



## ***QUESTIONS CONCERNING GATE K-6 ACADEMIC PROGRAMS***

***What does G.A.T.E. stand for?***

Gifted and Talented Education

***My child gets good grades and has scored very well on the state standardized tests. Does that mean he/she is gifted?***

It could indicate that your child is gifted or that he/she is a very strong student or both. Strong grades and tests scores are not an automatic indicator of giftedness.

***Who are gifted students?***

The Federal definition of gifted students is, “Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.”

***If I have a child identified for the GATE program should I expect school to be easy for him/her?***

Not necessarily. Every person is unique. Everyone has strengths and weakness.

***What are characteristics of gifted children?***

In general, the gifted learner shows characteristics that differ from their age peers in every area of function: cognitive, affective, physical and intuitive. See links on the GGUSD GATE Home Page for more detailed characteristics of gifted children.

***What is the purpose of a GATE program?***

The purpose of the GATE program is to meet the unique advanced learning needs of gifted children.

### ***Why do GATE students need a special program?***

Recent research shows that if a child is gifted, he/she needs a program that is responsive to his/her level of learning and thinking in order to reach their maximum potential. Studies have demonstrated that students who are not challenged in their early educational settings can plateau intellectually.



### ***Is GATE the same as Special Education?***

The GATE program is designed to meet the unique educational needs of gifted children as defined in the state standards for gifted students. The GATE program it is not a function of Special Education.

### ***What are the advantages of being in a GATE class?***

The advantage of the GATE program for gifted students is that it is designed to meet the unique needs of gifted students. Dr. Maureen Neihart, Child Clinical Psychologist quotes, “The most important school-based intervention for gifted students is a challenging educational program that provides an optimal academic and social match for the student’s pace, level, and pattern of learning.” This is just what our GATE teachers are trained to provide for our GATE students.

### ***What are the disadvantages of being in a GATE class?***

Not all neighborhood elementary schools have GATE programs. If your local school has no established program, your child would need to attend the GATE elementary site nearest your neighborhood school. GATE students may need to take the bus to their new GATE site. Parents may request a transfer for the siblings of their gifted students through Child Welfare and Attendance, on the third floor of the District Office, in order to keep the siblings at the same school site. These transfers are based on space availability and subject to approval by the GATE site principal.

### ***My child is so good at some things, but only average in others. Can he still be GATE?***

Yes, gifted students have strengths and weaknesses. Just because your child is gifted doesn't mean that he or she is gifted in every discipline of study. As part of the GATE program, students will learn to set short and long term goals in order to have academic success.

***If my child is gifted why does he seem to lack common sense?***

The “adult like” intellectual conversations you can have with a gifted child can be deceiving. In fact, his/her social and emotional development may be the same as his/her age level peers. This can lead to some confused expectations on the part of parents and teachers. A good rule of thumb... remember that they are kids first.

***How can I help a GATE child who is perpetually bored?***

If a child is in a GATE program and perpetually bored, it usually means that there is an issue not being addressed. Boredom stems from lack of involvement. If a child is not involved in his/her schoolwork, you should begin by getting a clearer picture of the problem by meeting with the teacher. Together you can help the child devise a plan for becoming and staying involved.

## ***QUESTIONS CONCERNING LOGISTICS***

***What grade levels offer GATE or Advanced classes?***

Grades 1-6, 7-8, and 9-12. Kindergarten teachers are offered individual training, as needed, to support the learning needs of exceptionally advanced learners in their class.

***Where are the GATE programs located?***

Elementary GATE classes are offered at Allen, Peters K-3, Peters 4-6, and at Patton. Intermediate School Campuses offer Advanced courses and all High schools offer Honors classes and Advanced Placement courses for GATE and high achieving students.

***Should my child qualify, can I choose the GATE site my child will attend?***

No. The Elementary GATE site is assigned based on your attendance area. The secondary sites are your designated intermediate and high school. Should you want your child to attend a different intermediate or high school, you will have to apply for a transfer by going to the Child Welfare and Attendance Office on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the District Office.

***Are GATE programs the same in every district?***

The state of California has Recommended Standards for GATE programs. All districts that have written GATE plans are required to adhere to these standards. There are many variations of these standards based on the district. Most are very similar in structure.

***Will the GATE program take up too much of my child's free time?***

The GATE program should not take up any more time than a regular class. Homework and grading requirements are the same.

