

# Omaha Public Schools

## Gifted and Talented Program

Revised August 2025

### Nebraska, Rule 3 Definition

“Learner with High Ability means a student who gives evidence of high performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, or artistic capacity or in specific academic fields and who requires accelerated or differentiated curriculum programs in order to develop those capabilities fully.”

### Mission Statement

Advanced Academics and Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) programs in the Omaha Public Schools develop the strengths and talents of all students and offer services at all grade levels to meet a broad range of students needs. Every student needs to be challenged and engaged in exciting learning experiences. Some students need different learning experiences to address their cognitive and social-emotional needs.

### We believe our students...

- \*are found in the areas of intellectual ability, academics, creativity, visual/performing arts and leadership
- \*are found in all cultures.
- \*include students with learning disabilities, (or twice-exceptional, 2E).

### HAL Program Goals & Objectives

The goal of the HAL program is to provide a differentiated program that will meet the needs of our districts' high ability learners. The program will strive to:

- Identify students who demonstrate potential abilities of high performance in recognized areas of giftedness.
- Provide advanced learning opportunities for all students.
- Provide education services that meet the needs of all high ability learners.
- Provide professional development opportunities to staff in order to promote a better understanding of the needs of high ability learners, and the services available to meet those needs.
- Follow the identification procedures as outlined in the district identification plan for high ability learners.
  - All staff members shall be made aware of the identification procedures.
- To meet the students' intellectual, social, physical, and emotional needs.

### Elementary School

Gifted and Talented services begin in 3rd grade in elementary schools. GATE students participate in Specialized Instruction each week with a GATE Facilitator. Lessons have been developed that extend the learning within the classroom using advanced content and teach problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, and inquiry. There are also opportunities for extracurricular activities sponsored by the GATE program.

### **Middle School**

Advanced Academics continue in the Middle School through participation in honors courses and many clubs and activities. All GATE services take place either in an honors course or by choosing one or more activities that are sponsored by the Gifted and Talented program. Each Middle School has a GATE Facilitator to coordinate events and activities, teach honors courses, and make sure each students' needs are met.

### **High School**

High School students have many advanced courses available. Students need to work closely with their guidance counselor to choose courses and activities that best meet their needs. Each student is unique and has different strength areas. Every Omaha Public Schools high school offers many advanced courses that make it possible for all students to be challenged at their own level. There is an Advanced Academic Coordinator in each high school that is also available for questions and guidance.

### **HAL Identification Procedures**

All students in grades 2-8 are screened several times each year for possible entry into the Gifted and Talented program. It is very important that all students who need GATE services participate in the program. The screening tools that are used include a cognitive test that measures a student's potential ability, achievement tests which measure what a student is currently able to do, a measurement of motivation and current grades, and a measurement of creativity and leadership. Teachers, staff members, and parents/guardians are encouraged to advocate for all students who may qualify.

**To be identified for GATE services a student must meet at least 3 of the 4 criteria listed below:**

COGNITIVE – Top 5% at the school or national level on an intelligence/cognitive test

ACHIEVEMENT – Top 5% at the school, state or national level on a grade-level standardized or norm-referenced achievement test

MOTIVATION/PERFORMANCE – “A” or Advanced (ADV) in 60% or more courses on the most recent semester grade report OR Qualifying recommendation/involvement for Motivation as recorded on the Classroom Teacher Input Form OR Parent/Guardian/Student/Staff Referral

**CREATIVITY/LEADERSHIP** – Qualifying recommendation/involvement for Creativity or Leadership as recorded on the Classroom Teacher Input Form OR Parent/Student/Staff Referral

If you wish to refer a student for identification for Gifted and Talented Education services please complete a PGSS Referral which is located in the downloadable forms tab. Return the completed form via email or school mail to your GATE facilitator. Please note that a completed referral does not automatically meet one or all of the criteria for identification. Each student referral will be considered and have an eligibility worksheet started so that all available criteria can be reviewed. Newly identified students will be added to specialized instruction groups at the beginning of each quarter.

Our department carefully works to implement equitable identification processes and procedures that will permanently identify high performing students for GATE services within the Omaha Public Schools, nurture their social/emotional development and enhance their curriculum experiences so these unique individuals may reach their fullest potential.

