



LEARNING WITHOUT LIMITS

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION (GATE)

A Parent Handbook

Jurupa Unified School District

Language Services and Student Programs

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SUPERINTENDENT

Elliott Duchon

Every child is unique and comes to school with different educational needs and presents different challenges to parents and teachers. When a student has been identified for the Gifted and Talented Education Program, we can help identify these needs and provide the very best education for the student. The Jurupa Unified School District conducts blanket testing to help identify all children who qualify for the GATE program. This helps to assure that a child who might qualify for the program is not overlooked.

We also recognize that parents of GATE children may face unique needs and challenges. Assuring that your child performs to the best of his or her ability is a shared responsibility of school and home. The purpose of this handbook is to provide a resource to parents of GATE children so that we may work together in providing the best educational opportunity for your child.

We hope this handbook is a valuable resource to you. Your most valuable resource is your child's teacher. Communication with the classroom teacher is critical to the education of all children. This handbook also provides other resources and answers questions you may have about the GATE program.

When home and school work together, the student is the winner. Thank you for helping us to educate your child.

Elliott Duchon

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

The mission of the Jurupa Unified School District is to educate each student to the highest levels of academic achievement and prepare students to succeed in life. We want our students to have a strong academic foundation, a successful transition through academic and social learning, and to be prepared for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

The mission of the Language Services and Student Programs Department is to help all students of different backgrounds excel in the programs it offers. The Gifted and Talented Education Program offers differentiated instruction in the classroom to all those students who are in need of more advanced and challenging tasks, as well as a variety of extension programs at the school and district levels. We recognize the importance of meeting every child's needs, especially those of our gifted students. We strive to find the best research-based instructional practices to bring to our students.

OUR MISSION

Gifted learners, generally, show characteristics that are different from their same age peers in every area of function: cognitive, affective, physical, and intuitive. There is no one single characteristic that encompasses giftedness. Gifted learners differ from each other as each child has unique patterns of characteristics and interests. Differences commonly found between most gifted learners and their same age peers are:

- **A need for acceleration and modification in pacing of the curriculum:** *Gifted students may have a need to move faster through the curriculum.*
- **A need for complexity and intensity:** *Gifted students may need the opportunity to explore the connections and relationships between concepts, theories and generalizations.*
- **A need for depth:** *Gifted students may have a need to learn about certain subjects in great detail.*
- **A search for novelty:** *Gifted students may have a need to exhibit their creativity in the creation of original projects that challenge their thinking in new and unusual ways.*

WHO ARE THE GIFTED?

A broad and extensive range of characteristics and traits have been defined for gifted children; however, the fact remains that no one trait can be used as a signifier of giftedness. It is rather the subtle combination of several key traits possessed to a certain degree of intensity or with exceptional pervasiveness that is the greatest indicator to parents and teachers.

It must be remembered that gifted children are children first and gifted second. They are still young and will sometimes act socially and emotionally like students their age. The difficult part is the lack of consistency between gifted students, or even between traits of a single gifted student, in social-emotional behavior. A nine year-old gifted child may be able to engage in a very mature, even profound conversation with an adult. However, when a lack of experience with the subject matter is exposed, the child's behavior can easily revert to that of an average nine year-old. This can be very disconcerting and unexpected.

Just like other children their age, gifted children will often need to be taught how to use their problem-solving ability to thrive emotionally and socially.

The term “gifted and talented students” identifies children and youth who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools in order to fully develop such capabilities.

Definition taken from U.S. Congress, 1972

Purpose

The Gifted and Talented Education Program is designed to meet the unique needs of children with exceptional abilities. The program operates under the guidelines of sections 52206-52212 of the California Education Code.

Identification

Second grade students are assessed for potential identification through the use of the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test. Students in grades three through twelve may be referred by an educator or parent for possible identification. Jurupa Unified School District currently identifies students utilizing a multiple criteria process.

In addition, teachers may refer a student based upon observation of student behavior and work that demonstrates a student’s exceptional abilities in academics, leadership, creativity, and in the visual and performing arts.

WHAT IS GATE?

The definition of *differentiation* in gifted education has been debated, redefined, and refined over the years. Educators see GATE services as the response to the needs of gifted students and an extension of the core curriculum for the purpose of creating challenges, depth, and complexity.

