Gifted and Talented and Accelerated Programs
Parent Handbook
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Introduction

The purpose of the San Juan Unified School District Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Handbook is to provide a complete source of information about the various aspects of the diverse programs for our Gifted and Talented students. While different in nature, these programs take a focused approach toward reaching students who are creative, innovative, and equipped to successfully lead our nation into an increasingly complex global society. This guide is a resource for present and prospective families of students that are identified as Gifted and Talented as well as families interested in accelerated programs. It has been specifically designed to include current research based information as well as explain identification, services, timelines and address some frequently asked questions.

We look forward to working together as we continue to ensure the success of our students.

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Not every child has an equal talent or an equal ability or equal motivation, but children have the equal right to develop their talent, their ability, and their motivation.
— John F. Kennedy
What is Giftedness?

**Defining Giftedness and Characteristics of Giftedness**

According to the California Association for the Gifted: "Compared to their age peers, GATE students usually learn at a faster pace, use a large vocabulary, ask many questions, and need activities that are complex and challenging. They may also be highly sensitive, creative and intense. These are only some of the characteristics of a GATE student.”

http://www.cagifted.org/

A gifted person is one who demonstrates or has the potential of displaying an extraordinary level of performance in one or more areas. These abilities can be very broad or can be from other aspects of the person’s life such as leadership skills or creativity. Others are very specialized talents such as an aptitude for mathematics, writing, science, or music. It is commonly recognized that about five percent of the student population is considered gifted. Exceptional talents are prevalent in children and youth from all linguistic, racial, ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic backgrounds.

It is common for a gifted child to demonstrate several of these qualities:

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

Bright or high-achieving students are often "rule followers". They are able to read circumstances, know what is anticipated, and carry out expectations to a high level. These students often get high grades, complete all work, and are excellent citizens. Gifted children can be "rule benders" or push the envelope of expectations. This chart from Challenge Magazine might help you recognize and distinguish some of these traits.

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

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

Some Common Myths About Gifted Students
• Gifted students are a homogeneous group, all high achievers.
• Gifted students do not need help. If they are really gifted, they can manage on their own.
• Gifted students have fewer problems than others because their intelligence and abilities somehow exempt them from the hassles of daily life.
• The future of a gifted student is assured: a world of opportunities lies before the student.
• Gifted students are self-directed; they know where they are heading.
• The social and emotional development of the gifted student is at the same level as his or her intellectual development.
• Gifted students are social isolates.
• The primary value of the gifted student lies in his brain power.
• The gifted student's family always prizes his or her abilities.
• Gifted students need to serve as examples to others and they should always assume extra responsibility.
• Gifted students make everyone else smarter.
• Gifted students can accomplish anything. All they have to do is apply themselves.
• Gifted students are naturally creative and do not need encouragement.
• Gifted children are easy to raise and a welcome addition to any classroom.
Truths About Gifted Students

• Gifted students are often perfectionistic and idealistic. They may equate achievement and grades with self-esteem and self-worth, which sometimes leads to fear of failure and interferes with achievement.
• Gifted students may experience heightened sensitivity to their own expectations and those of others, resulting in guilt over achievements or grades perceived to be low.
• Gifted students are asynchronous. Their chronological age, social, physical, emotional, and intellectual development may all be at different levels. For example, a 5-year-old may be able to read and comprehend a third-grade book but may not be able to write legibly.
• Some gifted children are "mappers" (sequential learners), while others are "leapers" (spatial learners). Leapers may not know how they got a "right answer." Mappers may get lost in the steps leading to the right answer.
• Gifted students may be so far ahead of their chronological age mates that they know more than half the curriculum before the school year begins. Their boredom can result in low achievement and grades.
• Gifted children are problem solvers. They benefit from working on open-ended, interdisciplinary problems; for example, how to solve a shortage of community resources.
• Gifted students often think abstractly and with such complexity that they may need help with concrete study- and test-taking skills. They may not be able to select one answer in a multiple-choice question because they see how all the answers might be correct.
• Gifted students who do well in school may define success as getting an "A" and failure as any grade less than an "A." By early adolescence they may be unwilling to try anything where they are not certain of guaranteed success.

