

La Cañada Unified School District

GATE Master Plan

Gifted and Talented Education



June, 2008

GATE Master Plan

Who We Are

La Canada Unified School District serves the incorporated city of La Canada Flintridge, a residential community of 21,600 people. The city is located near Pasadena, 13 miles north of the Los Angeles Civic Center. The district serves 4,082 students and consists of three elementary schools (K-6), an alternative SELPA school that serves the Glendale/Burbank/La Canada school districts, and La Canada High School, a grade 7-12 secondary school. Parents are well-educated; over 80% of adult residents have attended college. The district's students consistently score in the top 10% for California, and the district has an Academic Performance Index score that, at 915, is the third highest in the state. Ninety-eight percent of all students enroll in post-secondary schools.

The two largest groups in terms of ethnicity are white (59.64%) and Asian (25.38%), followed by Hispanic (3.14%), African-American (.27%), and Multiple or No Response (17.36%). Only 1% is socio-economically disadvantaged. English learners make up 2% of the student population and are dominantly Korean speakers. Students with Disabilities account for 7% of the population. The GATE population parallels these percentages.

As a Professional Learning Community, the district is strongly committed to the implementation of an Every Student Succeeds plan which coordinates various monitoring strategies and support programs to help all students achieve or exceed grade-level academic expectations. A second significant focus is Developmental Assets, which centers on the experiences, attitudes, and behaviors needed in the lives of young people to help them develop in positive and healthful ways.

The district's GATE program serves 463 students and contains all elements of the recommended standards, including identification and program options, a plan for involving parents, and district-wide commitment to and training in differentiation. All teachers K-12 have had and continue to receive extensive training in differentiated instruction. Programs for GATE students at the elementary level include part-time groupings in which students attend classes or seminars that are organized to provide advanced or enriched subject matter for a part of the school day. Another service delivery option is an extensive after-school program in which GATE and other motivated elementary students participate in enrichment activities centering on service, citizenship, and extended learning in the sciences, math, writing, and foreign languages.

GATE middle school students benefit from the resources possible on a 7-12 campus. Gr. 7-8 students enjoy the more personalized emotional support possible with their School Within A School setting while having available to them the advanced resources and course choices of the high school. This includes foreign language classes in French, German, Spanish, and Korean, and science classes in partnership with the nearby Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The 7/8 Enrichment Program provides activities such as Aviation Club, Sign Language Club, Heifer International Service Club and California Junior Scholarship Federation (CJSF).

At the high school level, the concept of inclusivity continues, with opportunities for acceleration, post secondary education, independent study and enrichment. An open enrollment policy for honors and AP classes has proven successful. Of 1,552 students, sixty-seven percent are enrolled in at least one honors or AP class. Of 534 who took AP exams in 2007, 84% passed with a 3 or better.

A newly conceived program being readied for implementation for 7-12 students in 2008-2009 involves a 45-minute flex time at the start of each school day. FLEX-STEP will provide a more effective structure for managing the academic rigor of middle and high school, providing opportunities for intervention, service, acceleration, and extended learning. GATE students will be able to come together and pursue shared interests such as advanced writing workshops, independent study, leadership opportunities, and post secondary course options.

The district's Gate Advisory Committee meets eight times a year and includes community members, parents, counselors, site GATE coordinators, the principal of the middle school and the district's GATE Coordinator. One of their strongest contributions is in the area of communication. In addition to communicating with the various sites, they also monitor, the district GATE newsletter, and have input on the after-school and pull-out programs, the fall information meeting for GATE families, and the spring reception for those involved in any facet of the district GATE program.

