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# GATE Newsletter

*Seasonal Updates for Parents from the GATE Office*

## Welcome back from the GATE office!

Hello parents, and welcome to the first of our quarterly parent newsletters for the 2015-16 school year! We're excited to share with you some changes in staffing, as well as important dates for this year and information on growth mindset and how it applies to your children.

Last spring Stephanie Shaughnessy accepted a position as principal at John Morse Therapeutic Center. She is delighted to serve as a leader in that capacity! Over the summer, Kari Hanson-Smith transitioned into the expanded administrative role of Coordinator of GATE & AP Programs.

The newest member of our team is Sarah Schnack, who has replaced Kari as our GATE Resource Teacher. She has taught at Phoebe Hearst Elementary and Sam Brannan Middle School, and recently returned from two years abroad in Vietnam setting up a GATE program at an international school.

While Kari will be the main contact for parents, please email Sarah if you have any topics or questions you would like to see addressed in a future edition of the Parent Newsletter. The December edition will provide more information about the GATE screening process and the William & Mary Language Arts curriculum.

We look forward to working with you, your children, and their teachers to make this a fantastic year for everyone!

Sarah & Kari

## Who can I contact?

**Kari Hanson-Smith, GATE Coordinator**  
Program Design, GATE ID  
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**Sarah Schnack, GATE Resource Teacher**  
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## GATE Screening

The GATE office is pleased to announce that beginning this December, **all 3<sup>rd</sup> grade** students in our district will be screened for GATE.

Look for more information in our December parent newsletter, or visit our website: [www.scusd.edu/gate](http://www.scusd.edu/gate), and click on the red box labeled GATE Identification Testing and Timeline.

This website is also where to find more about referring your 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, or 6<sup>th</sup> grader for GATE screening.

## Save the Date!

### District GATE Advisory Council

- 9/22/15 at Pony Express
- 12/8/15 at Matsuyama
- 4/8/16 at Caleb Greenwood

All meetings are from 5:30-6:30, and consist of parents of GATE students, teachers, and administrators from across SCUSD.

## Parent Resources

**Are you looking for additional support? Ready to learn more about giftedness? Looking for parent-friendly journals, articles, or a good book to read about supporting your gifted child?**

**These three organizations are excellent places to start.**



### SENG

[www.sengifted.org](http://www.sengifted.org)

Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted. SENG's mission is to empower families to successfully guide their gifted children to success. Through frequent newsletters, webinars, and support groups, members are provided with a wealth of resources. If you're interested in becoming a SENG trained parent group facilitator, let the GATE office know.



### National Association for Gifted Children

[www.NAGC.org](http://www.NAGC.org)

This is the national advocacy organization representing the needs of gifted learners. Their publication "Parenting for High Potential," is an excellent and accessible resource for members. In addition, NAGC provides an expansive website, annual conference and resources.



### California Association for the Gifted

[www.CAGifted.org](http://www.CAGifted.org)

Membership in this statewide organization supports advocacy for the needs of gifted learners along with their parents and teachers. CAG hosts regional events, professional development, an annual conference, and publishes nationally recognized journals.

And of course, the SCUSD GATE website has information for parents about the William & Mary Language Arts curriculum, differentiation, enrichment opportunities, and the GATE services offered by our district. [www.scusd.edu/gate-resources-parents](http://www.scusd.edu/gate-resources-parents).

## Mindset and the Gifted Child

Over the past few years, parents and educators are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of a student's mindset to his or her success. In Carol Dweck's 2010 article for the journal *Educational Leadership*, entitled "Even Geniuses Work Hard," she explains mindset in this way:

"During the past several decades, my colleagues and I have conducted research identifying two distinct ways in which individuals view intelligence and learning. Individuals with a *fixed mindset* believe that their intelligence is simply an inborn trait—they have a certain amount, and that's that. In contrast, individuals with a *growth mindset* believe that they can develop their intelligence over time (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Dweck, 1999, 2007).

These two mindsets lead to different school behaviors. For one thing, when students view intelligence as fixed, they tend to value looking smart above all else. They may sacrifice important opportunities to learn—even those that are important to their future academic success—if those opportunities require them to risk performing poorly or admitting deficiencies. Students with a growth mindset, on the other hand, view challenging work as an opportunity to learn and grow. I have seen students with a growth mindset meet difficult problems, ones they could not solve yet, with great relish. Instead of thinking they were failing (as the students with a fixed mindset did), they said things like "I love a challenge," "Mistakes are our friends," and "I was *hoping* this would be informative!"

Students with a fixed mindset do not like effort. They believe that if you have ability, everything should come naturally. They tell us that when they have to work hard, they feel dumb. Students with a growth mindset, in

contrast, value effort; they realize that even geniuses have to work hard to develop their abilities and make their contributions.

Finally, students with a fixed mindset tend not to handle setbacks well. Because they believe that setbacks call their intelligence into question, they become discouraged or defensive when they don't succeed right away. They may quickly withdraw their effort, blame others, lie about their scores, or consider cheating. Students with a growth mindset are more likely to respond to initial obstacles by remaining involved, trying new strategies, and using all the resources at their disposal for learning." Dweck, Carol. "Even Geniuses Work Hard." *Educational Leadership*. ASCD, 1 Sept. 2010. Web. 21 Sept. 2015.

The connections between mindset and our gifted learners is clear. Our children, who are often praised for their gifts and told how brilliant they are, are often the most at risk for developing a fixed mindset and becoming risk-averse. As parents of gifted children, what can we do to help foster a growth mindset? Perhaps the most important change we can make is in how we praise our children. Instead of showing that you only value success or perfection, give kudos when you see your kids working hard and persevering at a challenging task. Encourage them to take risks even when they feel like they might not be good at something right away.

Remind students that every time they try something new, their brains are getting stronger and growing new connections. And above all, model the growth mindset in your own life. Our children are looking to us for cues on how to handle challenges in their lives – be a growth mindset role model!

If you would like to learn more about mindset, Stanford University has put together a toolkit for parents with information and suggestions for how to encourage a growth mindset in your children (and yourself!): <https://www.mindsetkit.org/growth-mindset-parents>

## **What Can I Say To Myself?**

### *Instead of...*

- I'm not good at this.
- I'm awesome at this!
- I give up!
- This is too hard.
- I can't make this any better.
- I can't do math.
- I made a mistake.
- I'll never be as smart as her.
- It's good enough.

### *Try thinking...*

- What am I missing?
- I'm on the right track.
- I'll use some of the strategies I've learned.
- This may take some time and effort.
- I can always improve, so I'll keep trying.
- I'm going to train my brain to do math.
- Mistakes help me improve.
- I'm going to figure out what she does and try it.
- Is this really my best work?

adapted from [https://twitter.com/sgray\\_NCSD/status/453720742757027841](https://twitter.com/sgray_NCSD/status/453720742757027841)