Adapted from College Planning for Gifted Students, 2nd edition, by Sandra Berger. 2000 ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education
Gifted and Talented Education Purpose Statements

San Juan Unified Mission Statement:
Valuing diversity and excellence, the San Juan Unified School District’s mission is to educate and inspire each student to succeed and responsibly contribute to a radically evolving world by providing innovative, rigorous, student-focused instruction and programs in a safe, caring, and collaborative learning community.

San Juan School District believes that all Gifted and Talented students, including those from diverse socioeconomic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, should be provided with quality academic learning experiences. These experiences should be challenging and enriching and meet each student’s particular abilities and talents. Inherent in this philosophy is that focus on recognizing our responsibility to meet needs of students who show and have the potential of showing, an exceptional level of performance in one or more areas of expression.

Goals for Gifted Education in San Juan Unified:

• Offer equitable, high quality, differentiated learning opportunities for the GATE identified students to reach their full affective and academic potential
• Support students in expanding their capabilities to convey and employ their ideas successfully
• Ensure that gifted education services are an integral part of the general education program.
• Provide for the social and emotional needs of advanced learners.
• Recognize and foster diverse abilities and talents.
• Deliver comprehensive professional development for teachers specific to the needs of gifted learners.

School Based Services for Gifted and Talented Students

San Juan Unified School District’s GATE Program serves students in regular K-12 classes through cluster grouping and differentiation using an individualized student learning plan as well as self-contained Rapid Learner classes in grades 2-6. International Baccalaureate, Honors and AP classes as well as post-secondary opportunities are available to serve students in secondary.

Rapid Learner Program

The Rapid Learner Program is a specially designed program for GATE elementary students grade 2-6. Students who are identified are then given priority using the weighted criteria (see Appendix B). The purpose of the program is to meet the specialized needs of GATE students with respect to their cognitive development, their social development and their emotional needs. Students in the RL Program receive instruction one grade level above their current placement in language arts and math. For example, students in a 2nd grade classroom, receive instruction in 3rd grade standards. Teachers provide grade level instruction in science and social studies while integrating a curriculum that is rich in depth, complexity and novelty. Strands of deep-thinking inquiry and problem solving are constant across advanced coursework. The goal of the three RL schools is to allow GATE students to achieve their maximum potential in an environment with like-minded peers, however integration with general education students occurs as well.
Throughout the Rapid Learner program emphasis is placed on the social and emotional aspects of learning by working with various theories of development including, but not limited to, Piaget and Vygotsky. Students scrutinize and weigh social and ethical issues in literature, science and social studies as well as behaviors with and among their peers.

San Juan Unified School District has three Rapid Learner Elementary sites: Del Paso Manor, Deterding Elementary and Pershing Elementary.

**Del Paso Manor:** The students in the Del Paso Manor Rapid Learner Program are engaged in a high quality learning experience. All students' abilities and talents are recognized and encouraged so that each student has the opportunity to reach his or her maximum potential. The program features an accelerated curriculum rich in complexity, depth and creativity, which also fosters sensitivity and responsibility. The unique nature of Del Paso Manor's Rapid Learner Program assists students in becoming life-long learners.

![Del Paso Manor](image)

**Deterding Elementary:** Deterding Elementary meets the advanced learning needs of gifted students while stimulating their intellectual curiosity and artistic abilities. With inquiry-based instruction, students master accelerated skills, then apply their knowledge using critical and
creative thinking. The academic curriculum is interwoven with a strong tradition of excellence in visual and performing arts.

Pershing Elementary: The Rapid Learner Program teaches an accelerated academic curriculum in every subject except social studies and science, which are at grade level. In all subjects, supplemental materials extend and enrich the text, allowing teachers to push intellectual and social development. Students entering the program at the second grade level are working 1-2 years above grade level upon completion of the program in sixth grade.

