

**Conejo Valley Unified School District
GATE-DAC Meeting Notes
Friday, 20 October 2017
University Center, 2801 Atlas Avenue, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 9:07am

II. OPENING CEREMONIES

- a. Introductions
- b. Pledge of Allegiance
- c. Dr. Santos introduced and led discussion around the "Quote of the Day":
"Make them think... It is a terrible loss to the brain to not teach questioning."—The Bui

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Agenda was adopted as presented. No changes.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments

V. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Minutes were not received by some attendees.
- b. It was suggested that email addresses be added to the sign-in sheet.
- c. Minutes of the last meeting will be approved online at a later date.
- d. Minutes usually are sent out about a week after the meeting takes place. It was decided that, going forward, minutes will be sent out 48 hours prior to the upcoming meeting.
- e. The newsletter will be sent out with the minutes.

VI. DISCUSSION OF PLANS FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

- a. Fun Fridays/Terrific Tuesdays—Subha Tholudur
 - The aim of these events is to provide place for GATE students from across all schools to connect with each other in a social setting around an activity that is of interest to them.
 - Events will take place once a month.
 - The first Fun Friday was held for 4th and 5th graders on 29 September from 4-5pm at University Center. Forty-eight students signed-up for the "Math Dice Competition."
 - Due to an email glitch, only 9 students signed up for the first Terrific Tuesday for 6th, 7th and 8th graders. The event is rescheduled for 27 October from 4-5pm at University Center. It will be a "Thinking Games" event, with board games to include: Prime Climb, Blokus, Scattergories, Qwirkle and Boggle.
 - If members are interested in organizing/running an upcoming District event, they should contact either Julie Freedman or Subha Tholudur with their plan.
 - All District events need a District representative in attendance. Dr. Santos is our only District representative.
 - Resources from Fun Fridays and Terrific Tuesdays will be available at the CVUSD offices for individual schools to borrow to use for events at their own campuses. Events can be held at lunchtime during recess or after school. Work with your school site facilitator to set up a time.
- b. Possible Redwood Event for Elementary Cluster —Bijaya Eaton
 - Cluster events can be organized with a school facilitator or teacher present; Dr. Santos may not need to be present.
 - It was suggested that GATE event organizers may be able to secure additional funds from ASB for events on campus.

VII. REPORTS

- a. CVUSD GATE Plan 2017-2018—Dr. Santos
 - The CVUSD GATE Plan for the upcoming year is organized around four categories: Testing, Activities and Enrichment, Professional Development and Parent/Community Outreach. (Handout)

- The new model involves assessing *every single* 3rd grader (1131 students) using the OLSAT.
- All other students (1st, 2nd, and 4th through 8th graders) will be referred for testing.
- The OLSAT test will take place on 20 January 2018. If a student's OLSAT results are "abnormal," additional assessment will be run.
- About 2300 out of roughly 19,000 students in CVUSD are identified as GATE, making up around 11% of the student population.

Discussion

Activities & Enrichments/Funding

- All district-wide enrichments (e.g., Odyssey of the Mind, Noetic, Fun Fridays, Solve It Days Reflections) are also open for GATE students' participation.
- Dr. Santos will use All-Calls and Twitter to disperse information about certain upcoming activities.
- The budget for GATE district-wide is \$40,000. Half of that budget goes towards testing. That leaves roughly \$20,000 to be used across our 27 GATE sites
- District funding is provided for activities held across schools (clusters)
- Scholarships are available for families who want their child to participate in enrichment activities like Noetic Math
- The District will help fund a site activity if the site also "has skin in the game" (has raised some funds themselves). Chances of district funding will increase if the activity is for a cluster and not just one school.
- Dr. Santos reinforced that the first event held "has to be good!" This will increase the likelihood that the next event will be well-attended.

Solve It Day through GATE DAC

- Solve It Day will take place for elementary students on 16 November and for middle schoolers on 17 November. There will be four Solve It Days for the school year.
- The aim of Solve It Day is to bring GATE students together for thought collection, collaboration, group building, and creativity. It is not meant to highlight competition.
- The invitation for Solve It Day will go out a week before the event.
- Dr. Santos reiterated the importance of the social and emotional components of GATE events and their goal to provide a space for interaction among GATE students.
- It was suggested that sites reach out to other organizations (e.g., Thousand Oaks Libraries) for help in organizing enrichments and activities for their sites.

GATE Facilitators

- Some parents are not aware of whom their site's GATE facilitator is and are unclear on what duties/responsibilities the GATE facilitator is supposed to fulfill.
- Dr. Santos informed the group that the designated GATE facilitator at elementary and middle schools is always a teacher.
- Dr. Santos invited parents to come meet their site's teacher at the upcoming GATE facilitator meeting. It will be held in the District Office Board Room on Monday, 23 October at 4:30pm.
- There is no high school teacher facilitator. It was suggested that high school counselors receive additional, specific GATE training in order to better serve GATE students.

b. DAC Report—Subha Tholudur

- The PTSA Council will be holding a Girl Empowerment Session date yet to be announced.
- The Conejo Schools Foundation will be awarding its first round of grants. Grants are awarded through the district in the amount of \$250 to individual teachers. All teachers are encouraged to submit a grant application.
- A new bill was passed which releases the district from having to choose the least expensive food vendor.

c. School Site Reports

Redwood Elementary School—Bijaya Eaton

- Conducted a brief GATE Parent survey to address children's needs
- Respondents prioritized needs such as Time Management, Increased Academic Challenges, Stress/Anxiety Coping Methods and Planning
- Parents also indicated they would like to see more opportunity at school for science and math challenges and robotics.

Colina Middle School—Alysia Flamer

- Discussed the evolution of the GATE program at the Colina, explaining that when she and her daughter first arrived, there was no “school site GATE program” to speak of
- With a new dean, came new energy for the program and the formation of a GATE parent team
- Organizing the first GATE information night for this year has challenges surrounding communication and privacy issues:
 - It is difficult to reach out to the larger group of GATE parents because of privacy issues: the school is not allowed to share the list of GATE identified students to the larger group
 - To meet this challenge, it is recommended the Dean create a user list and send out information
 - In addition, parents may find it hard to get around privacy issues to organize themselves or even get to know one another.
 - Information night may help introduce GATE parents. And parents can reach out to each other outside of school to get together for support or form a group to organize activities or enrichments
- Reiterated that the responsibilities, level of involvement, communication to parents of GATE facilitators varies widely from site to site
- Take away from the Colina experience is that a site’s GATE program can go from “nothing” happening to thriving in a very short time if the right mix of dean, facilitator, parents and students come together

Sequoia Middle School/Odyssey of the Mind—Julie Freedman

- This year’s regional Odyssey of the Mind competition will take place at Westlake High School on 24 February 2018.
- Last year 33 teams from CVUSD competed.
- Would like to see at least one team from every school participate this year.
- It is not too late to form a team for this year’s competition. A team must have a parent/coach in order to participate in Odyssey of the Mind, but the program is entirely student driven (no coach input in the team’s presentation/performance)
- For more information contact Julie Freedman or Kathryn Loberg.

Speaker Committee- given by Subha Tholudur for Hilary Bhinder (Lang Ranch) (absent)

- Members were asked generate suggestions for who to line up for the speaker series or topics to be covered or both
- Some areas that may be of interest included
 - Leadership skills
 - TOHS Ethos Program
 - Robotics Club
 - DATA Club
 - CVUSD personnel/administration
 - Jennifer Boone, District Curriculum
 - Emotional, Social Support
- Ideas should be sent to Hilary Bhinder or Subha Tholudur

d. Local/State Update—Dr. Santos

- Dr. Santos shared information from the Tri-County Council (Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo) for Gifted Students:
 - There will be a “GATE Way to Leadership” program for 7th graders on 5 May 2018 in Carpinteria. There will be approximately 25 slots open for CVUSD. More information to follow.
 - The Summer Institute for the Gifted (SIG) Program is a paid enrichment program for 4th through 6th graders
 - Scholarship/grant opportunities exist for GATE students (\$150), parents (\$300) and teachers (\$400) to enhance site learning. Deadline for applications is 1 December 2017.

e. CAG Conference Report—Dr. Santos

- This year’s CAG Conference will be held on 3 March 2018 at the Sheraton in San Diego. The parent session will take place Sunday, the 4th and will include half day workshops.

- Two \$750 scholarships are available. More information to follow.
- Dr. Santos shared a list of traits/characteristics/skills exhibited by GATE students and the corresponding challenges/consequences that arise from those traits.
- Knowing these traits→challenges can help parents and teachers find ways to work with these challenges in public school/public policy
- Dr. Santos will send out more complete information, but in a nutshell:

CHARACTERISTIC/TRAIT/SKILL	CONSEQUENCES/CHALLENGES
Acquires information quickly and easily	Impatience; dislikes basic routines/work
Inquisitive, searches for significance	Asks embarrassing questions
Intrinsically motivated	Strong-willed, resists direction
Enjoys problem solving	Resists practice; questions teaching procedures
Seeks cause and effect relations	Dislikes unclear, illogical areas
Seeks to organize things and people	Constructs complicated rules; seen as “bossy”
Large vocabulary	May use words to manipulate
Emphasizes truth	Worries about humanitarian concerns
High expectations of self/others	Intolerant; perfectionist; may become depressed
Creative/Inventive	Disruptive; out of step with peers
Long attention span; persistence	Neglects interaction with people; stubbornness
Desire for acceptance/empathy	Sensitivity to criticism or peer rejection

- Dr. Santos reminded members not to ignore any social or emotional struggles that their GATE child might exhibit. GATE students have a heightened sense of social-emotional concerns.
- Dr. Santos explained that GIFTED children are not the same as HIGH-ACHIEVING students.

VII. OTHER UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Schools on Wheels— Parent from Westlake Elementary
 - Non-profit program in which students 12 years and older can tutor a younger child who is homeless, in the foster system or otherwise disadvantaged.
 - Dr. Santos knows of the program and its Director, Angie Allmendinger.
 - It was suggested that Angie be considered for the speaker series
 - Dr. Santos also informed us that if CVUSD students were to take place in the program, that they would be paired with a student from outside our community (privacy rights)

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- a. GATE Curriculum
 - Dr. Santos is looking at the curriculum and how to implement improvements/changes at sites.
 - The district does cluster GATE students in classrooms.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:10.