

**West Contra Costa Unified  
School District**

**Parent Guide  
Gifted and Talented Education**



Educational Services  
GATE Program  
(510) 307-4500

*Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.*

- US Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OER) (1993)

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**The West Contra Costa Unified School District Gifted and Talented Education (GATE)** program provides educational opportunities that recognize the performance capabilities of gifted students as well as addressing the unique needs and differences associated with having these abilities. The goals of the GATE Program are:

- Provide students with opportunities for learning that maximize each child's unique abilities and talents
- Assist and encourage students to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at advanced academic and creative levels
- Support students in expanding their abilities to communicate and apply their ideas effectively
- Engender an enthusiasm for learning at higher levels

### **Instructional Program**

The primary focus of GATE is differentiated instruction.

#### **Elementary and Middle School**

In elementary and middle school, the GATE Program is delivered using differentiated instruction which allows teachers to enrich and supplement the core. Through varied instructional processes and assignments designed to address areas of strength, GATE students are able to reach their maximum potential. This in-class differentiation can sometimes be hard to distinguish. Three of the components that are commonly associated with differentiation are:

**Content** – Altering what is being taught; putting more depth into the curriculum, using universal concepts to create broader understanding.

**Process** – Changing how it is being taught; using varied resources, levels, flexible groupings, or varying instructional strategies.

**Product** – Having different outcomes (i.e., how the student demonstrates understanding of the lesson); providing choice in product, varying assignments or levels of assessment.

Not every lesson will be differentiated with variations in content, process, and product. Ongoing assessments help teachers evaluate which students need an assignment altered and when differentiation is necessary. Differentiated instruction can also include combinations of the following options:

**Cluster Grouping** – Several GATE/high achieving students are grouped in the same classroom, which allows GATE students to interact and learn with peers.

**Flexible Grouping** – Flexible grouping lets students work in a targeted group while mastering advanced material. Once they have mastered the material or the subject matter, they are able to move to another group.

**Part-time Grouping** – Is used for specific curriculum areas such as math and/or reading; placement is determined by a student’s level of achievement or ability. Parent notification and permission is necessary for this type of arrangement because the placement may be for a relatively long period.

**Team Taught Cluster/Level Grouping** – Multiple teachers regroup their students for part of the day so that the GATE students and high achievers are clustered for the core curriculum.

In middle school, students also have access to accelerated courses, and, as appropriate, high school math courses as well as differentiated instruction.

### **High School**

GATE students have access to honors, and Advanced Placement courses for a range of subjects. Advanced Placement courses, coupled with the AP exams, allow students to have accelerated learning and earn college credit. These courses are open to all students who wish the challenge of advanced courses.

## **Identifying Gifted and Talented Students**

The district’s identification procedures are equitable and comprehensive. Ed Code requires the use of multiple sources of information in identifying a GATE student. Formal identification for GATE placement is done district wide for all students in 3rd grade.

### **Grade 3**

- All students are screened using several tools, including a teacher rating score and assessment data for ELA and math.
- Scores are reviewed by Educational Services Department staff.
- Based on review of these scores, a decision is made to certify (or not) or to conduct further testing, with parent permission.
- Parents/guardians and the school are notified of student placement.

## **Grades 4-11**

All new 4<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> graders may also be referred to the GATE program via the following process:

- A written request for referral is submitted to the principal.
- Teacher completes the Teacher Rating Scale; at the secondary level, at least 3 teachers must complete the form.
- School team reviews the referral and determines if it should be sent to the Educational Services Department for placement review.
- Educational Services staff reviews the referral and data. A decision to certify (or not) or to conduct further testing is made.
- Notification of certification (or not) is sent to the parent/guardian, the referring adult, and the school site.

### **Tips for GATE Parents**

- Become more knowledgeable about GATE and share your knowledge with others.
- Become familiar with learning strategies appropriate for GATE students.
- Investigate resources available to GATE parents.

### **Resources for GATE Parents**

- California Association for the Gifted (CAG) [www.CAGifted.org](http://www.CAGifted.org)
- National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)
- World Council for Gifted and Talented Children [www.WorldGifted.org](http://www.WorldGifted.org)
- Hoagie's Gifted Education Page [www.hoagiesgifted.org](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org)

*A gifted person is someone who shows, or has the potential for showing, an exceptional level of performance in one or more areas of expression.*

- National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC)