



## Overview of IUSD APAAS Application Process

### APAAS Program

The **Alternative Program for Academically Advanced Students**, is an elementary school program option for students in 4th through 6th grades. The program is designed to meet the needs of a unique population of highly intellectual learners who consistently prefer creative outlets to demonstrate their understanding of content. Students successful in the program are individuals who have an innately high level of curiosity, think outside the parameters of conventional ideas, and are motivated by complex, open-ended options. The program is constructed for students who independently handle high-level assignments, collaborate with others, have a strong foundation in math and reading, and can express ideas in writing. A student does not need to be GATE-identified to participate in APAAS. APAAS is offered at the following school sites for the 2025-26 school year: Brywood, Deerfield, Eastshore, Santiago Hills, Westpark (year-round calendar), Bonita Canyon - Grade 4 only, Turtle Rock - Grade 5 & 6 only. The APAAS program currently housed at Turtle Rock Elementary will be transitioning to Bonita Canyon Elementary School beginning in 2025-26. Over the next few years, each incoming 4th grade will be added until the full program is established at Bonita Canyon Elementary.

To be considered for APAAS, families who **reside within the IUSD attendance boundaries** may submit an online application for their student. APAAS application criteria are compiled and compared. Program placement is offered to the highest scoring students in order of score until all classes are filled. This placement process is conducted annually in May and students begin participating in the program in 4th grade. Applications open in January on our website. All tests will be given in-person.

### Application Criteria- 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

Criteria	Description
	*all criteria are equally weighted in the application process
Naglieri NNAT (NAI)	This non-verbal, culturally neutral test assesses general ability. It is a nationally normed, multiple choice test that is administered to <u>all</u> students one time in third grade. NAI, Naglieri Ability Index, scores between 90 and 110 are considered to be average. Scores between 111 and 120 are considered high average. Scores between 121 and 130 are considered to be superior. Scores of 131 and above are considered to be very superior.
STAR Reading Fall OR Winter  AND  STAR Math Fall OR Winter	STAR Renaissance assessments are nationally normed, computer-adaptive tests of reading and math achievement. Several times each year all students in grades 1-5 participate in the STAR Math assessment, and students in grades 3-8 participate in STAR Reading. Scale scores range from 600 to 1400 and are calculated based on the difficulty of questions presented to a student and the number of correct responses they provide. The highest score of the Fall and Winter administrations for each subject area are used as criteria measures.
Writing Sample	Students are asked to write a creative story in response to a specific prompt. Writing samples are evaluated by IUSD staff for use of language, divergent thought, and idea development across a 4 point rubric. Samples scoring a 0 provided no written response. The minimum score possible for a response is 1. The maximum score possible is 8.

## Application Criteria- 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade

\* The program is designed as a 3-year option; therefore, there are limited spaces for 5th and 6th grade students.

Criteria	Description <small>*all criteria are equally weighted in the application process</small>
Grade Point Average (GPA)	The student's grades in the four major content areas (English, Math, Science and Social Science) are translated to a standard 4 point scale and then an average is calculated. 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Trimester GPAs are utilized.
STAR Reading Fall OR Winter AND STAR Math Fall OR Winter	STAR Renaissance assessments are nationally normed, computer-adaptive tests of reading and math achievement. Several times each year all students in grades 1-5 participate in the STAR Math assessment, and students in grades 3-8 participate in STAR Reading. Scale scores range from 600 to 1400 and are calculated based on the difficulty of questions presented to a student and the number of correct responses they provide. The highest score of the Fall and Winter administrations for each subject area are used as criteria measures.
CAASPP ELA AND CAASPP Math	California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) The California State computer adaptive tests and performance tasks assess students in English Language Arts/literacy and mathematics. Due to the timing of state reporting, scores included are from the student's previous grade level. Further information can be found on <a href="#">IUSD's Statewide Testing website</a> .

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the difference between APAAS and GATE?

Both GATE and APAAS classes provide instruction aligned to grade level common core standards. The GATE program provides a cluster group of gifted students placed together in a general education classroom. IUSD teachers have training in effective differentiated instruction to meet the needs of advanced learners.

APAAS is an elementary school program option for students in 4th-6th grades. The program is designed to meet the needs of a unique population of highly intellectual learners who consistently prefer creative outlets to demonstrate their understanding of content. To be considered for APAAS, the parent/guardian must apply for their child to participate during the application window which begins in January.

### 2. How will I know if APAAS is the right placement for my child?

Students who are successful in the APAAS program have a high level of curiosity, work independently, thrive on open-ended options, are intrinsically motivated to learn, and are comfortable with expressing their ideas in writing.

### 3. My child is involved in several extracurricular activities. Will the added rigor of this program be too much for them?

Many successful APAAS students participate in extracurricular activities such as sports, music, and other programs. The APAAS program provides high level content and commitment, however the program allows for inclusion of other activities and life balance. Most people, in general, benefit from unscheduled time during the day and/or week in order to maintain a healthy attitude and perform at their best.

### 4. When and how will I be notified if my student has been selected for APAAS?

Students and parents are notified via email of placement by the beginning of May. Parents must confirm acceptance of placement via email to finalize the placement.

**5. If a student does not get placed in APAAS, is there any chance to be placed after May?**

If a program spot becomes available after the initial placement in May, placement will continue through the first six weeks of the school year. Program offers will be made to the highest scoring students in order of score.

**6. What if I am an Irvine resident, but my child attends private school?** Irvine residents not currently enrolled in IUSD may submit an application form and provide their private school information. Proof of residency will be required at time of application. The Advanced Learning Department may contact the private school to gather additional necessary information. We may also ask for alternative information for all students not currently enrolled in IUSD.