

Monrovia Unified School District

Gifted and Talented Education Program (GATE) June 2004

Section 1: Program Design The district provides a comprehensive continuum of services and program options responsive to the needs, interests, and abilities of gifted students and based on philosophical, theoretical, and empirical support (EC 52205d and 52206a)

1.1 Statement of philosophy, goals, and standards appropriate to the needs and abilities of gifted

Minimum Standards:

(a) The district’s philosophy regarding gifted students is represented by the following goals:

- (1) Provide an appropriate and rigorous learning community of gifted students that recognizes, develops, and nurtures the students commonalities and unique differences in intellectual, academic, creative, and social-affective areas.
- (2) Provide teachers and administrators with professional development opportunities that will ensure students not only meet the state academic content standards, but also receive appropriately differentiated instruction targeted to exceeding the standards.
- (3) Provide parents with the resources to fully understand the district’s identification and instructional program, and the parenting tools to be responsive to the strengths and needs of their gifted child.
- (4) Build capacity within the district (Board members, parents, community members, and staff) to expand efforts in recognizing and comprehensively supporting gifted students.

The identification criteria addresses the intellectual component using group screening tools that are inclusive of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and accepts individual intellectual assessments when available. Other identification categories include high achievement, specific academic ability, and creativity. (See Section 2)

(b - d) The plan was designed using information from multiple sources often cited in gifted education, including California Association for the Gifted, Professional Advocates for Gifted Education, Dr. Barbara Clark, Dr. Sandra Kaplan, Dr. Roger Taylor, Dr. Karen Rogers, Dr. Carol Tomlinson, and others. The Board was involved in two study sessions in the development of this application (Attachment 10). There was also active involvement of a core group of parents and staff. Every site had at least one-two parent representatives (Attachment 9: Agendas). The parent group participated in the development of GATE Program Assessment Survey (Attachment 1A), creating questions which specifically targeted instructional grouping models, beyond-the-school day enrichment programs, teacher training, identification criteria and an analysis of budget priorities. The GATE Program Survey then formed the basis for the Staff Survey (Attachment 1B), thereby allowing district personnel to measure critical areas of alignment and to identify differences.

Commendable Standards: Two year approval

(a) Initial drafts of key components of the plan were disseminated to parent representatives (i.e., student instructional grouping practices; enrichment programs, student identification issues, and budget), following a thorough analysis of the GATE survey results (Attachment 1C). Upon enrollment, all parents receive a GATE Parent Handbook (Attachment 2) which provides information about identification, district services, and related resources.

(b) The district provides oversight to ensure that all GATE identified students receive similar services across all the elementary, middle and high school campuses and are not denied appropriate programs due to logistics or other factors which may have the potential to interfere with services. For example, all elementary schools offer appropriate clustering of GATE students during the school day and content instruction differentiated for GATE and other high ability students regardless of the school of attendance. Another example is if personnel are not available to offer the after-school GATE enrichment on-site program, another district sponsored after-school enrichment program will be offered in its place.

(c) Because of the need to directly engage parents of gifted students in a meaningful dialogue about the redesign of the program, the Associate Superintendent of Instruction and Director of Special Programs met formally on three occasions this year with a GATE Advisory Committee (some of which are also community members). The primary goal was to redesign the program to reflect a strong and rigorous “between the bells” school day program, and it was felt that parents needed an opportunity to be given a specific voice in the development of the current application. They were one of four major stakeholders which included the Board, site teachers and administrators. It proved to be an excellent opportunity in which the work could be shared, trust developed, and

hear the perceptions and understandings of both the educators and the “clients.” For the 2004-05, the current parent advisory committee will be reconfigured to include staff and community members. Additionally, approximately 60-80% of the parents are actively involved in their School Site Councils, and one parent serves on the district’s Collaborative Oversight of Resources for Education (CORE) designed to make Board budgetary recommendations for 2004-2005.

Exemplary Standards: Three year approval

- (a) MUSD recently included creativity as one of the 4 areas of identification, and is experimenting with the use of a peer nomination process as well. See Section 2 for further description. Due to the relatively small size of the district (6600 students), providing a well-developed program for gifted students in the area of leadership and/or visual performing arts has not been available.

1.2 Description of administrative groupings and structures appropriate for gifted education and available to all gifted learners.

Minimum Standards: One year approval

- (a – b) A combination of daily clustering and part-time grouping demonstrates that the district and site program design is an integral part of a GATE student’s school day as indicated in the model below.
- (c-d) The program design includes daily clusters and assignment of trained teachers that targets continuous student growth and places them in settings that allow for daily interaction with intellectually similar peers, as well as other non-GATE identified high achieving students for targeted instruction in language arts and/or mathematics.

Program structure

Elementary: A full-day cluster of GATE students (with no less than 8 students per class) is the recommended service model at all grade 4-5 classrooms. The grouping recommendation for 8 students reflects the work of Dr. Karen Rogers which suggests that a minimum of 8 gifted students is needed to achieve “critical mass” for optimum interaction and enhanced learning. Additionally, students are grouped regularly with other academically high-achieving children in their areas of academic strength (language arts and/or mathematics). Schools receive annual student lists from the district office which provides information about the individual areas of identification for each student: Intellectual, High Achievement (Language Arts and mathematics), Specific Ability (Language Arts or mathematics) and Creativity. Additionally, sites use the performance levels on the California Standards Tests (ELA and math) to determine those non-GATE students who may benefit from high ability instructional groupings.

Schools may recommend the following for K-3 students formally identified in the intellectual category: (1) Provide differentiated instruction within the class, or (2) be cross grouped into a higher grade level for a specific content area or (3) in individual cases, be considered for grade acceleration. K-3 students who demonstrate many gifted characteristics but do not yet have sufficient documentation of superior skills may also receive similar services upon the recommendation of a site parent/teacher/administrator conference or Student Success Team (SST).

