

The Community Advisory Committee for Gifted and Talented Education
cordially invites you to attend our bimonthly meeting featuring

APAAS Parent Orientation Meeting

Monday, February 25, 6:00 p.m.

Location: Oak Creek Elementary School, 1 Dove Creek, Irvine 92618

COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

With the APAAS application process around the corner, parents and teachers might be wondering, "What's the difference between GATE and APAAS?" In order to answer that question, it helps to understand some background on gifted education. The first documented systematic approach to providing for "bright pupils" was developed by the Superintendent of Schools in St. Louis, Dr. William T. Harris. *The Gifted and the Talented: Their Education and Development* explains that Dr. William T. Harris's reports for 1868-69 and for 1871-73 includes information on the advantages of promoting and accelerating highly intelligent students. For students in the lower grades, promotions were for short intervals, as short as five weeks; while gifted students in the higher grade levels were accelerated through the grades. He noted that the plan provided gifted pupils with more challenging work and "prevented them from acquiring habits of laziness."

We'll have to fast forward to 1980 when California's State Legislation required a 200 minute per week gifted program to be provided in a regular classroom for all GATE identified students. Irvine realized that a weekly 200 minutes wasn't enough for its highly able students and, through Carol Smith's efforts, designed APAAS, an Alternative Program for Academically Accelerated Students. APAAS provided a full-time gifted program.

Twenty years later, in 2001, Legislation redefined instruction for gifted students to be planned and organized as an integrated, differentiated learning experience throughout the regular school day. The revised GATE program was now similar to the concept of the APAAS program.

The similarities in the two programs leads us to the question, "What's the difference between GATE and APAAS?"

Today, identified GATE students are cluster-grouped and placed with a teacher trained in providing more depth, complexity, and acceleration in the core subjects throughout the school day. The level of intensity in each subject varies depending on the student's needs. The pace of instruction varies, and lessons are layered for a variety of abilities. Depending on the make-up of the class, part-time, flexible groups are established to provide for a range of learning styles and academic achievement levels.

APAAS benefits students who thrive from a more challenging level of rigor and an expectation for each student to strive for excellence. The pace of instruction is faster in all areas of the curriculum; therefore, students must be comfortable asking questions for more clarification. Students who are successful in an APAAS classroom enjoy the challenge of higher level curriculum, and appreciate working with others who are like-minded and share a similar work ethic.

Both programs are committed to meeting the gifted students' academic needs by providing an appropriately paced learning environment and maintaining realistic expectations for optimal learning. Since our district's goal is to provide an environment where each student can work toward his/her personal level of success, we are fortunate to have options for our gifted children. We are constantly working toward making improvements in both arenas as we continue with our quest to bring a qualitatively rich program to students with high potential.

Sincerely,

Beth L. Andrews
Beth L. Andrews

CAC-GATE Chairpersons' Message

By Terry Freedlander

As we begin the new year, the CAC GATE Board is going to begin its efforts to have a Parent Representative at all IUSD schools. The Parent Representative to the GATE CAC Board is an important one, as this individual is the liaison to the respective school community.

We are currently seeking out Parent Representatives to fill the role at schools where they currently do not exist. To that end, we began with the first GATE CAC Parent Meeting to distribute information that can be used at the school level through email, through posting on websites, or through your weekly newsletter. Templates of upcoming information will be provided as well.

This is all with the intent of allowing greater attendance at the Quarterly GATE CAC Meetings. These meetings are the the parents of GATE and APAAS students. Speakers are selected to bring new relevant research, insights, and information to the parent community. We want to encourage greater participation in the quarterly meetings, so through the Parent Reps will be actively sending templates of information in advance of meetings to allow for great attendance at the meetings.

One other topic that will be shared with Parent Reps will include planning a GATE picnic or event for your local GATE families. At Turtle Rock [my children's school], we have held GATE/APAAS picnics at which we share information, provide a speaker, and also importantly provide a forum at which parents can meet with other parents and talk about issues and their GATE/APAAS experience.

We are excited to provide this information to the Parent Reps, and look forward to working with each school to help communicate about our IUSD GATE program.

Please contact me at tfreedlander@gmail.com with any questions or if you have interest in becoming a Parent Rep.



Nominations Are Now Open!

If you are interested, or know of someone who might be interested, in running for the board of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC-GATE), please fill out the nominating form below and mail it to: Nominating Committee Chairperson, Terry Freedlander, c/o IUSD-GATE, 5050 Barranca Parkway, Irvine, CA 92604. Please respond by March 14, 2008. Elections will be held at our April meeting.