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Program Design

- The GATE plan for La Canada Unified School District (LCUSD) contains all elements of the recommended standards, including philosophy and program goals, identification and program options, differentiation at every level, and leadership, humanitarianism, and citizenship in such categories as were written by members of the GATE Advisory Committee.
- The philosophy of the program is as follows: ***To deploy well-qualified teaching resources to stimulate identified gifted students to explore and enlarge their intellectual, academic, and creative horizons; to stimulate curiosity and passion for learning at the highest levels, and to build on the fundamentals of citizenship, leadership, and community.***
- The district believes all students deserve an education that challenges them to meet their full potential. As such, the district is committed to differentiating the core curriculum for all students during the regular school day. Teachers plan classroom experiences that extend and enrich the core curriculum for GATE students.
- The district provides support from the GATE and general curriculum budgets for staff development and identification while site GATE budgets provide specific materials and experiences for differentiated services.
- The GATE District Advisory Committee meets eight times a year. Membership includes District GATE Coordinator/District Professional Development Coordinator, elementary site GATE coordinators/counselors, the middle school principal, community members and parents from the elementary sites and the 7-12 site, the GATE pull-out instructor at the elementary level, and an instructor for the After School GATE program.
- Information on the GATE program can be obtained through the www.lcusd.net website, including a power point presentation, agendas and meeting notes, issues of the GATEWAY newsletter, and information about outside resources available for GATE students.
- Identification of GATE students includes an intellectual component and a high achievement component, both of which have objectives that meet or exceed state academic content standards.
- A district-wide orientation meeting at the beginning of each school year describes both the identification process and the program at all levels.
- Through the Developmental Assets program, which is for all students district-wide, GATE students develop sensitivity and responsibility towards others and are helped in the development of realistic, healthy self-concepts.

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

- The first component for all students K-12 is the cluster grouping, part-time grouping, flexible grouping and differentiation that are integral to the day of the GATE student. All students receive differentiated instruction in their general classroom from teachers continually trained in differentiation. Teachers new to the district receive augmented training as well.
- At the elementary level, GATE students in Grades 4-6 receive 45 minutes of extended instruction held each week during non-academic segments of the school day. The instructor has specific training as a GATE educator, and adds depth and complexity to the standards-based curriculum. For example, a criminal justice unit ties in with world history, and a unit on rocket building connects with physical science.
- In the spring, an additional Artists-in-Residence program kicks in and enhances interests in visual and performing arts for these GATE elementary students. A graphic artist, a writer, and a songwriter work in small groups on creative projects. An important component for this and the regular pullout program is that they provide an effective way to address the social and emotional needs of gifted and talented students.
- A four-month After-School GATE program is held at rotating elementary site each year. All fourth grade GATE students and all students in Grades 5-6 with an express interest in a class are eligible to participate. Courses are designed to develop problem-solving abilities (Is Democracy Fair?), constructive ethical standards (How the Constitution and Bill of Rights Protect You), an awareness of choices for satisfying contributions in his or her environment (Marine Biology; Wildlife Biology), and sensitivity and responsibility to others (Knitting for a Cause).
- As GATE students move on to the middle school, they benefit from the fact that they are on the same campus as high school students and are thus able to participate in learning environments commensurate with their potentials. Where appropriate in specific subject areas, middle school GATE students may access these secondary level courses. Some language arts teachers buddy middle school students with AP students. The Instructional Resource Center (IRC) is available for both middle and high school students and serves as a valuable support for such assignments as the eighth grade Civil War research paper.
- With differentiation as the cornerstone and “academic excellence and personal growth” as a part of the district’s mission statement, the GATE program becomes more inclusive at the middle school level. All 8th grade students are enrolled in Algebra 1-8 or Algebra 1A. Spanish, Korean, French and German are offered in 8th grade and

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throughout high school.

- Math Counts, a national middle school competition, is in place, as are 21st Century after-school offerings.
- At the high school level, then, the concept of inclusivity continues. Students at all levels are instructed by teachers trained over time in differentiation. In addition, as stated above, Korean as part of the foreign language choices is a unique option. Teachers in the science department collaborate with scientists from the nearby Jet Propulsion Laboratory.
- Four years ago, LCHS adopted an open enrollment policy with regard to students gaining access to honors and Advanced Placement courses. As a result of this policy, which includes increased professional development support for AP and honors teachers, enrollment has significantly increased. In 2006-07, over 67% of 9-12 students were enrolled in honors or AP courses. In addition, the number of students passing with a 3 or better has increased from 81% to 84%. Sixteen courses, including the newest in environmental science, are offered.
- LCHS has partnerships with area community colleges to offer college credit classes of interest. These courses provide transferable college units and core and elective credits toward graduation.
- Scheduled for the 2008-09 school year is the initiation of a 45-minute FLEX-STEP Time for Grades 7-12. Each student will have an individualized schedule at the start of the day. Independent study, virtual classes, and advanced sections in areas such as wildlife ecological biological diversity and AP writing are in the planning stages at this time.

The program is articulated with the general education programs.