**Additional Program Services, Options, and Strategies** (including but not limited to)

Acceleration  
Curriculum Enrichment  
Flexible Grouping  
Curriculum Compacting  
Advanced Placement  
Advanced Elective Classes  
Independent Study Opportunities  
Dual Enrollment  
Cluster Grouping  
Mentorships/Shadowing  
Extra-Curricular School Offerings  
Counseling & Guidance  
Career Exploration  
Pull-Out  
Push-In

**Evaluation**

Annual evaluations of the GATE program shall be conducted by using any of the following measures: surveys, interviews, and program evaluations aligned to Cognia. Information gathered will be used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the HAL program and how we can improve. Student needs, program design, curriculum, learning environment, student identification, staff development, and other resources will be evaluated.

## **Staff Development**

School staff shall receive training which will include, but is not limited to areas such as GATE characteristics, social and emotional needs, identification, curriculum, assessment techniques and instructional strategies.

Teachers will be encouraged to attend seminars and conferences related to high ability learning (i.e. Nebraska Association for Gifted conference, ESU workshops, Webinars, etc.).

Teachers, counselors, and administrators will be made aware annually, which students have been identified and are included in the program.

## **Management Plan**

The High Ability Learning program will be led by Dr. Elizabeth Maloney, the Teaching and Learning Consultant for Advanced Academics and Gifted and Talented Education. Dr. Maloney will ensure the quality of training and implementation within the schools. She will work with principals and other administrators collaboratively in order to build relationships and create a positive environment to foster the needs of Gifted and Talented Students.

## **Appendix**

Inquiry Form

Nomination Forms

Input Forms



Omaha Public Schools - Gifted and Talented Education  
Parent/Guardian/Student/Staff (PGSS)  
**INQUIRY FORM**

STUDENT INFORMATION			
Student Last Name:		Student First Name:	
Current School of Enrollment:			
Student ID:	School Year:	Grade Level:	
Language(s) Spoken at home, if other than English:			

IDENTIFICATION TIMELINE	
<b>Inquiries &amp; Recommendations due:</b>	<b>For GATE services beginning:</b>
Friday, September 24, 2021	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter: Monday, October 11, 2021
Friday, November 19, 2021	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter: Wednesday, January 5, 2022
Friday, February 4, 2022	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter: Monday, March 21, 2022
Friday, May 13, 2022	Beginning of 2022-2023 School Year

**Return this form to the GATE Facilitator at the student's school.**  
GATE Facilitator begins a student eligibility worksheet.

Completion of this form initiates a review of a student's data for meeting the following criteria:	
<p><b>COGNITIVE:</b> Top 5% at the school or national level on an intelligence/cognitive test.</p> <p><b>ACHIEVEMENT:</b> Top 5% at the school, state, or national level on a grade level standardized or norm-referenced achievement test.</p> <p><b>MOTIVATION/PERFORMANCE:</b> A 3.50 or greater GPA equivalent, "A" or "Advanced" (ADV) in 60% or more courses on the most recent semester grade report (any previous two quarters for elementary level) OR qualifying recommendation/involvement for Motivation as recorded on the Classroom Teacher Input Form OR Parent/Guardian/Student/Staff Recommendation. *</p> <p><b>CREATIVITY/LEADERSHIP:</b> Qualifying recommendation/involvement for Creativity or Leadership as recorded on the Classroom Teacher Input Form OR Parent/Guardian/Student/Staff Recommendation. *</p> <p>* Parent/Guardian/Student/Staff forms are available on the OPS GATE website at <a href="http://www.ops.org/gifted">www.ops.org/gifted</a> or from the GATE facilitator at your child's school.</p> <p>Note: Standard deviation ranges are considered for national percentiles.</p>	
<p><b>To be identified for GATE services, a student must meet at least 3 of the 4 criteria listed above</b></p>	

INFORMATION OF PERSON INITIATING REQUEST	
Last Name:	First Name:
Relationship to Student:	
Contact Information (address, email address, and phone number):	
Date:	
<b>Facilitator Use Only:</b> <i>(complete this section if creating an INQUIRY from other documentation)</i>	<b>Facilitator Name:</b> <b>Is supporting documentation attached?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

Omaha Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, citizenship status, veteran status, political affiliation or economic status in its programs, activities and employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following individual has been designated to accept allegations regarding non-discrimination policies: Superintendent of Schools, 3215 Cumming Street, Omaha, NE 68131 (402-557-2001). The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Director for the Office of Equity and Diversity, 3215 Cumming St, Omaha, NE 68131 (402-557-2790).



