

Fullerton School District Gifted And Talented Education Program Frequently Asked Questions

What are the steps to identifying my child as Gifted/GATE?

GATE screening is an ongoing process, and all students have an equal opportunity to be screened for placement in the GATE program.

All second-grade students currently enrolled in the Fullerton School District will participate in the first round of the screening and identification process. This is done so that all students have an opportunity to display their gifted abilities. Parents who choose to “Opt Out” of this process must be aware that once a child has “Opted Out” they may not be added to the testing list for the remainder of the school year.

Students may be nominated for screening by parents, teachers, the school’s Student Intervention Team, or other persons familiar with the student’s performance. Standardized test scores and student work are monitored each spring to ensure that students demonstrating extraordinary achievement are found either through nomination or by a review of the data.

What criteria qualifies my child for GATE identification?

Once the test is complete, it is scored and parents are notified by mail of the results. FSD uses multiple pathways to make GATE Identification recommendations. The GATE Identification Team is comprised of teachers and administrators who meet to review data including cognitive abilities scores, achievement scores, and other pertinent data. Our district offers several ways in which a child can be identified GATE:

- **General Intellectual** -A student must obtain a total score of 98%ile or above on a nationally normed cognitive abilities test. Multiple data points are reviewed to triangulate this recommendation, including English Language Arts and Mathematics achievement scores, creativity, language acquisition, teacher observation of exceptional classroom performance and/or ability, along with observations of characteristics of a gifted child
- **High Achievement** -A student must obtain a total score of 95%ile or above on a nationally normed cognitive abilities test **AND** California State Test and FSD District Benchmark scores in the High Advanced range in English Language Arts and Math over a period of two years. Multiple data points are reviewed to triangulate this recommendation, including English Language Arts and Mathematics achievement scores, creativity, language acquisition, and teacher observation of exceptional classroom performance, along with observations of characteristics of a gifted child.

- **Multi-Dimensional** -A student must be close to meeting test score criteria in General Intellectual or High Achievement categories. This category is provided to ensure equal opportunity for students from varying linguistic, economic and/or cultural backgrounds and for students with learning disabilities. Students are evaluated according to a combination of factors. These include District Benchmarks, intellectual ability, achievement, student portfolio, and observations of gifted characteristics.
- **Visual and Performing Arts** - Students in 3rd, 4th and 5th grade may apply for an Artistic Talent designation through a portfolio and interview process. Students who qualify for the GATE Artistic Talent designation will receive services at Golden Hill Elementary School. A student in 7th or 8th grade must demonstrate exceptional talent in visual and/or performing arts as measured by teacher recommendation and audition and/or student portfolio.

GATE TESTING

Who administers the tests for GATE identification?

The GATE Coordinator for the district and/or a School Site GATE Coordinator/Administrator administers the group ability test. Second grade teachers will give the screening test to all participating students in their class. The FSD GATE Coordinator, or the School Site GATE Coordinator will administer subsequent tests.

What is the timeline for GATE testing?

Second Grade Students: The GATE screening process for enrolled second grade students begins in the fall of each year. During the month of September, parents will have the opportunity to decline testing for their child. The identification process begins in the months of *September, October, and November*, when all students in the second grade across the district take a general abilities test to begin the screening process for the gifted and talented program (GATE).

The GATE Identification and Placement Team meets to review all data, including the cognitive abilities test, achievement test scores, creativity, language acquisition, and gifted characteristics. Local norms are used as a best practice when making GATE recommendations. GATE Identification recommendations are based on the triangulation of data to support the best placement for students.

Parents will be notified of the testing results after the Identification and Placement meetings and prior to the end of the school year. It is anticipated that results of the GATE identification process will be available in January of the school year.

Third through Seventh Grade Students: GATE testing for third through seventh grade students takes place each year in October, November, and December for enrolled students, including

students new to the Fullerton School District. Parents may request testing during Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences. A link to request testing is also available on the FSD GATE website.

Students are screened with parent permission if they have shown gifted characteristics throughout that school year, received advanced test scores in Language Arts and Mathematics the prior year, are scoring in the High Advanced range on current year District Benchmark assessments in Language Arts and Mathematics, or are recommended by their parent or teacher.

The GATE Identification and Placement Team meets to review all data, including the cognitive abilities test, achievement test scores, creativity, language acquisition, and characteristics of a gifted child. Local norms are used as a best practice when making GATE recommendations. GATE Identification recommendations are based on the triangulation of data to support the best placement for students.

Parents will be notified of the testing results after the Identification and Placement meetings and prior to the end of the school year. It is anticipated that results of the GATE identification process will be available in January of the school year.

Once a student has been identified as GATE, they are eligible to participate in the GATE Program the following school year. Students who qualify for GATE may remain in a GATE Cluster at their home school or may choose to attend one of the GATE Designated Schools.

How many tests will my child need to take?

