

WEEKLY CHECKLIST

- Three ring binder, lined paper and dividers
- Pencil case with pencils, markers, ruler, eraser, scissors
- Inking About Thinking Journal
- Learning Log signed by parent
- Homework
- Appropriate outerwear for outdoor recess
- Indoor footwear
- Water Bottle
- Healthy snacks
- Lunch or money to buy lunch
- BIG SMILE
- THINKING CAP
- A separate backpack often helps with organization.

Please feel free to contact the Teachers of the Gifted via email:

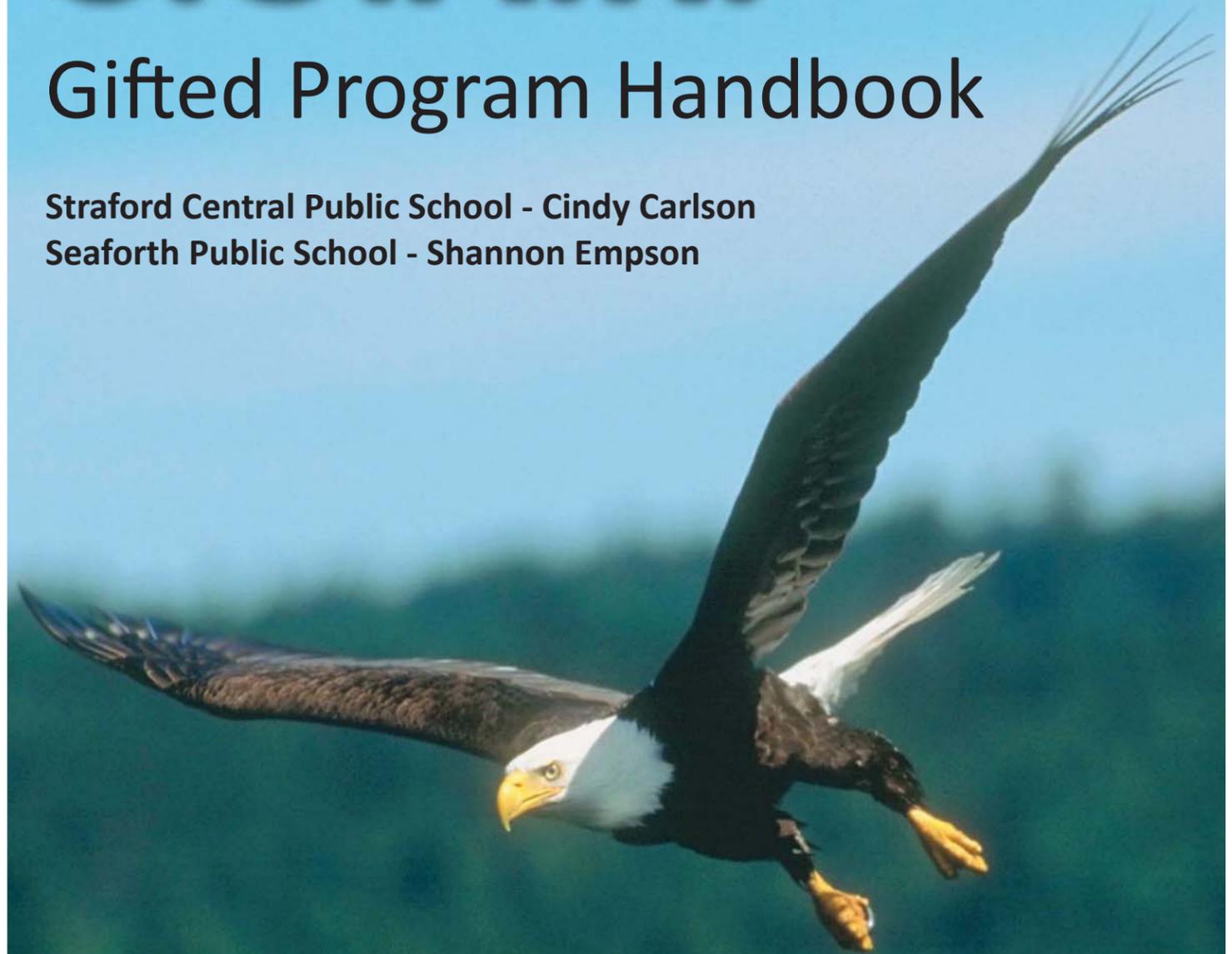
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S.O.A.R.

Gifted Program Handbook

Straford Central Public School - Cindy Carlson
Seaforth Public School - Shannon Empson



"No bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings." - William Blake



To think... perchance to dream...

