

Division of Instruction
Advanced Learning Options
Gifted/Talented Programs

Interested in Applying for the Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS) Designation?

Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS) demonstration sites receive the SAS designation for providing clear evidence of exemplary Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) implementation. SAS evidence is GATE and resident school-specific only. Magnet and Dual Language Education evidence is not applicable. General best practices and successes at the school site, while commendable, are not considered evidence of GATE implementation. As such, it is strongly recommended that in preparation for the upcoming 2019-2020 application period¹ interested District schools start collecting evidence from the past two academic years (2017-2018 and 2018-2019) that advances the assertion that the school provides exemplary service and support for their gifted/talented students, such as:

- Equitable screening/referral of gifted learners (Evidence: Request for Assessment, Local School Search and Referral Forms, etc.)
- Active school site Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Screening Committee (Evidence: Site gifted/talented screening committee meeting schedule, Local School Search and Referral forms, etc.)
- School meets/exceeds gifted identification goals and identification is proportionate to the demographics of the school (Evidence: MiSiS gifted/talented identification data reports, etc.)
- Appropriate GATE clustering and scheduling (Evidence: GATE/SAS rosters, master schedule, etc.)
- Systemic and ongoing implementation of differentiation for gifted learners (Evidence: school/program brochures, sample GATE lesson plans that show depth, complexity, novelty, and acceleration, grade level plans, etc.)
- Achievement data for identified gifted learners (Evidence: MiSiS data reports, etc.)
- GATE professional development participation for teachers and administrators that indicates site staff is well trained in gifted education. Topics include gifted/talented identification categories, identifying and serving diverse gifted learners, characteristics of underserved gifted learners, and strategies to support the educational needs of gifted learners (Evidence: GATE professional development records, agendas, sign-ins, PowerPoints, MyPLN history, participation certificates, etc.)
- GATE parent and community engagement (Evidence: agendas, sign-ins, PowerPoints, surveys, evaluations, number of parent and community gifted/talented referrals, etc.)
- Meeting instructionally the social/emotional needs of gifted learners (Evidence: lesson plans, PowerPoints, professional book study on topics related to social/emotional needs of gifted learners, e.g., asynchronous development, perfectionism, anxiety, etc.)
- Innovation and technological advancement (Evidence: project-based learning, 21st Century competencies, use of instructional technology, novel products, etc.)

¹Next SAS cycle begins academic year 2021-2022

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GATE/SAS Clustering Policy

(Adapted from MEM-6244.5, 2018-2019 Annual GATE Report)

General Clustering Requirements

- Clustering, a research-based grouping model, involves placing gifted/talented students in a mixed-ability classroom, where a trained teacher differentiates curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of diverse groups of students.
- Clustering is the intentional placement of a minimum number of identified gifted students per class (elementary level: five to eight; secondary level: 15 to 25).
- Once minimum clustering requirements are met for identified gifted students, the remainder of class seats should be filled with students who are high achieving and/or currently being screened for identification.
- Meeting minimum clustering requirements by creating small groups of gifted learners in multiple mixed-ability classrooms is not best practice for teaching and learning.
- Best practice is to place all identified gifted and high ability students in clusters with teachers who are highly trained to provide consistent, daily differentiated instruction through the targeted use of research-based GATE strategies, e.g., depth, complexity, acceleration, and novelty.
- GATE cluster grouping is a research-based, effective and efficient means for schools to provide more challenging coursework, giving gifted/high ability learners daily access to advanced content and new learning, as well as providing students with an academic peer group in core subjects.
- Creating robust clusters of gifted learners ensures that differentiated planning and instruction can realistically and systemically occur.

Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS) Clustering Requirements

- SAS sites must meet all general GATE clustering requirements. SAS classes should be comprised of resident and SAS permit students, if applicable, who meet one of three eligibility criteria.
- SAS participants should not be intentionally separated or “tracked” based on resident status, gifted identification status, test scores, etc.
- Once minimum clustering requirements are met for identified gifted students, the remainder of SAS class seats should be filled with students: 1) who meet SAS eligibility/verification criteria, e.g., tests scores or critical-thinking skills, and/ or 2) who are currently being screened for gifted/talented identification.

Should you have questions regarding appropriate GATE evidence, please contact Gifted/Talented Programs, Advanced Learning Options, at (213) 241-6500.