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GALACTIC HANDBOOK

2016-2017



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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
GALACTIC Timeline	4
GALACTIC Curriculum	5
Screening/Identification Process	6
GALACTIC Identification Matrix	7
Frequently Asked Questions	8-9
Characteristics of Gifted Children	10
General Information	11-12
Parent Involvement	13
Student Evaluation	14
GALACTIC Office Procedures	15-16
Staff	17
Helpful Web Sites for GALACTIC	18

Introduction

This handbook was developed as a professional and parent resource guide to gifted education in the Hazelwood School District.

Hazelwood School District Vision Statement

Hazelwood School District will foster lifelong learners, productive citizens, and responsible leaders for an ever-evolving society.

Hazelwood School District Mission Statement

We are a collaborative learning community guided by a relentless focus to ensure each student achieves maximum growth.



GALACTIC Vision

GALACTIC will be an exemplary elementary gifted program fostering a community of learners who model excellence, integrity, and ever-evolving skills for the 21st century.

GALACTIC Mission

GALACTIC will advocate for gifted children and provide challenges appropriate to their academic, social and emotional needs.

GALACTIC Timeline



1973-1979	Enrichment program in each elementary building; taught by building personnel
1979-1980	Gifted Academic Program in each building taught by 5 full-time teachers
1980-1983	Gifted Academic Program in each building taught by 10 full-time teachers with Art & Music Component taught by each elementary Fine Arts teacher
1983-1985	Gifted Academic Program taught by nine full-time teachers at GALACTIC Center in McCurdy School. Art & Music Component taught by each building's Fine Arts teacher
1985-1994	Gifted Academic Program taught by nine full-time teachers at GALACTIC Center in Hazelwood Central High School with Art & Music Component taught by each building's Fine Arts teacher
1994-2002	Gifted Academic Program taught by 16 full-time teachers at GALACTIC Center in Hazelwood Central High School
2002-2008	Gifted Academic Program taught by 12 full-time teachers at the GALACTIC Center in Hazelwood Central High School
2008-Now	Gifted Academic Program taught by 10 full-time teachers at the Gibbons GALACTIC Center located on New Halls Ferry Road

The GALACTIC Center is housed at the Gibbons GALACTIC Center. Students in grade 2-5 attend the center one day per week for a full day of differentiated instruction. Students in 1st grade attend the center for a half day each week. While in the home schools, GALACTIC teachers do push-in screening activities with ALL children in 1st grade and kindergarten to insure early identification of gifted students. Teachers perform the testing for identification that is required to qualify students for gifted services. Gifted education at the elementary level in the Hazelwood School District has grown from a pilot program in one elementary school to a district-wide program serving approximately 5% of the district population.

GALACTIC Curriculum

Our curriculum is a living document that is written, edited, and amended each year by GALACTIC teachers to fit both the interests of our students and the talents of our teaching staff. As of 2002, our curriculum is Board approved. In 2009 an updated curriculum was written. We differentiate our curriculum by:

1) Content 2) Process 3) Product and 4) Environment (especially for affective needs).

Sample Units:

<u>5th Grade</u>	Visual Art Production Digital Music Coding Psychology for Kids Advanced Geometry	Yearbook Energy Law & Government Film Production Robotics
<u>4th Grade</u>	Speak up! Speak out! Metrics in Chemistry Shakespeare Cultures in Action Engineering	Food & Fitness German Geometry Human Body Digital Photography
<u>3rd Grade</u>	Ancient Civilizations Human Body/Grossology Inform. Technology III Economics Flight	Junior Film French Botany Engineering Color & Light
<u>2nd Grade</u>	Spanish Code Breakers Pre-Engineering Information Technology II	Music & Motion Great Lit/Poetry Independent Investigators Visual Art/Sculpture
<u>1st Grade</u>	Fairy/Folk Tales Math Thinking Skills Information Technology	Kitchen Math & Science Build It

**Independent Study is available for students 2-5th grade with a signed student/parent/teacher agreement and plan.



Screening & Identification Process

Screening at Home Schools

Broad, early screening for potential gifted students will occur in every elementary school in Hazelwood School District.

- September - December:
1st Grade screening with ALL students
(Deadline - Friday before Winter break)

- January- April:
All 2-5 & dual enrolled students referred before Spring
Break (Deadline- Second Friday in May)

All Kindergarten students referred after
Spring Break (deadline second Friday in May)

GALACTIC's Identification Matrix

#1A GALACTIC-

Recommendation/Observation (K-1)

Student qualifies for further screening based on in-class activities.

OR

#1B Teacher Observation

Student qualifies for further screening based on Teacher Observation Form.