In part because differentiated instruction is such a strong commitment for the district, the GATE program is comprehensive, structured, and sequenced between, within, and across grade levels K-12. District philosophy dictates that depth and complexity in lessons be rooted in grade level standards. All children address the same standards, but the route to learning the standard allows GATE children to explore advanced content through a variety of experiences suited to their individual styles and pacing needs.

At all levels, including K-2, formal and informal surveys of learning styles are conducted so that teachers can design lessons with multiple intelligences in mind. Both students and their parents are surveyed about student multiple intelligences. At the elementary level, all students from Grade 1 to Grade 6 receive regular classes in art, music, and drama. These classes are tied with the California Standards for Fine Arts. At the fourth, fifth and sixth grade levels, students are offered classes in instrumental music during non-academic times. Since 2005-2006, Spanish has been offered at the elementary levels. These are 40 minute, twice weekly sessions for grades 3-6.

The program provides support services including counselors and consultants. At each of the three elementary sites and at the 7-8 and 9-12 sites, counselors oversee the GATE program. In addition, a District GATE Coordinator oversees the program and reports directly to the LCUSD Superintendent.

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How We Identify GATE Students

The nomination/referral process is ongoing and includes student's kindergarten through grade twelve.

All students are eligible for the nomination process regardless of socioeconomic, linguistic, or cultural background, and/or disabilities. Site administrators inform teachers of the process, and teachers, all of whom are trained in differentiation and are cognizant of the characteristics of gifted and at-risk students. The district's identification process includes these steps:

Intellectual ability is measured by means of the Otis-Lennon Abilities Test (OLSAT). Each spring, the district administers the OLSAT to all third grade students (with parent permission). The spring schedule for this testing is published in the master calendar, which is given to all LCUSD families. The OLSAT is also administered in the fall and winter to all new students who enter the district in grades 4-6. A PR-S score of 98% or above for total verbal and math is required for placement. After two years, students who have not qualified may be retested using this measurement.

Transfer students who present scores in the 98th percentile or above on a nationally normed test of cognitive intelligence ability need not take the OLSAT to qualify for placement.

Students may also qualify for GATE placement based on high achievement. Each September, a matrix of various measurements is assembled to assess the student's level of achievement. To qualify in this way, the student must demonstrate the following:

- 450 or above on each of the major California Standards Test (CST) subtests (ELA and math)
- a rubric score of 5 or 6 (above grade level proficiency) on the district writing prompt
- 95% or above accuracy on the district's cumulative math assessment.

At the middle and high school levels, parents and teachers may refer new and continuing students to the GATE program on the basis of ability or achievement. At all grade levels, eligibility requirements include consideration of the student's primary language and linguistic development in English.

The GATE site coordinator maintains data on qualifying and non-qualifying students for use by the Student Study Team (SST) in the event that the parent of an initial non-qualifier requests a re-evaluation two years later. GATE participation is indicated in a student's cumulative record and in the district computer system.

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

The GATE site coordinator and certificated personnel meet to discuss each student that has participated in one of the processes described above. The participants review all screening, evaluation and assessment data for each student. Evidence from multiple sources is used to determine eligibility. In addition to the standardized test scores and district assessment data referenced above, information such as the following may be considered:

- *classroom observation
- *student interview
- *parent input
- *work portfolio
- *grades
- *report card comments
- *cumulative record comments
- *input from student's former teachers
- *special interests, skills and abilities such as leadership, creativity and critical thinking
- *factors affecting student achievement, such as LEP, RFEP designation

The diversity of the district's student population, the measurable of whom are Caucasian and Asian, is reflected in the district GATE population.

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

- GATE students and parents are provided with considerable information and orientation regarding student placement and participation. Signed parent permissions for participation are on file and updated on a yearly basis. Participation in the program is based on the criteria of identification and is not dependent on the perception of a single identification. Each fall the GATE District Coordinator and members of the GATE Advisory Committee present an Orientation Evening at the District Office for families of newly qualified GATE students.
- At all sites K-12, a student success plan is in effect. This includes a Pyramid of Intervention that systematically provides support in three critical areas: First are supports for all students; secondly are supports for groups of students, including GATE, and finally, supports that are targets designed for the specific needs of individual students. Occasionally, Student Study Team meetings are held which include parents on special issues. The result of this may be an individualized program for compacting or an individualized program which results in a student doing class work, such as mathematics, at an advanced level. The district GATE Coordinator identifies any GATE student who is at the Basic or Below Basic level and works with the site counselors and teachers on intervention support.