For the office of:

Chairperson (must be a GATE parent who has been a CAC-GATE member) _____

Vice Chairperson (can be either a parent or staff member of CAC-GATE) _____

Secretary _____

Treasurer _____



STONE CREEK GATER NEWS

By Flora Morgan

The third grade classes at Stone Creek have just performed the play *Character Counts*. Not only does this play help teach values, but it enables students to have multiple opportunities in acting, singing, dancing, stage design, and directing. Challenging the students to further enhance their reading and vocabulary is the Vocabulary Connections program. Math continues to challenge our third graders with multiplication mosaics, mental algebra, and hands on geometry projects. Third grade is integrating science experiments with IUSD's Life Cycle Unit. All students love exploring the scientific method during our experiments! After sending the literature character, Flat Stanley across the country and throughout the world, the third grade classes have been anxiously awaiting responses. Using our mapping skills both with flat maps and the computer, we will be charting Flat Stanley's travels.

Fourth grade students are involved in the Navigators, which is a literature group that promotes the love of literature. The Navigators use novels to provide opportunities of differentiation through the dramatic arts. Currently, utilizing *Islands of the Blue Dolphins*, the students are creating and directing a play for their group. The Eagles are a research-based group that is researching the Titanic and formulating newspaper articles.

Fifth grade students also are involved in the Navigators enrichment group. Currently the Navigators are working on advanced projects for the novel *The Sign of the Beaver*. Character analysis utilizing charts and the computer are under construction. Additionally, they are studying the biology aspects of book and preparing in-depth discussions. Continuing to springboard off *The Sign of the Beaver*, the GATE students are creating P.E. skills to be taught in small groups. These skills directly correlate with the skills a person would need from the novel.

These projects promote higher-level reading, thinking, problem solving, and teamwork. The Gate students also have prepared a Jeopardy power point presentation for the social studies unit. The entire class steps up to the challenge of competing in the Jeopardy finals. Math competition teams and Scrabble tournaments are always favorites of the Gate students.

Sixth grade GATE students use author comparison pairs to analyze books written by the same author and books/topics written by different authors. Currently, the students in the Navigator group are involved in an accelerated curriculum for the novel *Cave of Moving Shadows*. They utilize divergent and alternative projects to promote critical understanding. Likewise, the sixth grade GATE students are enjoying preparing for their Jeopardy tournament utilizing science as the topic of interest. I'm sure each group's game will be challenging and exciting, with the addition suspenseful music to the Jeopardy power point presentations.



Brywood APAAS

By Nancy Wilson, Mary Thomas-Vallens, Lynda Wilson and Vince Sipkovich

4th Grade APAAS

The students in Mrs. Williams' 4th grade APAAS class have been very busy!! I have chosen two students to let you know what we have been up to over the past month in the areas of language arts and social studies.

Written by Cassie Wang:

This January our class was studying CA Mission Life. After learning about the establishment of the missions, Mrs. Williams asked us to research one of the 21 California missions. We looked up the information on the computers at school, books our teacher supplied, and at home. Most of the research was done at school with Mrs. Williams' guidance. We were asked to create a flipbook with chapters called: Father Serra, Daily Life, Mission Diagram, Vocabulary, Mission History, and an extra chapter to create on our own. By doing this research, we learned how to take notes and turn them into paragraphs. Another mission activity completed was a Point of View lesson so we could understand the concept of perspective. Our teacher assigned us to create a dialogue between a padre and an Indian at the mission, making sure that we were authentic with the content we used. These activities really helped our study of the CA Missions come alive.

Written by Karen Yang:

During the past month, we have been reading a novel called *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. It ties in nicely with our study of CA history. To make sure that we really understand the story, we were asked to make a journal relating to the main character, Karana and her hardships of being stranded on an island. Also we filled out a basic human needs chart so that we know how she is meeting her physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and aesthetic needs. Relating to the main character in these ways really helped us understand this novel and the experiences of the protagonist in *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.

5th grade APAAS

Why is this important, and how will I remember it? How do I learn best? How can I express myself more clearly? What imprint can I make on the world? What patterns and big ideas do I see in math, literature, history and science? What can I invent that will make life easier for others or myself? These are some of the questions on the minds of the students in WMTV (also known as Lynda Wilson's and Mary Thomas-Vallens' 5th grade APAAS class).

Looking for connections and patterns has been a wonderful way to gain insights across the curriculum. From decimal place value to exponential notation, intervals to outliers, math is unfolding in our class as a never-ending source of patterns. In literature, the class is studying a variety of genres, examining archetypal patterns and universal themes. For example, students have examined several Native American myths to see how the stories relate to the cultures from which they arose. The theme of survival has tied together our novel studies of *Sign of the Beaver* and *Maniac Magee*. Etymology studies have unlocked the door to word families and led the class to discover how useful knowing word roots can be. *The Phantom Tollbooth* has challenged the students to realize that word meaning can be

manipulated to create humor and irony. Reading about and discussing current events have allowed students to see how human needs and wants can create conflict or bring people closer together. In science, the repeating pattern of the water cycle and the interactions between high and low pressure, warm and cold air have been explored. Making connections and seeing patterns transform discrete bits of knowledge into meaningful learning experiences for the class.

