



ACADEMIC PROGRAMS  
AND SERVICES FOR  
GIFTED LEARNERS



## A POSITION PAPER

The California Association for the Gifted (CAG) periodically publishes position papers that deal with issues, policies, and practices that have an impact on the education of gifted and talented students. All position papers approved by the CAG Board of Directors are consistent with the organization's philosophy and mission, and the current research in the field.

The position papers support the organization's belief in the value and uniqueness of all individuals, its respect for diversity present in our society, and its commitment to honoring the similarities and differences among all students. CAG encourages the provision of educational opportunities that are appropriate to challenge and nurture the growth of each child's potential. The organization is especially mindful of the need for advocacy for individuals who have developed or show the promise of developing intellectual abilities and talents at high levels.



# ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR GIFTED LEARNERS

In order to provide effective programs and curriculum for gifted students, research indicates that a continuum of services (i.e., models, programs, and options) must be offered that can meet a wide range of abilities, interests, and readiness. Such services need to include a combination of acceleration, flexible grouping based on interest, ability, and need, and differentiation of the core curriculum through depth, complexity, and novelty of instruction and materials. Programs for gifted learners should provide for continuous progress, continuity, intellectual peer interaction, and services that challenge the students at their individual level of academic and intellectual development. Such services need to be offered and implemented as an integral part of each school day.

Administrative groupings and structures appropriate for gifted education may include:

- regular classroom with cluster grouping
- part-time grouping
- multi-age grouping
- special schools or magnet schools
- mentoring

At the secondary level other models that have been found to be successful as part of the program for gifted learners include:

- Group seminars or honors classes
- Advanced Placement
- International Baccalaureate
- Concurrent college enrollment

Each program organization or model has benefits, however, no one model alone can provide the continuum of services necessary to meet the needs of all gifted students.

To be effective, in addition to high levels of thought and intellectual rigor, the program must also facilitate unique and sophisticated expressions of creativity, ethical standards, positive self- concepts, sensitivity and responsibility to others, and contributions to society. Whichever program and curriculum modification model is selected, teachers must be provided support and ongoing training to ensure the effective education of gifted learners.

The districts that support excellence in gifted programming are those that:

- have observable documentation stating their philosophy, plans for appropriate identification and service, differentiated curriculum, quality criteria for assessment methods and procedures, and evaluation of student outcomes and program effectiveness.
- have programs of service and their projected student outcomes aligned with the district's philosophy and identification plan.
- designate a responsible agent at the district level for the coordination of services for gifted learners and site level administrative and parental support.
- establish an advisory group including teachers, administrators, parents, and interested members of the community to serve in the interest of gifted students.
- encourage and provide staff in-service to build competence in their teachers that allows them to plan and implement appropriate differentiated service to gifted students.

For each gifted student to reach the highest level of potential possible, the California Association for the Gifted affirms the position that schools must provide a continuum of appropriate services and meet the conditions that research indicates are necessary to ensure meaningful and challenging programs for gifted learners.



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