

parent handbook



reach higher

hawthorne



dig deeper

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Philosophical Cornerstones of the Hawthorne ELP

Four essential principles define the Extended Learning Program at Hawthorne Elementary:

- The Hawthorne ELP is a program specifically designed to meet the needs of academically gifted and talented students with curriculum and instructional methods appropriate to that identified population.
- Parental involvement is crucial to the Hawthorne ELP. The Lowell ELP was initially founded as a parent cooperative. The Hawthorne ELP continues this tradition by embracing a specific way of organizing parental participation. Parents are expected to co-op in the classroom and are formally represented by the elected members of the Steering Committee.
- Teachers, parents, and students are part of a learning community and need to communicate openly with each other to maintain an optimum climate for learning.
- Teachers work together as a team to create an integrated, sequential, seven-year learning experience for students.

History of the Lowell/Hawthorne ELP and SLCS D Gifted Services

The first gifted and talented program of the Salt Lake City School District was established in 1977 as EQUIP (Educational Quality by Understanding Individual Potential), a parent-cooperative program for gifted children. The program was housed at Lowell School in one classroom with sixteen students, with Betty Jamison as the teacher-director.

From the beginning, ELP required parents to be in the classroom, co-opping for three hours per week for each child in the program. Ms. Jamison's vision for EQUIP included parents as a vital part of the process. Parents taught small groups in the classroom, interfaced with local and district school officials, ran the application process, and managed other administrative duties. By 1980, the program had expanded to three classrooms at Lowell: K-2, 3-4, and 5-6, with three teachers: Nancy Larsen, Betty Jamison, and Lin Hooper. During this time, Connie Jeanne Larsen worked as a full-time kindergarten teacher on a volunteer basis. The program continued to expand as demand increased, and by 1982, there were seven classes and teachers for grades K-6. Salt Lake City Superintendent John Bennion made the program an official part of the Salt Lake School District's gifted

and talented offerings, renaming it ELP (Extended Learning Program).

In 1982, approximately 30 seventh through ninth graders formed the first class of post-elementary students at the Central City Community Center. These students were moved to South High School the next year, and the middle school was housed there until South High was closed in 1987. Middle school and high school students then moved to West High School, where middle school students continued in an ELP for accelerated learners. At the high school level, the District adopted the International Baccalaureate program as the full-time high school continuation of services for the gifted and talented students in the Salt Lake School District.

Another magnet ELP was organized at Bennion Elementary for grades 5-6 in 1987; Bennion added 4th grade to their program in 1988. Additional K-3 classes were added at Whittier Elementary in 1996. The Whittier and Bennion programs were combined in 2001 when the new Whittier building was finished. In Spring 2004, the District organized a Bilingual ELP serving Spanish- and English-speaking children at Emerson Elementary. In Spring 2009, the District began two new full-time Magnet ELP Middle Schools, one each at Clayton and Hillside Middle Schools.

In 2003, Lowell School was closed, and the elementary program moved to Hawthorne School. In 2011, the Hawthorne ELP serves about 190 elementary students; the Whittier ELP serves about the same number of students; and Emerson serves about 170 students in its bilingual ELP program. Clayton and Hillside serve about 30 full-time middle-school ELP students; West High serves about 150 middle-school ELP students and 500 high-school IB students.

In the fall of 2009, the Hawthorne ELP instituted its parent-funded Spanish Language Program for all grades. Based on research in immersion language techniques, the program uses all-Spanish conversation, focusing on games, question-and-answer sessions, skits, and songs. Hawthorne teachers incorporate new vocabulary into other areas of learning when possible. Each classroom receives Spanish instruction daily.

Mission Statement of the ELP Steering Committee

The ELP Steering Committee supports and enhances the education of ELP students at Hawthorne Elementary by encouraging and coordinating parent donations of time and money in order to realize a high standard of education for an identified student population and to maintain continuity and vision for our program as a role model for gifted education in the Salt Lake City School District.

The ELP Steering Committee and Its Role Within the Hawthorne Community

The ELP Steering Committee acts as the official voice of the ELP parent community with representatives elected by the entire parent body. The Steering Committee is one of three organized parent committees at Hawthorne Elementary. The other committees are the SCC (the School Community Council) and the PTA (the Parent-Teacher Association). The Steering Committee encourages parents to participate in all organizations; all parents are invited to attend any Steering Committee, PTA, and/or SCC meeting.

The SCC is a forum for faculty-parent decision-making processes within our school community. The SCC adheres to the Salt Lake City School District policy of shared governance. The PTA provides support for the Hawthorne School community.

