
February 2017 Newsletter

Rolling Hills Public Charter School

8900 North Horseshoe Bend Road, Boise, ID 83714

[www://rhpcs.org](http://rhpcs.org) T: 208-939-5400

This is the first monthly newsletter for our GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) program. It is our intention to keep parents and families in the "know" of what is going on within the Rolling Hills Public Charter School GATE Program. These will be available on the school site as well as hard copy for our students who are in the GATE Program.

Committee Meeting and Testing Decisions:

The last committee meeting was held on January 30, 2017. During this meeting we looked at the applications submitted as well as student grades and scores on the benchmark assessments to determine which students we would go forward with testing. The committee is pleased to announce that we have three students who appear to qualify for further testing.

What does this mean? It means that these three students will be given assessments (Woodcock Johnson, and WISCV) to determine whether they actually qualify for the Gifted and Talented Program. This is generally a very small percentage of students. It requires 96% or higher in cross categories.

What about students who were not selected to move forward with testing? We have chosen our top students to participate within the RHPCS GATE Program. These students will still have the opportunity to



Upcoming Units

Grades K to 3

Math Unit on Geometry with the theme of "King Arthur"

Grades 4 to 8

Math Unit on Geometry with independent themes

End of-8 year presentations for both K-3 and

Important Announcement

Students who have been chosen for further testing will be notified by Stephanie Lee with consent forms so we may proceed with the Woodcock Johnson and the WISC V testing.

If you have
questions...

Holly Freed

hfreed@rhpcs.org

208-939-5400

participate in the program. They will not “technically” have qualified for GATE under the guidelines; however, they are high enough on our benchmark assessments that we feel they should be awarded the opportunity to experience enhanced educational opportunities and differentiated instruction.

If you have questions about this please be sure to contact Holly Freed at hfreed@rhpcs.org



More Important News

Grades K-3 Winter Projects/Curriculum

Our students in grades K-3 who are participating in GATE have been meet minutes with Mrs. Freed for the GATE class.

The topic for students during the winter project/unit has been literature and they have been learning about the various types of fairy tales, they have learned the tale and have been asked to focus in on their ability areas to create a fair

For example, one of our student's area of strength is in science and engineering. He has created a fairy tale surrounding the theme of science and engineering. His story has a beginning, middle, and end. It includes the rising action, climax, falling action and resolution. He is currently working on creating a “project” to go along with his story to present to his

We will be wrapping up this literary unit by the end of February. I will be taking photos of your children and will send them to you via email or text message.

Grades 4-8 Winter Projects/Curriculum

Our students in grades 4-8 who are participating in GATE have been meet minutes with Mrs. Freed for the GATE class.

The topic for students during the winter project/unit has “time travel”. Students are encouraged to focus in on their area of strength and interest with the theme. They have been asked to think about whether they would go forward or backward in time, who they would meet, what they would change or help invent. This project is based on the student and their interest and strength. They, too, are asked to present the project in some type of “visual”. The visual aid can be anything of their choosing such as a poster, presentation, music, picture etc.

In addition to the actual research and presentation of the older groups we will be asking them to reflect and explain what they learned and how what they learned from completing the project impacts them.

We will be wrapping up this time travel unit by the end of February. I will be taking photos and videos of your children and will send them to you via email or text message.

An Article of Interest for You...

Making a Difference in One Gifted Student: The Starfish Story

Posted 10/17/2016 by **Barbara Swicord, Ed.D.** Categories: [Gifted Education](#), [Gifted Students](#), [Teachers](#)

The Starfish Story from Loren Eiseley's essay entitled *The Star Thrower*, published in 1969 in *The Unexpected Universe*, and has become a very popular and meaningful story since its publication. Of course, as we are all things gifted here at [NSGT](#), I naturally see it as a story that can help us as educators save the lives of gifted students. Here's the story for those who need a refresher.

A young man is walking along the ocean and sees a beach on which thousands and thousands of starfish have washed ashore. Further along he sees an old man, walking slowly and stooping often, picking up one starfish after another and tossing each one gently into the ocean.

"Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" he asks.

"Because the sun is up and the tide is going out and if I don't throw them further in they will die."

"But, old man, don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it! You can't possibly save them all, you can't even save one-tenth of them. In fact, even if you work all day, your efforts won't make any difference at all."

The old man listened calmly and then bent down to pick up another starfish and threw it into the sea. "It made a difference to that one."

When working with teachers, I often find them understandably overwhelmed with the tasks expected of them, which would include the expectation that they can differentiate and individualize all their curriculum to meet the learning needs of the diverse group of individuals facing them each day in their classrooms. So, often I would say, **start with just one strategy or just one student and build on that achievement.** Such an approach often feels doable to teachers.

For example, today, try to compact your math lesson so that those who already know that math can use that time for something more productive for them. Today, create some challenging questions that have no one right answer. Today, allow one student to research a topic of personal interest to her. Today, find one mentor who can work individually with one student who has an interest or skills beyond what can be provided in the classroom to develop that interest or talent. And so on. Just keep doing that one thing that makes a difference to that one person and before you know it, you have made a difference to many young people.

This story reminds us of the power within us to change the world, one starfish, one student, or one strategy at a time. You never know—**you may not just be changing a life, you may be saving a life.** If you are an educator who has tried a one-at-a-time approach to gifted and talented education challenges, please share your successes, or frustrations, with us so that we can all continue to grow together.

All the best,

Barbara Swicord, Ed.D.

CEO, National Society for the Gifted and Talented ([NSGT](#))

President, Summer Institute for the Gifted ([SIG](#))