

Gifted and Talented Education

Parent Handbook



Tucson Unified School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its educational programs or activities.

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Introduction

This handbook is intended to offer a friendly approach to common sense support for home, school and community in the Tucson Unified School District. Parents of gifted and talented children are often looking for information and a sense of direction on how to become effective advocates not only for their own children, but also for excellence in education as a whole. The handbook reflects current programs of our district.



"Tucson Unified School District has provided leadership in serving the needs of gifted children for over 25 years. The comprehensive programs available for gifted children in TUSD are second to none in Arizona." October, 2005

*J. Jeffrey Hipskind
Director of Gifted Education
Arizona Department of Education*

Defining Giftedness

❖ Common Characteristics

During preschool years, giftedness can be demonstrated by early physical development, early language development, and/or exceptional powers of observation and curiosity.

While it is rare for a gifted child to exhibit all characteristics listed below, it is common for a gifted child to manifest many of them:

Good problem-solving abilities	Rapid learning
Extensive vocabulary	Good memory
Longer attention span	Compassion for others
Perfectionism	High degree of energy
Preference for older companions	Wide range of interests (or narrow ones)
Interest in experimenting and doing things differently	Unusual sense of humor
Early or avid reader with greater comprehension	Ability with puzzles, mazes or numbers
At times seems mature for age	Insatiable curiosity and persistence
Intense concentration	Perseverance in areas of interest
May question authority	Advanced sense of conscience
Perceives abstract ideas, understands complex concepts	Sees relationships/makes connections with ideas
May demonstrate intense emotional and/or physical sensitivity	Exhibits creativity

❖ Bright Child / Gifted Learner

Knows the answers / Asks the questions	Is interested / Is highly curious
Is attentive / Is mentally and physically involved	Has good ideas / Has wild, silly ideas
Works hard / Plays around, yet tests well	Answers the questions / Discusses in detail, elaborates
Top group / Beyond the group	Listens with interest / Shows strong feeling and opinions
Learns with ease / Already knows	6-8 repetitions for mastery / 1-2 repetitions for mastery
Understands ideas / Constructs abstractions	Enjoys peers / Prefers adults
Grasps the meaning / Draws inferences	Completes assignments / Initiates projects
Is receptive / Is intense	Copies accurately / Creates a new design
Enjoys school / Enjoys learning	Absorbs information / Manipulates information
Technician / Inventor	Good memorizer / Good guesser
Enjoys straightforward, sequential presentation / Thrives on complexity	Is alert / Is keenly observant
Is pleased with own learning / Is highly self-critical	

Janice Szabos, Challenge, 1989, Good Apple, Inc., Issue 34

❖ **Myths/Facts About Gifted Students and Gifted Education**

Myths	Facts
Gifted education and the "gifted" label are "elitist" because schools with gifted programs offer "special" treatment for smart kids that already have it all	<i>Gifted education is, in fact, about meeting the academic and affective needs of students whose abilities and knowledge exceed what is being taught in the regular classroom</i>
Gifted kids have "pushy" parents	<i>In fact, parents of gifted children are often less inclined to make an issue of their children for fear of drawing attention and harming their child's school experience. Often, parents of gifted children may be reliving their own negative experience in school and simply want their child to be intellectually challenged each day in school</i>
Gifted kids tend to be physically weak and unhealthy	<i>Gifted children actually tend to be stronger, have fewer illnesses, and many are outstanding athletes</i>
Gifted kids are emotionally unstable and social misfits	<i>The opposite is generally true. Many children fail to be identified by teachers because their outward behavior seems so normal. They are often very outgoing and can be outstanding leaders</i>
Gifted kids are enthusiastic about school and academic work	<i>Gifted children will, in fact, opt for alternative ways to demonstrate their intelligence and creativity, if not encouraged to do so in a school environment. Gifted students will often choose the easiest path to an "A" since the "A" comes so easily to them</i>
Gifted kids are smart enough to learn by themselves	<i>Gifted children require the same professional educational and emotional support as other children, but support must be appropriate to their needs</i>
Gifted kids are usually from upper/middle class professional families	<i>Gifted children are found in all socioeconomic groups in proportionate numbers</i>
Gifted kids with the same level of intelligence have the same abilities and interests	<i>Gifted children, like all children, are unique individuals and differ in their abilities, talents, and personalities</i>
All children are gifted	<i>All individuals are unique with their own relative strengths and weaknesses, but giftedness refers to extraordinary, exceptional, beyond-the-norm abilities and talents</i>

❖ Learning Styles

Learning styles are a means of describing ways in which the human mind processes information. Learning styles vary in degrees of intensity and variety with each individual. Following are some examples of frequently used terminology to describe these characteristics:

✧ *Sequential Learners:*

step-by-step learners	adept at computation, spelling, rote memorization, timed tests
neat, well organized	adept at biology, foreign languages
adept at following oral directions	academically talented

