

*GATE Advisory Council Notes  
September 12, 2016*

***Welcome and Introductions***

***6:05pm***

*Parents and Staff present introduced themselves at the tables.  
Turn out exceeded expectations requiring more copies of materials.*

*A quote from Bell Hook- an educator- "... We must genuinely value everyone's presence."*

*Ms. Almer spoke about the expectations of the council, our start time preference and how she'd like to see each meeting evolve. Ideas were welcomed at any time and parents were encouraged to place their 'idea' on the Parking Lot board.*

***The GATE Coordinator Role***

***6:15pm***

*Ms. Almer discussed what her vision is for this assignment and what she hopes to accomplish as the coordinator. She spoke about the "limitless human potential in every person."*

*She also said that the 14, 040 represents the number of hours our learners will be in school from K-12<sup>th</sup> grades. She is committed to ensuring that we make every one of those hours count.*

***Why GAC and not PAC?***

***6:20pm***

*In an effort to include everyone, parents, teachers, and administrators, it was necessary to adopt a title that was all encompassing. Ms. Almer would like to see more parent participation with parents leading a meeting and sharing ideas with the rest of the council.*

***Meeting Times and Agendas***

***6:30pm***

*She would like agenda items to be written on the Parking Lot during meetings, emailed to her, or shared at the school sites directly.*

*At this point, we were asked to debrief and speak to our table partners about concerns we have or about the GATE Survey that we were given. Tables thoughtfully read through the information. The packet handed out was 5 pages in length (front and back) and denoted the findings from elementary and middle school from the perspectives of parents, teachers, and students.*

*There was much discussion regarding the findings during the debriefing period and then discussion continued as a whole group while Ms. Almer facilitated.*

*Some of the discussion about the survey revolved around who actually attended the District GATE day and the number of kids taking the survey. Some parents asked what was the percentage. Some students marked that they didn't attend the event and some marked that they did, but it was unclear as to the totals in the survey. The survey reflected a small cross-section of the GATE program's population.*

*Parents felt overall in the survey that there was a growing "elitism" within the GATE program. This was felt more strongly by parents in the elementary school setting whereas students were the more vocal components regarding the middle school survey.*

*Middle school students voiced opinions that said that being in a GATE program put them in a "separate" category and that they felt that other non "GATE" students were just as smart and just as worthy to be part of the program. Ms. Almer felt that middle schoolers had an overwhelmingly strong sense of justice.*

*The survey overall reflected poor parent participation. There was some minimal discussion as to why and some parents offered that other surveys went out at the same time and may have precluded the importance of this particular survey.*

*One parent voiced that in an elementary school setting, being clustered into GATE is ideal because that GATE student might not feel that he can perform to his/her utmost potential if he/she is in a class with students who do not have an academic focus. Thus, a GATE program in the primary grades gives that student an opportunity to flourish with like-minded peers.*

*In middle school, it's all about fitting in and being fair, so more students felt like they were being isolated into a "program" vs being integrated more with their peers who they felt were smart as they were.*

*It was discussed by several parents that some students might be GATE, but that they don't perform as GATE students. They have a poor interest level in learning and are wired differently when it comes to performing in a school environment.*

*More discussion ensued.*

*About 50% of the comments were favorable about being part of the GATE program, but it left parents questioning what did the other 50% think. Ms. Almer said that since it was such a small sampling, it wasn't entirely reliable. Other parent representatives chimed in that we had to also take into account RTI and other support offered at each school site as it pertains to the relationship a parent and learner will have with the GATE program.*

### ***Looking at the Master Plan***

***6:40pm***

*There are grids which denote who is accountable, the actual action item and the stage in its completion. We are trying to come out of a vacuum that was caused when what had*

*been in place was taken away due to budgetary concerns. Now that it is being revived, we are asking questions as to how we want to see it come back to life.*

*The plan this year is to rebuild it and refine it. Being gifted and talented doesn't mean doing more work and doing it faster. It means understanding the world differently and being taught skills to succeed on this level.*

*We are looking at the socio-emotional needs of gifted kids and adding this as a component to the high school because so many kids at this level could benefit from more counseling support.*

*Burbank is offering many teacher trainings for GATE practices. All are required to take at least 1, especially new teachers, but many are signing up for multiple sessions. There is a desire to provide a more organic level of teaching for all students. Especially noticeable are the K-2 teachers who are actively pre-identifying, attempting mini clusters and groupings, and providing support for all learners in a classroom.*

*GATE as a thing vs GATE needs. Kids in high school don't see themselves as GATE, yet they need help with executive functions, organization, and pacing... as many feel overwhelmed and have a need to conquer all and do it perfectly. This is where some of the master plan will focus- on training high school counselors on how to help the socio-emotional needs of GATE students. Right now, there really isn't anyone checking in with these students.*

*GATE high school students also have classes like Honors and AP which replace the need for GATE specific curriculum, but their needs are still GATE and high school counselors need more specific training on how to better support his population of learners.*

*Also, there are different types of gifted kids.*

*There is a text that is being adopted for teachers:*

***Differentiation for Gifted Kids: Going Beyond the Basics*** by Diane Heacox and Richard Cash.

***A New Vision for Site Reports***

***6:50pm***

*There was a brain break here. We all discussed the Year at a Glance calendar thus far with our tablemates.*

