

## Questions from Families Redistricted to SES

### **Class Placement**

#### **What is the cap size per class?**

The staffing ratio and cap size are the same system-wide. Currently the staffing ratio of students to teacher are as follows:

- Kindergarten is 22:1 with a limit of 24 students
- Grades 1-2 is 20:1 with a limit of 24 students
- Grades 3-5 is 26:1 with a limit of 31 students.

#### **How are you going to place students coming in to make sure they have friends in class?**

Articulation between schools will take place in the Spring, and that information will be used for class placement. Swansfield staff will use academic data, information from staff at the student's current school, as well as information from the parent articulation card to make placements. We will provide updated information on this process later in the Spring. Every effort will be made to ensure no student is placed in class without peers from his/her current school.

### **Reading**

#### **How do you handle having a wide variety of skill levels in reading and writing?**

Whole group instruction in reading and writing is designed to ensure all students are taught grade level standards. Small group instruction during reading is designed to meet students at their instructional level. Reading classes are heterogenous to provide students with the opportunity to move between groups to meet their instruction needs (by providing additional support to students struggling with grade level standards and enrichment for students exceeding grade level standards). Individual conferencing and small skill groups in writing also allow the teacher to differentiate instruction based on needs.

#### **If a child is being instructed 2 grade levels above for reading at their current school will Swansfield continue that level of instruction?**

Students are taught at their instructional level. Students above grade level will be provided opportunities to read above grade level text while also focusing on developing higher level thinking through questioning and writing opportunities.

### **MST/RST**

#### **Are the RST and MST teachers here full-time at SES, 5 days/week? Do they serve other schools? Are they 100% SES?**

This school year, the Reading Support Teacher and Math Support Teacher are at Swansfield 4 days a week. On the fifth day of the week, the MST & RST are either serving another school or participating in professional learning.

## **Gifted & Talented**

### **How is information communicated to parents regarding upcoming CEUs (Curriculum Extension Units) if students are selected or not selected?**

Updates regarding CEUs are communicated in the school newsletter and/or through teacher emails, and they are also on the PowerPoint that is posted on the SES website. After the talent spotting lessons and the review of students' performance data with staff, the GT Resource Teacher sends home a letter indicating the student's selection for a CEU.

### **How does the GT program handle twice exceptional students?**

Howard County Public School System serves twice-exceptional students by providing access to advanced programs while also supporting their instructional needs through their IEP or 504. All students, including twice-exceptional learners, are reviewed and discussed as part of the GT Placement Process. As with all students, the team reviews multiple measures of ability and performance. Included in the placement meetings are staff from Special Ed, counseling, etc. Once placed in a class, IEP and 504 accommodations are followed.

### **How do students new to the county get evaluated COGAT?**

There is an opportunity for students new to Howard County who came after the December test dates to take the CogAT in May. If the student moved to HCPSS at the beginning of 4th grade, that student would also be assessed for GT placement using an ability measure. Parents are notified through an announcement in the SES newsletter, HCPSS news, and the May date is shared through the GT website. SES places a testing notice in the newsletter, but the GT Resource Teachers also seek out any new students.

**It's clear that there is a specific GT Math program with assessments involved. What's a bit unclear are the enrichment programs that are "schoolwide", but that ultimately are for a select few. Can you please explain how this enrichment program is delivered? It sounds like everyone in the beginning and then to a smaller group?**

**And It would be helpful to further clarify how children are assessed for eligibility for the G/T program. Could you clarify?**

The elementary GT program has many entry points and students may participate in one or more of the opportunities.

- GT Mathematics in grades 4 and 5 - Participation in the G/T Mathematics Program is based upon multiple criteria, including a variety of performance measures and the results from the administration of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) to all students in grade 3.
- Curriculum Extension Units (CEUs) - Participation is based upon student's academic strengths as demonstrated on a variety of performance indicators including MAP, PARCC and CogAT assessments; classroom achievement; and

performance in the Talent Spotting Lesson (TSL) in grades 2-5 conducted prior to the unit.

- Instructional Seminars - Participation is based on student interest; available to all students.
- Primary Talent Development (PTD) - PTD provides instruction in creative and analytical reasoning strategies for all students in grades K & 1.

### **If our child is not recommended for GT, can we petition to put them in GT?**

If your child is not recommended for GT Math, there is a placement review process. A letter, along with the CogAT scores, will go home in March. The letter outlines the process for a parent to provide information about their child (other than school data) about which the placement review committee may not be aware. The placement review committee meets for a second time to consider placement for these students.

For GT Curriculum Extension Units, you may always contact the G/T teachers for information about the placement process and to determine why your child was not placed at this time. Our school team is always reviewing academic data to ensure students are in the appropriate placement and are willing to meet with you if you feel your child is not appropriately placed.

