



Parent/Family Newsletter

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GATE Student Advisory Council

Bringing Student Perspectives to the Forefront



Gifted/Talented Programs launched the GATE Student Advisory Council (GSAC) this academic year. Comprised of 57 high school students from each region in the District, the council convenes on a monthly basis. GSAC serves the purpose of enabling students to contribute insights regarding District GATE policies and programs, offering recommendations for enhancing school support for GATE students, and equipping students with information to advocate for themselves and their peers.

The inaugural meeting took place at the offices of the LAUSD Student Empowerment Unit in October 2023.

Students participated both in-person and online to acquaint themselves with one another and acquire fundamental knowledge about the District's GATE programs, services, and support. A survey conducted during the meeting will guide the formulation of agendas for forthcoming sessions. Furthermore, the council will collaborate on a project aimed at positively impacting GATE learners throughout the District.

Key topics of interest for students include the identification process for gifted and talented status, personal identification within specific categories, and the program options available to gifted students.

Gifted/Talented Programs realizes that students are the primary stakeholders in the education system. Their direct experience provides unique insights into the day-to-day realities of school life in LAUSD. Involving them in decision-making allows for the creation of more tailored and effective solutions that address their specific needs. We are so excited to work with them this year and hear their perspectives and innovative ideas.

The creation of GSAC has inspired us to bring back the School Spotlight feature to the newsletter and each edition will feature a piece written by one of our GSAC members.

Important Dates

- ♦ **Dec. 18 - Jan. 5:** Winter Recess
- ♦ **January 10:** GATE Parent Hour
- ♦ **January 15:** Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
- ♦ **February 7:** GATE Parent Hour
- ♦ **February 19:** Presidents' Day Holiday - No School
- ♦ **February 28:** GATE/SAS Parent Webinar with Lisa Van Gemert focusing on Creativity



Social Emotional Wellness Corner

SEL-ebrate the Holidays

Social-emotional learning ("SEL") is an important part of any gifted student's education. Starting with this issue, Gifted/Talented Programs will share ideas from our GATE Psychologists on supporting gifted learners with SEL. As we prepare for the upcoming break, here are some supports gleaned from an article published by the Davidson Institute, "Tips for Low Stress Holidays for Gifted Families (November 25, 2020).

During winter break, households with gifted children "...may be dealing with one or a mix of all the following: overexcitabilities, perfectionism, emotional intensities, existential thinking, asynchronous development, and an acute sense of injustice." If this sounds familiar, here are some supportive ideas to try:

For the Perfectionist, Anxious, or Emotionally Aware: These children have trouble letting go of unrealistic holiday expectations, tend to be people pleasers, and are sponges for others' emotions. Dedicate time for physical activities like hiking, dancing, or yoga. Work together to put up decorations, cook/bake, and prepare gifts for loved ones to channel calming energy.

For the Extrovert with Overexcitabilities: These children have boundless joy for the season but may have trouble focusing their energy. Opportunities for daily exercise will be key, but also make time for cooperative board games or role-playing games to foster joy and connectivity.

For the Existentialist: These children have a propensity for existential thinking and a strong sense of idealism. They may benefit from guided journaling to reflect on the year that passed and to set affirmations for the year ahead. Help them identify actionable steps for the family to address the issues they are concerned about. Engage your child and family members in community volunteering. Giving back is a powerful act for social-emotional well-being.

If you'd like to learn more about some of the specific kinds of social-emotional challenges mentioned here, checkout the resources on the [SENG](https://www.seng.org/) (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted) website.

(Note: SENG is not affiliated with LAUSD Gifted/Talented Programs.)

School Spotlight

San Pedro Senior High (Region South)

by Chloe Straight, Student and GSAC Member



San Pedro Senior High was proudly given the 2023 School of Recognition award from the Magnet Schools of America. This achievement highlights the school's dedication to providing an enriching and innovative learning environment for its STEAM students. San Pedro Gifted STEAM Magnet stands as the only gifted magnet program for high school students in Los Angeles's Harbor area. The curriculum, blending Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM), is designed to encourage and challenge students. Beyond just readying students for college, STEAM provides experiences geared towards crafting success stories, to achieve students' full potential.

In my personal experience with STEAM, I've been provided lots of support and resources. Right from the start, my program set up events like the freshman and seniors ice cream meet, where students from both grade levels met and talked about their experiences and questions going into the new year. Our administration works hard to make sure that we students feel like we are part of the community and have outlets when we need support. My favorite event was the de-stress week before finals where we had a puppy party and hung out with support dogs to reduce stress as needed. Our main projects in the STEAM program use Project Based Learning (PBL), where students are given a topic and choose how we will present it. Our last topic was our culture, and we were able to choose games, food, music, and a few others to display our culture to other students and educate them. I feel like these projects bring students together on both a social and emotional level.