



Information about Gifted Education



Tahoe Truckee Unified School District
Educational Services Division
Extensions and Interventions Programs

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TAHOE TRUCKEE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Pathways to Possibilities and Student Success

Robert J. Leri, Ed.D.

Superintendent Chief Learning Officer



District Office

11603 Donner Pass Rd.
Truckee, CA 96161-4953
(530) 582-2500
Fax: (530) 582-7606

Elementary Schools

Donner Trail Elementary
52755 Donner Pass Rd.
Kingvale, CA 95728
426-3639

Glenshire Elementary
10990 Dorchester Drive
Truckee, CA 96161
582-7675

Kings Beach Elementary
8125 Steelhead Ave.
Kings Beach, CA 96143
546-2605

Tahoe Lake Elementary
375 Grove St.
Tahoe City, CA
583-3010

Truckee Elementary
11911 Donner Pass Rd.
Truckee, CA 96161
582-2650

Intermediate Schools

Alder Creek Middle
10931 Alder Drive
Truckee, CA 96161
582-2750

North Tahoe 4-8
2945 Polaris Rd.
Tahoe City, CA 96145
581-7050

High Schools

Cold Stream Alternative
11661 Donner Pass Rd.
Truckee, CA 96161
582-0157

North Tahoe High
2945 Polaris Rd.
Tahoe City, CA 96145
581-7000

Sierra High
11661 Donner Pass Rd.
Truckee, CA 96161
582-2640

Tahoe Truckee High
11725 Donner Pass Rd.
Truckee, CA 96161
582-2600

Board Of Trustees

Dianna Driller,
Randy Hill,
Gaylan Larson,
Kirsten Livak,
Kim Szcurek

An Equal Opportunity

Tahoe Truckee



April 28, 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians:

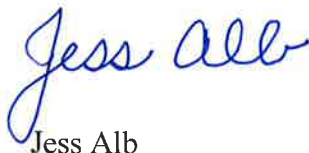
We are so happy that you are interested in learning more about the options that Tahoe Truckee Unified School District currently has for gifted education! We hope the information you find in this packet will be useful to you, as you become acquainted with our Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program.

Currently, TTUSD has programmatic options for GATE at most of our elementary schools, and North Tahoe School. These programs meet one hour a week (either before or after school based on parent and teacher need), and they service our formally identified GATE students grades 4-8.

This year we are excited to have a pilot program at Glenshire Elementary and Alder Creek Middle School for our accelerated learners. The Accelerated Learners Services (ALS) Pilot is designed to meet the needs of our accelerated students within their classrooms everyday regardless of a "GATE" designation. The GATE students at these sites have a designated period every day, which has a social-emotional as well as a creativity component.

Each site TK-8 (with the exception of Donner Trail Elementary) has a GATE Coordinator on site. If you would like more information, I would urge you to contact your site GATE Coordinator and set up an appointment. We look forward to helping you!

Thank you,



Jess Alb

Extensions and Interventions Programs Coordinator

Contact Information:

District Extensions and Interventions Programs Coordinator:

Jess Alb, jalb@ttusd.org, (530) 582-2530

Glenshire Elementary:

Karen Martin, kmartin@ttusd.org, (530) 582-7675

Kings Beach Elementary:

Molly Holiday, mholiday@ttusd.org, (530) 546-2605

Tahoe Lake Elementary:

Cathee Perkins, cperkins@ttusd.org, (530) 583-3010

Truckee Elementary:

Mardiece Patrick, mpatrick@ttusd.org, (530) 582-2650

Alder Creek Middle School:

Neysa Williams, nwilliams@ttusd.org, (530) 582-2750

North Tahoe School:

Doug Reid, dreid@ttusd.org, (530) 581-7050

GATE District Advisory Committee (G-DAC) Meetings*:

**G-DAC Meetings are on GATE policy and procedure.*

November 17, 2015

Event Location: TTUSD's District Office
Room: Board Room (childcare will be available)
Time: 6:00pm-7:00pm
Who Is Invited: All GATE Stakeholders

March 3, 2016

Event Location: TTUSD's District Office
Room: Board Room (childcare will be available)
Time: 6:00pm-7:00pm
Who Is Invited: All GATE Stakeholders

May 26, 2016

Event Location: TTUSD's District Office
Room: Room 8 (childcare will be available)
Time: 6:00pm-7:00pm
Who Is Invited: All GATE Stakeholders

Accelerated Learner Parent Workshops*:

**Parent workshops are about specific topics and strategies relating to gifted education*

October 28, 2015

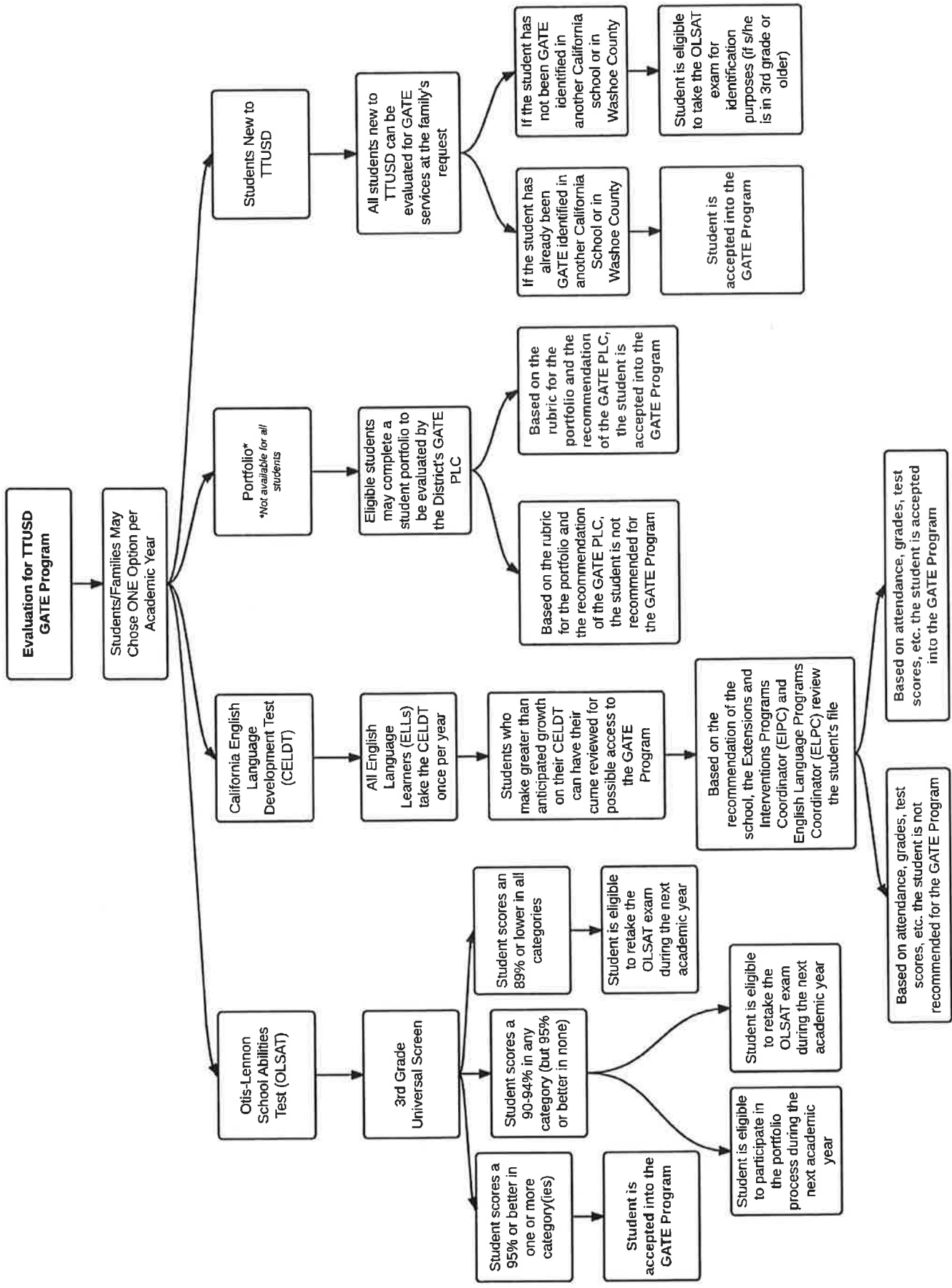
Topic: Mindsets and Student Achievement
Event Location: TTUSD's District Office
Room: Board Room (childcare will be available)
Time: 6:00pm-7:00pm
Who Is Invited: All are welcome

January 20, 2016

Topic: Executive Function and Your Child
Event Location: TTUSD's District Office
Room: Board Room (childcare will be available)
Time: 6:00pm-7:00pm
Who Is Invited: All are welcome

March 30, 2016

Topic: Procrastination and the Gifted Child
Event Location: TTUSD's District Office
Room: Board Room (childcare will be available)
Time: 6:00pm-7:00pm
Who Is Invited: All are welcome



Evaluation for TTUSD GATE Program 2014-2017

Tahoe Truckee Unified School District (TTUSD) students, grades 3-12, are eligible to be evaluated for the district's Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program once per academic year; there are four ways to be identified for gifted services. Once a student has been identified for gifted services in TTUSD, they are not required to be re-evaluated.

GATE Identification through the OLSAT:

The Otis-Lennon School Abilities Test (OLSAT) is an abilities test (i.e.: it measures potential), not an achievement test (i.e.: a test that measures what a student knows at any given point in time). The OLSAT is a nationally normed, standardized assessment, which measures a student's potential for verbal and non-verbal abilities.

All third graders are given the OLSAT as a universal screen (unless parents/guardians opt students out of testing) each year during the testing window (at the end of February) for identification for the GATE program the following Fall. Students who receive a score of 95% or better in any category are admitted to the GATE program. Students receive scores for their verbal and non-verbal abilities in both an age-normed and grade-normed situation (i.e.: they are compared to other students their age *and* to other students in their grade, who might be older or younger than them).

Students who receive a score of 90-94% in any category (but 95% or better in none) are eligible to complete the portfolio option the next academic school year, if interested. Students who receive a score of 89% or lower in all categories are eligible to retake the OLSAT the next academic year, during the testing window.

GATE Identification through the CELDT:

The California English Language Development Test (CELDT) is an assessment that all California English Language Learners (ELLs) must take each year in order to monitor their progress in English Language acquisition. Based on the progress that ELLs make on their CELDT tests (in conjunction with their scores on California state standards assessments, and class performance, as per the requirements from the California Department of Education), students can be re-classified as English Language Proficient (R-FEP) once they have demonstrated proficiency.

The average ELL takes approximately 5 years to progress from non-English Language Proficient to R-FEP, with an anticipated gain of one level of proficiency each year. Therefore, if a student makes "greater than anticipated growth" on their CELDT (i.e.: making 2 or more years' worth of growth in one year), they may have their cumulative file evaluated by the Extensions and Interventions Programs Coordinator (EIPC, who oversees the district's GATE program) and the English Language Programs Coordinator (ELPC, who oversees the English Language Development programming for the district), who (along with the student's school's recommendation), will determine the student's eligibility for the GATE program.

