Parent Resource Guide

for

Gifted and Talented Students

2010-2011

With regard to excellence, it is not enough to know, but we must try to have and use it.

– Aristotle

SLVUSD GATE Program

San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District is committed to learning for all students. As a district, we focus on four essential questions in our instructional program:

1.) What do we want ALL students to know?

2.) How will we know if students learned it?

3.) How do we respond when students don't learn it?

4.) How do we respond when students already know it?

For the gifted student, it is the fourth question we must answer with clearly planned differentiated instruction and assessment for their learning. The most important instructional program for gifted and talented students is classroom instruction that is differentiated; this means that teachers are focused on ways to deepen, extend, enrich the learning and thinking of students within the classroom experience. Each of our sites also offer enrichment as part of the traditional GATE program; however, it is important to note that the guidelines from the California Department of Education and The California Association for the Gifted state that the most effective model for gifted education is what occurs during the school day. As the state's budget crisis continues to eat away at the limited resources for enrichment programs outside of the classroom, we are finding ways to collaborate with each other and with our parent community so that we can offer some enrichment experiences. It is for this level of professionalism and thoughtful program development that the educators in SLVUSD are to be acknowledged for the instructional program they provide at each grade level.

Elementary

Both Boulder Creek and San Lorenzo Valley elementary schools offer students in grades 4 and 5 enrichment experiences as well as differentiated instruction in the core content areas. For further program details, please contact the site principal.

Middle School

SLV Middle School is working diligently to support the learning needs of all students in the middle grades. Students who are identified as gifted or talented are invited to participate in enrichment activities before, during and after school. For further information, please contact the middle school principal or counselor.

High School

SLV High School continues to develop ways to identify and support incoming students. Gifted or talented adolescents often want to "blend in" with peers and are hesitant to participant in activities that are identified with groups that are outside of the extra curricular realm. To that end, high school students are invited to attend the Honors English class, which meets during lunch time, and join campus clubs and organizations that are of their particular interest. The counseling department meets with students individually to track their progress through high school using the Individualized Learning Plan. This is another way for students to learn about accelerated courses and activities that support their identified talents. For further information, please contact the high school principal or counselors.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Organizations

American Association for Gifted Children

http://www.aagc.org/

Duke University organization and resources related to gifted education and students.

The Association for the Gifted (TAG)

http://www.cectag.org/

A division of the Council for Exceptional Children. Promotes scholarly research, advocacy, and professional development.

Belin-Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development

http://www.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/

Sponsored by the University of Iowa. Conducts talent search and educational programs for gifted students.

California Association for the Gifted (CAG)

http://www.cagifted.org/

A non-profit organization of teachers, administrators, parents, and professionals interested in promoting gifted education in California.

College Admissions Services

http://www.go4ivy.com/resource.asp

Resources and information about college admissions including financial aid, scholarships, studying for the SAT, writing application essays, and the college admissions process.

Davidson Institute for Talent Development

http://www.ditd.org/public/

Supports profoundly gifted young people and opportunities for development of talents.

Kids Links – Gifted and Talented Education Program

http://www.stockton.k12.ca.us/gate/kids-links.htm

A resource for students to use. Web resources, games and activities for students in elementary and middle school are posted on this site. There are links for parent resources as well.

Stanford University Education Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY)

http://epgy.stanford.edu/

Computer-based distance-learning courses for high-ability students of all ages in an individualized educational experience in a variety of subjects from kindergarten through advanced-undergraduate.

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page

http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/

Gifted information and resources for parents, educators, counselors, administrators, other professionals, kids and teens

Jacob K. Javits Fellowships Program

http://www.ed.gov/programs/jacobjavits/index.html

U.S. Department of Education sponsored programs for gifted and talented education funding for elementary, high school, and college students; local educational agency grant programs, and university research.

Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth

http://www.jhu.edu/~gifted/

The program identifies top academic students in grades two through eight and opportunities for participation in challenging educational programs through their tenth grade year.

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)

http://www.nagc.org/

A non-profit organization of teachers, administrators, parents, and professionals interested in promoting gifted education on a national level.

National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRCGT)

http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt.html

The NRCGT promotes and publishes research on gifted education related to current and emerging issues in education of gifted and talented students, including GATE students from diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic groups.

Odyssey of the Mind

http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/

An international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college involving regional, state, and international competitions.

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)

http://www.sengifted.org/

Fosters education and research to support the unique social and emotional needs of gifted individuals.