#2 Test of Reasoning Ability

Student takes the CogAT.

- Students in grades K-5 take the CogAT and must score at least a 113 to proceed.

#3 Test of General Mental Ability

Student takes the WASI-II and must score in the 95th percentile to be recommended for gifted services.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is GALACTIC?

Gifted
Alternative
Learning
ACTivities
Involving
Children

Students at GALACTIC are exposed to a differentiated curriculum in terms of: 1) content 2) process 3) product and 4) environment.

2. Will my child be reevaluated each year?

No, once your child is identified as needing gifted services, he/she will attend GALACTIC through 5th grade. After 5th grade, GALACTIC students automatically become SAIL students at the appropriate middle school.

3. How many students receive gifted services in the Hazelwood School District?

We accept as much as 5% of the district's population into our gifted program; however that number varies depending on how many meet the criteria for selection. According to state guidelines, students should score in the 95th percentile or higher to be considered for gifted services, and GALACTIC adheres to that cut-off.

4. Do gifted students really need a different program to meet their needs?

Gifted learners have unique learning needs compared with their chronological age peers. They are best served by an integrated approach that allows for advanced learning, an accelerated pace and extended experiences while interacting with their intellectual peers. Curriculum experiences for gifted learners need to be carefully planned and implemented in order to maximize potential effect; that is what we do at GALACTIC!

5. What about students who are identified as gifted in another school district then transfer into Hazelwood School District?

If a child has been identified as gifted in a state-funded program, we will ask to have those records faxed to our office. If those criteria meet our GALACTIC identification requirements, that student will be allowed into our program as soon as possible. Otherwise, the student will be considered a new referral and tested at the same time as other students at that grade level for inclusion in the program the subsequent school year.

6. What will happen if my child enters the GALACTIC program and then struggles there?

We communicate regularly with parents about student progress, but in the case of a student who is struggling academically or emotionally at GALACTIC, we will hold a “staffing” for that child. The purpose of a “staffing” is to discern the nature of the problem(s) and devise some goals that will lead to success for that student. This plan is designed in conjunction with the home school staff, parents and their child plus GALACTIC staff.

7. If my child is exceptionally gifted, how will I know about that?

Once a year in the fall, we will send out letters to parents of children with IQ scores at the 99.9 percentile and above to notify you about the possibility of the PEGS (Program for Exceptionally Gifted Students) Program here in the St. Louis area. You will receive information about PEGS and the steps in finding out if your child MIGHT qualify for this program designed to meet the special learning needs of exceptionally gifted children. Any additional re-testing is the parent’s responsibility to arrange with Special Programs or PEGS.

8. What about grades/homework?

GALACTIC students will not be required (and should not need) to complete regular classroom assignments given on the day of their attendance at the GALACTIC Center. If homework is given, it should be distributed prior to the student coming to the Center that day.

Characteristics of Gifted Children

The following is a list of characteristics typical of gifted children. A child may exhibit both the positive and negative behaviors of a characteristic depending on the environment. The listing is not exhaustive, but is intended to represent some significant cognitive and affective characteristics of students which, taken collectively, represent strengths, needs and tendencies observed in students with high intellectual ability.

While it is rare for a gifted child to exhibit all characteristics, it is common for a gifted child to manifest many of these behaviors.

Characteristic	Positive Behavior	Negative Behavior
Learns rapidly/easily, retains information	masters information quickly, ready recall and response	gets bored easily, resists drill, disturbs others
Demonstrates higher level thinking	analyzes synthesizes and evaluates data	is frustrated with routine tasks
Reads intensively	reads many books and uses library on own	neglects other responsibilities
Has advanced vocabulary/verbal facility	communicates ideas well	monopolizes discussions, antagonizes peers
Achieves at high academics level	receives high grades and/or standardized test scores	brags is egotistical, is impatient with others
Possesses long attention span	sticks with a task or project	resists class routine, dislikes interruptions
Has a variety of interests, highly curious	asks questions, gets excited about ideas	takes on too many activities, is spread too thin
Processes ideas in diverse ways	solves complex problems, enjoys intellectual challenge	goes on tangents, exhibits no follow-through
Works independently	creates and invents beyond assigned tasks	refuses to work with others
Has a well developed sense of humor	exhibits an ability to laugh at oneself	plays cruel jokes or tricks on others
Demonstrates individualism	asserts self and ideas, has sense of own uniqueness	has few friends, is stubborn in beliefs
Is self motivated, self-sufficient	requires minimum teacher direction or help	is overly aggressive, challenges authority
Assumes leadership roles	leads peer in positive ways, positive role model	leads others into negative behaviors
Exhibits unusual sensitivity	shows empathy toward needs of others, introspective	interferes in the affairs of others
Is idealistic, has strong sense of justice	displays advanced levels of moral judgment	impolitely corrects adults, unwilling to compromise
Is a risk-taker	experiments and takes intellectual risks	does not use common sense
Displays great intensity	has passionate interests, high energy level	is unwilling to vary interests
Strives for perfection	Performs beyond expectations	Is reluctant to accept constructive criticism

