

Draft
Davis Joint Unified School District
Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Master Plan
 June 2008

SECTION 1: Program Design	
GOAL: Davis Joint Unified School District provides a comprehensive continuum of services and program options responsive to the needs, interests, and abilities of gifted students and is based on philosophical, theoretical, and empirical support. (EC 52205d and 52206a).	
STANDARD 1.1 The plan for the district program has a written statement of philosophy, goals, and standards appropriate to the needs and abilities of gifted learners.	RATIONALE: The process of writing a statement of philosophy requires all contributing members to develop a consensus of beliefs and purpose. The stated goals and objectives provide the justification for decision-making and serve as standards by which the program can be measured.
Mission Statement It is the mission of the Davis Joint Unified School District's Gifted and Talented Education Program, in partnership with parents, community and post-secondary institutions, to provide a quality educational program for gifted and talented students in order to develop their knowledge, skills, abilities, and values. The district's GATE program serves three categories of gifted students: 1) <i>intellectually gifted</i> —students with high potential in the areas of abstract thinking and reasoning ability as applied to school learning situations; 2) <i>high achieving</i> —the student who scores two or more levels above grade level in two or more academic areas and/or maintains a 3.6 grade point average in college preparatory academic classes for a period of two consecutive years; 3) <i>high achieving in a specific academic area</i> —the student who scores two or more levels above grade level or who maintains a 3.6 grade point average in a single academic area for a period of two or more years.	
ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District support and approval processes will be integrated to assist with alignment and support of the GATE Master Plan and district operations. 2. The trained teachers in the self-contained GATE classes will articulate their programs and coordinate with grade-alike teachers among sites as well as across grade levels; this will develop continuity of program in grades 4-9. 3. Periodic progress reports will be provided to the GATE Advisory Committee. 4. An annual end-of-the-year report will be provided to the Board of Education and/or the Superintendent regarding the progress in achieving and/or maintaining the goals of the GATE Master Plan. 	

STANDARD 1.1a The plan includes an intellectual component with objectives that meet or exceed state academic standards.	RATIONALE: Gifted students are often capable of work beyond the academic content standards for their grade level. To ensure their continuous progress and intellectual growth, the academic objectives must include the grade level standards and allow for advanced and more complex differentiated study.
ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During GATE teacher articulation sessions, the California State Standards are evaluated and modified for appropriate depth and complexity, and—when necessary—acceleration to meet the needs of gifted students. 2. The California State Standards are discussed at GATE teacher articulation meetings and where appropriate, modifications to the standards are developed and implementation is discussed. 3. See Section 3, Curriculum and Instruction, for specific program structure and curriculum modifications. 4. District Standards' Based Report Cards will include an addendum to reflect modifications made for students in self-contained GATE classes. 	

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STANDARD 1.1b The plan incorporates expert knowledge, is approved by the local Board of Education, and is easily accessible to parents and the community.

RATIONALE: Incorporating current research into the district plan ensures that best practices for gifted students will be used. A plan-writing committee--comprised of parents, teachers, support personnel, and administrators uses this information to write the district plan. Each draft is posted on the district website, sent to each school site council and/or PTA for input, and reviewed at a public forum. The Board of Education also reviews the preliminary plan and offers input. Once the plan is evaluated by district administration, a finalized version is submitted to the Board of Education for approval, which gives authority to the plan and provides a foundation for continuing support by the district. Having the parents/guardians and the community well-informed about the GATE program in the district facilitates their cooperation and involvement and makes more resources and support available.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Collected materials are available in the GATE library at the District Office to provide research resources for all educators and parents, including Gifted Child Today, Roeper Review, and California Association for the Gifted (CAG) publications, educational materials, etc.
2. District personnel attend conferences related to gifted education—including differentiation in the regular classroom—and provide professional development and workshops on current research in gifted education to colleagues and parents.
3. Workshops conducted by the GATE Coordinator and/or the GATE teaching staff provides information to parents/guardians about the special needs of gifted learners.
4. Information is disseminated in a variety of ways: school newsletters, *The Davis Enterprise*, site level staff meetings, district principals' meetings, letters and e-mails.
5. Periodic reports to Board of Education occur. The approval of the GATE Master Plan follows a timeline. District administrators and board members receive timely information regarding the GATE program including the GATE Advisory Committee meetings and are invited to visit GATE classrooms.
6. GATE information nights for parents/guardians are held on a regular basis.

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STANDARD 1.1c Participation in the program is not limited by other problems of logistics.

RATIONALE: A program, to be fair, must ensure that eligible students are able to participate. All sites must provide access to services for GATE to eligible students.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

Testing and qualification for the GATE Program is covered in Section 2. That section discusses qualifying scores for students identified as *intellectually gifted* (evaluated for their achievement in relation to the talents they bring to school learning situations, as described in The Fourteenth Mental Measurement Yearbook, 2001), *high achieving*, or *specific academic ability*. (See appendix for specific student placement procedures, referral forms, etc.).

Once a child is identified, several service options are available to parents:

1. Elementary students:

- a. Identified *intellectually gifted* students, those whose achievement in relation to the talents they bring to school learning situations has been evaluated, may apply for a place in the self-contained GATE classes or they may remain in the regular classroom and **receive differentiation via cluster grouping, flexible grouping, and/or individualized plans.**
- b. Students qualified gifted as *high achieving* or *specific academic ability* receive a differentiated curriculum via cluster grouping, flexible grouping, and/or individualized plans.

2. Junior high school students:

- a. Identified *intellectually gifted* students may select to enroll in the self-contained GATE Core classes at Holmes Junior High or Harper Junior High or the Honors/GATE Core at Emerson Junior High.
 1. Self-contained GATE core classes include:
 - a. GATE English, Social Studies, and Science 7
 - b. GATE English, Social Studies, and Science 8
 - c. GATE English and World Geography/I Search 9
 2. ~~Accelerated High Achieving~~ core classes – open to intellectually gifted, high achieving, and specific academic ability students who meet the criteria include:
 - a. ~~7th grade Literature Around the World~~ **Adv Comm wishes to register complaint that changes were not discussed openly even though they impact GATE MP**
 - b. 8th grade American Studies
 - c. 9th grade English 9 Classics Approach or English 9 Humanities
 3. Accelerated math, foreign language, and music are available at all sites.
- b. Identified *high achieving* or *specific academic ability* students have equal access to the high achieving classes, such as ~~Literature Around the World~~ (see complaint), American Studies, and English 9 Classics Approach or English 9 Humanities.
- c. GATE students demonstrating leadership characteristics may enroll in a leadership class available at all junior high school sites.
- d. Acceleration in mathematics or foreign language may result in students being concurrently enrolled at the high school or, occasionally, in college.

3. Senior high school students:

- a. Identified *intellectually gifted* students may select the self-contained GATE English 10 class and/or English 10 Honors ~~and/or~~ ~~and~~ Advanced Placement and/or Honors classes available in mathematics, science, English, social studies, music, foreign language, and art. A student may be concurrently enrolled in post-secondary programs such as the *Accelerated College Entrance Program* at California State University, Sacramento, local community colleges or University of California, Davis, as appropriate.
- b. Identified *high achieving* or *specific academic ability* students may enroll in honors classes, Advanced Placement classes, Accelerated College Entrance Program at CSUS, or local community colleges, or UC Davis, if they meet qualification requirements.
- c. GATE students wanting to develop leadership can be served with student government and peer helpers/health advocates.

ADDITIONAL ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. The implementation of universal testing during the 2002-2003 school year has better identified students from underserved groups **as demonstrated in district-wide evaluation as well as the Javits Grant.**
2. Universal third grade GATE testing and makeup testing is administered within the school day by the GATE Coordinator, school psychologist, administrator, and/or teacher as necessary.
3. In an on-going attempt to reflect the demographic makeup of the Davis Joint Unified School District, special "Search and Serve" efforts are directed within the GATE Office using student records, test scores, etc., to locate at risk students and students new to the district to be screened for placement in the GATE Program.

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Students demonstrating evidence of giftedness are not excluded from testing or placement in the program based on the need for services in other programs such as Title I, English Language Learners, or Special Education.

4. Given the known achievement gap of underrepresented students in the nation, in California, and in Davis, support personnel will implement sound methods to increase students' success in their program of choice.
5. GATE forms are translated into Spanish and other languages where appropriate and feasible. If demand is large enough, translation into other languages may occur.

STANDARD 1.1d A district GATE Advisory Committee representing all sites meets regularly to assist in program planning and assessment.

RATIONALE: A separate committee that can devote concentrated time to the issues and problems of the GATE program and its students are able to pool ideas and expertise to strengthen the program, provide sources for materials and collectively find solutions to any problems that surface. Including parents/guardians and community members gives a broader perspective and additional support to decisions and necessary actions.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. The district's GATE Advisory Committee meets monthly from September to May, except in December or if there is no business to address in a given month. Each school site is expected to send **one parent/guardian representative and one teacher representative as voting members** of GATE Advisory. Representative administrators and support services often attend. All parents/guardians and teachers are welcome to attend meetings.
2. The GATE Advisory Committee sometimes forms a subcommittee to investigate specific topics such as identification, placement of GATE students, program writing and differentiation in the regular classroom.

STANDARD 1.2 The program provides administrative groupings and structures appropriate for gifted education and available to all gifted learners.

RATIONALE: Services to gifted students can be provided in a variety of settings, but some are more effective than others. The most effective provide differentiation, flexible grouping, continuous progress, intellectual peer interaction, and continuity.

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ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

The GATE Program is designed with a variety of options:

1. Self-contained classes for *intellectually gifted* students in grades 4-10
2. Cluster grouping should occur in regular classrooms for students who are *intellectually gifted*, *high achieving* or have *specific academic ability*. It is a goal of the district to provide differentiated instruction, including cluster grouping and flexible grouping, as needed, for GATE identified students in each elementary school.
3. Flexible grouping in general education classrooms for students who are intellectually gifted, high achieving or have specific academic ability
4. **Split-site enrollment between school of attendance and Davis School for Independent Study (DSIS) will be used to meet needs of GATE students who have specific academic ability and whose needs cannot be met at the school of residence.**
5. High-achieving/Honors/Advanced Placement classes at the three junior highs and the high school have differentiated assignments for *intellectually gifted*, *high achieving*, and *specific academic ability* students developed by classroom teachers.
6. Mentors may be provided when applicable.
7. Concurrent enrollment may occur in accelerated classes among elementary/junior high, junior high/high school, and high school/college.
8. Early college entrance is an option for some highly gifted students
9. Continue support and training of K-3 teachers to differentiate instruction for *high achieving* and *specific academic ability* primary students and to utilize cluster and flexible grouping and cross-age mentoring.
- ~~10. Continue support and training of 4-6 teachers in differentiating curriculum.~~
- ~~11. Continue district wide differentiation training including options for systematic, thorough and in-depth professional development to increase teacher knowledge and expertise. Examples: East Coast training used by Lafayette School District and the "Differentiation Certificate Program" offered through the University of California, Davis.~~
12. Continue professional development on characteristics and needs of gifted students and techniques for differentiating curriculum.

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Elementary School Program

1. K-3 students who demonstrate *high achievement* or *specific academic ability* should be provided a differentiated curriculum with depth and complexity and opportunities to work together by cluster grouping or flexible grouping for academic content areas.
2. In grades 4-6, *intellectually gifted* students may attend GATE self-contained classes at one of ~~three~~ **four** magnet campuses; the number of classes offered is based on demand and available facilities. Demand-driven refers to the district's policy **to provide the opportunity to add** additional self-contained GATE classes in grades 4-6 when the following conditions are met:
 - a. By March 1, at least 29 students are on the waiting list for a **single** grade level.
 - b. The families of at least 29 students are willing to accept GATE placement at an agreed upon site.
 - c. A classroom must be available at one of the existing GATE sites.
 - d. A qualified teacher must be assigned to this class without additional District funding.
3. *Intellectually gifted*¹ students in grades 4-6 who opt to remain in their neighborhood schools and students identified as *high achieving* and *specific academic ability* should be provided a differentiated curriculum that includes depth and complexity; these students, if the opportunity is available, are well-served through cluster or flexible grouping for at least part of the day. Teachers may also provide an individualized plan to meet specific needs.