Voluntary K-8 after-school GATE enrichment programs are supported through site GATE funding. If a site is unable to contract with available staff to provide the program, district-sponsored partnerships may be used to provide after-school enrichment programs that may be open to any interested GATE and non-GATE student.

Middle and high school: Academic clustering is offered through advanced, honors, and Advanced Placement classes at the middle and high school. Monrovia High School currently offers 4 pre-AP sections; 10 Advanced Placement courses; and 4 honor courses. There are a variety of MHS clubs and organizations which are of interest to GATE and other high ability students, including California Scholarship Federation, ASB Cabinet (leadership training), specific language clubs, Interact partnership with the Rotary Club, Key Club, National Honors Society, and TAAG Team (facilitating diversity workshops).

- (e) In order to assure a consistent student performance history of superior intellectual, academic achievement, and/or creative behaviors, the formal nomination process begins in grade 3. However, students in grades K-3 may also be considered when there is substantial objective information to support identification (refer to Section 2). Through the annual nomination/identification training provided to the sites by the district, teachers of K-3 students are made aware of the intellectual, academic, and creative characteristics of gifted students; and parents of K-3 students are made aware of the GATE program through a recently designed annual parent flyer to be used in the spring of 2005 (Attachment 3). The flyer encourages them to contact their child’s teacher should they feel their child demonstrates many of the attributes typical of a GATE student (to be used 2004-05). Through the site Student Success Team or an informal meeting with the parent, site administrator and teacher, instructional program options are discussed and may include: cross-grade grouping in the academic area(s) of strength; participation in the after-school GATE enrichment program; or grade acceleration if warranted and if it is in the best interests of the student.

Commendable Standards: Two year approval

(a) The daily instructional program provides grouping opportunities that provide for gifted peers to be clustered together in conjunction with accelerated academic opportunities targeted to serve individual student strengths. The district also provides an array of enrichment programs outside of the school day: These include the K-8 after-school programs such as participation in the Science Olympiad, poetry contests, and in-depth units of study resulting in the completion of student products (i.e., Art History, medieval history, etc.). Additionally, students are offered district-paid opportunities to Astrocamp, the UCLA Young Scholars Program in writing and/or mathematics, and a summer technology workshop. Parents are also made aware of the CSULA program for GATE students that provide an opportunity for qualified students in grades 6-10 to enroll in summer college classes.

Exemplary Standards: Three year approval

(a) Beginning the summer of 2004, teachers and administrative staff primarily responsible for working with clusters of GATE students will receive training in the cognitive, affective and academic characteristics of giftedness and are expected to use this information to guide instruction and assessment (see Sections 1.3 – Commendable Standards [a] and 5.1). The district will use the CDE/CAG differentiation model, along with the GATE Teacher Handbook (Attachment 4) as a reference tool for staff development and to develop a common understanding and language of the intellectual/academic/and affective needs of gifted students.

1.3 Program is articulated with general education programs.

Minimum Standards: One year approval

(a-b) The coordination of the GATE program is the responsibility of the Director of Special Projects. While it is one of three significant programs assigned to the Director (including Title I and English Learners), this assures that the program is integrated into all aspects of the general education program and is part of the regular dialogue with site administrators and the staff development department. The current Director has had nearly twenty years of experience with the gifted program as a GATE program specialist (Baldwin Park USD, 1985-95); site principal (La Canada USD, 1995-98); coordinator (Paramount USD, 1998-2001), and continues to be a member of the California Association for the Gifted (CAG) and Professional Advocates for Gifted Education (PAGE). Previous accomplishments included district recognition in the *LA Times* and *Newsweek* for implementing a peer nomination process in Baldwin Park USD; as well as previously serving as president of PAGE. Additionally, because of the Director’s background in special education and working with the English Learner program, students who may not normally be considered for the program, are included in the initial nominations.

(c) This past year (2003-2004), the district has made a concerted effort to include parents, staff, and administrators in the development of this current application. A very active parent advisory committee has met four times to review the district’s previous GATE program, and developed a comprehensive GATE parent survey (Attachment 1A), which resulted in specific recommendations for change. A similar teacher/staff survey (Attachment 1B) was also developed and used for guidance in the development of the program, as well as ongoing dialogue with the principals.

Commendable Standards: Two year approval

(a) Beginning the summer of 2004, the district will fully fund the CDE/California Association for the Gifted (CAG) Teacher Training Institute for a cadre of grade 4-5 and 6-8 teachers, and annually thereafter. The training is intended to provide the foundation for differentiated instruction and to create a team of specifically trained personnel who may later serve as a trainer of trainers to other staff. Additionally, the GATE Teacher Handbook (Attachment 4) was created in part to provide information and serve as an instructional guide about gifted and differentiated strategies. These include CDE/CAG differentiation model; critical questioning (Benjamin Bloom, Art Costa); tiered assignments, assessments and exams; thematic instruction; curriculum compacting and independent projects, Sternberg’s Triarchic intelligence model, etc. Students who are not identified for the program, but who show similar characteristics, are also grouped with the GATE students to extend and enrich their experiences as well.

Exemplary Standards: Three year approval

(a) The K-12 California Content Standards serves as the base for the instructional program, and differentiation is intended to include attention to increased pacing (acceleration), depth and complexity within the standards.

(b) GATE students are monitored in regards to their academic progress and any related affective, personal or familial concerns that may interfere with their school success is reported to the K-8 Program Advisors or Assistant Principal or grade level counselor at the high school. Referrals to other district support services are available to all GATE students, including counselors, Healthy Start family referrals, and other community resources.