✧ *Spatial Learners:*

conceptual, complex systems thinking	adept at mathematical reasoning, developing own methods of problem solving
poor at spelling, rote memorization, timed tests, handwriting	disorganized
adept at geometry and physics	able to arrive at correct solutions without taking steps
adept at following visual instructions	

✧ *Left-Brained Learners:*

analytical	verbal
able to process information one step at a time	

✧ *Right-Brained Learners:*

very creative	comprehend easily
visual learners, must "see" it to understand it	able to hold images in their mind
often artistically able	able to do calculations better in their head than on paper
poor spellers	successful with un-timed tests and homework that is not repetitive
successful when matched with teachers who offer similar teaching styles and an understanding of students' unique needs	

❖ Multiple Intelligences

Based on Dr. Howard Gardner's *Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, there are at least eight primary factors of intelligence within the human brain. These intelligences vary in relative strength with each individual and include:

- ✧ **Linguistics:** very verbal, sensitive to semantics, syntax, pronunciation; likes to read and write; enjoys learning new vocabulary.
- ✧ **Musical:** listens to, expresses, composes, and performs music in variety of ways; senses music in contexts not associated with music.
- ✧ **Logical Mathematical:** able to perceive patterns, relationships, abstractions; likes puzzles, manipulatives, collections; experiments in controlled, orderly ways.
- ✧ **Spatial:** recreates the visual without the physical reference; likes to build things, to draw; able to solve the problem by visualizing the product.
- ✧ **Bodily-Kinesthetic:** expresses through conscious use of body; physically adept both with large and small motor control; able to make complex sequence of moves; likes to "clown around."
- ✧ **Interpersonal:** instinctive capacity to sense emotional states of others; highly interactive, influential, and able to manipulate others; often takes leadership roles.
- ✧ **Intrapersonal:** able to discriminate one's own feelings; individualistic, independent, usually self-assured; introspective.
- ✧ **Naturalist:** fascination with the immense variety of the world's animal and plant species and the talent to assign them to new or established taxonomy.

❖ The Twice Exceptional Child

Twice Exceptional students have both the characteristics of students with disabilities and of students with outstanding potential. The discrepancy between the superior abilities and the learning difficulties results in feelings of frustration and heightened sense of inefficacy. Their strengths are often evident in the arts and in their ability to think and speak creatively.

Twice-exceptional children may demonstrate one or more of these learning challenges:

On tests of ability, their scores may show significant discrepancies of 12 points or more between verbal and nonverbal subtests.

They have large vocabularies which may be deficient in word meanings and the subtleties of language.

They may be reading significantly below grade level but have a large storehouse of information on some topics.

They have the ability to express themselves verbally but an apparent inability to write down any of their ideas.

They may excel at abstract reasoning but seem unable to remember small details.

They may seem bright and motivated outside of school but have difficulty with traditional school tasks.

Their slow reaction speed may result in incomplete work and low test scores on timed tests.

Their general lack of self-confidence may manifest itself as inflexibility, inability to take risks, super-sensitivity to any type of criticism, helplessness, socially inadequate behaviors, stubbornness, and other behaviors designed to distract others from their learning inadequacies.

They may lack effective organization and study skills.

✧ Ways to Help Twice-Exceptional Students Succeed in School

Twice-exceptional children can not improve simply by “trying harder.” They must be taught specific compensation strategies. They must know and appreciate the fact that they have normal and above-average intelligence. They, and the adults in their lives, need to understand that their brains are dealing with certain physiological factors that influence their ability to learn.

❖ **Underachieving Gifted**

Students who demonstrate through standardized measures a discrepancy between intellectual and/or creative ability or potential and academic achievement and/or creative productivity are considered to be underachievers.

Contributing factors may include:

✧ Family Considerations

level and value of education in the family	models for achievement within the family
overprotection	parental expectations
perfectionism of parents	making a child a “little adult”
emotional or physical turmoil	

✧ Personal Characteristics

need for control or attention	response to competition
attitude for failure	level of creativity
learning style	deficit skills
coping strategies	self-esteem, self-concept
response to authority	

✧ Factors Attributed to Reversing Underachievement

out-of-school interests	consistent parenting that encourages a positive attitude, responsibility
goal-setting that attaches meaning to success in school	opportunities for advanced study, independent study
relevant assignments	evaluation of process as well as product
flexible teaching styles	competent, passionate teaching
realistically high expectations	student retaining internal focus of control
student reflection on patterns of underachievement	student acceptance of responsibility for actions and behaviors

✧ Indicators of Progress may Include:

attitude change (happier, enjoys learning, improved self-concept)	completed assignments
quality of work	increased concentration and productivity
improved ability to deal with emotional conflict	

Gifted and Talented Education Purpose Statements at TUSD

❖ Board Policy - 6115 (as of 11/05)

Children from all segments of society have exceptional abilities, either potential or demonstrated, in the areas of general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude and creative or productive performance.

