

# Yes, Virginia, There is a GATE Program

Many emails and phone calls, in addition to coffee shop and grocery store conversations, have included the statements, "I'm not donating any money because there's no GATE Program any more," or, "The rigor won't be there."

## **QUITE THE CONTRARY.**

The GATE Office will continue its role serving the needs of GATE identified students and the needs of the teachers who instruct those students in Honors, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate classes. These services include the following:

- Conducting assessment of gifted and talented students for identification
- Providing Professional Development opportunities for teachers
- Providing parent education (Dr. James T Webb will be here June 10)
- Providing enrichment activities for students during and beyond the school day
- Providing supplies and equipment for classroom instruction (esp. technology)
- Conducting an annual evaluation of the Honors classes and activities listed here
- Conducting fundraising to support the above

While the GATE Program still receives funding from the state and from the District, we must, like every other school program in this current economic climate, conduct fundraising in order to accomplish our mission. Fundraising supports all of the above initiatives. Identification of gifted students is still important for a variety of reasons: it ensures that those students get their needs met, and that teachers use appropriate instructional strategies; it also makes them eligible for enrichment opportunities provided by the GATE Office. Identification is also one of the criteria for enrollment in the Honors classes.

To ensure that the rigor of the Honors classes continues, the GATE Office in conjunction with the District Office is providing intensive professional development. Since publishing our calendar of professional development opportunities, teachers have flooded the GATE and District Offices with sign-ups and enthusiastic statements of their willingness to participate. For instance, all junior highs in the District are sending teachers to four days of training in pre-Advanced Placement instructional strategies in June. In-depth training in differentiation strategies is available in July at the California Association for the Gifted's Summer Institute, offered here in Santa Barbara. We're planning to offer a Technology Institute for both teachers and students in August.

It is clear that we have the professional commitment of teachers who are devoted to providing a rigorous curriculum that meets the needs of all students, including using differentiation strategies to ensure that our gifted students are appropriately challenged.

All this is to say that this survey is extremely important at this time of transition. Please let us hear from you and your student(s) as your feedback is crucial to us as we continue to improve our GATE Program.