Differentiation is:

- *The means by which curiosity is recognized and stimulated*
- *The provision of educational experiences that offer the student valuable areas of study which may not exist in the core curriculum or may have been minimized*
- *The provision of opportunities for students to study areas that further develop the core curriculum*
- *The provision of curricular experiences that cause students to think independently, explore areas of the core curriculum in depth, and venture into new and varied topics*
- *A coordinated, comprehensive curriculum.*

WHAT IS DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION?

There are often some misconceptions about what differentiation actually entails; sometimes it is easier to define what it is not:

Differentiation is not:

- *A reward or punishment for being gifted*
- *Better books or more homework*
- *Intended to deliberately segregate students from each other*
- *Intended to be curricular experiences that are merely flamboyant or labeled as fun or entertaining without educational value*
- *Disjointed activities.*

A differentiated curriculum is achieved by modifying one, some, or all the elements of curricular experiences: *process skills, content or subject matter, product or form of sharing and transmitting one's learning, and the learning environment*. Modifications of the curriculum must be accompanied by modification in instruction. It is the right of all students to have an appropriate curriculum responsive to their needs, interests, and abilities.

ELEMENTS OF DIFFERENTIATION

The California Department of Education and The California Association for the Gifted have defined four strategies that are the core of a differentiated curriculum for the gifted and advanced learners. They are **Depth, Complexity, Novelty, and Acceleration.**

Depth is defined as becoming an expert in an area of study. It is the part of the curriculum that allows students to learn more about a topic that might be introduced in the text or in a lesson. It also is the part of a curriculum that gives students permission to go to outside resources and to analyze the content with the goal of becoming a scholar. Students who study a topic in depth begin to think like a disciplinarian in their field.

Complexity is defining the inter relatedness of content and how topics are connected or related to each other. When students are given an opportunity to see how the content of their science unit relates to what they are studying in social studies or literature, they are being asked to think complexly. While Depth can exist in the classroom without Complexity, Complexity cannot exist without Depth. Students cannot relate content within and across the disciplines unless they know something about that content.

Novelty is the creative component of differentiation. It is not about the teachers' creativity but about the students'. Teachers who encourage novelty expect their students to demonstrate uniqueness and creativity in their work: "*Don't go where the path leads, go where there is no path and leave a trail.*" Again, under-explaining encourages students to 'stretch their wings' and demonstrate their understanding of key concepts through projects and assignments that encourage creativity and uniqueness.

Acceleration is perhaps the most straightforward means of differentiation that meets the needs of students with demonstrated high levels of understanding by arranging for them to move more rapidly through a particular curricular sequence. Such acceleration can be either self paced within any learning environment, or in a group setting with the students participating in a class or course for a higher grade or age. Thus, a group of third grade students may be working on the fourth grade math curriculum with teacher guidance and supervision; or a seventh grade student with advanced levels of understanding in mathematics may be ready for algebra rather than pre-algebra. Acceleration is used inappropriately when students are offered an accelerated curriculum and expected to teach themselves.

Elementary Level:

At the elementary school level, Jurupa Unified School District currently provides different service delivery models for identified GATE students. The particular service delivery model offered by an elementary school is generally dependent on several factors; each school site plans to provide the most suitable program possible. For appropriate delivery of instruction, student needs, readiness, and interests are evaluated.

Secondary Level:

At the middle school level, students are generally placed in advanced classes for core subjects. In high school, students may access Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), and Early College Academy.

Cluster Class:

Clustering is the most common of all the program types for gifted students. In this model, identified GATE students are grouped in a regular grade-level classroom as a “cluster.” The GATE cluster class will have the traditional number of students for that grade level. These classes may exist at fourth through twelfth grade, and the size of the cluster will vary among grade levels. Ideally, the teacher in the GATE cluster class will be GATE certified, or possess special training to work with GATE students. Classroom instruction, assignments, and assessments are modified to challenge and engage the gifted learner.

Special Day Class:

Special Day Class may be provided whenever a school has sufficient numbers of identified GATE students at a particular grade level. These classes are composed only of students identified as gifted and talented.

