

## IUSD GATE Program Update



Changes in the law that govern the GATE program became operative on January 1, 2001. One of these changes directly affects the IUSD GATE program and how we implement the various strategies. Education code 52206 states that the 200 minute minimum requirement has been eliminated, and replaced with a more rigorous standard that requires that

**“programs be planned and organized as an integrated, differentiated learning experience within the regular school day, and be augmented or supplemented with other differentiated activities related to the core curriculum.”**

In IUSD, these programs will be in the form of

- special day classes (APAAS),
- consistent part-time groupings (departmentalized programs), and
- cluster groups (all GATE students at a grade level are grouped together in the regular class).

**Cluster-grouping** GATE identified and high level thinking students is an excellent way to meet the needs of advanced learners in a regular classroom. The size of a cluster-group of gifted learners will vary at each site, from classroom to classroom, and year to year. However, it is desirable to have a minimum of 3-5 students in each cluster so that the students can stimulate thinking, and can work together throughout the day. Moreover, the teacher finds it easier to differentiate the core curriculum for a cluster of gifted learners while continuing to offer a rich learning environment and provide for the range of abilities that are present in the class.

Differentiating the curriculum takes place within four areas: acceleration, depth, complexity, and novelty.

- **Acceleration** refers to moving through the grade level concepts at a faster pace by removing needless repetition. Since gifted students need less time to master new material, this provides the time to delve more deeply into the core curriculum as defined in the state frameworks.
- **Depth** provides a layering of the learning where the students go deeper into a particular subject area within the core curriculum. Several techniques for adding depth are learning the language of the discipline, adding more detailed information, examining patterns and trends, and studying the rules and ethics involved.

- **Complexity** means looking at a particular topic from a different point of view, examining how an issue has been affected or changed over time, and making connections between different situations.
- **Novelty** refers to providing the student who has a particular interest in a specific topic the opportunity to venture off further than the teacher had planned. Novelty allows students to take learning into their own hands, while the teacher's role is to monitor progress.

Our goal as educators, is to provide instruction that meets the needs of each of the students within our class. For our gifted students, who have a natural learning ability that places them above average, this means we need to provide appropriate mental challenges and stimulating lessons that access the core curriculum.

The Irvine Unified School District is working toward meeting the goal of providing all gifted students with this type of education. Since we have been involved with the training and implementation of differentiation of the core curriculum for over five years, we have a strong start on our plan to meet the new requirements, and we are committed to continued work in achieving our goal.