



Enrichment for All & Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) St. Paul Catholic Elementary School Program Statement

School Mission

St. Paul Catholic Elementary School is a compassionate community where knowledge is pursued with excellence, faith is rooted in Christ, and character is embodied through service. We are dedicated to creating a caring and nurturing environment, producing life-long learners, and enriching students' lives.

School Vision

Guided by our Catholic Faith, we cultivate excellence in every student to prepare and challenge them to reach their full potential.



Program Overview

The Gifted Student

All students require opportunities to learn, grow and be challenged to strive for excellence. Students with exceptional talents and learning potential have needs that require specific knowledge and attention. Some common characteristics may include:

- Ability to comprehend ideas
- Enhanced emotional depth and sensitivity at a young age
- Strong sense of curiosity
- Enthusiastic about unique interests and topics
- Quirky or mature sense of humour
- Creative problem solving and imaginative expression
- Absorbs information quickly with few repetitions needed
- Self-aware, socially aware, and aware of global issues

Giftedness is defined as an advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of breadth and depth beyond those normally provided. Students who are identified as gifted can experience advanced intellectual abilities accompanied by any or a combination of the following:

- heightened intensity
- exceptional creativity
- persistent intellectual curiosity
- rapid acquisition and mastery of concepts
- superior reasoning and problem-solving skills
- leadership capacity
- potential for advanced achievement in a specific domain or general academic aptitude

These attributes can require interventions beyond those available in a traditional program including:

- optimal pacing of learning
- interaction with like-ability peers
- individualized learning experiences
- increased breadth and depth
- specialized supports
- continual opportunity for challenge and advancement



Kindergarten and Grade 1 Programming

The GATE program at St. Paul Catholic Elementary begins with our early learners.

Students that attended the 100 Voices program at the Edmonton Valley Zoo and were coded in the Gifted Program can be accepted into the GATE program for their Kindergarten year at St. Paul, upon re-assessment in May/June.

GATE within our Kindergarten classroom is exclusively a "push-in" model, with our specialized team supporting students directly within their Kindergarten learning environment and collaborating with the with one another. Kindergarten is a foundational year, where children will interact with peers, create, imagine, experiment, and explore the world around them.

At St. Paul, we have extended our partnership from our 100 Voices program at the Edmonton Valley Zoo to now include our St. Paul Kindergarten program. For 10 Thursdays throughout the school year, all Kindergarten students will attend zoo school with their classroom teacher, our GATE specialized teacher, and a zoo interpreter to extend and enrich programming beyond the walls of our school community.

Grade 1 students will also gain from the "push-in model" and will engage in a GATE cohort led by a specialized teacher on Thursday mornings

The Gifted Classroom

St. Paul Catholic Elementary School created the Gifted Classroom program (GATE) to meet the needs, characteristics, and interests of gifted students. Some benefits of choosing the gifted pathway for your child may include:

- Learning content more relevant to their interests and abilities beyond classroom instruction
- The opportunity to work with and learn from other children with similar or higher intellectual aptitude
- The ability to work with like-minded peers who also have creative and complex ways of thinking
- The ability to relate with others who have similar interests
- A dedicated master teacher who will oversee the programming needs of students within the GATE classroom

The Gifted Classroom will provide an opportunity where your child can experience increased connection with peers. Intellectually gifted students may often feel a lack of connection with their peer group in a traditional setting.

Why Choose GATE?

- Gifted programs provide learning environments that differentiate between each child's learning needs. For example, children might be given advanced instruction in subjects they excel in and more graduated instruction for subjects they struggle in. This further reduces the chance of a mismatch between a child's learning needs and the curriculum.



- In gifted learning environments, students are encouraged to learn about subjects that interest them the most. Gifted research shows that this promotes a love of learning and can ignite a passion to pursue more in-depth studies. High student interest supports increased motivation and learner engagement.
- Students who are gifted may also have a special need or disability— just as students with disabilities may also be gifted. The term "twice exceptional," also referred to as "2e," is used to describe gifted children who have the characteristics of gifted students with the potential for high achievement and give evidence of one or more disabilities as defined by our provincial Special Education Coding criteria. These disabilities may include specific learning disabilities, speech and language disorders, emotional/behavioural disorders, physical disabilities, autism spectrum, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Student Life in the GATE Program

The GATE Classroom at St. Paul Catholic Elementary School will be comprised of four cohorts, Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grades 2-3 Cohort, and a Grades 4-6 Cohort.