Albert Einstein

"I value the education that I receive from the gifted classes that I attend. I have the opportunity to explore interesting topics in a challenging way. Quite simply, I am asked to think. I believe that this is what I will be asked to do in the future, and it appears that the future will require me to be an excellent thinker." - Gifted Elementary Student

The goal of **S.O.A.R.** (Self-directed Opportunities Achievements and Rewards) is to provide a nurturing, accepting environment where the unique intellectual, creative, social and emotional needs of gifted learners are fulfilled. The out-of-school withdrawal program acts as a **"Think Igniter"** focusing on the development of skills and techniques that teach the processes of thinking rather than the products of knowledge. The one day a week class offers students the opportunity to directly work with like peers. Research suggests that one of the most important aspects of gifted programming is the need for these learners to come together to "spark" each other's thinking.

The foundation of the Gifted Program is a differentiated curriculum with these key characteristics:

- More intellectually demanding learning experiences.
- Learning based on characteristics, needs, abilities, and interests rather than on predetermined curricula or sequence of instruction.
- Complex activities requiring more abstract thought and higher-level thinking processes.
- Time for in-depth inquiry, active exploration, and discovery.
- Higher expectations for independence and task persistence.
- Extensive opportunities to develop and apply creative and critical thinking.
- More challenges to acquire and demonstrate leadership abilities.
- More emphasis on developing self-understanding and the understanding and appreciation of others.
- More opportunities for students to demonstrate what they have learned in a wide variety of forms that reflect knowledge, excellence, and the ability to generate new ideas.

New Content / Tests - Tests and the introduction of major concepts should also be avoided on the withdrawal day. Due to the nature of most gifted children, this may cause them undue stress. If new material is taught, teachers should provide direct instructions to students when they return to class. Students should not be responsible for obtaining this information on their own.

Classroom Work - Students should only be required to complete work that is necessary to learn new information or to understand complex concepts. It is the student's responsibility to check their work obligations and to ask for extra help if they do not understand any material.

Homework - Gifted students often need help to learn how to break assignments into manageable chunks and balance their work load appropriately. A monthly calendar at home with assignments listed would be beneficial. Be aware that the one day withdrawal class is often very intense for the gifted student. They may need an extra day to catch up on their work. If at any time, you feel your child has more than she or he can comfortably handle, please contact the child's teachers to discuss strategies to lighten the load.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the key to any successful program. It is very important to work together to ensure that the gifted learner has a positive experience. The newsletter, **Gifted Gazette**, will keep parents and teachers informed about on-going classroom activities. Students will be utilizing a weekly **Learning Log** and **Inking About Thinking Journal** to record observations and ideas about their day. The purpose of the journal is to encourage the development of meta-cognitive thinking. Students will be expected to share the journal with their parents and home school teacher in order to keep everyone in the loop. Parents and teachers should feel free to contact the Teachers of the Gifted with any questions or concerns. It is also important to contact the teachers when your child will be absent from the program.

Introspection - Introspection is the process of self-examination of one's opinions, ideas, and feelings. Introspection encourages the development of self-understanding, i.e., recognizing and using one's abilities, becoming self-directed, appreciating likenesses and differences between oneself and others. Circle Meetings (E=MC2 - Everyone is Equal in Magic Circle Times) are held weekly to discuss the emotional and social aspects of being gifted.

Logical Reasoning - Logic is the study of methods and principles used in distinguishing correct from incorrect reasoning. Deductive thinking is a form of logical reasoning in which the conclusion follows from the statements of fact. Inductive thinking is a form of logical reasoning in which a generalization is made based on the evidence gathered.

Problem Solving - Problem solving strategies include these steps: define the problem, analyze the problem, establish criteria for evaluating solutions, propose solutions, take action.
(Think, Evaluate, Decide, Act)

Research - To become effective information users, students must have opportunities to access and use all kinds of information. Utilizing the independent research method, students develop organizational and research skills as they locate, interpret, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and communicate information. Technological skills are also taught to help students produce a variety of products.

ASSESSMENT

Various assessment strategies are implemented in order to encourage students to move from teacher-dependency and grades to independence and self-assessment. Student created rubrics, peer evaluation using "two stars and a wish" and self-evaluation allow gifted learners to become actively involved in their learning experience. When co-evaluation and self-evaluation are employed, self-esteem is enhanced.

"Self-evaluation calls forth high standards of personal excellence without the harmful pressures which meeting only the expectations of others can create." (Delisle - When Gifted Kids Don't Have all the Answers)

Portfolios - Students self-select samples of work that will help set appropriate learning goals and evaluate their progress.

Student - Led Conference - Students are asked to personally reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and with the teacher's support set realistic learning goals. A collaborative teacher/student report is written and shared with the parents at this time.

Report Cards - An anecdotal report based on the student's goals and learning skills is written by the teacher in March and in June.

Juggling Two Programs

Specialty Classes/ Events - Teachers are asked to try and avoid scheduling art, music, and other special events on the pull-out day. When special events such as field trips, guest speakers, room parties and performances happen on the withdrawal day, gifted students often feel left out. If a conflict arises, please notify the teacher so that the student can be given the option of participating in the special event or in the gifted program.

DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM

Instructional methods and strategies used within the program emphasize the belief that gifted students must be active participants in their own learning. The teacher functions as a facilitator, guide, and confidant. The curriculum incorporates both group and individual strategies focusing on creative thinking, critical thinking, communication, leadership, group dynamics, and problem solving. The teachers of the program develop differentiated curriculum and implement instructional strategies designed to:

- involve gifted students in educational decision making.
- develop gifted students as independent learners.
- allow gifted students to apply productive thinking skills.
- enable gifted students to develop understanding of self and society.



GIFTEDNESS HAS MANY FACES

"It is difficult to generalize about students who are gifted because their characteristics and needs are so personal and unique." Sandra L. Berger



Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory

"It's not how smart you are, but how you are smart." Gardner maintains that we all have not one but eight intelligences, which interact to give us our individual patterns of abilities. The eight intelligences are quite separate in that a person may have ability or potential in any one, or more, of them without necessarily being good in other areas. Through various activities and personal inventories, students learn the characteristics of each intelligence: **Word Smart, Math Smart, Picture Smart, Music Smart, Body Smart, Nature Smart, People Smart, Self Smart.** Understanding one's learning strengths and weaknesses helps students engage in their own learning. By providing variety with a choice of activities from all intelligences, students are engaged through multiple learning pathways and have a greater opportunity to experience success.



The Thinking Toolkit

“If we teach a child just information, what is learned is for the moment. If we teach a child how to think, what is learned is for a lifetime.” Edward DeBono

Bloom’s Taxonomy

Bloom’s six-level hierarchy of thinking processes is often used by teachers to plan a variety of questions or tasks of different levels. The taxonomy comprises the three lower levels of Knowledge, Comprehension and Application, along with what are usually referred to as the “higher order thinking” levels of Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation. These three levels are emphasized in the program to unlock and develop analytical, critical and creative thinking. Higher order thinking (HOTS) encourages students to reflect on how they learn and what has been learned.

PMI - Positive Minus Interesting

PMI is a lateral and creative thinking strategy developed by Edward de Bono. This thinking tool helps students learn to see both sides of an argument and to make informed decisions. Individually, in pairs or small groups, students apply the following three questions. What are the **positive** ideas about this? What are the **negative** aspects about this? What is **interesting** about this?

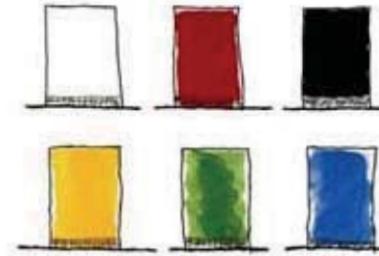
Thinker’s Keys

The 'Thinker's Keys' are a set of question prompts designed to unlock and develop analytical, critical and creative thinking.



The 'Keys' are:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| The Reverse | The Ridiculous |
| The What If | The Commonality |
| The Disadvantages | The Question |
| The Combination | The Inventions |
| The BAR | The Brick Wall |
| The Alphabet | The Construction |



Six Thinking Hats

This strategy devised by Edward de Bono helps students visualize separate modes of thinking about a topic by wearing a range of six different ‘thinking’ hats. His hope is that by doing so he will enable children to realize that they have choices about the kind of thinking they use for any task, whether it be a discussion, making a decision or solving a problem. Thinking hats also encourage students to avoid becoming “stuck” in one kind of thinking and thereby not taking into account a range of possibilities or points of view.

- **White Hat** - the facts; more information is needed
- **Black Hat** - negative; what is bad about an idea
- **Yellow Hat** - positives; what is good about an idea
- **Red Hat** - emotions; how you feel about an idea
- **Green Hat** - creativity; how the idea may be changed
- **Blue Hat** - thinking about thinking; focuses on meta-cognition

Instructional Strategies

Brainstorming - Brainstorming is a process for generating new ideas based on the principle of suspended judgment. Brainstorming can take place either individually or in a group. **SCAMPER** is a strategy that can be used to assist students to generate new or alternative ideas. It is a tool to support creative, divergent thinking. **SCAMPER** is an acronym for: substitute, combine, adapt, modify/magnify/minify, put to other uses, eliminate, reverse/rearrange.

Brainteasers - A variety of educational brainteasers (word, number, and visual puzzles) stimulate critical and creative thinking skills.

Creative Thinking - Creative thinking is the ability to produce new ideas, fresh insights, and solutions which are of value. Creative thinking skills are nurtured through a variety of techniques with an emphasis on: **fluency** (thinking of a lot of ideas), **flexibility** (thinking of ideas in different categories), **originality** (thinking of unique and unusual ideas), and **elaboration** (adding details to further develop ideas).

Critical Thinking - Critical thinking is the ability to analyze and evaluate ideas. Critical thinkers use a variety of thinking techniques to judge the authenticity, worth, or accuracy of information.

Collaborative Group Experience - Students practice various social skills and leadership roles (both task-oriented and relationship-oriented) as they participate in cooperative group problem solving.