

Gifted And Talented Education

Travis Unified School District
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GATE PURPOSE

Gifted and Talented Education (*GATE*) is a non-mandated, state funded program that emphasizes opportunities for the development of maximum potential for individuals with outstanding abilities. Identified students receive differentiated curriculum instruction. Differentiated curriculum involves depth, complexity, novelty, and acceleration of content. **The Travis Unified School District GATE program's purpose is to provide qualitatively differentiated learning opportunities that further nurture each identified student, so that they may develop their intellectual, emotional, creative, and social gifts to the fullest.**

The Travis Unified School District has chosen to focus service on fourth - eighth grade identified GATE students. Class size reduction in kindergarten through third grade allows more individualized and differentiated instruction for students at that level. The high school offers advanced placement, honors, and leadership classes that support the GATE student. Athletics and interest clubs are also available at the middle school and high school for GATE students.

The GATE program provides differentiation and enrichment of the curriculum within the regular classroom. Identified students may also meet together in either pull out or cluster groups in which extended and enrichment activities are provided through an integrated curriculum of science, math, art, communication skills, technology, social science, and literature.

The GATE standards are:

To increase:

1. Acquisition, retention, and use of information, including being able to discriminate between necessary and unnecessary information.
2. Higher order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, application, and evaluation).
3. Capacity to see from multidisciplinary viewpoints.
4. Conceptual learning.
5. Adaptability to change - discovering that problems change with new information, and that a problem may have to be reformulated once or many times in the process of understanding and coming to a resolution.
6. Self-directed learning skills and intrinsic interest.
7. Effective collaborative learning practices.
8. Meta-cognitive skills (thinking about thinking).
9. Self-awareness of multiple intelligences.
10. Personal growth and sophistication in attitudes, appreciation, emotions, communication, and intuition.
11. Self-evaluation skills

IDENTIFICATION

Students may qualify for Travis Unified School District's GATE program under the following categories and criteria:

INTELLECTUAL

Student demonstrates extraordinary or potential for extraordinary intellectual development.

1. Nomination from parent, educator, self, previous school records.
2. Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) score of 93rd percentile or above on age or grade component.
3. Score of 430 or more in English language arts (ELA) on the California Standards Test (CST) or a score of 470 or more in math on the CST.

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL

Student demonstrates outstanding critical thinking skills, offers unique, unusual responses or solutions to problems and questions, and exerts strong leadership skills.

1. Nomination from parent, educator, self, previous school records.
2. Student portfolio exhibiting support for nomination.
3. Score of 90% or more on average of two GATE Screening Forms.
4. Score of 420 or more in ELA on the CST or a score of 445 or more on the Math CST.
5. Total score at or above the 90th percentile on the OLSAT.

SPECIAL

Student demonstrates high potential but low performance due to cultural, linguistic, economic or environmental factors.

1. Nomination from parent, educator, self, previous school records.
2. Completion of GATE Form #1.0 by nominating person.
3. Student portfolio exhibiting evidence that student is showing success in the classroom.
4. Total score at or above 400 on the ELA CST or 415 on the math CST.
5. Total score at or above the 81st %tile on the OLSAT.

FINE ARTS

Student demonstrates high potential or achievement in an area of the visual and performing arts such as music or dance.

1. Nomination from parent, educator, self, previous school records.
2. Recommendation from a fine arts instructor indicating that the student demonstrates high potential or achievement (i.e. gallery showing, symphony performance).
3. Total score at or above 400 in ELA CST or 415 on the math CST.
4. Total score at or above the 81st percentile on the OLSAT.

TRANSFER

Student transfers into Travis Unified School District, and was identified as a GATE student at previous school.

1. A student who transfers into Travis Unified School District and has been identified as a GATE student may enroll in the program if his/her qualifications meet the district's requirements for placement in any of the above categories.

IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURE

SCREENING PROCEDURE

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1. Third through seventh grade teachers receive information on gifted learner characteristics.
 2. Teachers nominate potential candidates for fall testing by filling out a nomination form. Depending on the nomination category, a screening form, a Form #1.0, portfolio and/or recommendation from a fine arts instructor may be necessary.
 3. The GATE Coordinator compiles a list of students to be tested the following fall. (A spring test date may also be scheduled in order to accommodate a large number of students.)



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1. Teachers screen cum folders of transferring students to determine previous GATE identification/participation and alert the GATE Coordinator.
 2. Program opening is announced in newsletters and bulletins for parents to nominate students for testing. Students may also nominate themselves or be nominated by another educator.
 3. GATE Coordinator revises list of students to be tested, determines the date of testing, and disseminates information to site principals and teachers.