PROGRAM AND SERVICE DESCRIPTIONS

Parents are encouraged to develop and maintain close communication with their child's school. The first person you should communicate with is the teacher. The school's principal and GATE coordinator are also key contacts. To enhance their child's education, parents are encouraged to be actively involved at school in a variety of ways, such as coordinating events, acting as room parent and/or school volunteer, becoming a PTA member and School Site Council member and a Site GATE Advisory member. Parents also have the opportunity to participate in an advisory capacity through the Jurupa Unified School District GATE Advisory Committee (DGAC) which meets approximately three times during the school year. Please telephone for dates, times, and locations of these meetings for this school year. You may also visit our GATE web page on the JUSD web site: www.jusd.k12.ca.us.

A climate of mutual trust and a sharing of common goals lead to a real partnership between the home and school. Parents are virtually unlimited in the kinds of contributions they can make to gifted education. Parents are encouraged to draw on their unique gifts and talents in working with teachers to enhance their child's classroom experience.

Parents of gifted children offer these tips:

- *Understand that your child may not want to stand out for being gifted.*
- *Schedule regular trips to the library to select reading material.*
- *Provide play materials that can be used in creative ways, not just models and puzzles with one correct way of building them.*
- *Find a few playmates that are truly compatible.*

PARENT PARTICIPATION

- *Take family trips to interesting places where children can grow – museums, aquariums, gardens, and historical sites.*
- *Attend concerts, plays, and dance performances.*
- *Watch TV programs with your child and discuss what you have seen. Educational programs like those found on The History Channel or Discovery can be both entertaining and informative.*
- *Encourage activities in areas of academic and/or physical weakness.*
- *Allow your child to fail or be frustrated. In fact, try to ensure that some degree of failure is experienced in the preteen years. Admit your own failures and discuss them.*
- *Do not allow intelligence or intellect to substitute for social graces or family responsibilities.*
- *Encourage your child's empathy and social consciousness.*
- *Enjoy your child, for soon he or she will be grown!*
- *Teach your child a life skill familiar to you, such as cooking, sewing, gardening, auto or home repair, carpentry, etc.*
- *Give your child opportunities to learn music, dance, art, computers, sports, etc. An interest in many of these skills is primarily developed during childhood.*

Physical Immaturity

It is frustrating for a young child to be able to think on a high level, and at the same time have difficulty writing the letters of the alphabet, and to be able to recognize this incongruity. To be advanced intellectually, but only average in physical development, can be troublesome to the GATE child.

Do not overlook a child's physical development. Without coercing, quietly encourage and guide your child into activities requiring attention to fine and gross motor coordination – puzzles, construction sets, and group sports.

Underachievement

At least half of the gifted students in the elementary grades do not match their ability with school achievement. Learning to underachieve may occur at about the fourth or fifth grade as a reaction to inadequate curriculum and an emphasis on conformity. Sometimes the underachievers display negative, self-defeating attitudes. Failure may be defined by the gifted child as anything other than being “the best.” For the gifted youngster in a competitive society, nonparticipation may be preferable to losing.

Maintain challenging and enriching experiences for your child at home, and continue positive dialogue with your child's teacher and school when motivation or interest appears to wane. Model the importance of working to potential – but do not overly stress achievement as the sole goal.

OBSTACLES FACED BY GIFTED CHILDREN

Too Many Choices

The requirement to make career and personal choices can be overwhelming to gifted children with the mixed blessing of multiple abilities. Some gifted adolescents try to meet all expectations of parents and others. Because they attempt to succeed at everything, they are less likely to perform to their potential in any area.

Ensure your child meets with adults who are successful in a variety of professions, and that throughout their secondary education they meet regularly with counselors to discuss and establish career goals.

Experiencing Non-Success

Dr. Sylvia Rimm wrote, “The surest path to high self-esteem is to be successful at something you perceived would be difficult.” In elementary and secondary settings, students may not find grade-level work very challenging. Students may graduate from high school in a top position representing the upper level of intelligence, ability, talent, and leadership, but in college or in the working world, success becomes more elusive. Competition becomes keener, and achievement more important. The experience of failing or even of being average may be totally foreign to gifted people. They may become “paralyzed perfectionists” who need a guarantee of success.