The Tucson Unified School District recognizes that gifted students have special educational needs that should be met within the context of educating the whole child through a variety of services and options. Each of these services and options should be available on a district-wide basis.

The role of the gifted education program is to:

- A. Identify the particular abilities and needs of these students.
- B. Challenge students functioning at the highest level of ability.
- C. Encourage underachieving students who are capable of the highest performance.
- D. Promote higher level creative and productive thinking skills throughout the district.
- E. Promote creative or productive achievement.

Educators should encourage students to extend their individual abilities and to seek intellectual excellence. Tucson Unified School District seeks to nurture such development and excellence.

Gifted and talented students shall be provided with appropriate instruction and/or special ancillary services (from kindergarten through high school) that are designed to meet their educational needs.

No students shall be excluded from the program(s) because of their ethnic status, handicapping condition, creed, gender, or religious convictions if they meet the eligibility criteria and have parent or guardian approval for participation.

The gifted education program(s) shall comply with provisions of state statutes and regulations for gifted education.

Parents and guardians of pupils participating in program(s) for gifted and talented students shall have the right to review program procedures and concerns in accordance with board policy 1105.

Cross Reference: Governing Board Policy 1105, Grievance Procedure for Members of the Public

Legal Reference: ARS 15-770. Gifted pupils, Scope and Sequence; Annual Financial Report.

TUCSON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tucson, Arizona

Adopted by Board: May, 1988

❖ Law

✧ Federal Legislation

Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act, passed in 1988 authorizes the U.S. Department of Education to fund grants, provide leadership, and sponsor a national research center on the education of gifted and talented students. Grant priority is given to the identification of students missed by traditional assessment means (i.e. economically disadvantaged, minorities, limited English proficiency, or disabled), and programs that serve these special populations. Congress has appropriated between \$3.0 million and nearly \$10.0 million each year to fund programs under this Act.

✧ Arizona Statutes

ARS15-779. Definition

In this article, unless the context otherwise requires:

“*Gifted pupil*” means a child who is of lawful school age, who due to superior intellect or advanced learning ability, or both, is not afforded an opportunity for otherwise attainable progress and development in regular classroom instruction and who needs special instruction or special ancillary services, or both, to achieve at levels commensurate with the child’s intellect and ability.

ARS15-779.01 Powers of the school district governing board or county school superintendent

A. The Governing Board of each school district shall provide gifted education to gifted pupils identified as provided in this article.

B. The Governing Board may modify the course of study and adapt teaching methods, materials and techniques to provide educationally for those pupils who are gifted and possess superior intellect or advanced learning ability, or both, but may have an educational disadvantage resulting from a disability or a difficulty in writing, speaking or understanding the English language due to an environmental background in which a language other than English is primarily or exclusively spoken. Programs and services provided for gifted pupils as provided in this subsection may not be separate from programs provided for other gifted pupils and may not be provided in facilities separate from the facilities used for other gifted pupils. Identification of gifted pupils as provided in this subsection shall be based on tests or subtests that are demonstrated to be effective with special populations including those with a disability or difficulty with the English language.

✧ OCR Regulations

Tucson Unified School District has entered into three agreements with the Office of Civil Rights. These agreements have been developed to ensure meaningful access to district services for Limited English Proficient members of the TUSD community.

- **Instructional Services for ELLs (OCR #08955002)** - The purpose of this agreement is to ensure meaningful access to services within the classroom for TUSD's ELL (English Language Learners) and reclassified students.
- **Interpreter/Translation Services (OCR #08011157)** - This agreement is designed to ensure meaningful access to services beyond the classroom for TUSD's Limited English Proficient parents.
- **Health and Human Services Meaningful Access (OCR #09-01-3298)** - This agreement covers the Family Resource and Wellness Centers (FRWC) operated by TUSD and requires TUSD to ensure that TUSD provides meaningful access to all limited English proficient students and their parents seeking services at the FRWCs.

School Based Services for Gifted and Talented Students

❖ History of GATE in TUSD

Without a clearly differentiated curriculum, any educational program for the gifted is only a patchwork of well-meaning, but unrelated efforts and ideas. Based on this belief, teachers, parents, and administrators recognized the need for a clearly differentiated curriculum scope and sequence for the gifted program in TUSD.

To meet this need, interested and qualified individuals gathered in the spring of 1981. The committee sought the expertise of community members and academic authorities for such tasks as verifying generalizations and validating the collaborative process. For five years this project continued. In 1986, a task force was created for the purpose of examining the GATE program. One recommendation of this task force was to finish the curriculum project. With renewed vigor, a newly formed committee began the final stages of the project in the summer of 1988, and a curriculum scope and sequence for the gifted was developed for TUSD.

