

Fontana Unified School District

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION PROGRAM



*“Gifted education . . . unlocking potential”*

# Parent Handbook

## 2009- 2010

## History of the GATE Program

The California Legislature first established a program for gifted students in 1961 when they enacted the mentally gifted minor (MGM) program. This program targeted a narrow range of students who scored at the 98th percentile or above on standardized intellectual ability tests. Recognizing that this narrow focus left out many gifted and talented students, new legislation was enacted in 1980.

The Fontana Unified School District's GATE program started in 1989 and soon became district wide in 1990. The GATE program offered district advisory groups and informational meetings to its parents and students. GATE certification classes were offered to Fontana teachers to better serve our students. The Fontana GATE program is ever changing and evolving to meet the educational needs of our students and parents.

The Governing Board believes that all students deserve an education that challenges them to meet their full potential.

*The Board shall provide gifted and talented students opportunities for learning commensurate with their particular abilities and talents.*

(Board Policy 6172)

## Who is a GATE student?

General consensus world-wide concludes that true giftedness occurs in about three percent of the population. Research supports the fact that that gifted individuals generally exhibit high levels of function in the following areas: cognitive, affective/social emotional, physical/sensory, and intuitive. Obviously characteristics of giftedness will vary and no one child may exhibit them all.

The National Association for Gifted Children suggests that compared to their age peers, gifted children **may**:

- Ask numerous questions, seeking reasons, insights & facts
- Have a retentive memory & memorize rapidly
- Be extremely curious and concentrate for long periods on subjects of interest
- Possess an unusually large vocabulary
- Have a wide general knowledge and interest in the world
- Solve complex abstract problems
- Have an unusual imagination
- Prefer to work alone
- Have a highly developed sense of humor
- Set high Standards and strive for perfection

Bright children are often confused with gifted children. Bright students listen well, don't question the teacher, work hard and answer questions. They don't challenge the teacher's competence or stray off the curriculum. Bright pupils enjoy school and get challenged with the work that they are asked to do. They find the work neither too hard nor too easy.

The gifted child on the other hand, if in a regular classroom, may be spending almost all of the school day thinking or doing something other than what the teacher wants. They find the constant repetition so boring that they often don't shine in the classroom. You might find the gifted child day dreaming, looking out of the window, reading a book, or engaged in some self-motivated task instead of listening.

Gifted children often dislike school, are not challenged by the work presented to them, and find the concepts and ideas being taught far below their intellectual prowess. This lack of school engagement often creates a variety of behavioral problems including underachievement, bullying, suggesting unusual or silly sounding ideas and completing very little class work while demonstrating subject mastery on tests.

## *Characteristics and Behaviors – A Comparison*

### **High Achievers**

**vs.**

### **Gifted Learners**

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Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Is receptive to new ideas	Is intense about ideas
Is interested in learning	Is highly curious
Copies accurately	Creates a new design or way of doing it
Is attentive in class	Is mentally and physically involved
Enjoys school	Enjoys learning
Loves the teacher	Loves ideas
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
Has good ideas	Has wild, silly ideas
Is a technician of ideas	Is an inventor of ideas
Answers the questions	Discusses in detail, elaborates
Good memorizer	Good, informed guesser
Loves to memorize	Loves to think and ponder
Completes assignments	Initiates projects
Enjoys a straightforward, sequential presentation	Thrives on complexity and loves ambiguity
Works hard	Plays around, yet tests well
Is alert	Is keenly observant
A top group student	Is beyond the group
Is pleased with his/her own learning	Is highly self-critical
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings and opinions
Likes an authority to be in charge	Has own idea for how it should be done
Loves rules	Wants only basic guidelines
Learns with ease	Already knows
Learns easily at the knowledge and comprehension level	Sees relationships and combines ideas; sees the whole picture
Six to Eight repetitions for mastery	One to two repetitions for mastery
Wants the "rules" of the assignment spelled out	"I want to do it my way" or has a better way to do it
"What do I need to do to get an A?"	"What is the purpose of the assignment?"
Understands ideas	Constructs abstractions
Enjoys peers	Prefers older students or adults
Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences
Is focused on the end product	Is focused on the "journey"

## Identification of Potential Giftedness

Identification of potential giftedness must make use of multiple criteria to fairly assess each child. Fontana Unified School District uses measures from multiple sources and criteria with appropriate consideration given to screening for economically disadvantaged and those with a language background other than English.

