

Talent Pool Letter to Parents

Dear Parents:

We are pleased to inform you that your child, _____, has been selected to participate in the Talent Pool of our Schoolwide Enrichment Program for this school year. This selection was based on your child's above-average ability or potential for achievement. This information comes from several criteria, including teacher nominations, grades, achievement test scores, classroom performance, creativity, task commitment, interests, peer nominations, and self-nominations.

The Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) program was developed to provide necessary challenge both within the regular classroom and in an enrichment room setting to ensure that all of our students are motivated, interested, and encouraged to work at a challenging level. The program strives to develop critical and creative thinking skills and methodological skills for independent study so that students might become more productive adults. We are also committed to the pursuit of excellence. We strive to provide students with experiences in which they may excel by learning the value of work and commitment.

Approximately 15% of students in this district are selected for the Talent Pool. This program services all students with general exploratory experiences (Type Is), skill training (Type IIs), and enrichment clusters. In addition, students who choose and demonstrate the ability to do so may pursue independent investigations (Type IIIs). Because your child has been included in the Talent Pool for this year, we would like to describe in more detail the ways students may be involved in the SEM.

Type I. Students are regularly exposed to a wide variety of topics, issues, and disciplines that are not normally covered in the regular curriculum. These Type I experiences are provided for general enrichment, as well as to "spark interests" in students who may want to pursue an advanced level of study (Type III investigation).

Type II. Students in the Talent Pool meet regularly with the enrichment specialist in the enrichment room. These students will spend at least one hour per week involved in Type II skill training activities. These include creative and critical thinking skills, advanced research and reference skills, and creative problem solving activities.

Enrichment Clusters. Students are able to participate in a variety of enrichment clusters. Enrichment clusters are groups of students who meet regularly to pursue a common interest and the investigation of a real-world topic. These groups are interest-based, multiage, and use real-world methodologies and resources to develop an authentic product or service.

Type III. Through increased involvement with other types of enrichment experiences, students in the Talent Pool may become interested in pursuing a Type III investigation. One of the major purposes of Type I and Type II Enrichment is to develop advanced-level thinking skills and stimulate new interests in students. In this case, a student can spend up to 5 additional hours per week in the enrichment room. Students may work individually or in small groups based on interest. Projects may range in length from several weeks to several months.

Curriculum Compacting. Time spent in the enrichment room will not result in your child missing essential work in the regular classroom. A careful assessment of academic strengths

has resulted in “compacting” the curriculum in those areas. This will allow your child to cover regular curricular material at a pace that is appropriate for his or her ability level and will avoid repetition of already mastered material. Curriculum compacting also helps avoid the boredom and frustration that many above-average students may experience. The time that is saved through curriculum compacting will be spent in the enrichment room.

Total Talent Portfolio. A portfolio that highlights your child’s interests, strengths, and preferred learning styles is kept on file in the enrichment room. The portfolio includes an interest assessment filled out by the student, a learning styles inventory, plus a collection of representative work from the classroom, enrichment clusters, and special projects or Type III investigations. It is passed from grade to grade to show your child’s progress and growth.

We hope this is helpful in clarifying the SEM Program. Your child will be given an overview at school. We have arranged an orientation meeting for parents to explain the SEM, distribute a parent handbook, and answer questions. The meeting will be held at _____ on _____ at _____.

We are delighted to be able to work with your child and provide these enrichment services. In addition, we welcome and encourage parent participation in the program, whether it is for a Type I workshop, an enrichment cluster, help with transportation, typing, or a mentorship. If you think you can donate an hour or more throughout the year, please complete the form below and bring it to the meeting.

Thank you for supporting our program. We hope to see you at the orientation meeting!

Sincerely,

Schoolwide Enrichment Model Program

Please sign this form to indicate that you have received this notification and return it to your child’s school as soon as possible.

Student’s Name: _____ School: _____

Parent or Guardian: _____ Profession(s): _____

Phone: (hm) _____ (wk) _____

I am willing to donate one hour as a parent volunteer in the enrichment program in the following way:

_____ Share an interest, hobby, or occupation with a small group of children

_____ Help locate and schedule Type I experiences

_____ Work as a mentor

_____ Facilitate an enrichment cluster

_____ Computer work

_____ Driving

_____ Other _____