❖ GATE Scope and Sequence Curriculum Goals

The student will develop:

- ✧ Understanding and skill in using the methods unique to each discipline as well as those common to several disciplines.
- ✧ An understanding of broad-based issues, themes, or problems within interdisciplinary and multicultural contexts.
- ✧ The independence, self-direction, and skills in group processes that lead to creative and productive thinking.
- ✧ Critical and higher level thinking skills in both cognitive and affective areas.
- ✧ Affective behaviors involved in the creative process, including risk-taking, curiosity, imagination, and enjoyment of complex challenges.
- ✧ The convergent and divergent cognitive abilities necessary for creative productivity and an understanding of the roles and characteristics of creative and productive individuals in the evolution of significant change.
- ✧ Products that refine or challenge existing ideas, incorporate concepts, and use techniques, materials, forms, and knowledge in innovative ways.
- ✧ Acceptance and valuing of human differences; respect for the needs, cultures, and rights of others; and recognition of the contributions of others.

❖ **Differentiated Instruction for Gifted Learners**

Differentiated Instruction provides different tasks and activities for gifted learners than their age peers. The elements of differentiation are: content, process, product, environment.

Content Modification - The focus of the GATE program is not on linear acceleration in one subject area. Instead, the major focus is on the acquisition of complex, abstract ideas that are applicable to a wide variety of disciplines and situations.

Process Modification - As new materials are presented and as students engage in learning activities, the focus is on:

- ✧ **Higher Level of Thinking** - emphasis on the use of knowledge rather than its mere acquisition.
- ✧ **Open-Endedness** - questions and learning activities that have no predetermined right answers and which encourage further thinking and investigation.
- ✧ **Discovery** - learning situations in which students use inductive reasoning to discover patterns, ideas and underlying principles.
- ✧ **Evidence of Reasoning** - students are encouraged to not only express their conclusions but also to explain their reasoning. They are encouraged to learn different reasoning processes by observing, listening and interacting with other students.

Product Modification - Students will produce original products that go beyond paraphrasing or copying of existing materials. These products will address issues of real concern to the student, will meet criteria determined by the teacher and students and will, to as great an extent as possible, be shared with audiences other than the GATE teacher and students.

Learning Environment

- ✧ **Student Centered vs. Teacher Centered** - high emphasis on student discussion and interaction.
- ✧ **Evaluative Environment** - students are encouraged to express their ideas without fear of judgment – a definite distinction is made between judgment and evaluation – judgment implies rightness or wrongness – evaluation implies measuring a product against specific, stated criteria and identifying strengths and weaknesses in a helpful, non-threatening manner.

❖ Teaching Models in Education of the Gifted

<u>Model</u>	<u>Description</u>
Taba	Open-ended questioning techniques
Eberle	Creative thinking techniques
Bloom	Cognitive taxonomy – knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation
Renzulli	Enrichment Triad – general exploratory activities, group training activities, individual and small group investigations of real problems
Parnes	Creative Problem Solving – fact finding, problem finding, ideal finding, solution finding, acceptance finding

** Compiled by: Marker, C.J. (1982). Teaching Models in Education of the Gifted. Aspen Publishers, Austin, TX*

❖ Programs

GATE services include both part-time and full-time (self-contained) programs.

Self-contained programs consist of classes in grades 1 through 8. Self-contained programs are designed to provide the basic academic curriculum for students qualified for participation. Students in elementary and middle school self-contained classes receive their core instructional program under the supervision of teachers certified and endorsed in gifted education. Students in middle school self-contained classes are enrolled in four core classes: language arts, social studies, science and mathematics, and in additional elective classes consistent with the middle school program.

Self-contained GATE classes for Spanish dominant and bilingual students are offered at Hollinger Elementary and Pistor Middle School.

✧ Self-Contained Program Sites



Corbett Elementary School (East)
5949 E. 29th Street
*Located on 29th street between
Wilmot and Craycroft*



Hollinger Elementary School (bilingual)
150 W. Ajo Way
Located on Ajo Way west of 6th Avenue



**Lineweaver Elementary School
(Central)**

461 S. Bryant

*Located between 22nd and Broadway –
Alvernon and Columbus on Bryant*



**Tully Elementary Magnet School
(Northwest)**

1701 W. El Rio Drive

*Located north of Speedway between I-10
and Silverbell on El Rio Drive*



White Elementary School (Southwest)

2315 W. Canada Street

*Located north of Drexel and west of
Mission Road*

☒ Middle School Self-Contained Program Sites



Doolen Middle School (North/Central)
2400 N. Country Club
*Located on the northeast corner of
Country Club and Grant*



**Pistor Middle School
(English/bilingual) (West)**
5455 S. Cardinal Ave.
*Located on Cardinal between Drexel
and Irvington*



Vail Middle School (East)
5350 E. 16th Street
*Located on the west side of Craycroft
between 22nd and Broadway*

✧ GATE/PLUS Elementary Program

Part-time services include the GATE/PLUS program at all TUSD elementary schools. Students participating in the GATE/PLUS program receive approximately 90 minutes of direct service per week from itinerant GATE teachers. The lessons in GATE/PLUS classes cover the content areas of language arts, science, math, social studies and fine arts. The specific activities involve complex thinking, such as critical and creative thinking, and involve a problem solving approach. Emphasis is placed on goal setting, self-direction, flexibility, and cooperation in social and academic situations.

