Gifted/Talented Programs

Be Proactive: Advocating for Your Gifted Child!

Dr. Nicole Niederdeppe & Susanna Furfari

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Gifted/Talented Programs Staff

**Advanced Learning Options (ALO)**
Arzie Galvez, Director
arzie.galvez@lausd.net

**Gifted/Talented Programs (GATE)**
Susanna Furfari, District Coordinator (NE)
susanna.furfari@lausd.net
Dr. Robert Grubb, District Specialist (NW)
grubb@lausd.net
Dr. Lucy Hunt, District Coordinator (C)
lhunt@lausd.net
Kevin Kilpatrick, District Coordinator (S)
kevin.kilpatrick@lausd.net
Dr. Nicole Niederdeppe, District Coordinator (E)
nnn8729@lausd.net
Michelle Papazyan, District Specialist (TIP)
mpapazya@lausd.net
Erin Yoshida-Ehrmann, District Coordinator (W)
emy2142@lausd.net
Wynne Wong-Cheng, District Coordinator, Psychological Services
wynne.wong@lausd.net
Anne Fleming, Central Office Designated GATE Psychologist
anne.fleming@lausd.net

Phone: (213) 241-6500
Fax: (213) 241-8975
333 S. Beaudry Avenue, 25th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
http://achieve.lausd.net/gate
Part I: Overview of Gifted/Talented Program
• What Gifted Learners Need
• Categories of Identification
• Program Options

Part II: Advocating for Your Gifted Child
• Common Concerns
• Tips for Advocacy
Agenda

Part III: District Parent Outreach
- Parent Meetings, Conference, and Newsletter
- Online Resources
- Q & A
The goal of Gifted/Talented Programs is:

To identify gifted and talented students including those from diverse racial, socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds, and provide high-quality differentiated opportunities for learning that meet students’ particular abilities and talents.
Characteristics of Gifted Learners

A Gifted Learner May Exhibit:

- Early, rapid learning
- Endless energy
- Superior language ability; learns language quickly
- Large knowledge and interest base
- Exceptional memory
- Keen, mature sense of humor
- Complex/abstract thinking and great imagination
- Superior reasoning/problem-solving ability
- Long attention span when interested
- Inappropriate acting out or apathy when disinterested
- High level moral thinking; ability to detect injustice or inconsistency
- Unrealistic self-expectations; perfectionistic and competitive
- Frustrated with illogical or disorganized thinking
- Impulsive, risk-taking behavior OR worried to take risks due to fear of failure
- Overwhelming curiosity; questions everything and everyone (including authority)
- Lack of desire to socialize with age-level peers; prefers the company of adults/older friends
Who Else are the Gifted?

**Underrepresented Students**
- Girls (Science/Math)
- Students talented in the arts
- Non-English speaking students
- Students who speak “non-standard” English
- Students who do not “fit the mold”

**Overlooked Characteristics**
- Non-producers
- Behavior problems
- Introverted/quiet
- Bored/apathetic
- Absentminded
- Low test scores/grades
- Dominant student
What Gifted Students Need

- To deal with feelings of being different
- To recognize and deal with stress
- To learn how to be proud without being arrogant
- To develop appropriate problem-solving skills
- To be challenged with meaningful, differentiated learning opportunities
- To have opportunities to interact with others of similar ability or interest
- To recognize and accept their own abilities, interests, and limitations—and those of others
- To be recognized as a gifted child, not treated as a small adult

Adapted from the 11th World Conference on Gifted and Talented Education, 1995.
Categories of Identification

- **Intellectual Ability** *(Second semester kindergarten and above)*
  Students whose general intellectual development is markedly advanced in relation to their chronological peers; evidenced by District psychological testing.

