



# Porter Ranch Community School LAUSD Gifted/ Talented Programs

## FALL GATE PARENT/FAMILY MEETING 2023

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# MEETING AGENDA

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Goal of Gifted/Talented Program

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Truths and Myths about Giftedness

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Characteristics of Gifted/Talented  
Learners

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Problems Gifted Kids May Face

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GATE Identification Categories

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District Program Options

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School Program, Plan, and Budget for  
GATE Learners

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What is Differentiation?

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What Can a Parent Do to Nurture  
Giftedness?

# GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAMS GOAL

To identify gifted and talented students including those from diverse racial, socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds, and provide high-quality differentiated opportunities for learning that meet students' unique abilities and talents.

# DISPELLING THE MYTHS

## Myths About Gifted Learners:

**Myth #1: *"Gifted Students Don't Need Help; They'll Do Fine on Their Own."***

**Truth:** Would you send a star athlete to train for the Olympics without a coach? Gifted students need guidance from well-trained teachers who challenge and support them in order to fully develop their abilities. Many gifted students may be so far ahead of their same-age peers that they know more than half of the grade-level curriculum before the school year begins. Their resulting boredom and frustration can lead to low achievement, despondency, or unhealthy work habits. The role of the teacher is crucial for spotting and nurturing talents in school.

**Myth #2: *"Teachers Challenge All Students, So Gifted Kids Will Be Fine in the Regular Classroom."***

**Truth:** Although teachers try to challenge all students, they are frequently unfamiliar with the needs of gifted children and do not know how to best serve them in the classroom. A national study conducted by the Fordham Institute found that 58% of teachers have received no professional development focused on teaching academically advanced students and 73% of teachers agreed that *"Too often, the brightest students are bored and under-challenged in school—we're not giving them a sufficient chance to thrive."* This report confirms what many families have known: not all teachers are able to recognize and support gifted learners.

# DISPELLING THE MYTHS

## Myths About Gifted Learners:

**Myth #3: "That Student Can't be Gifted; They are Receiving Poor Grades."**

**Truth:** Underachievement describes a discrepancy between a student's performance and their actual ability. The roots of this problem differ, based on each child's experiences. Gifted students may become bored or frustrated in an unchallenging classroom situation causing them to lose interest, learn bad study habits, or distrust the school environment. Other students may mask their abilities to try to fit in socially with their same-age peers, and still others may have a learning disability that masks their giftedness. No matter the cause, it's imperative that caring and perceptive adults help gifted learners break the cycle of underachievement in order to achieve their full potential.

**Myth #4: "All Children are Gifted."**

**Truth:** All children have strengths and positive attributes, but not all children are gifted in the educational sense of the word. The "gifted" label in a school setting means that when compared to others in their age or grade, a child has an advanced capacity to learn and apply what is learned in one or more subject areas, or in the performing or fine arts. This advanced capacity requires modifications to the regular curriculum to ensure these children are challenged and learn new material. Gifted does not connote good or better; it is a term that allows students to be identified for services that meet their unique learning needs.



# CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED LEARNERS

## A gifted learner may exhibit:

- Early, rapid learning
- Endless energy
- Superior language ability; learns language quickly
- Extensive knowledge and interest base
- Exceptional memory
- Keen, mature sense of humor
- Complex/abstract thinking and great imagination
- Superior reasoning/problem-solving ability
- Long attention span when interested
- Inappropriate acting out or apathy when disinterested
- High level moral thinking; ability to detect injustice or inconsistency
- Unrealistic self-expectations; perfectionistic and competitive
- Frustrated with illogical or disorganized thinking
- Impulsive, risk-taking behavior OR worried to take risks due to fear of failure
- Overwhelming curiosity; questions everything and everyone (including authority)
- Lack of desire to socialize with age-level peers; prefers the company of adults/older friends

# Problems Gifted Kids May Face

## **Self-esteem issues**

Not only do gifted kids have to live with the stigma of being “different,” but their sensitivity can also make them appear vulnerable. In combination, these two factors increase the likelihood of being bullied or rejected by peers, both of which are highly damaging to a child’s self-esteem.

## **Boredom at school**

Boredom at school frequently leads to underachievement in gifted students, particularly during adolescence. Gifted adolescents often become frustrated knowing they could complete their work much faster at home, leaving more time to pursue other interests. In essence, school begins to feel like a waste of time, and this may be true even for students enrolled in specialized gifted programs.