Section 2: Identification The district’s identification procedures are equitable, comprehensive, and ongoing. They reflect the district’s definition of giftedness and its relationship to current state criteria. **(EC 52202: Title 5 Regulations)**

2.1 The nomination referral process is ongoing and includes students K-12.

Minimum Standards: One year approval

(a) (Attachment 5: Identification procedures/staff) All students are eligible to be considered for the program, including those with diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds or learning disabilities. While the district focuses its identification efforts in grades 3 and above in order to assure a consistent history of intellectual, academic achievement, and/or creative behaviors, students in grades K-3 may also be considered when there is substantial objective information to support identification. Currently, approximately 7-8% of identified students are English Learners and 2% receive special education support services.

(b) Multiple sources of student information and traditional/nontraditional methods are gathered and reviewed including: (a) student characteristics as described on the teacher/parent nomination referral form (b) results on group administered intellectual screening tools, such as the Raven’s Matrices, Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary Students (SAGES), Cog-AT, Otis-Lennon, or individual tests of intelligence (c) academic results on normed referenced achievement tests such as the SAT 9 or CAT 6 or Advanced performance level on the California Standards Tests (ELA and math) and/or (c) creative abilities using a teacher checklist, review of student product samples, and the Divergent Production score on the SAGES.

(c) Beginning in the spring of 2004-05, and annually thereafter, parents receive a school notice about the GATE referral process (Attachment 3). Following discussions with the teacher and other knowledgeable staff, parent referrals are highly considered, and included in the student assessment screenings for intellectual abilities. Peer nomination forms are also available to teachers to assist with providing students additional non-traditional paths for consideration.

(d) It is recommended students initially not placed be reconsidered no sooner than at the end of the following year if information supports re-nomination, although it is suggested intellectual assessment using a group administered tool not be re-administered for a period of two years in order to minimize test-retest reliability concerns. However, a group administered test that is different than the one initially given may be considered. The district maintains a 3 year database of previously referred students.

(e) A packet describing the characteristics of gifted students, nomination/referral forms, including voluntary peer nomination forms, and description of the placement criteria are made available through an annual meeting with the site GATE teachers and/or K-8 Program Advisors and 9-12 Assistant Principal (Attachment 5). Additionally, the district provides lists of students who have achieved at the Advanced range on the California Standards Tests in English Language Arts and/or Mathematics, as well as SABE 2 scores for English Learner students in the district for less than 12 months. This information is to be shared with teachers as they consider students for nomination. Emphasis is also placed on the characteristics of students who may not achieve at the upper range on the CST due to the acquisition of second language or a learning disability, but who evidence a high number of intellectually and/or creative characteristics.

Commendable Standards: Two year approval

(a) In the spring of each school year, site Program Advisors, and identified GATE teachers receive training in the district’s nomination and identification procedures as outlined in Attachment 5.

(b) Individual student files are keep in the district GATE office. Sites are notified annually of newly identified students with supporting GATE identification paperwork forwarded to be filed in the students’ cumulative files. Students not initially placed may annually be re-nominated pending additional information. See (d) above.

Exemplary Standards: Three year approval (None were cited in the rubric)

2.2 An assessment/identification process is in place to ensure that all potentially gifted students are appropriately assessed for identification as gifted students.

Minimum Standards: One-Year Approval

(a) Initial nomination referrals are forwarded to the GATE office for review and a determination of the need to assign trained personnel for intellectual screening is made. Once all the objective information is completed, the GATE office completes the GATE Student Summary form (Attachment 5).

(b) Multiple sources of student information are gathered and reviewed including: (a) student characteristics as described on the

teacher/parent nomination referral form (b) results on group administered intellectual screening tools, such as the Raven’s Matrices or Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary Students (SAGES), other group administered tests, or individual tests of intelligence (c) academic results on normed referenced achievement tests such as the SAT 9 or CAT 6 or Advanced performance level on the CST’s and/or (d) creative abilities using a teacher checklist, review of student product samples, and the Divergent Production score on the SAGES.

The Director reviews each student Summary form for completeness and records on the form if the student meets the objective criteria for placement. The student Summary forms are then returned to the site Program Advisor/Assistant Principal along with the initial nomination forms for final determination of GATE placement. Decisions reflect input from (a) objective test data results provided by the GATE office (b) teacher recommendation using the results of the teacher/parent nomination form; and (c) Program Advisor and/or Principal recommendation. If a student is not meeting the objective criteria and site staff strongly supports the nomination, sites are encouraged to contact the Director for further discussion of the student’s skills and abilities and possible consideration for re-nomination at a later time, or given special permission for placement.

- (c) Parents are informed of (a) the initial nomination process, including a permission-to-assess form and (b) the final GATE placement recommendation during the spring-summer period of each school year (Attachment 6). Should parents have questions or disagree with the recommendation, information about an appeals process is included.
- (d) Throughout the year, the names of transfer students are forwarded to the GATE office and follow-up contacts with the sending districts are promptly made to confirm whether or not the student meets the placement criteria for MUSD. If the student’s information is not complete, transfer students are included in screening process.

Commendable Standards: Two year approval

- (a) MUSD is a small district of 6600 students; one pre-K, K school; five K-5 schools; two middle schools, and a comprehensive 9-12 high school. There are three major ethnicities represented: 52% Hispanic-Latino; 27% White; and 12% African-American. The average percent of low income students is 60% district-wide, and ranges from a high of 79% to a low of 43%. Approximately 20% of the population is English Learners.
- (b) A review of the placement criteria used three years ago appeared to be more sensitive to the English-only, traditionally high academically achieving student, and did not widen the initial nomination pool to appropriately include linguistically or culturally diverse students who may not initially show high performance on standard measures. The review resulted in the following changes:
 1. The inclusion of nonverbal measures such as Raven’s Matrices and SAGES Reasoning Subtest for intellectual identification
 2. The inclusion of an experimental peer nomination process which is currently voluntary (beginning spring 2004).
 3. The inclusion of creativity as a category for identification (beginning spring 2004).
 4. An extended teacher nomination form that enables teachers to recognize specific student characteristics in three areas: intellectual abilities; high achievement; and creativity (beginning spring 2004).
 5. Availability of SABE 2 test results, in addition to CST/CAT 6 data.

