

Siuslaw School District Talented and Gifted Services

November, 2022



Hello from your Special Programs Department, and welcome to the first edition of the 2022-23 Talented and Gifted (TAG) newsletter!

This newsletter will be shared three times a year to communicate with parents of TAG students, students who are eligible for TAG services, and staff members who work with TAG students. We are offering this digitally, but if you would like a paper copy mailed to your home, please contact [Kelly Dotson, TAG Coordinator](#). You will find updates, a snapshot of what is happening across the district, and resources to support parents, students, and teachers.

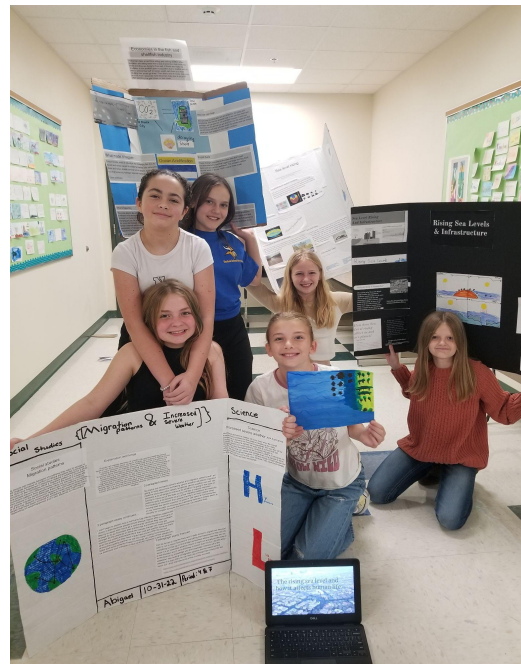
Welcome from the TAG Coordinator

In the spirit of embracing change and growth, I am pleased to step into the role of TAG Coordinator. I've been an educator with the Siuslaw School District for 14 years and I have 23 years of experience working with TAG students and families.

This Fall has been really busy! I've been solidifying systems to identify TAG students, observing students to support differentiation in the classroom, coaching teachers, and attending trainings with the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Association of Talented and Gifted. In addition, I enjoyed being a part of student conferences to develop TAG plans.

I'm looking forward to continuing to support our students, parents, and staff. Please reach out to me if you have any questions.

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Sixth grade students show off an integrative science and social studies project about climate change. Students made connections between how climate change affects the Earth and how the changing Earth has impacted humanity. They each chose at least two modes to present their connections to their classmates

TAG Update and Guidance from the Oregon Department of Education



The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) TAG Specialist, Angela Allen, has provided much needed professional development for TAG Coordinators recently. There are positive changes coming from state directives, and Siuslaw is working to update our policies, protocols, procedures, and practices.

Improving our TAG identification practice is an important shift as we learn more about what research is telling us. There are kids from marginalized populations missing from TAG. It's time to evolve so that we break down barriers to TAG identification for historically underrepresented populations of students. No longer are we receiving *state norms* for the Spring Smarter Balanced (SBAC) tests. All districts are to move toward using *localized norms*, and we are currently making this shift.

When we assess students using SBAC and the KBIT2 intelligence test, those scores are important, but no longer "gatekeepers" that shut down the evaluation process in its tracks.

ODE is instructing all districts to gather a "preponderance of evidence" before making a determination (ODE Division 22, 581-002-2325, #3). In other words, multiple pieces of evidence need to be collected by the team before making an informed decision, and one test score is not the only determinant.

Other pieces of evidence that can be used to qualify a student include: EasyCBM, local performance data, research-based rating scales, teacher/parent recommendations, teacher qualitative data/observations, classroom work samples (ideally scored with an ODE rubric), grade level performance tasks at the "exceeds" level, evidence of rapid language acquisition, accelerated learning, and advanced vocabulary in any language.

Transitioning to meet these new requirements takes some time, but the process has already begun. We are improving our practices one step at a time.

Siuslaw's current TAG Identification Data

At the beginning of the 2022-23 school year Siuslaw School District had 53 students identified as talented and gifted (TAG). These students range from 2nd grade to 12th grade. The Oregon Department of Education suggests that a district has between 5-10% of the student population identified as TAG, and we were at 4.1%.

As of November 10, 2022 there are 63 students identified as TAG, which is 4.9% of the student population. There are currently 10 new referrals for identification that are being processed.

Noetic Learning Math Contest

The Noetic Learning Math Contest (NLMC) is a semiannual problem-solving contest for elementary and middle school students nationwide.