Mary A. Deterding
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Carmichael, CA 95608
(916) 575-2338
GATE Services in Elementary

GATE identification formally occurs late in 1st grade. Classroom teachers are able to integrate differentiation for their gifted students within the classroom utilizing the individualized student-learning plan (See Appendix A). The plan is shared at the first parent conference to allow for parent input and support in modifying curriculum and instruction as needed to accommodate the needs of the student. A copy of the plan will need to be included in the student’s cumulative records. This in-class differentiation can sometimes be hard for parents to recognize. Three of the components that are most often associated with differentiation are:

- **Content** – altering what is being taught; putting more depth into the curriculum, using universal concepts to create broader understanding, etc.
- **Process** – changing how it is being taught; using varied resources at differing levels, flexible groupings, varying instructional strategies, etc.
- **Product** – having different outcomes (i.e., how the student
demonstrates understanding of the lesson); providing choice in product, varying assignments or levels of assessment.

Not every lesson will be differentiated and not every lesson will vary content, process, and product. Ongoing assessment helps teachers evaluate who needs an assignment altered, and how a lesson should be taught.

In addition to differentiation throughout the day, each site has a different way of developing the strengths of our GATE students. Several sites have added clubs, opportunities for leadership, project based learning or extension activities. Each site determines how they will serve the unique needs of GATE children. Please inquire about the site-specific GATE services with your elementary school administrator.

**GATE Services in Middle School**

Middle School specialized programs meet the needs of our GATE students; however, are accessible to all high achieving students who meet the rigorous academic criteria (See Appendix B). All middle schools in San Juan Unified School District, excluding Winston Churchill, offer Honors courses. Winston Churchill Middle School
offers the International Baccalaureate Programme. Placement into these programs is done through the Office of Student Learning Assistance.

**Middle School Honors Program:** Students who have demonstrated high achievement, interest, and/or potential in one or more academic areas may be ready to take Honors classes. Enrollment in Honors classes would take place in the spring during the course selection process. At that time, sites would assist students in choosing which science, English and/or social studies Honors classes will best meet their academic needs.

The curriculum and instruction in Honors classes extends and enriches through best practices. Classes are designed to engage and challenge advanced learners, e.g. problem-based learning, research, and investigations. Honors classes provide opportunities to build on individual academic strengths, develop critical and creative thinking skills, and prepare students for advanced coursework in high school, i.e. Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate at Mira Loma, or traditional High School Honors courses.

**International Baccalaureate Programme:** The IB Middle Years Programme begins at Winston Churchill Middle School and continues at Mira Loma High School. The IB Middle Years Programme, for students aged 11 to 16, provides a framework of academic challenge. The purpose of IBMYP is to provide a thorough study of the various core disciplines, a holistic view of knowledge, intercultural awareness and communication, and the development of global ethics and values. The aim is to awaken the intelligence of students and teach them to recognize relationships between school subjects and the world outside the school walls by combining knowledge, experience and critical observations. Along with a rigorous core curriculum, students are involved in community service, high school level courses in a second language, and involvement in visual and performing arts. Students who
meet the IB criteria (See Appendix B) are sent letters in the fall notifying their families of their eligibility for the program. Parents are asked to return a letter of intent by November. Acceptance letters are sent out in the winter. Accepted students are placed into the program by Student Learning Assistance and do not need to contact San Juan Central for the Open Enrollment process. Our International Baccalaureate schools are known for their rigorous college preparatory program.

GATE Services at High School

High School specialized programs meet the needs of our GATE students; however, are accessible to all high achieving students who meet the rigorous academic criteria. All High Schools in San Juan Unified School District, offer AP courses. Mira Loma High School offers the International Baccalaureate Programme.

**Honors:** Honors courses offer more rigorous and in-depth coursework to especially talented and driven students. In order to sign up for an honors course, students need to demonstrate talent, motivation, and a strong record in basic courses in the same subject. These classes can offer GATE students the opportunity to flourish in the secondary school environment. Parents who want to request enrollment in Honors classes should meet with a counselor at their high school during spring registration for fall classes.