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children

http://www.worldgifted.org/

A worldwide network of educators, scholars, researchers, parents, educational institutions, and others interested in research and information on the gifted.

KEY DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES OF GIFTED CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Developmental Differences of Gifted Children:
High sense of perception and sensitivity
High tendency toward integration and synthesis
Divergent thinking
High intensity of interests and creativity
Uneven inherent abilities (asynchronous development)
High expectations of and from self and others
Early self-observation but often inaccurate conclusion

Developmental Markers of Adolescence:
Adolescence is said to begin with the question: "Who am I?" and end with the statement: "This is who I am."
Inwardizing/Individuating-turning in to discover oneself
Developmentally normal narcissism
Separating and differentiating self from parents
Increasing desire for independence
Increasing turning to peers
Emotional volatility

Developmental Differences of Gifted Adolescents
Very early metacognition
Sense of being different at a time when peer identification is intense
Fear of not being understood
Different interests from peers
Need for appropriate risks and challenges
Possible discovery of underdeveloped areas of learning
Multipotentiality
Need for mentors and role models outside the family

Is My Child Gifted?

In order to assist you in the evaluation of whether or not a child would be considered as gifted, the following chart has been devised to help discriminate the differences between a "bright' and a 'gifted" child. Although all students can exhibit a mixture of characteristics listed below, the gifted and talented child typically exhibits unusually high levels describe in the gifted category.

The Bright Child	The Gifted Child
• knows the answers ……	asks the questions
• is interested ……	is highly curious
• is attentive ……	is mentally and physically involved
• has good ideas ……	has wild, silly ideas
• works hard ……	plays around, yet tests well
• answers the questions ……	discusses in detail; elaborated
• is in the top group ……	works beyond the top group
• listens with interest ……..	shows strong feelings and opinions
• learns with ease ……..	already knows
• needs 68 repetitions for mastery …….	needs 12 repetitions for mastery
• understands ideas ……..	constructs abstractions
• enjoys peers ……	prefers adults
• grasps the meaning ……	draws inferences
• completes assignments ……..	initiates (not necessarily completes) projects
• is receptive ……	is intense
• copies accurately ……	creates a new design
• enjoys school ……	enjoys learning
• absorbs information ……	manipulates information
• is a technician ……..	invents
• has a good memory ……	is a good guesser
• enjoys straightforward …… sequential presentation	thrives on complexity
• is alert ……	is keenly observant
• is pleased with own learning …….	is highly self-critical

Descriptors by Janice Szabos

Note: Not all descriptors will be true for every student

High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Thinker

A HIGH ACHIEVER…	A GIFTED LEARNER…	A CREATIVE THINKER…
Remember the answers.	Poses unforeseen questions.	Sees exceptions.
Is interested.	Is curious.	Wonders.
Is attentive.	Is selectively mentally engaged.	Daydreams; may seem off task.
Generates advanced ideas.	Generates complex, abstract ideas.	Overflows with ideas, many of which will never be developed.
Works hard to achieve.	Often knows without working hard.	Plays with ideas and concepts.
Answers the questions in detail.	Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives.	Injects new possibilities.
Performs at the top of the group.	Is beyond the group.	Is in own group.
Responds with interest and opinions.	Exhibits feelings and opinions from multiple perspectives.	Shares bizarre, sometimes conflicting opinions.
Learns with ease.	Often already knows.	Questions: What if…
Needs 6 to 8 repetitions to master.	Needs 1 to 3 repetitions to master.	Questions the need for mastery.
Comprehends at a high level.	Comprehends indepth, complex ideas.	Abstracts beyond original ideas.
Enjoys the company of age peers.	Prefers the company of intellectual peers.	Prefers the company of creative peers.
Understands complex, abstract humor.	Creates complex, abstract humor.	Relishes wild, off the wall humor.
Grasps the meaning.	Infers and connects concepts.	Makes mental leaps: Aha!
Completes assignments on time.	Initiates projects and extensions of assignments.	Initiates more projects than will ever be completed.
Is receptive.	Is intense.	Is independent and unconventional.
Is accurate and complete.	Is original and continually developing.	Is original, ever changing, and misunderstood.
Enjoys school often.	Enjoys self-directed learning.	Enjoys creating.
Absorbs information.	Manipulates information.	Improvises.
Is a technician with expertise in a field.	Is an expert, abstracts beyond the field.	Is an inventor and idea generator.
Memorizes well.	Guesses and infers well.	Creates and brainstorms well.
Is highly alert and observant.	Anticipates and relates observations.	Is intuitive.
Is pleased with own learning.	Is self-critical.	Is never finished with possibilities.
Gets A’s.	May not be motivated by grades.	May not be motivated by grades.
Is able.	Is intellectual.	Is idiosyncratic.

