Las Virgenes Unified School District

LVUSD Mission

The Mission of the Las Virgenes Unified School District is to ensure that all programs are dedicated toward enhancing student achievement and that each school is a humanistic organization, valuing students emotionally and academically, providing the highest quality education possible in a personalized environment. We aspire to enable each student to realize maximum potential as a responsible citizen who will enhance the community and society.

AE Wright Mission

We at AE Wright are dedicated to the goal of academic excellence as well as the personal and social development of our students. Academic integrity is fostered in a climate that represents the unique needs of the adolescent. This includes curriculum and teaching techniques. Having a positive self-image, respecting the rights of others, communicating effectively, thinking-critically, being able to meet challenges and accepting responsibility are essential to the personal and social development of a well-rounded individual.

District GATE Goal

To identify gifted students and provide high quality differentiated opportunities for learning that meet students' unique social, emotional and academic needs and prepare them to be positive contributing members of society.

Middle School GATE Program Philosophy

The philosophy of the middle school GATE program is to provide a learning environment that focuses on the use of acceleration, depth, complexity and novelty to enhance student learning. By cohorting like-minded peers, intrinsic motivation and a positive self-image develop in a safe environment. Students are encouraged to work outside of their comfort zone and take academic risks that create intellectual leadership, courage, resilience, and humility.

For more information, visit the AE Wright Middle School website lvusd.org/aewms.
What makes the GATE program different?

A team of innovative teachers provide an interdisciplinary program utilizing strategies of depth, complexity, acceleration, novelty and clustering to promote higher-level thinking in all core content areas.

Depth and Complexity
Icons of Depth and Complexity are prompts designed to help students go beyond surface level understanding. These essential thinking tools help students delve deeper into a concept (depth) and comprehend that concept with greater complexity. To truly understand something, one must be able to analyze details, apply the language of the discipline and recognize patterns, parallels and big ideas.

Acceleration
Because gifted students grasp concepts quickly, instruction is accelerated to allow more time for critical thinking.

Novelty
In-depth understanding requires establishment of interpersonal, collaborative, and collegial group skills to promote problem solving and creative thinking.

Clustering
Clustering gifted students provides opportunities for intellectual and social development with peers who have similar interests, ideas, and curiosities.

Curriculum and instruction overview

The GATE Program uses the following to meet the needs of gifted students:

- Bloom’s Taxonomy
- Higher-order thinking skills
- Icons of depth and complexity
- Independent research
- Complex problem-based student-centered assignments
- Projects that encourage students to take risks, and go out of the box
- Socratic seminars
- Universal Concepts: power, change, order, conflict, patterns, systems, relationships
- Scholarly Pursuits
How is the program structured?

Gifted students in grades 6-8 are offered an academically challenging curriculum designed to meet their needs. GATE educators teach core content classes as well as integrate leadership, along with social and cooperative learning skills into an interdisciplinary curriculum. Students work in GATE cohorts for their core academics (English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies) and receive daily physical education classes and a variety of electives offered at AE Wright Middle School.

As this chart demonstrates, the instructional program shifts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Courses through GATE Department</th>
<th>Courses through Subject-Specific Departments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th, 7th and 8th</td>
<td>English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies</td>
<td>Math*, PE and elective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Students do not remain in their GATE class clusters for math. They are placed into math courses based on several measures of academic performance.

Why GATE?

Does your child:

- Express a desire for more challenging activities, ideas or conversation?
- Pick up on concepts easily?
- Have a superior sense of humor?
- Wonder and ponder?
- Think abstractly?
- Demonstrate heightened awareness of global issues?
- Think quickly and see relationships?
- Have high morals and empathy?
- Display optimism or idealism?

Identification process

Students must take an IQ test administered by a district psychologist and reach a minimum threshold score to be invited to enroll in GATE. Students who have been accepted into the program are invited to a GATE Showcase where current GATE students and their parents will answer questions and share their experiences. Guests will meet the GATE staff and learn more about the program. To sign up for the test, parents can review the GATE Self-Assessment and then fill out the GATE Online Application Form. Outside assessments will not be accepted.
General GATE Timeline:

**Summer**
- Request IQ Assessment

**Fall/Winter**
- Informational Nights
- Request IQ Assessment
- IQ Test Administered
- Receive notification of qualification for the program

**Spring**
- GATE Showcase
- Submit program commitment form

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**Frequently asked questions:**

**What does GATE testing consist of?**
GATE testing is a one-on-one IQ test with our school psychologist. The test lasts for approximately 30 minutes and takes place at your 5th grade student’s elementary school. Make-up tests and tests for current 6th or 7th graders take place at the District Office.

**Is GATE offered at all the middle schools? How about honors?**
The GATE program is only available at AE Wright Middle School. However, honors programming is offered at all three middle schools in both 7th and 8th grade.

**How many students are in the GATE program? How many classes do you have?**
While numbers may vary from year to year, historically the program has consisted of approximately 50-75 students and 2-3 cohorts per grade level.

**If my child qualified but cannot attend the GATE showcase, how do I receive the same information?**
Please contact AE Wright Middle School with any questions you may have at (818) 880-4614. The school also has campus tours that share information about GATE program.

**We are from out-of-district and would like our child tested. What is the process?**
We can only test out-of-district students after our permits department receives all the necessary paperwork to confirm that your child will be enrolling in our district. To find out more information on how to start the permits process, please contact our permits department at (818) 878-5258.

**If my child already tested for a gifted and talented program from another school, will that test suffice?**
We require that all students test here at our district.
FAQ continued

If my child tested and did not qualify, can they re-test?
We only test a student once per year. If they do not qualify, they can sign up to re-test the next year.

Which grades can test for GATE?
GATE testing is for students who are in 5th, 6th and 7th grade.

When and how do we find out our child’s test results?
The test results will be mailed out to the address you provide on the electronic “GATE Testing Request Form” after all testing is completed at all school sites. LVUSD students will be notified starting in February. Out-of-district students will be notified after they are tested.

If my child tests and does not qualify, and I do not agree with the decision, what do I do?
There is an appeals process that is articulated within the notification you receive from the school district that outlines additional information you can submit to LVUSD for the GATE appeals committee’s consideration.

Does my child receive special high school placement for being part of the GATE program?
Our GATE students matriculate to a variety of programs once they attend high school, but there is no GATE program at that level. With gifted students, we recommend courses with advanced rigor. Please visit the high school websites for more information.

My child attends AE Wright and is interested in the program. What are my options?
Your child may test for GATE and, if the student qualifies, begin the program at the start of the following school year.

What if my child joins the GATE program and it is not the right fit?
Please contact your child’s school counselor to discuss options. Please be advised that students may not transfer schools in the middle of a school year. Any approved transfer would take place the following school year.

My child did not take the GATE test in 5th grade and attends Lindero Canyon Middle School or AC Stelle and is interested in the program. What are my options?
Contact the district office to schedule a GATE assessment with a district psychologist. Additionally, you will need to contact the district permit office for clearance to switch school sites.