Students may take one or two tests to inform identification. FSD uses ability tests given in a group situation. Multiple data points will be reviewed to make GATE Identification recommendations.

What happens if my child does not meet GATE identification criteria?

Students who do not meet established criteria may be re-evaluated in future grade levels, for up to three test cycles. Parents may request testing during Fall Parent-Teacher conferences.

How many times may I have my child tested?

In the Fullerton School District, students are tested up to a total of three times which includes their second grade screening. Identification is made based on a review of multiple data points by the GATE Identification and Placement Team.

Is it possible to see my child's results after the test?

Test scores are sent from the GATE office. These are percentile scores and have been normed on

a national scale. The GATE Identification and Placement Team reviews the test scores through local norms. Please remember that the name of the specific tests will not be released.

GATE test scores are reported as percentile rankings, which represent how well a student performs compared to other students in a nationwide norm sample for their age. Percentile is not related to the percentage of correct answers a student gets on a test. This is unlike a percentage score, which refers to what portion out of a group of 100 falls into a category.

What kind of test is the GATE identification test?

The Fullerton School District uses nationally normed cognitive abilities tests to assess verbal and nonverbal reasoning potential. This reasoning potential is strongly related to success in school. However, it is not a test for which a student can study.

To assess reasoning potential, the tests use tasks such as detecting likenesses and differences, recalling words and numbers, defining words, following directions, classifying, establishing sequence, solving arithmetic problems, and completing analogies. This is done since these tasks have been shown to be valid measures of an individual's ability to reason logically.

What is the difference between Ability Tests and Achievement tests?

An Ability test is a test of general reasoning skills, which is the type of test used for identifying gifted students. An Achievement test is a test of developed skill or knowledge, such as the State Tests and Benchmarks or those used in the classroom to check progress. Our Ability tests identify Non-verbal, Quantitative, and Verbal reasoning ability, focusing on reasoning and problem-solving skills.

IDENTIFICATION

Does my child lose identification if he/she does not attend a GATE school?

Once a child has been identified as GATE, they will keep that identification even if they do not choose to participate at a GATE Designated school. They will retain their GATE identification while they attend the Fullerton School District. Students will not need to test again and their GATE identification will continue while in the Fullerton School District.

Is private testing accepted for identification?

Private assessments are not accepted as part of the evaluation process. The identification process established by the Fullerton School District ensures that pupils in the district have equal

access to screening and referral as required by Categorical Program Monitoring (CPM VI-G 6.2).

If my child was identified in another school district, may he/she be identified in this district?

GATE is not a mandated program in California. Therefore, each district develops its own criteria for identification. Eligible students must meet the GATE Identification Criteria established by the Fullerton School District in order to be identified as GATE in the district.

JUNIOR HIGH-HONORS

Do you have GATE classes in Junior High?

Students are placed into Honors classes based on placement tests. GATE Program classes for students in grades 7th and 8th are incorporated into the student's basic program requirements in Language Arts and/or History/Social Science. These GATE students participate in at least one class per day with other gifted students. Those students who are gifted in visual or performing arts, once identified through audition or portfolio, may participate in advanced classes in their specific area.

What happens to my child's GATE identification when he/she enters high school?

Once a child has been identified as GATE, they will retain their GATE identification while they attend the Fullerton School District. As students move up to the High School level, their identification is given to the High School District; however, students may have to meet the criteria established by the high school district for Honors or Advanced Placement.

PLACEMENT

If my child is identified as GATE, which school would he/she attend?

Once a child is identified as GATE, they are invited to participate in the GATE program. The Fullerton School District offers both cluster classes and GATE-designated schools in which GATE students are clustered with other students who are GATE identified.

GATE Designated Class Size: When class size reaches 35 GATE-Identified students, the site will move to two equal classes the following year to accommodate all formally GATE Identified students.*

*Approved at November 2025 Board Meeting

Home School	Designated GATE School
Acacia, Commonwealth, *Fisler, *Maple, Raymond, *Rolling Hills, *Woodcrest	Acacia
Golden Hill, Fern Drive, *Orangethorpe, *Pacific Drive, *Valencia Park	Golden Hill
Beechwood, *Fisler, Hermosa Drive, *Rolling Hills	Hermosa Drive
Laguna Road	Laguna Road
Maple, Orangethorpe, Pacific Drive, Richman, Valencia Park, Woodcrest	Richman
Sunset Lane	Sunset Lane
<i>GATE Identified students may decide to remain in attendance at their home school.</i>	

* Depending on enrollment numbers

What if we want our GATE identified student to stay at their home school?

Students identified as GATE may decide to remain in attendance at their home school, participating in a GATE Cluster Class. These GATE identified students will be grouped together in the same classroom at their school and be taught by a GATE-trained teacher using strategies for gifted students. Questions regarding placement at the home school should be directed to the school principal. All Fullerton School District schools work to meet the academic needs of each student, providing differentiated instructional activities within the class.