

**Certification Report
Advanced Learning
Posted January 2004**

School Lafayette Elementary

Program Spectrum

Lafayette Elementary has a well-respected twenty-year history of offering an outstanding academic program to advanced learners through the Spectrum Program. We feature self-contained classrooms entirely made up of testing qualified Spectrum students in the second through fifth grades. Our first grade advanced learner population is served in a blended classroom including enough non-Spectrum students to create a whole class. The work of many researchers over the past twenty years has documented the benefits of grouping together gifted learners in their areas of greatest academic strength for at least part of the school day.

Our curriculum is based in inter-disciplinary constructivist philosophy allowing students to discover for themselves the inter-connections of academic subjects and their applications to life. Students seek and evaluate the information they acquire related to the problem they are given to solve. Activities that involve inquiry learning include problem framing, data gathering, divergent thinking or idea generation, evaluating alternatives, and applying a solution to the problem.

The Lafayette Spectrum Program instructional philosophy is based on a three-legged foundation: one-third basic skill development, one-third deepening and extension of material, and one-third acceleration of material in reading and mathematics. Staff provide open-ended assignments which allow for student choice and incorporate the higher order thinking skills of application, synthesis, evaluation, and creativity. Additionally, students have myriad opportunities to apply their skills and learning to real-life applications and situations.

Lafayette has high academic and behavioral expectations for all students. Spectrum students are integrated with all students across a grade level for a variety of instructional, social, and special activities and events, thereby establishing a cohesive, inclusive school-wide community of learners. The combination of a rigorous and accelerated curriculum with a strong sense of school-wide community serves as excellent preparation for the middle school experience.

Strengths/Commendations

Robust student numbers to form self-contained classrooms of all district-identified students

Curriculum and instructional focus on inquiry-learning

Close work with parents

Experienced and recognized staff with 60 combined years in gifted education