✧ Resource Middle School GATE Program

Part-time GATE resource programs are available at all middle schools. Programs typically consist of one class period daily. Parents should consult with their neighborhood middle school counselor to determine program options. Program options can include: core classes or honors classes, enrichment or special interest elective which can replace a regular elective, release-time or pull-out, or alternative scheduling.

✧ Resource High School GATE Block Program

GATE block classes for English and Humanities are offered at all neighborhood high schools for students and determined by site administration and may consist of any of the following: English, Western Civilization, Non-Western Civilization. High school students may register for GATE block classes through the registration process. High school counselors should be consulted for information on participation in GATE block classes.

❖ Referral

Referrals for evaluation for gifted education programs may originate from any source. The GATE office disseminates information to all schools regarding procedures for referrals and testing of students. All students referred for evaluation must have a *Permission to Evaluate* form signed by the parent/guardian on file in the GATE office prior to evaluation.

Students residing in the TUSD boundaries may be eligible for GATE testing. Please contact the central GATE office for information.

❖ Testing

Students in kindergarten through eighth grade participate in group administered testing and should be referred early in the fall semester. Testing for referred students takes place in all elementary and middle schools in January and early February, and students will be considered for placement for the following school year. Testing offered by the district is free of charge to parents or guardians. Parents should contact their neighborhood school or the GATE office to determine exact testing dates.

Test accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. Parents or staff should contact the GATE office prior to testing so accommodations can be arranged.

Arizona school districts are required to use tests approved by the State Board for testing and identifying gifted children. The list of approved tests does not include achievement tests such as the Stanford 9 or the AIMS. State approved tests are typically cognitive ability tests. The tests currently being used by the GATE department include:

Cognitive Abilities Test, *grades 1 through 8*
Raven Test of Progressive Matrices, *(non-verbal) kindergarten through 8*
Otis-Lennon, *kindergarten only*

All students that wish to be considered for middle school GATE placement must test.

Students placed in self-contained GATE in elementary school are not required to test each year to maintain their placement until their 5th grade year.

Students placed in GATE/PLUS are required to test if they wish to be considered for self-contained placement and/or to continue GATE services in middle school.

Any student exiting the program for any reason are subject to test unless prior arrangements/approval have been made with the GATE Department.

Students that don't perform well on the district administered GATE test must wait until the following year to retest as the second test within a calendar year would be considered invalid. State approved examinations from private psychologists are accepted and considered for GATE placement.

Most self-contained placements are completed before the start of school. It is up to the discretion of the GATE administrator to move a student from a part-time status to a full-time GATE placement during the school year.

❖ **Reporting to Parents**

All test results and materials are compiled and reviewed by the GATE office Placement Team. Test results and status letters are mailed home to parents by mid April. Parents of students identified for placement in the self-contained program are invited to attend an Open House meeting at their neighborhood self-contained GATE school.

❖ **Student Identification**

1. Each spring the central GATE office will send all middle schools a list of students who scored at the 97th percentile on the GATE test, and are eligible to be enrolled in GATE resource classes.
2. Each spring the central GATE office will send all middle schools a list of fifth grade students who have participated in the elementary GATE program. These students are excellent candidates for participation in middle school GATE resource classes.
3. Middle schools may use other methods to identify students for participation in GATE resource classes, which include:
 - a. review of standardized test results, such as Terra Nova or AIMS
 - b. GPA
 - c. teacher recommendations

❖ **Alternate Screening Procedure for Kinders**

The GATE office also uses the **SPARK** (Screening Procedure and Assessment for the Recruitment of Kindergartners) team for both recruitment and identification purposes. The SPARK assessment is a performance-based assessment designed to identify gifted children from under-represented populations.

❖ Selection Process

In general, students selected to participate in the full-time programs demonstrate the capability to perform academically at or above the 97th percentile as measured by state approved standardized tests. Part-time programs are more inclusive and accommodate a broader range of student abilities.

All GATE test results are compiled and rank-ordered by the central GATE Office. The Placement Team reviews all test results. The Placement Team consists of the program Administrator, Bilingual Recruitment Specialists, and teachers in the GATE program. The Placement Team is responsible for reviewing all test information including classroom teacher checklists.

All placements in self-contained GATE classes (full-time) and the elementary GATE/PLUS program (part-time) are approved and monitored by the GATE Office. Placements in self-contained classes in grades 2 through 5 and 7 and 8 are very limited, occurring as the result of student attrition.

