

PEAK Program

(Personalized Enrichment and Advancement of Knowledge)

Family Information



2025-2026

PEAK Staff

Nicole Davis: nicole.davis@lps53.org

Maia Foust: maia.foust@lps53.org

Kris McArtor: kris.mcartor@lps53.org

Stephanie Palmer: stephanie.palmer@lps53.org

Renee Stirtz: renee.stirtz@lps53.org

Angie Stubbs: angela.stubbs@lps53.org

Melissa Englert, Gifted Coordinator

melissa.englert@lps53.org

816-736-5322

All referenced school district board policy can be found online on the [Liberty Public Schools website](https://www.lps53.org/).
Revised February 12, 2026

Table of Contents

Mission	3
Philosophy	3
Communication	4
Procedures	5
Discipline	5
Primary PEAK Program Curriculum	6
Intermediate PEAK Program Curriculum	7
Depth and Complexity Thinking Strategies	8
Bloom's Taxonomy	9
Characteristics You Might See in Gifted Children	10
Some Challenges of Dealing With Gifted Children	11
PEAK 2nd-5th Grade Priority Learning Standards	12
PEAK Family Resources	16

Mission

Liberty Public Schools is committed to an educational program that recognizes the unique value, needs, and talents of each student. We further believe that each student, regardless of race, creed, intellect, or socioeconomic status, has a right to opportunities that will develop their potential to the fullest extent. Liberty's program for gifted students strives to create a positive environment in which each student has the opportunity to develop higher-level critical and creative thinking skills, participate in differentiated exploratory activities based on individual needs and interests, and enhance a healthy self-concept in order to become a self-directed learner who fully appreciates and utilizes personal potential.

Philosophy

Students who come to school with advanced knowledge and unusual learning capacity need a curriculum that is differentiated and matched to their learning characteristics. Those characteristics include the capacity to handle content at an advanced level and pace, the ability to explore areas in significant depth, the tendency to ask and grapple with difficult questions, and the desire to use leadership abilities to make a difference in the world at large. At the same time, gifted students are unique and as different from one another as they are from the population as a whole. They demonstrate different characteristics depending on their cultural, educational, and economic backgrounds.



Portrait of a Gifted Learner



Image from the [Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Gifted Education](https://doe.mo.gov/gifted/)

Communication

A variety of communication tools will be used to foster a strong parent-to-school partnership, such as phone calls and electronic communications. The school will utilize phone calls or conferences when sensitive information will be shared to protect student confidentiality. Email will continue to serve as an effective means of communication for general, non-sensitive information.

PEAK-Specific Communication

- August: PEAK Back-to-School for 2nd grade
- August: PEAK Back-to-School Social for 3rd, 4th, & 5th grades
- October: Peek at Process for 2nd, 3rd, 4th, & 5th grades
- January: Meet and Greet for newly qualified PEAK students
- March: 2nd Grade Take a Peek at PEAK
- May: 3rd, 4th, & 5th Grades Take a Peek at PEAK
- Quarterly: Elementary PEAK Department Newsletters will be emailed quarterly in October, December, March, and May.
- Individual PEAK teachers will email classroom updates in between department newsletters.
- PEAK teachers can be reached via the email addresses listed on the cover of this handbook.
- For questions related to program-wide procedures, please contact Melissa Englert, Gifted Coordinator, at melissa.englert@lps53.org or 816.736.5322

Procedures

1. **Attendance:** Students are expected to be in attendance each PEAK day unless they are ill or there is an extreme emergency. Please let your child's PEAK teacher know if they will be absent. Guidance about student attendance and absences can be found in the [Elementary School Handbook for Parents](#).
2. **PEAK Transportation:** Students will attend PEAK at Ridgeview Elementary on a designated day of the week. They will be taken by bus to and from Ridgeview on their PEAK day. The bus will arrive at their home school in the morning and take them to Ridgeview. The bus will return PEAK students to their home school in the afternoon for regular dismissal procedures.
 - a. PEAK students are expected to adhere to all district transportation expectations and guidelines. For more information, see the School Transportation section of the [Elementary School Handbook for Parents](#).
3. **Specials:** Students will not attend specials on their PEAK day.
4. **Lunch:** PEAK students will have access to their lunch accounts at Ridgeview. Students can make their lunch choice in the cafeteria, or they can bring a sack lunch if they prefer.

