

Talented and Gifted (TAG)

Program Philosophy:

The Morning Sun Elementary School is committed to providing educational opportunities for all students in the district. Therefore, in the fall of 1981, the district began a TAG program. (TAG is Talented and Gifted)

Currently, the Morning Sun School District provides an Honors program that allows unique educational opportunities for high-achieving pupils in the elementary school. The school district's governing Honors committee determines the criteria it will use to identify students for participation in the Honors program.

Committee Members:

- Steve Hollan, Principal
- Tracy Shriver, School Counselor
- Sandy McElhinney, 2nd Grade Teacher
- Jeremy Kral, 3rd Grade Teacher
- Amanda Clark, 5th Grade Teacher
- Nancy Martin, TAG Coordinator

TAG at Morning Sun Elementary School incorporates three components of enrichment extensions for our students:

- Honors for selected students in grades 3-6
- Enrichment for all students in grades Kindergarten-2nd
- Revolving Door for selected K-2 students

What is the Honors Program?

The Honors program at Morning Sun Elementary focuses on 3rd-6th graders who have qualified to be in Honors class. The Honors students participate in a program that seeks to develop critical and creative thinking, independent inquiry, research skills and affective learning. Through the use of a challenging curriculum, the program provides an opportunity to develop individual interests and abilities for the students.

Students are identified in at least one of four ways:

- Iowa Assessment scores of 98% in reading, math, or science
- CogAT scores of 130% in verbal, nonverbal, or quantitative
- Teacher recommendation
- Previous honors (grace for a year)

In grades 3-6, identified students spend two, 45-minute class periods a week in the Honors classroom, participating in thematic units of study that extend and enrich. The units and materials used vary, depending on the interests of the students. We emphasize STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) facets. Honors students are also highly involved annually in Math Olympiads, Battle of the Books, and Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl.

Also, TAG-Honors students help with school-wide initiatives such as:

- recycling plastics, paper, and tin twice monthly
- hot lunch waste watch which involves measuring daily food waste and reporting data to stakeholders such as students, teachers, parents, cooks, and administrators
- elections, at least every four years

What is the Enrichment Program?

Elementary students in grades one and two receive Enrichment Classes. Students travel to the Enrichment classroom to participate in supplemental educational activities planned to augment their regular educational programs. In these supplemental educational activities, the students use advanced materials and/or receive special opportunities from persons other than the regular classroom teacher. Kindergarteners will begin this program during the second semester.

The children have 30-minute lessons once a week. The materials used for convergent/analytical/deductive/logical skills are P.E.T.S. (Primary Education Thinking Skills) and Are They Thinking?

P.E.T.S. is a systematized enrichment thinking skills program. P.E.T.S. follows the taxonomy outlined by Benjamin Bloom, presenting lessons in analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These higher order skills are less emphasized in most primary curriculum, yet students of all ability levels have shown interest in and understanding of these different types of thinking.

Are They Thinking? is a thinking-skills program for the elementary grades written by Greta and Ted Rasmussen. Five skill groups are targeted:

1. analytical thinking—to separate something into parts in order to identify key elements. To examine a particular concept to discern its essential qualities.
2. flexible thinking—to try various approaches and take alternate points of view. To present different ideas, shifting perspectives with ease.
3. problem solving—to define a problem, determine the desired outcome, select possible solutions, choose strategies and apply the best solution.
4. elaborative thinking—to expand on an idea, providing additional information or insights, thus widening its possibilities.
5. originality—to see something in a fresh way. To generate creative responses that often result in unexpected solutions.

What is the Revolving Door Program?

Morning Sun Elementary School provides the “Revolving Door” exploratory class for closer observation of possibly talented and gifted lower elementary children. The children are selected by the K-2 classroom teachers, based on observable high achievement, gifted characteristics, and demonstrations of higher-level creativity.

The children will come to the TAG Coordinator, through the “revolving door” for a brief exploratory class every other week for about 20-25 minutes. Notes of specific instances of their ‘sparks of genius’ will be recorded.

Many schools are adding the additional “revolving door” approach in meeting with exceptional children earlier than 3rd grade.

Please note: just because your child may be coming to the Revolving Door exploratory classes does not mean that they will be guaranteed placement in the TAG-Honors class when they reach 3rd grade.

We are excited to do all that we can for all of our students at all levels! Morning Sun School is committed to meet and stretch the abilities of our students!