Junior High Program

1. *Intellectually gifted* students at Holmes Jr. High and Harper Jr. High are served in GATE self-contained core classes **in grades 7-9** that include English, social studies, and science. Students are placed by readiness in mathematics. Some other accelerated classes such as foreign language and music are available as well as concurrent enrollment at the high school.
2. At Holmes and at Harper, students who are *high achieving* or have *specific academic ability* enroll in Board approved high achieving classes such as ~~Literature Around the World~~ **(Adv Comm requests class be reinstated in 7th)**, American Studies, or English 9 Classics Approach or English 9 Humanities. *Intellectually gifted* students who do not enroll in the self-contained GATE classes may enroll in the high achievement classes if they meet the criteria for high achieving. **[Members requested we reinstate that identified intellectually gifted students may attend the Honors/GATE classes at Emerson Junior High.]?**
3. Emerson Junior High places *intellectually gifted* and *high achieving* students who meet the performance requirements in Honors/GATE Classes—as described above—which include Literature Around the World, American Studies, or English 9 Classics Approach or English 9 Humanities. The junior high GATE self-contained programs at Holmes and at Harper as well as the Honors/GATE Core at Emerson will remain demand-driven. Enrollment follows these guidelines:
 - a. Any *intellectually gifted* student in the District may enroll in the Honors/GATE cores at Emerson.
 - b. Students in the Pioneer and Korematsu self-contained programs may move with their classes to Harper Jr. High—regardless of residence address; students in North Davis and Willett self-contained programs may move with their classes to Holmes Jr.—regardless of residence address.
4. Students enrolling in GATE Cores from the regular program apply to Harper or Holmes according to their residence address; students in self-contained GATE classes may apply to their junior high according to their residence address rather than move with their self-contained 6th grade class.
5. Demand-driven classes refers to the District policy providing the opportunity to add additional self-contained GATE core classes in grades 7-9 when the following conditions are met:
 - a. By March 1, at least 30 students are on the waiting list for a single grade level.
 - b. Vacant classrooms needed for an additional core are available on the junior high campus.
 - c. No additional cost would be incurred to fill the teaching position.
 - d. To fulfill Title 5, Laws and Regulations, Section 3840.3, classes will be “taught by a teacher who has specific preparation, experience, personal attributes, and competencies in the teaching of gifted students.” (See Section 5 for criteria)

¹ As defined in The Fourteenth Mental Measurements Yearbook, 2001: The OLSAT-7 is designed to measure abstract thinking and reasoning ability. The term “mental ability” has been changed from previous versions to “school ability” to reflect the purpose for which the current test is intended to serve: “To assess examinees’ ability to cope with school learning tasks, to suggest their possible placement for school learning functions, and to evaluate their achievement in relation to the talents they bring to school learning situations. The use of “school ability” is also intended to discourage overgeneralization of the nature of the ability being measured (e.g., general intelligence).

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High School Program

1. In grade 10, *intellectually gifted* students, those evaluated for their potential achievement in relation to school learning situations, may enroll in GATE English 10 or in English 10 Honors; *intellectually gifted students may be excused from prerequisite requirements.*
2. *High achieving* and *specific academic ability* students in grade 10 may enroll in English 10 Honors or English 10P—a college preparatory class.
3. An 11th grade Honors American Literature and 12th grade AP Literature and Composition are available to GATE identified students.
4. All qualified students—including gifted students—may enroll in Honors and Advanced Placement classes offered in many disciplines including mathematics, English, foreign languages, art, music, social science, and science.
5. Concurrent college enrollment, in accordance with Title 5, Section 3860.f and g, is an option for those identified gifted students who qualify.

STANDARD 1.3 The GATE program is articulated with the general education programs, is comprehensive, structured and sequenced between and across grade levels.

RATIONALE: The district has the responsibility to educate all students and to facilitate their mastery of the state content standards at the highest level of their ability. The GATE program provides appropriate educational experiences that provide for continuous intellectual and academic growth. The configuration of the self-contained program facilitates GATE teacher collaboration.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Students needing above-grade level math may be served in the regular classroom or move one or more grade levels ahead which may result in concurrent enrollment at a different site.
2. Students may be concurrently enrolled at two sites to provide for academic needs; this may be elementary/junior high, junior high/senior high, or senior high/college. Some very exceptional children are enrolled in junior high/college.
3. When any two sites cannot meet a student's need, split site enrollment through Davis School for Independent Study is sought.

STANDARD 1.3a The program provides continuity within the gifted program and with the general education program.

RATIONALE: Gifted students may be advanced beyond the level of the curriculum for their age group. Providing continuity of learning experiences within the gifted program and with the general education program from grade-to-grade from elementary through high school ensures appropriate learning experiences and educational progress for gifted students and prevents using their time to relearn previously mastered concepts and skills.

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ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Continue regular meetings for teacher collaboration across sites.
2. Articulation meetings with teachers of GATE students both in self-contained classes and in the regular classroom allow discussion of appropriate materials and continuity of student experiences within and across grade levels.
3. Grade-level and subject articulation meetings at the school sites on a regular basis address grade-level standards and differentiation for gifted students in both the self-contained and the regular classrooms.
4. District curriculum committees comprised of both self-contained and regular classroom teachers address appropriate materials for gifted students during textbook adoption cycles.
5. Forms and meetings, which pass on relevant information regarding a student's skills and experiences, are used between grade levels so that teachers can better ensure appropriate progress through content and skills.
6. Students identified as *intellectually gifted* who wish to attend a self-contained GATE class are served at Korematsu, North Davis, Pioneer, and Willett. Magnet sites facilitate GATE teacher collaboration.
7. Strengthen GATE teacher collaboration time at magnet sites to provide continuity and awareness between and among teachers.
8. Provide for differentiation of instruction to be developed and expanded each year at each site, if possible; expansion of the self-contained program can occur only at sites currently hosting that program option.
9. Should continuing decline in enrollment result in reducing the number of self-contained GATE classes, the recommendation about which site to close will be made by a subgroup of the GATE Advisory Committee lead by the GATE Coordinator and approved for implementation by the Superintendent and the Board of Education.

STANDARD 1.3b A coordinator is designated and responsible for advising and coordinating all aspects of the program. The program also provides support services including counselors and consultants.

RATIONALE: Research has found that a coordinator must be designated to ensure that the district GATE program plan is implemented and that the agreed upon services are delivered. Research further shows that in districts in which the total time of at least one person is devoted to gifted education, far more students are adequately served. Gifted students have more than just atypical academic needs. Intensity, perfectionism, and feelings of difference need to be explored with professional counselors.

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ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. The GATE Coordinator plans the overall structure of the district's gifted program in consultation with the GATE Advisory Committee and site administrators, and implemented actions shall be conducted and assessed as to effectiveness.
2. The GATE Coordinator assesses all referred students and establishes profiles of identified students. GATE maintains a database of all identified gifted students.
3. The GATE Coordinator completes all administrative paperwork inherent in the program, such as evaluating data, sending information to parents, and completing funding proposals under the supervision of the Superintendent.
4. The GATE Coordinator, in compliance with Title 5, Section 3831.7, conducts teacher inservice in gifted education for all staff members. This will occur during a two-day inservice in August and a minimum of quarterly for the remainder of the school year. Upon request, the coordinator also provides support and resources for teachers with gifted students in ~~their classrooms~~ **the regular program**. Attendance at these trainings is expected of GATE teachers.
5. The GATE Coordinator arranges articulation meetings of GATE teachers at least 4 times a year.
6. The GATE Coordinator, in compliance with Title 5, Section 3831.8, conducts parent meetings in gifted education to disseminate information about the district program and to address issues of concern to parents of gifted students. The coordinator also encourages parents' active participation in the district program and communicates with parents by phone and e-mail.
7. The GATE Coordinator serves on district committees with general education responsibilities to provide support for gifted learners.
8. The GATE Coordinator attends and/or participates in IEP, 504 Plan, and child study team meetings for identified **twice-labeled**, gifted students **being served** in the district self-contained GATE classes.
9. The GATE Coordinator facilitates meetings between GATE teachers and general education program teachers to plan appropriate instruction for gifted students in the regular classroom and to develop plans for offering differentiated instruction for gifted students in the regular classroom at each site. The coordinator also teaches demonstration lessons, as needed to support GATE teachers involved in differentiating instruction.

STANDARD 1.3c The program involves the home and community.

RATIONALE: Parents/guardians and other community members have important information about their children that will affect educational decisions. The program can benefit from the resources found within the home and community and derives strength from their continuing support.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Parents/guardians are invited to join the GATE Advisory Committee.
2. GATE orientation meetings communicate the district's GATE options for parent/guardian participation.
3. The GATE Coordinator provides information to parents/guardians directly through conferences, meetings, and phone/email contact. The coordinator also arranges visitations of GATE classrooms or meetings with GATE teachers for parents/guardians to discuss options for their gifted child.
4. The GATE Office will develop methods to effectively support students from underrepresented groups and their parents so that fully informed choices are made regarding available GATE options, so that these students successfully participate in the selected GATE program options if one is selected by the parent/guardian. When necessary, the GATE Coordinator will seek assistance from the EL Coordinator for assistance with meetings, testing, and/or mailings to meet the needs of non-English speaking families.
5. The GATE Office will seek assistance from Special Education when necessary.
6. The GATE Office maintains a library, open to parents/guardians, with research and strategies related to gifted and talented education, including meeting the social and emotional needs of gifted students.

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SECTION 2: Identification

GOAL: DJUSD's identification procedures are equitable, comprehensive, and ongoing to reflect the district's definition of giftedness and that relationship to current state criteria. (EC 52202: Title 5 Regulations, Section 3822) It is the goal of the DJUSD to locate students and to provide educational experiences for students whose abilities range from higher-than-normal to "highly gifted." [EC52202] The student population of the GATE Program should proportionately represent the student population of the District with regard to gender, race, and ethnicity, and current efforts are focusing on increasing the numbers of students from underrepresented groups.

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

RATIONALE: In order to ensure equal access to GATE services, the nomination and referral process must be an ongoing, integral part of the program; students at all grade levels must be eligible for consideration for the gifted program.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Student nomination forms are accepted at any time in the GATE Office.
2. District *Search and Serve Process* for screening students in grades 3,4,6,7 and 9 includes universal screening of 3rd graders, and for 4th, 6th, 7th, and 9th graders outreach to parents, community, teachers, administrators, and support personnel via staff inservice, information packets to teachers, articles in school newsletters and *The Davis Enterprise*, and parent meetings.

STANDARD M2.1a All children are eligible for the nomination process regardless of socioeconomic, linguistic or cultural background, and/or disabilities.

RATIONALE: Gifted students exist among all of the diverse populations in a district. Gifted students, including those representing populations that are often underrepresented in GATE programs, frequently are not recognized by traditional referral processes.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. DJUSD provides an equal opportunity for all students to be considered for the GATE program.
2. An active search is conducted by the GATE Coordinator, involving teachers, counselors, psychologists, principals, parents, and students. Search is a critical step in the identification of gifted students because it is the only way many of the underrepresented students will be nominated as prospective GATE participants. The importance of the sites in the search process cannot be stressed enough—*especially in grades 4, 6, 7, and 9*. Clearly, if students are not nominated, they may never have an opportunity to receive educational services commensurate with their abilities. Even though parents/guardians are able to refer children, many students need an opportunity for others to help identify those who should be nominated.
3. The search focuses on students who are believed to possess extraordinary potential or performance in one or more of these categories:
 - Intellectual Ability
 - Achievement Ability: High Achievement (in two or more academic content areas)
 - Achievement Ability: Specific Academic Ability (in a single academic content area)
4. The GATE Identification Committee will determine whether a student who is recommended by his/her parent or teacher for re-screening shall be rescreened, and if so, using which method. The Committee shall usually be composed of the following staff: GATE Coordinator, psychologist, administrator, and two GATE teachers.
5. The Identification Committee reviews information gathered from the classroom teacher, support personnel, and parent/guardian as well as samples of student work completed under the supervision of the classroom teacher.

STANDARD M2.1b The district establishes and implements both traditional and nontraditional instruments and procedures for searching for gifted students. All data are used to ensure equal access to program services.

RATIONALE: Equity can only be ensured when a variety of methods are used to seek out potentially gifted students.

