



Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) for English Learners

Val Verde Unified School District recognizes the need for a program model that identifies and services the gifted English Learners. The increasing diversity of the school-age population and difficulty of identifying gifted children with diverse backgrounds point to a pressing need for assessment models that take into consideration the complex cultural, linguistic, and experiential factors that affect expression of gifted potential. The intent of this program is to increase the identification of GATE students amongst the English Learner population.

State and Federal Guidelines

The Federal government has defined “gifted and talented children” as children and youth who are identified at the preschool, elementary, or secondary levels as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of high performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, academic, leadership, or performing and visual arts, and who thereby require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school.

The California legislature has found and declared that it is in the public interest to support unique opportunities for high-achieving and underachieving pupils in the public elementary and secondary schools of California who are identified as gifted and talented. The Legislature further declared its intent that special efforts be made to ensure that students from economically disadvantaged and varying cultural backgrounds be provided with full participation in these unique opportunities.

The State of California has very clear guidelines for the identification process for gifted and talented students. It is the school district’s responsibility to develop the methods and procedures for identifying these students. The method of identification must conform to these general principles:

- Standards shall ensure the identification of pupils who possess a capacity for excellence far beyond that of their chronological peers
- Methods shall be designed to seek out and identify those pupils whose extraordinary capacities require special services and programs
- Provision shall be made for examining a student’s range of capacities

- Methods and techniques of identification shall generate information as to a student's capacities and needs
- There shall be equal opportunity to be identified in the categories served
- Methods shall be designed to seek out and identify gifted and talented students from varying linguistic, economic, and cultural backgrounds

Current Recommendations

In an effort to identify more language minority students as gifted and talented, the following current recommendations are made:

- An emphasis must be made on the nomination of underrepresented minorities, particularly English Learners
- Development of criteria and procedures that allow access by language minority students
- Provision of staff development for teachers of English Learners in the identification and recognition of giftedness in minority students

Identification of English Learner GATE Students

In order to address the area of identification of students from historically underrepresented cultural and linguistic groups, Val Verde Unified School District instituted the use of the Raven Progressive Matrices (RPM) Test in 1998. The RPM is a non-reading test of cognitive processing skills that tests general mental ability, which correlates positively with success in school. However, standardized test scores are still weighted heavily in the identification process. The district has implemented multiple measures in order to ensure equitable access to the program, including:

- Parent Survey (available English and Spanish)
- Teacher Survey A: Student Characteristics
- Teacher Survey B; Creative or Productive Thinking
- School Performance: Report Card Grades
- Academic Achievement: California Standards Test and California Achievement Test – Sixth Edition
- Intellect: Raven Progressive Matrices
- Demonstrated Talents
- Special Consideration Checklist

Service for English Learner GATE Students

Any student identified as gifted or talented has access to all programs and services for GATE students, which may include class clusters, after-school enrichment, and/or

Saturday academies. Special considerations are made on a case-by-case basis for classroom placement of English Learners because of their linguistic needs.