connects to students' real-life experiences and communities and includes multiple voices and perspectives.

3.3.2. Educators encourage students to connect to others' experiences, examine their own perspectives and biases, and develop a critical consciousness.

3.3.3. Educators use high-quality, appropriately challenging materials that include multiple perspectives.

**3.4. Instructional Strategies.** Students with gifts and talents demonstrate their potential or level of achievement in their domain(s) of talent and/or areas of interest.

3.4.1. Educators select, adapt, and use a repertoire of instructional strategies to differentiate instruction for students with gifts and talents.

3.4.2. Educators provide opportunities for students with gifts and talents to explore, develop, or research in existing domain(s) of talent and/or in new areas of interest.

3.4.3. Educators use models of inquiry to engage students in critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem-solving strategies, particularly in their domain(s) of talent, both to reveal and address the needs of students with gifts and talents.

**3.5. Instructional Strategies.** Students with gifts and talents become independent investigators.

3.5.1. Educators model and teach metacognitive models to meet the needs of students with gifts and talents such as self-assessment, goal setting, and monitoring of learning.

3.5.2. Educators model and teach cognitive learning strategies such as rehearsal, organization, and elaboration.

3.5.3. Educators scaffold independent research skills within students' domain(s) of talent.

**3.6. Resources.** Students with gifts and talents are able to demonstrate growth commensurate with their abilities as a result of access to high-quality curricular resources.

3.6.1. Educators use current, evidence-based curricular resources that are effective with students with gifts and talents.

3.6.2. Educators use school and community resources to support differentiation and advanced instruction appropriate to students' interests, strengths, and academic learning needs.

#### **IV. AUDIENCE – student group (school, grade, discipline) to be served:**

Gifted and Talented 9 - 12 grade students

#### **V. RESOURCES – specific texts, materials, equipment needed:**

**Specific resources need to be determined in a collaborative process; sample ideas are provided here for REACH Honors ELA 11 course:**

##### **Sample Texts:**

**Q1:** *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller – provides student reading aloud (in parts), listening experiences, graphic novel adaptation, and film adapted to the play.

**Q2:** Works of Edgar Allan Poe – adapted in text, graphic novel, film, art, music, media.

**Q3:** *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott adapted in text, graphic novel, film, art, and media.

**Q4:** *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry - provides student reading aloud (in parts), listening experiences, graphic novel adaptation, and film adapted to the play.

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## Sample Materials:

Film, video essays, art, music, media, headphones, audio-with-text books, classroom sets of selected texts, art supplies.

## Sample Techniques:

Kaplan's Depth & Complexity prompts, visual notes, visual-linguistic 'writing,' varied discussion techniques (i.e., Socratic Seminar, Think-Pair-Share, etc.), film and media analysis, student choice boards, alternative learning products, a learning management system where all materials are posted and available, and recorded lectures (as needed).

## VI. OUTCOME – evaluation of course effectiveness

- Students access Honors/AP literary sources and demonstrate learning through a variety of critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and collaborative learning strategies, complemented by visual-spatial and prose products.
- Variety of student learning products within specified objectives
- Student and family feedback surveys
- Student enrollment – students will self-select this course over other options.

## VII. IMPLEMENTATION – timeline to include pilot phase and annual evaluation of proposed course

Stage of Development	Timeline	Details
Research & Development	SY 2023-2024 Summer 2024	Develop REACH Honors ELA 11 framework with REACH ELA team members from all 3 secondary sites
Pilot	SY 2024-2025	Implement REACH Honors ELA 11 at all 3 secondary sites: development team <b>meetings once per quarter</b>
Evaluation & Revisions	Summer 2025	REACH Honors ELA 11 team confers with REACH Coordinator to evaluate the course's success and growth needs
Full Implementation	SY 2025-2026	REACH Honors ELA 11 team refines programing at all 3 secondary sites
Evaluation & Revisions	Summer 2026	REACH Honors ELA 11 team confers with REACH Coordinator to evaluate the course's success and growth needs

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**VIII. PROCESS – how teachers, parents, and students (when appropriate) were included in the decision-making process.**

**The preliminary proposal has been developed by:**

Vanessa Hill: Gifted Education Coordinator, Amphitheater Public Schools

Sally Miller: REACH teacher at Ironwood Ridge High School

**Parent, teacher, student committee members:**

A diverse and collaborative team complements REACH Honors ELA 11 development:

- Family feedback surveys and feedback loop (SY 2023-2024)
- Student surveys in terms of course preferences for ELA 11 (SY 2023-2024)
- Collaboration with REACH ELA teachers (SY 2023-2024)
- Consultation with site administrators and academic counselors (SY 2023-2024)

APPROVAL: \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal**

date

**Superintendent Designee**

date

(NOTE: Must be submitted for Governing Board approval prior to the end of the current school year for implementation during the following school year.)