**Advanced Placement Courses:** Advanced placement courses are classes, which are tailored for students who intend to take an advanced placement exam. These exams are used to allow students to skip over
basic prerequisites in college by demonstrating that they know the material. These courses are taught at the college level and are available at all High Schools. Grades in AP classes are based on a 5-point scale (weighted), rather than the typical 4-point scale. In addition, students may receive college credit for successfully completing AP classes and making an appropriate score on AP tests. After the freshman year, entrance requirements for AP classes are based upon teacher recommendation and academic performance. These classes are accelerated and appropriate for GATE students as well as other students who are achieving at a high academic level. Parents who want to request enrollment in AP classes should meet with a counselor at their high school during spring registration for fall classes.

**IB Diploma Programme:** The IB Diploma program is offered at Mira Loma High School. This is a challenging academic program in which students meet the highest academic standards, develop critical thinking skills and learn to see themselves in an international context. Mira Loma has one of the most successful diploma programs in the country, routinely testing with a passage rate at or above ninety percent. All applications for the High School IB Programme are completed through Mira Loma.

**CIVITAS:** Rio Americano High School, offers Academia CIVITAS, a four-year program of political studies. The Civitas program provides students with advanced and specialized learning in the social sciences and an enriched sense of citizenship. The mission of the program is prepare students to be active, responsible, knowledgeable citizens who accept their role as civic minded adults. In addition to completing the SJUSD graduation requirements, CIVITAS students complete a minimum of 6 semesters of specialized courses. CIVITAS is a college preparatory program. All applications for CIVITAS are done through Rio Americano.
Testing and Identification

**First Grade GATE Naglieri Testing:** Universal testing occurs for all district 1st graders unless parents “opt out.” The first grade assessment tool used in San Juan is the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) which is administered to all first graders. It is a group ability test that does not require English language skills and knowledge that is taught in school. This test allows students to demonstrate their ability to think and reason by figuring out problems that are presented through a complex series of geometric shapes and designs. The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test allows students to demonstrate advanced levels of reasoning without word knowledge, mathematics, or reading skills. The content of the test is completely nonverbal, the instructions are brief, and the questions may be solved using only the information that is presented in each diagram. Students practice sample questions as part of the test preparation. Sample tests are not commercially available. The best test preparation is a good night's sleep and a healthy breakfast. Testing generally occurs in January. Students who score in the 97th percentile and above are identified as GATE students and parents are sent notification in March.

**California Standards Tests:** Students within the top 2 percent of total scale scores California Standards Tests in English Language Arts and Mathematics combined for the specific grade level will be identified GATE. Parents receive CST scores over the summer and then parent letters of GATE identification are sent out in September. The specific scaled scores needed for identification will be posted on the website each year.
**Standardized Tests:** Students can be identified GATE if they score in the 95th percentile or higher on both reading comprehension and total mathematics on the Stanford 10 (SAT/10) or the California Achievement Test 6 (CAT/6) or 95th percentile or higher on both reading comprehension and total mathematics on another norm-referenced test with up to date norms.

**Full Scale IQ Tests:** Students who have a full-scale IQ score of 130 on the Wechsler or full-scale IQ score of 132 on the Stanford-Binet test assessed by a licensed psychologist can be identified as gifted.

**Other District Identification:** San Juan Unified will accept GATE identification from students who can show that they were identified in another district.
Gifted children come with challenges as well. Parents are the most influential teachers a child will have, and teachers rely on building a successful partnership in order to create the most positive environment for learning. Parental involvement in a child’s continuing education is fundamental, particularly in the areas of motivation, reinforcement, emotional stability, and enrichment.

- Inform yourself, once your child is identified, about the characteristics, feelings, and challenges of gifted children. Investigate the resources listed in this guide. Books will be available for check-out through the Parent Resource Center at San Juan Central.