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ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

To be identified *intellectually gifted*, a student must attain a qualifying score (described below) on a test of abstract thinking and mental reasoning using traditional and non-traditional methods. The district is currently using the OLSAT-7 and considering other options for universal testing at third grade. The OLSAT-7 assesses “examinees ability to cope with school learning tasks, to suggest their possible placement for school learning functions, and to evaluate their achievement in relation to the talents they bring to school learning situations.”² To solve mental reasoning test problems, a student must use both sides of the brain; he or she determines the correct answer by applying his or her area of strength whether it is verbal or nonverbal clues. An additional category of “highly gifted pupil” was added to state law in January of 2001 and is defined as a student “who has achieved a measured intelligence quotient of 150 or more points on an assessment of intelligence administered by qualified personnel or [who] has demonstrated extraordinary aptitude and achievement.” [EC52202]

1. GATE IDENTIFICATION: SEARCH & SERVE PROCESS (To be completed by February 28th)

A. Before the Universal Testing Occurs:

- Parent information letter is sent to all 3rd grade parents/guardians
- IEP accommodation information is gathered and processed prior to administering the universal testing
- Necessary modifications are arranged for student testing
- Selection of assessment tool and GATE Identification team

2. Universal Testing of Grade 3:

- ~~Assessment Team is~~ Classroom teachers are trained and administer OLSAT –7 to 3rd grade students at each site under standardized testing conditions ~~with classroom teacher~~ during the final two weeks of September according to procedures defined in the GATE Master Plan

SEARCH

3. Criteria for Immediate Qualification

- Measure 1 – Observational data or anecdotal records, i.e. cumulative folders, teacher comments, checklist information, and pertinent testing records, and
- Measure 2 – Parent and/or Teacher Nomination Form, and
- Measure 3 –minimum OLSAT-7 results: T=96% **and** Verbal=96% **or** Non-Verbal=96%

4. Criteria for triggering Search and Serve Process for Student Rescreening

- Students not qualifying immediately in Step 3, are reviewed based on:
 - OLSAT-7 score on Total and one Subtest score are within the standard error of measurement (SEM + or –5), **or**
 - risk factors as identified in the Master Plan (socioeconomic status, language, health, designated special education, etc.), **or**
 - discrepancy in norm referenced test on reading/language arts and/or math scores (if available at 80%ile) or CST at advanced level or if student is bilingual or has risk factors—math CST advanced and language CST proficient, **or**
 - sample work products’ assessment, **or**
 - parent/teacher indicators of gifted characteristics as identified on the Nomination Forms **or**
 - a student in a sub-group that suggests s/he might have a lower than accurate OLSAT test score because of the student’s cultural background (examples: lower socioeconomic level, lower parent education level, language other than English).

5. Rescreening Qualifying Process and Criteria

- WISC-IV Verbal is administered to students who appear highly verbal and who meet criteria in Step 4, or
- TONI-3 is administered to those students who appear nonverbally/spatially advanced, who have limited English, who benefit from more structured test environment without time constraints, and who meet the criteria in Step 4, or
- Structure of Intellect (SOI) or Slossen may be administered as an alternative for those students who have taken the above named tests within a 12 month period and who meet the criteria in Step 4, and
- Administration of re-screening methods will be available in the student’s primary language if the primary language is English or Spanish; it may be available in other languages whenever appropriate for the student and feasible for the district.

6. Program Placement

- Options: 4 self-contained GATE classrooms, currently limited to 116-124 positions (as determined by district requirements), will be filled at the 4th grade level; at 5th through 9th grades, vacancies

² The Fourteenth Mental Measurement Yearbook, 2001, pages 875-876.

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- will be filled from a rank order wait list.
- Parents/guardians of GATE identified students shall submit an Intent Form to request placement in self-contained GATE classes in 4th grade and each year thereafter to continue in their current program.
 - Students whose parents/guardians request placement in self-contained GATE classes are rank ordered by the student's total score first, followed by the higher subtest score, when available, on the qualifying test of school ability (*OLSAT-7, WISC IV, TONI-3*, etc.) Students qualifying on the basis of a single test score (*TONI-3, Raven*, etc.) will be placed below students qualifying with the Total and one Subtest Score.
 - Students are placed into self-contained classes from the rank-ordered list according to the student's geographical proximity until a site is full; a student in the rank-ordered pool of 116-124 whose closer site is full will be offered a seat at another site; if the family does not accept the second site, he/she will remain in the neighborhood school and be placed on a waiting list. First priority for a site vacancy is given to a student attending a GATE class further away from his/her home address who wishes to return to the closer program.
 - Placement notification is made by the end of the 3rd quarter and parents/guardians must commit in writing to the placement by the specified due date or the vacancy goes to the next person on the waiting list
 - Individualized counseling will be offered to parents/guardians of students from a different cultural background to ensure the parent/guardian makes an informed decision about their student's placement.
7. Students in grades 4 and 6 can be tested at selected elementary sites between Thanksgiving vacation and Winter break. Tests are administered on Wednesday afternoons and are scored by the GATE Coordinator; results are mailed to principals, teachers, and parents/guardians by mid-January.
 8. Students in grades 7 and 9 can be tested before school on scheduled Wednesdays at the junior high between Thanksgiving vacation and Winter break. The GATE Coordinator scores the tests and mails the results to secondary counselors and parents/guardians by mid-January.
 9. Only after all rescreening processes and appeals process review have been completed by district office staff and shared with administrators will confidential GATE identification results be sent to all parents at the same time.
 10. Teacher and/or parent/guardian referrals are reviewed by the GATE Identification Committee and the referrals are either denied or sent to the GATE Coordinator and/or a district psychologist for testing.
 11. Once the testing process is completed, parents/guardians and students are asked to decide what kind of program delivery system they want for the next school year. Those choosing self-contained GATE classes are rank-ordered, using first the total score, followed by the higher subtest score, when available, and placed according to the Placement Procedure (described below). Information for those remaining in their neighborhood schools is forwarded to the sites to support instructional differentiation by classroom teachers.

Draft

Qualifying Scores for “Intellectual Ability” –

Achievement in relation to the talents students bring to school learning situations

- A. An intellectually gifted student with **no** risk factors:
 - Test data indicating that on a test of school ability mental reasoning, the student has attained a minimum Total score of 96% and a minimum score of 96% on either the Verbal or the Nonverbal subtest score.
- B. An intellectually gifted student with **one** risk factor:
 - Test data indicating that on a test of school ability, the student has attained a minimum Total score of 95%.
 - Verification of risk factor that is present.
- C. An intellectually gifted student with **two or more risk factors***:
 - Test data indicating that on a test of school ability, the student has attained a minimum total score of 94%.
 - Verification of risk factors that are present.

Qualifying Scores for “Intellectual Ability”

CATEGORY	Test of School Ability		
	TOTAL SCORE	VERBAL SCORE	NONVERBAL SCORE
An Intellectually Gifted Student with <u>NO</u> Risk Factors	At Least 96% AND	At Least 96% OR	At Least 96%
An Intellectually Gifted Student with One RISK FACTOR	At Least 95%		
An Intellectually Gifted Student with Two or more RISK FACTORS	At Least 94%		

*RISK FACTORS:

The following five risk factors may impact a student’s potential or performance on tests of school ability and/or achievement. The presence of these variables will be documented by a review of school records or a statement from the administrator, teacher, or parent. Appropriate consideration is given to students who are impacted by these factors:

1. Economic: parent unemployed; low /single parent income; participation in free-reduced lunch programs
2. Environmental: lack of preschool/kindergarten experience; poor attendance due to conflict with home responsibilities; and/or transiency and study time; unsettled family life
3. Health: designated instructional services via RSP such as learning disabilities, etc., severe allergies, asthma, health problems, on-going medication, etc.
4. Language/Cultural: primary language of parent and/or student is other than English; lack of proficiency or verbal fluency in English; limited home/school communication; cultural values and beliefs in conflict with those of dominant culture; parent from different culture.
5. Social/Emotional: child abuse; emotional adjustment problems; significant home factors such as divorce, chronic illness or death, family separation, extended absence of a parent, remarriage, and/or frequent moves.

Draft

STANDARD M2.1c Referrals are sought from classroom teachers, principals, counselors and parents. The GATE Coordinator actively searches for referrals among underrepresented populations.

RATIONALE: To ensure that students are observed from different perspectives, all individuals who interact with students must have the opportunity to refer them for consideration. Students whose giftedness may be masked by factors such as language or cultural barriers or poverty must especially be sought out.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. All 3rd graders are tested at their school sites the last two weeks of September **unless** the parent/guardian submits a "DO NOT TEST" form.
2. Student nomination forms for grades 4, 6, 7, and 9 are accepted at any time in the GATE Office.
3. The formal search for 4th and 6th graders begins in October:
 - a. Letters of explanation and teacher nomination forms are mailed to all 4th and 6th grade teachers.
 - b. Teachers and school secretaries are sent copies of "Parent Nomination" forms in English and Spanish. (Forms may be translated into other languages, as needed.)
 - c. "Camera ready" notices about the parent nomination process are sent for publication in principals' newsletters.
 - d. Information about nominating students is sent for publication to *The Davis Enterprise*.
 - e. Grades 4 and 6 nomination forms are due in the GATE Office by November 20 with testing scheduled between Thanksgiving vacation and Winter break on Wednesday afternoons. A final make-up session is offered the third Wednesday in January.
 - f. Student results are mailed home by the end of January.
4. Students in grades 7 and 9 are sought beginning in October:
 - a. "Camera ready" data is sent to secondary schools to be included in the October newsletters mailed to students' homes.
 - b. Letters of explanation and nomination forms are sent to secondary counselors for use and for distribution to teachers.
 - c. Information about secondary nominations is sent for publication to *The Davis Enterprise*.
 - d. Nomination forms are due in the GATE Office by November 20.
 - e. Secondary students are tested at their sites on Wednesday morning between Thanksgiving vacation and Winter break. A final make-up test is offered the third Wednesday in January.
 - f. Student results are mailed home by the end of January.

STANDARD M2.1d Students may be nominated for participation more than once.

RATIONALE: No nomination or identification process is 100% accurate. In order to eliminate the possibility of bias and to guarantee the opportunity to be evaluated more than one time, it is necessary to accept referrals for a student more than once.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Students may **not** retake any specific mental reasoning or school ability test administered by GATE staff or by outside/private practitioners more than once during a 12 month period.
2. When parents have been notified of a student's score and the score is within a 5 point *Standard Error of Measurement* on the Total **and** one subtest score, the student will be rescreened with an alternative test. The *OLSAT* may be taken once a year.
3. GATE Coordinator and a district psychologist meet with the *GATE Identification Committee* to review information from staff and parents/guardians and to screen for risk factors and collect additional pertinent information as previously described in the components of Section 2.
4. Recommended students receive further evaluation.
5. Students not scoring in the *Standard Error of Measurement* are evaluated by the GATE Identification Committee if the parent/guardian and/or school district instructional staff member submit(s) a written nomination form.
6. Davis Joint Unified School District will accept outside/private testing reports if, and only if, an approved test is used and **all subtests** are administered and reported and with approval of the GATE Coordinator; it is **not** the responsibility of the district or its representatives to advise parents about outside testing.

STANDARD M2.1e All staff receive training and information about the nomination process and the characteristics of gifted learners. Nomination forms are sent directly to teachers, counselors, administrators, and support personnel.

RATIONALE: To ensure equal access to GATE services, all individuals who interact with students must have knowledge of the GATE program and the referral process.

Draft

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Universal 3rd grade testing notification and “opt out” information will be included in the back-to-school packet distributed to all 3rd grade families.
2. Testing information for grades 4 and above is provided in October, the GATE Office provides letters of explanation, testing schedules, and teacher nomination forms to elementary teachers in grades 4 and 6 and to counselors at the secondary level. Secondary teachers are advised through faculty meetings and/or teacher bulletins that nomination forms are available from the counselors, from the GATE Office.
3. “Camera ready” information is provided for elementary principals’ newsletters, secondary PTA newsletters, and The Davis Enterprise, to inform parents that the search is underway and to *explain* how parents can nominate students.
4. The GATE Office provides nomination forms that can be completed by teachers who refer students and another form, in both English and Spanish, for parents/guardians to refer children. All information included on the initial referral form is essential to the completion of each case study.
5. Nomination forms for students in grades 4 and 6 are due in the GATE Office by November 15. The GATE Office staff then compiles grade level lists of nominees. When a child is nominated by staff, but not by parent/guardian, a letter is mailed home requesting permission to test. When a parent/guardian nominates a child, the nomination form includes the permission to test. Once every parent is given the opportunity to complete a permission form to test, lists are compiled and materials organized for each testing session.
6. Outreach currently in place for underrepresented groups include GATE forms that are now translated into Spanish and are being translated into Mandarin and Korean. The GATE Coordinator works with the English Language Learner Coordinator to identify prospective students, EL teachers are encouraged and guided about how to refer students, and risk factors are considered in qualifying percentiles. The GATE Coordinator attends School Site Council and PTA meetings. All information and forms are available in the district office and on the district website.

