The GATE identification process strives to provide students with equal access to programming opportunities. The current identification process is designed to be inclusive rather than exclusive by including multiple criteria based on a combination of standardized instruments and non-standardized means and criteria, and a local needs assessment.

Gifted and Talented Facilitators
Each OPS middle school has a certified teacher assigned the role of Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Facilitator. All facilitators have advanced degrees and/or endorsements in education and receive ongoing professional development in gifted and talented education.

Information Technology
- Robotics
- Programming and Coding
- Digital Media
- Technology Projects

Educational Equity
Aligned with the vision of the Omaha Public Schools is the commitment to educational equity for all students, staff, and patrons of the school system. In all places and in all activities of the Omaha Public Schools, it is expected that every individual will be treated in a fair and equitable manner. All conduct will reflect a belief in the dignity and value of each person regardless of the individual’s race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, marital status, citizenship status, or economic status.
**Gifted and Talented Education Mission**

Gifted and Talented Education in the Omaha Public Schools strives to identify potentially gifted and exceptionally talented students across the district, nurture their social/emotional development and enhance their curriculum experiences so that these unique individuals may reach their fullest potential.

**Curriculum**

Gifted and Talented Education in the Omaha Public Schools is committed to developing students through a curriculum framework focused on:

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Inquiry
- Cultural proficiency
- Meta-cognition (self-reflection) and
- Affective skills (Positive and healthy habits for working independently and with others).

**Honors Courses**

Classroom teachers meet the needs of high ability learners on a daily basis through classroom differentiation. Additionally, all OPS middle schools offer honors courses in English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science. These courses enhance and enrich learning experiences for students by differentiating through Pace (accelerating the instructional practices), Depth (deepening the discipline knowledge and practice) and Complexity (Using sophisticated levels of advanced thinking).

All OPS middle schools offer:

- Honors Language Arts 7
- Honors Language Arts 8
- Honors Physical Science (Grade 8)
- Honors Pre-Algebra 1-2
- Honors Algebra 1-2
- Honors Geometry 1-2

Placement in honors and advanced courses is determined by standardized assessments, classroom performance and other established criteria.

In some cases, students may require academic course offerings not available at the middle school. Students and families may work with the school’s GATE Facilitator to complete an acceleration agreement that may involve such options as distance learning or high school placement. Grade-level acceleration or grade-skipping can also be considered through a process involving an Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS).

**Exploratory Units**

As part of a successful middle school model, Marrs Magnet Center incorporates exploratory units selected by students. For a week each semester, students explore their interests more in depth.

**Identification**

The Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 3, requires schools to develop a system to identify learners with high ability.

Starting with the 2016-2017 school year, high ability learners will be identified for GATE services by meeting indicators for at least 3 of four criteria:

- **COGNITIVE** – Top 5% at the school or national level on an intelligence/cognitive test
- **ACHIEVEMENT** – Top 5% at the school or national level on a standardized grade-level achievement test
- **Motivation/Performance** – “A” or Advanced (ADV) in 60% or more courses on the most recent semester grade report (equivalent to a 3.5 un-weighted GPA) OR qualifying staff referral/recommendation and/or participation
- **Creativity/Leadership** – Qualifying staff referral/recommendation and/or participation

While some students may not meet the criteria for identification, the Omaha Public Schools believes students throughout the district have talent and potential. A student may still be involved in many of the GATE and school sponsored events and competitions. This involvement may serve as an indicator for the Motivation/Performance or Creativity/Leadership criteria towards permanent identification.

**Events and opportunities**

The following events are sponsored by GATE:

- Academic Pentathlon (USAD)
- Think Tank
- Poetry Slams (Fall and Spring)
- Academic Quiz Bowls
- Book Blasters
- Scholars Program

Students have additional opportunities to be challenged through clubs, events, competitions and performances offered at their middle school. These opportunities may include but are not limited to:

- African American History Challenge
- Destination Imagination
- Geography Bee
- History Day
- National Junior Honor Society
- Math Team/Math Counts
- Music Performances
- Robotics
- Science Bowl and/or Olympiad
- Science and Engineering Fairs
- Spelling Bee
- Student Mentoring Program