GATE Identification through the Portfolio Option:

Students who received a 90-94% on the OLSAT the year before are eligible to be evaluated for the GATE program by submitting a portfolio of student work. Students interested in completing the Portfolio Option should contact their school's GATE Coordinator for the specific requirements of the portfolio, which include: a cover letter introducing her-/himself and why s/he would like to be admitted to the GATE program; up to 4 pieces of student work that s/he is particularly proud of, with an explanation of the assignment and why s/he chose to include it; 1 choice piece which highlights an area of passion (past entries have included: videos, audio recordings, poetry, short stories, paintings, etc.); students must submit a writing sample based on a prompt they receive from the GATE Coordinator; and students must have one current and one past teacher complete the

Renzulli Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (which are to be submitted from the teachers directly to the EIPC).

Portfolios are evaluated by the District's GATE PLC, which is made up of district GATE Coordinators (from all TK-8 schools in the district), the EIPC, all site principals and the Executive Director of Educational Services. The rubric for evaluation will be placed in the cumulative files of students who participate in the Portfolio Option.

Please note: The GATE PLC reserves the right to update and revise the rubric for the portfolio each year based on the continuing development of the program and the needs of the students. At this time, the rubric is not available to students before portfolio evaluation because the GATE PLC does not want to limit the creativity of students and/or create a standardized "look" for what a portfolio should be.

I am new to TTUSD, what are the options for my child?

TTUSD students can only be evaluated for gifted services once per year, during the testing/portfolio windows. Students who are new to the district, however, can be evaluated (by taking the OLSAT or based on CELDT scores) at the request of the family when they enroll in the district, even if this is out of the testing window. Students who have been previously identified for gifted services within the State of California may provide proof of eligibility, and they will be admitted to the GATE program. Similarly, students who have been identified for gifted services in Washoe County (our sister district across the Nevada border) will also be admitted into the program.

What if my child does not qualify for GATE but needs something more rigorous than the regular curriculum?

This year TTUSD is piloting the Accelerated Learners Services (ALS) program at one of our elementary schools (Glenshire Elementary) and one of our middle schools (Alder Creek Middle School). The purpose of this pilot is to meet the academic needs of our accelerated students in the regular classroom whether they are GATE identified or not. Students will qualify for the program in a flexible way, that is, if they demonstrate that they have a need for accelerated/enriched curriculum in a particular subject through formative assessments (i.e.: they need acceleration in math), then they will "walk to learn." The walk to learn model allows students to walk to programs in different classes for different levels of challenge, depth and complexity, acceleration, etc. (i.e.: one 5th grade teacher may teach the regular math curriculum while her partner may teach an accelerated math class at the same time; students needing accelerated material will "walk" to the second teacher's room for this one subject, then return to their regular classroom when the lesson is completed).

Who do I contact with questions or for more information?

Please contact the district's Extensions and Interventions Programs Coordinator:

Jess Alb

11603 Donner Pass Rd

Truckee, CA 96161

530.582.2530

jalb@ttusd.org

New GATE Plan: Summary of the Changes:

Overall design/format of the plan
Program design
Identification Process
Curriculum and Instruction
Affective Dimension
Professional Development
Program Effectiveness
Appendices

Program Design

- Cluster grouping as a highly effective GATE strategy, where a cluster is 5 or more
- “GATE” identification includes academically gifted and high achieving students, and makes up approximately 10% of the student population (districtwide)
- District and site funding sources, with an option of a family supported field trip option
- Roles and responsibilities of administrators, teachers, parents and students
- The GATE PLC, G-DAC, the GATE Steering Committee, etc. as stakeholder groups
- Clearly articulated parent involvement piece

Identification Process

- Renzulli Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students and a portfolio for students that scored 90% or better on the OLSAT, but did not qualify
- Greater than expected progress on the CELDT
- Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) option for students TK-3 who have accelerated needs, but are not old enough to be identified for the GATE program
- An appeals and exit procedure

Curriculum and Instruction

- GATE does not have a curriculum per se, but this document does point teachers in the right direction by placing an emphasis on:
 - Differentiation
 - Clustering
 - Instructional contracts

- Curriculum compacting
- Acceleration, etc.
- The district may develop a vertically articulated GATE curriculum will be during the 2014-17 school years

Affective Dimension

- Gifted individuals have unique social-emotional needs
 - Administrators, counselors and teachers need to be trained in these needs, and be provided with strategies for working with students
 - Students with social-emotional needs that directly effect their ability to learn in the classroom need to have an SST, and possibly counseling
 - Students with behavior issues stemming from social-emotional needs will not be dropped from the GATE program

Professional Development

- All teachers will be trained in differentiated instruction
- All teachers with GATE clusters will receive additional training to support the needs of the students in their classes
- All administrators, counselors, GATE Coordinators and teachers of GATE clusters will receive specific training in the needs of gifted students
- Teachers will receive instruction on the social-emotional needs of the gifted

Program Effectiveness

- The GATE program will be evaluated annually for effectiveness
- The GATE Plan will be updated/revised every three years, and will need Board Approval
- All stakeholders will be able to “weigh in” on the formal, triennial, evaluation of the program

Appendices

- The purpose of the GATE Plan is to be a guiding document that can also be used to inform teachers and parents on best practices when working with gifted students
- Over the course of the next three years, the GATE PLC will be updating the plan to include Appendices that direct readers to the research behind the policies and procedures set forth in the GATE Plan



**Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Plan
2014-2017**

Tahoe Truckee Unified School District
Educational Services Division
Extensions and Interventions Programs
June 2014

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I. Program Design:

A. Philosophy and/or Mission Statement

1. District Vision

All Tahoe Truckee Unified School District scholars will be provided challenging and engaging learning opportunities in order to thrive and to be successful in a globally competitive age. This goal will be accomplished through collaboration with students, parents, staff, and the community, united in dedication to our children's future. Highly skilled, motivated and caring principals and teachers will engage scholars in effective and innovative instruction through a rigorous and relevant curriculum that promotes mastery of meaningful content, creativity, critical thinking, teamwork, problem solving, respect for diversity, the ability to communicate in multiple languages, and the effective use of technology. A culture of quality, accountability, responsibility, and respect shall characterize the school district.