## ***QUESTIONS CONCERNING TESTING***

***How is a child recommended to take the GATE test?***

All teachers are sent instructions on how to recommend students for the GATE testing. Teachers make recommendations in November based on characteristic behaviors of gifted children. ***Parents have the right to recommend their own children for testing.*** See the link for the Parent Referral Form on the GATE Home Page Web Site. Parent referrals are due in the GATE Office by December 1 for spring testing and June 15 for summer testing.

***What is the usual method for testing for the GATE program?***

Students are recommended for testing based on characteristic behaviors of GATE students. They are then given a nationally normed group test, which has been an effective tool for identifying gifted students throughout the nation.

***How can I have my child tested for the GATE program?***

If you would like your child to be tested for the GATE Program, discuss it with his/her teacher at the first parent/teacher conference in October. If your child's teacher does not feel that this is an appropriate referral, you may use a parent referral form and refer your own child.

***When does testing occur? Where?***

Spring testing is during the months of February and March at each elementary, intermediate and high school. Summer testing takes place in August at a site determined by the district.

***When will I get the results?***

Spring results should be received by the end of the second week of May. Summer results are processed and returned by mid September.

***If my child does not pass the test, will he/she be allowed to take it again?***

Students may take the test up to three times during their academic career in GGUSD. They may only take the test once in a twelve-month period.

***Will my child have to be re-tested each year to stay in the program?***

No, once a child has passed the GATE test, he/she will not have to retake the test.

***Should I prepare my child for taking the test?***

Giftedness can be nurtured through a rich, engaging home environment, although giftedness is inherent to the child and, therefore, it cannot be forced or taught. No specific test preparation is needed, as it is a test that measures thinking processes, not specific subject areas.

***Is there any way to help my child become GATE?***

No. Giftedness is not something you can practice.

***What if my child does not pass the test, but has a lot of characteristics of GATE children?***

Most of us have some characteristic of giftedness. A truly gifted child will have many of the characteristics to a very pronounced degree.

## ***QUESTIONS CONCERNING CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION***

***Will my child still learn the basic skills?***

Absolutely, the GATE program uses the same state standards, core curriculum and basic skills as the regular program. The core curriculum is taken to a greater degree of depth and complexity through an instructional process called differentiation.

***How is a GATE class different from a regular class?***

GATE students are grouped with their intellectual peers with the goal of building the capacity for highly complex thinking and analysis in an interactive environment.

***What kind of training do GATE teachers receive?***

In order to teach GATE the state says that teachers must receive ongoing training in differentiating the core curriculum, specifically for advanced learners. GATE teachers must also receive training on meeting the social and emotional needs of their gifted students.

***Is there more homework in the GATE program?***

GATE students receive homework commensurate with district guidelines for their respective grade level.

***Is the grading the same for GATE and non-GATE students?***

Yes. All students are graded on their report card using the State Grade Level Standards.

***How is the GATE program different or enhanced?***

The GATE program meets the unique needs of gifted learners by enhancing the core standards with depth, complexity, novelty and acceleration. The program is research-based and also meets the unique social and emotional needs of gifted learners.

***What is Differentiation?***

Differentiation is a term that is widely used in the field of education. Basically it means to meet the differing needs of the students in the classroom. In the field of Gifted Education it indicates a need to make lessons accessible to all types of learners and to tap into the advanced levels of intellect of our learners.

***Why is Differentiation important?***

The process of differentiation for advanced learners is research-based and allows for advanced levels of cognitive development. It does not include more of the same or “increased difficulty”. For gifted students learning becomes a dynamic process which develops complex cognitive thinking skills by “digging deeper” into the learning process. Students are with their mental peers, thereby creating an environment for high-level interactive learning.

***Can my child be removed from the GATE program?***

The GATE program is not a cure-all and may not be appropriate for all students. Experience tells us that most children need a period of adjustment for any type of change. Decisions on continued placement are made jointly by the GATE office, school site and parents.

***QUESTIONS CONCERNING  
SECONDARY EDUCATION***

***Is there a GATE program at the Junior High/Intermediate level?***

Yes. Each intermediate school addresses the needs of their gifted population in a different way using the state approved structure for gifted education.

***What is the GATE structure at the Intermediate level?***

Academically accelerated students and GATE identified students are placed into classes designated for students achieving at the highest levels. They are often referred to as "advanced" classes.