STANDARD C2.1a Training in the identification process is provided that is specifically appropriate for administrators, teachers, and support personnel.

RATIONALE: Interaction with students varies by the role an individual plays in the educational system. An administrator or counselor, for example, interacts with students from a different perspective than a classroom teacher. In order to ensure that students are evaluated from various perspectives, it is necessary to provide specific training for individuals in a variety of positions within the school and district.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Informational materials sent to all elementary teachers and secondary counselors identify characteristics of giftedness, the nomination process with the forms, due dates, and the testing schedule.
2. Parent informational materials are sent in the opening school packet, and presentations are made by request at PTA and School Site Council meetings.
3. Information and materials are posted on the district website.

STANDARD C2.1b The district maintains data on nominees and includes these data in reassessing students who are referred more than once.

RATIONALE: Data from previous referral(s) provide useful information for a team evaluating a student who has been referred previously.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. In the fall, before the nomination forms are distributed, the GATE Coordinator works with site administrators to set the testing schedule and notifies teachers and administrators at each school to inform them about characteristics that may be present in the potential GATE student.
2. The GATE Coordinator provides parent education about characteristics of giftedness.
3. In November and December, information about risk factors, STAR test performance, and other school related data is gathered about 3rd grade students.
4. The data gathered on the 3rd grade students will be compared with the *OLSAT* results to determine which students qualify and, in addition to those scoring within the standard error of measurement to be rescreened, which students have significant disparities to require further evaluation.
5. Information gathered during this process will be included in the evaluation of students who test again in 4th, 6th, 7th, or 9th grades

Draft

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

RATIONALE: To ensure equal access to GATE services, the plan must include a process for the use of multiple tools to identify gifted students including those that are appropriate for diverse populations of students.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Once parents/guardians and teachers have been advised as to who qualifies in the *intellectually gifted* category, parents/guardians and staff may submit data for reevaluation. The data may include grades, standardized test scores, and sample work completed in the classroom under the teacher's supervision.
2. During the reevaluation process, the GATE Coordinator screens any additional information and gathers data about potential risk factors. If the GATE Coordinator/Identification Committee agree, the student is referred for additional evaluation with a district psychologist.
3. During this process, students are also considered for designation in the categories of *high achievement* and *specific academic ability*. Students who qualify in these categories are entitled to differentiated curriculum in the regular classroom.
4. Students may qualify as gifted in the area of *high achievement*. K-12 students qualify by scoring Above Grade Level (a score of 5) on the California Standards Tests in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics for two consecutive years, and/or CELDT scores OR by maintaining a 3.6 GPA in university/college preparatory academic courses for the previous two years OR by teacher verification of student performance at two or more years above chronological peers in two or more subject areas. High achieving students are re-certified every 2 years as long as they meet or exceed the criteria.
5. Students may qualify as gifted in the area of *specific academic ability*. K-12 students qualify by scoring Above Grade Level (a score of 5) in one academic content area for two consecutive years on the California Standards Test, and/or CELDT scores OR by maintaining a 3.6 GPA in a single university/college preparatory academic course for the previous two years OR by teacher verification of student performance at two or more years above chronological peers in a single subject area. These students are re-certified every 2 years if they still meet or exceed the criteria.

Draft

Qualifying Requirements for “Achievement”

- A. A student may qualify as *high achieving* or as *specific academic ability* with **no** risk factors:
- A *high achieving* student has, for two or more years, attained an Above Grade Level score (5) on two or more of the California Standards Tests when available and/or maintained a 3.6 in university/college preparatory academic courses and/or has verification of academic performance two or more years above grade level.
 - A student with *specific academic ability* has, for two or more years, attained an Above Grade Level Score (5) on a single subtest (reading, language arts, or mathematics) and/or a 3.6 GPA in a single university/college preparatory academic course and/or documented academic performance two or more years above grade level in a single subject.
- B. A student may qualify as *high achieving* or as *specific academic ability* with **two or more** risk factors:
- For two or more years, a student has attained a score of 4 or higher on the California Standards Test (reading, language arts, mathematics, science, etc.) or an advanced math score (5) and/or proficient language score (4) on STAR and/or a 3.5 in university/college preparatory courses and/or above grade level academic performance in two more academic areas (reading, language arts, math, science, etc.).
 - For two or more years, a student has attained a score of 4 or higher on a single subtest (reading, language arts, mathematics, or science, etc.) on the California Standards Test and/or a 3.5 GPA in a single university/college preparatory academic course and/or above grade level academic performance in a single subject.

Achievement	No Risk Factors	With 2 or More Risk Factors
<p>High Achieving</p> <p>(K-12)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAR / California Standards Test Score of 5 on two or more tests (Reading/Language, Math, etc) for 2 or more years. • GPA 3.6 or higher in 2 or more university/college preparatory academic classes for 2 or more years • Verification of academic performance at two or more years above grade level in 2 or more subjects for 2 consecutive years • Attains a 92-95% on <u>both</u> the verbal and nonverbal subtests of a mental reasoning/school ability test; this designation is permanent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAR / California Standards Test of 4 or higher on two or more tests (Reading/Language, Math, etc) or a math score of 5 and a score of 4 in reading/language arts for 2 or more years • GPA 3.5 or higher in two or more university/college preparatory academic classes for 2 or more years • Verification of academic performance at two or more years above grade level in 2 or more subjects for 2 consecutive years.
<p>Specific Academic Ability</p> <p>(K-12)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAR / California Standards Test Score of 5 on one test (Reading/Language, Math, etc) for 2 or more years • GPA 3.6 in a single university/college preparatory academic course for 2 or more years. • Verification of academic performance at two or more years above grade level in a single subject for 2 consecutive years. • Attains a 92-95% on either the verbal or nonverbal subtest scores of a mental reasoning/school ability test; this designation is permanent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAR / California Standards Test Score of 4 or higher on one test (Reading/Language, Math, etc) for 2 or more years. • GPA 3.5 in single university/ college preparatory academic preparatory course for 2 or more years. • Verification of academic performance at two or more years above grade level in a single subject for 2 consecutive years.

Draft

STANDARD M2.2a A committee, including the GATE Coordinator and certificated personnel, makes final determinations on individual student eligibility for the program.

RATIONALE: To ensure that all possible variables have been considered, it is necessary for more than one person to make a determination of a student's eligibility. Multiple perspectives must be considered.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. After the universal testing process has been completed, the *Search and Serve Process* (see Section M2.1b) is initiated to begin to evaluate students for rescreening.
 - a. During November and December, the GATE Coordinator uses the previous spring *STAR* test results and other student data to evaluate *the* current 3rd grade students.
 - b. Risk factor information is gathered about 3rd graders and is considered in addition to the information from the *STAR* test information.
 - c. Additional information is gleaned from teachers, counselors, student records, including cum files and report cards, and classroom observations by the GATE Coordinator or a district psychologist.
 - d. Samples of student work, *completed in the classroom under teacher supervision*, may be solicited.
2. Students may be referred for alternative assessment as a result of this process.
3. GATE Identification Committee makes final determinations on student eligibility for program.

STANDARD M2.2b Evidence from multiple sources is used to determine eligibility, and a data record or file is established for each nominee.

RATIONALE: Since students have differing ways of demonstrating talent, final determination of eligibility must always allow for more than one criterion or screening instrument. A data record or file ensures that information is retained for future use.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. In addition to OLSAT, DJUSD may offer testing with other tests of school ability or accept results from other tests of mental reasoning such as the *Structure of Intellect (SOI)*, *TONI*, *Raven*, *WISC-IV*, etc., as long as the results are in the District's qualifying range and results of **all** subtests are included on the test protocols that are submitted.
2. Some students are assessed by school psychologists as a result of other referrals. Parent/guardian and/or teacher nominations and sample work may be submitted for consideration by the Identification Committee.
3. Testing instruments, such as those named, have proven through extensive research to be the fairest measure available for identifying potential. Superior levels of school ability have been equated with excellence or the potential for excellence. These assessments are used to identify the potential for success in the self-contained GATE Program classes.
4. Item M2.2a (above) further explains multiple identification criteria.

STANDARD M2.2c Parents and teachers are notified of a student's eligibility for program placement and are informed of the appeal process.

RATIONALE: Information regarding the status of a nominated student should be provided to parents and all who interact with that student in the school setting so that appropriate plans can be made in a timely manner. Teachers and parents who may have questions or desire more information are entitled to know the procedure to obtain that information.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Test results are forwarded to the school sites, and the GATE coordinator meets with teachers so that staff may use data for *student* placement and services.
2. Parent appeals shall be reviewed by the GATE Identification Committee and processes completed before placement of any student is determined.
3. Once all of the testing and *Search and Serve* processes are completed, letters are mailed to parents explaining the results of student testing.

Draft

STANDARD M2.2d Transfer students are considered for identification and placement in a timely manner.	RATIONALE: It is not appropriate to delay evaluation for transfer students who have been identified by the criteria of their former district. The educational program for transfer students must continue with as little disruption as possible. Waiting to fit into the test schedule would be detrimental to such a student.
ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Students transferring into Davis Joint Unified School District schools are requested to submit their GATE identification records from their previous school district. If the qualification is comparable to DJUSD's criteria, <i>when requested</i> students are placed in self-contained classes or added to a wait list. The classroom teacher is advised as to the student's GATE status.2. Transfer students who have been identified as GATE eligible in another district but whose scores are not commensurate with Davis requirements are re-evaluated to determine if s/he qualifies in Davis. This ensures equity of access for all students.	
STANDARD C2.2a The identification tools used are reflective of the district's population.	RATIONALE: In order to ensure all students equal access to GATE services, the instruments used to measure eligibility must be appropriate for the particular students being assessed, including gifted minority children, English Language Learners, and children in poverty.
ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. DJUSD will provide a second district-administered test to any student who scores within a <i>standard error of measurement</i> on the total score and one subtest or who is referred by the GATE Identification Committee that will provide data in support of a second screening.2. If the choice is a second test, the type of test needed is based upon the needs of the student. This test will be a test of non-verbal school ability (i.e. <i>Raven or TONI</i>) or verbal school ability (i.e. <i>Slossen Verbal, WISC-IV Verbal</i>) or one-on-one testing with a psychologist or the GATE Coordinator.	
STANDARD C2.2b The district makes timely changes in identification tools and procedures based on the most current research.	RATIONALE: Due to the increasing diversity of students, there are many research studies regarding alternative methods of identifying gifted students. These alternative methods can provide more effective ways to evaluate these students.
ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The GATE Advisory Committee schedules monthly meetings (except December) throughout the school year and regularly assesses new tests and placement procedures as they become known to the GATE office. The district's most recent analysis of its GATE Program was completed in 2007 by an outside group of consultants.2. The DJUSD GATE Program is also working under the auspices of a three year federal Javits' Grant which is studying identification procedures. A final report will be provided for the Superintendent and Board of Education in the fall of 2008. New information gleaned from the study will be integrated into the GATE plan.	
STANDARD E2.2a Personnel trained in gifted education meet at regular intervals to determine eligibility of individual candidates.	RATIONALE: It is necessary to ensure consistency in the referral and identification process throughout the district. Regular meetings of involved personnel assure consistency and accountability.
ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The DJUSD GATE Advisory Committee has a subcommittee that meets annually to review current standards for identification of gifted students and to review available testing protocols.2. Some members of this subcommittee are GATE-trained staff who participate regularly in GATE staff development provided by the GATE Coordinator and guest presenters. In addition, the GATE Coordinator reviews potential and referred candidates on an annual basis.	