Within the standards established by the California State Board of Education and prescribed in Education Code (law), the Fontana Unified School District identifies and offers programs to gifted and academically talented students in the following categories:

**Intellectual Ability** - pupils whose general mental development is significantly accelerated beyond that of their peers of the same age.

**High Achievement** - pupils who consistently produce ideas or products of excellence and achieve at superior levels on standardized tests over time.

**Specific Academic Ability** - (grades 7-12 only) - pupils who consistently function at an advanced academic level in a particular subject area.

The following measures are used in the screening and identification process:

### ***Intellectual Ability Measure***

Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test

### ***Academic Ability Measure***

Nationally norm-referenced test (currently the CAT6 given in grades 3 and 7)

### ***Gifted Characteristics Evaluation***

Teacher Inventory

Parent Inventory

### ***Social Environmental Factor Analysis***

Consideration for students with risk factors that could possibly mask full potential through

#### **Environmental**

- Attended three or more schools from grades K-5, applicable through grade 5 only

#### **Economic**

- Eligible for subsidized lunch program

#### **Language**

- Assigned any limited English or redesignated language proficiency code

#### **Emotional**

- Having involved a psychiatrist, counselor, psychologist or social worker due to emotional problems or acute emotional trauma

#### **Health**

- Has an active IEP or 504 Plan for services or is diagnosed with a medical condition that interferes with efforts toward school achievement

## **Program Guidelines**

The California Department of Education (CDE) administers the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Program which provides funding for local school districts to develop opportunities for high-achieving and underachieving pupils in elementary and secondary schools. Each school district governing board determines the criteria used to identify students for participation in the GATE Program.

The program offered by the district must be approved by the CDE and must include the following six elements as required by Education Code 52200(c) of state legislation pertaining to gifted and talented education:

- a. Differentiated opportunities for learning commensurate with the gifted and talented pupil's particular abilities and identified talents,
- b. Alternative learning environments in which gifted and talented pupils can acquire skills and understanding at advanced ideological and creative levels commensurate with their potential,
- c. Elements that help gifted and talented pupils develop sensitivity and responsibility to others,
- d. Elements that help to develop a commitment in gifted and talented pupils to constructive ethical standards,
- e. Elements that assist gifted and talented pupils to develop self-generating problem-solving abilities to expand each pupil's awareness for choices for satisfying contributions in his or her environment,
- f. Elements that help gifted and talented pupils develop realistic, healthy self-concepts.

Programs must be consistent with the applicable statutes and regulations and are required to be planned and organized as integrated, differentiated learning experiences within the regular school day. All students receive the same core curriculum; however, gifted students will be challenged through qualitatively different delivery of instruction. Multi-track elementary schools should examine the possibility of identifying a track or tracks that would carry the GATE classes allowing for identified students to receive quality differentiated instruction in successive years. In each situation students are enrolled with teachers who hold or are working toward certification in Gifted Education and are an expert in differentiation strategies.

### ***Classroom Configurations***

**Elementary:** Identified students in grades 3-5 are generally placed in cluster groupings. A reasonable cluster comprises no more than 1/3 of a class. Pupils receive grade-level appropriate differentiated activities from the classroom teacher. If enrollment permits, a special day class may be formed.

**Middle School:** In middle school, specific core courses are identified for clustering, or if enrollment permits, as magnet schools or special day classes. A special day class is composed of students identified as gifted. It is especially designed to meet the academic needs of gifted pupils for enriched or advanced instruction of the grade-level core

curriculum and is appropriately differentiated from other grade-level course classes in the same subject.

