

Gifted/Talented Programs

Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and School Support

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Catherine Estrada, *District Specialist*
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GATE/SAS Coordinator's Update

March 2012

Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.

John Dewey

Updates and Deadlines

- MEM-5443.3, *Schools for Advanced Studies Student Application for 2012-2013* is available on Inside LAUSD. The SAS student application window opens April 9, 2012 and the deadline is May 9, 2012. SAS schools must notify applicants of selection decisions by June 8, 2012. Parents may download an application directly from www.lausd.net/gate under "Program Options" and SAS "Applications & Criteria." SAS coordinators should familiarize themselves with MEM-5443.3 to ensure that their school adheres to District policies and procedures for enrollment.
- REMINDER:** OLSAT-8 second grade testing is scheduled for March 14-15, 2012 (makeup date: March 21st) for traditional calendar schools and April 11-12, 2012 (makeup date: April 18th) for year-round schools (track C). Student test materials will be sent to schools the first week in March; schools must use Directions for Administering (DFAs) saved from 2011 testing. For more information including parent letters, download MEM-5657.0, *2012 OLSAT-8 Administration to Second Grade Students*, available on Inside LAUSD. Coordinators and parents are highly encouraged to attend an informational OLSAT-8 meeting (visit www.lausd.net/gate for schedule and flyers).
- CORRECTION:** The West Testing Center (servicing LD 3) is listed incorrectly in MEM-5657.0, *2012 OLSAT-8 Administration to Second Grade Students*. The correct location is Charnock Elementary School, 11133 Charnock Road, Los Angeles, CA 90034 (open from 8:00 am — 4:30 pm).
- The final spring GATE/SAS coordinator and parent meeting will be held on March 5th at Taper Elementary School. To view a schedule or to print parent meeting flyers, go to www.lausd.net/gate.
- The GATE Office is working with ITD to streamline the GATE identification and GATE Report processes. Improvements will include scanning/archiving previously-submitted GATE Reports, updating the system to scan/archive identification referral packets to accelerate the process, online submission of future GATE Reports, and adding GATE demographic data/narrative to the LAUSD "School Finder" webpage. (We're not there yet, but we're working on it!)
- As we meet with parents throughout the District, we have discovered that there is still some miscommunication (or lack of information) about GATE program options. For example, most parents tell us that they have never heard of the Saturday Conservatory of Fine Arts or have ever been invited to a school-site GATE parent meeting. Work with your GATE/SAS parent representative to ensure that parents are informed about the great options that exist at your school and within LAUSD. Don't forget to invite GATE/SAS parents to the FREE parent conference on May 12th from 9:00 am —12:00 pm at Virgil Middle School. This FREE conference will feature an amazing presentations by Dr. Sandra Kaplan (University of Southern California) and Dr. Jim Webb (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted/Great Potential Press), a variety of workshop choices, light refreshments, and translation services.

Differentiation in Kindergarten: A Worthwhile Challenge

Early education lays the foundation for future success. While students in all grade levels require differentiation, kindergarten students often arrive to school with a seemingly overwhelming range of ability and developmental levels, learning styles, interests, and experiences. It is essential that kindergarten teachers differentiate their instruction in order to ensure that the achievement and experiential gaps do not widen as these children progress through school.

Effective Strategies for Differentiation:

- Flexible grouping
- Learning/interest centers
- Choice in materials, centers, and tasks
- Ongoing observation and assessment
- Multiple intelligences; integrating physical movement, music, and art into lessons
- High-level, open-ended questioning
- Real-life problem solving



For more specific planning tips, assessment tools, management strategies, and activities, check out *Differentiation in Kindergarten* by Cindy Middendorf.

Note: The ability to exercise attentional control and self-discipline has been shown to be a stronger predictor of academic performance than IQ or "good behavior" (Bronson & Merryman, 2009). These skills can be fostered through the use of extended dramatic play which encourages mature, multidimensional role play. For more information on strategies to foster self-control in young children, read *Tools of the Mind: A Vygotskian Approach to Early Childhood Education* by Bodrova and Leong. These strategies can be embedded in core instruction such as *Treasures*.

Exciting News from Portola Highly Gifted Magnet!