For GATE students with social and developmental issues, the services of the site counselors offer a welcome avenue on many levels. The district-wide, Developmental Assets, with its support from teacher and guidance personnel, provides more personalized social and academic intervention support for students K-12.

Curriculum and Instruction

A differentiated curriculum is in place, responsive to the needs, interests, and abilities of gifted students.

A long-term commitment to differentiated instruction has resulted in continuous training and implementation of differentiation in all classrooms K-12. Each year, at the site and district levels and in smaller groups based on subjects or grades taught, staff members are involved in the identification of instructional strategies that can increase opportunities that will encourage students to gain higher levels of learning. Curriculum compacting and enrichment activities, where the teacher pre-assesses students' prior knowledge and provides meaningful activities targeted to developmental or achievement levels, allow advanced learners to achieve while still remaining a part of the total class. Compacting occurs even between elementary and middle school; a qualifying sixth grader may accelerate and take seventh grade pre-algebra provided the parent is willing to provide transportation.

Again working together as departments or in grade level teams, the K-12 staff has created scope and sequence timelines which plot direction for key power standards and articulate the significant learning in content, skills, and products within and among grade levels K-12. As part of efforts to continually monitor and support students in their mastery of state curriculum standards, elementary grade levels and 7-12 departments have met on a quarterly basis to review test results and coordinate strategies for student support.

The differentiated curriculum for gifted students is supported by appropriate structures and resources.

Resource libraries on differentiation and book binders of local, differentiated lessons proven successful in LCUSD classrooms throughout the district provide a ready tool for all teachers K-12. Teachers at each grade level share proven lessons in binders and also at site meetings. There are samples of cubing, jigsaws, and tick-tack-toes for everything from cell biology to colonists.

In the teacher workroom at all elementary sites, more than 300 differentiated lesson plans exist as a ready resource. These are selected from Dr. Roger T. Taylor and Dr. Beverly M. Taylor's Curriculum Design On-Line and provided by the California Optimal Match Initiative of Johns Hopkins University. Because of the nature of differentiation, each lesson targets a range of grade levels and is aligned with the California Content Standards. Each unit develops thinking skills. For example, a classroom teacher might pull up a unit on Greek myths that will help GATE students analyze and synthesize information, participate in activities that promote divergent thinking, employ research skills, form creative associations of ideas across discipline lines, work individually and in small and large groups, and create various products

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that lead to a better understanding of myths and legends.

Technology in the classroom has also added depth and complexity. Each site now has a TechLite, a classroom teacher who has received additional technology training and is a mentor on site. Key additions to classroom technology include the use of United Streaming and Mimio, a living whiteboard that keenly engages students.

The differentiated curriculum is planned both for groups of gifted learners within a grade level or class and for individual gifted learners. For individual gifted learners, compacting may be used when appropriate, and a contract is drawn to document pre-assessment, monitoring of progress, and final evaluation.

Social and Emotional Development

Actions to meet the affective needs of gifted students are ongoing.

Since last applying for the GATE grant, the district has made a serious commitment to Developmental Assets, which includes 40 assets which are either external or internal and are further divided into eight sub categories: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. The entire La Canada community has made a commitment to Developmental Assets. Workshops have been held for staff and also for parents/community members. Principals work with the PTA to consistently make families aware of key assets. Each month one Developmental Asset is highlighted and publicized; teachers insure that students have related their experiences; parents are informed and encouraged to participate; principals applaud designated students who exemplify the characteristic.

In addition, the educational foundation has funded additional counseling staff. The five-member counseling staff has been re-organized with two 9-10 counselors and two for 11-12, plus one full-time college counselor. In 7-8, there is one counselor for each grade level. The funding by the La Canada Flintridge Educational Foundation of a college counselor has helped GATE students receive more personalized support for post-secondary direction.

LCUSD teachers, parents, and counselors, and all parents of GATE students are provided with ongoing information and training regarding the characteristics of gifted learners and their related social and emotional development. This includes professional articles as well as features in current consumer periodicals. Parents are also given information about additional resources available for their GATE student, such as camps, and expanded opportunities offered by various universities. News of these opportunities is available through GATEWAY, the GATE newsletter.