## **Problems with attention and organization**

Gifted kids are often stereotyped as being exceptionally focused and organized, but this isn’t always the case. Many gifted kids struggle with inattention and disorganization, in part because they’re abstract thinkers and in part because they have many diverse interests competing for their attention.



# CATEGORIES OF IDENTIFICATION

## Intellectual Ability (Second semester kindergarten and above)

Students whose general intellectual development is markedly advanced in relation to their chronological peers; students are identified as gifted in Intellectual Ability by a Los Angeles Unified School District designated GATE psychologist.

## High Achievement Ability (Fifth grade and above and second grade OLSAT-8 only)

Students who consistently function for two consecutive years at highly advanced levels in English-language arts and mathematics; evidenced by test scores (second graders may also be identified in High Achievement with the OLSAT-8)

## Specific Academic Ability (Fifth grade and above)

Students who consistently function for three consecutive years at highly advanced levels in either English-language arts or mathematics (science or social science included in grades 9 – 12); evidenced by test scores



# CATEGORIES OF IDENTIFICATION

## Visual Arts Ability (Second grade and above)

Students who originate, perform, produce, or respond at exceptionally high levels in drawing and painting; evidenced by District demonstration/portfolio review

## Performing Arts Ability (Second grade and above)

Students who originate, perform, produce, or respond at exceptionally high levels in either dance, voice, or drama; evidenced by District audition

## Creative Ability (Second grade and above)

Students who characteristically perceive significant similarities or differences within the environment, challenge assumptions, and produce unique alternative solutions; evidenced by District portfolio or presentation review

## Leadership Ability (Second grade and above)

Students who show confidence and knowledge; influence others effectively; have problem-solving and decision-making skills; express ideas in oral or written form clearly; show sense of purpose and direction; evidenced by District portfolio or presentation review

# DID YOU KNOW?

Only the High Achievement and Specific Academic categories are determined by test scores and grades (these students are considered “slam dunks” because their scores automatically qualify them for identification).

All other categories require the professional expertise of the local school screening team and additional category-specific requirements (i.e. portfolio review for Visual Arts Ability, test by GATE psychologist for Intellectual, etc.).



# REFERRALS FOR IDENTIFICATION

1. If an administrator, teacher, parent/family member, or child thinks a student is potentially gifted, they may provide this student's name to the school site GATE screening committee.
2. The screening committee is responsible for determining if the child is ready for GATE referral and in what category. This screening process could include observing the student, looking through test score/report card records or portfolios, interviewing teachers, etc. Referrals are created in MiSiS for students being screened.
3. If the screening committee determines that the student is qualified and ready for evaluation, they will initiate the formal identification process. If not, they may discontinue screening.

## SECOND GRADE TESTING FOR THE HIGH ACHIEVEMENT CATEGORY

- OLSAT-8 (Otis-Lennon School Ability Test, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition) is the Districtwide assessment given to all 2<sup>nd</sup> graders
- OLSAT-8 identifies students in the High Achievement category
- The assessment is conducted each spring
- The OLSAT-8 is a nationally standardized achievement test , that is norm-referenced, group administered and a measure of verbal and non-verbal school abilities
- There is no highly gifted designation possible using the OLSAT because it is not an Intellectual assessment
- Parent informational meetings are typically held in February and student scores are released in mid-May

**OLSAT**<sup>®</sup>  
Otis-Lennon School Ability Test<sup>®</sup>  
Eighth Edition

# HIGHLY GIFTED DESIGNATION: INTELLECTUAL CATEGORY

The term “highly gifted” refers to students who receive a percentile rank of 99.9 on the Intellectual assessment given by a District GATE Psychologist. No other identification category has a highly gifted designation.

Highly gifted students may apply to Highly Gifted Magnets.

Students who receive a percentile rank of 99.5 – 99.8 on the intellectual assessment are considered “highly gifted applicable” and may apply to Highly Gifted Magnets if space is available.

There is no special test for identification as highly gifted.

# IDENTIFICATION... AND BEYOND!

Gifted identification is not the final goal of this program.

Identification is the tool that allows teachers and schools to make instructional and programming decisions to best meet the academic and social-emotional needs of students.