Families are welcome to send a snack with their child on PEAK days since they eat later in the day.

5. **Recess:** In accordance with LPS Wellness Guidelines, 30 minutes of recess will be scheduled for students while they are at PEAK.
6. **PEAK Cancellations:** PEAK classes may be canceled for special events at the district, building, or grade level.
 - a. In the event of inclement weather, PEAK classes will be canceled when Liberty Public Schools are closed. If school is dismissed early due to inclement weather, PEAK students will be bused to their home elementary buildings for dismissal. If a virtual snow day falls on your child's scheduled PEAK day, PEAK classroom assignments will replace your child's regular classroom work. The PEAK teacher will post work to SeeSaw by 8:30 a.m. You will also receive an email with instructions from the PEAK teacher.
 - b. If there is a major building event at the students' home elementary school, it may result in the cancellation of PEAK classes (e.g., Fun Run, Field Day, dress rehearsal for school musical).
 - c. On occasion, PEAK may be canceled for a specific class or grade level due to a special event at students' home elementary school (e.g., a specialized field trip) or PEAK conferences.
7. **Early Release Days:** On scheduled district early release days, students will attend a shortened PEAK day. They will be bused back to their home elementary buildings for early dismissal.
8. **Medication:** If a child needs to take prescription or over-the-counter medication during school, their family needs to collaborate with the nurse at their home elementary building to complete a medication form. Medications must be in their original containers and should be accompanied by a pharmacy label or note from the physician. The nurse at the student's home elementary school will collaborate with the nurse at Ridgeview Elementary and the parents/guardians to ensure the continuity of medical care.

Discipline

The [Elementary School Handbook for Parents](#) provides information about discipline procedures, and these procedures remain in place while students are in PEAK. If a student needs support in developing successful behavior habits, the PEAK teacher and building administrators from Ridgeview Elementary and the student's home elementary school will work as a team to provide the needed structure and support to help students learn how to accept responsibility for their actions. Parents/guardians will be kept informed of any concerns and will be asked to partner with the school in helping their children learn to make productive choices. Student discipline is outlined in [district board](#) policies: JG, JG-R1, JGA-2, JGB, JGD, JGE, JGF, and JGGA.

Primary PEAK Program Curriculum

Personal Growth and Development

Personal Growth and Development activities are personalized to meet individual student needs. Lessons help learners set and evaluate goals, demonstrate grit, improve performance, work effectively in groups, and integrate the knowledge of self, gifted issues, and strategies for personal problem-solving.

Scholarly Thinking

Promoting scholarly thinking through creativity and curiosity develops deep thinkers who ask questions and seek answers. Learners will explore a variety of thinking strategies, such as questioning, inductive and deductive reasoning, FFOE (fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration), SCAMPER, logic, and critical thinking.

Universal Theme

Universal Themes are highly abstract, one-word ideas that can connect across (and within) any discipline.

- **2nd Grade:** Second-grade students will tackle the universal theme of **Structures**. Essential questions will guide the exploration and research of natural and human-made structures around the world and across various disciplines. Investigations of topics under this theme will vary in scope and depth but may include famous structures, natural structures, animal architecture, and biomimicry.
- **3rd Grade:** Third-grade students will gain a deeper understanding of themselves as learners and of their role in a world of the highly interconnected theme of **Systems**. Students are introduced to the framework of systems thinking and investigate the interdependence of natural and human-made systems. Students also learn new metacognitive strategies they can apply to enhance and deepen their appreciation for multiple perspectives and the positive and negative effects of changes over time. Investigations under this theme may include human body systems, the electrical system, animal taxonomy, and others selected by learners.

Math

PEAK math is a personalized learning time that involves choice and voice as students explore numbers in new and complex ways. Students participate in a variety of math investigations, including problem-solving, geometry, real world math, number systems, algebra, and more. Students will have the option to compete in a math competition in the spring.

Science

Second-grade learners will explore Lego Moon Mission, robotics, and simple machines. Third graders will participate in a variety of inquiry-based investigations. Learners will delve into the scientific method and engineering design process through hands-on learning experiences.

