

From the Coordinator

Welcome to
the 2004-05 School Year

Inside the Newsletter:

Upcoming meetings	2
GATE Teachers	2
District Advisory Council	2
Homogeneous placement	3

This school year brings many exciting additions to the BMMS campus. First of all, welcome to our new 6th grade GATE students and their families as well as the new provisional GATE students at all grade levels. Our campus now has a school within a school: The Academy. Several of our GATE students are participating in this new program. In addition, our site has four single gender classes at 6th grade in science and physical education. This is a research-based approach to increase student achievement and it is the first in our district. Black Mountain has also grown significantly since last school year with more students and 10 new teachers. The GATE student count has increased by almost 50 students, so we've added several teachers to the GATE community.

We had our first GATE Parent meeting on Wednesday, October 13. The site program and budget were discussed. This year the district has determined a new calculation system for distribution of funds. Each cluster of 8 students will receive \$150.00; our site has 32 clusters for a total 2004-05 distribution of \$4800. We also had a carry-over of \$1569; therefore, our total site budget is \$6369. The majority of the budget will be used for in-class resources that will directly impact our gifted students' learning. Examples of past purchases of resources include advanced level books and young adult periodicals such *Time for Kids* and *Teen Newsweek*. A copy of the budget is available at the site. Another area of discussion was the selection process for the homogeneous classes. For the past two years, we have had more students request the homogeneous class than our site can accommodate. The leadership team at our site has been considering a lottery system rather than the traditional first-come, first-serve process. Parents discussed this option and provided alternate suggestions that the GATE leadership team will consider before making the final decision. The other suggestions are listed in a separate article in this newsletter.

I also want to apologize for the late notice many of you received regarding the GATE Parent Meeting on October 13. We have been trying to get the GATE newsletter online through the district for quite a while now and we have not been successful, even at this time. The meeting notification was on the BMMS marquee as well as on the website, however, the newsletter is generally the most effective communication system. We were fortunate to be able to use the all-call phone system the day of the meeting to serve as a reminder. We did have a good turnout, despite the problems with communication. Keeping you informed is a priority for us at Black Mountain. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we try to work out the problems so we can more effectively communicate with you.

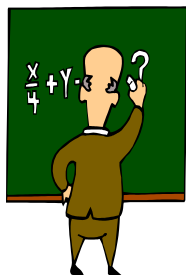
If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to email me at stracy@san.rr.com or stracy@powayusd.com or Marcia Finney, the GATE counselor, at mfinney@powayusd.com.

Susan Tracy
GATE Coordinator



GATE Basic Ed Teachers

For the parents that are new to our district, the GATE program at the middle school level consists of groupings of gifted students in basic education classes. The first placement is in clusters of 8-10 students consisting of district identified and provisional students within a regular classroom. Provisional students are ones who have been identified gifted in another district. They will be qualified in PUSD through either the Steering Committee or testing within our district. The other option placement is an all GATE class of district identified gifted students. Following is a list of the GATE teachers and the type of class they teach.



“Character is higher than intellect. A great soul will be strong to live as well as think.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson

	6th grade	
Ms. Mary Jo Coffee		1 homogeneous/ 1 cluster
Mr. Brian Frost		2 clusters
Ms. Gail Smith		1 cluster
	7th grade	
Ms. Susan Tracy		1 homogeneous / 1 cluster
Ms. Victoria Spence		2 clusters
Mr. Adam Ruchman		1 cluster
Ms. Garner-Paine		1 cluster
	8th grade	
Ms. Arlene Gapusan		1 homogeneous
Ms. Julie Malmquist		2 clusters
Ms. Julie Reshatoff		1 cluster
Mr. Richard Conklin		1 cluster

District Advisory Committee: Wanda Faivre, BMMS representative

The GATE District Advisory Committee (DAC) is a group of parents who meet throughout the year with Tracy Liu, the district GATE Coordinator, to discuss issues and concerns that affect gifted children in our district. They meet five times a year at the district office and report meeting notes to the site coordinator and parents. Our site representative is Wanda Faivre. If you have concerns that you would like brought to the district meetings, contact Wanda at wfaivre@earthlink.net. Thank you Wanda for continuing as our site representative this school year.



Future Meetings

January/February, 2005	District sponsored guest speaker
February, 2005	AP/Honors Panel discussion
March, 2005	Homogeneous/Heterogeneous Placement Panel discussion (following Bridging to Black Mountain)

Homogeneous Class Placement

Listed below are the suggestions for next year's placement of students into the homogeneous classes:

1. Lottery- Parents would have a week to submit their request for the class. This would be followed by a lottery and the first 32 students pulled would be placed in the class. Additional names would be kept in order of the draw to move into spots vacated due to moves or scheduling problems.
2. Addition of another homogeneous class – The additional students beyond the 32 students would be placed in a class with gifted students not specifying a preferred environment. Traditionally, parents not turning in a request do so because the letter states that if a cluster is preferred, the request form does not need to be returned.
3. Movement to another middle school – With Mesa Verde a mile down the road, the suggestion was to allow the child to opt for an intra-district transfer to the other school if there is room at that site. This would have to be a district decision based on the needs of the other middle school. At this point, each site determines the most appropriate way to place their students in the homogeneous class.
4. Retain the status quo – Continue the practice of selection for the class by using the first-come, first-serve process with time stamping.

Your comments and additional suggestions are encouraged and welcome. The GATE leadership team, consisting of Dr. Carrillo, Marcia Finney (GATE Counselor), and Susan Tracy (GATE Coordinator) will make the final decision. We will make this decision in the next several months and you will be notified in the winter edition of the GATE newsletter. You can email any of the above team through the district website email.

“An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you know and what you don't.”
Anatole France (Thibault)
novelist