The ELP Steering Committee and Parent Organization are the only organizations that represent specifically the ELP children at Hawthorne Elementary; they are not official Salt Lake City School District committees. The Hawthorne ELP Parent Organization is a 501(C)(3) organization. Under the Bylaws of the Hawthorne ELP Parent Organization, the ELP Steering Committee, as an independent, parent-run organization, can act only in direct educational support of ELP students. The Steering Committee encourages ELP parents to support the Parent-Teacher Association and the School Community Council. The ELP Steering Committee designates representatives to both the PTA and the SCC so that all organizations can be mutually informed.

The ELP Steering Committee has always functioned, both historically and legally, as an independent organization, though it works cooperatively with teachers and administrators. The ELP Steering Committee is responsible to its members and acts in the interest of the students and teachers. As we pursue this mission, we support an identified special-needs population.

The Hawthorne ELP Steering Committee and Parent Representation

Hawthorne ELP parents believe that they have the opportunity to make a difference in their children's education through their active involvement. Parents have the right to expect a democratic voice in the ELP, especially given their high level of involvement. The Steering Committee allows parents to contribute, in an organized and meaningful way, to their child's education.

The organization of the Hawthorne Parent Steering Com-

mittee is dictated by our Bylaws. As a 501(C)(3) organization, we adhere closely to these Bylaws. A Nominating Committee headed by the past chair, and including a past member of the Steering Committee as well as two ELP parents not otherwise affiliated with the Steering Committee, nominate a slate of officers at a meeting in the spring to which all parents are invited. The nominating committee recommends:

- a chair-elect,
- a treasurer,
- a secretary, and
- a representative to the SCC.

At the spring meeting, the entire ELP parent body elects those officers. Committee chairs are appointed by the ELP Steering Committee chairperson, and parents are informed of most if not all of these appointments at the spring meeting. Committee Chairs almost always include

- a PTA representative, who attends Steering Committee meetings and PTA meetings and relays information from both groups to each other;
- two "new student" volunteers (one for Kindergarten and one for Grades 1-6), who help facilitate the District's on-site testing (though parents do not participate in the testing itself) and talk with interested parents;
- a program-wide co-op coordinator, who oversees a co-op coordinator in each grade;
- a parent-teacher liaison;
- a newsletter editor; and
- a computer expert, who helps the teachers with any in-class computer equipment.

According to our Bylaws, the Steering Committee also includes the following faculty members who are invited to attend meetings:

- the principal, and
- two teachers from the ELP faculty. These teachers then relay information to the rest of the ELP faculty.

Though not dictated by Bylaws, the past chair has historically been active on the Steering Committee and attends meetings. Any ELP parent who wishes to attend Steering Committee meetings is invited to do so, and minutes of our meetings are posted in the school.

Steering Committee Support of the Educational Program

The Steering Committee provides support in many ways; two of the most definitive ways are through financial donations and through contributions of parent time:

- We raise and distribute funds for the ELP; as a 501(C)(3) organization, we adhere to strict standards when we disburse these monies.
- We administer and coordinate parent volunteerism in the classroom.

Some of the ancillary duties of the Steering Committee and its individual members include

- representing ELP parents and their children to the District;
- providing volunteer program support for District activities (such as providing organizational assistance for testing and classroom observation);
- providing information to applicants and admittees and their parents;
- promoting goodwill toward gifted education throughout the District;
- raising and distributing monies for the Spanish language program;
- publishing and distributing quarterly a newsletter for parents, which provides information specifically about our program as well as generally about gifted education;
- arranging and coordinating transportation and carpools for ELP students;
- providing feedback to teachers and administrators on decisions affecting the ELP, including allocation of resources, curriculum, and hiring;
- acting as a liaison between parents and teachers in cases of minor misunderstandings;
- supporting and enriching the arts, science, music, math, and literature curricula;
- writing grants requesting support for the arts and other materials necessary for our extended curriculum;
- providing nonessential, morale-enhancing support for ELP teachers by coordinating retirement parties, bringing dinners when teachers have family crises, hosting an annual steering committee social, etc. The Bylaws prohibit

ELP donations being used for this purpose, and these services are supported by private donations from the Steering Committee.

Channels for Problem Resolution within the ELP Steering Committee

The ELP Steering Committee provides a parent-teacher liaison, whose job is to represent parents' concerns to teachers and administrators, especially those that are specific and individual in nature. The Steering Committee also discusses and relays parent concerns, particularly those of a general nature, to school administrators or district authorities.

