



**Modesto City Schools
Gifted and Talented
Education
Program Handbook**



Important Dates 2011-2012

August-September-STAR results come out. Used at the junior high level for placement verification.

October-March-Referral collection months. The district will send out one series of parent notifications based on STAR scores. Site representatives will collect parent information forms, report cards, STAR scores, etc. for potential GATE candidates.

December-January-Testing at 2nd Grade. The Aptitude tests will be administered by a proctor at each of the elementary sites.

January 15, 2012-Final deadline for 2011-2012 screening nominations. Referrals submitted after January 15, 2012 will be accepted but held until the 2012-2013 screening.

January 2012-End of semester 1. Report card collection time for referrals 3rd-6th grade. Assessment results are on semester report cards.

March 2012 -Screening committee meets. Determinations are made as to GATE status.

April/May 2012-Parent notification letters go home for results of GATE screenings.

May 17 or 18, 2012-7PM-GATE Orientation/Extravaganza Event at school sites.

FAQ

What happens if my student is certified GATE but does not receive a placement? Students who either elect not to accept a placement or who are not offered a placement due to program size constraints remain in their regular education classroom. All Modesto City Schools' classrooms provide differentiated instruction based on the needs of the students within the class. Students who are certified retain that certification.

Do I need to submit a portfolio to increase my student's chances of receiving GATE certification?

Portfolios, outside letters of recommendation, or other materials are not part of the screening process. These documents can add to the picture of the whole child but are not weighted in the screening point system.

Does the GATE program accelerate the curriculum? Modesto City Schools GATE uses enrichment to take curriculum into more depth and breadth, ensuring more complete mastery of grade level standards. Students are tested on grade level materials. 6th grade GATE students use scaffolded math curriculum. This scaffolding uses 7th grade math standards in combination with 6th grade math standards and concepts to enrich and enhance the math curriculum.

What does it mean to be on a waiting list? Students on the waiting list are eligible for placements should space become available. The waiting list is created in order of rankings by points from the screening process. Spots are offered over the phone and acceptance or denial is required before the GATE office moves to the next student on the list. Students are not moved after the first quarter.

How are Learning Centers Assigned? The three Learning Center sites have specific feeder schools (based on proximity and similar schedules). When a student is screened, the school at which they are attending becomes their "home" or feeder school. If a student is certified at their school of attendance they feed into whichever Learning Center site is applicable. Placements are not given priority based on ethnicity, boundaries, or other non-criterion based factors.

How can I be more involved in GATE? Join the GAPS (GATE Advisory Parents). See the GAPS tab for meeting dates, times, and locations.

District Overview

The philosophy of Modesto City Schools' Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program is that each student should make the most of his/her potential and it is our job to give students opportunities. While all students have special talents, GATE students are exceptional in their ability to grasp abstract concepts, symbols, and ideas. In order for these students to reach their true potential, they need teachers, parents, and administrators who exert their own creative and intellectual abilities to provide enrichment, challenges, and motivation.

Modesto City Schools offers GATE Learning Centers housed at three school sites: Lakewood, Martone, and Sonoma. The programs are self contained and limited transportation is provided to attend GATE programs. Junior High Honors classes are based on STAR scores. High school Advanced Placement class as well as the IB Program at Modesto High use STAR scores and transcripts to place students.

Students in Learning Center programs are exposed to an enriched and enhanced curriculum including foreign language, fine arts, and consultants from the community who provide students with experiences to enhance their education. Students are also challenged to study the California State Standards at broader and more in-depth levels. Supplemental and enrichment materials are utilized to provide students with a more complete and comprehensive mastery of each essential standard.

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their student's education. Information about the GATE Advisory Parents (GAPS) Committee and the GATE Website are in this handbook and parents who want to stay current with the trends, changes, and current research pertaining to Gifted and Talented Education across the state and within our district can also access the GATE website for links and resources.

Website

To access the Modesto City Schools GATE website, log on to the Modesto City Schools home page at www.monet.k12.ca.us Under the "Quick Links" heading, you will see a link for **GATE**. Click there and you will open to our home page. The GATE website features information about GATE Learning Center programs, certification criteria, links to local and state resources for GATE parents and students, and much more.

