

Gifted Education in Crisis

The wolf, disguised in statewide budget cuts clothing, continues to pound at both Gifted Education doors in the state of California as well as the nation. Gifted and Talented, **GATE**, programs have been under siege from various sources over the years including past governors who did not believe in the program and conflicting legislative proposals to dismantle the GATE programs.

The unprecedented budgetary crisis continues in the state affecting all school districts. In addition to the potential budget cuts to all educational programs, we must remain aware of **SBX3 4**, the **Flexibility Provisions of the State Budget Senate Finance Bill**, which states that school districts receiving categorical funds will not be required to submit new GATE applications or **Request for Continued Funding** for this and the next school year (see GATE FAQ, Fiscal Questions at www.cde.ca.gov/sp/gt/gt/). It is also stated that under the **Flexibility Provision**, districts **will** be allowed to transfer GATE and other categorical funds for general purposes and **not** be required to implement GATE program requirements, which effectively will negate programs for our gifted learners.

On the federal level, funding for the Jacob Javits program is in jeopardy. The national Associational for Gifted Children, NAGC advocates in Congress and at the U.S. Department of Education on behalf of the gifted education community to increase federal support for gifted and talented learners. They urge supporters of GATE Education to assist these efforts by communicating regularly with their Members of Congress on the needs of gifted students. They have prepared an advocacy toolkit to help you gather the information you need to make the case for gifted education; they also offer suggestions to help supporters be even more effective advocates at the federal, state, and local levels.

NAGC has also launched a new grassroots initiative -- where individual advocates will work directly with NAGC to educate Members of Congress on issues of concern to the gifted education community. They're calling this initiative the Legislative Action Network and invite you to be part of it.

In addition to contacting your local legislature, advocates for GATE programs are urged to contact your LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION.....to **not** take all GATE funding out of your local district's program and **not** to remove the GATE program from your district's heart and mind. You need to express your concern as to how important the programs are to your child's school. These programs need to continue in order to nurture the development of talent in our schools.

Our society needs gifted and talented individuals to create a brighter future in our communities, states and nation. These students will continue to be our innovators, entrepreneurs, scholars, artists, and leaders who are needed to solve local and global problems. In a world flattened by advanced technology, GATE programs need to garner the resources and offer opportunities to ensure these students are developing their abilities to optimal levels.