

**Yosemite Unified School District
GATE Plan
Revised June 2008**

Program Design

The Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program in the Yosemite Unified School District will offer classes and programs for gifted and talented students that meet or exceed all state standards.

At the K-8 level, the program will include differentiated instruction within the regular classroom, pull-out programs for students to receive expert instruction in special areas of interest, and student leadership training. Specific offerings will be determined each year based on parent and student input and specific areas of giftedness.

At the 9-12 level, students will receive accelerated instruction through the honors programs in English 9 and 10 and world history, Advanced Placement classes, and International Baccalaureate classes. The AP and IB programs will include classes in core curriculum subjects and in performing and visual arts and in multi-media. All of these classes will be held during the regular school day and will be open to any student meeting the prerequisites.

All classes and programs will be taught by qualified staff members; special programs may be advised by qualified parents, community members, or experts in a given field.

The School Site Councils will act as the advisory committee for the GATE program, addressing needs as required, approving the application, and approving plan revisions. Members of the Site Councils include students, teachers, staff, community members, and administrators. The councils meet monthly. A district council will be formed to oversee the district GATE program. The district board of trustees will approve all plans and applications for the GATE program, as well as receive updates at least annually.

The GATE plan will be available on the district Web site and in written form upon request.

Each school site with a GATE program will designate a coordinator and there will be a district-level coordinator who is appointed by the superintendent.

The GATE program is to be sequenced across K-12 with at least annual meetings of site coordinators and articulation between elementary and high school GATE teachers.

Identification

A variety of methods will be used to identify gifted and talented students. All students are eligible for consideration for the GATE program. Nomination for GATE will come through referrals from classroom teachers and parents and from transcripts for students new to the district. Transfer students will be notified of their eligibility in a timely manner.

Elementary students may be nominated for the GATE program more than once and these nominations will be maintained on file for use in future nominations. All elementary staff members will receive training in the nomination and identification process and will be informed of the availability of nomination forms. A district-wide nomination form will be available for elementary schools. High school students enrolled in IB and AP courses are GATE students and are eligible for the classes for which they meet the prerequisites.

Final eligibility for elementary GATE will be determined by a committee that includes the GATE site coordinator, teachers, and counselors. A variety of materials will be used to make a final determination, including, but not limited to, test data, grades, teacher input, and parent input, when available. The committee will meet at the beginning of each semester to view nominations and at other times during the semester as the need arises.

Site coordinators and the district coordinator will keep current on research regarding gifted learners and will make appropriate changes to the identification process.

Files will be established for each elementary student who is nominated and these files will be kept throughout the student's enrollment at the school. The files will be transferred with the student when he or she changes schools within the district. Information will be made available to other districts as appropriate upon parental request, should a student leave the Yosemite Unified School District. Records for high school students are in their permanent files and on their transcripts reflecting the IB and AP courses taken.

All students are eligible for GATE regardless of socioeconomic status, disabilities, cultural or linguistic background. Efforts will be made to reflect the demographics of the district in the demographics of the GATE program.

Students and parents will be informed of the GATE program and the nomination and identification process. Selection for the GATE program will be based on the established criteria and not on the advice of one person.

Signed parental permission for participation must be on file for elementary GATE students.

Once a student is identified as gifted and/or talented, the student shall remain identified as such, although services may vary from year to year. Before any student is considered

for withdrawal from the program, interventions will be implemented and there will be a meeting with the parent and student.

Multiple service options will be available for students in the GATE program. These options will be periodically reviewed by the committee

Curriculum and Instruction

The district will develop differentiated curriculum, instructional models, and strategies that are aligned with and exceed the state academic content standards and curriculum frameworks. The differentiated curriculum will be related to theories, models, and practices from the recognized literature in the field. The curriculum will be responsive to the needs, interests and abilities of the gifted students and will assist the students in meeting or exceeding state core curriculum and standards.

The differentiated curriculum will provide for the balanced development of critical, creative, problem solving and research skills, advanced content, and authentic and appropriate products. It will focus mainly on depth and complexity of content, advanced or accelerated pacing of content and unique and original expression of student understanding. It will facilitate development of ethical standards, positive self-concepts, sensitivity and responsibility to others, and contributions to society.

The core curriculum will be presented to the gifted students in such a way that it will be appropriate to their needs, interests, and abilities and will not be redundant. Instructional strategies will be used to promote inquiry, self-directed learning, discussion, and debate. Learning theories will be included that reinforce the needs, interests and abilities of the gifted student. These will include abstract thinking. The gifted program will articulate the significant learning in content, skills, and products within and among grade levels kindergarten through 12th grade.

The differentiated curriculum will be held regularly and as a part of the regular school day. It will be taught with appropriate instructional models, and supported by appropriate materials and technology. The structure will allow for continuity in courses of study and will use a variety of teaching strategies. Instruction will be offered through large and small groups, in homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping, through teacher and student directed learning. There will be opportunities for independent study. A wide variety of materials and resources will be available to the students to supplement independent study projects. The differentiated curriculum will be structured for groups of students as well as for individual students.

Social and Emotional Development

The district will establish and implement a plan to support the social and emotional development of gifted learners. Actions to meet the needs of the gifted students will be ongoing. At-risk gifted students will be monitored and provided the appropriate support.

All staff and parents will be provided with information and training regarding the characteristics of the gifted learners. The gifted learners will be provided with career and

college counseling and at the secondary level the will be provided counseling from the IB coordinator and pre-college opportunities.