WMTV-er's write in all subject areas since writing is both the vehicle for, and the proof of, understanding. The students have been focusing on how to be more succinct and fluid in their writing. From short, timed in-class writing on a variety of subjects to longer imaginative stories and research summaries, these hard working authors are practicing outlining, summarizing, and writing to a specific audience. Writing is taking learning to a higher level.

In computer lab, direct applications are made for the various activities mentioned above. Creating computer-generated tables, charts, graphs, calendars, outlines, and graphic poetry have supported the learning by making connections between disciplines even stronger.

Currently, these creative fifth graders are busy envisioning a world made better by inventions of their own design. Students have identified needs, kept detailed logs, and done in depth research as part of their invention projects. They have also focused on marketing and interviewing techniques to learn how to sell their products' usefulness. These are just a few of the ways the children are connecting the world to the classroom.

Students in WMTV's class are learning to be self-motivated, self-directed learners. Looking for answers to important questions and identifying big ideas creates a sense that the world is open to them as long as they learn to take charge and think for themselves.

6th grade APAAS

In language arts the Brywood sixth graders are working on publishing poetry. Each student will write poems in many different forms such as quatrains, Haiku, ballads, sonnets, etc.. The students will publish their work in hard bound books and will create their own illustrations for each section of the project.

In social studies, the students are constructing pyramids to use in a simulation activity. In this activity the students, in groups, will design a three foot tall pyramid made out of straws and paper mache and will hide sarcophagi containing various artifacts and items in them. After the construction is complete, the groups will trade pyramids and attempt to discover the pharaoh and other artifacts in order to tally points. There are positive and negative points in this simulation. The students strategically cut three small openings in the pyramids (5cm X 5 cm) to attempt to gain points. The activity involves planning, critical thinking, math skills, and team cooperation. Related to the pyramid simulation activity, our students will have an opportunity to go on a field trip to Bowers Museum in late January to view Egyptian artifacts.

Pre-Algebra Enrichment at Canyon View

By Brian Kull



This year at Canyon View, students in the Pre-Algebra program have had the unique opportunity to participate in an after school enrichment program taught by Steve King. This program, which is provided free of charge to the students, gives additional support and enrichment to supplement the instruction they receive in class.

The sixth grade program at Canyon View is departmentalized, with King focusing on math for all of the sixth graders. Using various methods of differentiation he is able to meet the needs of all the learners in his classroom, including those participating in the pre-algebra program. The pre-algebra students are receiving direct instruction from both the classroom teacher and trained instructional assistants. The students' math instructional time during the school day is used effectively and efficiently. They receive quality instruction and timely feedback on their performance, thus preparing them to be successful in algebra as they enter middle school.

The unique aspect of our pre-algebra program is the after school enrichment component. Once a week, King leads an hour long after school class to give the pre-algebra students additional support. During this time he is able to provide further help to those students who may be having difficulty with a certain concept, or give students supplementary instruction enabling them to have a deeper understanding of the ideas they learned in class.

This has proven to be a valuable resource for our sixth graders. Those that struggle with some of the more difficult lessons are able to get the little bit of extra help they need to feel secure with their learning. When it comes time for assessment or to use their skills in a real world situation, they have the ability and confidence to be able to succeed. For students who were able to get a firm grasp on the concepts when they were first presented in class, this after school program has allowed them to delve deeper into the lessons. This more thorough understanding is preparing them for more advanced math concepts later this year and throughout their academic careers.

A great deal of time and preparation went into building a program to meet the needs of our GATE students. The learners have responded by taking advantage of the opportunities presented to them to further their growth. The hard work of the GATE students and the dedication of the Canyon View staff will prepare these children to be successful lifelong learners.

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Community Advisory Committee for Gifted and Talented Education
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FEBRUARY, 2008

CALENDAR FOR 2007-2008

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- February 25 ***APAAS Parent Orientation*** – Oak Creek Elementary 6 – 7 p.m.
- February 15-17 ***CAG (California Association for Gifted) 46th Annual Conference***, Anaheim
- May 3 ***SAT and subject tests – register by April 1, 2008***
- March 5 ***District Science Fair*** – Irvine High School (Grades 6-12)
- April 24 ***Community Advisory Committee (CAC-GATE) Meeting*** – Administration Center, 5050 Barranca, Irvine, 6:30 p.m. – **Guest Speaker** – Dr. Jim Delisle
- April 29 ***Honors Vocal and Instrumental Concerts – 7:00 pm*** – Calvary Church, Santa Ana
- June 7 ***SAT and subject tests – register by May 6, 2008***
- June 30 – July 25 **Summer School** – Grades K-8

All Dates Are Not Confirmed and Subject to Change.