STEAM

PEAK students in grades 2-5 take charge of their learning by selecting and exploring a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, or math) area of interest in a hands-on way. Students are responsible for selecting an area of interest, designing their learning plan, seeing it through, and reflecting on their work.

Intermediate PEAK Program Curriculum

Personal Growth and Development

Personal Growth and Development activities are designed to meet individual student needs. Lessons may help students set and evaluate goals, demonstrate grit, improve performance, work effectively in groups, and integrate the knowledge of self, gifted issues, and strategies for personal problem-solving.

Scholarly Thinking

Promoting scholarly thinking through creativity and curiosity develops deep thinkers who ask questions and seek answers. Learners will explore a variety of thinking strategies, such as questioning, inductive and deductive reasoning, FFOE (fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration), SCAMPER, logic, and critical thinking.

Universal Theme

Universal Themes are highly abstract, one-word ideas that can connect across (and within) any discipline.

- **Fourth-grade** students will tackle the universal theme of **Change**. Through the research process, learners will investigate topics in social studies, science, math, and their personal lives, and be given the opportunity to explore a topic of their own choosing.
- **Fifth-grade** students will tackle the universal theme of **Power**. Through the research process, learners will investigate the power of “me,” the power of teamwork, the power of math and science, as well as the power of a question.

Math

Math is a personalized learning time that involves lots of voice and choice. In fourth grade, learners choose from a variety of units: math competition, geometry, CSI math, and real world math. In fifth grade, learners deepen their understanding and application of math in the following units: math competition, 10 things mathematicians and scientists should know but are rarely taught, and algebra.

Science

Intermediate learners will participate in a variety of inquiry-based investigations. Learners will delve into the scientific method and engineering design process through hands-on learning experiences.

STEAM

PEAK students in grades 2-5 take charge of their learning by selecting and exploring a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, or math) area of interest in a hands-on way. Students are responsible for selecting an area of interest, designing their learning plan, seeing it through, and reflecting on their work.

Depth and Complexity

Thinking Strategies



The eleven prompts of Depth and Complexity are designed to move students toward expert thinking. Each prompt is a lens to focus students on a particular aspect of a topic.

Depth: Learners go deeper to uncover more details and new knowledge related to the investigation.

- **Big Idea:** An overarching statement about a topic. Moves students toward abstraction and away from specifics.
- **Essential Details:** The most important aspects of a topic. Moves students away from abstraction and toward evidence.
- **Language of the Discipline:** The vocabulary an expert would use to discuss his/her field. May include acronyms, jargon, phrases, names of tools, or even important people.
- **Rules:** The laws, hierarchies, norms, etc., within a topic. These are things that we expect to be followed. What happens when rules are followed and broken?
- **Patterns:** Details we expect to repeat within a topic. A pattern can break without necessarily creating a problem.
- **Ethics:** The problems, ambiguities, or dilemmas of a topic. Students should be considering pros and cons, resolving issues of fairness, or pondering “what is right?”

Complexity: Learners connect concepts across disciplines.

- **Change Over Time:** Focus on breadth, asking learners to consider how a topic has changed or not changed as time has passed.
- **Multiple Perspectives:** Asks students to consider the same topic from multiple points of view.
- **Unanswered Questions:** What we don't currently know about a topic. What we want to know about a topic. Promotes curiosity.
- **Across Disciplines:** How does this topic represent an intersection of other fields?
- **Trends:** What are the changes in the topic? What forces are causing changes?

*Permission given: Ian Byrd & Lisa Van Germert from Gifted Guild's Guide to Depth & Complexity

Bloom's Taxonomy

Many of the activities in PEAK refer to Bloom's Taxonomy. This is simply a way to "think about thinking". Using Bloom's, we make sure students understand basic information and think at higher levels. Here is a brief description of these six levels.

Remember

This is simply recalling or identifying information. When you define, list, label, or match, you are at the knowledge level.

Understand

As the label implies, you now show that you understand the material. Summarizing, paraphrasing, and predicting are all examples of comprehension.

Apply

This is putting to use what you know, whether it is facts, rules, or principles. Applying rules to a new situation, solving math problems, illustrating, and making charts and graphs are examples of application.

