

STANDARDS FOR PROGRAMMING AND EVALUATING GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION PROGRAM**Definitions**

GATE: An acronym for Gifted and Talented Education referring both to programs for gifted and talented students and to students participating in the programs.

GATE Cluster program and student: Students who score in the ability range greater than or equal to two standard deviations above the mean differ from their age peers in that they generally show advanced comprehension, a faster pace of learning, and an ability to handle greater complexity and depth in their learning. These students may not be challenged by the regular curriculum or its manner and pace of presentation. They require programs differentiated from the regular school programs in order to realize their learning potential. The Cluster program is intended to serve the varied profiles presented by these students who not only differ from regular students in their learning abilities, but also differ from each other in the unique patterns of characteristics and interests they possess. When Cluster classes are composed of both identified and non-identified students, the composition of the class must be carefully planned in order for the classes to be successful learning environments for all students involved.

The cluster curriculum and instruction, though based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) curriculum, must be differentiated in content, process, and product. Levels of abstraction, complexity, and depth must be greater than those provided by the CCSS. The pace of learning must be altered to accommodate students' needs. Students must master the core curriculum, but the amount of time and the number of repetitions required for learning must be compacted based on teachers' assessment of how the students learn and what they already know. In the Cluster classroom, student interests become a larger part of the curricular emphasis. Instructional processes are adapted to students' abilities to work with abstract ideas, to generalize, and to make complex relationships within and across the disciplines.

The environment of the Cluster classroom must be carefully designed by a teacher who is knowledgeable about gifted students' social-emotional as well as intellectual development. Students' cognitive, affective, physical, and intuitive functioning are to be taken into account. The environment must promote skill development, intellectual growth, and attainment of healthy self-concepts.

GATE Seminar program and student: Children who test three standard deviations above the mean are atypical learners who require programs significantly differentiated from the typical GATE Cluster programs in order to feel comfortable with themselves and their differences and to develop their exceptional potential.

The Seminar program is intended to serve such varied profiles as presented by students who need extraordinarily high-level, advanced, and challenging curricular activities; those with extremely high tested ability but low school achievement; and those who are divergent

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thinkers and have unique learning needs. Because these students represent a heterogeneous group with a wider range of abilities than those represented in the GATE Cluster class populations, the learning program must be designed and adapted to individual differences.

Just as GATE Cluster curriculum and instruction must be differentiated from the regular or core curricular offerings, so must the seminar curriculum and instruction be differentiated from that of the GATE Cluster, Advanced, and Advanced Placement classes in content, process, and product. The content must be differentiated in levels of abstraction, depth, and complexity, focusing to an even higher degree on generalizations and essential questions. A greater percentage of classroom processes and interactions revolve around an interplay and exchange of ideas, with students defending their thinking and looking critically at their own and others' thinking. Students spend more time in pursuit of their own passions and interests with a greater emphasis on independent study and long-term projects.

Learning and exploration are accomplished in an environment purposefully designed by teachers knowledgeable about the psychosocial as well as intellectual development of students who, because of their often-uneven development, may be many ages simultaneously. The environment must be one that matches student needs, creates a safe place to express ideas without stigma, and encounter rigorous instruction and learning opportunities. At the same time, students must acquire the necessary skills and knowledge in a manner and at a pace that supports their inquiry and investigation. The appropriate manner and pace may be quite different for each individual.

The Seminar provides a learning program that incorporates both core subjects and advanced, enriched learning opportunities reflecting the interests and creativity of the students. By doing so, the program aims to encourage intellectual development as well as growth of self-identity, exciting students to extend their learning beyond the classroom through extracurricular, enrichment, and community service activities.

“*At Risk*” Cluster and Seminar students: Underachieving/underproducing, double-labeled (GATE and special education), nonconforming thinkers, English Language learners, and profoundly gifted students should receive counseling and support services. “*At Risk*” students are not to be dropped from a GATE program without an intervention plan and a parent conference. A student is never decertified as a GATE student and may enter or reenter at any time during the student's academic career. Seminar students may re-apply for available space in Seminar programs throughout the district.