Exemplary Standards: Three year approval

- (a) GATE placement eligibility recommendations outlined in (a) and (b) found in the “minimum standards” section above, reflect the combined input of the Director, site Program Advisors, designated site teachers and administrators. Each are part of the district training efforts which occurs primarily through monthly Director-Program Advisors meetings, site principal-leadership meetings, and annual faculty/staff trainings which are provided through trained district GATE personnel (Director, Intervention/enrichment Coordinator, and the district resource teacher).
- (b) The district does not have a separate identification plan for underrepresented groups, as any student who meets the identification criteria is eligible for placement. However with the inclusive changes in the nomination and identification procedures, GATE enrollment has steadily increased in the past three years, and is beginning to better reflect the district enrollment patterns. Current enrollment is approximately 6600 students. There are three major ethnicities represented: 52% Hispanic-Latino; 27% White; and 12% African-American. The average percent of low income students is 60% district-wide, and ranges from a high of 79% to a low of 43%.

2001GATE enrollment:
352 students. 19% Hispanic/Latino. 64% White. 6% African-American.

2003 GATE enrollment:
560 enrolled. 25% Hispanic/Latino. 54% White. 8% African-American.

Section 3: Curriculum and Instruction Districts develop differentiated curriculum, instructional models and strategies that are aligned with and extend the state academic content standards and curriculum frameworks. The differentiated curriculum is related to theories, models, and practices from recognized literature in the field. **(EC 52206a and 52206b)**

3.1 A differentiated curriculum is in place, responsive to the needs, interests, and abilities of gifted students.

Minimum Standards: One year approval

(a-d) Beginning in the summer of 2004, all designated teachers will be trained in the CDE/CAG differentiation model for instruction which embeds the state content standards and the expectation is that all gifted students will meet or exceed the standards by attaining Proficient or Advanced levels on the California Standards Tests.) Currently, 84.54% of identified students are meeting that criteria. At a minimum, the differentiated model will emphasize:

- (1) The use of the CDE/CAG Thinking Tools (from CDE’s *Differentiating the Curriculum to Provide Advanced Learning Opportunities for a Diverse Student Population*) for incorporating depth and complexity into the daily curriculum, including problem-solving models and research skill development
- (2) Flexibly adjust the pace of instruction to advance content where/when appropriate
- (3) Integrate the use of novelty.

A second dimension of instructional expectation will emphasize:

- (4) Nurture students creative and unique thinking styles; develop an awareness of their own learning style and preference; as well as understand their individual potential for high intellectual and academic performance
- (5) Encourage the development of unique student products
- (6) Develop a recognition of students’ societal and personal/ethical responsibilities, and extend their understanding, regard, and sensitivity to the skills and talents of others.

Commendable Standards: Two year approval

(a-c) The district’s GATE Teacher Handbook (Attachment 4, Section “Differentiated Strategies That Make a Difference”) provides the foundation for the variety of differentiated instructional approaches in which teachers will be trained on and encouraged to use with GATE and other high ability students. Strategies summarized in the handbook include:

- CDE/CAG Differentiation Model
- Critical questioning (Benjamin Bloom, Art Costa), including questioning extensions through inquiry, discussion, and debate opportunities
- Planned flexible student groupings by ability, interest, and learning styles.
- Tiered Assignments / Exams (reflecting work of Dr. Carol Ann Tomlinson).
- Curriculum compacting
- Independent projects
- Dr. Robert Sternberg’s *Triarchic Intelligence* (analytical, creative and practical thinking responses)
- Interest centers and groups

Exemplary Standards: Three year approval

(a) Currently, the district’s end-of-year student program evaluations incorporates many of the content learning and skills expected to be demonstrated by gifted students receiving an appropriately differentiated program (Attachment 7). Further work in the development of a scope and sequence for elementary and secondary programs will continue through 2004-05 and 2005-06 with the intention to clarify common intellectual, academic and creative standards. “Common” standards will include agreements on the “big ideas”, themes, patterns expected for the major units of study across grades and/or content areas, and identification of common guiding questions for each unit.

3.2 The differentiated curriculum for gifted students is supported by appropriate structures and resources.

Minimum Standards: One year approval

(a) The differentiated program is offered regularly during the school day at each elementary and secondary site as described in

Section 2.

- (b) The CDE differentiated instructional model provides the foundation for gifted students and is incorporated into the regular school day. Beginning in 2004, selected teachers have an opportunity to participate in district-paid CAG sponsored Summer Teacher Institute, as well as receive training in other differentiated models reflected in the GATE Teacher Handbook (Attachment 4). Annually, thereafter, the CAG training will be offered to additional teachers with the goal that at a minimum all grade 4-5 teachers and middle/high school teachers who have assigned GATE students will be trained.
- (c) Sites are provided with a per pupil GATE allocation that supports the acquisition of additional materials. Additionally, many of the classrooms are now supported with on-line computers and the purchasing of appropriate software can be funded from a combination of site GATE funds and/or through School Site approved allocations (all K-5 sites and 1 middle school site is designated as Schoolwide.)

Commendable Standards: Two year approval

(a-c) Beginning the fall 2004, school sites will group gifted students both heterogeneously and homogeneously depending on the area of study, designated task, and expected learning experience. For example, in the elementary schools, gifted students will be heterogeneously clustered in their homerooms in clusters of at least 8 GATE students and are then homogeneously grouped into an appropriate advanced language arts and/or mathematics cluster based on the performance level of the student. Instruction is delivered in a variety of ways including direct teacher instruction, inquiry, cooperative learning structures, etc. Students will also receive opportunities to participate in interest-based learning activities that provide both group and independent projects and independent study. Teachers are encouraged to use above grade level materials and provide a range of resources that support opportunities for gifted students to explore additional print, non-print, and technological informational materials. Each site is provided with a per pupil allocation to supplement regular instructional program materials.