Analyze

Analysis is when you break the material into parts. Comparing and contrasting is probably the most common example. However, you also analyze anytime you categorize, classify, outline, or sort.

Evaluate

Evaluation involves using what has been learned to form opinions, judgments, or decisions. The key here is to use definite criteria. Some words associated with this level are choose, critique, defend, rank, recommend, or support.

Create

When you create or synthesize, you put the parts of what you have learned into a new whole. This might mean you form new patterns or structures, see abstract relationships, uniquely communicate an idea, or create an original product.

Characteristics You Might See in Gifted Children

- **Advanced Language**
Displays an advanced vocabulary and an ability to use more complex language effectively in a variety of situations; naturally uses similes, metaphors, and analogies to express relationships.
- **Analytical Thinking**
Ability to discern components of a whole; strives to determine relationships and patterns in procedures, experiences, ideas, and/or objects. The student may not be "organized", yet enjoys organizing and planning events and procedures.
- **Meaning Motivated**
Shows curiosity and an inner drive for thorough, independent understanding; asks penetrating, intellectual questions, and demonstrates an extensive memory.
- **Perspective**
Displays an ability to understand and incorporate unexpected or unusual points of view through oral language, writing, manipulatives, and/or art.
- **Sense of Humor**
Demonstrates understanding of higher levels of humor and application of a finely developed sense of humor, either through the production of original jokes, riddles, puns, or other humorous effects or through understanding the subtle humor of others.
- **Sensitivity**
Intensely sensitive to the needs of others, demonstrates a strong sense of justice, and sets high standards for self and others.
- **Accelerated Learning**
Demonstrates mastery and an ability to learn and understand material and concepts beyond the facts and knowledge typical and expected for that age group.

Adapted from the *Kingore Observation Inventory* by Bertie Kingore, 1993

Some Challenges of Dealing with Gifted Children

<i>The child who...</i>	<i>may also be the child who...</i>
shows superior reasoning powers	is impatient; seems stuck-up or arrogant; challenges your authority
can solve problems quickly	gets bored and frustrated
shows persistent intellectual curiosity	drives you crazy with questions; asks inappropriate questions
has a wide range of interests	seems scattered and disorganized
has an advanced vocabulary	talks too much; find it hard to communicate with age peers
learns quickly	resists assignments that don't present opportunities for new learning; dislikes drill and practice; does inaccurate or sloppy work
grasps math concepts easily	has little patience for regular math lessons or homework
is creative and imaginative	goes too far; lacks interest in mundane assignments
sustains concentration for lengthy periods	has tunnel vision; hates to be interrupted
sets high standards for self	sets unrealistically high goals; avoid taking risks; lacks tolerance for others' mistakes
has a keen sense of humor	uses humor inappropriately to gain attention or attack others
is sensitive	is easily hurt; has trouble handling criticism; feels powerless to solve the world's problems

Adapted from *When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers* by Jim Delisle and Judy Galbraith

PEAK 2nd-5th Grade Priority Learning Standards

Communication Skills Development
Individual Expression
<u>Speaking & Listening Standard SL4</u> : Speak effectively when presenting; speak clearly, audibly and to the point using conventions of language when presenting individually or with a group by using efficient presentation skills with available resources using a variety of media; planning appropriate presentation based on audience.
<u>ISTE Standard 1.6</u> : Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
<u>ISTE Standard 1.6d</u> : Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for their intended audiences.
Group Interaction
<u>ISTE Standard 1.7a</u> : Students use digital tools to connect with learners from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, engaging with them in ways that broaden mutual understanding and learning.
<u>Speaking & Listening Standard SL1</u> : Develop and apply effective listening skills and strategies in formal and informal settings by posing and responding to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information and make comments that contribute to the discussion to link to remarks of others
<u>Speaking & Listening Standard SL3</u> : Speak effectively in collaborative discussions; speak clearly and to the point using conventions of language when presenting individually or with a group by summarizing points made by others before presenting own ideas, according to classroom expectation and providing and evaluating evidence to support an opinion

Affective Skills Development
Self Awareness
<u>ISTE Standard 1.1a</u> : Students articulate and set personal learning goals, develop \ strategies leveraging technology to achieve them and reflect on the learning process itself to improve learning outcomes.
<u>ISTE Standard 1.4d</u> : Students exhibit a tolerance for ambiguity, perseverance and the capacity to work with open-ended problems.

