

GIFTED EDUCATION – GATE PROGRAM

The mission of the GATE Program is to provide services for those students who are identified at the elementary and middle school levels as possessing demonstrated high performing capability or potential intellectual and creative abilities, specific academics, leadership, or the performing and visual arts. The curriculum of the GATE Program is focused upon ensuring in-depth, enriched, and challenging opportunities for these students. Students who participate in the GATE Program throughout their years in District 20 become confident persons who understand and value their gifts and talents and are thus able to contribute to the community at large.

District 20 evaluates students each year to determine eligibility for the GATE Program. Each year, students are screened using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Reading and Math Totals (achievement), and the Cognitive Abilities Test Total (potential). Students must score above the 90 percentile in each of those areas to qualify for the program. In addition to the standardized tests, four other instruments are used in the identification process: three teacher surveys and a parent survey.

If a student does not qualify for the GATE Program, but is thought to exhibit gifted and talented behaviors and characteristics, District 20 follows an “Exception Process” that would begin with the classroom teacher. A meeting of the classroom teacher, building principal, GATE teacher, and an one other teacher who sees that students on a regular basis would take place to review information about the student. This Exception Team would determine eligibility in the program.

District 20 provides for exiting from the GATE Program should it be necessary to consider withdrawing a student from the program. It should be noted that participation in the GATE Program is not a privilege, but an integral part of the student’s academic career based upon talents and abilities. However, in some instances, such a program may not be the most appropriate way to meet a student’s needs. When this occurs, a meeting with the parents, teachers, principal, and the student is held to determine a course of action that could allow a probationary period before withdrawal.

The GATE Program at the elementary schools follows a pull-out program. Elementary students work with the Gifted teacher two days a week for one period each day. The GATE Program at the middle school is a replacement program. Students meet each day with the Gifted teacher during the Reading class.