The GATE office determines assignment of all students placed in the full-time and GATE/PLUS programs. Schools housing full-time GATE programs coordinate registration and enrollment. A board approved geographic feeder pattern is used to assign students to self-contained GATE school sites. Students identified for part-time programs enroll in their home TUSD school.

Qualified Middle/High school students may enroll in GATE classes as part of the registration process. School counselors should be consulted for participation in GATE classes.

Students must retest for admission to middle school self-contained and University High School.

❖ **The Student Performance Review Procedure**

The goal of the GATE program is to provide a successful educational experience for participating students. However, some students may experience difficulty in the areas of academic progress, motivation, appropriate behavior, or thinking skills. The Student Performance Review process is designed to provide a method of communication between teachers, students, and parents. The procedure is to identify areas of difficulty for the student and develop strategies that will result in student success. Instructional accommodations must be considered as part of this process.

Prior to meeting with parents:

The teacher(s) will complete TUSD Child Study Forms (if necessary) and the Student Performance Review Checklist, documenting areas of difficulty. A Student Support Team consisting of parent(s), teachers and other school personnel who may have worked with the student (examples: counselor, school nurse, monitors, instructional aides, etc.) should be identified and consulted, exploring ways to help the student be successful.

If the student is identified as disabled under section 504, the GATE teacher initiates reviews by the Special Education Team, or the 504 Team, to determine if the student's difficulty is related to his/her disability. The team(s) will also determine if the student's 504 Plan or IEP is being appropriately implemented.

Parent Conference and Strategy for Success

1. Arrange a time for the parent(s) and Student Support Team to meet. GATE/PLUS teachers should be sure to include the student's regular classroom teacher.
2. The Strategies for Success form will be completed with the parent and student at the conference meeting. Complete and sign the Acknowledgement of Receipt of Copy of Strategies For Success. A copy will be given to the parent(s), a copy will be sent to the GATE office, and a copy will be placed in the student's Cumulative Folder.
3. As designated on the Strategies for Success form, a parent/teacher/student conference will be held to review the student's progress. If the student is performing adequately, no further action, other than monitoring, is necessary.
4. If the student's performance has not improved, the Strategies for Success form will be reviewed at a conference and modifications will be made. The parent/s will be given copies of all new documentation. Step 4 may be repeated as needed by the Student Support team.
5. After repeated intervention using the Strategy for Success forms, it may be necessary to refer the student to the school's Child Study Team. You may also submit a referral request to the GATE Behavior Integration Specialist, with copies of the Checklist for Performance Review and GATE Strategies for Success form to the GATE Office.
6. Finally, if the student has not met the requirements established by the Child Study Team, the GATE teacher should contact the GATE Behavior Integration Specialist. No further action regarding the student should take place pending a review from the Student Support Team. The GATE teacher should forward copies of all current documents to the GATE office prior to the meeting.
7. Parents may appeal the decision to exit a student to the GATE program administrator.

❖ **Transportation**

District transportation is provided for students selected for placement in self-contained GATE programs. The GATE office provides the Transportation Department with the students' address and any changes of pick-up or drop-off points within TUSD boundaries. All transportation scheduling and routing is done by the Transportation Department. The Transportation Department sends routing information to all families approximately one week prior to the first day of classes in the fall semester.

❖ **GATE Timeline**

August – November	Parents/guardians submit <i>Referral Permission to for Evaluation</i> forms to TUSD school sites or central GATE office for processing
January	Testing for referred students conducted at TUSD elementary/middle school sites
February	Testing make-up for students absent for January testing
March – April	GATE selection for self-contained and GATE/PLUS programs
April	Test results and placement offers mailed home to parents

Supporting Your Child's Needs

Recommendations as compiled by: www.hoagiesgifted.org, website for the advocacy of gifted individuals and learners.

❖ Build Personal Awareness

- ✧ Learn about the unique cognitive, social and emotional issues of the gifted
- ✧ Attend public forums/panels that focus on the needs of gifted/talented students
- ✧ Get involved in school and/or district decision-making committee
- ✧ Attend conferences sponsored by local, state and national organizations
- ✧ Plan informal gatherings to meet with other parents of gifted children
- ✧ Familiarize yourself with books, newsletters, websites, etc. *See Appendix*

❖ At Home

- ✧ Set an example; model life-long learning
- ✧ Collect examples of your child's work and creativity in a portfolio
- ✧ Encourage and model good communication with your children
- ✧ Create an accepting environment and encourage your child to share his/her feelings, questions, comments
- ✧ Be a good listener
- ✧ Be a facilitator and a guide - share in the adventure of learning new things
- ✧ Allow childhood to be a part of your gifted one's life; do not expect him/her to feel and act like a miniature adult
- ✧ Avoid comparing your child with others or you may lose sight of his/her individuality
- ✧ Make free time a regular pastime - don't over schedule your child
- ✧ Set clear and consistent expectations and consequences; involve your child in the process
- ✧ Help your child believe in himself/herself
- ✧ Emphasize your child's strengths; be positive
- ✧ Supplement your child's learning at home; nurture your child's passions, interests and creativity
- ✧ Model general respect for educators and their important service to society
- ✧ Value risk taking, hard work and the satisfaction of achievement
- ✧ Discuss effective problem solving techniques and strategies to cope with failure
- ✧ Encourage independence by giving your child responsibility
- ✧ Provide opportunities for your child to interact with other gifted children, older children and stimulating adults
- ✧ Encourage self awareness
- ✧ Remember the value of humor
- ✧ Above all, enjoy them