2. GATE Philosophy

Tahoe Truckee Unified School District (TTUSD) **believes in** educating all students in a safe and supportive learning environment, promoting academic excellence and ethical and responsible citizenship, while building community and parent partnerships. With regard especially to the education of students identified by the district as gifted, the district recognizes that students with exceptionally high level of ability and/or achievement have unique educational needs. The district also recognizes that these students have unique characteristics and social/emotional needs, and that gifted students come from all cultural and economic backgrounds. The district has high expectations that all of its students will achieve district and state grade level standards, and provides opportunities for students who have the ability to exceed the standard to receive differentiated curriculum.

B. Goals and Objectives of the GATE Program

In accordance with the district's mission and philosophy (see Appendix A and Ed. Code 52200), the goals of TTUSD's GATE program are to:

- Provide unique learning opportunities for high-achieving and underachieving pupils in the district who are identified as gifted and talented, including differentiated instruction with the identified student's specific abilities and talents.
- Make special effort to ensure that pupils from economically disadvantaged and diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds be provided with full participation in these unique learning opportunities.
- Provide appropriate training and support for all staff that support students.

- Include program elements that help gifted and talented students develop healthy self-concepts, sensitivity and responsibility to others, and a commitment to constructive ethical standards.
- Provide parents and community with timely, accurate information on the district GATE program; opportunities and resources for learning more about GATE issues; and the opportunity and encouragement to become involved in program planning and evaluation.
- Include elements that assist gifted and talented students in developing problem-solving abilities and expand each pupil's awareness of choices for satisfying contributions in his or her environment.
- Continually improve the quality of the existing program for gifted and talented students through the use of an end-of-the-year program evaluation.

C. Description of Services

1. Service designs/models

The GATE program provides services that are an integral part of the school day; therefore, each school site will use cluster grouping as the primary grouping method for meeting the needs of all students. **An appropriate cluster group consists of a minimum of 5 gifted students per class.** In cluster groups, students are provided with the opportunity to work with intellectual peers and are provided with **opportunities** for continuous progress.

In addition to cluster grouping, teachers will use flexible grouping, leveling, and gifted students will receive differentiated instruction in their core curriculum. Teachers will receive training in differentiated instruction and methods for integrating differentiation for all students.

Based on the specific needs of the students at each elementary and middle school site with an active GATE program for grades 4-8, students will receive either before or after school enrichment programs **and/or pull-out programs,** which will include social and emotional group opportunities for gifted students to explore their feelings and concerns about being gifted. Teachers in TK-3 will be trained in the needs of gifted children so that they can provide differentiated instruction.

Middle and high schools will offer honors/advanced/accelerated groupings and/or classes, before/after school enrichment programs (**as appropriate by site and budget**), Advanced Placement courses, etc.

2. Range of student need

TTUSD recognizes that all students are unique, and may have a variety of different needs. TTUSD's GATE program currently includes "gifted" students (i.e.: those students in the top 3-5%) and high achievers, who (once combined) make up approximately 10% of grade-level students. Once students have been identified for gifted education, they retain their status, and do not have to be retested.

Students who qualify for gifted education in TTUSD are admitted to the program regardless of any other academic categories in which they may be identified (i.e.: English Language Learners, low socio-economic status, diagnosed with a learning disability, etc.).

D. Budget

1. District funding

GATE funds and/or funding sources are used to address:

- Professional development
- Direct student services **for academic and social-emotional needs**
- **Site level coordination**
- District level coordination
- GATE student identification process
- Parent involvement practices

A budget will be developed **annually** separate from this document. Funds that support these areas will supplement and not supplant district funds for all students, including gifted students.

Monies that have been allocated for GATE will not carryover. Since the state of California no longer provides a categorical budget for Gifted Education, there are no indirect costs that must be set aside for categorical compliance measures.

2. Site funding

Each site with a functioning GATE program will have a GATE allocation that will allow for the hourly funding of a GATE Coordinator (which will be governed by the TTEA Contract), and student materials.

Each site has the authority to fundraise and/or to work in conjunction with a parent group (i.e.: PTO or a GATE PTO) to fundraise for their specific program in general, or for a specific program component, such as field trips.

Each site has the choice to host an annual field trip that is funded with either site funds and/or parent/guardian donations and/or parent group donations. GATE field trips should be tied to the GATE curriculum, and be aligned with specific student interest. GATE Coordinators are required to follow all TTUSD policies and procedures for hosting a field trip.

E. Leadership

1. District designee (EIPC)

Tahoe Truckee Unified School District added the new position of Extensions and Interventions Programs Coordinator (EIPC) in 2013. This position is a TOSA (Teacher on Special Assignment) position that was created with the intent of offering sites more, and specialized, support in offering high-quality learning experiences to all students,

and in ensuring that our schools and district remain in compliance with both the state and federal government. One of the main focal points of the EIPC is accelerated learning (i.e.: GATE, Advanced Placement, accelerated learning programs, extensions and enrichment, etc.).