NAGC Standard 1.1 : Demonstrates self-knowledge with respect to their interests, strengths, identities, and needs in socio-emotional development and in intellectual, academic, creative, leadership, and artistic domain.
NAGC Standard 1.2 : Develop an understanding of how they learn and grow; recognize influences of their beliefs, traditions, values on learning behavior
NAGC Standard 1.3 : Demonstrate understanding of and respect for similarities and \ differences between themselves and their peer group and others in the general population
NAGC Standard 1.7 : Recognize their preferred approaches to learning and expand their repertoire
NAGC Standard 3.3 : Develop their abilities in their domain of talent and/or interest area
NAGC Standard 4.1 : Demonstrate growth in personal competence and disposition for exceptional academic and creative productivity
Social Interaction
NAGC Standard 3.5 : Demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary for living and being productive in a multicultural, diverse, and global society.
NAGC Standard 4.2 : Demonstrate personal and social responsibility and leadership \ skills.
ISTE Standard 1.1c : Students use technology to seek feedback that informs and improves their practice and to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.

Problem-Solving Skills Development
Analyze and Solve Problems
Math Standard DS : Represent and analyze data
Reading Standard R1A : Draw conclusions, infer and analyze by citing textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text
Reading Standard R3B : Evaluate purpose, identify reasons for the decision and provide evidence to support a claim; analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting similarities and differences in point of view; verify facts through established methods; explain evidence used to support a claim; use reasoning to determine the logic of a conclusion and provide evidence to support reasoning
Use Problem-Solving Strategies
ISTE Standard 1.1d : Students understand the fundamental concepts of technology operations, demonstrate the ability to choose, use and troubleshoot current technologies and are able to transfer their knowledge to explore emerging technologies

ISTE Standard 1.3d : Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
ISTE Standard 1.4a : Students know and use a deliberate design process for \ generating ideas, testing theories, creating innovative artifacts or solving authentic problems.
ISTE Standard 1.4b : Students select and use digital tools to plan and manage a design process that considers design constraints and calculated risks.
ISTE Standard 1.4c : Students develop, test and refine prototypes as part of a cyclical design process.
Math Standard RA : Represent and analyze patterns and relationships; Use the four \ operations with whole numbers to solve problems
NAGC Standard 3.4 : Develop critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem-solving strategies to become independent investigators

Research Skills Development
Gather Information
Reading Standard R1D : Read and comprehend informational text independently and proficiently
Reading Standard R3B : Evaluate purpose, identify reasons for decision, evidence to support a claim; analyze multiple accounts of same event/topic, noting similarities and differences in point of view; verify facts through established methods; explain evidence to support claim; use reasoning to determine logic of conclusion and evidence to support reasoning
Writing Standard W3A : Apply research process by formulating open-ended research question; follow guidelines for collecting and recording information; select relevant resources, assess accuracy, reliability of the information in print and digital sources; differentiate between paraphrasing and plagiarism; present and evaluate how completely, accurately answered; record bibliographic information from sources
ISTE Standard 1.3a : Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
Organize Information
Writing Standard W1 : Develop and strengthen writing by applying a writing process to develop a text for audience and purpose; reread, revise and edit drafts. Use technology, including the Internet to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others

Analyze Information
Reading Standard R1A : Draw conclusions, infer and analyze by citing textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text
Reading Standard R3B : Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting similarities and differences in the point of view
Apply Information
Reading Standard R3C : Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably
Writing Standard W2B : Develop informative/explanatory writing to examine a topic with relevant facts, examples, and details; develop argumentative writing by introducing and supporting a claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence
NAGC Standard 3.4 : Develop critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem-solving strategies to become independent investigators

PEAK Family Resources

- Gifted Education, Missouri Department of Elementary Education <https://dese.mo.gov/quality-schools/gifted-education>
- Gifted Association of Missouri (GAM) <http://www.mogam.org/>
- National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) <https://nagc.org/>
- Davidson Institute <https://www.davidsongifted.org/>
- Hoagies' Gifted Education Page <https://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>
- Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) <https://www.sengifted.org/>