Draft

STANDARD E2.2b The diversity of the district's student population is increasingly reflected in the district GATE population.

RATIONALE: All gifted students are entitled to GATE services. Every effort must be made to seek and find potentially gifted students among all of the diverse populations found in the district. The more successful that set of processes is, the more the population of the GATE program will reflect the population of the district.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Students who fall into the category of *under-represented* are screened for additional GATE evaluation according to their performance on STAR tests including CST scores, CELDT scores, risk factors, etc., and referred for further assessment by the GATE Coordinator and/or GATE Identification Committee.
2. Many *under-represented* students who demonstrate disparity between actual performance skills and thinking ability perform very well in advanced classes. Students flagged as having risk factors or disparate scores are encouraged to participate in additional screening. Those who qualify are counseled as to the advantages and disadvantages available to them in the GATE program as well as what support services are offered; these students are followed by both the GATE Coordinator and, when applicable, the EL Coordinator.
3. Universal testing of 3rd graders and the follow-up *Search and Serve* process better achieves equity of access to the GATE program for all students regardless of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. With this process, DJUSD increased the number of underrepresented students who qualify and participate.
4. Through the universal testing and the *Search and Serve* process, classroom teachers receive information about each student's verbal and non-verbal comprehension and reasoning which supports the teacher's efforts to differentiate and individualize curriculum in each classroom for each student.
5. DJUSD provides a second district-administered test to any student who scores within a *standard error of measurement* on the total score and one subtest or who is referred by the GATE Identification Committee at no cost to the family. The selection of the second test is based on the needs of the student as determined by the GATE Coordinator and/or GATE Identification Committee.

STANDARD M2.3 Multiple service options are available within the gifted education program and between other educational programs. Placement is based on the assessed needs of the student and is periodically reviewed.

RATIONALE: No one program meets the needs of all students. To ensure equity, it is necessary to correlate GATE service options to students' skills and abilities. GATE services must be available to "Twice Exceptional Students" or those gifted students with emotional issues, physical or learning disabilities.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. DJUSD requires various delivery systems for GATE services including self-contained GATE classes in grades 4-10; differentiation in the regular classroom; designated high achieving, honors, and Advanced Placement classes; independent study; acceleration; and concurrent college enrollment.
2. GATE instruction is delivered to students in homogeneous classes, in cluster groups within specific classrooms, in flexible groupings based on readiness or interests or learning modalities, and/or on individual learning contracts.

Draft

STANDARD M2.3a Students and parents are provided information and orientation regarding student placement and participation options. Signed parent permission for participation is on file.

RATIONALE: In order for families to make an informed choice regarding their child's participation in the GATE program, they must have access to information regarding all aspects of the program.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Parent Information Nights are part of the scheduled parent education program.
2. Information is provided to School Site Councils and PTA's. The GATE Coordinator will attend meetings upon request.
3. Teachers provide information at Back-to-School Night and in school/teacher newsletters.
4. Handouts are available from the school and GATE Office and/or posted on the district website.
5. Opening of school information packets include explanations about the GATE program and options, testing, GATE Advisory Committee meeting schedules, and "opt out" information for families of third graders choosing not to participate in universal testing.
6. Development of effective support mechanisms for underrepresented students and their parents, so that fully informed choices are made regarding GATE options, is ongoing.

STANDARD M2.3b Upon parent request, the district provides identification information the parent may take to a new school or district.

RATIONALE: It is important for a child to receive GATE services as soon as possible upon moving to a new school or district. When parents/guardians deliver the GATE information from the prior district, the evaluation/assessment process can begin immediately.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Students transferring out of DJUSD to another district may receive copies of GATE identification information, as well as grades and attendance records upon request by the parent/guardian or receiving school.
2. The GATE Office will provide a letter and accompanying materials if requested by the parent/guardian or the receiving school.

Draft

STANDARD M2.3c Participation in the program is based on the criteria of identification and is not dependent on the perception of a single individual. Once identified, a student remains identified as a gifted student in the district, though services to individuals may vary from year-to-year.

RATIONALE: While GATE students may not always perform to expectations, they are still identified as GATE. They are entitled to an objective evaluation of participation and of GATE services to meet their needs.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

CERTIFICATION AND PLACEMENT

*Intellectually gifted*³ students are certified for the duration of their attendance in DJUSD. If an *intellectually gifted* student requests and is placed in a self-contained GATE class, that *intellectually gifted* student may retain his/her seat each year through grade 10 so long as the parent/guardian returns the annual *Intent to Continue Form* by the due date. Should an *intellectually gifted* student choose to leave a GATE class, he or she is encouraged to participate in an exit interview with his/her *family and* the GATE Coordinator *and/or* school representative to resolve any questions or concerns and to facilitate the most beneficial future placement.

1. Elementary students identified *intellectually gifted* who remain in their neighborhood schools are **entitled** to differentiated curriculum. District-wide training in differentiation is ongoing. Differentiated program offerings may include enrichment in the regular classroom, ability grouping for reading and/or math, writing *individual learning plans*, and acceleration techniques such as compacting, pretesting, etc.
2. Secondary students identified *intellectually gifted* who are not placed into self-contained GATE classes are entitled to differentiated curriculum. This differentiation includes district-designated *high achieving* classes, accelerated programs in math, science, foreign language, etc., or independent study. *High Achievement* and *Specific Academic Ability* certification is for a two-year period. (Adv Comm requests reinstatement of Lit Around the World) At the end of two years, a student certification must be renewed if the student still meets the qualification criteria. The exception to this two year certification is a student who scores 92-95% on one or both subtests of a test of school ability/mental reasoning; this student will be certified as high achieving in the appropriate category for the duration of his/her attendance in the district. Students are entitled to programs at the school site so long as they remain certified. These services may include enrichment activities in the regular classroom, ability or cluster grouping in the regular classroom, flexible grouping in content areas, *honors and Advanced Placement classes* and/or independent study.

³ Students' ability with school learning tasks and achievement in relation to the talents they bring to school learning situations.

Draft

STANDARD C2.3a Before any student is considered for withdrawal from the program, interventions are implemented and a meeting is held with the parents and student.

RATIONALE: All qualified gifted students are entitled to the services of the GATE program. Every effort must be made to meet the needs of the student before withdrawal from the program is considered. Alternative ways to meet the student's needs must be explored. Regardless of the modification, the student is still an identified GATE student.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Only a parent/*guardian* may withdraw a qualified *intellectually gifted* student from the DJUSD self-contained GATE program once the student is admitted.
2. The parent/*guardian* is encouraged to first meet with the GATE Coordinator and/or the classroom teacher/counselor to discuss possible interventions and/or modifications to the curriculum where appropriate.
3. A student whose parent/*guardian* removes him/her from the self-contained GATE class will be considered for re-entry **after** those on the waiting list have been offered a seat.
4. Only a parent/*guardian* may withdraw his or her *intellectually gifted* student from the GATE Program by submitting a request to the GATE Office, *in writing, to remove and destroy any GATE records*. The parent/*guardian* will be notified that the student must requalify to return to the program at a later date.
5. The GATE Master Plan requires that district psychologist time be provided in assisting with GATE identification of underrepresented groups as necessary (not to exceed 80 hours per year).
6. The GATE staff provides many at-risk GATE students with the benefits of a long term relationship with an individual qualified to help them with needed academic and social coping strategies.
7. The GATE staff provides support for underachieving, learning disabled, perfectionist, and socially-isolated gifted students who require additional help.
8. The GATE staff provide teachers working with these special needs' gifted students the strategies and interventions to improve their success in the classroom
9. The GATE staff provides parents of gifted students, including at-risk or special needs' gifted students, with assistance to support these children at home and at school.

Draft

SECTION 3: Curriculum and Instruction

GOAL: Davis Joint Unified School 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. (EC52206a and 52206b)

RATIONALE: Gifted students are usually capable of learning at a faster rate than other students and may exhibit needs for a high level of complexity, depth, and acceleration in learning. They characteristically delve deeper into the curriculum and seek more complex understanding than their peers, and they most often have comprehension and vocabulary levels far beyond their grade mates. Such educational needs require that modification and differentiation of the curriculum be in place so that the gifted students' needs, interests, and abilities can be addressed and their continuous progress can be ensured.

STANDARD 3.1 Differentiated curriculum is in place that responds to the needs, abilities, and interests of *intellectually gifted* and high achieving learners and facilitates the ability of each student to meet and exceed the core curriculum standards. This differentiation, which focuses on depth, complexity, appropriate pacing, and novelty, is but one part of the whole picture. The curriculum must also provide for the balanced development of critical, abstract and creative thinking, high level problem solving, advanced levels of research and curricular content, and products which are both appropriate and authentic, so that each individual within the program is able to learn in a manner uniquely appropriate to personal interest.

RATIONALE: Differentiating and individualizing the curriculum provides equity for learners who often have the majority of the content already mastered when the year begins. The resulting differentiated assignments reinforce the needs, interests, and abilities of the gifted while helping them develop ethical standards, positive self-concepts, sensitivity, responsiveness to others, and contributions to society. Through differentiation and individual instruction, learners may be challenged both horizontally and vertically to increase depth of knowledge and thinking skills. As a result, every student is provided the opportunity to make at least one year's growth in knowledge and skills.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. All teachers are encouraged to attend gifted conferences as well as district GATE inservices and/or to pursue the UCD, or similar, gifted certificate program.
2. District workshops on differentiating the curriculum are provided by district and other personnel for all teachers on a regular basis.
3. In-service is available on the cognitive, social and emotional characteristics, needs, and concerns found with gifted students as a result of their atypical development; the academic and personal/interpersonal development; the interaction with parents and other staff about gifted students and their needs; and the assessment of classroom performance.
4. Articulation meetings involving all GATE teachers from sites with self-contained programs are provided on a regular, on-going basis. GATE teachers meet at their sites to plan between grade levels.
5. The GATE office maintains a library of research and materials related to teaching strategies for gifted learners and materials related to character building and ethics.
6. All teachers of GATE students in self-contained classes have access to the curriculum standards as modified for the self-contained GATE program. The GATE portion of the comprehensive School Plan is approved/amended by the GATE Coordinator as appropriate and congruent with the GATE Master Plan.
7. Teachers of GATE students in self-contained and regular classrooms from all grade levels have opportunities to meet together to discuss their teaching and student learning. Problems and strategies are discussed at these meetings.
8. GATE students have multiple opportunities to use higher level thinking across the curriculum employing the models of such people as Benjamin Bloom, Joseph Renzulli, Howard Gardiner, etc. They also apply creative thinking to problem solving using the models of such people as Edward deBono, E. Paul Torrance, and others.
9. Students are encouraged to pursue individual interests through I-Search research. Students may work with mentors from the community on these pursuits.
10. GATE students use learning resources that are advanced but commensurate with their reading comprehension and interest levels.
11. Time management and study skills are an integral and continuous part of the regular curriculum for gifted learners.

Draft

STANDARD 3.2 Differentiated curriculum is regularly planned by teachers with input from parents, students, and administrators, and offered to every identified *intellectually gifted* and high achieving student in the program as an integral part of each day. Teachers utilize a variety of appropriate instructional models that include, but are not limited to, large and small group instruction, homogenous/heterogeneous grouping, teacher/student-directed learning, and multiple opportunities for independent study. Extensive and appropriate resources and technology support the delivery of this curriculum.

RATIONALE: Even within the GATE community of learners, students learn differently, so there must be a wide variety of strategies employed to help each student maximize his or her potential. These strategies may vary between disciplines and grade levels.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Support and approval processes will be integrated within the district to assist with alignment and support of the GATE Master Plan and district operations.
2. Periodic progress reports will be provided to the GATE Advisory Committee.
3. An annual report will be provided to the Board of Education by the Superintendent regarding the progress in achieving the GATE Master Plan goals.

Language Arts -

1. Needs assessments to determine reading levels and skills are administered at the beginning of each school year. Students then read novels and expository texts, independently, in small groups, and with the whole class, that are commensurate with their abilities and interests
2. When student readiness demands, teachers work towards the grade level standards of the appropriate grade level.
3. Parents and other community members are used as mentors for individuals and small groups.
4. Lists of reading materials, especially those materials dealing with ethical issues, complex themes, social and personal issues, philosophical inquiry, and advanced sources for lateral enrichment across the curriculum, are updated regularly by the GATE Advisory and Articulation committees and are regularly made available to all teachers.
5. Leveled vocabulary books, using Jerome Shostak's *Vocabulary Workshop* program, are used sequentially in self-contained classes in grades 4 through 9.
6. Students have ample opportunity to choose processes and products that help them pursue personal interests and strengths.
7. Students participate in the *Future Problem Solving Program* to develop thinking and performance in communication, research, application, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis.