***Why does the program structure change at the Intermediate level?***

GATE identified students and academically accelerated students compliment each other and learn together in order to provide more interaction at the highest levels of learning. Research tells us that developmentally, the social and emotional needs of gifted students are best met in this way beginning in the preteen years.

***What is the GATE program at the high school level?***

All students at the high school level can qualify for classes designated as "Honors" courses beginning in the 9th grade, based on teacher recommendation. These classes offer a more rigorous and challenging dimension to the curriculum. Advanced Placement classes, or "AP" courses, are courses designed to parallel college level courses and are offered to 10-12 graders. They are rigorous, time intensive and offer a weighted grade scale. The College Board offers an "AP" exam at the end of the course. Students passing the test can receive college elective credit that will transfer to most universities.

## **QUESTIONS CONCERNING SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL NEEDS**

### ***Why should I put my child in the GATE program?***

If your child is gifted, it means they have the capacity to easily acquire content that is complex. Research tells us that grouping these children with their mental peers is important for academic and social/emotional development. The problem with not placing a gifted child in an appropriately challenging environment is the potential for boredom or underachievement. As quoted by Dr. Silvia Rimm, Clinical Child Psychologist, “The surest path to high self-esteem is to be successful at something one perceived would be difficult. Each time we steal a student’s struggle, we steal the opportunity for them to improve their self-esteem.” Children are in school to learn and be challenged. Gifted children, by nature, need a greater challenge than what is offered in the general education program.

### ***What if my child does not want to go to or be in the GATE program?***

No one necessarily likes change that removes him or her from his or her comfort zone. Children are no different. Parents should make the ultimate decision regarding what is best for their child and provide emotional support. Teachers in the GATE program are trained on how to support the students emotionally as they make the transition.

### ***Is the competition common among high achieving students overwhelming in the GATE setting?***

In the GATE program collaboration replaces competition as the primary vehicle for learning. It does take a shift in thinking for those students who are at the top of their class if they always view themselves as “the best”.

### ***Do they have the opportunity to be a part of the school activities?***

Yes. GATE students are integrated in all non-academic activities.

### ***My child has been identified as gifted but has a great deal of difficulty with change. How can I help him/her make the transition to a new school?***

Visit the area; look for familiar landmarks connecting home to school. Walk the campus to gain familiarity with it. Think about all of the things that you do when you have to make a change in your home location or work location.

Once you put yourself in the position of having to make a change, you will think of many ideas that will make the transition easier.

***My child is very smart and I often have a battle of wits and intelligence with him/her. Can someone help me with this?***

GATE students are just regular kids with an advanced intellect, but remember they are still children. The GATE staff has a great deal of experience and will be able to help you guide your gifted child. The GATE Office can offer support through books and tapes that can be loaned. The Home Page to GGUSD GATE has links to Internet support and suggested reading for parents needing further support.

## ***QUESTIONS CONCERNING GATE VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS (VAPA)***

***Are there classes for children gifted in the areas of visual or performing arts?***

Yes, there are classes for students talented in the Visual and Performing Arts. Students ***do not need*** to be in the Academic GATE Program to qualify and participate in the GATE VAPA Programs.

***How do students qualify for the GATE VAPA?***

***For GATE Visual Arts:*** GGUSD students may submit an art portfolio in the spring which will be assessed for placement in an after school visual arts program for the following fall. Students are notified of the results in June.

***For GATE Performing Arts:*** GGUSD students will audition in the fall for placement in an after school music program for the following spring. Within a month of the audition students are notified of the results.

***Do they have to qualify each year?***

***For GATE Visual Arts:*** In the Visual Arts Program students must requalify when transitioning from elementary to secondary school.

***For GATE Performing Arts:*** Students in the Performing Arts Program must audition every year.

***In what grade level does it begin?***

For GATE Visual Arts: Students may submit a portfolio beginning spring of 3rd grade for participation in the GATE Art Program the following fall.

For GATE Performing Arts: Students may audition for the choral or instrumental music beginning in the fall of 4th grade for participation in the GATE Music Program the following spring.

***Where are the classes located?***

Classes for GATE Visual Arts and GATE Performing Arts are offered at various sites throughout the district, based on where the instructor teaches.

[• GGUSD GATE HOME PAGE link](#)

[• GGUSD HOME PAGE link](#)

[GGUSD PARENT HOME PAGE link](#)

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