Exemplary Standards: Three year approval

(a) The current elementary program offers a homogeneous, self-contained structure within a designated grade level for language arts and/or math, depending on student strengths; as well as grade level heterogeneous clusters of 8 or more identified students in the regular class setting. Additionally, elementary students participate in an after-school enrichment program each semester which targets specific areas of interest and units of in-depth study, and at least three district sponsored enrichment programs (Astrocamp, UCLA Young Scholars Program, District Summer GATE Technology Workshop). Middle schools offer a similar program of homogeneous advanced cluster groups in content areas and, dependent on staff. If staff is not available, the sites can participate in a district-wide enrichment partnership program. The high school offers 4 pre-AP sections; 10 Advanced Placement courses; and 4 honor courses, and a variety of MHS clubs and organizations which are of interest to GATE and other high ability students, including California Scholarship Federation, ASB Cabinet (leadership training), specific language clubs, Interact partnership with the Rotary Club, Key Club, National Honors Society, and TAAG Team (facilitating diversity workshops).

Section 4: Social and Emotional Development Districts establish and implement plans to support the social and emotional development of gifted learners to increase responsibility, self-awareness, and other issues of affective development **(EC 52212a1)**

4.1 Actions to meet the affective needs of gifted learners are ongoing.

Minimum Standards: One year approval

- (a) School staff and parents are provided with information and training about the social and emotional needs unique to gifted students annually through a combination of communication avenues. There is the GATE Teacher Handbook (Attachment 4) and GATE Parent Handbook (Attachment 2). Elementary and middle school Program Advisors meet with the Director monthly, and GATE issues, including the affective needs of students and potential at-risk behaviors are discussed at least annually. Teachers and administrators also receive information through scheduled staff development training days. Teachers responsible for the after-school enrichment programs receive training prior to initiating their programs.

Upon enrollment, parents of newly identified students receive a copy of the handbook and attend a district meeting in the early fall which emphasizes not only the intellectual and achievement criteria that is used for identification, but discusses the “what does it mean to be gifted” from the student’s point of view, and the “heterogeneity” of these students. Parent reading resources are also provided for more in-depth information targeting social-affective characteristics, and parents/staff are encouraged to join CAG as on-going resource for current information.

The GATE department also works with the Healthy Start and Intervention office to disseminate information to counselors.

- (b) At the middle and high school, counselors and teachers encourage students to take advantage of mentoring and pre-training opportunities in their areas of interest and to specifically explore college and post-secondary training opportunities through research, including internet searches, interviews, college/university visitations, the AVID program that may include GATE students who meet the criteria for both programs, etc. The ASB Leadership Council also provides students with opportunities to develop a wider lens of their potential.

Commendable Standards: Two year approval

- (a) The site GATE enrichment teacher(s) annually meet with the students to explore their strengths and characteristics that provided the foundation for GATE identification, and embed social-affective components into their program, including developing an awareness of the students’ own skills, and a growing sense of the similarities, differences and appreciation of others skills and talents (GATE and non-GATE). The results of the parent/student inventories for newly enrolled students are shared with the site GATE coordinators. .

- (b) Guidance and counseling services are available to all gifted students, and staff is also provided with information available in the GATE Teacher Handbook (Attachment 4) addressing the social-affective needs of students. Each site has a Student Success Team and partnerships through the Healthy Start and Intervention office to provide support, in-class interventions, or outside referrals when specific needs have been identified. There is a recognition that individual student needs may range from classroom accommodations that require a more rigorous program, to opportunities that offer more choice and creative options, to serious student-family crises counseling.

Exemplary Standards:

- (a-b) Student Success Teams (SST), as well as actions taken by district counselors, are documented in the appropriate files. SST’s act as the hub for a variety of personnel support resources to interact, exchange recommendations, and identify periodic a follow-up schedule. At the end of the year, teachers identify GATE students which have needed or may benefit some level of “watch” or intervention. This information is then annually forwarded to the school sites in the fall. Through collaboration with the GATE office, counselors, and the Healthy Start / Intervention office, personnel is trained to identify at-risk behaviors of gifted students, and suggested home-school support.

4.2 At-risk gifted students are monitored and provided support (e.g. underachievement, suicide, substance abuse).

Minimum Standards: One-year approval

- (a-b) The actions described in 4.1 detail the training teachers and counselors receive. Teaches are encouraged to discuss concerns with their site Program Advisor which may in turn, result in an informal parent/school meeting or formal SST.
- (c) At-risk GATE students remain identified for all program services regardless of any interventions or outside referrals.
- (d) When a GATE student is identified as at-risk and in need of additional support services, teachers and/or counselors regularly

provide parents with the necessary information about recommendations and “next-steps”, and include parents as partners in the discussion about how best to support the student.

Commendable Standards: Two-year approval

(a) For 2004-05, program advisors, selected teachers who regularly work with gifted students, and counseling representatives will jointly develop a suggested list of grade-appropriate intervention strategies for those students identified as most at-risk to help guide the recommendations of the SST’s. The range of considerations may include:

- (a) re-examining the strengths of the student and aligning the appropriate instructional program to match the strengths
- (b) increase the rigor of the program
- (c) offer more choice within the classroom program and/or more emphasis on creating student products based on areas of interest
- (d) provide specific academic interventions when needed
- (e) focus on developing the student’s personal awareness of his/her learning profile, strengths and areas that need careful attention
- (f) develop an awareness of multiple perspectives – how others view the student, how he/she views others, how he/she views themselves
- (g) cognitive behavioral interventions that define acceptable alternatives and options when responding to stress or personal conflict
- (h) personal counseling and/or student and family counseling referrals
- (i) suicide and/ or abuse counseling and referrals.