Omaha Public Schools - Gifted and Talented Education  
Parent/Guardian/Student/Staff (PGSS)  
**RECOMMENDATION – CREATIVITY**



STUDENT INFORMATION			
Student Last Name: _____		Student First Name: _____	
Current School of Enrollment: _____			
Student ID: _____	School Year of Referral: _____	Grade Level of Referral: _____	
Language(s) Spoken at Home: _____		Date: _____	

RECOMMENDATION & REFERRAL TIMELINE	
<b>Referrals &amp; Recommendations due:</b>	<b>For GATE services beginning:</b>
Wednesday, September 23, 2020	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter: Monday, October 26, 2020
Wednesday, November 18, 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter: Tuesday, January 10, 2021
Wednesday, February 10, 2021	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter: Monday, March 29, 2021
Friday, May 28, 2021	Beginning of 2021-2022 School Year

Return this form to:

[gatereferrals@ops.org](mailto:gatereferrals@ops.org) OR

Dr. Beth Maloney, GATE Supervisor (TAC – 3215 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68131)

INFORMATION OF PERSON COMPLETING THE REFERRAL	
Last Name: _____	First Name: _____
Relationship to Student: _____	
Contact Information (address, email address, and phone number): _____	
Signature or Full Name: _____	

CREATIVITY (Please check characteristics exhibited by the student)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefers complexity and open-endedness	<input type="checkbox"/> Is constantly asking questions
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributes new concepts, methods, products or performances	<input type="checkbox"/> Criticizes constructively
<input type="checkbox"/> Has extreme fluency of thoughts and a large number of ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Is a risk taker, confident
<input type="checkbox"/> Is observant and pays attention to detail	<input type="checkbox"/> Is attracted to the novel, complex, and mysterious
<input type="checkbox"/> Uses unique solutions to problems, improvises	<input type="checkbox"/> Is a nonconformist, uninhibited in expression, adventurous, able to resist group pressure
<input type="checkbox"/> Challenges existing ideas and products	<input type="checkbox"/> Accepts disorder
<input type="checkbox"/> Connects disparate ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Has a sense of humor
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Adapted from:  
Johnsen, Susan. *Identifying Gifted Students: A Practical Guide*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, Inc., 2004. Print.  
Kingore, Bertie. "High Achiever, Gifted Learner. Creative Thinker." *Bertie Kingore, Ph. D. N.p.*, n.d. Web. 21 Feb. 2016.  
<<http://www.bertiekingore.com/high-gt-create.htm>>.  
Renzulli, Joseph S., et al. *Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, Inc., 2010. Print.

**THIS IS A TWO PAGE DOCUMENT. PLEASE BE SURE TO COMPLETE BOTH PAGES.**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
<p><b>(REQUIRED)</b> Choose <u>three</u> of the characteristics checked on the previous page. In the space provided, include three specific examples in which the student has exhibited these characteristics of creativity. Recommendations should be unique to a student. These examples should be like a short story explaining ways in which the student is creative. Below is one such example, please include three as you share about your student or child.</p> <p><i>Example: Is Observant and pays attention to detail. Mark's creativity forces him to be very observant and pay a lot of attention to things most wouldn't. For example, he recently said, "Mom can you text ____'s mom because her birthday is tomorrow." I text the mother and she asked how in the world did Mark remember her birthday in August, when they hadn't seen each other since May? I asked Mark and he said, "Mom I just remember things" and he really does. He can recall specific dates and details that most people couldn't. He pays attention to everything.</i></p> <p><b>If needed, you may attach up to two additional pages:</b></p>
<p><b>1. Creativity Characteristic:</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Example:</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>2. Creativity Characteristic:</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Example:</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>3. Creativity Characteristic:</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Example:</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>(OPTIONAL)</b> Please include any additional information you would like to add regarding this student's review for identification for Gifted and Talented Education services. In addition, list any specific events or activities in which the students is involved, within or outside of school: <input type="checkbox"/></p>

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Omaha Public Schools - Gifted and Talented Education  
Parent/Guardian/Student/Staff (PGSS)  
**RECOMMENDATION – LEADERSHIP**



STUDENT INFORMATION			
Student Last Name:		Student First Name:	
Current School of Enrollment:			
Student ID:	School Year of Referral:	Grade Level of Referral:	
Language(s) Spoken at Home:		Date:	