- **High Achievement Ability** *(Fifth grade and above and second grade OLSAT only)*
  Students who consistently function for two consecutive years at highly advanced levels in English-language arts and mathematics; evidenced by test scores (second graders may also be identified in High Achievement with the OLSAT-8)*
Categories of Identification

- **Specific Academic Ability** (Fifth grade and above)
  Students who consistently function for three consecutive years at highly advanced levels in either English-language arts or mathematics (science or social science included in grades 9 – 12); evidenced by test scores

- **Visual Arts Ability** (Second grade and above)
  Students who originate, perform, produce, or respond at exceptionally high levels in drawing and painting; evidenced by district demonstration/portfolio review

- **Performing Arts Ability** (Second grade and above)
  Students who originate, perform, produce, or respond at exceptionally high levels in either dance, music (voice), or drama; evidenced by district audition
Categories of Identification

- **Creative Ability** (Fourth grade and above)
  Students who characteristically perceive significant similarities or differences within the environment, challenge assumptions, and produce unique alternative solutions; evidenced by district portfolio or presentation review

- **Leadership Ability** (Fourth grade and above)
  Students who show confidence and knowledge; influence others effectively; have problem-solving and decision making skills; express ideas in oral or written form clearly; show sense of purpose and direction; evidenced by district portfolio or presentation review
“Highly-Gifted” Designation: Intellectual Category

- The term “highly-gifted” refers to students who receive a 99.9% on the Intellectual assessment given by a District GATE Psychologist. No other identification category has a highly-gifted designation.

- Highly-gifted students may apply to highly-gifted Magnets

- Students who receive a 99.5% - 99.8% on the Intellectual assessment are considered “highly-gifted applicable” and may apply to highly-gifted Magnets if space is available

- There is no special test for “highly-gifted”
Referrals for Identification

1. If an administrator, teacher, parent, or child thinks a student is potentially gifted, they may provide this student’s name to the school site GATE screening committee.

2. The screening committee is responsible for determining if the child is ready for GATE referral and in what category. This screening process could include observing the student, looking through test score/report card records or portfolios, interviewing teachers, etc. Referrals are created in MiSiS for students being screened.

3. If the screening committee determines that the student is qualified and ready for evaluation, they will initiate the formal identification process. If not, they may discontinue screening.
Second Grade Testing for High Achievement Category

- There is a Districtwide assessment of all 2nd graders for the High Achievement category conducted each spring.
- The assessment used is the OLSAT-8 (Otis-Lennon School Ability Test, 8th Edition) – this achievement test is a nationally standardized, norm-referenced, group administered measure of verbal and non-verbal school abilities.
- There is no highly-gifted designation possible using the OLSAT because it is not an Intellectual assessment.
- Parent informational meetings are typically held in February; student scores will be released mid-May.
Gifted identification is not the final goal of this program.

Identification is the tool that allows teachers and schools to make instructional and programming decisions to best meet the academic and social-emotional needs of students.

The identification process has little value without appropriate clustering and differentiated instruction to follow.
GATE Program Options

- Cluster model in resident schools
- Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS)
- Gifted/High Ability Magnets
- Highly-Gifted Magnets
- Conservatory of Fine Arts
- Honors and Advanced Placement courses (middle and senior high school)
ALL SCHOOLS SHOULD HAVE A GIFTED PROGRAM!

At local schools with GATE programs, identified gifted students must be placed in clusters (not scattered by chance or design). Policy states that there must be 5-8 gifted students per class in elementary clusters and 15-25 gifted students per class in secondary clusters.

Model 1: Team-Taught Cluster: Two or more teachers working as a team with flexible groupings in core subjects

Model 2: Full Day: Clusters with identified gifted students, recommended/verified students, and those who are being screened for referral (e.g. Honors/AP on secondary level)

Model 3: Self-Contained: All identified gifted (e.g. Highly-Gifted Magnets)

Model 4: Alternative Program Model: Subject to approval from GATE Office
District policy states that gifted students require differentiation (depth, complexity, novelty, acceleration) throughout their regular school day.
No Matter What Program, It’s All About Differentiation: How is the core curriculum modified to meet the needs of gifted learners?

