

*Dripping Springs*

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

# **Gifted & Talented Guidelines and Procedures**

Updated Summer 2022

## **Program Vision**

Develop and empower students to be lifelong scholars, critical thinkers, innovators, leaders, and global contributors.

## **Program Mission**

Guided by best practices we will identify, teach, support, and nurture gifted and talented students to achieve their fullest potential.

## **Program Description**

Gifted and Talented (GT) Programs provide instructional opportunities and other services designed to meet the needs of students with significantly advanced general intellectual ability and/or specific subject matter aptitude. These programs will provide an appropriately differentiated curriculum and ensure the students are instructed in essential knowledge and skills while demonstrating an acceptable degree of mastery. As needed, the programs will modify delivery of instruction for students by accelerating and providing greater depth, more complex content, and extensive enrichment activities.

## **Objectives**

The general goal of the Gifted & Talented Program is to provide a differentiated educational program for gifted and talented students in the district.

### **1. Program Management Objectives**

- a. To identify students in grades kindergarten through twelfth grades (k-12) to be served by the programs
- b. To understand the abilities and needs of each gifted and talented student
- c. To provide teachers at each campus with knowledge and skills necessary to implement the programs for the gifted and talented
- d. To develop appropriate curricula and identify instructional materials to support programs goals
- e. To involve parents and community members in the implementation of the Gifted & Talented Programs
- f. To implement evaluation procedures for effective programming and for program continuation, refinement, and possible expansion

### **2. Program Objectives for Students**

- a. To develop their abilities at higher level through more complex thinking skills (including critical, creative, and computational thinking) in activities that are extensions of the regular curriculum and enrichment.
- b. To study advanced-level content and master the major concepts, skills and processes of specific disciplines in which they demonstrate ability.
- c. To develop the skills necessary for self-directed learning and to conduct independent studies and research projects that extend the regular curriculum and result in advanced-level products

- d. To gain an understanding and respect for each person's abilities, recognize the similarities and differences between themselves and others, increase interpersonal relationships and develop their own unique abilities for the betterment of both themselves and society.

### **Characteristics of Gifted Students**

1. The district definition of giftedness is based on the state definition:

"Gifted and talented student" means a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who: (1) exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area; (2) possesses an unusual capacity for leadership, or (3) excels in a specific academic field.

Texas Education Code 29.121

2. Persons involved in the Gifted & Talented Programs should be aware of the definitions of the areas of giftedness that Gifted & Talented Programs in the district address.

- a. General Intellectual Ability

The student possessing general intellectual ability is consistently superior to other children in the school to the extent that he/she needs and can profit from differentiated educational services from those provided within the standard school program.

- b. Subject Specific Academic Ability

The child possessing a specific academic ability is that student who has an aptitude in a specific subject area that is consistently superior to the aptitudes of other children to the extent that he/she needs and can profit from differentiated educational services from those provided within the standard school program.

### **Student Eligibility**

The district will not discriminate against students with regard to race, color, creed, religious affiliation, sex, or disability.

A student is classified as eligible for participation in the Gifted & Talented Program based upon criteria set by the district according to the guidelines of the Texas Education Agency.

### **Service Design**

The district will modify the delivery of instruction for gifted and talented students by compacting, accelerating, providing greater depth, and expanding the essential knowledge and skills. The district will ensure that students are instructed in essential knowledge and skills and demonstrate an acceptable degree of mastery while participating in the program.

### 1. Elementary (Grades K-5)

Gifted and talented identified students in grades K-5 are provided with differentiated instruction as needed in the four core academic areas by their regular classroom teacher(s) on a daily basis. Students are also served by a gifted and talented certified specialist in a weekly pull-out enrichment class, which provides challenging learning experiences integrating all four core academic areas.

The goal of the district model is to provide one full-day of pull-out gifted and talented programming per week in grades K-5. The amount of time provided depends on enrollment and allotted staff.

### 2. Middle School (Grades 6-8)

Students in grades 6-8 are served in Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and/or Science by a teacher highly qualified in the subject area and gifted and talented qualified or certified. Based on the number of students identified enrolled in each subject area, students will be served in subject specific gifted and talented classes, cluster grouped in subject specific Honors classes, or on occasion through differentiation of instruction if individual student scheduling conflicts arise.

A gifted and talented class may be offered in each core area, Huddle and Advisory/Tiger Time if at least 15 identified gifted students by grade level can be scheduled in the class. The determination of gifted and talented class offerings will be made by the campus principal based on the overall Honors course enrollment and the availability of staff.

