

A decorative border of colorful hot air balloons (purple, green, and blue) surrounds the text. The balloons are arranged in a rectangular frame, with a row of 12 balloons at the top, a row of 12 at the bottom, and vertical columns of 12 balloons on the left and right sides.

Talented and Gifted Program

Sweet Home School District #55

Parent/Student Handbook

Goals of the Talented and Gifted Program

Provide an appropriate placement, a secure environment, and program options which will encourage students to:

- Develop at their maximum potential
- Move at a faster pace, work more intensely and produce products that are the result of in-depth study
- Organize, analyze, synthesize, evaluate and communicate ideas and information in the pursuit of individual interests
- Utilize appropriate creative problem-solving techniques to make choices and decisions
- Pursue excellence through motivation and desire to learn
- Recognize that commitment and persistence result in outcomes which will engender a sense of pride and accomplishment
- Work cooperatively and accept differences as a functioning member of a group

Sweet Home School District #55

Talented and Gifted Program

During the 1987 legislative session, the State of Oregon passed the “Talented and Gifted Education Act.” This legislation was based on sound principles and research regarding the needs of talented and gifted students.

The change in direction has required a significant shift in thinking for parent, educators and students alike. Students are individually assessed, and the regular classroom teacher has become the major player in providing appropriate services. Instruction must address students’ assessed levels of learning and accelerated rates of learning.





Rate and Level of Learning

Your child's teacher will provide instruction that matches your child's abilities. The teacher will determine the child's level of learning and provide instruction at that level. Your child will be learning new skills, concepts and information. There will be review from time to time, but for the most part, the work will reflect new learning.

The teacher will also monitor the rate at which your child is learning. Some gifted children learn new material more quickly than their peers. Teachers will monitor students' rate of learning with frequent assessments. If the child has mastered the concepts or information, the teacher will move the student on to new work.

At the time your child is identified as talented or gifted and again at the beginning of each school year, the teacher will prepare a plan to address your child's rate and level of learning—the PEP (Personal Education Plan). A copy of this plan will be sent home for your review and feedback.

Appeals and Complaints

An appeals procedure is available for parents who have an identification, placement or program appeal. If the problem cannot be solved informally by discussion with school staff, the parent will be given an appeal form to fill out and return to the building principal.

The principal will forward the appeal to the superintendent within three days of receiving the appeal. The superintendent shall arrange for a review committee consisting of the building TAG coordinator/teacher, the district TAG implementer and the building principal or designee. This committee shall meet within five working days of receiving the written appeal from the superintendent and review all pertinent information. Their recommendation will be submitted to the superintendent within 10 working days of receiving the original appeal.

The committee may recommend one of the following: the programs or services currently being provided are appropriate; or, the appeal be upheld in the whole or part.

The superintendent shall inform the parent in writing of his/her acceptance or rejection of the recommendation of the review committee. The parent may appeal the decision to the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final.

If the parent remains dissatisfied, has exhausted district procedure and 45 or more days have elapsed since the original filing of the appeal, the parent can file an appeal to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The school district shall provide a copy of the appropriate Oregon Administrative Rule upon request.

Parent Rights

The school district is required to:

1. Inform parents of the programs and services available at the time the child is identified as talented or gifted.
2. Provide an opportunity for parents to provide input to and discuss with the district the programs and services to be received by their child.
3. Notify parents of their right to request, at any time, the withdrawal of their child from programs and services.
4. Inform parents of their right to file a complaint under OAR 581-022-1940.

Legal Requirements

The school district must have a written plan for programs and services.

The instruction provided to identified students must address their assessed levels of learning and accelerated rates of learning.

Assessments for the development of an appropriate academic instructional program shall include the information used by the team for identification purposes and may include other information such as:

- Grades, portfolio records or other achievement information
- Other formal or informal assessment methods designed by teachers
- Student interest or learning style inventories or interviews
- Other measures deemed relevant

Identification Criteria

Students are identified as academically talented in math or reading. Information from the preceding two years are considered:

- Score at the 97th percentile or above on a nationally norm-referenced math or reading test.
- A second score at the 90th percentile or above.
- Behavioral, learning or performance information from teachers and parents.

Students are identified as intellectually gifted based on:

- Score at the 97th percentile or above on a nationally norm-referenced intellectual ability test.
- A second score at the 90th percentile or above.
- Behavioral, learning or performance information from teachers and parents.
- Demonstrated potential to perform at the 97th percentile.



Identification Process

We screen state and local test scores to create a “pool” of students to monitor for possible TAG eligibility. Additionally, teachers, parents and students themselves may refer students for further assessment.

Parents must give permission for further individual testing and are kept informed of the results. Teachers are consulted for their observations of the child. Two or more people, usually the district TAG Consultant and TAG Identification Specialist, meet to review the information and make a decision about eligibility or the need for further assessment.

Common assessments are the Oregon State Assessment, the RAVEN, Otis-Lennon Student Achievement Test and the WISC.