Problem-solving helps students become better mathematicians and thinkers, therefore better equipped for advanced STEM learning. The goal of the NLMC contest is to develop students' problem-solving skills, to encourage their interest in math, and to inspire them to excel in math.

Siuslaw will have 95 students, grades 3-7 participating on November 17-18. During the contest, students have 45 minutes to solve 20 creative problems independently without a calculator. There will be awards for the high scorers in each grade, National Honor Roll ribbons, and medals for those that are in the top 50% and 10% in the nation.

Program Highlight: Aspire at Siuslaw Middle School

Eighth grade students are each spending one quarter participating in the Aspire Program. Aspire provides students with the tools and resources they need to help prepare them for career and college readiness.

Using the tools provided by Aspire, students take questionnaires to help them identify their likes and skills to enable them to start thinking about what they want to do with their lives in the future. Through research, students prepare presentations on their chosen career paths, possible colleges, or trade schools they would like to attend.

In addition, students participate in a "High School Scavenger Hunt" which requires extensive coverage of the high school course guide, so that they know what to expect going into high school. Middle school counselor, Brittany Anderson, also augments the course by providing a culminating presentation over all high school expectations.



The above photo was taken during the Aspire field trip to the University of Oregon on 10/31/22.

RESOURCES

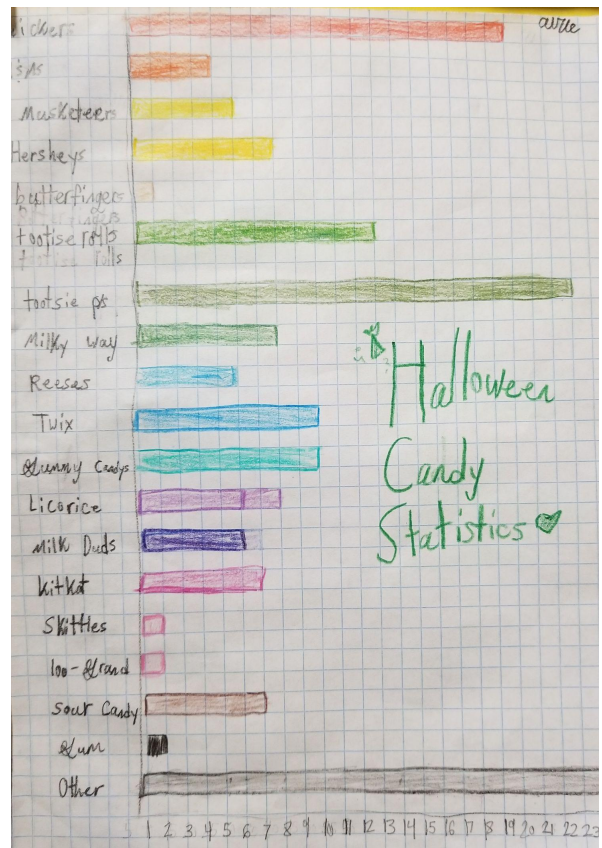
[TAG Resources for Parents](#), [Resources for Teachers](#),
[Educational Sites for TAG Students](#), [Reading for TAG](#)



Check out these [Enrichment opportunities](#) for Siuslaw students!

Fun with Statistics

While studying statistics, fourth grade students graphed Halloween candy wrappers, then used their imaginations to create a design with the wrappers. This student created famous landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty, the Space Needle, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and the Gateway Arch.



SHS Chess Club

Siuslaw High School's Chess Club meets during lunchtime everyday in Mr. Wartnik's classroom. On a typical day there are about 12 students playing chess, eating, and quietly socializing.



Volunteer Opportunities

Would you like to work with a small group of accelerated students? There are opportunities to get involved. Please follow the directions on the [Siuslaw Schools Volunteer Website](#) and contact [Kelly Dotson](#).

Who's who in the world of TAG?

Your classroom teachers are responsible for delivering TAG services during the school day, and are an integral part of each student's TAG plan. Remember to work closely with your child's teacher to ensure that they are getting the instruction they need to grow this year.

Special Programs Director, Lisa Utz lutz@siuslaw.k12.or.us

Talented and Gifted Program Coordinator, Kelly Dotson kdotson@siuslaw.k12.or.us

Kindergarten-2nd Grade TAG Representative, Natalie Gibson ngibson@siuslaw.k12.or.us

3rd Grade-5th Grade TAG Representative, Alyssa Cargill acargill@siuslaw.k12.or.us

6th Grade-12th Grade TAG Representative, Kelly Dotson kdotson@siuslaw.k12.or.us



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