Beginning in the Fall to support GATE students' needs and abilities, the GATE teacher will be providing "push-in" support within each grade level classroom, Enrichment for All. With this approach, the GATE teacher will work in collaboration with grade level teachers within the homeroom classroom on targeting specific learning goals for each student, as well as identifying areas of interest to further support the teaching and learning within the GATE classroom and the development of the Individualized Program Plan.

Students enrolled in the GATE program for Grades 2-6 will participate in specialized enrichment clusters through selective "pull-out" cohorts. The GATE classroom will focus on core subjects within each grade level (Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies), using a transdisciplinary approach in which multiple subject areas are addressed in one project or area of discovery. Programming will occur during the instructional day with the same learning targets being met by the Alberta Curriculum.

GATE Models of Instruction

The GATE Classroom is designed to provide challenges and engage students, allowing them to participate in meaningful learning and problem-solving to the extent they are able.

Programming will include:

- **Enrichment Clusters:** This provides an opportunity for students to work in small groups with the GATE teacher over an extended period.
- **Curriculum Compacting:** This model provides a two-fold purpose: first, further expand upon the teaching of what students already know; and second, to work on an independent study/project, learn new material and to further discover and inquire into a particular subject with a guide.



The Individualized Program Plan (IPP)

Students within the GATE program receive a Code 80 (Gifted and Talented), Special Education Code (Alberta Education, 2021). An IPP document is created in partnership between school and home to identify goals and objectives for the student over the course of the school year.

A student's IPP will contain essential information about the student's strengths and needs, current level of performance, specialized assessment results, recommended supports and instructional strategies that will be most effective for the student. The student's learning team will also develop several long-term goals and measurable objectives (usually one to three per year for a student who is gifted), focusing on a strength-based mindset. Parents are an integral member of their child's education and will meet with the Learning Team to review the IPP three times over the course of the school year. The IPP is a living document and can be referenced at any time to align with the fluidity in programming for Gifted and Talented Education.

Some of the areas that may be addressed within an IPP can include:

- **Variety of Programming** - Students with gifts and talents participate in a variety of evidence-based programming options that enhance performance in cognitive and affective areas.
- **Coordinated Services** - Students with gifts and talents demonstrate progress because of the shared commitment and coordinated services of gifted education, general education, special education, and related professional services, such as our Learning Coach, members of our multi-disciplinary team, and Division or community psychologists.
- **Collaboration** - Student learning is enhanced by regular collaboration among families, community, and the school.
- **Resources** - Students with gifts and talents participate in gifted education programming that allows access to resources to meet student needs and program goals.
- **Comprehensiveness** - Students with gifts and talents develop their potential through comprehensive, aligned programming and services.

The Role of the Teacher

Programming for students with special education needs builds on the Alberta curriculum —the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a student is expected to learn at specific grade levels. With thoughtful planning, the curriculum can appropriately challenge students who are gifted. However, the content, learning activities, and/or instruction may need to be adjusted to meet an individual student's ability level and learning needs.

At St. Paul Catholic Elementary School, we have specialized teachers working with students and staff who are accessing Code 80, Special Education Coding. Intentional program planning, development of Individual Program Plans, collaborating with homeroom teachers, and supporting Assessment and Reporting Division Standards are critical. The Learning Team, parents, and child thoughtfully create a program that aligns with the needs of the gifted child.