Transfer of Eligibility

If a student is identified as a TAG student at another district and transfers into Sweet Home Schools, the Identification Team will review the scores used for that identification to see whether they meet the Sweet Home School District TAG identification criteria.

If the scores meet the SHSD criteria, the parent will be notified of the student’s placement in the TAG program. The current PEP will be implemented or a new PEP developed by the teacher. If the scores do not meet SHSD criteria, the parent will be notified that the student does not meet local eligibility requirements.



What Parents Can Do

Understand that your child is a normal student in many ways. They are not smart in every way. They may not excel at every test or project. They do have particular learning needs that are different than many of their peers.

Gifted children benefit greatly from the same things all children do—love, guidance and support. Spend time talking with them about things that interest them. Give them as many experiences as you can. Take them to art galleries, Saturday markets, rodeos, theaters, parks, factories, hospitals, animal shelters and recycling centers. The more they see and experience, the better they will understand the world around them and be able to relate all they learn in school.

If you feel your child is not being challenged in the classroom, talk with your child’s teacher. Schedule a conference where you can share your concerns and listen to the teacher’s assessment of the situation. Collaborate with the teacher to come up with a plan that satisfies everyone. Check back with the teacher in a few weeks to see how things are going. If your child continues to be assigned work at a level below the assessed level or rate of learning, consider addressing the issue with the principal.

Characteristics of the Underachieving Gifted Student

Sometimes testing shows students to have high scores in mathematics or reading or to have high intellectual ability, but classroom work doesn't reflect the students' potential. Or, the student is identified in the primary grades, but over time the level of learning becomes consistent with that of peers.

Underachieving gifted students commonly exhibit one or more of the following:

- Low self-concept
- Social immaturity and lack of self-discipline
- Procrastination
- Feel adults are dissatisfied with them
- Do not see relationship between efforts and subsequent achievement
- Low aspirations for future and resist goals that are set for them
- Lack study skills and motivation for academic tasks
- Dislike school and choose companions who have negative attitudes toward school
- Leave schoolwork incomplete
- Perform better synthesizing than on detailed tasks requiring precise and analytic information processing.



Classroom Strategies for TAG Students

Teachers will design ways to meet your child's need in the classroom. The following are examples of how that might look:

- Tiered Assignments: Modify the assignment requirements based on student's prior knowledge.
- Anchoring Activities: Ongoing projects that the student automatically moves to when he completes the regular classroom assignment earlier than peers.
- Adjusting Questions: Oral or written questions target the student's level of learning.
- Learning Contracts: Agreements between the teacher and student that allow the student to go ahead with tasks appropriate to her rate and level of learning.
- Curriculum Compacting: Reduces the amount of time normally required to cover a subject and may result in acceleration or extension opportunities.
- Grouping: Grouping students according to interest or ability. Groups may then have different assignments or expected outcomes.
- Independent Study: Student investigates an area of interest with the teacher adjusting for level of independence and complexity.
- Open-Ended Assignment: Tasks are designed to allow for varied solutions and to require complex application of skills.
- Interdisciplinary Projects: Activities include several disciplines and emphasize seeing relationships and using advanced thinking skills.

Other Strategies For Meeting Students' Need

While the teacher is able to meet a student's need in the regular classroom most of the time, other strategies can be considered.

- **Early Entry:** Students begin school at first grade rather than kindergarten. Due to the risks involved, students must meet extremely high criteria to qualify for early entry. The student is assessed for academic achievement, intellectual ability and social-emotional maturity.
- **Grade Skipping:** A student is placed a grade ahead of the usual age-related placement. As with early entry, a team of staff and the parents look at multiple criteria before making this decision.
- **Other Class Placement:** Placing the student in another classroom or grade level for a specific subject.
- **Academic Extensions:** Opportunities inside or outside the regular school day that can enhance the student's education.
- **Honors or Advanced Placement Classes:** Classes that are designed for students who are working above grade level. These are mostly limited to the secondary level.



Traits of the Gifted Learner

We recognize that there are many types of abilities and talents from leadership to dance to mathematics. However, our program is limited to those who are talented in reading or mathematics or intellectually gifted.

Each child is different, but some common characteristics include:

- Large capacity for information on topics of interest
- Ask unusual questions for their age
- Use logical ways to figure out problems and find solutions
- Are persistent and able to concentrate, especially on self-selected tasks
- Are highly original and curious
- Have extensive vocabulary and communicate well
- Have unusual or advanced interest in a topic or activity
- Recognize and use humor well
- Learn basic skills more quickly and with less practice than peers
- Able to relate well to older children and adults
- Show keen powers of observation and eye for details
- Are quick to see patterns and inconsistencies
- Often show emotional sensitivity
- Show keen sense of justice and moral concern
- Have a vivid imagination
- Use complex thought processes
- Are able to use abstract thought processes
- Enjoy expressing ideas and opinions, even in disagreement
- Have a sensitivity to aesthetics