GENERAL INFORMATION

Daily Schedule

Students attend the GALACTIC Center on the following days:

<u>DAY OF WEEK</u>	<u>GRADE LEVEL</u>
Monday	Grade 5
Tuesday	Grade 4
Wednesday	Grade 3
Thursday	Grade 2 & 1
Friday	Screening/Testing at elementary schools

A typical day for GALACTIC students in grades 2 – 5:

9:00-9:25	Arrival and Homeroom
9:25-10:45	First Period
10:45-12:00	Second Period
12:00-1:00	Recess/Lunch
1:00-2:20	Third Period
2:20-3:40	Fourth Period
3:40-3:50	Homeroom and Dismissal

A typical day for GALACTIC students in Grade 1:

9:00-9:30	Arrival and Homeroom
9:30-12:00	Learning Zone
12:00-12:10	Homeroom
12:15	Board buses & return to home school for lunch

(Please send a healthy snack with your child.)

Lunch

Hot lunch services are available at the GALACTIC Center Mondays-Thursdays. The menu may be different than the elementary schools, but the prices are the same \$2.00 for a full lunch including a drink; \$.40 for a drink only.) Hazelwood students can only put money into their account at the home school and use their student ID numbers at both schools to purchase lunch. Dual-enrolled students can bring lunch money to GALACTIC for their lunch accounts.

Uniform

Our policy is that uniforms do NOT have to be worn at GALACTIC.

Homeroom

Each student is assigned to a homeroom in which lunches, coats, and other necessary items can be stored. Students need to bring a pencil and folder to GALACTIC each week. From time to time, students are asked to bring personal items to school to share as they relate to a unit. Unless they have been requested for a lesson, please do not allow students to bring personal items. **Cell phones, electronic game devices, and radios are prohibited.**

Transportation

Students should report to their home school no later than 8:30 a.m. and wait for the GALACTIC bus. That designated bus will bring students from all schools to the Center and, at the end of the day, will return students to their home schools or to bus stops closest to their homes. Appropriate bus conduct is expected from all students; misconduct may result in suspension from the bus.

Parents may choose to transport their children to and from GALACTIC. The parking lot for our GALACTIC Center is in the front of the building. Please arrive at 9:00 a.m. when staff members are on duty. Dismissal begins at 3:50 p.m. and ends by 4:00 p.m. Car riders may be picked up at the back door.

Program Level Communication

GALACTIC eBlasts are sent home to keep families abreast of daily happenings plus special events sponsored by our Booster's Club. Additionally, parents may stay current of GALACTIC happenings via our Facebook Page or Twitter feed (@HSDGifted).

Parent Involvement

Visitors & Volunteers

Any parent is welcome to visit the GALACTIC Center at any time. We encourage parents to spend some time to become familiar with our curriculum and the daily schedule. FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR CHILDREN, ALL VISITORS MUST REGISTER THEIR ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE AT THE OFFICE.

Much of the success of the GALACTIC Program can be credited to our parent volunteers. They serve as a resource, experts in certain subject areas, and fundraisers. Beginning in 2008-09, volunteers who have regular and frequent contact with students need to fill out an application packet, and undergo a criminal check for \$12.00 if dropped off at The Learning Center. If a packet is filled out online, the fee is \$13.25. This volunteer packet is available in our office. We ask volunteers to respect all of our students by keeping the strictest confidentiality.

Contacting Teachers

Parents wishing to contact their child's teacher should call the school at 953-4954 and leave a message with the secretary or email the teacher. The teacher will contact you as soon as he/she is available. **Teachers will not be called out of class to answer the phone.**

Parents are encouraged to contact GALACTIC regarding any changes that affect their child's performance of social/emotional adjustments to school which might include death, divorce, remarriage, illness, etc. If your child is struggling or in any way unhappy with the gifted services he or she is receiving, please call GALACTIC to discuss your concerns.

GALACTIC Boosters

The GALACTIC Boosters supports the GALACTIC Program. All families are encouraged to join through a nominal donation each year. Funds raised by the GALACTIC Boosters are used to enhance the educational experience of our students with speaker and competition fees. The meetings are held on the once a month. Any parent of a GALACTIC student is welcome. **Please join us!**

Student Evaluation / Assessment

Parent Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held two times a year at the GALACTIC Center during conference times on the Hazelwood School District calendar. This will be an opportunity to see your child's work, talk with their teachers, and sign their mid-semester Progress Report.