At each elementary site counselors also serve as the on-site coordinators of the GATE program. As such, these counselors are attuned to the needs of GATE students, and, as members of the GATE Advisory Committee, they are aware of the needs and concerns of the parents of GATE students. The counselors/GATE site coordinators are responsible for identification of GATE students, monitoring of GATE students, and the implementation of GATE goals at their respective sites. Their professional training also places them in a unique position when it comes to meeting the affective needs of gifted students. All counselors conduct regular workshops related to pragmatic concerns and social issues.

At the 7-12 level, staff has developed learning contracts and restructured 9th grade individual student/parent counseling meetings. In addition, counselors and administrators are presenting Developmental Asset lessons in homerooms. As such, they are alerted early to any affective needs of gifted students. District-wide, the counselors have also had extended training in the Pyramid of Intervention or are an integral part of a similar process as part of the individualized plan for Every Student Succeeds.

With regard to transitions, sixth grade students receive visits in their classrooms from a 7-8 counselor who guides them on registration and also eases anxieties. Once on campus, the counselors support students affectively with interest groups in specialized areas such as grief and friendship. The 7-8 principal holds class meetings once a quarter to continually connect with students.

Counselors, including one specifically responsible for college guidance, are in place at the high school to meet the affective as well as cognitive needs of all students, supporting GATE students with respect to Advanced Placement classes. Individualized attention is paid so that the balance of classes remains appropriate for student success.

At risk gifted students are monitored and provided support (e.g. underachievement, symptoms of depression, suicide,

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substance abuse).

All GATE students who are underachieving are identified by the District GATE Coordinator and the Director of Assessments and Research. Teachers and guidance counselors are trained to collaborate in implementing intervention strategies for these at-risk students. All of our schools have implemented individualized Every Student Succeeds plans, which focus attention on the specific needs of each student. The aforementioned Learning Contracts in grades 7-12, pragmatic and similar workshops led by counselors K-12, plus a guided study program in grades K-8, provide an additional net of support.

Professional Development

The district provides professional development opportunities related to gifted learners on a regular basis.

Continued professional development in differentiated instruction and other opportunities is fostered in several significant ways. The Single School Plan for all sites K-12 has identified differentiated instruction as one of three or four key focuses for School Site Council funding. This makes it possible for staff to attend workshops for gifted students and for staff to gather in small groups and articulate on topics such as compacting.

Technology positively augments learning for GATE students. Each site now has Techlites, classroom teachers with additional training in technology. These Techlites act as technology mentors in the use of hardware and software aimed at curriculum enhancement. They also present workshops in newly available technology, such as the living white board, which engages GATE and other students and extends their learning. Regular updates by the Director of Technology direct teachers to sites which support the needs of accelerated learners.

A significant component to professional development is the matrix of the Buy-Back program. This program has at its base the Best Practices philosophies of Richard DuFour. Thus the three critical questions that guide staff development center on the following: What is it we want all students to learn? How will we know when each student has acquired the essential knowledge and skills? What happens when a student does not learn? Mandatory professional development days address differentiated instruction from several directions: large group session topics such as recent brain research or strategies in differentiation are balanced with small group collaborative sessions for specific applications. As an additional option, teachers may build 6.25 hours of professional development from choices based on their own professional interests and needs. A teacher may choose to gain knowledge and skills by going outside the district, such as a writing workshop. A teacher may choose to gain knowledge and skills by attending several in-district workshops on varied topics such as reading literacy, differentiation, cross-cultural issues, and the use of new technology as a strategy for enriched education. Third, a teacher may choose to gain knowledge and skills by collaborating with peers to design programs that respond to student needs on an interdisciplinary or cross-curriculum basis. Increasingly, the shift has been toward utilizing on-staff experts. Thus a more seasoned teacher who already has extensive differentiation training may choose professional developing in areas that relate differentiation to specific cultural backgrounds, such as Korean.

District personnel with direct decision-making and/or instructional responsibilities for gifted students are provided with role specific training.

Every teacher in the district and the GATE district coordinator has had education and/or experience in teaching gifted students. This is because all students are heterogeneously grouped, and because every teacher in the district has been a part of more than one district-wide professional development opportunity and further opportunities at joint site or departmental workshops. Teachers are supported with on-site GATE coordinators with knowledge of gifted education. The shared structure of the professional development sessions enables teacher-to-teacher professional sharing in addition to the education, which takes place by contracts with experts for in-services.

