

Stowers GATE Program Goal and Philosophy

The Stowers GATE program is a cluster program that provides and develops unique education opportunities for our high-achieving and underachieving students who have been identified as gifted and talented. Stowers believes that **all** students deserve an education that challenges them to meet their fullest potential. The GATE program provides our gifted and talented students opportunities for learning that correspond with their particular abilities and talents. Our GATE program provides opportunities for our gifted students in grades 4-6 to recognize their full potential and maximize their individual interests and talents. This program is designed to help our students learn how to apply their talents both in the classroom as well as in their everyday lives.

Stowers GATE program includes:

As directed by EC Section 52200(c) which states that all GATE programs should include the following:

- (1) Differentiated opportunities for learning commensurate with the gifted and talented pupils' particular abilities and talents
- (2) Alternative learning environments in which gifted and talented pupils can acquire skills and understanding at advanced ideological and creative levels commensurate with their potentials
- (3) Elements that help gifted and talented pupils develop sensitivity and responsibility to others
- (4) Elements that help to develop a commitment in gifted and talented pupils to constructive ethical standards
- (5) Elements that assist gifted and talented pupils to develop self-generating problem-solving abilities to expand each pupil's awareness of choices for satisfying contributions in his or her environment
- (6) Elements that help gifted and talented pupils develop realistic, healthy self-concepts.

General standards for GATE:

The *CCR*, Title 5 establishes the following general standards that apply to all types of gifted and talented programs:

- (a) Unique opportunities for high-achieving and under-achieving pupils who are identified as gifted and talented shall be provided.
- (b) Districts shall make provisions for ensuring participation of pupils in the upper range of intellectual ability.

- (c) Districts shall make provisions for ensuring full participation of pupils from disadvantaged and varying cultural backgrounds.
- (d) The quality of existing programs for gifted and talented pupils shall be maintained or improved.
- (e) Experimentation with a variety of programmatic approaches and cost levels shall be encouraged.
- (f) Written consent of a parent, guardian, or other person having actual custody and control of the pupil shall be on file with the district prior to the pupil's participation in the program.
- (g) The district program shall meet the specific needs and requirements as specified in the *EC* Section 52200(c) for gifted and talented pupils. Academic components shall be included in all program offerings.
- (h) The district program shall reflect the assessed needs of its identified pupils.
- (i) All identified gifted and talented pupils shall have an opportunity to participate in the gifted and talented program.
- (j) The district shall develop a written plan for the district program which is available for public inspection. The written plan describes the appropriately differentiated curricula for identified gifted and talented pupils as well as specifies the methods used to examine the appropriateness of the identified pupil's total educational experience, including articulation with other special-funded programs that serve gifted and talented pupils. (*CCR*, Title 5 Section 3831)

International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, Primary Years Program (PYP):

Stowers designation and authorization as an International Baccalaureate World School brings with this title a highly developed inquiry based curriculum that meets the GATE standards. Here is the connection. The IB with its focus on the PYP balances the acquisition of significant and relevant knowledge and skills, the development of conceptual understanding, the formation of personal, positive attitudes and the capacity to take responsible actions.

The PYP:

- addresses students' academic needs and their social and emotional well-being
- encourages students to develop independence and to take responsibility for their own learning
- supports students' effort to gain understanding of the world and to function effectively within it
- helps students to establish personal values as a foundation on which international-mindedness will flourish.

The written curriculum, outlined below, is made up of five essential elements and details what students learn.

The five essential elements of the PYP:

- **knowledge**, which is both disciplinary, represented by traditional subject areas (language, math, science, social studies, arts, PSPE) and transdisciplinary
- **concepts**, which students explore through structured inquiry to develop coherent, in-depth understanding, and which have relevance both within and beyond subject areas
- **skills**, which are the broad capabilities students develop and apply during learning and in life beyond the classroom
- **attitudes**, which contribute to international-mindedness and the wellbeing of individuals and learning communities, and connect directly to the IB learner profile
- **action**, which is an expectation in the PYP that successful inquiry leads to responsible, thoughtful and appropriate action.

Stowers Focus

Stowers teachers, administrators and support personnel recognize that gifted and talented students possess unique learning characteristics. These characteristics might include the student's need to delve deeply into a given subject, a desire to spend longer periods of time researching a topic, the ability to quickly master designated grade level content, an extremely strong sense of fairness, sensitivity and empathy, and the need to interact with mental peers on a regular basis.

Research shows that because of these characteristics, gifted students require some alteration to the regular classroom program to reach toward their full academic, social and/or physical potential. Our gifted and talented students will experience a differentiated program in the following areas; learning environment, teaching/learning processes, student products, assessment, and curriculum content.

The program for identified GATE students includes a focus on the following elements:

Focus on the Learning Environment

- A counseling, guidance and teaching staff who acknowledge and respect each student's uniqueness.
- A flexible classroom structure which meets the needs of the gifted learner through a variety of learning situations including small group instruction, cooperative learning, and independent research.
- A school day which provides opportunities to:
 - (a) interact with intellectual peers,
 - (b) interact with other gifted students who share the same learning needs,
 - (c) learn and practice being a leader as well as a follower, our learner profile.
 - (d) engage in divergent thinking,
 - (e) develop social as well as academic skills.
- A risk-free environment in which freedom of thought and divergent thinking is encouraged, expected and valued.
- Opportunities to understand, experience and appreciate intellectual and cultural diversities.
- Teachers who have the desire, skill and commitment necessary to provide for individual GATE student's intellectual, social and emotional development.

Focus on the Teaching/Learning Opportunities

- Opportunities to interact with teachers and other adults about topics of personal interest in a one-on-one situation.
- Opportunities to operate at the higher cognitive levels for a portion of selected school days.
- Opportunities to evaluate individual growth and achievement.
- Strategies to guide students toward a greater tolerance of other's skills and strengths.
- Use of higher levels of thinking skills and a variety of teaching styles to promote critical/creative thinking.
- Opportunities for students to consider their personal and academic growth.
- Use of a variety of teaching modes:
 - (a) collaborative learning
 - (b) group discussion
 - (c) hands-on experiences
 - (d) simulations
 - (e) inquiry
- Opportunities to be both a leader and a follower and to participate in both homogeneous and heterogeneous ability and skills groups.

Focus on the Student Products

- The work of the gifted student often shows an intellectual engagement with processes and products of learning; i.e., a commitment to the knowledge and insights that education has to offer. Because of this, our GATE student products will reflect the following:
 - (a) an ability to grasp cognitive concepts and to appreciate and comprehend transdisciplinary connectedness,
 - (b) high levels of critical thinking (self-evaluation and self-reflection),
 - (c) creativity,
 - (d) an ability to address solutions to real personal, environmental or community problems.

Focus on the IB's Transdisciplinary Curriculum

- GATE students will have opportunities to:
 - pursue in-depth academic studies.
 - reflect and consider the relationship of new information to existing knowledge.
 - understand, experience and appreciate the cultural diversity within our society.
 - discuss ideas with teachers and other students and to suggest original solutions or viewpoints.
 - to recognize their full potential and maximize their individual interests and talents.
 - to help our students learn how to apply their talents both in the classroom as well as in their everyday lives.