- Accelerated pacing
- Advanced content
- Depth, complexity, and novelty
- Above grade-level resources
- Tiered assignments
- Learning/interest centers
- Independent study
- Flexible grouping
- High level questioning
- “Think Like a Disciplinarian”
- Compacting the curriculum in a student’s area of strength

**Important!** Many of the terms listed above should be part of the response from a teacher of gifted students when asked about meeting the needs of your child.
Qualified Teachers

Best practice is to place all gifted students in clusters with teachers that are qualified and trained to provide consistent, daily differentiated instruction for advanced learners.
Last year 8,139 LAUSD teachers participated in professional development offered by the Gifted/Talented Programs Office.

Professional development included LAUSD conferences, small group trainings, Saturday classes, online classes, and training on banked-time Tuesdays at their school site.
Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS)

- SAS programs are designed for students who demonstrate superior achievement with appropriate documentation
- SAS programs were created as an alternative to Gifted/High Ability/Highly Gifted Magnets
- SAS schools are models/demonstration sites for quality differentiated instruction
- All SAS programs reapply every five years to ensure quality and consistency
List of SAS Schools

To locate Schools for Advanced Studies programs in your area, visit our website http://achieve.lausd.net/gate.

Click on “Program Options” and scroll down to “List of SAS Schools.”

The SAS student application period is in Spring 2018.

Note: SAS programs do not provide transportation, however, parents may apply to any SAS program throughout the District.
Magnet Programs

- Magnet programs are voluntary integration opportunities available to students in grades K-12 living in LAUSD boundaries. Only Gifted/High Ability and Highly Gifted Magnets require specific criteria for selection.

- Applications for 2018-19 school year are due Thursday, November 9th and selections are made in March for the following year’s enrollment.

- For more information about Magnet programs including the application process, you may contact Student Integration Services at (213) 241-4177 or visit http://echoices.lausd.net for more specific information about the Choices process.
The Conservatory of Fine Arts is the hidden gem of LAUSD. The Conservatory has been servicing LAUSD students since 1981.

- Visual and Performing Arts classes
- Open to recommended students in grades 3-12 (students identified gifted in the arts receive priority placement)
- Saturdays for 19 weeks at CSULA
- Taught by LAUSD teachers and professionals in the arts
- FREE!
- Applications are typically due in September for an October start date
- Visit [http://achieve.lausd.net/gate](http://achieve.lausd.net/gate) for more information
Honors and Advanced Placement

**Honors**
- Advanced/accelerated coursework available at the secondary level
- Coursework designed by local school teachers

**Advanced Placement**
- Available at high schools
- Cooperative endeavor of secondary schools, colleges, and the College Board
- College-level coursework

**Note:** These classes should offer challenging, rigorous work – not just *more* work!

Contact **Advanced Learning Options** at *(213) 241-6444* or [http://achieve.lausd.net/alo](http://achieve.lausd.net/alo) for more information about Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Gear Up or Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)
School Site GATE Program
“In a Nutshell”

Gifted Identification
- Screening, referral, and identification in all seven categories among all ethnic subgroups
- At least 6% of the total population and of each ethnic subgroup are identified gifted
- Gifted identification proportionately reflects the demographics of the school
- Active GATE screening committee

Instruction and Academic Achievement of GATE Learners
- Appropriate clustering and differentiated instruction for identified gifted learners
- Evidence of academic growth/achievement for identified gifted learners

Knowledgeable and Skilled Staff
- GATE teachers and administrators meet minimum GATE PD recommendations (16 hours annually for teachers; this is required for SAS schools)

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement
- School holds at least two GATE parent meetings each year and regularly disseminates information to parents (e.g., parent newsletters, District meeting dates, etc.)
- School has an active GATE parent representative
What if your child’s needs aren’t being met?