Exemplary Standards:

(a) Support personnel (teachers, counselors, program advisors, nurses, administrators, etc.) will work toward consistently implementing appropriate recommendations that best match the presenting needs of the students, with follow-up documentation re: intervention recommendations and/or plans as warranted.

Section 5: Professional Development Districts provide professional development opportunities related to gifted education to administrators, teachers, and staff to support and improve education opportunities for gifted students. **(ED 5221a1)**

5.1 The district provides professional development opportunities to gifted learners on as regular basis.

Minimum Standards: One-year approval

- (a) Beginning in the summer of 2004, a core group of 4-5 teachers, 6-8 teachers or program advisors, and one 9-12 designated teacher will be trained in the CDE/CAG differentiation model for instruction which embeds the state content standards and the expectation is that all gifted students will meet or exceed the standards by attaining Proficient or Advanced levels on the California Standards Tests. Continued summer training for designated site teachers will be provided for the next 3 years, with the intention to (1) build capacity at the sites and (2) develop a small cadre of teachers to provide follow-up support for a differentiated “during the school day” program. As reported in Section 3, at a minimum, the differentiated model will emphasize:
 - (1) The use of the CDE/CAG Thinking Tools (from CDE’s *Differentiating the Curriculum to Provide Advanced Learning Opportunities for a Diverse Student Population*) for incorporating depth and complexity into the daily curriculum, including problem-solving models and research skill development
 - (2) Flexibly adjust the pace of instruction to advance content where/when appropriate
 - (3) Integrate the use of novelty.
- (b) All professional development will be followed by an evaluation component, including discussion with site principals about the level of administrative monitoring for specific “differentiated” teaching behaviors. These, in combination with the annual teacher evaluation of professional development needs (Attachment 7b) will form the basis for continued training.
- (c) Individuals providing staff development on differentiated instruction will be selected based on their knowledge and expertise in gifted education.

Commendable Standards: Two year approval

- (a) Site principals have oversight on the assignment of gifted students to teacher classrooms, and are encouraged to discuss with teachers their potential options for targeting gifted education as part of their professional growth development plan.
- (b) omitted in the rubric
- (c) Additionally, the district and principals will work collaboratively over the next 3-5 years toward having every teacher assigned to gifted students trained at least at Level 1 for training and implementation of the CDE/CAG model of differentiation.

Exemplary Standards: Three year approval

- (a) The district, in conjunction with site administrators and teachers, recognizes the need to more fully explore and implement a variety of sound, research-supported strategies that meet the differentiated needs of many learners. This past year, significant efforts have successfully been made to agree on the common strategies that would be used to making the curriculum more accessible to all students through an emphasis on specific vocabulary instructional routines that are tiered in level of difficulty to content texts, and to regularly incorporate inclusive student response strategies that allow the teacher to quickly monitor students acquisition of concepts and adjust instruction that lead to periodic regrouping.

Additionally, as a result of focused discussions with parents and staff, the district is widening its professional development focus to include strategies targeted to support the specific differentiated needs of gifted learners. The commitment to involve teachers in the summer CAG training institutes evolved from this work. As a cadre of teachers become more experienced and competent in delivering a rigorous gifted curriculum, the development of a leveled or tiered GATE training plan will evolve by the end of the 2004-05 school year.

5.2 District personnel with direct decision-making and/or instructional responsibilities for gifted students are provided with role specific training.

Minimum Standards: One-year approval

- (a) A district goal for the end of 2004-2005, is to have at least 50% of the teachers who have significant numbers of assigned gifted students will be trained in the CDE/CAG differentiation model. At the end of three years, 80% or more of the teachers

will be CDE/CAG trained and will continue through a process of designated trainings using the district’s GATE Teacher Handbook as a guide (Attachment 4, “Differentiated Strategies That Make a Difference”).

- (b) Currently, the coordination of the GATE program is the responsibility of the Director of Special Projects. As reflected in Section 1.3, the current Director has had nearly twenty years of experience with the gifted program as a GATE program specialist (Baldwin Park USD, 1985-95); site principal (La Canada USD, 1995-98); coordinator (Paramount USD, 1998-2001), and continues to be a member of the California Association for the Gifted (CAG) and Professional Advocates for Gifted Education (PAGE). Previous accomplishments included district recognition in the *LA Times* and *Newsweek* for implementing a peer nomination process in Baldwin Park USD; as well as previously serving as president of PAGE. Additionally, because of the Director’s background in special education and working with the English Learner program, students who may not normally be considered for the program, are included in the initial nominations.
- (c) Previously cited examples of training in gifted issues for teachers, counselors, and administrators are reflected in Section 3, 4 and 5.
- (d) Professional development training opportunities are made available to all personnel involved in gifted education (teachers, program advisors, site principals, etc.).

Commendable Standards: Two-year approval

- (a) As the district refines its professional development plan, it has included a “coaching plan” component beginning in 2004-05. This has required (1) a careful examination of the instructional goals of the district (developed through an examination of the work on effective schools by several educational researchers such as Dr. Robert Marzano, Dr. Douglas Reeves, Effective Schools national organization, and others; and the current focus on making instruction accessible to all students which includes delineating specific interventions for targeted student groups, and offering a rigorous and enriched program for students working at or above standards. (2) An identification of exactly what instructional behaviors are expected to be implemented and administratively monitored versus those offered in which the goal is a level of awareness and left to teacher choice. As an example of this work is the district’s summer training opportunities has identified which strategies require a coaching component, i.e., a peer who agrees to observe in another teacher’s class for an agreed upon period of time (i.e., 1 x per week for 30 days) and simply provides feedback on the number of occasions in which a new strategy or teacher behavior was used. This is non-evaluative in nature, but provides the impendance for implementation. The coaching plan “agreement” is made between peers, and while principals may play a role in observing a new strategy, it also is not evaluative. Following the development of mutual agreements between the district, site administrators, and teachers would targeted strategies play a role in the development of the Stull objectives and used for feedback and evaluation.