Note: *A second test date will only be scheduled if: a) 6% of the 4th - 8th grade population is not identified, or b) extenuating circumstances caused the student to have missed the first test date - i.e. illness.*

4. Parental permission for testing is requested. GATE Handbooks are sent home so parents can make an informed decision.
5. Students are tested using the Otis Lennon School Ability Test.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE:

After a decision has been made regarding eligibility, the following occurs:

1. School Notification:

A copy of the GATE eligibility letter is filed in the student's cumulative record at the school site. The original copy of the student's GATE file is sent to the district office GATE file. Principals receive a copy of test results. Teachers receive a profile of student results that may be helpful in planning.

2. Parent Notification:

- a. If eligibility is determined, a letter is sent home describing the local school and district program options, and requesting written parental/guardian consent for participation.
- b. If ineligibility is determined, a letter is sent home explaining the decision and suggesting recommendations.

APPEAL PROCEDURE:

If a student is **not** admitted to the program **and** 6% of the fourth-eighth grade ADA enrollment is not qualified under the eligibility criteria, parents/guardians may appeal the decision to the GATE coordinator. A meeting with a Student Study Team is scheduled to provide an opportunity to analyze a case study. The case study will consist of data gathered through the referral and screening process, a student portfolio, data from tests other than the OLSAT, an interview of the student, and other pertinent data deemed appropriate as per case. In each study, the information compiled should reflect consideration of the student's economic, linguistic, cultural, and environmental background. The Student Study Team shall be comprised of the site principal, a teacher of the student, the GATE Coordinator, and other specialists as needed.

The responsibilities of the Student Study Team are:

- 1) Summarizing the screening data
- 2) Analyzing the data and making one of the following recommendations:
 - a) Admitted to the GATE program
 - b) Admitted as a Situational Placement... for the student who does not meet admission requirements, BUT who is difficult to assess adequately or for whom assessment may not have been accurate due to extenuating circumstances, etc. Under Situational Placement, the student participates in the program for one year while every effort is made to develop the student's potential. At the end of one year, the Student Study Team reviews the success and appropriateness of the placement. The parents/guardians are then notified whether the student is permanently admitted or not admitted to the program.
 - c) Not admitted to the GATE program.

STUDENT NEEDS

Students, staff, and parents are surveyed annually.

Student needs are assessed through interest surveys, mind mapping, self selection of projects, and ongoing dialogue. In addition, quantitative and qualitative data from student work and test scores direct the facilitation of objective based curriculum for the GATE student.

Staff provides input by sharing classroom experiences and observations with individual students. There is ongoing dialogue between the classroom teacher and the GATE Coordinator.

Individual student goals are set in the fall, using input from teacher observations, parent suggestions, and student interests.

Parents provide input through a fall survey, participation on the District GATE Advisory Council, and continual communication with the classroom teachers and the GATE Coordinator.

SERVICE OPTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

E L E M E N T A R Y

1. **Enrichment** occurs in the regular classroom in all curriculum areas through Reader's Workshop, Literature Circles, Writer's Workshop, inquiry based science, social science, math and technology projects. Some classroom teachers use cluster grouping and curriculum compacting when appropriate and allow students to work on independent / small group projects that extend the curriculum in an area of student interest. GATE resources (multi-media programs, etc) are available at each site to assist teachers and students with projects. Some teachers use interactive simulation games that are curriculum based and allow for different levels of participation depending on ability and interest.
2. **Acceleration:** If necessary, students may go to a higher grade for a particular subject. The Algebra Academy is designed to accelerate students in math. Occasionally a student skips a grade.
3. **Leveled Grouping:** At some schools, students will be grouped with other identified gifted learners for a portion of the school day. Ongoing differentiated curriculum will be provided by the classroom teacher.
4. **The GATE pull out program:** This is available to supplement the program for identified gifted learners in grades 4-6, at some schools. A certificated teacher travels from school to school providing one half day of service per week at each participating site. The program uses thematic units that are integrated across the curriculum to provide opportunities for differentiated curriculum. The California Department of Education's Applied Standards are used for the pull-out program.

Activities include investigations using technology, printed matter, human resources, and field trips. An occasional, optional Saturday meeting may be scheduled to provide a forum for identified gifted learners to get together to work on special projects and/or take a field trip. For a number of reasons, a student may choose not to participate in the pull out program for the year. The decision is made with written parental agreement. The student may re-enter the program the following year.

5. Travis Unified School District also offers enrichment classes as part of its **summer school/intersession program.**

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1. **Differentiated curriculum:** Students work with their teachers to further develop their critical thinking skills and talents through special projects and activities.
2. **Cluster grouping:** Students will be grouped with other identified gifted learners for language arts, science, and social studies instruction.
3. **Ability grouping:** Students are placed in math classes according to their ability levels.
4. **Accelerated classes:** A variety of advanced classes are available to students who meet qualifying criteria. These include: advanced classes in drama, art, and band, media production yearbook, algebra, and geometry. Additional curriculum options that provide enrichment are: cultural living/Spanish, drafting, and choir.
5. **Before-School program:** Students may participate in a before-school program on common planning days. Students will meet with the GATE teacher every other week to work on a multi-disciplinary project.

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The 9th-12th grade program is rich in Honors, Advanced Placement and enrichment courses that adequately provide differentiation for GATE students. GATE students are able to receive academic credit for electing to take a leadership class. Athletics and various clubs also provide opportunities for enrichment.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent participation in planning, evaluating and implementing the GATE program occurs formally at the elementary level. An Elementary GATE Advisory Council is established with at least one parent representative from each site, a principal, and the GATE Coordinator. The GATE Advisory Council meets at least three times a year. The purpose of the GATE Advisory Council is to act as liaison for the GATE parent community and to raise appropriate issues to be discussed and acted upon at meetings. The council also reviews and analyzes parent evaluation surveys and annually suggests modifications. Minutes of the meetings are published and distributed to members. A copy of the minutes is posted on the TUSD website.

Parent participation and involvement is also encouraged through the following:

- assisting during class
- supervision on field trips
- completing annual GATE program evaluation surveys
- attendance at GATE related workshops and conferences
- participating with teachers in individual goal setting

To help parents become informed decision makers, newsletters and school bulletins at the elementary and middle school are regularly published. They aim at keeping the community abreast of the needs and characteristics of gifted learners, describing program options within and outside the district and providing information on parent education seminars, workshops and conferences. Updates are also made to the TUSD website.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Staff development needs specific to GATE instruction are determined through the following:

- analysis of annual responses of staff, students and parents on fall interest surveys and spring program evaluations
- articulation meetings for Grades 4-6, and departments 7-8
- evaluation of test data (i.e. OLSAT scores, SAT9 scores)
- analysis of student work
- review of current research in gifted and talented education
- review of state and national frameworks, standards, and related documents

Staff development for classroom teachers is provided through district-wide common planning days, staff meetings, and the district's professional development program.

Sessions may include:

- how to identify GATE students
- how to differentiate curriculum within the context of the class
- the purposes and organization of the GATE program
- sharing information from CAG conferences and workshop attendance
- sharing research information and resources

The GATE teachers, classroom teachers, and parents are also encouraged to attend the annual California Association for the Gifted (CAG) Conference.

GATE PROGRAM EVALUATION

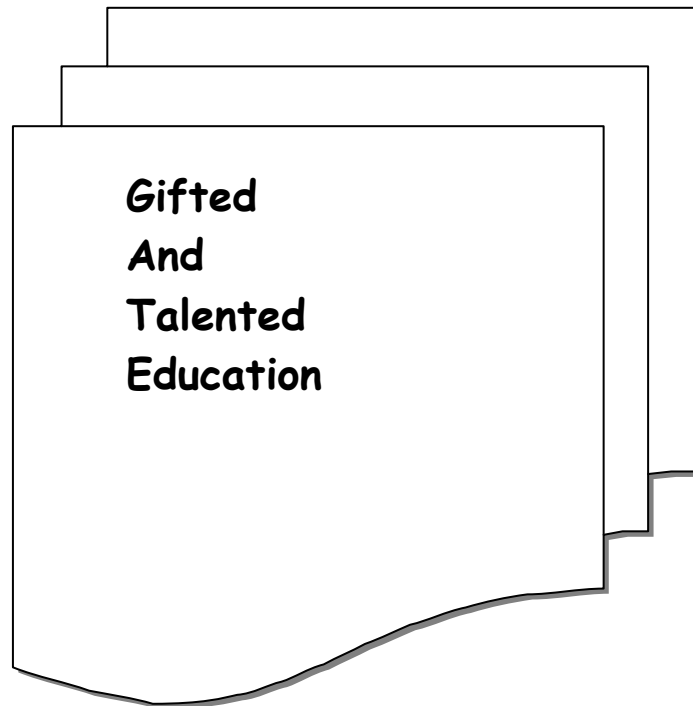
Each site reviews its GATE program by surveying staff, students, and parents regarding program operation, the curriculum, and its impact on students. The GATE Coordinator also completes a self-review. Results of these surveys are compiled and analyzed by the GATE Advisory Council and recommendations for program revision are made. School site councils review and recommend revisions also.

Student evaluation is a continuous process throughout the year. Students perform self-evaluations through journals and performance assessments. Classroom and GATE teachers use objective measures along with observations of student work habits, problem-solving abilities, leadership tendencies, and self esteem. Teachers maintain portfolios at the elementary level. Portfolios include evidence of student growth including: rubrics, creative work, research inventories, mind maps, goal sheets, self-evaluations, journals, photographs of 3-D models, reports, projects, etc.

BUDGET

The Travis Unified School District GATE program is funded through a state grant. The grant is used to pay the salary of the GATE Coordinator. The GATE Coordinator manages the program and coordinates services for identified students.

Private grants and categorical funds may also be a source of funding for the GATE program at both the elementary and middle school levels.



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