RECOMMENDATION & REFERRAL TIMELINE	
Referrals & Recommendations due:	For GATE services beginning:
Friday, September 24, 2021	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter: Monday, October 11, 2021
Friday, November 19, 2021	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter: Wednesday, January 5, 2022
Friday, February 4, 2022	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter: Monday, March 21, 2022
Friday, May 13, 2022	Beginning of 2021-2022 School Year

Return this form to:

[gatereferrals@ops.org](mailto:gatereferrals@ops.org) OR

Dr. Beth Maloney, GATE Supervisor (TAC – 3215 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68131)

INFORMATION OF PERSON COMPLETING THE REFERRAL	
Last Name:	First Name:
Relationship to Student:	
Contact Information (address, email address, and phone number):	
Signature or Full Name:	

LEADERSHIP (Please Check Characteristics Exhibited by the Student)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is well-organized	<input type="checkbox"/> Is highly responsible; can be counted on
<input type="checkbox"/> Can do backward planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintains on-task focus
<input type="checkbox"/> Is visionary, has holistic views	<input type="checkbox"/> Is self-confident
<input type="checkbox"/> Is a problem finder	<input type="checkbox"/> Is a persuasive communicator
<input type="checkbox"/> Is able to see problems from multiple perspectives	<input type="checkbox"/> Has a cooperative attitude; works well in groups
<input type="checkbox"/> Is adaptable to new situations	<input type="checkbox"/> Influences the behavior of others, recognized as a leader by peers
<input type="checkbox"/> Can manipulate systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Participates in most social activities, enjoys being around other people	

Adapted from:  
Johnsen, Susan. *Identifying Gifted Students: A Practical Guide*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, Inc., 2004. Print.  
Kingore, Bertie. "High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Thinker." Bertie Kingore, Ph. D. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 Feb. 2016.  
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
<p><b>(REQUIRED)</b> Choose <u>three</u> of the characteristics checked on the previous page. In the space provided, include three specific examples in which the student has exhibited these characteristics of leadership. Recommendations should be unique to a student. These examples should be like a short story explaining ways in which the student is a leader. Below is one such example, please include three as you share about your student or child.</p> <p><i>Example: Influences the behavior of others, recognized as a leader by peers. Mary often has an idea that she is enthusiastic about and will get her friends to buy in to the idea and join her. For example, recently she was very interested in identifying animal tracks. She found a .pdf file online and printed multiple copies, and asked for help laminating them all. Then she brought each one of her closest friends at school one of the printouts and for a week or two they all "tracked" animals during recess.</i></p> <p>If needed, you may attach up to two additional pages:</p>	
1. Leadership Characteristic:	<div><div></div><div>Example: <div></div></div></div>
2. Leadership Characteristic:	<div><div></div><div>Example: <div></div></div></div>
3. Leadership Characteristic:	<div><div></div><div>Example: <div></div></div></div>
<p><b>(OPTIONAL)</b> Please include any additional information you would like to add regarding this student's review for identification for Gifted and Talented Education services. In addition, list any specific events or activities in which the students is involved, within or outside of school: <div></div></p>	

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Omaha Public Schools - Gifted and Talented Education  
Parent/Guardian/Student/Staff (PGSS)  
**RECOMMENDATION – MOTIVATION/PERFORMANCE**

STUDENT INFORMATION			
Student Last Name: _____		Student First Name: _____	
Current School of Enrollment: _____			
Student ID: _____	School Year of Referral: _____	Grade Level of Referral: _____	
Language(s) Spoken at Home: _____		Date: _____	

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Dr. Beth Maloney, GATE Supervisor (TAC – 3215 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68131)

INFORMATION OF PERSON COMPLETING THE REFERRAL	
Last Name: _____	First Name: _____
Relationship to Student: _____	
Contact Information (address, email address, and phone number): _____	
Signature or Full Name: _____	

MOTIVATION/PERFORMANCE (Please Check Characteristics Exhibited by the Student)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is motivated in work that excites	<input type="checkbox"/> Tenacity for finding out information on topics of interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Persists in completing tasks in areas of interest	<input type="checkbox"/> An unusual ability to communicate with words, numbers, or symbols
<input type="checkbox"/> Is self-directed, independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Little need for external motivation to follow through in work that is initially exciting
<input type="checkbox"/> Has high degree of concentration	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Becomes bored with routine tasks	
<input type="checkbox"/> Persistent work on tasks even when setbacks occur	
<input type="checkbox"/> A strong desire to learn	
<input type="checkbox"/> Intense, sometimes unusual, interests	

