



**GOVERNING BOARD AGENDA ITEM  
AMPHITHEATER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10**

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**DATE OF MEETING:**      **January 25, 2022**

**TITLE:**      **Study and Approval of new REACH course for 2022-2023**

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**BACKGROUND:**

An evaluation/review of the REACH Program for gifted students was last done in the Spring of 2016. Several recommendations and changes were made further improving gifted education in Amphitheater Public Schools. The changes of adding additional time at the elementary level and a full time REACH teacher at each of our three high schools was a big step.

The current pandemic has brought to light the need to review our REACH program again to support our students. A survey was presented to both students and parents in November 2021. These results will be shared along with recommendations to continue to improve our REACH program in Amphitheater at the January 25, 2022 meeting.

The Course Request for 2022-2023 is attached for study and approval.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

This item is presented for Governing Board approval.

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**INITIATED BY:**

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Tassi Call, Associate Superintendent for Elementary Education

Date: January 13, 2022

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Todd A. Jaeger, J.D., Superintendent

# Amphitheater School District COURSE REQUEST FORM

**Proposed course name: REACH Honors English 9 and REACH Honors English 10**  
**Department/School: REACH- AHS, CDO and IRHS**

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

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 push-in lessons to Honors (Cambridge) English 9 and 10 and pull-out lessons for gifted students in on-level English courses. While the push-in lessons complement Honors (Cambridge) English curriculum and serve high-achieving, non-gifted students in a whole-class service, the pull-out service comes at the cost of missing core curriculum. The result is an inequity of service to the gifted population.

[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.

**The scope and the sequence shall:**

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1. Provide for 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 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 visual-spatial English class pathway would provide a more flexible 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, as well as a secondary exception as noted in an IEP or 504 Plan. 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 English - Weighted Grade

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

**Course description:** REACH Honors English course is designed with a strong visual-spatial platform in content, process and products; writing coach approach to support college preparation in terms of content, structure and style. REACH Honors English employs storytelling as the common component of every unit in order to focus on student ideas, voice, tone, style and expression.

Writing coach process focuses on quality of the writing process, development and growth over quantity of products. The Writing coach process involves a unique approach to coaching writing in students:

- Brainstorming/planning – visual-spatial tools, including collage, sketching, mind maps and visual reels (of relational objects)
- Drafting - embeds imagery into prose; considers graphic noveling; employs dictation with teachers in a coaching session
- Coaching – interwoven into each step are 1:1 writing conferences in which teacher provides qualitative feedback and models traits of writing
- Editing – modeled by teacher in coaching sessions; gradual release of control method in which student adopts proficiency
- Publishing – employs student agency and encourages visual-spatial and auditory components.

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**Course objective:** REACH Honors English supports gifted and high-achieving visual-spatial learners by offering processes that function through visual-spatial learning as well as provide opportunities to produce learning products in visual-spatial modes.

**Course format:** [preliminary proposal to be detailed in a collaborative process]

Q1: Storytelling: graphic novels, animated short stories & illustrated poetry

Writing: Literacy Narrative, Visual Autobiography

Q2: Storytelling: film-as-literature, TV-as-literature

Writing: adapting story-as-film Pitch Project

Q3: Storytelling: art-as-literature, music-as-literature, social media-as-literature

Writing: visual-prose analysis of various works of art, music & media; original podcast or video production

Q4: Storytelling: live theater, plays & screenplays

Writing: original script or screenplay

**Course techniques:** REACH Honors English employs various gifted teaching strategies including: Theory of Knowledge style discussions and applications, Creative Problem-Solving, Depth & Complexity, Personalized Learning Model (Self-Directed 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 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**

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**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.

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

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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 and 10 grade students at AHS, CDO and IRHS

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

**Specific resources need to be determined in a collaborative process; sample ideas are provided here for a grade 10 PILOT REACH Honors English course:**

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

##### **Q1: graphic novels, animated short stories & illustrated poetry**

Graphic novels: *Through the Woods* by Emily Carroll, *The Prince and the Dressmaker* by Jen Wang, *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *Frankenstein* (the graphic novel) by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

Animated Short Stories: available online

Illustrated poetry: *The Complete Illuminated Works of William Blake*, *Classical Poetry: An Illustrated Collection*, *Heartstrings: Poems to Live by*

##### **Sample Materials:**

Headphones, audio-with-text books, art supplies, (more to be determined once texts and activities are selected)

##### **Sample Techniques:**

Visual notes & note taker tools, Learning Management System where all materials are posted and available, recorded lectures,

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### VI. OUTCOME – evaluation of course effectiveness

- Students access Honors/AP literary sources and demonstrate learning through a variety of visual-spatial and prose products
- Student learning journals and reflections
- Each quarter will produce an Honors-level product that can be held in portfolio
- 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 2021-2022 Summer 2022	Develop a diverse team of REACH teachers, English teachers and alumna to detail REACH Honors English 9 with specific texts and products
Professional Development	Summer 2022	Gifted training will be offered to the teachers that will teach the REACH Honors English 9 course in SY22/23
Pilot	SY 2022-2023	Implement REACH Honors English 9 at all three high schools; development team <b>meets quarterly with teacher(s)</b> to mentor process with student products
Evaluation & Revisions	Summer 2023	REACH Honors English teacher confer with development team to evaluate the course’s success and growth needs
Professional Development	Summer 2023	Gifted training will be offered to the teachers that will teach the REACH Honors English 10 course in SY23/24 and any new REACH Honors English 9 teachers.
Full Implementation	SY 2023-2024	REACH Honors English expanded to grades 9 and 10 in all three high schools; development team meets quarterly with teachers to mentor process with student products
Evaluation & Revisions	Summer 2024	REACH Honors English teachers confer with development team to evaluate the course’s success and growth needs

