Gifted & Talented Education

NEWSLETTER

TUSD Tucson Unified School District

Fall 2008

Parent/Staff GATE Open House - 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

November 13 – 1010 E 10th Street – Board Room
November 19th – Vail Middle School (Located on Craycroft between Broadway & 22nd street)

We value your input… Please join us to contribute ideas and provide feedback about the GATE program and meet our new GATE Coordinator. Please feel free to drop into one of the above open house dates.

SELF-CONTAINED NEWS

Corbett Elementary School – submitted by A. Pierson

Corbett has lots to offer. We are doing some exciting things. We are doing some high level learning. In 5th grade Mrs. Ahumada is studying our founding fathers and the Presidential Elections. Students are going to be holding debates and researching our founding fathers. In second grade Mrs. Gibson has been studying the physics and history of Kite flying. In third grade Mrs. Pierson is having students blogging. They are blogging all their book reports and learning how to use technology. They are also learning how to connect ideas. They are connecting Ancient Greece and Rome to the American Government. Art is a big thing in Mrs. Pierson's class too. Students are learning about art and artists through the core curriculum. At Corbett we are making inferences, connecting ideas, evaluating and analyzing and having a lot of fun learning new things.

Lineweaver Elementary School

Lineweaver Elementary GATE classrooms were in a whirl of activity as the new school year began. First grade students conducted interviews of classmates and presented them in class. Second grade students displayed curiosity about cockroaches and had live specimens to study up close. Third grade students have been busy learning about simple machines to build miniature soap box cars and forces in tension to build bridge models. Fourth grade students have been studying vocabulary and adding quirky words to their everyday language. Fifth grade students have wrapped up study of the solar system and explorers of the New World.

Tully Elementary School

As advocates for gifted children, we, here at Tully Elementary Magnet School, believe students should be offered an educational program, which adequately meets their individual needs. We strive to challenge and enrich the lives of all our students. We differentiate instruction and offer opportunities for creativity and personal expression.

We offer our students daily opportunities for creative and critical thinking, in addition to instruction that encompasses state standards at each grade level.

Our extended day opportunities for our GATE students include programs such as; Spanish Club, fourth grade Bailar Ballet sponsored by Tucson Ballet, Folkorico Dance, and an after school program/tutorial.

Thank you for taking interest in your child's educational success!

Pistor Middle School

Technology, fine arts and diversity are three focuses of Pistor Middle School's Self-Contained GATE program. Students participate in six core classes: language arts, advanced mathematics, social studies, science, and core enrichment. Our electives reflect a commitment to connect to the real world, for example, mariachi, journalism, dance, Native American literature, chorus, art, humanities/drama, and band.

Pistor offers a Dual Language GATE program. The Pistor Dance Ensemble regularly performs in the Tucson community. Three technology labs support advanced communications.

Visit Pistor Middle School's spring GATE Open House on March 26, 2009 to hear more!

Pistor Dance Ensemble rehearses in the dance room with Ms. Blakeley.

Vail Middle School

The Alice Vail Middle School self-contained GATE Program has a well-deserved reputation for excellence, recognizing that gifted children demand relevant and rigorous curriculum, real world connections, and creative-productive opportunities. For example, in 2008-2009, our students will work with the UA on DNA fingerprinting lab techniques, participate in mock elections, become entrepreneurs, and debate critical social issues in both policy and Lincoln-Douglas formats. The AVMS focus on academics, athletics, and the arts assists us in our long-term GATE goal that our students will be exceptionally prepared for high school and beyond. And when our former students return to visit, they tell us that is exactly what happens.

GATE RESOURCE NEWS

Gridley Middle School

Gridley offers accelerated classes for advanced students in the areas of Language Arts and Math at all three grade levels. We are the only middle school that requires all of our 8th graders to take Algebra. We believe the exposure to an advance curriculum better prepares them for success in high school. We also offer Algebra for high school credit.

Mansfeld Middle School with Ms. Steele

GATE Resource is an academic enrichment course designed with the needs of the GATE qualified student in mind. Selected topics relevant to the student's core classes are taught to enhance and augment the student's regular curriculum. Classes meet for one period a day, five days a week, for three years.

Lessons are taught in an interdisciplinary manner. Each unit supplements material from one or more of the middle school core classes. All units require a finished product and a presentation to the class. A different syllabus is implemented every year. The concept is to employ as many varied teaching methods to address as many different learning styles as possible and to incorporate higher order and critical thinking skills into every lesson. Topics include: Science, language arts, social studies, art, technology, law and drama.

