

W I N T E R 2 0 1 4 - 2 0 1 5

GATE Newsletter

Seasonal Updates for Parents from the SCUSD GATE Office

Q&A with The GATE Office Middle School GATE Services

Q: I have two students, one is GATE identified and is in 3rd grade in a GATE Cluster classroom at our neighborhood school; my other child is in 5th grade and while she does well in school she has not yet qualified for GATE services. I've been happy with the level of challenge in her elementary classes, despite them not being "GATE," but I wonder about what will happen in middle school.

A: All of our middle schools offer "GATE" classes for 7th and 8th grade students; however students do not have to be GATE identified in order to be placed in these classes. Rather, all students are eligible based on their current academic performance. Each school site determines the qualifying criteria for placement in these high ability classrooms.

There are a range of programs available for middle grades learners, and all schools offer visitation opportunities to learn more. To learn more and schedule a visit go to:

<http://www.scusd.edu/middle-school-visitation-events>

Winter Season is GATE Id. Season

SCUSD is proud to be one of very few school districts in the state of California that begins the GATE services screening process as early as winter of 1st grade. This enables students who present characteristics that suggest they would benefit from GATE services to receive them beginning in 2nd grade. Early intervention and support can have tremendous long-term gains in terms of student achievement and engagement.

In order to determine whether or not a student would benefit from services, the GATE office uses multiple measures: The Naglieri Non-Verbal Abilities Test (NNAT2), Student Profile Rating scales, and Academic work. The GATE Committee, a team of trained principals and the GATE Office staff then review this data to make recommendations for services. Results are shared in April and a parent information night will be held at the Serna Center.

Additional district wide screening also happens in 3rd grade, and both parents and teachers can refer a student for screening in 2nd-6th grades at any point in the school year.

Save the Date!

**District GATE
Advisory Council**
January 20th 5:30
John Bidwell Elem
Work with the
SCUSD GATE
office to learn
about services
across SCUSD.

**1st Grade GATE
Testing Window**
January 20th- 30th
All Elem Schools
District
Psychologists will
administer the
NNAT to all 1st
grade students in
classrooms

**Annual CAG
Conference**
Feb 28-March 1
Palm Springs, CA
CA Association for
the Gifted holds its
annual conference
for parents,
teachers &
administrators



STANFORD UNIVERSITY
Education Program for Gifted Youth



JOHNS HOPKINS
CENTER FOR TALENTED YOUTH

Selecting a Summer Enrichment Program that is the right fit for your child

While early December may seem an unlikely time to begin making summer plans, in the world of summer enrichment it is peak season! Making plans far in advance enables you and your child to benefit from scholarship opportunities and availability in a wider range of programs both locally and nationally. While most of the programs targeting GATE students are available to students starting 4th grade, there are many local options (*think museums, and art centers*) that support younger students. Additionally, there is an increasing range of on-line opportunities. While these may not offer the same chances for peer interaction, they do offer tremendous opportunities for cognitive stimulation. Whatever option works best for your family, the research is conclusive that students benefit significantly from summer enrichment.

Gifted and Talented Learners who spend much of their school day surrounded by age-peers in heterogeneous classrooms benefit significantly from the chance to spend a week or more over the summer in enriched learning, either by interest or ability area, with cognitive peers. Students who are able to participate in summer learning—whether camp, community, or family based—score higher on their fall achievement tests than students who are left to their own devices throughout the summer (Alexander, Entwisle & Olsen, 2007). Time spent in high-interest work with other gifted students also offers opportunities for greater intellectual challenge and stimulation, as well as peer support for academic excellence. (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2007).

The GATE Office can direct parents to a range of programs. See the website for a brochure.



Local Spotlight: ATS

Academic Talent Search at CSUS Serving 4th-9th grade Gifted Learners

January 21st—ATS Qualifying exams begin at area schools.

January 31st, February 21st & 28th, and March 14th – ATS Qualifying exams at CSUS

<http://www.csus.edu/coe/ats>

ATS, in partnership with CSUS, has been providing summer academic and interest based enrichment for highly motivated and able learners since 1982. Participants can enroll in 1-, 3- or 5-week sessions held on the campus of CSUS.

Need based financial aid is available!

Summer Enrichment: Big Choices

Residential or Commuter?

Consider whether or not your child is mature enough to spend as much as a week (or longer) away from home. While for many programs, age is a determining factor; it is not the only consideration. If your child is ready, residential programs often offer the chance to meet and build relationships with a more diverse group of participants through a wider range of activities. Non-residential programs are usually less expensive, but offer experiences at local venues with local peers.



Age or Ability Level Groupings?

During the school day, your child is placed with age-peers. Yet he or she may have abilities or interests that go far beyond the average student in that grade. Some summer programs recognize this and group participants in age bands (e.g. Ages 7-10). Additionally, some programs are intended for students who are cognitively far beyond their peers, giving them a chance to meet others who think the way they do.



Academic or Enrichment?

A well-rounded summer program will provide students with a balance between the academic program offerings and the social and enrichment offerings. Consider your child and which of his or her interests would best be nurtured over the summer. Keep in mind that this experience should be positive and enriching, not remedial.



Regional or National Program?

A local program at a university, museum, or community center may be an excellent way to try out summer learning experiences. Northern CA also benefits from associations with nation-wide programs such as CTY or SIG. As many programs encourage students to return annually and are offered at a variety of universities, participation in a national program offers participants the chance to accomplish two goals: summer enrichment and college tours!



What's Different in a GATE Class: William and Mary Curriculum for High Ability Learners

SCUSD students receiving GATE services at all GATE sites benefit from rigorous Language Arts curriculum developed by the College of William and Mary. You may have seen evidence of this curriculum in September, and as we return from Winter Vacation this curriculum will make up a significant percentage of the Language Arts instruction in your child's classroom.

The William and Mary Language Arts units are designed around five instructional models that foster concept attainment, differentiation, and depth and complexity. Over the summer GATE classroom teachers participated in full-day training around the use of these teaching models. Throughout the school year, the GATE Office provides ongoing training to support teacher's implementation of this content.

Literature Web:

This teaching model is used in all grade levels and is designed to guide understanding and interpretation of a literature selection. Completed independently, in small groups, or as a whole class, this graphic organizer fosters close reading of aspects of literature and serves as a tool for discussion.

Vocabulary Web:

In depth instruction and exploration of vocabulary is an excellent way to address the learning interests of GATE students. This web is a graphic organizer, a tool that aids students in exploring words in depth. Students in small groups or with a partner will analyze word

origins, synonyms, antonyms and part of speech. Dictionaries are used both on-line and print.

The Hamburger Model for Persuasive Writing:

This graphic model uses the familiar metaphor of a sandwich to help students understand the structure of an argumentative paragraph or essay. As students transition across the grades the components for structuring this paragraph increase in complexity as additional features are added.

Paul's Elements of Reasoning Model

Developed by Richard Paul, this provides an organized structure for the analysis of a real-world issue or problem. Students are supported through understanding the various perspectives of stakeholders and the consequences of outcomes.

Taba's Model of Concept Development

Developed by Hilda Taba this model guides deep understanding of an overarching concept. In grades 2-6 students consider the concept of change. Teachers may also use this structure to introduce other concepts during the year.

Additional features of the curriculum:

Literature selections represent a balance between classics, fables, folktales, and current literature. Novels reflect a wide variety of cultural backgrounds and a variety of reading levels are accommodated.

Students in grades 4-6 participate in literature circles offering additional opportunities for teachers to group students according to ability and interest in the classroom.