*There was discussion about twice exceptional students. How GATE students that have learning disabilities can be serviced even if they have a 504 plan.*

*The identification process was also discussed. Measures are being taken to ensure equitability for all.*

*The discussion also touched on under-performing GATE students and teaching strategies to better engage them. Strategies have to be updated and that is where professional development will play a strong role.*

*We watched the Cougar Vision video made by students at Jordan, which gave us a creative way to learn what middle school is doing at Jordan. We'd like to see more creative site reports coming in from each school site.*

***Upcoming Events for the Year*** **7:01pm**

*Sometimes, GATE learners “hyperfocus” on an item or interest which becomes their pet project. If we can supply them an authentic audience, they are more willing to produce quality work. The work has to be for a real thing, for a real purpose, for a real audience.*

*Action vs Assignment is the key when looking at GATE work and making something enticing to this type of student.*

*Everyone reviewed the site calendar and had input for Ms. Almer.*

*PSAT Talent Search is open to all 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Johns Hopkins University will hold summer workshops for students who qualify during these PSAT talent searches.*

*The National Merit School is for Juniors only.*

*If an activity is planned with an engaging focus that will benefit GATE students as well as other, it will be placed on the calendar.*

*Check out the calendar on the website*

[www.burbankusd.org](http://www.burbankusd.org)

*Then click Parents and then GATE.*

***Push- Ins, Pull- Outs, Pop- Ups*** **7:08pm**

*There was a lot of discussion and opinion on this topic. Parents felt they liked pull outs because it made them feel that it was a “GATE” type program perk. It led them to believe that this is what the GATE program should look like, but it isn't necessarily best practices when it comes to GATE.*

*Kids didn't really like them because they felt strange and it took them time to warm up and get engaged at the pull out sessions with others. They were out of their comfort zone. Some parents saw this as a learning tool for the students. Others saw this as a way for*

*them to fall behind in class as well as maybe the learner wasn't interested in the actual focus of the pull out day.*

*Parents are able to opt out if they feel their child isn't into the specific topic that has been chosen for that particular pull out session.*

### *Pull Outs*

*Some possible ideas for the pull out days:*

- 1. Clustering activities for elementary schools and each grade level would be pulled out. Breakout Edu -a series of puzzles designed to engage kids in solving them.*
- 2. Growth mindset training- the power of yet.*
- 3. Executive function training- organization and focus for success with GATE learners.*
- 4. Green screen program- creative movie making program for kids to use.*
- 5. Thrively- an online quiz designed to help students figure out what types of career paths they might be interested in pursuing. Many GATE students feel like their instruction doesn't actually lead them to a career path.*

### *Push-ins*

*These would be conducted on a site level and done either by class or grade level. It would have something to do with the curriculum and all students would be able to participate as well as this would serve as professional development for teachers and staff.*

### *Pop-ups*

*Activities like Rube Goldberg challenges would pop up. Anyone could register a team of 4, not just GATE program students, but their friends and non-GATE counterparts. This would be a challenging and fun activity that would be inclusive of a wider community and help ensure that the **14, 040** hours of instruction kids will receive continues to be engaging, even though this pop-ups would be conducted after school hours.*

*They could be art, writing, and STEM related and would help develop the T in GATE which stands for Talented.*

*-Pull outs are designed with a specific theme in mind.*

*-Push ins are designed to be a more organic approach to teaching which services the*

*-GATE learners, their peers in a class, and teachers who become professionally developed as a result.*

*Pop ups have the potential of becoming cost-effective, continuously offered, and a great supplement to the GATE program because parents can bring their expertise to the pop up and they can be varied in content and productive in their execution.*

*Ms. Almer is committed to making these happen along with her other plans for the GATE Master Plan.*

*General concerns expressed by parents on pull-outs was that students would fall behind in Math. Many parents asked Ms. Almer to request that on pull out days, all students are exempt from Math homework- a free homework pass for the day. This would alleviate the angst felt by most students who would rather not miss the day than fall behind in Math.*

*\* The goal for push-ins is to do one per grade level at each site. These are the most organic choice, and the one most welcome for parents.*

*\* The goal for pop-ups is to do them often with parent help. These can be done with less planning and creative use of resources, donations, and budgets. This is a new concept so it would require parents that can spear head ideas with Ms. Almer and help create incredible opportunities for our learners.*

*\* The goal for pull-outs is to provide support with Growth Mind Set training, executive function skills, and offer deeper challenges for our learners. These require much planning and funding.*

*Game night was discussed briefly. Ms. Almer felt that while they are good, why not have the type of game night that had students made, publish, or create an app- so that the game night would be creating the game vs simply playing it.*

*Many parents questioned the value they were getting regarding pullouts and expressed concerns to keep them to one day only, all year. They mostly opted for pus- ins.*

*More parents would be on board with district pop-ups if they were well informed of when and what the focus topic will be.*

*How can this communication happen?*

*Ms. Almer says website, emailed, speaking to your site representative, translating documents, relying on GAC to talk to their parents, In Touch phone call to reach a wider audience.*

***DIE CUT Call Outs***

***7:28pm***

*Please write down a hope, goal, wish for this GAC program for this year. Leave it on the table.*

*If you have questions, write them on the parking lot or email them to Ms. Almer.*

*Meeting adjourned at 7:28pm*

*Parental discussion ensued.*