Students qualify for GATE Resource at Mansfeld with their scores from the GATE placement test. Students who enter in the sixth grade will remain in GATE Resource for the seventh and eighth grades with no further testing required.

Utterback Middle School

Along with the excellent visual, musical and theater arts classes at Utterback Magnet Middle School, GATE students can choose to enroll in the Social Studies based GATE class in 6th grade, Accelerated Math class in 7th Grade, and an Advanced Science class in 8th grade. As we continue to implement project-based learning throughout the school, gifted and talented students will be challenged to become better thinkers, collaborators and communicators.

GATE/PLUS NEWS

Nancy Marek (Marshall, Gale, Carrillo, Brichta, Van Horne)

We have been developing the theme of Interdependence. We are now studying the brain and making metaphors. Here are some examples: My brain is a bucket that fills with ideas. My brain is a tree that has roots to make me think. My brain is a circle that never ends with thoughts. My brain is a super hero because it helps me in bad situations.

Connie Krug (Reynolds, Henry, Lyons, Roberts, Dunham)

Students have developed the concept of *Interdependence* by participating in activities that demonstrated mutual reliance. They created multi-colored paper spheres as metaphors for their various levels of thinking; after which, they studied the structure and function of the human brain. Next, we will focus on learning strategies and memory techniques.

Shari Sidransky (Blenman, Kellond, Sewell)

Our focus has been on defining and experiencing our theme: Interdependence. We have read various books and played vocabulary charades to help those words come to life. We have been using a variety of thinking strategies, and will do some in-depth activities with SCAMPER in the next few weeks. We are also learning new games that require interdependence.

Nancy DeArman (Vesey, Robins, Bonillas, Whitmore)

Students are now learning about elaboration strategies and creating elaborations of their own. They have already learned about similes and metaphors, and have displayed them in GATE classrooms. In coming weeks, students will be learning about, and writing, personifications. Future lessons will also include poetry, in which elaboration strategies will be used.

Pam VanderLinde (Booth-Fickett; Future Cities Classes)

Can you imagine the challenges involved in designing a city of 50,000 that dates 150 years in the future? Students at Fickett are currently engineering cities for competition in the National Engineers Week Future City competition. The Future City Competition requires students to complete 6 projects that include: a computer design of their future city, a computer evaluation, a scale model, a research essay, a design abstract and an oral presentation. This year's requirements center around creating a self-sufficient system within the home which conserves, recycles, and reuses all existing water sources.

Pam VanderLinde (Booth-Fickett-Stock Market Class)

To understand the stock market as of late, one needs to devote time and energy in order to interpret the current crisis. Students participating in the Stock Market class are definitely getting a jump start. Our future financial wizards work together to create and manage a virtual investment portfolio of real world stocks and mutual funds. Researching and evaluating companies based on online financial sites is the base on which their fortunes will be supported.

Lynn Ramsey (Lineweaver, Myers Ganoung, Richey, Schumaker, Wheeler)

Creativity was spurred with a strategy called SCAMPER, using two sheets of newspaper and one foot of masking tape to create a hat. Students told facts about themselves while sharing their hat. With hats on heads, connected by a string, students had to figure out how, as a team, to do tasks while keeping all team members' hats on. Our journal writing should reveal the tale...

Geometry and paper folding helped us solve a problem of making a paper sphere or GATE ball. In GATE/PLUS, we have fun, but we are serious about our thinking.

Toni Kalish (Fruchthendler, Johnson, Collier, Wright)

Ms. Kalish's students began the year by exploring Interdependence and its meaning, presence, and significance in our lives and world. The students tied this concept to their red, yellow and green light thinking skills, which were reflected in the creation of their GATE balls. They also explored geometry concepts with the balls. Currently, the students are learning about the brain.

Susan Truman (Howell, Steele, Warren, Dietz, Rogers)

While doing language arts lessons about inference and humor, students discovered that these concepts can be interdependent. It was fun for them to learn what inference means when the learning process is humorous. Students wrote inference riddles, analyzed cartoons, performed humorous skits, and drew inference/humorous pictures from their real life experiences.

Myrna Ramirez (Manzo, Tolson)

GATE students have been elaborating and concluding with concepts of this year's theme of Interdependence. Students brainstormed and participated in activities to demonstrate interdependence. Students have been learning about thinking skills and the triad model of gifted individuals. We have also been involved in mathematical group challenges and spatial problem solving activities.