Writing -

1. All students work according to their ability to meet state standards at their grade level or above, as assessed by performance-based tasks and increasingly sophisticated application of rubrics and/or teacher evaluation.
2. Students explore various genre; teachers mentor each according to his/her needs. Students are offered technology for word processing and research.
3. Spelling and vocabulary are individualized according to individual student need.
4. Students 7-12 have opportunities to enroll in elective classes such as:
 - Journalism
 - Senior Writing Seminar
 - Children's Literature
 - Composition and Literature, AP

Speaking -

1. All students K-12 have multiple opportunities to develop oral presentation skills via debate, reports of information, speeches, poetry recitation, readers' theatre, *Future Problem Solving*, and other venues.
2. Students 7-12 have opportunities to enroll in elective classes such as:
 - Theater
 - Drama
 - Speech
 - Debate

Draft

Reading -

1. Students K-6 have opportunities to participate in advanced reading/literature via literature circle, readers' theater, out-of-grade level reading materials, *Future Problem Solving*, and independent study.
2. Students 7-8-12 may enroll in designated high achieving, honor, and Advanced Placement courses such as:

Junior High Classes:

- ~~Literature Around the World~~ (Adv Comm recommends reinstatement)
- American Studies
- English 9 Classics Approach or English 9 Humanities

High School Classes:

- ~~California Literature~~ Honors English 11
- The Novel
- Literature and Composition, AP

Math -

1. **Math – Grades K-6** - Multiple options are available to all identified GATE students and are determined by each individual site/teacher:
 - a. Enrichment may be provided within each classroom with mentored instruction and cluster or flexible grouping.
 - b. Students learn at their ability levels by regrouping by grade level within a student's own school (such as high/middle/low instruction within a grade level), accelerated instruction in self-contained GATE classrooms, or placement in a higher grade level for math instruction.
 - c. Students may learn at an appropriate pace through placement in a higher grade level at another school within the district (such as elementary students taking math at the junior highs or Davis School for Independent Study.)
 - d. Students may seek concurrent enrollment at an institution of higher learning (such as UCD) in math.
 - e. All students learn to describe and write out computation processes, learn to solve problems in a variety of ways, and learn a higher level of problem solving.
 - f. District GATE students participate in Math Olympiad, and Math Counts.
2. **Math – Grades 7-12** - As students continue into junior high and high school, they enter those classes for which they qualify, including:
 - Algebra I
 - Geometry
 - Algebra II/Trigonometry
 - Introduction to Analysis
 - AP Calculus – both AB and BC
 - AP Statistics
 - UCD and CSUS mathematics courses

Draft

Social Science -

1. **K-12 GATE students are taught using a number of instructional strategies and activities:**
 - a. Students are encouraged to acquire the information at their own accelerated pace.
 - b. Students have access to expository sources commensurate with their readability and comprehension levels.
 - c. Students go into depth in their studies by looking at the same information from different points of view, by examining the underlying ethical principles of an issue, by looking for patterns and trends, by discovering and pondering unanswered questions, by stating the rules that apply to concepts, by looking at details, and by learning to use language appropriate to each study.
 - d. Students study the complexity of issues by understanding how different disciplines view the same event, by defining relationships between and over time, and by multiple and/or opposing viewpoints.
 - e. Students may study overarching themes (e.g. power, change) as they apply to social studies.
 - f. Study of the social sciences stresses the use of higher order thinking skills, including applying knowledge, analyzing information, synthesizing ideas, and evaluating outcomes using criteria; students also use creative thinking skills as well (such as redesigning and substituting).
 - g. Student activities include multiple opportunities to pursue independent interests pursuant to their studies, including personal research.
 - h. Students may work independently with or without an adult mentor.
 - i. Students may be grouped according to interest and ability, within or across classes at the same grade level, in pairs or small groups.
 - j. Activities include Future Problem Solving Program, I-Search, Socratic Seminar, Ethical studies, and Mock Trial.
2. Secondary level offerings continue opportunities for *Future Problem Solving*, Mock Trial, I Search, include advanced, honors, and Advanced Placement classes, as well as concurrent university registration (e.g. UCD, CSUS, community college).
 - ~~Advanced Placement Human Geography~~ (Adv Comm recommends reinstatement if #=full class)
 - Advanced Placement US History
 - Advanced Placement US Government and Politics
 - Advanced Placement Economics

Science -

1. K-6 GATE students are taught using a number of instructional strategies and activities to differentiate the content standards:
 - a. The state content standards are used as the foundation; students will acquire additional information through a variety of research techniques.
 - b. Students do independent research on topics of interest within a unit to motivate and deepen their understanding of the content.
 - c. Students, working in small groups or independently, use scientific method to perform experiments through a process that includes the application of observational and analytical skills.
 - d. Students, working in small groups or independently, develop their own experiments using the scientific method; this process allows them to apply the scientific method, to learn how to design experiments, and to understand how to record data and make and verify predictions.
 - e. Students, working in small groups or independently, develop models or include technology as visual representations of concepts and processes.
 - f. Students discuss in class or in small groups the connections among events and their relationships to each other.
 - g. Students examine in class or in small groups the ethical principles of an issue by looking at the details, discussing the possible effects, defining the different viewpoints, pondering unanswered questions, and predicting future impact.
 - h. Activities may include, but are not limited to, independent and group research, debate, independent and group experiments, computer simulations, and ethical studies.
 - i. Students will be supported in research opportunities for Future Problem Solving scenarios related to science.
2. 7-8 GATE who are identified *intellectually* gifted and request the self-contained core are enrolled in GATE Science 7 and 8 in which the content standards are differentiated through the use of depth and complexity, enrichment, and acceleration, as well as interdisciplinary study. Students will be supported in research opportunities for *Future Problem Solving* Scenarios related to science.
3. 9-12 students identified as *intellectually gifted*, *high achieving*, or *specific academic ability* enroll, based on readiness, in advanced science classes:
 - Advanced Biology
 - Advanced Placement Biology

Draft

- Advanced Placement Chemistry
- Honors Physics
- Advanced Placement Physics
- Physiology and Anatomy
- ROP Biotechnology
- ROP Biotechnology Internship

Draft

Section 4: Social and Emotional Development

GOAL: Davis Joint Unified School District supports the social and emotional development of gifted learners to increase responsibility, develop self-awareness, engender ethical behavior and assist other issues of affective development. (EC52212a1)

RATIONALE: Often the affective needs of gifted students are overlooked while educators and parents/guardians concentrate on their academic needs. Because gifted learners often respond to social and emotional factors in their lives differently than do their age mates (just as they respond differently to academic factors), educators and parents/guardians need to recognize and appropriately attend to those needs assuring balanced and simultaneous growth of cognitive and affective abilities.

STANDARD 4.1 Teachers, parents, administrators, and psychologists/counselors are provided with information and training regarding the characteristics of gifted learners and their related social and emotional development. Teachers incorporate techniques to support affective learning in their classrooms. Ongoing counseling services are provided and documented as appropriate.

RATIONALE: Teacher training and parent education do not typically offer specialized training needed to equip educators to recognize the characteristics of the gifted and to provide them support. Teachers, meeting with students on a daily basis, are in a position to be most effective in supporting healthy social and emotional behaviors. It is important that the district create teacher resources related to affective development in areas such as interpersonal skills, self-esteem, moral and ethical judgment and behavior, and empathy. Counseling services by teachers, principals, and psychologists/counselors need to be an ongoing process.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. The GATE library at the District Office provides resources for all educators and parents/guardians including lists of affective traits of gifted students, books and materials by James T. Webb, Lawrence Kolberg, Carol Gilligan, and Erik Erickson on moral development, guidelines for choosing appropriate classroom materials, and a list of available community resources to support the social and emotional needs of gifted students.
2. Teachers attend gifted conferences and/or pursue the gifted certificate program at the University of California at Davis.
3. Staff development on effective issues related to gifted students are provided by district personnel.
4. Articulation meetings involving all GATE teachers in the District self-contained program establish recommended GATE core literature lists that emphasize the use of literature to support positive affective development in students.
5. GATE teachers in the self-contained program conduct class meetings, conflict resolution, reflective assessment and problem-solving lessons on an ongoing basis.
6. Workshops conducted by the GATE coordinator and GATE teaching staff provide information to parents about the special needs of gifted learners. Procedures for assigning students to counselors and groups are established at each school site, conducted by the Student Study Team (SST, Healthy Kids, etc.) and utilize the services of the GATE psychologist and GATE Coordinator as requested.
7. ~~The GATE Master Plan designates a GATE psychologist. This psychologist and~~ Appropriate GATE experts provide training regarding the social and emotional needs of gifted students for all staff and support personnel, to provide training sessions for teachers that include skills for leading student discussion groups. ~~The GATE designated psychologist, as needed, advises and coordinates the Child Study Teams.~~
 - a. The GATE Master Plan provides for training sessions for parents. Specific needs regarding transition issues exist at the following levels of the self-contained program: entering 4th grade, exiting 6th grade/entering 7th grade, after the 1st semester of 7th grade, and mid 9th grade. Parents, as well as students, have needs for ~~counseling~~ support regarding social and emotional giftedness issues.

Draft

STANDARD 4.2 Guidance and counseling services appropriate to the social and emotional needs of gifted students are provided by trained personnel. Teachers and guidance personnel are trained to collaborate in implementing intervention strategies for at-risk gifted students.

RATIONALE: Gifted learner's advanced intellectual development can make it more difficult to diagnose at-risk behaviors. Teachers are trained in content and pedagogy. There are limits to what can be expected of teachers regarding the guidance and counseling of students. Studies and experience demonstrate that gifted learners are at higher risk for suicide, depression, stress, underachievement, perfectionism, and substance abuse than their age peers. Early intervention is crucial. To be most effective, teachers and counselors must collaborate with one another.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Counseling groups for students exhibiting specific-needs are scheduled as needed by school counselors and psychologists at the sites with GATE self-contained programs, and are made available to other sites if requested..
2. Referral services to community resources are made when appropriate. Documentation is done in individual IEPs and by Student Study Teams at the various sites.
3. Teachers and support personnel are included in all plans for student support, including Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and 504 plans.
4. Records are established and kept to track service and progress through IEPs, 504 plans, and in the individual student's cumulative file.
5. Referral procedures are established at individual school sites.
6. ~~Referral forms to be completed by parent/guardian and/or teacher are available at the school sites.~~
7. An information collection system that supports open communication between parents/guardians and the school is maintained through copies of IEPs, open cumulative files, and a GATE database in the GATE office.
8. Intervention plans meet social and emotional needs through a variety of strategies including contracts, flexible scheduling, use of mentors, split-site Davis High School and Davis School for Independent Study assignment, and referral to outside counseling services.
9. The GATE Master Plan provides for access to a designated ~~district psychologist~~ **GATE expert** with specialized training in GATE education and student needs.
 - a. To define the strategies appropriate to deal with at-risk gifted behaviors and develop guidelines for effective individual intervention plans,
 - b. To provide staff training in the procedure for carrying out appropriate intervention plans
 - c. To establish clear and consistent procedures for referral for services,
 - d. To appropriately share specific information (anecdotal records, referral records) with parents/guardians of students who have been identified as at risk, and
 - e. To additionally provide support for gifted learners, their teachers and parents at sites not housing the self-contained programs, so that services are timely and equitable across the district.

STANDARD 4.3 Gifted students are provided awareness opportunities of career and college options and guidance consistent with their unique strengths.

RATIONALE: One of the goals of gifted education is to assist students in becoming autonomous learners, which includes becoming good decision makers. Gifted learners are frequently multitalented, which can make career decision-making difficult.

Draft

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Job shadowing is available through the School-to-Career Program and through Health classes at Davis High School.
2. Gifted students are encouraged to participate in college information nights provided by the district, which includes scholarship information.
3. National/regional/state talent search material is advertised and provided through the GATE Office (SCAT testing, ACT, Johns Hopkins),
4. Concurrent enrollment through Los Rios Community College District, California State University, Sacramento, and University of California at Davis is available to DHS students.