### **Is PTD across all HCPSS? I have a K student at PRES, I've not heard any communication about this?**

Primary Talent Development lessons are taught at all HCPSS schools. They provide all kindergarten and first grade students with instruction in creative and analytical reasoning strategies. G/T resource teachers teach eight PTD lessons throughout the year.

## **Chorus, Band, and Strings**

### **What are GT opportunities in chorus, band, and strings? Who/how are they assessed?**

The GT Music opportunities are implemented system-wide, so they are the same as you would find in your current school.

Orchestra- GT auditions take place at the end of September each school year. Students are nominated to audition by their school orchestra director (Mrs. Lahan). Audition requirements are listed at <https://www.hocoyo.org/auditions-esgto>. If you are wondering if your child may be at the level to audition for GT orchestra, please feel free to email Mrs. Lahan at [sarah.lahan@hcpss.org](mailto:sarah.lahan@hcpss.org).

Band - GT band auditions were held in December and the band meets after school once or twice a week until mid-March. There is also a representative Honors Band with a similar schedule that does not require an audition. Each school has two representatives.

Chorus - Students are able to participate in both Howard County Children's Chorus and Festival Chorus. The Howard County Children's Chorus (HCCC) is a Gifted and Talented Ensemble for elementary students and comprises two choruses: Lyric and Cantus. The Lyric Chorus includes auditioned fourth and fifth grade students who have been nominated by their music teachers to audition. The Cantus Chorus is for second and third grade students who have been nominated by their music teacher to join. Both choirs are year-long and rehearse weekly. The Howard County Festival Chorus provides a unique opportunity for fifth grade students to participate in an extended master class and performance. Each elementary school choral director can nominate up to four students. Students are provided with music rehearsal tracks and are expected to practice the music on their own or in conjunction with their music teacher before the day-long rehearsal and concert. The full day rehearsal and evening concert are scheduled in May.

## **Title I**

**Title I Designation: You said you don't yet have final numbers. When will they be available and Title I Designation reconfirmed?**

We hope to have the official numbers from the Maryland State Department of Education by the end of March. Once we have those numbers, we can officially confirm the Title I schools for the 2020-21 school year.

## **Attendance**

**Is there much truancy at the school?**

Swansfield's current attendance rate is approximately 94.5%.

## **PBIS**

**If Minor Incident Report is done, does the parent receive a copy?**

A carbon copy of a Minor Incident Report is sent home with the student.

## **Bullying**

**My kids have had bullies at our school. Is there a lot of bullying/fighting at SES?**

So far this school year, 10 bullying reports have been submitted by parents or students at Swansfield. When a bullying report is submitted we follow HCPSS policy 1060 implementation procedures. This includes beginning the investigation as soon as possible within two school days, notifying the target/victim's parents immediately (within 1 school day) of receiving the report and notifying the parent of the accused in a timely manner. A school administrator will conduct an investigation and provide notice of the outcome of the complaint to both sets of parents. Additional information about the process can be found [HERE](#).

## **Programs at SES**

### **Does 5th Grade have Safeties?**

Our fifth grade students have many opportunities to be involved and help throughout the school. One of those opportunities is the Safety Program, which is currently run by Mr. Berry (our PE teacher). We currently have approximately 15 students in the Safety Program.

### **Is there a Walking Wednesday program at Swansfield?**

The Swansfield PTA has a recess program called Fitness Friday, however, this program is currently in need of a coordinator and volunteers in order for it to continue.

### **Pointers Run does food composting. Can Swansfield start such a program?**

Swansfield does not currently have a food composting program, however we always welcome new ideas. Any parent interested in starting a new program such as this can reach out to an administrator to determine next steps.

### **The Howard County Park and Recreation Program currently offers 17 programs at Pointers Run this Spring. Swansfield only offers 1 program. How can we help get more programs with Rec and Park at Swansfield?**

Several after-school programs are currently organized by our PTA. This year a variety of programs have been offered such as Soccer Shots, Karate, Coding, Chess Club, Fashion Club, etc. Howard County Recreation and Parks has also scheduled programs at our school such as Abrakadoodle, but as with all after-school programs, interest and enrollment determine the schedule.

Parents are always welcome to reach out to the PTA After-School Program Coordinator with ideas of programs they would like to see take place at Swansfield. All questions/suggestions can be submitted through the PTA website.

## **Technology**

### **Does Swansfield have a TV studio?**

Yes. Swansfield has a TV studio that is available to broadcast morning announcements. Video announcements were used last school year, but due to some technical difficulties and new staff they have not yet started this school year. We fully anticipate them to be up and running by next school year!

## **Visitation**

### **Can parents come for lunch with a child?**

Yes. Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their child in the cafeteria.