



Pacifica School District

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Preparing Students for an Evolving World

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MEMORANDUM

Office of the Superintendent

Meeting of

April 1, 2015

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: Wendy S. Tukloff, Ed.D., Superintendent
SUBJECT: Pacifica School District Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Identification Process

Background

After many years of using an extremely intricate funding formula for school districts, the State of California has moved to a more simplistic formula that is to provide a more equitable distribution of funds, Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). With this new formula, the State eliminated categorical and special programs funding allocations to allow districts to fund the particular programs, should a district choose to do so, within LCFF with the exception of targeted subgroups: English Learners (ELs), Socio-economically Disadvantaged (SED) Youth, and Foster Youth. These targeted subgroups are provided additional unduplicated funds noted as supplemental funds.

This change in funding of programs has resulted in districts reviewing Board Policies that reflected programs no longer funded. One such program is the Gifted and Talented Education Program. At the October 21, 2014 meeting, Trustees had the opportunity to review the recommended changes to the optional policy BP/AR 6172 Gifted and Talented Student Program. After discussion, it was determined to delete the policy because Pacifica School District does not have a GATE Program and had not had a GATE program for many years. On October 29, 2014, the Trustees voted to eliminate BP/AR 6172 Gifted and Talented Student Program.

To update school administrators regarding this change the item was brought forward during a Leadership Council meeting. Information was shared of the deletion of the policy but that the identification process would continue. We then discussed the purpose behind identification and the testing process used. The following is a highlight of items discussed:

1. The district has a limited identification process due to the limited staff and lack of funds: Our process uses one measure that limits our identification of giftedness in only one area, nonverbal problem solving aspects of cognitive ability and advanced critical thinking.
2. Should we continue with the identification process a more robust process should be developed, which will in effect need staff time and additional funding.
3. There is a desire to meet the needs of the GATE student, which school administrators believe is occurring due to our strong curricular and pedagogical approach, as well as our consensus building approach to working with families on a case by case basis.
4. The label of GATE is not needed to ensure that we meet the needs of the student who demonstrates giftedness.

Based on these discussion points, we would like to eliminate GATE testing in the future years. We will work with families on a case by case basis should they need guidance regarding GATE programs/identification. Principals Karen Gnusti and Dan Lyttle will be present at the meeting should Trustees have questions regarding impact on students at the school level.