- Value the process of learning, not only the end results, and model learning from your own mistakes and challenges. Bright children often become familiar to success and quick results. It’s important they learn that not all their goals or desires will be met easily. By learning to cope with difficult challenges, where success is not immediate, your child will develop the persistence to handle the increasing demands of school and life in general.

- Be an active listener, particularly when difficulties arise. Make sure that you understand the child’s concerns and point of view before trying to offer advice. What may not seem important to you, may be a big deal to a child, especially with the intenseness of some gifted children.

- Encourage your child to attempt and persevere in areas that he may struggle. This may help him understand that he need not be perfect, while also developing empathy for others who find it difficult to excel and gain appreciation for those whose talents are different from their own.
• Allow children to do things that they can do (or can be helped to do) for themselves. The primary job of parenting is preparing a child for independence.
• Provide enrichment but don’t over-schedule your child -- and don't let an older child over-schedule him or herself. Everyone needs time to think, to plan, and most of all, to dream.
• Volunteer and get involved in your child’s education. Parents are needed to teach after-school GATE enrichment classes and provide expertise and enrichment in the classroom. Talk to your child’s teacher about how you can help.
• Advocate for your child but be wary of living through your child. All parents want the best for their children, but your child’s goals and dreams may be very different from the ones that you have for them.
• Remember most of all, that gifted children are first and foremost…children.

**GATE Advisory Committee**

Parents are encouraged to attend the Gifted And Talented Education Advisory Committee. The committee supports the needs of the GATE program as well as reviews and provides input on the implementation and development of GATE programming and evaluation. Members include interested parents/guardians, teachers and administrators. The committee meets three times a year and all parents of GATE students are invited to attend. The meeting dates are posted on the website.
Resources

The resources below are not sponsored by San Juan Unified School District although they may be used as additional resources.

Organizations

**California Association of the Gifted:** is an organization of educators, parents, and community members dedicated to meeting the unique academic and social-emotional needs of gifted and talented students. [http://www.cagifted.org/](http://www.cagifted.org/)

**Gifted Child Society:** A non-profit organization founded in 1957 to further the cause of gifted children. The Society has served over 40,000 children and their families. [www.Gifted.org](http://www.Gifted.org)

**International Baccalaureate Organization:** A world wide program. Maintains an office at 200 Madison Avenue, Suite 2007, New York, NY 10016, (212)696-44464. [www.IBO.org](http://www.IBO.org)

**TAG Family Network:** An organization by and for parents, it disseminates information, supports parents, monitors and influences legal issues. [www.teleport.com/~rkaltwas/tag](http://www.teleport.com/~rkaltwas/tag)
Books

You Know Your Child is Gifted When....: A Beginner’s Guide to Life on the Bright Side by Judy Galbraith

Stories of gifted kids, from verbal to humor, and lots of great quotes from the experts, all to get you started on your adventure with your gifted child.

Parenting Gifted Children from the National Association for Gifted Children  By Jennifer L. Jolly, Ph.D., Donald Treffinger, Ph.D., Tracy Ford Inman and Joan Franklin Smutny, Ph.D.

The only book of its kind, this guidebook will allow parents to find the support and resources they need to help their children find success in school and beyond. Covers topics such as high achievers, advocacy, homeschooling, twice exceptional students, underachievement, and postsecondary options.

“Could Do Better” Why Children Underachieve and What to do About It by Mandel and Marcus

Two leading psychologist give you individualized, practical solutions tailored for the six types of underachievers: Coasters, Anxious Underachievers, Identity-Searchers, Wheeler-Dealers, Sad Underachievers, and Defiant Underachievers. An eminently valuable resource for anyone confronted with the challenge of getting the best out of children and adolescents.