See that your child is pursuing personal interest independent study projects at home. Try to ensure that your child has opportunities to interact frequently with children who have similar abilities.

Accelerated Learning: Pacing students through the curriculum at a rate commensurate with their advanced ability, allowing them to go as far and as fast as they can go.

Advanced Placement (AP): A program in which a secondary student can gain college credit and/or advanced college placement. Advanced placement is obtained by successfully meeting criteria established by higher education institutions on a nationally given and scored Advanced Placement examination.

Cluster Grouping: A method for organizing a heterogeneous classroom by assigning students with similar needs, interest, and/or abilities to the same classroom.

Core Curriculum: The common knowledge and skills to be learned by all students of a particular grade as determined and specified by a local school district. The California State Department of Education specifies reading, writing, mathematics, history, social science, and physical education to be core curriculum. The state frameworks provide standards for learning in all core subject areas.

Creativity: The human attribute of constructive originality. It is the process of combining what exists into something new, which could be a procedure, idea, or product.

Critical Thinking: The development of analytical thinking for purposes of decision making. This includes using specific attitudes and skills such as analyzing arguments carefully, seeing another's point of view, and reaching sound conclusions.

Curriculum Compacting: A process to give students validation for what they already know. It allows students who demonstrate mastery to omit portions of assigned curriculum, or to move more quickly through curriculum than would be typical. Students may be accelerated through the content matter or pursue enrichment activities while the unit is being taught to other students.

Differentiation: Adapting the curriculum to meet the unique needs of learners by making modifications in complexity, depth, and pacing. It may include selecting, rather than covering all, the curriculum areas depending on the individual needs of students.

Enrichment: Activities that supplement the core curriculum. Such activities are generally not specified in the curriculum and are selected by the teacher and/or students.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Gifted and/or Talented Child: As defined by California Education Code 52201: “*Gifted and talented child* means a child enrolled in public elementary or secondary school of this state who is identified as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of high performance capability.”

Heterogeneous/Homogeneous Grouping: Heterogeneous grouping involves grouping students of *diverse* interest, needs, or abilities together. Homogeneous grouping involves grouping student of *similar* interests, needs, or abilities together.

Honors Class: A secondary level course specifically designed to be advanced in content, process, and product.

Independent Study or Self-Directed Study: Allows students to follow individual or self-selected areas of interest by designing and implementing their own study plans. Close monitoring by teachers is an essential component of independent study.

Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.): A measure of ability or aptitude at a given point in time, comparing children of the same chronological age. Originally, it was considered the sole way of measuring student ability. Current thinking now accepts IQ as one of many ways to measure a student’s academic potential.

Interdisciplinary Curriculum: A course of study structured to investigate a topic or concept by gathering and relating information and ideas from multiple subject areas.

Learning Styles: A student’s preference for a mode of learning. For example, a student could favor auditory versus visual learning.

Multiple Intelligences: An educational theory commonly associated with Howard Gardner which describes different kinds of intelligences exhibited by human beings. The theory identifies at least eight intelligences: linguistic, spatial, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and the naturalist.

Publications for Parents

Gifted Child Quarterly: National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC).
1707 L. Street, NW, Suite 550, Washington, DC 20036

A quarterly journal regarding research perspectives in the field of gifted studies.

Gifted Child Today: Prufrock Press. P.O. Box 8813, Waco, TX 76714-8813

This is an informative bimonthly publication with articles of interest to parents and educators.

Gifted Education Communicator: California Association for the Gifted (CAG).

15141 E. Whittier Blvd., Suite 510, Whittier, CA 90603, phone: 562-789-9933.

A newsletter for parents and educators of gifted children.

Parenting for High Potential: National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC).

1707 L. Street, NW, Suite 550, Washington, DC 20036.

A magazine specifically for parents of gifted students, including a kids' section.

60 Ways to Assure Success for Your Gifted Children NY: Chris, J. (1995). Trillium/Royal Fireworks

The book presents 20 lessons, each accompanied by three practical activities.

Paying Smart Perry, S. (1990). Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing

This book includes specific projects and activities for the family.