The identification process has little value without appropriate clustering and differentiated instruction to follow.

Cluster model in resident schools  
Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS)  
Gifted Magnets  
Highly Gifted Magnets  
Conservatory of Fine Arts  
Honors and Advanced Placement  
(AP) courses (middle and senior high  
school)



# GATE PROGRAM OPTIONS



# SCHOOL GATE PROGRAM

Our School Plan to meet the needs of gifted/talented Learners

How we differentiate instruction for gifted/talented Learners

How we refer and identify students to be assessed as gifted/talented



# NO MATTER WHAT PROGRAM, IT'S ALL ABOUT DIFFERENTIATION:

HOW IS THE CORE CURRICULUM MODIFIED TO MEET THE  
NEEDS OF GIFTED LEARNERS?



- Accelerated pacing
- Advanced content
- Depth, complexity, and novelty
- Above grade-level resources
- Tiered assignments
- Learning/interest centers
- Independent study
- Flexible grouping
- High level questioning
- “Think Like a Disciplinarian”
- Compacting the curriculum in a student’s area of strength

# WHAT CAN A PARENT DO TO NURTURE GIFTEDNESS?

Read daily to/with your child; ask questions that require high-level thinking

Take your child to get his/her own public library card; encourage self-selection of books in a variety of genres and content areas

For younger children, provide play materials that can be used in creative ways such as blocks, art supplies, or recycled materials

Take family trips to places of interest such as museums, aquariums, gardens, historical sites, and performances

Monitor and limit TV viewing and video game playing; encourage activities that require critical thinking and problem solving

Provide some safe opportunities for ambiguity/frustration – struggling intellectually is an important part of learning

Practice research skills in areas of interest; model appropriate use of reference books and the internet to find answers to questions

Encourage your child's empathy and social responsibility, not just academic achievement

Adapted from Mountford, S. "What Can a Parent Do?" California Association for the Gifted Parent Handbook.

# BE SURE TO READ THE GATE PARENT/FAMILY NEWSLETTER!

Published quarterly

Current and past issues  
are available in English  
and Spanish on the  
GATE website

Go to:

[www.lausd.org/gate](http://www.lausd.org/gate)

Click on “Families”

Click on “Parent/Family  
Newsletters”



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## Parent Newsletter

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### Odyssey of the Mind

*Teaching divergent thinking and celebrating creativity*

Odyssey of the Mind is an international creative problem-solving program that engages students in their learning by allowing their knowledge and ideas to come to life in an exciting, productive environment. The program is designed to encourage and develop divergent or “out of the box” thinking while embedding differentiated instruction and addressing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), academic standards, and Future Ready Skills. This program supports students who are identified gifted/talented in the Creative Ability category and can serve as an excellent screening tool for students who may be potentially gifted/talented.

Gifted/Talented Programs has been supporting Odyssey of the Mind in LAUSD since 2019. Two LAUSD schools have teams moving on to the state competition in Moreno Valley on April 1, 2023. Principal Anna Aguilera and GATE Coordinator Anastasia Gonzalez from Clifford Street Math and Technology Magnet shared that students in grades kindergarten through 4th grade participated in an after-school Odyssey of the Mind enrichment class. Their 3rd and 4th grade team won first place in Problem 4 Division 1 “Where’s the Structure.” In this problem, the team designed and built a structure made of only balsa wood and glue that balanced and held as much weight as possible. It had three parts, and each part was hidden in plain sight. During the performance the team revealed each part and assembled them into a final structure for testing. The performance also included a poem about searching for something special. The props, costumes, structure and script were all created by the team of seven talented students.



Principal Susi DaCorsi and GATE Coordinator Clare Kearns from Welby Way Charter Elementary shared that this year, 28 students returned to the problem-solving competition after a hiatus during the pandemic. To prepare, student teams met after school and on weekends for several months prior to the regional competition on March 11, 2023. Three of their four teams will be advancing to the State competition.



# ADDITIONAL DISTRICTWIDE GATE PARENT MEETINGS

GATE Parent Hour -  
First Wednesday of the  
month on Zoom

GATE Webinars - Held  
bi-monthly on Zoom

For more information  
visit the Families page  
on the GATE website at  
[www.lausd.org/gate](http://www.lausd.org/gate)





Questions or  
comments?



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Thank you attending!



Together, we make a  
difference.

Q & A