Jane Martin (Cavett, Van Buskirk, Duffy, Ochoa, Cragin)

Ms. Martin's students have been exploring the central nervous system, focusing on the function of neurons and the three main parts of the brain. They have also been learning about the 8 multiple intelligences and how they relate to the right and left hemispheres of the brain. The students have written songs and poetry, as well as created models and artwork to illustrate the above concepts.

Laurie Kardish (Menlo Park, Roskruge, Davis)

Students began the year with activities to reveal this year's theme, and by learning the thinking models used every year in the GATE program. "Like spices can create a tastier food, combining all the thinking processes (we learn in GATE) makes a more interesting outcome." Conner Adkisson 5th grade Davis Bilingual Elementary.

FROM THE DESK OF – David Niecikowski, MAED/CI Coordinator, Gifted and Talented Education

Hello all!

Thank you for taking the time to read the newsletter. I am deeply honored to be the Coordinator of the Gifted and Talented Education Department. My background in gifted education includes teaching the World History portion of the high school GATE block and most recently, as an elementary pull-out GATE teacher.

TUSD provides more opportunities for gifted students than most districts in the nation. The GATE program would not be possible without the support and service from our staff, administration, school board, and legislators. Please consider taking the time to let them know how you feel about the GATE program.

The GATE department appreciates your involvement in your child's education. Your attendance at the Parent/Staff GATE Open House mentioned on the first page of this newsletter is greatly appreciated. I hope to meet many of you in person.

Questions? Suggestions? I can be reached at david.niecikowski.tusd1.org or 731-4005.

Heather Dorey (Miller, Banks, White, Pueblo Gardens, Oyama)

So far this year, GATE students have been actively exploring the theme of Interdependence, as well as examining various GATE thinking skills. As we begin the 2nd quarter, we are taking a look at Interdependence from the perspective of economics, specifically how we, as consumers, are influenced by companies and advertisers, and how that in turn affects our economy.

Susan Mahoney (Soleng Tom, Erickson, Wrightstown)

Mrs. Mahoney's class is very busy exploring Geometric Concepts. You might think this is a bit "BORING!" Oh no! We are actually building spheres using "Flat Stanley" circles. Did you know that you will find all the geometric shapes in a sphere that is constructed this way? We have used SCAMPER and FFOE strategies to create many new variations of our original concept of Interdependence.

Pittman Carrington (Davidson, Bloom, Jefferson Park, Mission View, Miles)

Younger students enjoy a heavy dose of strategy games which give them an opportunity to socialize, use higher order thinking skills, and practice basic logic skills at the same time. Activities also include short vocabulary and writing lessons as well as opportunities to get questions answered and stump the teacher! Older students also work on a variety of word-based logic activities around the theme of interdependence. Most recently, students completed an activity using Anolograms, an analogy activity where success depended on keeping an open mind to the relationships between the words. Think: adverse is to jingle like rampart is to horn.

Kevan A. Kiser-Chuc (Hollinger, Safford, Grijalva)

We have been studying about our brains and how they work. Did you know that we have 100 billion neurons, and

each one makes 1,000 to 10,000 connections of new information; or, that our frontal lobe is used to solve problems? No wonder we get headaches sometimes!

We have been playing "Brainy Games" in class and on the computer, creating new 'brain" metaphors, such as: "A brain is like a control tower because it tells us what to do," or "the brain is like a rubber band because it stretches your mind."

Garrett Young (Drachman, Borman, Tully, Corbett, Hudlow)

Using hands-on lessons, cooperative and independent learning activities, as well as games, to teach the concepts of interdependence, students are learning:

Why it is important to distinguish fact from opinion in advertising, to enhance consumer decision making.

How Producers and Advertisers use a variety of methods to try to influence consumer tastes and preferences, and through that, demand.

The various ways in which people respond to advertising.

Students will soon be learning the structure and dynamics of Economics.

Anna Marie Martinez (Maldonado, Fort Lowell, Borton, Holladay, Rose)

First quarter began on a positive note, as students were engaged in a number of activities relating to the main theme of INTERDEPENDENCE. They also learned/reviewed the Creative Thinking Models used in the GATE Program. For example, students had a fun time creating an awesome 3D GATE ball based on Traffic Light Thinking.