From Brain Research Into Teacher Action

(by Barbara Clark, CSU Los Angeles, author of *Growing Up Gifted*)

RESEARCH FINDING ABOUT LEARNING	RELATED ACTION FOR TEACHERS OF GIFTED STUDENTS
Development of intelligence depends on the interaction between the biological inheritance and environmental opportunities to use this inheritance.	Create stimulating environments and include appropriate challenges that encourage curiosity and exploration.
Attention and concentration rely on the impact of the environment on the brain.	Organize the classroom to include access to a variety and range of materials and activities; ensure psychological safety of all students; provide for exploration and choice.
Stress produces biochemistry that reduces cerebral cortical function.	Minimize fear, threat, anxiety, and tension in the learning environment and do not allow such emotions to overwhelm the teaching process.
The brain responds to novelty, to the unexpected, and to discrepant information.	Use novelty to motivate and enhance the process of learning. When asked to drill, or to do repetitive activities, the brain responds automatically without thought. While useful for learning some skills, such as times tables, these practices can be counter productive to higher-level learning.
The potential of brain development is essentially unlimited for most individuals and the dynamic nature of the brain allows intellectual growth to progress or regress, but does not remain static.	Organize the environment to make continuous progress from the student's level of mastery available and encourage progress beyond grade or age level for all learners guided by their individual rate of learning.
How intelligence is expressed will depend on the individual's genetic pattern and anatomical structure in interaction with the support and opportunities provided by the environment.	Differentiate and individualize instructional planning and teaching, allowing each student to respond uniquely.
The brain integrates information and builds memory and predictions and generates models of reality. Students' minds do not just record what is taught; the brain makes inferences and predictions. Bright minds require complexity and need exposure to patterns and relationships.	Use interdisciplinary teaching across time and space instead of single goals or objectives involving limited subject matter or isolated events.
The brain constructs meaning; it does not just process information or amplify thought.	Create problems to solve and work toward in-depth understanding of the concepts being taught. Integrative, multidisciplinary teaching will prevent the limits to knowledge and understanding brought about by teaching each discipline only as a separate specialization. Didactic teaching alone is no longer justifiable.
The brain attaches emotional significance to information; good learning derives from exciting teaching, as emotional responses are often more important in making cognitive decisions than are our rational processes.	Make your teaching positive, empowering, and enthusiastic, as this way of teaching is highly valuable in the learning process.
Optimal learning requires the active involvement of the learner.	Plan for the learner to be actively involved with concrete experiences and sensory stimulation in both elementary and secondary classrooms. Use of texts and workbooks alone is not appropriate to teach abstract concepts.
Use of the processes and content of both specializations of the right and left hemispheres of the cerebral cortex are needed for powerful learning.	Give opportunities for integrative and alternative modes of learning and expression to insure effective learning.
Intelligence is developed and supported by experiences that associate and integrate information from the different areas of function in the brain (.e., cognitive, affective, physical/sensing, and intuitive).	Include experiences from all areas of brain function in learning opportunities whenever possible.
The brain constantly uses feedback to create connections, store information, and develop experiences.	In the teaching process, include feedback that synthesizes and interconnects information at more complex and abstract levels for the learner frequently, consistently, and in a timely manner.

Differentiated Instruction Web Links

Differentiated Instruction
Internet4Classrooms
http://www.internet4classrooms.com/di.htm
Includes links related to instructional theory, practical tips, sample units and other documents that are useful in applying differentiated instruction techniques in the classroom.

Differentiated Instruction
New Horizons for Learning
http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/differentiated/front_differentiated.htm
Provides links to articles that offer principles and tools designed to not only help students to learn more effectively but to also help them to enjoy the process and be interested in continuing to learn throughout life.

Differentiated Instruction: A Tool for All Students
Tools for Schools
New York State Education Department
http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/sate/resourcesdiffinstr.pdf
Includes materials developed for the *Too/s for Schools* teleconference series, which was designed to support schools in improving student achievement.

