



April 3, 2012

Superintendent Constance Hubbard
Randy Booker, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services
Members of the GATE Advisory Committee
Piedmont Unified School District, 760 Magnolia Ave, Piedmont, CA 94611

Dear Superintendent Hubbard, Mr. Booker, and GATE Advisory Committee members,

Piedmont GPS was formed three years ago for families with gifted, talented, and twice-exceptional children in the Piedmont Unified School District. Among our goals is to help the District support gifted students at every level. We hope to do this through education, advocacy, and fundraising. Our members are active participants on the GATE Advisory Committee, Budget Advisory Committee, and Site Councils, and frequently provide input to the School Board.

During this past year GPS activities have included:

- October 2011 - sponsored a workshop open to all in the community to review characteristics of gifted and the newly adopted GATE plan.
- November 2011 - donated \$450 to offset the cost for six teachers to attend the California Association for Gifted symposium in Napa County.
- January 2012 - organized a panel of Piedmont parents describing how they advocated for their gifted children in school.
- March 2012 - hosted "Improving Gifted Education Through Consistency and Communication: The Resource Coordinator Role"

All events have been well attended by parents, teachers and community members.

We appreciate and support Randy Booker's suggestion at a recent GATE Advisory Committee meeting that GATE goals be included in the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SIPA) at each school, and that the GATE plan be included under the purview of the individual Site Councils.

As you know, we submit a letter of recommendation to you once per year. We thank you for addressing many of the proposals made in our letter last year. At your request, we are updating our current recommendations.

1. Explore the feasibility of creating and filling a part time gifted/GATE Resource Coordinator who could:

- Ensure consistent implementation of the existing GATE program
- Support the educational needs of high achieving and academically gifted learners
- Support Twice Exceptional students – those both gifted and with learning challenges
- Using state-adopted curricula and focusing on student strengths, assist teachers in providing differentiated, rigorous, and accelerated experiences during the school day.
- Assist teachers and families in identifying resources for serving "multiple intelligences" and unique interests of students to encourage their passion for learning

The speaker at our most recent event, Dana Cope, serves in this capacity for the Napa Valley Unified School District (http://www.nvUSD.k12.ca.us/alps_mission). Based on her

description of their program, it appears that Piedmont has many pieces of a similar program already in place but is lacking the overall coordination provided by a dedicated GATE program coordinator.

- 2. Ensure that and demonstrate how GATE funds are used to provide a continuum of services (models, programs and options) to meet the learning needs of GATE students during the regular school day as stated in Section 1:2.b of the district GATE plan and required by the state.**
- 3. Improve implementation and training of the School wide Cluster Grouping Model (SCGM), which has the potential to raise achievement for all students.** The district purchased the SCGM handbook last spring but it is not clear that all teachers are aware of the value of grouping and how to maximize the opportunity. We would like the district to document and demonstrate how teachers use clustering to benefit all students.
- 4. Consistently implement the Differentiated Instruction Plan for each GATE-identified student.** This written plan documents agreed-upon educational goals and lists principal activities to meet those goals for the school year. It would help:
 - Improve teacher/parent understanding and communication on what is being done for the GATE students.
 - Track how many parents of newly-identified GATE students meet with their student's teacher to learn how their student's needs will be met during the school day
 - GATE Resource Coordinator (See item 1) could coach and assist teachers with this task.
- 5. Purchase a six month site license to National Association for Gifted Children's "WOW! Webinars on Wednesdays" program.** This program provides teachers, administrators and parents live and archived educational gifted and twice-exceptional learning opportunities from experts in the field of gifted education Piedmont GPS is willing to fund this item at a cost of \$399 if the district will fund teacher time to view program.

We've tried to make these recommendations specific, reasonable, and actionable. Our group would be happy to discuss raising funds to support these goals.

If you have any questions, please contact Kathleen Crombie, President of Piedmont GPS, at piedmontgps@me.com. We welcome discussion of and your feedback on our recommendations. We appreciate all your efforts and look forward to an ongoing, productive relationship.

Regards,

Piedmont GPS Board and Members: Kathleen Crombie, Elizabeth Shook, Lisa Joyce, Jon Elliott, Kyla Harriel, Catherine Ogle, Stacy Ramsdell, Leshia Manley, Julie Caskey, Lisa White, Kim Fisher, Eliza and Douglas Chin.