Guiding the Gifted Child: A Practical Source for Parents and Teachers by James Webb

Gifted children have special social and emotional needs. Their characteristics, combined with current educational practices, often put them at risk for problems. This award-winning book contains chapters on motivation, discipline, peer relationships, sibling relationships, stress management, depression and many other issues that parents and teachers encounter daily with these children. It has been called "The Dr. Spock book" for parents of gifted children, and over 100,000 copies have been sold.
Websites

**Gifted Child Society** is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1957 by the parent's of New Jersey's gifted children to further the cause of gifted children. [http://giftedchildsociety.com/](http://giftedchildsociety.com/)

**Hoagies' Gifted Education Page**, provides resources, articles, books and links to help and support parents, teachers, and gifted children alike. Pick your entrance, but explore them all! [http://www.hoagiesgifted.com/](http://www.hoagiesgifted.com/)

**Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted** is a great resource for parents filled with information articles for parents of gifted children. [http://www.sengifted.org/](http://www.sengifted.org/)

**Dr Linda Silverman Gifted Development Center** has served as a resource center for developmentally advanced children and their parents, and for gifted individuals of all ages. [http://www.gifteddevelopment.com/](http://www.gifteddevelopment.com/)

**Institute of Educational Advancement** is dedicated to helping our nation’s most talented young people in developing their fullest potential by focusing on creating programs and providing leadership for educational practices and policies that are student-centered and which promote academic rigor, excellence in the arts, high standards and educational innovations. [http://www.educationaladvancement.org/](http://www.educationaladvancement.org/)
Frequently Asked Questions

What test scores are required to qualify for GATE from the Naglieri?
There are several different ways students can be identified (Please see identification). The qualifying criterion for the Naglieri is a minimum of the 97th percentile.

How long does it take to get results for the Naglieri?
It can take up to 6-8 weeks after testing to get results for GATE identification.

Are there benefits to placing my child in a Rapid Learner program?
Placement in Rapid Learner is a family decision. For many gifted students, there are educational and social advantages. Some students may be sufficiently challenged and socially content in their neighborhood school program. As parents/guardians you will want to weigh the pros and cons, and consult with others who deal with your child (pediatrician, teacher, etc.). Attend the Parent Orientation Meeting in March and/or visit the sites, talk with families who currently have a child in the GATE program, and make your best-informed decision. An important consideration is that this commitment will probably be for five years and may require extra driving and early start times. However, for some children, not feeling isolated and/or different is worth some of the disadvantages of transportation.

How do I get my child evaluated for the GATE program?
If your child is currently a 1st grader, he/she will participate in the universal testing of all 1st graders using the Naglieri Nonverbal Test. This test is administered in the child's classroom in January. If your child is in second grade or higher, he or she may be identified through the California Standards Test.
In addition to district administered testing, parents/guardians may also submit test results from other districts and/or from private licensed psychologists. A student must have taken a test of mental reasoning administered by a school district or by a licensed psychologist. A student may **not** repeat the same test within a 12 month period; for example, if a student took the *Weschler* in October and again in May, the results of the May test would be invalid. A student's test results must also include scores from all subtests.

**If my child is identified GATE, will he need to be retested every year?**

No, once a student is identified GATE, he or she maintains the identification. There is no need to retest.

**How is placement in GATE classes determined?**

All qualified students who request placement in a Rapid Learner class are rank-ordered. The first criterion is GATE identification, followed by a standardized achievement test score and report card scores (See Appendix). The rank-ordered scores will fill any vacancies from students on the wait list.

**Can we choose a GATE site?**

There are currently 3 Rapid Learner sites: Del Paso Manor, Deterding and Pershing. Each have one class/strand of self-contained classes at the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. Every effort is made to place qualifying students at the school of choice; however, parents are asked to rank their choices and may be offered a spot at a different Rapid Learner site.

At the Middle and High School levels advanced courses are offered to all high achieving students. GATE students who meet the High Achiever or IB criteria will be placed into the courses. Students also have many honors and AP classes from which to choose.
Does my child have priority if a sibling is also a Rapid Learner or if the Rapid Learner school is our home school?

We do not offer priority placement. All students are ranked using the district criteria. The only priority given is to students who reside in district boundaries over students who do not reside in district boundaries.

What if my child doesn’t want to go to a Rapid Learner class?