Newsletters

The ELP Steering Committee publishes a newsletter quarterly. This newsletter includes information about the Hawthorne ELP and gifted education in general and is sent home with students' take-home papers. Hawthorne PTA publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, and our principal also sends home newsletters. Many of the teachers also send weekly emails and/or monthly class newsletters.

ELP Donations and Budget

The ELP Steering Committee asks for a once-a-year voluntary donation of \$45.00 per student for its general fund and a voluntary \$80.00 donation to fund the Spanish language program. Other donations, which can be restricted for a specific use or unrestricted and used in any part of the program, are always welcome. The Steering Committee and teachers work together in the summer to propose a budget based on the assumption that 80% of families will make a \$45.00 donation per child to the program in general and 85% of families will make an \$80.00 donation to the Spanish language program. Monies donated to the Spanish language program are discrete and used only to fund Spanish language teaching in the Hawthorne ELP. The general budget covers classroom supplies, field trips, books, and other materials necessary to provide our extended curriculum. This budget is presented at our annual fall parent meeting for input by the entire parent body. After receiving this input, the Steering Committee approves and finalizes

the budget. Steering Committee income and expenditures are reported at each meeting, are audited yearly, and are available for parent review. The Steering Committee holds no regular fundraisers, but encourages parents to support other Hawthorne School organizations such as the PTA and school fundraisers such as Sally Foster for the PTA.

General Meetings

According to its Bylaws, the ELP Parent Organization is required to hold two general meetings each year. Traditionally, these meetings are the Fall General Parent Meeting, held at Back-to-School night, and the Spring General Parent Meeting, held at the Share Fair in the spring. At the fall meeting, ELP donations are collected and a budget is presented for input from the general membership. At the spring meeting, the treasurer presents the year's expenditures and account balances. Volunteers are asked to audit the financial records of the ELP Steering Committee. At the spring meeting, nominations and votes are taken to elect the next year's Steering Committee Officers. At the same time, a nominating committee is established for the following year.

Parental Innovation

Many of the things that seem to be the essence of the Hawthorne ELP were new ideas not very long ago. Parents and teachers have made immeasurably important changes to our school and program simply by being involved and having vision. Please consider your ideas valuable and share them with your child's teacher and/or the ELP Steering Committee. Since the Hawthorne ELP is strongly influenced and supported by parents, you are an important source of ideas and improvement.

Our Co-oping Tradition

The Lowell/Hawthorne ELP has a twenty-five year tradition of parent involvement. Our program is founded on this participation and the thousands of hours of participation that came before. The parents' contributions enable the teachers to focus more attention on the students, develop more extensive lesson plans, and provide more small group activities. Parents also extend the educational opportunities of the ELP students by providing a variety of enrichment experiences including hands-on science; music, literature, and art appreciation; singing; cultural history; creative writing; and P.E.

Calculating Your Co-op Responsibility

All parents are expected to co-op for two-and-a-half hours per week per child. When parents are unable to co-op during school hours, there are a variety of other jobs that can be accomplished during evening or weekend hours.

Recording Co-op Time

The ELP Steering Committee keeps a record of volunteer hours. Please document your hours on the sheet in your child's classroom. This helps the Steering Committee apply for grants as well as track how we contribute as a community. In addition, Hawthorne School policy requires all co-oping parents to sign in and wear a volunteer tag. A sign-in sheet and volunteer tags are located on the north wall near the office. School and district administrators use this information for many purposes. Perhaps the most important reason is safety: when volunteers sign in, office personnel can verify that adults who enter the building are there for a legitimate reason.

Arrival Time

Please arrive a few minutes early so you can help with transitions and receive any needed instructions for the teacher's scheduled activities. Punctuality facilitates a smooth routine and permits the teacher to continue with her prepared curriculum.

Missing Your Scheduled Co-op Day

Please be aware that the teachers depend on your participation in their classroom and plan the day's curriculum around having co-oping parents there to help. Missing

parents may change what and how a subject will be taught. The teachers and the students count on your reliability as a co-op parent. Please find a substitute if you are unable to co-op. The classroom co-op coordinator should have suggestions of parents that may have the flexibility to change days. It is your responsibility, however, to find another parent to co-op when you cannot. If you have a last-minute emergency, please call the school to let the teacher know. This is preferable to having your child inform the teacher. They may forget or tell the teacher too late for them to change their plans.