Differentiated Instruction Resources
Staff Development for Educators
http://www.sde.com/conferences/Differentiated-Instruction/DIResources.htm
Offers more than 50 PDF files for downloading organized around the following four areas: Differentiating Textbooks, Understanding Expository Textbooks, Differentiated Instruction, and Poverty.

Differentiated Instruction (Strategy of the Week)
Education World
http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/strategy/strategy042.shtml
Discover how research into how students learn led to the changes in how teachers adapt educational content, process, and product according to student readiness, interests, and earning profiles.

How to Differentiate Instruction
Teach-Nology
http://www.teach-nology.com/
A tutorial that offers strategies for using technology to differentiate instruction. Links to definitions of terms, sample strategies, and lessons are provided.

Teacher-to-Teacher Digital Workshops
U.S. Department of Education
http://www.paec.org/teacher2teacher/
Free online courses developed for teachers as a means of sharing research-based best practices. Several courses cover differentiation. Each course is delivered in segments--usually about 15 minutes long--of video interspersed with reflective questions and small tasks that foster understanding. An entire program, including activities, is about 2 hours long. Compiled by Learning Multimedia Center, Instructional Services Branch, Santa Clara.

FAQ (From The California Association for the Gifted)

How do I know if my child is gifted?

Compared to their age peers, gifted children 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 gifted child.

What is a Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Program?

In California, public schools may apply for educational funds to assist in providing appropriate learning opportunities for those students identified as gifted and talented. A basic gifted program will include: testing to identify gifted students; grouping students within a class or for all or part of the school day by ability; providing curriculum that is challenging and allows continuous progress; developing social and emotional skills; training for teachers and administrators in the education of gifted learners; providing counseling and support for gifted students who are at risk; and involving parents in the planning and evaluation of GATE programs. A written plan defining how the district will meet the needs of gifted students as articulated in the state GATE standards must be submitted to the California Department of Education (CDE) for approval for one to three years. To obtain a copy of the GATE law and/or a copy of the standards, go to the CAG web site (www.CAGifted.org) link, Calif. Dept. of Education GATE, or call the CDE at 9163235124 or 9163235831. In some districts, Article 3 School Based Education Code may apply.

How can I make sure that my child receives an appropriate education?

It is important that parents/guardians act as their child's advocates. Learn as much as you can about gifted education and the needs of gifted children. Familiarize yourself with the terms and definitions used in the various educational programs offered at your school or in your district. Inform the school about your child's special needs and then volunteer to help make sure those needs are met. Participate on your school's and/or district's GATE Advisory Committee or Site Council as a way to learn about and contribute to gifted education in your district. In addition, look for opportunities for your child to pursue special interests through community programs, summer classes or enrollment at the local community colleges of learning.

Can a gifted child have learning disabilities too? Where can I get information?

Some gifted children have learning disabilities such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, and visual or auditory processing difficulties. It is sometimes difficult to identify the special needs of these children because they often use their high abilities to mask or adapt to their learning disabilities. For more information, go to the CAG web site (www.CAGifted.org) link, Special Needs of the Gifted.

Why is raising a gifted child so challenging?

Gifted children often exhibit unique social and emotional needs that may include a strong sense of justice, extreme idealism, moral intensity, perfectionism, hypersensitivity, and unreasonably high expectations for themselves and others. They can be emotionally hypersensitive, such as to criticism, and/or physically hypersensitive, such as to touch and smell. Some may appear to be perpetual motion machines, or show wide swings in mood and maturity. Their vast emotional range can make them appear contradictory: aggressive and timid, mature and immature, arrogant and compassionate, depending on the situation. They may push the limits of rules at home and school, challenge their parents and teachers with constant questioning, and engage in risky behavior. The discrepancies between their physical, emotional, and intellectual development make parenting and teaching gifted children especially challenging. You may benefit from joining a support group for parents of gifted children as a way to meet others who share your concerns; if there are no groups in your area, consider starting one of your own.

How and when do we start planning for our child's future?

Begin now by developing an atmosphere of positive expectations and help your child identify interests, talents, strengths and weaknesses. Together with your child, investigate possible careers that could provide personal growth and satisfaction and explore options for the future. Look into mentoring or job shadowing opportunities. Request literature and visit college campuses when on vacation. Participate in summer programs and other activities sponsored by universities. If possible, begin a savings or investment plan to finance higher education or other experiences to support your child's goals.