**High School:** In grades 9 and 10, GATE students should be placed in specific class sections set aside for meeting the needs of highly capable learners in their individual area of identified academic strength(s). Counselors will work with students in subsequent years to steer them toward Honors and Advanced Placement classes particularly in any area of identified academic strength.

Students with sufficient credits for graduation may request to be authorized to enroll as a special part-time student in a local community college. Students must demonstrate adequate preparation in the discipline to be studied and have exhausted all opportunities to enroll in an equivalent course at the school of attendance. Costs associated with attendance at the community college are the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian.

## **Differentiated Curriculum**

California Education Code (law) requires that all students at a given grade level receive the same core curriculum; however, an identified GATE student can expect to be challenged in the curriculum through differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction is the manner in which each teacher modifies the core curriculum and designs strategies to address the unique needs of gifted students. Differentiation of curriculum is dependent on these principles:

- Differentiation is based on the state content standards at each grade
- Differentiation is affected by the dimensions of **depth**, **complexity**, **novelty**, and **acceleration**
- Differentiation should be an integral part of, rather than an adjunct to, the core curriculum
- Differentiation modifies what students will know (content), how students will think (critical, creative, and problem-solving skills or processes), how students will access and use resources (research skills) and how students will summarize and share their learning (products)
- Differentiation should be available to gifted and advanced students as well as any other student who evidence a readiness for the same experience
- Differentiation can be facilitated through flexible grouping and regrouping of students for each task or group of tasks based on need, interest, and ability
- Differentiation should be provided consistently and should be accompanied by high standards of performance
- Differentiation must include teacher instruction and should not be assumed to be self-taught by students

## Differentiated curriculum (continued)

Depth is elaborating. Students determine facts, concepts, and major principles when moving from the concrete to the abstract or known to the unknown in the discipline they are studying.

### **Skills associated with depth:**

elaborate	gather evidence	paraphrase
measure	generalize	describe
extrapolate	define ambiguity	restate
replicate	judge	

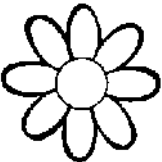

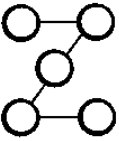








Complexity is making relationships. Student study issues, problems, or themes and make connections between ideas within disciplines or topics.

### **Skills associated with complexity:**

prove/disprove	compare and contrast	categorize
draw conclusions	show relationships	negotiate
estimate	define the problem	provide evidence
revise with new data	check for authenticity	

Differentiated instruction is often accomplished through the integration of depth and complexity principles, theories and generalizations structured around iconic teaching.

## **ICONS- Area of depth & complexity**

	Details		Rules
	Patterns		Multiple perspectives
	Unanswered questions		Relate over time
	Language of the discipline		Ethics
	Big idea		Trends
	Across disciplines		

Novelty is personalizing understanding. Students make original interpretations and restatements of existing information in ways that are personalized or individualized.

***Skills related to novelty:***

Prioritize	observe	explain the main idea
Hypothesize	resolve the conflict	ask questions
Predict	use trial and error	state your opinion

Acceleration is altering the pace of learning and compacting the curriculum. This is often accomplished when students demonstrate mastery or can “test-out” of an already learned skill. Curriculum compacting is an instructional technique specifically designed to make those curricular adjustments. It involves defining goals and outcomes for a given segment of instruction, determining and documenting which students have mastered a specified set of learning outcomes and providing replacement strategies for material already mastered through the use of instructional options. Students are encouraged to work at a more efficient and effective pace when provided challenging and appropriate opportunities.

**Social and Emotional Development**

The learning and exploration for GATE students is accomplished in an environment purposefully designed by teachers knowledgeable about psycho-social as well as intellectual development of students who, because of their often asynchronous development must be one in which students feel they “fit,” are safe to express their ideas without stigma, and encounter no ceilings to limit their reach. At the same time, students must acquire the necessary skills and knowledge in a manner and a pace which support their inquiry and investigation. These may be quite different for each individual.