Contacts

GATE Coordinator-Jennifer Tyson	(209)576-4057	tyson.j@monet.k12.ca.us
GATE Staff Secretary II-Liz Sakuma	(209)576-4057	sakuma.L@monet.k12.ca.us
Lakewood Principal-Joseph Mesa	(209)576-4841	mesa.j@monet.k12.ca.us
Feeder schools: Everett, Lakewood, Rose, Wilson, Wright		
Martone Principal-Carol Brooks	(209)576-4613	brooks.c@monet.k12.ca.us
Feeder schools: Bret Harte, Burbank, Fairview, Franklin, Kirshen, Marshall, Martone, Rob. Rd., Shackelford, Tuolumne		
Sonoma Principal-Jane Moffett	(209)576-4683	moffett.j@monet.k12.ca.us
Feeder schools: Beard, El Vista, Enslin, Fremont, Garrison, Muir, Sonoma		

Important Dates 2011-2012

Website and Contacts

GATE Advisory Parents Committee (GAPS)

The 2011-2012 GATE Parents Advisory Committee meeting dates, times and locations are:

- Tuesday October 18, 2011 7PM Staff Development 1 & 2 (425 Locust Ave.)
- Tuesday November 15, 2011 Pearson Cafeteria (500 Locust Ave.)
- Tuesday January 17, 2012 7PM Staff Development 1 & 2 (425 Locust Ave.)

The purpose of the GATE Advisory Parents Committee is to represent the Learning Center students as well as the community. GAPS is a parent group with elected officers who conduct meetings with regard to the needs, issues, and progress of the Modesto City Schools' GATE Program. Parents are encouraged to attend GAPS meetings and become familiar with the policies and procedures that pertain to GATE. GAPS is also a liaison committee between Modesto City Schools and the Modesto community.

The District Advisory Committee Procedures and Standing Rules are available on the GATE website. Additionally, DAC guidelines are in Modesto City Schools Board Policy 1222 (Community Relations).

Placement/Reassignment

Once the screening committee has reviewed the student candidates, recommendations are made. Students will receive one of three recommendations: **Certification**-this means a student has met the GATE criteria and is recommended for placement in a Learning Center program. Students are then ranked and placed in Learning Center programs on a space available basis. **Provisional**-this means a student has not quite met the certification criteria but the committee feels a GATE placement might be appropriate. Students who are provisional are placed in Learning Center programs only after Certified lists have been exhausted. Students on provisional status are reviewed at the end of each year for a maximum of two years. A provisional student may remain provisional for one additional year after the initial recommendation or may become certified or disqualified. **Does Not Qualify (DNQ)**-this means that a student has not met the certification criteria and is not eligible for placement in a Learning Center. Students who are disqualified may be nominated again in following years.

If a student is struggling in a Learning Center placement, interventions will be put in place by the GATE classroom teacher. Support can include a Student Contract which makes specific accommodations for a student academically and/or behaviorally. Parent(s), student, and teacher will develop a student contract that best meets the needs of the student and the GATE classroom. Specific time periods are mandated in the student contract. At the end of that period, the group will meet again and include site administration. Additional steps and interventions can be taken at that time if warranted. If a student is going to be considered for reassignment, the GATE Coordinator will attend a subsequent meeting and a Request for Reassignment form will be completed. Parents must understand that once a student is exited from a Learning Center program, readmission may only be obtained by completing the screening process again.

Certification Criteria

Parents, teachers, administration, students, and/or the GATE office may nominate student candidates for the GATE screening process. GATE referrals are accepted by each elementary site representative who collects a Parent Information Form to begin the referral process. Every candidate referred has the following information (as much as is available) collected in a file that is sent to the GATE office:

- Report cards (two years if available, including current assessment results and first semester grades.)
- STAR/CST scores (two years for grades 5-6, 1 year for 4th)
- Current year teacher recommendation form
- Student response form (filled out by the student)
- Aptitude test (2nd grade only)

The aptitude test is administered at each site by a district proctor. Testing dates will be determined by the GATE office in conjunction with the sites. The test is given only once to students and only at the 2nd or 3rd grade level. Students nominated beyond the 2nd grade are not given aptitude test and certification is based on the other criteria listed above.