Congratulations to Nickan Fayyazi who took first place at the L.A. County Scripps Regional Spelling Bee (defeating over 90 public and private school students). Good luck at the National Spelling Bee, Nickan! Also, congratulations to the Portola HG Magnet MathCounts team which took first place at the MathCounts Chapter Competition at CSUN.

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OLSAT-8 FAQs

Q: Why administer the OLSAT District-wide?

A: Analysis of 2009 pilot data indicates that this assessment supports goals of the District and Office for Civil Rights (OCR) to address the disproportionate number of underrepresented student populations and identify students who may be overlooked in the referral process.

Q: Who will be tested?

A: All second graders, including students with disabilities and English learners. (Students who are already identified in the Intellectual category or those who take the CAPA are exempt from testing.)

Q: What if parents do not want their child to take the OLSAT?

A: The parent can "opt out" of testing for their child by signing the parent informational letter (MEM-5657.0, Attachment E-1) and returning it to the school site. (Do not have parents sign and return the letter unless they want their child to opt out of testing.)

Q: Is the OLSAT an IQ test?

A: No, the OLSAT is an achievement test and eligible students will be identified in the High Achievement category.

Q: Can a student be identified "highly gifted" on the OLSAT?

A: No, again the OLSAT is an achievement test for the High Achievement category. The "highly gifted" designation only applies to the Intellectual category.

Q: How will a student qualify for gifted identification?

A: There are three ways to qualify for identification with the OLSAT: 1) Total age-based percentile score of 95% or above, 2) Total age-based percentile score of 90-94% with eligible CST scores on spring 2012 testing (445 ELA AND 450 Math), and 3) Total age-based percentile score of 90-94% with MyData poverty indicator of "yes."

Q: If a student does not qualify for identification with the OLSAT, can he/she still be referred for testing in the Intellectual category?

A: Yes, however all students must be thoroughly screened by the onsite GATE screening committee for appropriateness of referral.

Q: Where can I find information about testing procedures, materials, interpreting score reports, etc.?

A: All of the information is available in MEM-5657.0, *2012 OLSAT-8 Administration to Second Grade Students* (Inside LAUSD) and is covered in detail at the spring GATE/SAS Coordinator's Meeting (final meeting on March 5th at Taper Elementary School).

IMPORTANT NOTE: OLSAT Directions for Administering (DFAs) will not be reordered for next year. Be sure to save these booklets in a safe place for reuse during 2013 testing!

Make & Take

Symposium and Demonstration Lab: Product Differentiation for Gifted Learners

Join us for our 4th Annual GATE Symposium, scheduled for March 30th at Mulholland Middle School (Cesar Chavez holiday/unassigned day). This year's theme is "**Product Differentiation for Gifted Learners**" with a strong emphasis on "make & take" workshops for teachers in grades K-12. The Symposium will feature a keynote presentation by Dr. Sandra Kaplan (USC), tiered workshops on differentiation (basic, intermediate, and advanced), as well as a variety of hands-on sessions on product differentiation. All participants will receive a FREE Engine-uity Product Pouch and Mini-Guide to Bloom's Taxonomy, as well as 6 GATE professional development hours for the 2011-2012 school year.

Registration is available on the Learning Zone, <https://lz.lausd.net>. **Enrollment capacity is 400 with a limit of two participants per school as space is available** (additional enrollees from school sites will be dropped in the order of registration or as determined by the school leadership team) — check with your principal before enrolling. "No-shows" will be billed the full cost of attendance (\$300) so if you are registered and unable to attend, please drop the class on the Learning Zone so our waiting list can be accessed in a timely manner. If you have questions, please call the GATE office at (213) 241-6500.

Space is limited — register today!

Helpful Hints for GATE Coordinators

- Check SIS periodically to obtain the most updated gifted roster for your school; share this information with teachers.
- Create a brochure that describes your GATE/SAS program (required for Schools for Advanced Studies); this brochure should be available on your school's website.
- The GATE Report is a public document and should be readily available for parents to review. Keep a copy in the main office for reference; parents may request a copy of the report as well.
- Be sure to distribute the GATE parent and student newsletters and/or let parents know that these resources are available on www.lausd.net/gate under "Students and Parents."