

Protecting Services for Gifted and Talented Children

The current budget crisis has placed services for gifted and talented children at risk, as school districts struggle to balance their budgets and succeed in an era of accountability that gives no credit for students who perform above “proficient” or who show talent in areas like art, music and leadership.

Parents are the key to protecting these important services at the local level. Important points that parents can make include:

1. State funding for Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) was cut by 15%, not eliminated. Although GATE must take its fair share of required cuts, it is not reasonable to eliminate this important program.
2. GATE students need special attention too. They can become bored and disrupt classes, or withdraw and eventually drop out. There is ample evidence that gifted and talented students will not “do fine” if they are not provided with appropriate instruction.
3. Parents will seek options if the needs of their children are not being met. These options can include other schools or districts, charter schools, or private schools. A school district that saves the paltry \$7 per student allocated for GATE programs may find itself losing all funding (more than \$6,000 per student) for students whose parents feel the needs of their children are being ignored.
4. The federal government is providing substantial financial relief to school districts to help buffer the impact of the budget crisis. Programs for GATE students should benefit from this assistance, as should services for all students.