❖ In School

- ✧ Ask your child's teacher for suggestions to encourage and nurture this talent or interest or particular ability. Be a volunteer in the school, apply your talents in these and other areas:

Classrooms	Nurse's office	Tutoring
Art, music	Mentoring	Enrichment activities
Field trips	School Improvement Team	PTO
Gifted program	Fund raisers	

- ✧ Keep written documentation of meetings with school staff (e.g. teachers, specialists, principals)
- ✧ Offer to assist school staff in designing a personal education plan which identifies strengths and weaknesses, personal goals, indicators of academic growth, and means for parental support
- ✧ Agree on a timeline for setting student, parent and teacher goals

Advocacy

❖ Effective Advocacy for Your Child

- ✧ Know the facts; be informed
- ✧ Educate yourself on educational terminology, especially the vocabulary related to gifted education
- ✧ It is helpful to become familiar with state guidelines and accreditation rules as a framework for discussion
- ✧ Be willing to give your time and talents -- not just your criticism
- ✧ Make an appointment and tell the teacher what you wish to discuss. In the hallway right after school is never the best time and place for serious conversation. Make sure the teacher can give you her/his full attention
- ✧ Network with other interested parents, teachers and community members
- ✧ Be willing to listen to other perspectives
- ✧ Bring your sense of humor
- ✧ Be respectful of the professionals
- ✧ Avoid becoming a hovering parent - even gifted children need to develop their own sense of independence and ability to speak for themselves in a tactful manner
- ✧ Take time to say thank you to your child's teachers for their efforts
- ✧ Don't forget to ask your child what s/he thinks or wants. Separate your issues from your child's
- ✧ Be a good listener
- ✧ Focus on your main issue and be willing to collaborate and compromise
- ✧ Establish timelines in your discussions with teachers for both short and long-term goals
- ✧ Follow up meetings with a letter reiterating plans of action and important points so all involved can see what has been agreed upon
- ✧ Plan for a check-up meeting in the future to evaluate progress
- ✧ Discover and follow the "chain of command" at your child's school beginning with the classroom teacher in nearly all cases
- ✧ Focus on student needs, not the "*Gifted*" label
- ✧ Be assertive, not adversarial
- ✧ Join gifted organizations, attend gifted education conferences, and subscribe to gifted education resources

Resources

❖ Organizations

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)

1707 L Street NW, Suite 550, Washington, D.C. 20036; Phone: 202/785-4268. Parent members receive the quarterly newsletter, *Parenting for High Potential*.

www.nagc.org

Arizona Association for Gifted and Talented (AAGT) is an advocate for the diverse population of gifted children in the state of Arizona. www.azagt.org

Hoagies' Gifted Education page is a resource guide for the education of gifted children with links to resources on nearly every aspect of gifted education available on the Internet, plus annotations and first hand information provided by parents.

www.hoagiesgifted.org

The Association for the Gifted (TAG) was organized as a division of The Council for Exceptional Children in 1958 to help both professionals and parents deal more effectively with the gifted child. www.cectag.org

The Gifted Development Center serves parents, schools, and advocacy groups with information about identification, assessment, counseling, learning styles, programs, presentations, and resources for gifted children and adults.

www.gifteddevelopment.com

State Department of Education for the Gifted is a resource guide for parents with the gifted and talented children in the State of Arizona. www.ade.state.az.us/asd/gifted

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities, students with disabilities, and/or the gifted.

www.cec.sped.org/index.html

❖ Books

“*Parenting the Very Young Gifted Child*” by Nancy M. Robinson, Ph.D., University of Washington

“*Gifted Kids Speak Out*” by James R. Delisle. Free Spirit Publishing, 1987. How gifted children think and feel about school, friends, their families, and the future – in their own words.

“*Right-Brained Children in a Left-Brained World: Unlocking the Potential of Your ADD Child*” by Jeffrey Freed and Laure Parsons. New York: Simon and Shuster, 1998. If you feel you must help your kids with learning challenges with their homework, read this book so the time you spend with them can focus on compensation strategies rather than content.

“*Pathways of Learning: Teaching Students and Parents About Multiple Intelligences*” 2nd ed. Tucson, AZ by David Lazear. Zephyr Press, 2000. Explains the theory of multiple intelligences for parents.

“*Work Left Undone: Choices and Compromises of Talented Females*” by Sally Morgan Reis. Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press, 1998.