Planning for Students who are Gifted

Differentiate Instruction

Differentiated learning for students who are gifted means enhanced opportunities for thinking and learning, not just more work to do. Differentiating instruction involves thoughtfully modifying the following elements:

- ✓ **Content** - Teachers support this by focusing less on specific, factual information and more on concepts and generalizations, making content more complex by introducing additional variables, different sources and alternate viewpoints and looking for connections from one subject to the next.
- ✓ **Process** - This is how the teacher adapts the instructional strategy and what type of learning strategies the students use. Process is differentiated in a variety of ways, including creating opportunities for choice, collaboration, and meaningful research. Flexible pacing, questioning techniques, anomalies and paradoxes, tiered assignments, and independent projects are all effective strategies for differentiating process.
- ✓ **Products** - The products of learning are the ways in which students explore and demonstrate their understanding of content and process. Differentiating products means providing opportunities for students to demonstrate their thinking and learning in different ways, including written, oral, manipulative, discussion, display, dramatization, artistic, graphic representation, and service learning.
- ✓ **Environment** - The environment refers to the physical and social setting where learning takes place, as well as the conditions under which a student is working. At St. Paul Catholic Elementary School, the environment is a catalyst that sparks curiosity, provokes thinking and learning, and has alternate learning spaces where children can access various materials and thrive in various educational settings. From the Makerspace, the learning commons, the learning lab, and homeroom classrooms, our spaces are intentional and conducive to maximizing teaching and learning. We are also excited to share that we will be having an outdoor classroom here at St. Paul. This space will be a rich learning environment for all students and will encourage children to develop a love, appreciation, and respect for nature and all that is living.
- ✓ **Assessment** - Differentiating assessment for students who are gifted can mean making students more active partners in their own assessment process. Teachers can involve students by putting students at the center of the assessment process, enabling students to reflect on the learning criteria, developing strong goal setters, and valuing critical thinking and inquiry to guide instruction and improve student learning.

Eligibility Process (GATE)

To be eligible, children must continue to meet Alberta Education criteria to access gifted and talented or "Code 80" funding. This information is outlined annually in the Special Education Coding Criteria Document, as referenced below. As defined by Alberta Education, Giftedness is an exceptional potential and/or performance across a wide range of abilities in one or more of the following domains:



- general intellect;
- specific academia;
- creative thinking;
- social;
- music;
- art; and
- kinesthesia.
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Admissions and Testing for the Gifted and Talented Education

Kindergarten

If your child met the gifted coding criteria in the 100 Voices Zoo program, upon re-assessment in the Spring, they can qualify for the Gifted Pathway at St. Paul Catholic Elementary School.

If your child did not participate in the Gifted Pathway at the Zoo, your child can be screened once they are registered to determine eligibility and begin Kindergarten. A variety of assessments will be completed by the school-based learning team.

- Receptive and expressive language skills
- Literacy and approaches to print awareness
- Working Memory
- Gifted Rating Scale
- Parent Questionnaire

St. Paul Kindergarten & Grade 1 Students

Students enrolled in Kindergarten at St. Paul have the opportunity for re-assessment in May/June to determine their eligibility for the Gifted Pathway for Grade 1. Meanwhile, current Grade 1 students must undergo a comprehensive psychoeducational assessment meeting program standards to remain in the program for the subsequent year.

- Gifted Rating Scale (GRS)
- Parent Questionnaire

Grades 1-6

An IQ test with a score of 125 or higher in a single domain will be required for eligibility into the Gifted Pathway (testing is the responsibility of the parent/ guardian).

- Parent Questionnaire



Links to Support Program Statement

[Special Education Coding Criteria, 2021/2022, Alberta Education, 31 Mar 2021](#)

[St. Paul Catholic Elementary School - Programs](#)

[National Association for Gifted Children](#)

[The Journey: A handbook for parents of children who are gifted and talented](#)

[Edmonton Catholic Schools: Assessment & Reporting](#)

[Edmonton Catholic Schools: New Curriculum](#)

[Edmonton Catholic Schools: Inclusive Education](#)

[Edmonton Catholic Schools: Individualized Program Plans](#)

References

Alberta. Alberta Education. Learning and Teaching Resources Branch. Individualized program planning (IPP) : ECS to grade 12. *Chapter 11: Planning for students who are gifted*. 2006.

"Gifted Education Strategies." *National Association for Gifted Children*. Information and Publications.
<https://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/gifted-education-practices>

"Gifted and Talented Students: A Resource Guide for Teachers." *Department of Education. New Brunswick Educational Services Division*. Revised 2007.

"Advanced Standards in Gifted Educations Teacher Preparation." *National Association for Gifted Children*. Assessment. July 2013