Because all teachers have qualified for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) status, all teachers assigned to teach gifted students are certified through a variety of formal and informal certificate programs to work with gifted students. In addition, the district coordinator has demonstrated experience and knowledge in the field through the successful completion of programs offered by Johns Hopkins, Mel Levine's Schools Attuned, and through various courses involving the gifted student as a requirement for master completion in administration.

BTSA and New Teacher Orientation sessions include differentiation strategies.

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Follow-up classroom support for application of activities and strategies presented during in-service or professional development are continually planned. At monthly staff meetings, staff shares successes in differentiation. Both the site GATE coordinator and the district GATE coordinators offer strategies for instruction regarding GATE students.

Parent and Community Involvement

Open communication with parents and the community is maintained.

Parents are deeply involved in the development of the application and/or school site plans related to GATE programs. At the most general level, this means parents are informed of the district's criteria and procedures for identifying gifted and talented students as well as the program options and learning opportunities. Letters are sent through U.S. mail regarding criteria and procedures. For the After School GATE program, all parents, both those of GATE and those of non-GATE students, receive letters that define the program. Parents of GATE students also receive regular updates from the extended learning GATE teacher. This includes updates of the curriculum and samples of student work.

In the letter regarding permission to test, all parents of third grade students are given key information of the GATE program. School site websites further report on GATE activities. Parents of GATE students receive regular newsletters from the GATE instructor, and are invited to a fall meeting explaining the upcoming program. Parents of GATE students may also take an on-line survey to communicate their opinions on all aspects of the program.

A power point presentation prepared by the GATE District Coordinator explains all aspects of the LCUSD GATE program and is posted on-line. The quarterly GATE newsletter, GATEWAY, and minutes of all GATE Advisory meetings are posted on-line as well.

Partnerships between the GATE program and business and community organizations are established. The talents of the business and community are utilized both in the After-School GATE courses and in the extended instruction during the school day. Community citizens who are judges, city planners, members of the district attorney's office, or who are directors or screen writers for the motion picture industry share their talents and expertise with local GATE students. Career days at both the elementary and middle school level further enhance the opportunity for all students to learn from these and other local citizens.

An active GATE advisory committee with parent involvement is supported by the district.

A strength of the LCUSD GATE program is its GATE Advisory Committee. The committee includes counselors and GATE site coordinators from each elementary site, the principal of the middle school, parents from all sites, and community members including the wife of a judge and a member of the district attorney's office. Their individual educational and professional backgrounds and their commitment to the district program greatly strengthen the gifted and talented program overall. Unique in their commitment to the needs of GATE students, the GATE Advisory Committee has been responsible not only for the current goals but also for the mission statement and the essential skills for assessment. Attuned to the relevance of assessment, they have also structured surveys for GATE students and GATE parents. The survey work has divided GATE students into various subgroups, established goals, and generated evidence. The Advisory Committee has also been central in identifying talent within the community and drawing them into the GATE teaching experience.

Because communication is a priority for this group, they have fostered this in a variety of ways. A key example has been the implementation of an end-of-the-year gathering for all teachers in the GATE or After School GATE programs and the members of the GATE Advisory Committee.

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Program Assessment

The district provides ongoing student and GATE program assessment that is consistent with the program's philosophy, goals, and standards.

On both a formal and informal level, evaluation methods have been established to assess the gifted program and the performance of gifted students. On a formal level, the district director of assessment, research, and consolidated services disaggregates data regarding the performance of various subgroups, including GATE students. Data on state testing and also on the district's multiple measures for writing and math is analyzed by the district and site GATE coordinators and other administrators, and is then shared in small group meetings with classroom teachers. At this time, teachers are made aware of any marked discrepancies between the performance of a gifted student and his capabilities, thus allowing interventions to begin. Of the 463 GATE students in the district for 2007-2008, only five tested below the Proficient Level. The district GATE coordinator and the students' teachers and counselors monitored those students' performances throughout the year.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORING ADVANCED

La Cañada STAR CST English/Language Arts

	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
GATE	96	78	95	96	90	95	89	91
GENERAL ED	73	58	63	57	50	67	55	50
Difference	+23	+20	+22	+39	+40	+28	+34	+41

La Cañada STAR CST Math

	4	5	6	7	Alg. 1	Geom.	Alg. II	H.S. Math
GATE	99	83	86	94	68	56	38	56
GENERAL ED	64	67	57	56	36	23	15	34
Difference	+35	+16	+29	+38	+32	+33	+23	+22

