

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

GATE PROGRAM

(GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUICATION)

What is GATE?

It is the mission of the Dixie School District to provide a kindergarten through eighth grade system of education which will graduate students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to live rewarding and productive lives in a rapidly changing world.

We are committed to a school environment that fosters excellence and the achievement of one's potential. It is this belief in the possibility of individual excellence and unique achievement – and the school's responsibility for fostering both – that is the basis of Dixie School District's GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) program.

Goals

The Dixie District's GATE program goals are to:

- Identify high achieving students, including those from diverse racial, socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds, and provide opportunities for differentiated learning that meet the students' particular abilities and talents.
- Redesign curriculum to address the individual characteristics, needs, abilities, and interests of the high achieving student (differentiation of depth, complexity, and novelty).
- Provide staff training and learning opportunities which enhance both curriculum and instructional programs in ways that meet the needs of gifted learners.
- Provide opportunities for highly capable students to work in homogeneous, heterogeneous, and individual instructional settings (part-time grouping, enrichment activities, acceleration).
- Develop in each gifted student responsibility and sensitivity towards others.
- Develop in each gifted student the ability to recognize, integrate, and utilize his/her potential.
- Encourage family and community participation in services for gifted and talented students.

Program Structure

The Dixie District GATE program serves students in grades 4-8 and its structure consists of three primary components. In the first component, throughout the school year, teachers provide each GATE student with uniquely appropriate opportunities suited to his/her individual talents and abilities. In the second component, GATE students are served after school and/or on weekends by participating in activities called "*Dixie School District Discovery Days.*" The third components, "*School Clubs*" and "*Odyssey of the Mind,*" are extra activities that are offered at some of our schools at various times. Students have a choice to

participate in these activities on regular school days or after school. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of all the community resources available to enrich their student/s.

Differentiated Instruction

Qualitatively differentiated programs are those which modify or adjust content, process, products, and learning environment in ways which build and extend the special characteristics of gifted students. The content (what is taught) is more abstract, complex, and varied. The processes include those which develop higher-level thought; allow for open-endedness, discovery, and freedom of choice; encourage group interaction and proof of reasoning; or are varied both in kind and pacing. Student products involve real problems presented to real audiences. The district is committed to offering training to teachers on an ongoing basis to ensure that teachers are well versed in differentiated instruction.

Discovery Days

“Discovery Days” is a program providing introductory and/or extended instruction and enrichment experience in a variety of curriculum areas such as: Math, Science, Language Arts, Writing, Technology, Listening and Speaking, Visual and Performing Arts. Each year a *“Discovery Days”* brochure is published which details course options and their times and dates. *“Discovery Days”* activities are offered after school or on weekends and are open for elementary and middle school GATE students.

Screening and Identification of GATE Students

THE PROCESS

The process of identification of gifted and talented students in the Dixie School District is ongoing. Most nominations take place in the elementary grades (beginning in 3rd grade), although new students at any grade level may be referred.

THE REFERRAL

Pupils may be nominated for screening by a teacher, principal, parent, counselor, self, or GATE staff.

SCREENING

The GATE screening process is based on multiple criteria, including the California Standards Tests (CST), and scores in total Mathematics and total English-Language Arts. In addition, Dixie School District tests students with the Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT). The Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) is administered in spring to all nominated students. Parent permission is needed for testing.

ELIGIBILITY

GATE placement is determined by members of the Dixie District administrative team. For each nomination, the committee reviews a student profile including the multiple criteria mentioned above.