***Scholarly Traits***

<u>Curiosity</u>	Scholars have questions and want to seek answers.
<u>Goals</u>	Scholars have goals they want to reach: short term goals and long-term goals
<u>Multiple Perspectives</u>	Scholars listen, read and participate in understanding different points of view
<u>Perseverance</u>	Scholars exercise their intellect. They learn to persevere. They don’t give up.
<u>Pride</u>	Scholars take pride in the quality of their work.
<u>References</u>	Scholars use a variety of resources and references.
<u>Save Ideas</u>	Scholars have a system to organize and collect new ideas and information.

## **Professional Development**

Staff development is an integral part of learning and teaching. There is a body of knowledge that teachers, administrators and counselors must possess in order to develop appropriate educational experiences for gifted learners. Teachers need to receive specialized training to teach advanced learners with skill and effectiveness.

Professional development is based on meeting the unique needs of gifted learners in the context of addressing the core curriculum. A needs assessment of teachers and other school personnel who work with gifted learners is used to provide direction needed for planning comprehensive professional development opportunities. Professional development opportunities are provided to develop competencies and the qualifications that the district believes necessary for working with gifted learners.

## **Parent Involvement**

It is important for parents to be active participants in the education of their children. In a climate of mutual trust and sharing of a common goal, the best education for one's children and/or students leads to a strong partnership between home and school. Parents are virtually unlimited in the kinds of contributions they can make to gifted education. They, too, can draw upon their own unique gifts and talents in working with teachers. Always talk with your child's teacher first. Don't be afraid to ask about your child's education. The teacher is there to help you to better understand what is going on in the classroom. Keep in mind that everyone wants what is the best for the child.

Also important for parent involvement is participation in site governance teams, learning about and involvement in legislative processes related to gifted education and education in general, and, promoting more effective programs and program development.

Each school site's GATE Monitor will organize an orientation/information meeting within the first two months of school to outline their school site's GATE plan. In the summer months, following identification, the district GATE Program Office will hold an orientation meeting.

During the school year parents are invited to attend district sponsored information nights facilitated by leaders in the field of gifted education. These sessions include discussion and information on issues related to the social, emotional and educational needs of the gifted child.

### ***District GATE Parent Advisory Committee***

The District GATE Parent Advisory Committee meets at least four times throughout the school year to promote the exchange of ideas and information regarding programs and services to better meet the needs of our identified students and to ensure a cooperative climate among community, parents and district.

The purpose of the committee is to:

1. Advise the District on the program for gifted students
2. Have ongoing responsibility for review of implementation of the GATE program and to assess periodically the effectiveness of the program

3. To annually review and establish new goals and a budget consistent with district policy, and suggest to staff that they look at modifications in the plan to reflect changing needs and priorities, and
4. To provide information and education to parents of gifted children and interested persons.

Each site administrator is asked to facilitate the selection or election of at least one parent who is interested in representing their school site and sharing information from the Advisory meetings with their School Site Councils and school community.

### **Advocacy**

-Reprinted from *Advocacy Handbook for Gifted/Talented Education in California*, CAG

Effective advocates are:

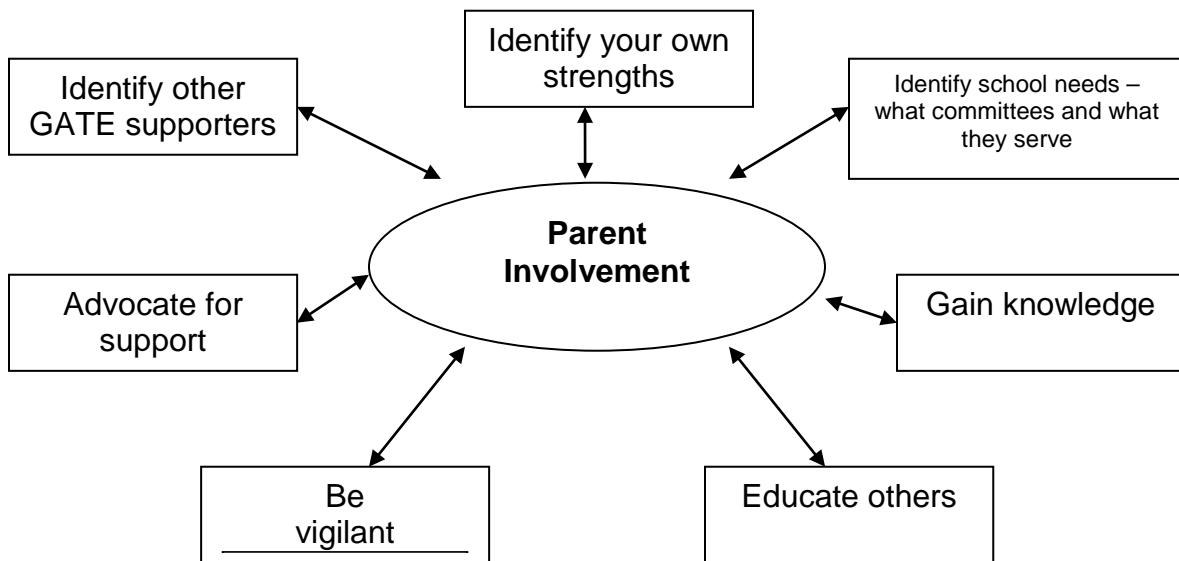
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| ✓ Well informed                          | ✓ Knowledgeable about the power of hierarchy |
| ✓ Sincere                                | ✓ Quietly persistent                         |
| ✓ Articulate                             | ✓ Resourceful and imaginative                |
| ✓ Politically aware                      | ✓ Well organized                             |
| ✓ Respectful of others' point of view    | ✓ Tactful                                    |
| ✓ Knowledgeable about their constituency | ✓ Enthusiastic                               |

Effective advocates must do their homework ahead of time if they wish to influence policy decisions and legislation. Such homework includes being sure that their requests are specific and their proposals are solidly documented.

Remember decision makers are obligated to be aware of the entire story and must look at the total educational picture when making decisions. In this regard, effective advocates are prepared to respond to possible criticism and to explain why gifted/talented education should be a high priority.

Ineffective advocates are:

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| ✗ Militant      | ✗ Insensitive to others' problems or points of view |
| ✗ Threatening   | ✗ Incapable of compromise                           |
| ✗ Hysterical    | ✗ Without a sense of humor                          |
| ✗ Verbose       | ✗ Unaware of the diversity among gifted children    |
| ✗ Recriminating |   |
| ✗ Omnipresent   |   |



**Organizations**

**Local** Fontana Unified School District GATE Program  
<http://www.fusd.net/district/schsupport/specprograms/gate/gate.stm>

**State** California Association for the Gifted (CAG)  
[www.cagifted.org](http://www.cagifted.org)

**National** National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)  
[www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)

National Society for the Gifted and Talented (NSGT)  
[www.nsgt.org](http://www.nsgt.org)

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)  
[www.sengifted.org](http://www.sengifted.org)

## **Budgets**

Monies allocated to the GATE program must support the Single Plan for Student Achievement for GATE students. In support of meeting the needs of gifted learners, GATE funds may be used for:

- Professional development that focuses on meeting the needs of gifted learners
- Professional development on differentiating the core curriculum
- Professional development for obtaining skills to teach designated gifted courses
- Stipends for teachers who serve GATE students beyond contract time
- Stipends for site program monitors
- Technology and software to support curriculum specifically purchased to meet the needs of the gifted students in accordance with the district/school plan
- Participation in educational experiences appropriate for GATE or advanced students such as Odyssey of the Mind, Science Olympiad, Academic Decathlon, Pentathlon, etc.
- Transportation and admission for school sponsored academic trips determined to support the curriculum
- Supplementary curriculum materials for use in GATE identified classes or before and after school programs established for GATE students

GATE funds **may not be used** for:

- Basic curriculum materials generally provided to all students
- Equipment and special supplies that are intended for use by the general school population
- Food and lodging for students on school sponsored trips
- Salaries and benefits for teachers of classes that meet during the teacher's regular contract day

# NOTES