2. **Site designees (GATE Coordinators)**

Each TTUSD school site with an active GATE program will have a GATE Coordinator that is responsible for **providing gifted academic instruction, social-emotional education**, identification and testing coordination, **site support for differentiation, and other supports as needed.**

3. **Roles and Responsibilities**

a) **District administrators**

TTUSD district administrators are responsible for:

- **Aligning the goals and beliefs of the GATE Plan with the overall goals and beliefs of the district;**
- **Creating flexible policies regarding student placement and pathways in order to meet the individual needs of gifted students (including grade promotion/acceleration);**
- **Requiring specific training for teachers in differentiated instruction and/or the needs of gifted learners;**
- **Organizing services, programs, classes, personnel, and student placement opportunities in order to facilitate the delivery of advanced and differentiated curriculum;**
- **Overseeing the development of an affective curriculum that systematically addresses the social and emotional needs of the gifted, and ensuring that the curriculum is being taught effectively;**
- **Implementing a multifaceted identification plan that includes measures that are valid and reliable that will find those students with outstanding performance and those with potential for outstanding performance from all cultural groups and socio-economic backgrounds;**
- **Involve stakeholders in the planning of services, communicating about the GATE program, and designing the evaluation of the effectiveness of services.**

b) **Site administrators and coordinators**

Site administrators and coordinators are responsible for:

- **Aligning the site GATE program with the district GATE Plan;**

- **Facilitating the delivery of services for identified students, such as scheduling GATE classes, classes with GATE cluster groups, etc.;**
- **Providing leadership in the analysis of student achievement data;**
- **Providing in-depth training opportunities in gifted education to maximize both teacher and student performance, as funding allows;**
- **Addressing parental concerns for the appropriate academic challenge for individual gifted students.**

c) Classroom teachers

Classroom teachers are responsible for:

- **Using the developed curriculum and best practices for differentiating instruction for gifted students;**
- **Monitoring the achievement (not just grades) of gifted learners, and identifying potential “underachievers”;**
- **Addressing the social and emotional needs of gifted learners in the classroom in a sensitive and appropriate manner.**

d) Students

Students are responsible for:

- **Advocating for themselves for the most rigorous education they can receive;**
- **Working at their full potential, even when this exceeds the expectation of the assignment and/or teacher;**
- **Taking responsibility for their actions, feelings, interest, and lack of interest in the classroom setting;**
- **Being active participants in their education, and striving to become 21st century learners, who develop and maintain a strong work ethic.**

e) Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- **Supporting their students emotionally, and academically;**
- **Upholding the need to develop a strong work ethic despite the relative ease that their students may feel in school;**
- **Allowing their students to fail and struggle, and recognizing that this is an integral part of the learning and growing process for all students;**
- **Participating in their students’ academic careers, while still allowing them to have a sense of independence.**

4. Stakeholder Groups

a) *GATE PLC*

TTUSD's GATE PLC is a panel of experts and specialists that do the fact finding, research, and "ground work" necessary in order for TTUSD to offer effective, high-quality gifted education programming. The GATE PLC is composed of site administrators, the EIPC, and site GATE Coordinators. When recommendations for TTUSD's gifted education programs arise, it is the responsibility of the GATE PLC to research the recommendations and either vet them for recommendations for use in the district, or to provide research-based documentation to explain why the recommendation was rejected by the district.

b) *GATE Steering Committee*

TTUSD reserves the right to call a GATE Steering Committee to advise on GATE issues as needed. Should TTUSD feel the need to convene a GATE Steering Committee, the Extensions and Interventions Programs Coordinator will make a recommendation for participants to the Executive Director of Educational Services, who has final say on the personnel invited to participate. Should a GATE Steering Committee be convened, the following experts will be represented:

- The Extensions and Interventions Programs Coordinator
- A School Board Member
- A School Psychologist
- A Teacher/GATE Coordinator
- A Parent
- An Expert on Gifted Education (on retainer as a consultant, as funding allows)

The purpose of the GATE Steering Committee will be to weigh in on important issues surrounding gifted education in TTUSD, and to make recommendations to the GATE PLC. The GATE Steering Committee will also act as an advising committee to the School Board and the Chief Learning Officer Superintendent when necessary. This is a representative body, and will act upon data-based decision making models and best practices in gifted education.

c) *GATE District Advisory Council (G-DAC)*

The GATE District Advisory Council (G-DAC) (formerly called the "GATE Advisory Group") is a group that is made up of administrators, teachers, parents, students and community members who are dedicated to promoting the success of TTUSD's accelerated learners, and addressing the

unique needs that these remarkable scholars have. All are welcome to attend the meetings, and TTUSD welcomes the voice and opinions of participants as the group addresses the most pressing needs of academically gifted scholars.

The G-DAC will meet regularly (at least three times a year), and dates and times will be posted in advance for stakeholders. G-DAC meetings will be a place to collaborate, brainstorm and advise on issues related to all GATE, accelerated and AP students in TTUSD.

Each school site with an active GATE program will have at least one representative to the G-DAC. These representatives will relate matters related to the GATE Program to the School Site Council. The Extensions and Interventions Programs Coordinator will arrange for opportunities for parents to hear speakers on various topics related to gifted education and gifted students, as funding allows.

During years when the District GATE Plan is being revised (every three years), the G-DAC will play an integral role as the venue that TTUSD presents GATE needs, and stakeholders can offer feedback on GATE programs. All GATE Plans will be presented at the G-DAC meetings before being presented to the School Board for final approval of the plan.

5. **Parent Involvement**

TTUSD recognizes the integral role that parents/guardians and families play in the social, emotional and academic development of children. The district and/or school will provide parents/guardians and families of students identified as gifted and talented with orientation and regular updates regarding the program and its implementation by:

- **Parents/guardians will be informed of the district's criteria and procedures for identifying gifted and talented students;**
- **Parents/guardians will be informed of the program options and learning opportunities available for their identified students;**
- **The products of gifted students will be shared with parents/guardians in a variety of ways, including having student projects displayed at:**
 - School displays and programs
 - Back to School Night and Open House
 - Parent-Teacher Conferences;
- **Translations of policies and procedures will be provided in Spanish;**
- **The district GATE Plan will be available on the TTUSD website;**
- **Parents/guardians will be involved in the writing and revision of the GATE Plan;**

- Parents/guardians are invited to participate in the district's GATE District Advisory Council (G-DAC).