### 3. High School (Grades 9-12)

Students in grades 9-12 are served in Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and/or Science by a teacher highly qualified in the subject area and gifted and talented qualified or certified. Based on the number of students identified in each subject area, students will be served in subject specific gifted and talented classes, cluster grouped in subject specific Honors or Advanced Placement (AP) classes, cluster grouped in subject specific regular classes if no Honors class is offered, or through differentiation of the curriculum and instruction.

A gifted and talented class may be offered in each core area by grade level if at least 15 identified gifted students can be scheduled in the class. The determination of gifted and talented class offerings will be made by the campus principal based on overall Honors and/or AP course enrollment and the availability of staff.

4. Gifted and talented students have choices in their course work to help foster creative and self-directed learning. They also have opportunities to accelerate through advanced placement testing and Credit By Examination (see Board Policy EEJB LOCAL).

### **Personnel and Professional Development Requirements**

Dripping Springs Independent School District will ensure that the teachers of gifted students meet the district and state standards for required training and certifications.

Special skills and attributes are required of teachers and staff who work with gifted and talented students. The development of special skills is an essential focus of the program, and teachers selected for the Gifted & Talented Program will possess certain abilities and characteristics as a basis for professionalism growth.

## **Assessment Procedures**

Gifted and talented assessment opportunities are available to all students who perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment in academic areas. The District Gifted & Talented Coordinator is responsible for providing equal access to gifted and talented services for each student. Campus administration and counselors will support the process as needed.

### Procedures for Assessment

1. Through an open referral system, a student may be recommended for referral by one or more of the following: an administrator, a teacher, a parent or guardian, the student, a peer, a psychologist, a counselor, a librarian, a community member, or any other person familiar with the student's abilities, past performance, and/or potential performance.
2. To initiate the assessment process, a DSISD form for Student Referral for Gifted and Talented Programs must be completed and submitted electronically via web form by the parent or guardian. The referral form is accessible through the district gifted and talented website. If families need assistance with online access, the home campus will provide support. Referrals will be accepted throughout the school year. Please check the gifted and talented page of the district website for referral windows.
3. The Gifted & Talented Assessment Committee shall participate in annual training and perform the following functions:
  - a. Review individual student records and compare this information with established district criteria for the identification of gifted and talented students.
  - b. Recommend placement for referred students in the Gifted & Talented Program(s) if they meet the qualifying criteria. It is the prerogative of the Gifted & Talented Assessment Committee to recommend students who do not qualify for the Gifted & Talented program to other special programs available through the district.
4. The committee will not discriminate against students with regard to race, color, creed, religious affiliation, sex, or disability.

### Data Collection

1. The District Gifted & Talented Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating the maintenance of records of all referral and assessment data.

2. Data will be collected in the following categories as needed for assessing students for placement in Gifted & Talented Programs:
  - a. Quantitative Data
  - b. Qualitative Data
3. Confidentiality will be assured regarding the rights of privacy of the individual according to legal standards. Information collected by the Gifted & Talented Assessment Committee will be available to those who need it for use in educational purposes.
4. All data collected will be recorded on the Gifted & Talented Profile Form
5. All students will be assessed using the district approved instruments and assessment measures.
6. The Gifted & Talented Assessment Committee may consider additional assessments as recommended by the District Gifted & Talented Coordinator or campus personnel in extenuating circumstances.
7. Students enrolling in the district who were previously identified as gifted in another district must meet particular standards as outlined in this document.
8. Students transferring within the district will be placed in the gifted and talented program at the accepting campus with no interruption of services.

#### Identification Process

1. The Gifted & Talented Assessment Committee will identify students for placement in gifted and talented programs based upon the established criteria and shall identify the students for whom gifted program placement is the most appropriate educational setting.
2. Parents wishing reconsideration of decisions by the Gifted & Talented Assessment Committee may appeal the committee's decision in accordance with the appeal guidelines.

#### Scoring

1. Scoring of district approved measures for possible placement in the Gifted & Talented Program will be completed as needed throughout the year.
2. Scores will be placed on the district approved matrix to determine qualifications.

#### **Qualifications for Placement**

Students will be identified as gifted and talented for the program through the use of criteria established by the State Board of Education, The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, and Dripping Springs ISD. The District Gifted & Talented Assessment Committees are responsible for the use of qualification requirements in the selection of students for the gifted and talented program.