Adapted from:  
Johnsen, Susan. *Identifying Gifted Students: A Practical Guide*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, Inc., 2004. Print.  
Kingore, Bertie. "High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Thinker." *Bertie Kingore, Ph. D. N.p.*, n.d. Web. 21 Feb. 2016.  
<<http://www.bertiekingore.com/high-gt-create.htm>>.  
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
<p><b>(REQUIRED)</b> Choose <u>three</u> of the characteristics checked on the previous page. In the space provided, include three specific examples in which the student has exhibited these characteristics of motivation/performance. Recommendations should be unique to a student. These examples should be like a short story explaining ways in which the student is motivated. Below is one such example, please include three as you share about your student or child.</p> <p><i>Example: Tenacity for finding out information on topics of interest. Joe always goes above and beyond in the classroom. He loves to learn new content and seeks out more information on topics that are especially interesting to him. Recently our class picked and researched a notable person from history. For their final product students gave a presentation to the classroom. Joe did a great job on his project about Jane Goodall. However, when another student gave their presentation on Neil Armstrong it caught his interest and he was intrigued. Joe spent the next few weeks reading books and doing more research on his own time and created a delightful power point on Neil Armstrong. He loves to learn!</i></p> <p>If needed, you may attach up to two additional pages:</p>
<p><b>1. Motivation/Performance Characteristic:</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Example: <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>2. Motivation/Performance Characteristic:</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Example: <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>3. Motivation/Performance Characteristic:</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Example: <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>(OPTIONAL)</b> Please include any additional information you would like to add regarding this student's review for identification for Gifted and Talented Education services. In addition, list any specific events or activities in which the students is involved, within or outside of school: <input type="checkbox"/></p>

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Omaha Public Schools Gifted and Talented Education		
Teacher Input Forms		
Student Information		
Last Name:	First Name:	Student ID:
School:	Grade Level:	School Year:
Teacher Information		
Teacher Legal Last Name:		Teacher Legal First Name:
This box will be filled if the student is currently identified for Gifted and Talented Education DO NOT COMPLETE THE REMAINDER OF THE FORM IF THIS BOX IS FILLED.		
Section One: Motivation		
Please place an "x" in the box if the student consistently demonstrates the characteristic that is described.		
"The student demonstrates..."	Frequently Observed	
1. behavior that requires little direction from teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. prefers tasks that require interdependence, collaboration and cooperation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. the ability to concentrate on a topic for a long period of time when relevant and of interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. tenacity for finding out information on topics and issues of interests; demonstrating strong desire to learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. continues persistent work on tasks when setbacks occur	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. a preference for situations in which he or she can take personal responsibility for the outcomes of his or her efforts	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. persistent follow-through behavior when interested in a topic, problem, or project	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. becomes bored with routine tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. little need for external motivation to follow through in work that is initially exciting relevant and of interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. intense involvement in certain topics or problems, especially those that are personal or social	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Please enter the total number of check marks for "Motivation"		
Section Two: Creativity		
1. flexible thinking (the ability to adapt, improve, or modify objects or ideas)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. a sense of humor, even on topics that may not appear humorous to others	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. an imaginative thinker (the ability to come up with unusual, unique, or clever ideas when solving problems or abstractions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. free spirited, confident and outgoing; willing to take risks	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. ability to generate a large number of ideas or solutions to problems/questions that are relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. challenges what is in existence & constantly asks questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. a nonconforming adventurous attitude, does not fear being different and may not always agree with peers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. prefers complexity and open-endedness	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. has a high degree of concentration when topics are relevant and of interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. is observant and pays attention to detail	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Please enter the total number of check marks for "Creativity"		
Section Three: Leadership		
1. responsible and dependable behavior when completing activities/projects that are relevant and interesting to him or her	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. influences the behavior of others, recognized as a leader and respected by classmates	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. persuasive communicator; ability to articulate ideas and communicate well	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. self-confidence when interacting with classmates and peers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. ability to organize and bring structure to things, people and situations; is a leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. cooperative behavior; works well in groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. participates in most social activities, enjoys being around people	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. adaptable to new situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. visionary; has holistic view	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. finds and sees problems from many perspectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Please enter the total number of check marks for "Leadership"		