Siblings

Hawthorne School policy does not allow children who are not registered to be in the classroom. This means that preschool siblings may not accompany the co-opping parent. Many parents are willing to trade baby-sitting time; this is a great opportunity to meet other ELP families. The ELP Steering Committee will facilitate babysitting exchanges, and will even try to match same-age siblings so the trade becomes a bona fide playdate. Occasionally, the Steering Committee may also have babysitter referrals. Please contact the ELP Co-op Coordinator if you wish to investigate these opportunities.

Guidelines for Classroom Volunteers

- Teachers need you there and count on you.
- Be aware that children sometimes behave differently (for better or for worse) when their parents are in the room. Your child's teacher will tell you if there is a major or long-term problem.
- Teachers will not schedule every minute of your co-op time. If the teacher is in the middle of a lesson, please don't interrupt and please don't leave. Know that she is aware of you and will direct you or answer questions when she is finished.
- It is difficult for teachers to conference each day with each co-opping parent. Quick questions are fine, but longer discussions should not be done in front of other children, nor should they occur during lunch or recess. Schedule another time and place for long discussions. The teacher may have planned to use that moment to get something ready and even a short discussion can throw off her timing for the rest of the day.
- Sometimes you may be asked to do things with office machines that you may not know how to do. Ask for help from the teacher. Teachers have priority with office machines.
- Let the teacher know if you feel uncomfortable working at an assigned task for any reason.
- Take personal conversations and cell phone calls outside the classroom. It is very distracting for the teacher and children to have parents talking or using cell phones during a lesson. Also, remember to set cell phones on silent mode when you're in the classroom.
- You are welcome to sit on the floor with the children while they participate in a discussion.
- Teachers in the upper grades often want children to work with little or no parent help in the classroom. The goal is to foster personal responsibility and self-direction. Be clear about when and how you should help.
- When a teacher is working with small groups, intercept any other children needing help to facilitate the small group running smoothly.
- Parents are additional eyes and ears for the teacher. If you are checking a student's work and notice a consistent problem, let the teacher know. Keep anything you might learn about students confidential. Tell the teacher about any problems you notice. Do not tell other children's parents. Information about a child's behavior or school performance needs to come from the teacher.
- If you see students' scores, please do not draw conclusions about your child or other children from what you have seen. Teachers see a wide variety of children through the years, and are trained to notice if something is significant or concerning.
- Follow the teacher's directions for correcting papers. Unless you are asked or it is part of a regular routine (like math timings), don't do anything with student papers (i.e. correct, grade, file, send home). Do not be over-zealous in an effort to provide comments or to mark answers wrong.
- If you're asked to make comments on papers, keep them as positive as you can. Descriptive, process-directed praise is helpful and associated with higher self-esteem. For example, "You worked hard to get your assignment finished." General, outcome-directed praise, such as "Great job" or "You got all the answers correct!" is positive too, but is not as highly correlated with developing strong self-esteem. Some teachers don't want extra comments on papers. Respect the teacher's wishes.

- Dress appropriately for a learning environment. Clothing should be comfortable.
- Short, tight exercise clothing is not appropriate for a classroom.
- Feel free to use the restrooms or get a drink. At Hawthorne, adults are asked to use only the adult restrooms, located in the middle of the central hallway. There are soda machines in the faculty room (Room #4). If there are snacks in the faculty room, they are usually for the teachers. It is difficult to bring enough treats to feed all the coping parents, so please respect these as private property.
- Please do not bring food or drink into the classroom, with the exception of water. If you do bring water, please keep it away from places where spills might occur, and dispose of containers afterward.
- Please do not use the classroom phones. If you need to use a phone, go to the faculty room or to the office.
- Thanks for all you do!
- If you are not staying at the field trip destination, make sure a teacher or responsible adult is at the destination before children leave the car and verify that this person understands that the children you drop off are now under her care.
- When you return to school, walk students back to the classroom.

Guidelines for Field Trips

District policy prohibits teachers from driving students on field trips. Teachers often ask parents to drive children to and from field trips. This allows our children wonderful opportunities that otherwise would not be available. Here are a few guidelines.

- Submit the required documents (copies of a Utah driver's license and proof of insurance) to the school in order to drive.
- Fill out any additional forms required by the school or the teacher when you arrive at school.
- Have operational back-seat seatbelts for each child you plan to drive.
- If you have front-seat airbags, never use the front passenger seat for a child.
- Fill your gas tank before you arrive at school. There generally isn't time to stop for gas en route.
- Do not talk on your cell phone while driving.
- Do not stop anywhere on the way to or from the fieldtrip.
- Be willing to tolerate squeals, singing, laughing, and jokes. Feel free to expect and enforce appropriate car manners.