La Cañada STAR CST Science

	5	8	10	Bio	Chem.	Earth Science	Physics
GATE	67	95	71	66	59	*	75
GENERAL ED	48	58	43	30	30	20	44
Difference	+19	+37	+28	+36	+20		+31

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In an effort to find out whether Elementary GATE students are leaving the district in middle or high school, mobility was researched by the LCUSD technology information system supervisor, the GATE coordinator, and the director of assessment, research and consolidated services. The results appear below:

MOBILITY of GATE and All Other Students

This table is based on student identification numbers and thus reflects not just numbers but more importantly the actual 6th grade students who remained within LCUSD through high school graduation/12th grade

GROUP	Enrolled in Grade 6	Graduated (or are current seniors)	Percentage of 6 th graders who stayed within LCUSD
2000-2006			
GATE	59	43	72.88%
All Others	295	219	74.24%
Total Students	354	262	74.01%
2001-2007			
GATE	70	58	82.86%
All Others	328	255	77.74%
Total Students	398	313	78.64%
2002-2008			
GATE	44	35	79.55%
All Others	309	261	84.47%
Total Students	243	202	83.18%

In addition, a series of surveys has provided feedback to guide implementation and improvements.

Review of the Administration of the GATE Program.

The GATE program surveys parents, students, and teachers to provide feedback to guide implementation and improvements to the program. Results of surveys are shared with the GATE Advisory Committee, district administrators, and the Board of Education.

Classroom Teachers

All La Cañada Unified School District general classroom teachers K-12 were surveyed in March, 2008, on two central questions: *Do you conduct a questionnaire about multiple intelligences, and what kind of differentiation did you do in your classroom last week or are planning on doing this week?*

Response was high and immediate with 40% of the elementary and 30% of the 7-12 staff responding within 24 hours.

Of the K-6 respondents, 100% survey multiple intelligences either through students or their parents, and utilize this information in lesson planning and in teacher conferences. At the 7-12 level, multiple intelligence information was more likely to be gleaned by one member of a school-within-a-school team or by academic subject, notably science.

All respondents (100%) said they were using differentiation, but the K-6 teachers provided deeper, more extensive samples.

GATE Instructors

GATE instructors, meaning the elementary pull-out instructor, the artists-in-residence, and the after-school GATE instructors, are given a formal survey at the end of every year. The responses of these surveys have up-graded our program in two ways. First, course time has frequently been extended from four weeks to six for after-school choices, and second, new courses or sections have been added. For example, the GATE pull-out instructor will be adding an aeronautics unit on things that fly.

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Parents

A parent survey was created in 2006-2007 and is posted on-line. Parents were informed of this through PTA newsletters and flyers. Although the response indicated the parents felt their child's teachers provide activities that promote critical thinking skills, and although they were satisfied with the GATE program, the response size has not been measurable.

Students

Students who participate in the pull-out, the artists-in-residence, or the after-school programs are surveyed at the completion of each of these offerings. Responses are uniformly exuberant. The surveys are perused by the GATE Advisory Committee and help determine the future course(s) for the program. For example, a new science offering on birds, plants and butterflies at a nearby arboretum has been exceptionally well received and will be continued.

Differentiation Survey

GATE students at the 4-12 level participated in an on-line survey. Elementary students took the survey in their computer labs and middle and high school students took the survey at the Instructional Resource Center under the guidance of the IRC librarian. The results show students show GATE students feel cared for and challenged overall; a need indicated in the survey is for more choices of assignments.

GRADE 4-12 STUDENT SURVEY ON DIFFERENTIATION

Number of GATE Students: 463
Number of Respondents: 348

Question	Never	Rarely	Not Often	Quite often	Often
My weekly classes challenge my thinking.	8%	16%	27%	34%	15%
My weekday classes require special projects, reports, or research.	7%	17%	24.6%	35%	17%
In my weekday classes I am given choices of assessments. For example, I might do a biography report in written form, as a speech, or as a song.	21%	27%	24%	19%	10%
In my weekday classes I am sometimes in a group with people of different abilities and sometimes in a group with people who have abilities similar to mine.	7%	12%	19%	40%	23%
When I come up with my own idea of a way to show my master of understanding of a subject, my teachers let me do it.	11%	15%	24%	30%	19%
It is my impression that my teachers/counselors care about my feelings	10%	14%	17%	31%	30%

GATE Master Plan

Procedures for Modifying the District GATE Program Based on the Annual Review(s).

Based on a review by the GATE Advisory Committee of the current program, the following strengths, needs, and improvement goals exist.

Overall Strengths – a cohesive program is in place and effective. It begins with differentiated instruction K-12. It continues with GATE identification in the spring of grade 3 and continues grades 4-6 with a weekly pull-out program and an after-school enrichment program on the 4-6 campus. Middle school GATE students may access secondary level courses and participate in various after-school enrichments. At 9-12, over 67% of all students (including GATE) are enrolled in honors or AP courses, and the number of students passing with a score of 3 or better is 84%. Finally, there is evidence of both academic success and stable mobility among the district GATE population. Only five of the 463 LCUSD GATE students scored below the Advanced or Proficient levels on any part of state testing. The population is stable; a tracking by individual student identification numbers showed that all but 12 of the GATE sixth graders in 2001 were still enrolled in the district graduated from La Cañada High School in 2007. The GATE program is enhanced by the time and talent support given by the community.

Overall Needs – the GATE Advisory Committee determined this year that the needs of the GATE student were met with less success at the 7-8 level. This is in contrast to the relatively extensive offerings at grades 4-6 and at 9-12 with the 16 AP options. It was determined that the upcoming addition of a FLEX-STEP period, which will be held as part of the school day, will meet many of the needs of the GATE students in terms of enrichment, acceleration, and affective needs.

SECTION 1: Program Design

GATE Program Strengths

- Structures in place for GATE students include district-wide differentiation plus cluster and part time groupings.
- The GATE program at the secondary level is a strong combination of Honors and 16 AP classes.
- Themed enrichment classes are tailored to student interests are offered outside of the school day.

GATE Program Needs

- Deepen the opportunities for 7-8 GATE students.

GATE Program Improvement Goals

- Monitor Flex-Step, which begins 2008-2009, to assess its impact on GATE students 7-12.

SECTION 2: Identification

GATE Program Strengths

- Identification centers on intelligence and high achievement.
- All students are invited to participate in OLSAT testing; counselors, with support for Student Study Team, also review multiple achievement assessments.

GATE Program Needs

- Study any need to heighten requirements for qualification based on high achievement.

SECTION 3: Curriculum and Instruction

GATE Program Strengths

- The differentiated curriculum occurs during instruction as an integrated part of the regular school day.
- Grouping strategies allow for development of academic as well as social and emotional skills.

GATE Program Needs

- Increase teacher collaboration opportunities regarding differentiation.

GATE Master Plan

SECTION 4: Social and Emotional Development

GATE Program Strengths

- District-wide Developmental Assets is an ongoing strength and reaches out to the community as well as district.
- The Educational Foundation enables the district to employ 12 full-time counselors district-wide, 9 at 7-12 and one each at elementary.

GATE Program Needs

- More training in the specific social and emotional needs of gifted students

GATE Program Improvement Goals

- Systematic information to all classroom teachers on topics related to the affective needs of gifted students

SECTION 5: Professional Development

GATE Program Strengths

- Differentiation instruction, multiple intelligences, brain research, and Developmental Assets are three key cores to district professional development.
- Teachers are encouraged through Buy-Back Creative Choice options to collaborate and design curriculum related to differentiation.

GATE Program Needs

- A more uniform system of accountability to assure that differentiation is deeply imbedded in the lesson planning of all teachers

GATE Program Improvement Goals

- Using Best Practices, put in place a more uniform system of accountability.

SECTION 6: Parent and Community Involvement

GATE Program Strengths

- Active, hands-on, GATE Advisory Committee
- High level of involvement from parents and community

GATE Program Needs

- More communication regarding ways to participate and contribute

GATE Program Improvement Goals

- Utilize GATE Advisory Committee to more broadly communicate opportunities to contribute.

SECTION 7: Program Assessment

GATE Program Strengths

- Annual surveys of parents, students, and teachers are given to inform and improve program.
- Student data system AERIES makes information on GATE students readily available.

GATE Program Needs

- More specific surveys so input can be analyzed by grade level.

GATE Program Improvement Goals

- Revise surveys accordingly.
- Devise more effective way to survey parents.

GATE Master Plan

SECTION 8: Budget

GATE Program Strengths

- Consistently monitored budget

GATE Program Needs

- Anticipated state cuts will impact program.

GATE Program Improvement Goals

- Encourage even more involvement from our talented and professional community.