Seldom does a child want to leave the known for the unknown. Ultimately, it is up to you to decide what would be best for your child. If you decide that Rapid Learner is the appropriate placement, you can mitigate some of the stress by providing regular opportunities to maintain neighborhood friendships. Also, take your child to the new site after school and talk with people you meet. Usually, these concerns lessen over the first month or so as your child makes new friends.

Are the Rapid Learner classes integrated with the rest of the school?

Rapid Learner classes are integrated just as any comparable elementary class. While classroom content is different, students take recess, lunch, music, PE, fine arts, and many field trips with other classes. There also will be many opportunities to interact with other students through clubs, leadership programs, sports, etc.

Can my child enter the Rapid Learner Program at any time?

At 2nd and 6th grades there are more opportunities to enter when the classes are being formed. Grades 3rd through 5th have openings only when someone leaves the program. The vacancies are first offered to students who have applied to the Rapid Learner program and are GATE identified. A new waiting list is generated each year. Students who did not get into a Rapid Learner site will need to reapply.

How many placements are available in Rapid Learner?
We have three Rapid Learner sites and each 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade will have 31 spaces. Most students are admitted into the Rapid Learner program in 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade. Class size expands from 31 students to 34 students in 4\textsuperscript{th} grade and with middle school choices there is more space available in our 6\textsuperscript{th} grade RL classes. We will have a small number of placements available as students drop from the program; however, it is impossible to determine the spaces from year to year or per site. The chance of your child’s acceptance is based on the criteria, the number of spaces available and the number of applicants. We will not be able to make judgments regarding placement of your student any time during the application process.

**How does my child accelerate to be working one year ahead? Won’t they miss something?**

Once students enter the 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade RL Program, the teacher assesses students and identifies any gaps in Language Arts and Math. He or she will fill in gaps as they quickly work through the curriculum. Second grade curriculum should be covered by December. Gifted students can learn content quickly and most of the time, there are no issues. If you have any concerns at any time, please speak with the teacher.

**What if my child is not doing well in an accelerated program?**

Everyone involved the child’s education wants enrolled children to succeed, in fact, to thrive. The vast majority of students who enroll in accelerated classes continue successfully in the program. There are some students who are not served by the fast pace and the demands that projects place on them. Generally there are clear signals when a child is not deriving benefit. Grades go down, or absenteeism goes up, or behavior and attitude towards school changes, etc... Teachers or parents then must initiate a remedial plan. If, despite all efforts to prevent it, a youngster suffers in the accelerated environment, then we exercise the option of counseling him or her out

**What if I have missed the deadline for applying to any of the programs?**
Students who have submitted applications prior to the deadline will receive first priority. If there are still openings, we will generate a waitlist as applications come in. Parents may be notified anytime up until the start of school.

If I do not reside in the district, can my child apply for accelerated programs?

If your child is attending San Juan Unified School District with an interdistrict transfer (IDT) or if you are requesting one and your child meets the qualifications, you may submit an application. Students who are on interdistrict transfers will be placed after eligible San Juan residents. Once a child is placed in the classes, he/she may continue. Parents will be required to get new interdistrict transfers for each new school. For instance, if you are in a Rapid Learner Elementary School and wish to transfer into the IB Middle School program, you will be required to obtain a new interdistrict transfer.
Accelerated Programs Timeline

August:

- GATE Advisory Meeting Dates are posted on our Website

September:

- Parents are notified if students are identified as GATE through the CST.

October:

- Parent letters are sent out notifying future middle school students of eligibility of Rapid Learner 6th grade or IB Programs.
- IB/HA/RL Parent information nights

November:

- Placement testing for out of district students wanting to apply for IB or HA who do not have CST scores
- Commitment Letters for IB and 6th Grade RL are due

January:

- Letters of acceptance for 6th grade RL or IB are sent out.
- Naglieri Test is given to all first grade students

March:

- Parents are sent letters of identification for students identified GATE through the Naglieri.
- Parents interested in RL need to submit an application for Rapid Learner
- 2nd Grade Rapid Learner Information Night
May:

• Rapid Learner placements are made
Appendix

Student Learning Plan