Each of the district-sponsored training opportunities include strands for involvement of high ability and gifted students, i.e., how to level or differentiate the vocabulary load for high ability students; how to use the inclusive student responses for adjusting instruction so that struggling students have another opportunity to learn the concepts, while students who easily grasped the concepts can be afforded appropriate support for going beyond or going deeper.

Exemplary Standards:

- (a) Sections 4 and 5 have described in detail the training expectations of teachers who have significant numbers of gifted students. The summer CAG training for 2004 and the district GATE Teacher Handbook serves as the foundation for tiered training.
- (b) Refer to Section 1.3 and 5.2 which describes the training and experiences of the program administrator.
- (c) See 5.2, Commendable Standards above for the district coaching plan.
- (d) The district administrator and district resource teacher are the primary support personnel for GATE. The goal is to develop a cadre of CDE/CAG trained teachers to form a “critical mass” of expertise who have a shared understanding and language of the elements of differentiated instruction, including the unique needs of gifted learners and that this expertise can be shared within and across sites.

Section 6: Parent & Community Involvement Districts provide procedures to ensure consistent participation of parents and community members in the planning and evaluation of programs for gifted students. (ED 52205 2f)

6.1 Open communication with parents and the community is maintained.

Minimum Standards: One-year approval

- (a) Beginning the spring of 2004 and annually thereafter, parents are informed about the district’s nomination process through a commonly used school site communication (Attachment 3). They are encouraged to discuss the possibility of a GATE referral with the student’s teacher and are given the name and phone of the district’s Director for further information. Translation in Spanish is available (93% of our second language learners are Spanish speaking.)
- (b) Parents who served on the GATE Parent Advisory Committee (several representing community members) are well aware of the application process, and contributed to shaping the major program services which are detailed in the application.
- (c) As described in several previous sections, the parents of gifted students, representing all the sites, actively participated in developing a district wide parent GATE program survey (Attachment 1). Arrangements were then made to meet with each site principal and together, the parent and principal, tallied the results and provided summary observations which were then brought back to the GATE parent committee. This information was effectively used to bring about significant changes to the daily instructional program and also resulted in finding avenues for using additional funds to support teacher training.

There is a also a district wide end-of-year program evaluation process conducted that includes parents(Attachment 7c).

Commendable Standards: Two year approval

- (a) In the fall of every school year, the district convenes a parent meeting for the students who have been recently identified (Agenda Attachment 8) and a translator is present. Prior to the meeting, parents receive an informational letter regarding program acceptance (Attachment 3) and a copy of the GATE Parent Handbook (Attachment 2) in both English and Spanish. The initial placement letter also states the area(s) in which the child met the placement criteria. Throughout the year, parents are regularly notified of GATE enrichment programs offered both through the district and the site-based after school programs. These include Astrocamp, UCLA Young Scholars Program, District Summer GATE Technology Workshop, and the CSULA Search for Exceptional Academic Achievement (SEAA) and the Pre-Accelerated College Enrollment (PACE) Program.
- (b) Parents are invited to Open Houses to view GATE student work completed during the school year and individual sites schedule GATE Open Houses to view work products representing areas of study offered during the after-school enrichment programs. Occasionally, a site also schedules evenings in which parents participate in the activities that are hosted by the students, i.e., in preparation for the Science Olympiad.

Exemplary Standards: Three year approval

- (a) See Minimum Standards (a) above. Additionally, many of the parents who served on the GATE Advisory Committee also serve on their individual School Site Councils.
- (b) Upon initial enrollment, parents are encouraged to complete an interest survey providing information about the student, and indicating the parent’s interest in assisting the sites with their enrichment programs. This information is then forwarded to the sites. Parents are encouraged to share their skills and talents, and have assisted in the areas of art, science, and computers.

6.2 An active GATE advisory committee with parent involvement is supported by the district.

Minimum Standards: One year approval

- (a) Twelve parents served this past year on the district parent GATE Advisory Committee, and attendance ranged from 90-100%. The committee formally met three times, with informal email and mail correspondence to provide ongoing dialogue about the development of the surveys and program recommendations. Meetings were two to two and half hours in length (Attachment 9: Agendas).
- (b) Parent education recommendations come through the annual parent evaluation surveys and GATE Advisory Committee.
- (c) School selection of parent representatives to the district advisory committee is made at the site level. Parents are invited to attend a GATE informational site meeting, and then told about the district level advisory committee. The request has been to have at least one, preferably two parents from each site. Three of the parents were Hispanic-Latino, and nine were Caucasian.

Commendable Standards: Two year approval

- (a) Parent signature is on the application and reflects their active participation in the design of services.
- (b) See Minimum Standards (a) above.
- (c-d) The district is increasing its efforts to share research and literature related to gifted education with parents and staff. For example, the work of Dr. Karen Rogers influenced the decision to group at least 8 gifted students in grades 4-5 in order to create a functional “critical mass” of students, thus the teacher is better able to focus on the needs of these students. While the district wide work which focused training efforts on direct vocabulary instruction and inclusive student response opportunities was not a direct reflection of gifted research, presenters such as Dr. Kate Kinsella offered information about the lack of vocabulary clarity and fluency often found in high school students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses. One of the vocabulary practices includes a pre-assessment to determine which words/concepts students do/do not know/use. The identification of teaching strategies to engage all students in responding to content instruction should result in teachers more clearly identifying which students easily acquired the information and are ready to move on or go deeper. Some sites have begun to review the ASCD tapes regarding differentiated instruction by Dr. Carol Ann Tomlinson, and have used this as the basis for continued investigation of ways to differentiate instruction for their gifted and high ability students.
- (d) Community support has been represented through (1) parents who play an active role in civic or professional activities in the city and (2) interested Board members, who also very active in other Monrovia venues. The elementary after-school programs occasionally seek partnerships with local businesses to supplement their programs such as a partnership between a local art gallery and using their experts for student instruction.