II. The Identification Process:

A. Purpose of Identification

According to the California Department of Education (CDE), the purpose of identification is to:

“[...] seek out and identify gifted and talented pupils from diverse linguistic, economic, and cultural backgrounds (CCR, Title 5 Section 3820) [...so that] districts [may] provide [them] a comprehensive continuum of services and program options responsive to the needs, interests, and abilities of gifted students based on philosophical, theoretical, and empirical support (EC 52205[d] and 52206[a]).”

Currently, TTUSD only identifies students for gifted educational services in areas of giftedness for which we provide services. TTUSD recognizes that giftedness may be found in any child regardless of race, culture, language, disability, or socio-economic level. All children are eligible for referral for identification.

B. Best Practices for Identification

1. Alignment of the identification process with Program Service areas

While the TTUSD will reserve the right to research identification in creative arts, leadership, and visual and performing arts in the future, TTUSD currently identifies students for services in academic areas of giftedness from grades 3-12, for programs that begin in grade 4

Middle school and high school students will have the opportunity to participate in school leadership, band and drama opportunities. High school students have the additional opportunity to be “identified” for athletic giftedness by trying out for junior varsity and varsity athletics.

2. Multifaceted assessment protocol

The district will establish and implement both traditional and nontraditional instruments and procedures for searching for gifted students. All data is used to ensure equal access to program services.

Students are eligible to be identified through multiple measures, which may include:

- Group testing with a norm-based standardized test, such as the OLSAT 8;
- Students that scored 90% or higher on the OLSAT 8, but did not meet the 95% criteria for GATE identification the following protocol may be requested and administered the next fall:

- **Students may request reevaluation for the GATE program by the GATE PLC by completing all of the following:**
 - **A scientifically evaluated teacher and parent checklist, specifically, the Renzulli Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students, and**
 - **A portfolio that is representative of the student's best work, which includes a portfolio evaluation by the GATE PLC;**
 - **Both the checklist and the portfolio are due to the site GATE Coordinator by the last day of the first trimester if the student is to be admitted to the GATE program for the year that the Renzulli Scales and portfolio are submitted. Scales and portfolios that are submitted after the last day of the first trimester will be evaluated for the following school year.**
- **Students that are not admitted into the GATE program based on the results of the Renzulli Scales and student portfolio will be eligible to take the OLSAT8 in the February window *if* prior arrangements are made with the GATE Coordinator by February 1st.**
 - **Greater than expected progress over one or more years on the CELDT (or equivalent exam);**
 - **Teachers of TK-3 who recognize the need for an accelerated learning plan for their students, prior to formal GATE identification, may call for a Student Study Team (SST) in order to outline an individualized learning plan (ILP) that is appropriate for the learning needs of their students**

3. Assessments that are valid and reliable

All standardized tests that will be considered for GATE identification (i.e.: the OLSAT 8 and the CELDT), will be nationally normed tests that have a significant body of research to suggest their validity and reliability. The teacher and parent checklists that are used for the identification of GATE students (i.e.: the Renzulli Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students) and/or to determine if grade promotion/acceleration is appropriate for a student (i.e.: the Iowa Acceleration Scales) will be nationally known, scientifically-based scales that have been vetted through valid, reliable and longitudinal research.

C. Selection Procedures

1. Assessment process

Students may be identified for gifted education based on multiple measures. For TTUSD, the ways that students can qualify for gifted education include:

- **Scoring 95% or higher on either the verbal or non-verbal sections of the OLSAT 8**
 - The OLSAT 8 testing window falls in February each year. All third grade students are given the OLSAT 8 during the regular school day (unless parents deny consent);
- **Students that score a minimum of 90% in either their verbal or non-verbal scores of the OLSAT 8, may be invited to submit a portfolio of student work for the GATE PLC to review, in addition to student evaluation using the Renzulli Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (recommendations for a gifted education program are subject to proprietary scoring). Based on the findings of the GATE PLC, the student submitting the portfolio will either receive a recommendation for gifted education or a letter explaining why the student did not receive a recommendation;**
- **Students that make greater than expected progress over one or more years on the CELDT (or equivalent exam) will be recommended to the gifted education program.**
- **A parent/guardian of a student that enters into the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District after 3rd grade, may request for their student to be tested for gifted education services with the OLSAT 8 outside of the testing window. If the parent/guardian would like an alternative measurement for GATE services (that appears in the list above), the student will be able to participate in the Renzulli Scales and portfolio evaluation during the normal February window. Any student may request a review of their CELDT scores at any time during the school year.**

2. Appeals and exit procedures

Unless parents/guardians request that their student *not* participate in GATE testing, all third grade TTUSD students will be given the OLSAT 8 test during the testing window. Any student who does not qualify for the GATE program may be referred for re-evaluation (in any of the above evaluative formats) after one full year has passed since his/her last evaluation. Students may be evaluated for gifted education once per year from grades three through eight.

Students that qualify for GATE services are not required to receive services. GATE identified students are invited to participate in any GATE program that is offered at the site that the student currently attends.

Once a student is identified as a GATE student, he/she remains identified as a GATE student in the district, and is eligible for GATE services through 12th grade. When issues of behavior and/or underachievement arise, the site uses parent-teacher-student conferences and/or the Student Study Team (SST) process to assess the situation and plan interventions for the student. Students may be placed in a different cluster, flexible group, or classroom if needed to meet their academic needs.