Bringing Out the Best: A Resource Guide for Parents of Young Gifted Children Saunders, J. (1991). Minneapolis, MN:

Free Spirit Publishing

This guide includes hundreds of ways to promote creativity and intellectual development as well as suggestions for advocacy.

Helping Gifted Children Soar Strip, Carol A. (2000). Scottsdale, AZ: Gifted Psychology Press, Inc

This guidebook informs parents and teachers about important gifted issues such as working together, evaluating classroom programs, forming parent support groups, choosing appropriate curriculum, meeting social and emotional needs, surviving the ups and downs, and more.

PUBLICATIONS FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids Walker, S. (1991). Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing

This book provides information regarding the nature of giftedness. It also contains many “how to” guidelines for interacting with gifted children.

A Parent’s Guide to Gifted Children Webb, J., Gore, J. & Amend, E. (2006). Columbus, OH: Ohio Psychology Publishing

This guide addresses ten topics including discipline, stress management, communication of feelings, and family relationships (used for the SENG parent group sessions).

Books for Students

Gifted Kids Speak Out Delisle, J. (1987). Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing

Gifted students talk about school, friends, and families in 6,000 surveys accumulated by the author.

The Gifted Kids’ Survival Guide: For Ages 10 and Under Galbraith, J. (1984). Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing

This guide includes tips for making school more challenging and interesting, coping with stress, and setting goals.

The Gifted Kids’ Survival Guide: For Ages 11-18 Galbraith, J. (1983). Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing

This guide includes tips for making school more challenging and interesting, coping with stress, and setting goals for the older child.

Perfectionism: What’s Bad About Being Too Good? Adderholdt-Elliott, M. (1987). Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing

This book helps find out if the person is a perfectionist. It explores some of the reasons why the person is and it offers lots of useful strategies for learning how to ease up on oneself and get the perfectionism under control.

A selection of resource books is available for check out from the Department of Language Services and Student Programs. Please call (951) 360-4179 for more information.

Remember to protect yourself and your child with the use of internet software that will screen inappropriate sites, and guide your child to never provide a full name, address, or phone number to any other online user.

GT World: www.gtworld.org

A comprehensive, online support community for parents of gifted and talented children. It provides a network for parents from different geographical areas and walks-of-life to share ideas and practical solutions on a range of parenting issues. Parents can post questions and request responses from other parents on how to stimulate and enrich the lives of gifted children.

Hoagies' Kids and Parents: www.hoagiesgifted.org

This site can help meet the learning needs of the gifted during the summer or any other time. Divided into dozens of pages (art and theater, books and authors, natural science, math, physics, vocabulary, social studies, and many more), it has hundreds of links. The centerpiece is *Kids Speak Out*, where gifted children of all ages contribute their own works, art, poetry, stories, and more.

Surfing the Net with Kids: www.surfnetkids.com

If your child wants to explore the Internet, this is an exceptional and safe source. Syndicated in print form in newspapers nationally, Surfing the Net with kids offers a rich variety of sources and links for gifted students and their families.

The SENG Newsletter: www.sengifted.org

Articles regarding parenting the gifted child, especially in the area of emotional and social support. Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted P.O. Box 6550 Scottsdale, AZ 85261 phone: 201-498-6744

ONLINE RESOURCES

California Association for the Gifted (CAG)

An advocacy group consisting of parents and educators who work to promote the welfare and appropriate education of gifted students.

www.CAGifted.org

11130 Sun Center Drive Rancho Cordova, CA

Phone: (916) 441-3999

Fax: (916) 441-2999

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)

An advocacy group made up of parents, professional educators, and affiliate groups from the various states that support gifted education at the national level.

www.nagc.org

1071 L Street, NW Suite 550, Washington, D.C. 20036

Phone: (202) 785-4268

Fax: (202) 785-4248

The Association for the Gifted (TAG)**The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**

An advocacy group which focuses on the needs of gifted children within the broader range of diverse special needs children.

<http://ERIC@cec.org>

1920 Association Drive Reston, VA 22091

Phone: (703) 264-9474

Fax: (703) 264-9494

Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)

A group organized to provide information and support for the emotional need of gifted children.

www.SENGifted.org

P.O. Box 6074 Scottsdale, AZ 85261

Phone: (480) 370-2193

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