Draft

Section 5: Professional Development

GOAL: The Davis Joint Unified School District provides professional development opportunities related to gifted education to administrators, teachers, and staff to support and improve educational opportunities for gifted students. (EC 52212a1)

RATIONALE: College and university programs preparing general education teachers, administrators, school counselors, and other school personnel seldom include significant learning opportunities about gifted students. Unless districts provide professional development opportunities, school personnel are unlikely to have the knowledge or skills to develop appropriate educational experiences for gifted learners. Without such knowledge, research finds that teachers, administrators, and counselors often have a negative attitude toward gifted learners, fail to appropriately modify their curriculum or instruction, and generally ignore the atypical needs of GATE students. The result is that gifted learners have the highest percentage of underachievement of any group of students. However, research also shows that when the needs of the gifted students are considered and the educational program is designed to meet these needs, these students make significant gains in achievement and for many GATE students their sense of competence and well being is restored. It is not only gifted students who gain, however; it has been found that successful gifted programs improve the climate and quality of the educational experience for the school as a whole.

STANDARD 5.1 The professional development opportunities are correlated with defined competencies for teachers of the gifted and the standards for GATE programs. The focus each year is based on a teacher and program needs assessment and on an analysis of the evaluations turned in at workshops. Inservice is provided by those who specialize in the area of gifted education.

RATIONALE: There is a body of knowledge and skill that teachers need in order to be effective with gifted learners. A needs assessment of the teachers and other school personnel who work with gifted learners will give the direction needed for the planning of professional development opportunities in regard to these issues. Full staff development opportunities on many of these areas of understanding will create support for the GATE program in the district. Evaluation of professional development experiences will include an assessment of the understanding of the information learned and the application of the practices with the gifted students. Presenters must have expertise in the area of gifted education.

Draft

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

There is a district-wide expectation for differentiation in all classrooms. Ongoing inservice for teachers with gifted students include:

1. Based on the CCR Title V, 3831j7 DJUSD provides the following inservice options using Buy-Back Days, collaboration time, and/or release time for teachers:
 - ~~a. Professional development is available on the cognitive, social and emotional characteristics, needs, and problems found with gifted students as a result of their atypical development; the academic and personal/interpersonal development of gifted students and how these impact classroom structure and curriculum development; the interaction with parents and other staff about gifted students and their needs; and the assessment of classroom performance.~~
 - b. ~~Buy-Back Days and District training for teachers on the topic of differentiation in the regular classroom are available.~~
 - c. A knowledge-based foundation in the theoretical, historical, and research-based constructs central to understanding individual differences and their manifestation in policies that also emphasize key issues and societal and economic factors that impact the development of intellectual talent.
 - d. Understand how gifted learners are different from other learners in respect to characteristics, developmental trajectories, and idiosyncratic ways of learning.
 - e. Understand added differences for gifted students that result from cultural background, poverty, and learning problems that sometimes accompany giftedness.
 - f. Use instructional strategies and instructional planning to emphasize pedagogical approaches that have been found effective with gifted learners, including those from diverse backgrounds; it includes the importance of using appropriate management strategies including assistive technology to respond to the exceptional student learning needs.
 - g. Provide learning environments for the gifted to include contexts for learning personal, social, and intellectual skills.
 - h. Provide learning environment to develop oral and written language and communication skills at appropriate levels of advancement, using appropriate technologies.
 - i. Focus on products necessary to differentiate curriculum appropriately for gifted learnings including learning plans, units, and scope and sequence documents using different domains and students differences.
 - j. Explicate the knowledge and skills essential for both identification of gifted learners, including the use of multiple measures for finding underrepresented populations, as well as the knowledge and skills needed to assess learning in programs.
 - k. Focus on the professional and ethical practice in relating to students and other individual stakeholders in gifted education and challenges teachers to strive for continuous improvement through professional development and reflection on practice.
 - l. Stress collaboration and provide time with colleagues to develop programs for these gifted students and with families, school personnel, and interested community groups.
2. College classes offered in conjunction with University of California at Davis provide teachers with the opportunity to attend classes on the topics of Differentiation in the Regular Classroom, Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted Students, and Identifying and Serving the Diverse Gifted Student. In addition, DJUSD works with UCD's Mind Institute and the Office of Extended Learning to provide education about brain research and its implications for the classroom.
3. District-wide articulation about curriculum content, process, and product occurs annually.
4. A resource library of research and materials on teaching, parenting, and being a gifted child is available in the GATE Office.
5. The district encourages teachers, counselors, and administrators to attend annual conferences such as California Association for the Gifted, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, California School Boards Association, etc.
6. The district Professional growth hours for salary schedule advancement and for the required continuing education to meet certain credential requirements are available for GATE-related training.
7. Verify teacher preparation to teach self-contained GATE classes. The teachers of self-contained GATE classes are expected to participate in on-going staff development:
8. Discussing relevant journal articles, evaluating what is working and what isn't, problem-solving shared concerns, and using a "study team" approach to discuss some issues of concern about gifted students and what may help are topics covered at inservice meetings.
9. Attending conferences or approved classes both about gifted students and their cognitive, social, and emotional development as well as workshops and classes to enhance teacher knowledge of subject content.
10. Share information, support, and materials with regular classroom teachers trying to meet the needs of the gifted students in their classes.

Draft

STANDARD 5.2 Teachers have education and/or experience in teaching gifted students or are ensured opportunities to acquire knowledge and experience. Teacher-to-teacher coaching models are encouraged and supported with GATE funds. An experienced and knowledgeable coordinator is in place. Administrators, counselors, and support staff are provided opportunities for professional development related to their roles and responsibilities.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Teachers who teach in self-contained GATE classrooms must have demonstrated ~~their~~ **education, experience, and commitment to on-going education and training about the cognitive, social, and emotional needs of gifted students. Only teachers who have demonstrated this commitment are placed and continued in the GATE self-contained classes.**
2. Every effort is made to cluster gifted students in the regular classroom with teachers who have been trained or agree to be trained in differentiating the curriculum.
3. The GATE Coordinator maintains expertise by staying current on readings in the field via *The Roeper Review*, *The Gifted Child Quarterly*, *The Gifted Education Communicator*, *GCT*, and other relevant periodicals and books and by attending classes and conferences related to the field of gifted education.
4. The GATE Coordinator attends child study team meetings, IEPs, and 504 meetings as requested to provide education and experience **and link student needs with teacher performance.**

NEW IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

1. Include a GATE support provider as part of the district's cadre of specialists in the BTSA program.
2. **Establish a defensible policy and consistent practice that ensures all gifted and talented students have access to a teacher trained in differentiation.**
3. **In the appendix, the scope and sequence for professional development is displayed.**

Draft

SECTION 6: Parent and Community Involvement

GOAL: The Davis Joint Unified School District provides procedures to ensure consistent participation of parents and community members in the planning and evaluation of programs for gifted students. (EC 52205 2f)

RATIONALE: It is imperative that the school system take the initiative to promote genuine exchange of information and ideas regarding GATE programs and services in order to better serve students and to ensure a cooperative climate among community, parents, and district. Lack of awareness on the part of parents/guardians or the community is a common complaint when issues concerning programs for gifted students arise.

STANDARD 6.1 Parents are informed of the district's criteria and procedures for identifying gifted and talented students as well as the program options and learning opportunities available. Parents of students identified gifted and talented are invited to attend an annual orientation that explains the goals and objectives of the self-contained GATE Program, thus enabling an informed choice by parents on behalf of the children. In addition, parents and students are invited to attend open houses and site presentations of GATE student science, I-Search products, etc. The GATE Program/Master Plan, identification criteria, and placement procedures are available on the district website and in the normal orientation materials provided by the district about the district. The identification criteria are explained in the district's GATE brochure, at a parent education night meeting, by teachers at parent conference time when applicable, and in school and PTA newsletters. On-going parent involvement is encouraged. Translations for documents and translators for meetings are provided as needed. GATE parents are involved in the on-going planning and evaluation of the GATE program and assist with business and community outreach.

RATIONALE: Parents and guardians are aware of GATE program options and procedures and serve on committees or have the option to provide input into the planning, writing, and evaluation of the GATE application. Each spring, an orientation is held for parents of incoming 4th and 7th graders to discuss the intermediate grades and junior high school self-contained programs and to do ongoing program planning and evaluation.

Draft

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Maintain information on the district's website and through school newsletters and the *Davis Enterprise* for procedures and schedule of deadlines and test dates and for general information.
2. Provide information about third grade testing in the back-to school packet; mail GATE information to parents/guardians.
3. Prepare and disseminate newsletter and community newspaper articles regarding GATE program options and guidelines.
4. Assist teachers in making GATE information part of back-to-school night presentations **and maintaining communication about curriculum and activities via email and/or class newsletters.**
5. ~~Supply information regarding the availability of the application to the Advisory Committee, parents/guardians, and community.~~
6. Provide parent/guardian meetings about educational opportunities on topics relevant to the GATE program including testing, talent search programs, social/emotional development of gifted children, working with the teachers, etc.
7. At regular intervals, formally evaluate or conduct surveys of students, teachers, and parents/guardians, and use the disaggregated data for the evaluation and modification of the GATE program.
8. Conduct orientation meetings before 4th grade and 7th grades to include specific information about program options, requirements, and resources. (Translators are available upon request.) A tour of GATE classrooms is available during the orientation or by appointment during the enrollment period.
9. Present parents/guardians with samples of differentiated lessons if requested.
10. Accumulate and display student work to share the quality of students' achievements.
11. Encourage specific talents through a variety of competitions and exhibits that represent Academic Decathlon, Future Problem Solving, Destination Imagination, Nature Bowl, Math Olympiads, etc.
12. Include input from parents/guardians other than the committee, students, teachers, and administrators regarding the state application.
13. Encourage parents/guardians to participate in the organization and implementation of field trips which augment the differentiated curriculum.
14. Use community members as practitioners, artists in residence, and other experts to extend resources and enrich the differentiated curriculum.
15. Encourage members of civic organizations to be advocates for the gifted program.
16. Encourage families of incoming 4th grade students to attend a pre-school picnic to reduce anxiety and stress.
17. Update and disseminate a GATE Handbook regarding GATE program options, guidelines, and frequently asked questions. **This will also be available on the district website.**
18. Encourage parents from GATE Advisory Committee to report to their sites; this is usually done by membership or attendance at School Site Council and PTA meetings.

STANDARD 6.2 Parents participate on the GATE Advisory Committee which holds regularly scheduled meetings to improve the productivity of the group and to allow issues that arise in the program to be considered in a timely manner. The district GATE Coordinator collaborates with the GATE Advisory Committee to share program information, gather parent input, collect ideas for parent education presentations, inform members about current research and literature in the field of gifted education, share relevant professional development opportunities, and solicit community support. The parents of special needs students such as gifted English Language Learners and gifted disabled students are sought for committee membership.