Exemplary Standards: Three year approval

- (a) Currently, approximately 10 % of GATE identified students also hold special needs, EL and/or R-FEP designations and 11% are I-FEP students (78% of the students are EO without additional special services). Parents of these students are invited to participate in both site and district GATE parent advisory groups and School Site Councils. All materials and meetings provide Spanish translations. One of the twelve parents regularly participating in the GATE Parent Advisory Committee represents a second language learner. All of the school’s and district facilities accommodate students or parents with special needs.

Section 7: Program Assessment Districts establish formal and informal evaluation methods and instruments that assess the gifted program and the performance of gifted students (which meets or exceeds state content standards). Results of data collected, including state standardized tests, are used to study the value and impact of the services provided and to improve gifted programs and gifted student performance (**EC 52212a1**)

7.1 The district provides ongoing student and GATE program assessment that is consistent with the program’s philosophy, goals, and standards.

Minimum Standards: One year approval

(a-c) An annual year-end program evaluation survey is conducted and involves parents, students (grade 4 and above), teachers, and administrative staff (Attachment 7 a-c). Student academic performance data is examined at the end of each summer, following the results of the STAR testing. Language performance data on the CELDT for EL/GATE students is examined following the results from CTB/McGraw-Hill which are received during February-March. Questions are designed to support the district’s philosophy and goals for the program, and include both opinion supported surveys and an examination of objective test data. The Director and district resource teacher summarizes the results and recommendations and forwards the information to the Associate Superintendent of Instruction Services. Individual school results are also summarized and shared with principals.

Commendable Standards: Two year approval

- (a) Program review of the results is primarily accomplished through the Director who has been trained in gifted education.
- (b-d) Further work in the development of a scope and sequence for elementary and secondary programs will continue through 2004-05 and 2005-06 following the CDE/CAG training. The intention will be to clarify common intellectual, academic and creative standards. “Common” standards will include agreements on the “big ideas” , themes, patterns expected for the major units of study across grades, and identification of common guiding questions for each unit and will be supported with the development of student performance rubrics or identification of GATE essential student performance standards.
- (e) On May 12, 2004, a second GATE Board study session was held to discuss the results of the parent and staff program surveys, and share anticipated changes in the GATE application. It was explained the recommendations arose from the surveys. The Board was provided with a draft copy of the application and encouraged to respond and make additional recommendations. Annually, hereafter, the Board will receive a summary of the evaluation assessments, including student performance data and recommendations that will identify areas of maintenance (strengths), revisions and/or changes to address areas of concern and areas of improvement.
- (f) As a result of the intensive involvement of parents and district staff in redesigning the program this past year, all stakeholders were asked to rank their order of preference of how the limited GATE funds should be used, recognizing that the current allocation of \$49,000 was insufficient to fully fund all the program services required to meet the standards addressed in this application. (See Question 4 on Attachment 1a.) There was unanimous agreement that the program should emphasize building a quality “within the bells” academic GATE program, but parents also did not want to compromise the after-school enrichment programs. After much discussion and working with the Associate Superintendent of Instruction, it was proposed to supplement the GATE teacher training component with \$20,000-30,000 of Title II, Teacher Professional Development funds, thus allowing the district to continue to maintain the after-school enrichment programs.

Exemplary Standards: Three year approval

- (a-b) Section b-d and e above address the issue of developing performance expectations and the creation of an annual GATE assessment report regarding the effectiveness of the program, and includes a plan for improvement in response to the information.
- (c) All stakeholders including teachers, administrative staff, support staff, parents and students are involved in the program assessment.

Section 8: Budgets District budgets for gifted programs support and provide for all the components of the district’s GATE program and meet the related standards(EC 52290, 52212a1, 2, 3).

7.1 The district GATE budget is directly related to the GATE program objectives with appropriate allocations.
<p>Minimum Standards: One year approval</p> <p>(a) GATE funds and additional funding sources are used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professional development (local conferences, workshops, in addition to newly developed commitment to cover the costs of the CAG Summer Training Teacher Institute). ▪ Direct student services (site GATE teacher stipends, per pupil site allocations). ▪ District level coordination (10% of Director’s salary and association district clerical costs) ▪ GATE student identification (maintenance of assessment materials, coordination of assessment activities/tasks) <p>(b) Expenditures of state GATE monies do not supplant district funds.</p> <p>(c) District coordination is the responsibility of the Director of Special Projects. 10% of this position is funded through GATE funds. Additionally, GATE funds support a stipend for one site GATE coordinating-teacher at each of the schools.</p> <p>(d) Carryover money is maintained in district GATE accounts. It is anticipated there will minimal, if any, carryover money for 2004-2005.</p> <p>(e) Indirect costs are calculated at a rate of 2.75 %.</p>
<p>Commendable Standards: Two year approval</p> <p>(a) As the district reshaped the scope and complexity of its services to align with the CDE’s rubric of a quality program, it was clear the coordination and oversight of the program exceeds the 10% salary allotment that has been used for the Director. However, in order to maintain the high priority enrichment services requested by the parents, and shift services to create a quality during the day program, we will continue to keep the allotment at 10% and use other funding to support this position.</p>
<p>Exemplary Standards: Three year approval</p> <p>(a) The district uses other categorical programs to support gifted students in need of additional support, i.e., LEP, Title I, Special Education, etc. as well as Title II, Teacher Professional Development funds. The Director position is multi-funded through Title I, LEP, Title III, and GATE.</p>