The GATE screening committee meets in the spring to review candidates. Each folder is read by three GATE committee members before a determination is made. Students are certified based on 5 categories:

Intellectual Ability-Extraordinary performance on aptitude test; **Specific Academic Ability**-Advanced level in reading OR Math on CST tests for two consecutive years OR demonstrated writing ability; **High Achievement**- Advanced level in reading AND math on CST tests for two consecutive years; **High Classroom Performance and Assessment**-Superior performance on assessments and graded class work; **Culturally Diverse**-English Learners demonstrate substantial growth in reading AND math on CST tests for two consecutive years or demonstrate a substantial CELDT level increase in a single year.

Junior High and High School Opportunities

Junior High Honors courses are offered in the four major curricular areas: Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Science/History. At the junior high level, students are placed in classes based primarily on STAR scores. Students may obtain placement in an Honors/GATE course based on their academic merit. Junior High Honors courses provide opportunities for students to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. Teachers lead students to experience greater depth and breadth of study and prepare them for the rigors of high school courses and specialty programs.

High school courses for GATE students may include Advanced Placement courses (offered at every Modesto City Schools high school) and the IB (International Baccalaureate) program (offered at Modesto High School). Students are placed in AP classes based on STAR scores and junior high transcripts. Honors junior high placement is indicated on student ballots and transcripts for high school placement. Students interested in the IB program must complete the IB application process.

AP and IB courses are rigorous academic courses that prepare students to enter two or four year college programs. AP courses prepare students for the AP exams that can earn students college credits. The IB program is a four year college preparatory program.

Elementary Learning Centers and Curriculum

The three Modesto City Schools GATE Learning Centers are housed at: Lakewood, Martone, and Sonoma. Students who live in other attendance areas are provided limited bus transportation to Learning Center sites. For transportation information and schedules, visit the website (www.monet.k12.ca.us click on Transportation). While each Learning Center site offers unique opportunities for students, the district GATE program provides a consistent enrichment base for all GATE students based on the limitations of the GATE yearly budget. Enrichment opportunities for the 2011-2012 school year include:

- **Spanish**-this one time per week program focuses on cultural aspects as well as some conversational Spanish. The Spanish advisor coordinates curriculum with the classroom teachers.
- **Fine Arts**-fine arts components range from music to art and students are given enrichment in their GATE classrooms.
- **Field Trips/Guest Presenters**-the GATE office may sponsor enrichment field trips and guest presenters to students in the GATE program. 5th and 6th graders receive enrichment provided by the Great Valley Museum on topics that correlate with their standards in science. The 3rd and 4th graders experience local authors and delve into English Language Arts standards enrichment.
- **Anthology**-the GATE program is looking to create a district anthology showcasing student writing, poetry, and illustrations.

Curriculum-The GATE classrooms follow the state adopted textbooks and curriculum and teachers enrich and enhance as they see opportunities. Many teachers draw upon outside resources to enrich their curriculum, including websites and webgames that promote learning, research and student skills, reading materials (both fiction and non-fiction) that capture student interest, and speakers to give students the opportunity to have alternate perspectives on issues.

Differentiated instruction ensures that students are met at their individual learning levels. The state adopted textbooks provide differentiated learning levels and enrichment activities that are utilized by GATE teachers. For information about grade level standards, refer to Modesto City Schools' Elementary Education website at www.monet.k12.ca.us (under Quick Links visit either District Elementary Language Arts or District Math, then select standards).

There is collaboration among GATE teachers at individual sites as well as collaboration across the district program as a whole and by grade level. Staff development opportunities are provided to GATE teachers with regard to current research and trends in teaching GATE students. Additionally, GATE teachers have opportunities to attend occasional conferences and to take continuing education courses specifically focused on teaching gifted students. Staff development and conferences give GATE teachers the opportunity to network with other GATE teachers and programs to expand their knowledge of the state curriculum and best practices for teaching GATE students. Refer to the GATE website for links to new research regarding GATE students and their learning/study habits.