Draft

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Continue monthly meetings (except December) of the district GATE Advisory Committee.
2. Continue gathering requests for topics and speakers and providing for parent education nights.
3. Continue to publicize parents/guardians education opportunities through district newsletters and local newspaper.
4. Continue to include information on the relationship between district policies and objectives for general education and those affecting gifted education; the role of the core curriculum, the differentiated curriculum, and the GATE self-contained program curriculum; the relationship between standardized tests and the evaluation of the gifted program; and the cognitive, social, and emotional development of gifted students and the associated impacts on curriculum and GATE student learning.
5. Communicate the purposes, goals, and activities of the GATE Advisory Committee to all constituents. Translations will be provided as needed.
6. Continue to encourage parent participation through school newsletters, classroom teachers, and personal contacts.
7. Provide summaries of meetings to committee members and others upon request **and/or post on the district website.**
8. Communicate meeting results with all parents/guardians of GATE students through advisory committee members' school site reports, ~~and~~ newsletter articles, **and on the district website.**
9. Continue to share contemporary research findings and journal articles and make available relevant periodical such as *Gifted Education Communicator*, etc.
10. Maintain and advertise the availability of the GATE library.
11. Provide or assist in coordinating speakers and/or resources in the field of gifted education.
12. Facilitate local parent/guardian meetings, encourage conference attendance such as California Association for the Gifted, support regional workshops such as those sponsored by Capital Region GATE Consortium or UCD Extension Office.
13. Facilitate parent/guardian support and discussion groups.
14. Continue to support participation in community and service groups and to solicit community business support for financial and other assistance, i.e. mentors, etc.
15. Continue to invite neighboring districts to attend district-sponsored parent/guardian education nights and teacher inservices.
16. Continue training and supporting both regular classroom teachers and teachers of self-contained GATE classes in effective strategies for working with parents of diverse GATE students.
17. Attend District English Language Advisory Committee meetings to liaison with teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents of English Language Learners.
18. **Continue to attend School Site Council and PTA meetings as requested.**

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SECTION 7: Program Assessment

GOAL: The Davis Joint Unified School District is standardizing the formal and informal evaluation methods and instruments to meet or exceed the state content standards and to assess the gifted program and the performance of gifted students. Results of data collected, including state standardized tests, are used to study the value and impact of the services provided and to improve the gifted program and the gifted students' performance. (EC5212a1)

RATIONALE: Measuring the outcomes of the program and student achievement helps to show the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Ongoing assessment allows changes to be made in the program to improve it. Others will need assessment information about the program so that they can support the program and help to advocate for the changes needed. Students will need assessment information regarding their work so that they can improve their performance and become better partners in their own learning.

STANDARD 7.1 The district provides ongoing student and GATE program assessment that is consistent with the program's philosophy, goals, and standards. All components of the DJUSD program are periodically reviewed by individuals who are knowledgeable about gifted learners and who have competence in the evaluation process. The program assessment process is structured to measure the goals and standards of the program using multiple, traditional and non-traditional strategies to assess student performance. These include valid and reliable standardized and criterion referenced achievement tests, questionnaires, and performance-based measures. The program contains a clear description of gifted students' performance expectations at each grade level. The assessment process contains criteria for levels of performance or rubrics and includes strategies that parallel the instruction as a means to collect information about student knowledge and capability. Strategies include student inquiry, collaboration, and reflection. Criteria for levels of performance or rubrics are used for each assessment product, course, and/or grade level. The assessment report for all educational services involving gifted students includes both commendations/strengths and recommendations/weaknesses of the program and is accompanied by a plan for improvement and renewal over time. The district allocates time, financial support, and personnel to conduct regular and systematic formative and summative program assessment. The results will be reported to the Board of Education and used for continuing program development.

RATIONALE: There are many components of the GATE program including the effectiveness of the personnel, the appropriateness of the curriculum, the variety of program structures, the quality of the resources, the involvement of the parents and the community, and the contributions of the support services. All of the program components need to be evaluated regarding their impact on the outcomes produced by the gifted students being served by the program. To collect the most useful data the evaluation process needs to be conducted by professionals who understand giftedness and the evaluation process. An important use of the data collected is to direct the improvement of the program.

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ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Program components are periodically reviewed under the direction of the GATE Coordinator. These include:
 - a. Students may take the *High School Subject Tests—Writing and Mechanics*, an out-of-grade-level achievement test. Finally, STAR results are evaluated in the areas of language arts and writing, reading, and math.
 - b. ~~CAT6~~ **CST**/STAR Tests, district-wide writing proficiency exams, and 6th grade math placement tests measure performance of elementary GATE students.
 - c. Enrollment in and completion of AP exams; *PSAT*, *SAT*, and *CAT6/STAR* results; and the percentage of National Merit Scholars as assessment components at the high school.
 - d. Performance in academic competitions such as Future Problem Solving, Academic Decathlon, Math Olympiads, Nature Bowl, and Destination Imagination as assessment components district-wide.
 - e. Results of these evaluations are discussed by GATE teachers and shared and discussed at GATE Advisory Committee meetings.
 - f. Summer workshops for teachers to ~~discuss the~~ **evaluate GATE** curriculum and any required modifications.
 - g. **Random surveys of GATE parents/guardians help to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the GATE Program.**

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SECTION 8: Budgets

GOAL: District budgets for gifted programs support and provide for all of the components of the Davis Joint Unified School District's GATE program and meet the related standards. (EC Section 52209, 52212a1, 2, 3)

RATIONALE: Davis Joint Unified School District students perform well above the average for California. The inclusiveness of the identification categories—*intellectually gifted, high achieving, and specific academic ability*—provides options for services to a population larger than most districts. It is the goal of the community and the district to provide services in self-contained GATE classes, but also to encourage teachers to differentiate in the regular classroom so as to provide a challenging and appropriate curriculum for each type of gifted student in the regular classroom.

STANDARD 8.1 The district GATE budget is directly related to the GATE program objectives with appropriate allocations. GATE funds which may be used to supplement—not supplant—district funds are used to address:

- Professional development
- Direct student services
- District-level coordination
- GATE student identification

A budget allocation for district GATE coordination by a single, full-time individual reflects the scope and complexities of the district's size and GATE plan. Carry-over monies are maintained within the district GATE accounts. GATE collaborates on expenditures across categorical programs. Indirect costs are aligned with the state limitations.

RATIONALE: The GATE budget, prepared with input from the administration, GATE Advisory Committee, teachers, and Board of Education, is created so that there is a one-to-one match between expenditures and items in the GATE plan in order to provide both accountability and integrity in the program.

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

1. Expenditures for District-level coordination include the cost of the GATE Coordinator, half of the cost of third grade universal testing, ~~.6 GATE Psychologist~~, **some district psychologist time for GATE rescreening for third graders**, .6 secretarial time, and supplies, postage, and materials necessary to maintain the GATE Office.
2. Expenditures for the GATE identification process:
 - a. Harcourt-Brace for testing supplies and materials
 - b. GATE Coordinator for scoring make-up tests for grade 3
 - c. GATE Coordinator for scoring tests for grades 4 and above
 - d. Harcourt-Brace universal test scoring for 3rd grade tests
 - e. Secretarial time for maintaining GATE records and database, collecting referrals, contacting families and schools to schedule testing, collating and sharing the data from the testing, and postage and handling for all the letters.
3. **The GATE Coordinator works with the English Learner Program Coordinator to improve the identification process by assisting with testing information and directions in students' native languages as often as is feasible and for the dissemination of information about the GATE program to parents of English language learners.**
4. The GATE Coordinator works closely with the Director of Student Services and the Coordinator of Special Education to ensure proper GATE services are provided to students who are twice-labeled.
5. The GATE Coordinator works with the Director of Technology to ensure the implementation of technology standards
6. The GATE Coordinator works with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to align GATE curriculum to meet or to exceed state standards.
7. Professional development about gifted students and gifted curriculum is provided and shared by the GATE Office, the BTSA Program, and other programs such as Buy-Back Professional Development Days.

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NEW IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

1. Increase training and support for student referral process—even with universal testing.
2. Work with district technology specialists to utilize the Technology Center to preview software appropriate for gifted students and to assist teachers to make technology available for these students who rarely find appropriate materials in a school library.
3. Work more closely with neighboring colleges and universities to enhance staff development and student learning opportunities.

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Glossary of Terms

Ability Grouping: Grouping students by ability, interest, and/or needs. Grouping may even occur in self-contained GATE classes. It is NOT synonymous with “tracking.”

Acceleration: Allowing students with advanced ability to move through the curriculum at a faster pace.

Advanced Placement: These secondary courses with criteria designed by college institutions. Students may take the course for high school credit. The optional AP examination allows college credit to those who score 3, 4, or 5.

At Risk: Students who experience economic, physical, emotional, linguistic, and/or academic problems are more likely to be underachievers and/or to drop out of school.

Cluster Grouping: Regrouping children in a heterogeneous class or across classes by their ability, interest, and/or needs in a specific area; i.e., math.

Collaborative Learning: Students share effort and expertise to create a common group production or project.

Content: Subject matter of the curriculum.

Cooperative Learning: Usually consists of mixed ability group that is assigned a common task is then divided amongst group members and everyone’s grade is related to the finished product.

Core Curriculum: The knowledge and skills to be learned by all students at a particular grade. The local district sets its standards based on the state frameworks.

Critical Thinking: Using higher order thinking skills – analysis, synthesis, and evaluation – recognize points of view, reach conclusions, and make decisions. Self-contained GATE classes spend 60% or more of the instructional day working at these levels.

Curriculum Compacting: A method where students who demonstrate “mastery” are able to omit portion of the core curriculum, this extra time may be redesignated for enrichment activities while the core material is taught to the other students in a heterogeneous class.

Demand-Driven: Refers to the District policy providing the opportunity to add additional self-contained GATE core classes when the following conditions are met:

- a. By April 20, at the elementary level at least 27 students are on the waiting list for a single grade level: at the secondary level at least 30 students are on the waiting list for a single grade level.
- b. The families of at least 27 elementary students must be willing to accept a GATE placement – even if it is outside their neighborhood zone.
- c. A classroom must be available at one of the existing elementary GATE sites; at the secondary level, classroom access must be available.
- d. A qualified teacher or teachers must be assigned to this class.
- e. No additional cost may be incurred to fill the teaching position.

Differentiation: A method of adapting the core curriculum by making modifications in depth, complexity, and pacing; this may include selecting, rather than covering all, the curriculum areas depending on students’ needs.

Discernible Blocks: Identified risk factors that may impact a student’s potential or performance on tests of school ability and/or achievement. They include economic, environmental, health, language/cultural, and social/emotional factors.

Enrichment: Using activities such as literature, speakers, field trips, etc., used to supplement the core curriculum. These activities, which are chosen, by the teacher and/or the students are generally not specified in the curriculum.

Grading: Grading practices – evaluation of student work – should be measured against content and performance standards rather than compared with the norm for their age or grade peers, which limits their educational development.

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Heterogeneous Grouping: This grouping is generally formed by chronological age level and without regard for the diverse needs of students, their interests, or their learning styles.

Homogeneous Grouping: This grouping is based on common criteria such as the student's interests, special needs, or academic ability.

Independent Study: Allowing students to follow individual or self-selected areas of interests and specific aptitude by designing and implementing their own study plans under the close supervision of teachers.

Individualization: Providing a specific program for some part of a student's day that meets the particular needs, interests, and/or abilities of individual students. Individualization does not mean that every child works in isolation.

Instructional Scaffolding: An approach that emphasizes teacher modeling, extension, rephrasing, questioning, praise, and correction rather than on the teacher as evaluator. The teacher role is a collaborative, interactive role with students by providing carefully structured and sequenced support.

Interdisciplinary Curriculum: Topics or concepts taught by gathering and relating information and ideas from multiple disciplines, i.e., English, social studies, and science.

Multiple Intelligences: A theory – commonly associated with Gardner – which intelligence can be expressed in at least seven ways: linguistic, musical, spatial, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

Open-Ended Assignment: A vehicle by which the teacher can judge student work based on the student's ability to draw upon prior knowledge, generate relevant connections. And articulate his/her reasoning.

Outcome-Based Education (OBE): The underlying principle is that decisions about curriculum and instruction should be based on the desired competencies students would demonstrate at the end of their formal education.

Peer Grouping: Assigning or matching students by shared characteristics such as age, ability, need, and/or interests.

Portfolios: A collection of student products used to measure student progress.

Problem-Based Curriculum: This model enables gifted students to practice critical and creative thinking while researching information and organizing ideas to solve real world problems.

Rubric: A scoring guide that is an assessment scale with intervals along the scale that represents a specific level of learning. Each interval has a description of the type and quality of work represented.

School Improvement Program (SIP): A K-12 categorical program funded by the state to improve curriculum, school climate, culture, management, and leadership training, and classroom support.

Standards: This term is subdivided into content and performance standards.

- Content standards relate to the specific academic knowledge, skills, and abilities that students are expected to learn in each core curriculum area at every grade level.
- Performance standards define various levels of competence in each curriculum area at every grade level for which content standards are established. They measure both student's and the school's degree of success in meeting content standards.

Thematic Curriculum: The study of a topic or concept that is specific, such as "animals," or global, such as "change" so that they theme serves as an organizing element to provide continuity and "connectedness" for learning.

Tracking: Fixed groups that are rigidly maintained overtime. This word is NOT synonymous with grouping.

Underachieving: A discrepancy between recognized potential and actual academic performance, which may result from social, emotional, physical, and/or academic problems.