Teachers will be trained in the social and emotional development of gifted students and how to incorporate techniques to support these students in the classroom. Guidance and counseling services will be available through trained personnel who will also be able to make appropriate referrals to outside agencies as needed. Counseling services will be documented. Teachers and counselors will collaborate on intervention strategies for the gifted student. These strategies may take place in the school, at home, or in the community.

Teachers will be trained to recognize symptoms of at-risk behavior and to refer the student to the appropriate school personnel. Counselors and administrators will be trained to make appropriate referrals as needed. The at-risk students will receive appropriate support and will not be dropped from the gifted program because of their at-risk behavior/problems. Information and support will be made available to the student's parents as well. The district will have a plan for teachers to work with guidance personnel on intervention strategies. These strategies will address the related issues and will include development of an intervention plan.

Professional Development

The district will provide professional development opportunities, on a regular basis, related to gifted education to administrators, teachers, and staff to support and improve educational opportunities for the gifted learner. Site coordinators and GATE teachers will be provided role specific training. The training will be based on needs identified in the annual assessment of the GATE program. The professional development activities will be shared as appropriate and evaluated for effectiveness. This training will be used to make improvements in the program. The professional development trainers will be experts in the field of gifted education.

Teachers will be encouraged to focus on gifted education for professional growth hours for credential renewal. The district will develop a process to qualify teachers to teach gifted students and there will be a professional development plan to accommodate different levels of teacher competency.

GATE teachers will have education and/or experience in teaching gifted students and will have opportunities to continue or gain such knowledge. The coordinator will receive training in gifted education and will have opportunities to update knowledge in the field. All staff involved in gifted education will be given professional development opportunities relevant to their role and responsibility in the program. Administrators and counselors will be encouraged to participate with teachers in ongoing professional development.

The district will contract with experts to conduct in-service in gifted education and it will also promote the concept of teacher-to-teacher professional development and utilization of the teacher/trainer model.

All teachers assigned to teach in the gifted program will be certified through formal or informal certificate programs; the coordinator will be a specialist in gifted education. The district will identify support personnel with expertise in meeting the needs of gifted learners both within and outside the district. Follow-up classroom support for application of the information gained during in-service will be planned.

Parent and Community Involvement

The district will provide procedures to ensure consistent participation of parents and community members in the planning and evaluation of programs for gifted students. There will be open communication with parents and the community and an active GATE advisory committee with parent involvement will be supported by the district.

Parents will be informed of the criteria and procedures for identifying gifted students; they will be given information on the program options and learning opportunities available. Translation will be provided as appropriate. The district's state application will be made available to parents and the community on the district Web site and in printed form, upon request. GATE parents will be part of the ongoing planning and evaluation of the program.

Each school site, and the district, where appropriate, will provide parents of identified gifted students with an orientation and with regular updates on the program. Products and achievements of the students will be shared with parents in a variety of ways, as appropriate.

Parents will be involved in the application and evaluations process of the GATE program at the elementary schools. GATE parents, and community members, will be invited to supplement the core and differentiated curriculum based on individual talents. Partnerships will be established with businesses and organizations with the district GATE coordinator and advisory committee soliciting support.

Parents will participate in the site and district GATE committees, which will meet a minimum of three times a year. The district GATE coordinator will work with the committee(s) to plan education opportunities in gifted education. Efforts will be made to assure that the demographic makeup of the advisory committees reflect the demographic makeup of the GATE program.

The district's state application will be signed by a parent member of the GATE advisory committee. Members of the committee will be regularly informed of current research and literature in gifted education.

The parents of special needs gifted students will be invited to be on the advisory committee. Special provisions will be made, as indicated, to facilitate their participation.

Program Assessment

The district will establish formal and informal evaluation methods and instruments to assess the gifted program and the performance of gifted students, which meets or exceeds

state standards. Results of data collected, including state standardized tests, will be used to study the value and impact of the services provided and to improve gifted programs and gifted student performance. This program assessment will be ongoing and consistent with the program's philosophy, goals, and standards.

This periodic review will be conducted by persons who are knowledgeable about gifted education and who are competent in the evaluation process. The results will be used for program improvement. The assessment process will be structured to measure the goals and standards of the program using valid and reliable instruments. The district will use multiple strategies to measure student performance, including achievement test data, questionnaires, and performance-based measures.

The district will provide the resources necessary for program assessment. This assessment will be conducted through the use of rubrics following a clear description of performance expectations at each grade level. The results of the assessment will be presented to the district board of trustees and will be made available to all stakeholders.

The evaluation program will include strengths and weaknesses of the program and a plan for improvement. The district will allocate time, financial support, and personnel to conduct the assessment.

Budget

The district will budget for gifted programs and will provide for all the components of the GATE program. The district GATE budget will be directly related to the GATE program objectives and will include appropriate allocations.

GATE funds, and other funding sources as appropriate, will be used for professional development, student services, district coordination, and student identification. State GATE funds will supplement, not supplant, district funds spent on gifted learners. There will be a budget allocation for district GATE coordination by a single individual on a part time basis. Site coordinators may also be included in the budget. Carry-over money will be kept to a minimum and will be maintained within the district GATE account. Indirect costs will not exceed the state limitation.

The budget allocation for the district coordinator, regardless of the source of funding, will reflect the district's size and needs of the program.

District and site coordinators will collaborate with other categorical programs to make it possible for gifted students to benefit from more than one source of funding.