At this time, TTUSD does not offer specific GATE programing at high school (i.e.: a program that includes social-emotional support). TTUSD reserves the right to evaluate the need for a GATE program at the high school level; therefore, students are not officially exited from the GATE program after completing eighth grade in TTUSD. While specific social-emotional support programs are not offered at the high school level, honors/advanced and Advanced Placement (AP) courses are currently offered at all high schools in TTUSD for students who want to push themselves academically.

III. Curriculum and Instruction:

A. Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum in Tahoe Truckee Unified School District is based on **California Common Core** standards and is differentiated to meet the needs, abilities, and interests of individual students. District-adopted language arts, math, history/social science, and science curriculum is aligned to state standards, **and new adoptions will be California Common Core aligned**, and include challenge activities for advanced students. In addition, district training in differentiated instruction provides practice in recognizing and implementing appropriate differentiated curriculum. Annual analysis of students' standardized test scores, student scores on district standards-based report cards, and curriculum embedded assessments, allow administrators and teachers to document the achievement levels of students in relation to core curriculum standards. While some teachers in the district are experts at differentiated curriculum, many still need further training. Technology such as Accelerated Reader, software for independent study, **etc. will be** used to support differentiated instruction, **as funding allows.**

B. Best practices for Curriculum and Instruction

The differentiated curriculum provides for the balanced development of critical, creative, problem solving and research skills, advanced content, and authentic and appropriate products. In their lesson plans, teachers will provide opportunities for students to assimilate content and to use higher level thinking skills, research skills, and authentic and appropriate product development. The differentiated curriculum is scheduled on a regular basis and is integral to the school day. Teachers will use the following groups to assist in making differentiated instruction a part of the regular school day: cluster grouping, flexible grouping, RtI² groups, leveling, concurrent enrollment, **separate enrichment programs.**

The differentiated curriculum focuses primarily on depth and complexity of content, advanced or accelerated pacing of content and novelty (unique and original expressions of student understanding). A main focus of the district's training in differentiated instruction will be depth and complexity, acceleration and novelty. The structure of differentiated curriculum allows for continuity and comprehensiveness of learning experiences in units and courses of study. The following strategies will be used to support differentiated instruction: core curriculum strategies for advanced learners; depth, complexity, acceleration and novelty; Socratic seminar at middle and high school, **etc.**

The differentiated curriculum facilitates development of ethical standards, positive self-concepts, sensitivity and responsibility to others, and contributions to society. The following groupings will provide opportunities to discuss ethical standards, positive self-concepts, sensitivity and responsibility to others, etc.: cooperative and collaborative groups, flexible groups, cluster groups, RtI² groups, social-emotional groups (**as part of the GATE curriculum**).

There will be opportunities for the core curriculum to be compacted for gifted students so that learning experiences are developmentally appropriate (not redundant) to their needs, interests, and abilities. Teachers trained in differentiated instruction will use the following strategies: compacting, tiered assignments, **instructional contracts**, acceleration, **and other research-based strategies as appropriate.**

There **will be** alignment of the differentiated curriculum with instructional strategies that promote inquiry, self-directed learning, discussion, debate, metacognition, and other appropriate modes of learning. Teachers will be trained in differentiated instruction that will provide universal understanding of strategies that promote inquiry. The differentiated curriculum includes learning theories that reinforce the needs, interests, and abilities of gifted students including abstract thinking and big ideas of content area. The differentiated instruction training will provide strategies in learning theory that reinforce the needs, interests, and abilities of gifted students.

The differentiated curriculum is planned both for groups of gifted learners within a grade level or class and for individual gifted learners. Teachers plan grade level and class units of instruction for use in differentiated instruction. The differentiated curriculum utilizes a variety of teaching and learning patterns: large and small group instruction, homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping, teacher and student directed learning, and opportunities for independent study. The following teaching **strategies** will be used to support differentiated instruction: pair share, leveled groups, centers, literature circles, **and other research-based strategies as appropriate.**

A scope and sequence for the gifted program articulates the significant learning in content, skills, and products within and among grade levels TK-12. A curriculum guide will be developed during the period between 2014 and 2017 if funds are available.

An extensive range of resources (including out of grade level print and non-print materials) is available to augment differentiated curriculum and to supplement independent study opportunities for individual students. Lack of

funding prohibits the purchase of extensive resources, however **each site has a wide range of materials that can be used or adapted for the use of gifted and advanced learners.**

IV. Affective Dimension (Social-Emotional):

A. Purpose of the Affective Dimension

Actions to meet the affective needs of gifted students are ongoing. Teachers, parents, administrators, and counselors are provided with information and training regarding the characteristics of gifted learners and their related social and emotional development, which will include: professional development, parent information meetings, G-DAC meetings, etc.

B. Best Practices for the Affective Dimension

1. Professional development and informational sessions

School psychologists and counselors need to be aware of the needs of gifted children, and should attend the professional development provided for teachers and administrators. Teachers **will be** trained and knowledgeable regarding social and emotional development of gifted students, and incorporate techniques to support affective learning in their classrooms. Within the next three years, with adequate funding, the district will provide training in the social-emotional needs of gifted children.

Teachers **will be** trained to recognize symptoms of at-risk behavior in gifted and talented students and to refer them to appropriate school personnel. If funding is available, certificate courses or individual courses may be offered. Student Study Teams (SSTs) may be convened to discuss at-risk challenges of gifted students.