Formal and informal conferences can always be arranged with any of your child's GALACTIC teachers if you have concerns. Please call the GALACTIC office any time at 953-4954 and we will have the teacher(s) return your call.

Accountability

Students' GALACTIC progress is reported to parents in the following way:

- **Monthly:** Receive communication from a teacher about class happenings digitally (website, email, twitter, etc.)
- **Quarterly:** a mid-course Progress Report is either given to parents at Parent/Teacher conferences or sent home for signature the following week.
- **Bi-Annually:** a summative assessment for each course will be sent home at the end of each semester. Students will also share their work at a project night.

Starbucks

Our Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) allows students the opportunity to receive Starbucks related to behavior. Please stay tuned to this section as we update our practices.

GALACTIC Office Procedures

Reporting Absences

It is the parents' responsibility to notify the GALACTIC office when their child will be absent from GALACTIC for the day. Please call the office at 953-4954 between 8:00-10:00 a.m. Please include your child's name, home school and reason for the absence. All absences will be reported from the GALACTIC office to the student's home school.

Unexcused & Excused Absences

A child's parent may decide that it is important for a child to stay at his/her home school when there is a conflicting event, but this will be considered an unexcused absence. Parents must contact the home school and GALACTIC to make these arrangements. **Only illness or building-wide events at the home school will be considered Excused absences from GALACTIC. A student's continuance in the program will need to be reviewed after two unexcused absences in a semester, at that time, a letter will be sent home to the parent.**

Code of Conduct

The GALACTIC Center follows the same code of conduct as all Hazelwood Elementary Schools. Inappropriate behavior may result in lunch detention, detention at the home school, or suspension. Parents (as well as the home) school will be notified of any violation of the Code of Conduct. By working together, we can help our students develop appropriate behavior and problem solving skills.

Withdrawal

It is recommended that a conference be held with the GALACTIC teachers prior to initiation of the withdrawal request if there is a persistent concern, but withdrawal of a student from the gifted program, can also be handled via phone.

Moving

Please notify the GALACTIC office as soon as you know your child will be moving to another district or to another school within our district. We will be glad to help you with information about other gifted programming in Missouri. Students whose families move out of the attendance area may complete the current semester at GALACTIC as long as they continue to live with their parents or guardians. Transportation in such instances will be the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

Change of Address &/or Phone Numbers

For your child's safety and well-being, please notify GALACTIC immediately if you have a change of address and/or phone number either at home or at work. It is crucial that you return all completed information forms to the GALACTIC office so that our records will be up to date and you can be contacted in case of any type of emergency

Early Dismissal or Cancellation of GALACTIC

Occasionally, early dismissal of pupils will occur. Your child will be transported back to his/her home school in the same order transportation delivers on a regular day. Car riders may be picked up at GALACTIC as usual in the event of early dismissal or cancellation. Be sure to have plans made for the care of your child should school be dismissed early.

Any announcement you hear on the radio or television about cancellation of classes for the Hazelwood School District will include the GALACTIC.

Nurse

If the GALACTIC nurse calls to inform you that your child is sick, please pick her/him up in a timely manner. It is important to keep your emergency numbers current with the office. Children should wait 24 hours before returning to school after a fever or vomiting. A sick child needs to be at home, not at school.

Health Services

Your child benefits from the professional services of a registered nurse if he or she becomes ill or injured while at GALACTIC. In case of illness or injury the school nurse or an authorized member of the school staff will care for a child. School personnel will render first aid treatment only. Parents will be contacted if a child needs to go home or if medical emergency treatment is necessary. In an emergency and IF parents are not available, the child will be taken to the emergency room at a nearby hospital.

Medication

School personnel cannot administer medication unless the medication is clearly marked with a physician's prescription including the doctor's name, student's name, dosage and the time to be given. Doctor's instructions must accompany over-the-counter type medications as well. Parents are responsible for delivering and picking up the medicine from school. No student is allowed to have medication of any kind, even cough drops, aspirin, etc. in her/his possession. All medication must be kept in the GALACTIC nurse's office and will be administered in the clinic by qualified school personnel only.

**HAZELWOOD SPECIAL PROGRAMS
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Helpful Web sites for GALACTIC:

- www.giftedresourcecouncil.org
- www.nsgt.org
- www.hoagiesgifted.org
- www.nagc.org
- www.uniquelygifted.org
- www.mogam.org
- www.nfgcc.org
- www.sengifted.org