Implementation

Cluster and Seminar programs must meet the following criteria:

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1. GATE certification for all elementary Cluster teachers, all middle/junior high school teachers teaching more than one GATE class, and all high school teachers teaching more than two GATE classes. Those who teach any GATE class must attend at least one GATE teacher in-service or conference per year and provide documentation thereof when the school's GATE plan is submitted to the GATE office. A Cluster teacher may teach on a waiver (requested by the principal and granted by the GATE Program Manager) for not more than one year. All Seminar teachers must be GATE certified and have three or more years of successful GATE Cluster experience.
2. Qualitatively different curriculum and instruction (references for definition of differentiation: Differentiating the CCSS Curriculum and Instruction to Provide Advanced Learning Opportunities, California Department of Education and the California Association for the Gifted, Sacramento, CA, 1994; Meeting the Challenge: A Guidebook for Teaching Gifted Students, California Association for the Gifted, 1996).
3. The six elements required by Education Code Section 52200(c) are as follows:
 - a. Differentiated opportunities for learning commensurate with the gifted and talented student's particular abilities and talents.
 - b. Alternative learning environments in which gifted and talented students can acquire skills and understanding at advanced ideological and creative levels commensurate with their potentials.
 - c. Elements that help gifted and talented students develop sensitivity and responsibility to others.
 - d. Elements that help to develop a commitment in gifted and talented students to constructive ethical standards.
 - e. Elements that assist gifted and talented students to develop self-generating problem-solving abilities to expand each student's awareness of choices for satisfying contributions in his/her environment.
 - f. Elements that help gifted and talented students develop realistic, healthy self-concepts.
4. Summary of recommended standards for programs for gifted and talented students (Education Code 52200-52212; 5 CCR 3822):

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- a. Program design. The district is to provide 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 (Education Code Sections 52205(d) and 52206(a)).
- b. Identification. The district's identification procedures shall be equitable, comprehensive, and ongoing; they must reflect the district's definition of giftedness and its relationship to current state criteria (Education Code 52202; 5 CCR 3822).
- c. Instruction and curriculum. The district is to 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 the recognized literature in the field (Education Code 52206(a) and (b)).
- d. Social and emotional development. The district is to establish and implement plans to support the social and emotional development of gifted learners to increase responsibility, self-awareness, and other issues of effective development (Education Code 52212(a)(1)).
- e. Professional development. The district is to provide professional development opportunities related to gifted education to administrators, teachers, and staff to support and improve educational opportunities for gifted students (Education Code 52212(a)(1)).
- f. Parent and community involvement. The district is to provide procedures to assure consistent participation of parents/guardians and community members in the planning and evaluation of programs for gifted students (Education Code 52205(f)).
- g. Program assessment. The district is to establish formal and informal evaluation methods and instruments that assess the gifted program and performance of gifted students (which meet or exceed state content standards). Results of all data collected, including state-standardized tests are used to study the value and impact of the services provided and to improve programs and gifted student performance. (Education Code 52212(a)(1))
- h. Budgets. The district is budgeted for gifted programs to support and provide for all the components for the district's GATE program and meet the related standards (Education Code Sections 52209, 52212(a)(1), (2), and (3)).

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5. Policy. The GATE program will establish and implement plans to support the social and emotional development of gifted learners.

Cluster Model

The Cluster model provides that 25 percent or more of the students in a class are identified as GATE Cluster with remaining openings reflecting the diversity of the school and, where appropriate, including students in the AVID program.

All district-identified Seminar students may participate within the Seminar program within their resident cluster. Residency within the high school cluster attendance boundaries is a top priority for acceptance into a Seminar program. For purposes of this policy only, residence includes students who enrolled through the CHOICE option and nonresident, Seminar-eligible students enrolled in a Seminar program in that area.

District criteria to be considered for student acceptance in all seminar programs include:

1. District Seminar identification.
2. Residency within the high school feeder pattern and within an adjacent high school feeder pattern that has no Seminar program, including continuing, articulating, Seminar nonresident students.
3. Parent/guardian and teacher information.
4. Student needs and characteristics.
5. Gender and ethnic balance.

Individual schools may add site-specific considerations, but the above criteria are being used first, districtwide.

Because of space and budget limitations, there may not be a Seminar placement available for every qualified student within their resident high school cluster.

Parent/guardian of GATE Cluster identified students participating in a GATE Seminar program must be clearly informed of these conditions, in writing, prior to placement of Cluster-identified students in Seminar.

The first Friday after the start of the school year, Seminar programs not filled by district-identified Seminar students may place resident cluster students in the remaining openings using

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the same criteria as above, with the substitution of district Cluster identification for district Seminar identification in the wording of the program acceptance letter. The letter must include the following statement: “All site placements of Cluster-identified students are for one year at a time and apply only to the site where the placement is made.”

Regulation
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SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
San Diego, California