

OUR PROGRAM'S PHILOSOPHY

As a satellite campus for the CATS (Chandler Academically Talented Students) program, it is important to us that our students have the opportunity to interact with a variety of learners on our campus. We put a strong emphasis on the social/emotional needs of our students but also strive to challenge our students academically. Our program focuses on the following elements:

- ◆ Acceleration– Students learn at a grade level above in Language Arts and Math. They tend to learn things at a faster pace and go more in depth to the various topics.
- ◆ Rigor– Students use critical thinking and discussion to help with their learning. They also use Thinking Maps to organize their learning. Kaplan's Icons are also used to help increase the depth and complexity of their learning.
- ◆ Creativity– Students are encouraged to have “out of the box” thinking.
- ◆ Choice– Students are often given choice in assignments/homework. They do project-based learning to focus on relevant issues that are important to them.



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

| Common Characteristic | Helpful Strategy |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Overexcitability | teach self-control |
| Introversion | provide interactions with peers based on similarities |
| Fixed mindset | teach growth mindset |
| Perfectionism | teach the difference between healthy and unhealthy perfectionism |
| Lacking social skills | ensure the child is in appropriate academic placement, has intellectual interactions with peers, teach social skills |
| Twice exceptional | assessments to understand all aspects of the child, teach to the child's strengths, build social skills, provide resource and counseling supports as needed |
| Low self-efficacy/self-esteem | teach and provide steps to achieve success and continue to build |
| Asynchronous development | teach to child's strengths |

Social emotional programs/strategies used at Ryan:

- Olweus Anti-bullying Program
- Second Step
- Character Celebrations
- Growth Mindset
- Executive Function Skills

How is this unique at Ryan?

We put a major emphasis on the social/emotional aspect of each child, knowing that it is quite often what these students need the most to be successful in both academics and in social situations. In addition, each of the above strategies are tailored to meet the social/emotional needs of the individual students.



Ryan Elementary



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Instructional Highlights of the Ryan CATS Program

3RD/4TH GRADE

- ◆ Book Studies: students read various books throughout the year and participate in class discussion, independent work, and a culminating activity
- ◆ Kaplan's Icons of Depth and Complexity: tools/prompts to help students dig deeper into the given content and enhance their critical thinking
- ◆ Inclusive Buddies with Reverse Mainstreaming: gifted students go into the special education classrooms to help with activities and read to students

5TH/6TH GRADE

- ◆ Socratic Seminars/Shared Inquiry- through discussion, students help each other understand and reflect on the given text
- ◆ Math Inquiry- using discussions to teach the content while focusing on depth of understanding and the mathematical processes; additionally, exploring authentic mathematical situations through projects

INSTRUCTIONAL CURRICULUM/ RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR THE CATS PROGRAM

- ◆ Engineering is Elementary (EiE)
- ◆ Junior Great Books
- ◆ Defined STEM
- ◆ STEM Room (coming soon!)
- ◆ Tower Gardens
- ◆ Ozobots
- ◆ Google Classroom
- ◆ Hands-on Science Investigations
- ◆ Opportunities for Self-Directed Research
- ◆ Collaborative Activities

Testimonials

“What I like about the CATS program is it is teaching me lots of good lessons and making me smarter. I also like how it is giving me a good challenge”

-Audra (3rd grade)

“What I like about the CATS program is that I get to learn about things that I can do on my level of learning. Also, I meet people that are more like me and think like me.”

-Keelee (4th grade)

“I like the CATS program because it gives us the ability to excel beyond our learning level.”

-Adam (5th grade)

“I like that it is more advanced than the regular classroom. Most of the time, you can go at your own pace. The teachers are wonderful and lots were [gifted] students themselves. I learn lots of new things. You get a big variety of activities. All in all, I really like the CATS program!”

-Maya (5th grade)

“I like CATS because it challenges me and allows me to improve. The learning is engaging and generally fun.”

-Jamison (6th grade)

“Both of my girls have been in the CATS program since kindergarten. We have had some wonderful teachers that not only challenge their students academically, but we have also been fortunate to have some teachers who also focus on social and behavioral responsibility and accountability for their students. These teachers not only stress the importance of academic success, but also expect their students to be accountable in the recognition and acceptance of each individual's uniqueness in all areas of life.”

-Dot (parent)