Common Concerns:

- The teacher is not differentiating instruction
- Differentiated instruction means my child tutors other kids in the room
- There is one size fits all homework
- Homework is just more work
- School is not communicating what gifted means and how the school meets the needs of gifted student
- My child is not in a gifted cluster
Tips for Parents: Gather Information

1. **Obtain objective data and gather other information**
   - Keep files of your child’s achievement and ability test results
   - Examples of work your child does outside of school are also helpful
   - Determine your child’s needs. Know what you want to ask for at your child’s school

2. **Learn how to work with your child’s school and the District**
   - Understand the leadership/decision making structure
   - Connect with the school’s GATE Coordinator
   - Learn the appropriate educational jargon, including differentiation, cluster grouping, self-contained classroom versus full day etc.
Tips for Parents: Work with the school

1. **Decide what is reasonable to ask the school to do**
   - Reasonable accommodations include differentiation, grouping with other gifted/talented students, participating in pullout programs, moving up a grade level for one or more subjects.
   - Understand that the school may not be able to meet your child’s needs and another school may be a better fit.

2. **Keep it positive and set a realistic timeline**
   - After gathering all of your data, you may have more knowledge than the school personnel. This can be a delicate situation! Share your knowledge in a manner that is non-confrontational and helpful.
   - Remember that your concern is one of many that the school receives daily. Ask for a timeline so that you know when to follow up.
   - Get to know the GATE Coordinator. They can be your “within the school” advocate.
3. **Tips for talking to teachers** (from Sally Yahnke Walker 2002)
   - Make an appointment. Don’t just drop in.
   - Document what your child has done, said, or read.
   - Plan what you are going to say.
   - Choose your words carefully. Try to start with something positive.
   - Build a partnership and negotiate solutions. Work as a team.
   - Be diplomatic, tactful, and respectful.
   - Focus on what your child needs.
   - Listen.
   - Bring along your sense of humor.
   - Summarize what you have discussed and a timeline.
## Tips for Parents: Beyond the school day

### 1. Research outside-of-school opportunities
- Schools cannot meet all of every child’s needs. Afterschool, weekend, and summer programs provide additional academic experiences and give your child the chance to meet other like-minded peers.
  - [http://educationaladvancement.org/](http://educationaladvancement.org/)
  - [https://www.giftedstudy.org/Residential/ucla/](https://www.giftedstudy.org/Residential/ucla/)

### 2. Join a parent group or start one
- National Association for Gifted Children: [https://www.nagc.org/](https://www.nagc.org/)
- California Association for the Gifted: [http://www.cagifted.org/](http://www.cagifted.org/)
Tips for Parents: A Note about Grade-Skipping

What if the common ways of meeting gifted learners needs are not enough?

Grade-skipping is a viable option for some students. Although many educators and parents view grade-skipping with some skepticism, research consistently demonstrates that grade skipping can be a highly effective intervention for high-ability students and that students are not adversely affected in the social-emotional domains.

Resources
- A Nation Empowered  http://www.nationempowered.org
- Iowa Acceleration Scale
“Making changes in a ‘system’ is difficult. For example, getting a school district to develop a program for mathematically-talented students could take years, and it may not be a realistic goal to expect the program to be ready for your child. However, working with your school to make individualized accommodations for your child during the school day could happen as soon as next week. Be assured that your advocacy today can have a positive impact on someone else’s child in the future.”

Tips for Parents: Advocacy – Working with Your Child’s School

By A. Shoplik
District Parent Outreach

- Districtwide GATE parent meetings are held each February in each Local District – see handout

- Each school is required to have at least two local school GATE Parent Meetings per year. Check with your school for dates!
9th Annual GATE/SAS Parent Conference

**When:** Saturday, March 17, 2018
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

**Where:** RFK Community Schools (close to Red and Purple Lines)

No pre-registration necessary
GATE Parent Newsletter

- Published quarterly
- Current and past issues available in English and Spanish on our website
- Go to achieve.lausd.net/gate and click on “Parents” then “2017-18 Parent Newsletters”
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Questions? ¿Preguntas?