2. Common social and emotional characteristics

TTUSD recognizes that many gifted students have unique social and emotional needs. Teachers in grades TK-12 will be trained in the needs of gifted children. **Not all gifted students exhibit social and emotional needs, and not all gifted students with social and emotional needs have the same needs or the same degree of need. Many of the most common social and emotional needs of gifted students include (but are not limited to):**

- **Dabrowski's Overexcitabilities**
 - **Psychomotor Overexcitability**
 - **Sensual Overexcitability**
 - **Intellectual Overexcitability**
 - **Imaginational Overexcitability**
 - **Emotional Overexcitability**
- **Intensity**
- **Perfectionism**

- **Executive Function delays and/or deficiencies**
- **Idealism and depression, etc.**

Schools with active GATE programs have social and emotional groups, which provide the opportunity for gifted students to explore their feelings and concerns about being gifted. As funding allows, TTUSD may investigate other avenues of support for the social and emotional needs of gifted students and their families.

3. **Social and psychological well-being**

Guidance and counseling services appropriate to the social and emotional needs of gifted students are provided by trained personnel. Referral services to community resources are made when appropriate. Students who need guidance and counseling for social and emotional needs will be referred to a Student Study Team (SST) at the student's school site. Counselors and psychologists are available to support all gifted students.

Administrators, teachers and families may consult with GATE Coordinators and/or the Extensions and Interventions Programs Coordinator for suggestions for strategies, resources, and non-TTUSD programs that may be appropriate for the individual needs of their gifted students.

Gifted students considered at-risk **can** receive counseling and support services and **will** not be dropped from gifted programs because of related problems. Students who are supported through various groupings can be moved to other groupings if necessary to meet the concerns of the at-risk behaviors and academic issues. Teachers and principals will inform parents of changes in a student's placement, as a result of at-risk issues. Students who have at-risk issues will receive appropriate interventions and placement, but will remain identified as "gifted."

4. **Intrinsic motivation**

TTUSD recognizes that a well-developed GATE program will facilitate intrinsic motivation skills by fostering an enthusiasm for learning, providing opportunities for choice, and allowing students to fail in a "safe" way. Independence skills will also be developed including time management, organization, self-regulation, etc.

5. **Differentiated college and career guidance activities**

Gifted students **will be** provided awareness opportunities of career and college options and guidance consistent with their unique strengths. At the secondary level, this includes mentoring and pre-college opportunities. Gifted students in the middle and secondary levels are provided some awareness opportunities of career and college options and guidance through the school counseling programs and staffed career centers.

V. Professional Development:

A. Purpose of Professional Development

Training for gifted education is an integral part of the professional development training for differentiation, Professional Learning Communities, and RtI². All teachers will receive training in differentiated instruction. Individuals chosen to conduct training for teachers will have knowledge and expertise in gifted education. Teachers who have GATE cluster groups will receive professional development in gifted education. The **Executive Director of Educational Services** and the coordinator of GATE programs will participate in the professional development provided for the teachers and principals. Administrators and counselors will be expected to attend the professional development provided for teachers. The district promotes the concept of teacher-to-teacher professional development in addition to contracting experts to conduct in-service.

B. Best Practices for Professional Development

Administrators, teachers and GATE Coordinators have specific knowledge about gifted children, and know how to meet their needs. The areas of professional knowledge required to work with gifted students include:

- **Foundations of gifted education,**
- **Development and characteristics of learners with gifts and talents,**
- **Instructional strategies,**
- **Learning environments and social interactions,**
- **Language and communication,**
- **Instructional planning,**
- **Assessment,**
- **Professional and ethical practice, and**
- **Collaboration**

All staff will be required to attend Differentiation Professional Development.

Teachers that have clusters in their classes will receive additional training in differentiation and the social-emotional needs of the gifted.

VI. Program Effectiveness:

A. Purpose of Evaluating Program Effectiveness

All components of the program **will be** periodically reviewed by individuals knowledgeable about gifted learners and who have competence in the evaluation process, including: site principals, **the EIPC**, teachers, parents, GATE Coordinators, etc. The program assessment process is structured to measure the **goals and standards of the program**; instruments used are valid and reliable for their intended purpose. The program will be evaluated using the state standardized testing data, OLSAT 8 and **CELDT** scores (all of which are valid and reliable). Parent surveys and **portfolio analysis** are not standardized instruments but will provide anecdotal data useful to the evaluation process.

B. Best Practices for Evaluating Program Effectiveness

1. Program cohesiveness

When evaluating program effectiveness, each individual part of the GATE plan should be evaluated individually as well as in relation to each other (i.e.: identification of gifted students should be evaluated as an individual category, and then also in relation to services provided, demographics of students in the program, etc.) in order to ensure efficacy of the program as well as program cohesiveness.

2. Meeting cognitive and affective needs

Parent surveys and teacher checklists will provide information about the affective dimension of gifted students' performance. GATE Coordinators will also gather qualitative and quantitative data from site counselors about the social-emotional health of our gifted students (which may include: attendance data, behavior/disciplinary data, dropout rates, etc.).

3. Perceptions of the program by stakeholders and nonparticipants

TTUSD is very interested in the feedback of GATE stakeholders. Since TTUSD is a data-driven district, it is the quantitative and qualitative data that is gathered through parent/guardian surveys, parent outreach, conversations with families and their students, administrators and Board members, etc. that is instrumental in creating and maintaining a high-quality gifted education program.

4. Timeline and process for regular evaluation

The GATE program will be evaluated yearly under the direction of the Executive Director of Educational Services. An annual report of the evaluation will be available at school sites in the School Site plans and will be presented to the School Board upon request.

5. Revision of the GATE Plan

The TTUSD GATE Plan will be reviewed, evaluated, and revised every three years. As a part of the revision process, key stakeholders (including administrators, teachers, parents, the GATE PLC, G-DAC, etc.) will have the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of the current program (through both quantitative and qualitative measures). The revised GATE Plan will ultimately be presented to the School Board for approval.

VII. Appendices

A. Notes and References

1. Appendix A: TTUSD's Strategic Plan 2020

B. Forms

1. Board Policies
2. Program Forms

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