“*Genius Denied*” by Jan & Bob Davidson with Laura Vanderkam. Simon and Schuster, April 2004.

“*Growing up Gifted: Developing the Talent and Potential of Children at Home and at School*” 5th ed. Paramus, NJ: Charles E. Merrill, 1997. The definitive textbook for parents and teachers; a comprehensive treatment of most aspects of educating and parenting gifted learners.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Education Research and Improvement. *National Excellence: The case of Developing America’s Talent*. Washington, DC: 1993. A conclusive, easy-to-understand report of gifted children’s educational needs. Call (877) 4-ED-PUBS to request a copy, or read it on the Web (www.ed.gov/pubs/DevTalent/toc.html).

❖ Magazines and Journals

Creative Kids

http://www.prufrock.com/client/client_pages/prufrock_jm_createkids.cfm - The nation's largest magazine by and for kids. The magazine includes games, stories, and opinions all by and for kids ages 8-14.

Gifted Child Quarterly

<http://www.nagc.org/default.aspx> - Publishes manuscripts that offer new or creative insights about giftedness and talent development in the context of the school, the home, and the wider society. Also publishes research studies as well as manuscripts that explore policy and policy implications.

Gifted Child Today

http://www.prufrock.com/client/client_pages/prufrock_jm_giftchild.cfm - Offers educators practical and timely information about motivating and educating talented learners.

Gifted Children Monthly

<http://www.gifted-children.com/> - Online newsletter for parents and teachers of gifted and talented children.

Imagine

<http://jhuniverse.jhu.edu/gifted/imagine/> - A periodical for middle and high school students who want to take control of their learning and get the most out of their pre college years.

The Journal for the Education of the Gifted

http://www.prufrock.com/client/client_pages/prufrock_jm_jeg.cfm - The Journal for the Education of the Gifted offers information and research on the educational and psychological needs of gifted and talented children.

Journal of Secondary Gifted Education

http://www.prufrock.com/client/client_pages/prufrock_jm_jsge.cfm - Offers education professionals comprehensive and critical information needed for building an effective educational environment for gifted adolescents. It accomplishes this through a mixture of innovative theory and research.

The Great Potential Press, Inc.

<http://www.giftedbooks.com/catalog.html> - We offer award-winning books for parents, teachers, and educators of gifted, talented, and creative children.

Frequently Asked Questions

Following are some of the most frequently asked questions and answers about the Gifted and Talented Education Program. Services available include an elementary, middle, and high school strand. The elementary strand has two programs: a self-contained (full-time) program available in five schools, and the GATE/PLUS itinerant (part-time) program offered in every elementary school in the district, designed to accommodate students in the TUSD school of attendance. Middle school also has two programs: a self-contained (full-time) program offered at three sites, and a part-time GATE resource program is available at every middle school. Each high school has a GATE block program for English and humanities, which serves students in ninth and tenth grade.

WHAT IS GATE? - GATE provides services designed to meet the special academic needs of gifted students and those who have potential for high achievement. A student who qualifies may be placed in one of the following programs:

1. **Self-contained classes** – students attend full time, five days a week, at a school that accommodates the feeder pattern of the home school.
2. **GATE/PLUS Itinerant services** – a GATE/PLUS teacher is assigned one day or ½ day per week to each elementary school. The primary service is a pullout program of about half an hour to one and a half hours per week. Identified children are pulled out and enriched in small group settings.
3. **Middle School Resource** – students typically participate in one GATE class per day.
4. **High School Block Classes** – two-hour block of English and humanities in ninth and tenth grades.

HOW ARE STUDENTS SELECTED FOR EVALUATION? Students referred by school personnel, parents, self or other knowledgeable source may be evaluated for the GATE program. Parents must sign a Referral and Permission for Evaluation form prior to evaluation.

HOW ARE STUDENTS SELECTED FOR PLACEMENT? Students who meet the state established criteria (97 percentile and above) are eligible for service. All students are rank-ordered for self-contained placement consideration. Students not participating in the self-contained program due to space availability or declining placement may be offered a placement in GATE/PLUS or middle/high school resource at the TUSD school of attendance.

DO ALL STUDENTS WHO QUALIFY PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM? All students who meet the state eligibility criteria will be offered GATE services. Parents must provide permission prior to placement in any elementary or middle school self-contained program.

IF SELECTED, ARE SERVICES PROVIDED FOR THE DURATION OF A STUDENT'S SCHOOL CAREER? Not necessarily. Placement is continued if the services are appropriate to meet the student's educational needs. If not, services may be discontinued by agreement between parents and teacher. All students are re-evaluated for eligibility placement in the middle school self-contained programs irregardless of previous GATE placement/services.

DOES THE DISTRICT PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION TO GATE CLASSES? The District provides transportation to self-contained schools for non-neighborhood students within the established GATE feeder pattern.