#### Student Qualification Requirements

1. Placement in the Gifted & Talented Programs for grades kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12), will be based on student assessment data and program design at each campus level. Placements are made by the Gifted & Talented Assessment Committees following established district guidelines.

2. At the elementary level (K-5), students who meet district expectations on five of the six of the following criteria qualify as gifted in DSISD:
  - a. Reasoning Assessment
  - b. Math/Science Assessment
  - c. Language Arts/Social Studies Assessment
  - d. Portfolio Assessment-Math and/or Language Arts
  - e. Parent Survey
  - f. Teacher Survey
3. At the secondary level (6-12), students who meet the district expectations on five of the six following criteria qualify as gifted in DSISD:
  - a. Reasoning Assessment
  - b. Math Assessment
  - c. Language Arts Assessment
  - d. Portfolio Assessment-Math, Language Arts, Science, and/or Social Studies
  - e. Parent Survey
  - f. Teacher Survey
4. Students who meet district expectations on four of the six criteria listed above do not qualify as gifted, but are eligible for review by the appropriate assessment committee. An appeal or reconsideration of placement decision may be made at the request of the parent or guardian, based on the guidelines for an appeal.
5. Placement of students in Gifted & Talented Programs will be noted by the Gifted & Talented Assessment Committees on the Gifted & Talented Profile Form. A signed Parent Permission Form indicating permission to participate must be on file.
6. All members of the Gifted & Talented Assessment Committee shall observe all laws and regulations governing confidentiality of information concerning the placement of students. Annual training to committee members is required.

Adjustments to the assessment procedure may be made to accommodate students with special needs, including English Language Learners and students qualifying for special education services at the discretion of the campus principal and the District Gifted & Talented Coordinator.

#### Placement Timeline

Students who qualify will begin services at the beginning of the next semester or at an appropriate time as determined by the campus principal in consultation with the parent or guardian.

#### **Transfer Students**

A student new to the district identified as gifted by a previous school district will be assessed through the district gifted and talented transfer assessment procedures in order to qualify for the DSISD Gifted and Talented Program.

Students transferring from one campus to another within DSISD will be appropriately placed in the DSISD Gifted and Talented Program at the accepting school with no interruption of services.

When a student withdraws from Dripping Springs ISD and enrolls in another district, DSISD will provide for the new district the student's assessment data and a letter stating that the student participated in the DSISD Gifted and Talented Program.

#### Procedures for Placement

Students who were identified as gifted in their previous district and whose previous district's gifted and talented identification process measures abilities comparable to DSISD's assessment requirements will provide documentation to be reviewed by the District Gifted and Talented Committee.

Students new to the district identified as gifted in their previous district who do not qualify based on comparable assessments will be referred for further assessments according to the district assessment guidelines and the Gifted and Talented Assessment Committee. Once assessments are completed then placement will be adjusted as determined by the campus and District Gifted and Talented Committee.

#### **Summer Testing (1st -12th grades only)**

##### Student Qualification Requirements

1. Placement in the Gifted & Talented Program for grades 1-12 during the summer, will be based on student assessment data and program design at each campus level. Placements are made by the Gifted & Talented Assessment Committees following established district guidelines.
2. At the elementary level (1-5), any students new to the district after January 1, who meet district expectations on five of the six following criteria qualify as gifted in DSISD after a review in August:
  - a. Reasoning Assessment
  - b. Math/Science Assessment
  - c. Language Arts/Social Studies Assessment
  - d. Portfolio Assessment-Math and/or Language Arts
  - e. Parent Survey
  - f. Teacher Survey (this data will be collected as needed and reviewed in September)
3. At the secondary level (6-12), any students new to the district after January 1 who meet the district expectations on five of the six following criteria qualify as gifted in DSISD after the review in August:
  - a. Reasoning Assessment
  - b. Math Assessment
  - c. Language Arts Assessment
  - d. Portfolio Assessment-Math, Language Arts, Science, and/or Social Studies
  - e. Parent Survey
  - f. Teacher Survey (this data will be collected as needed and reviewed in September)
4. Students who meet district expectations on four of the six criteria listed above do not qualify as gifted, but are eligible for review by the appropriate assessment committee. An appeal or reconsideration of



placement decision may be made at the request of the parent or guardian, based on the guidelines for an appeal. The appeal date for summer testing will be in late September.

5. Placement of students in Gifted & Talented Programs will be noted by the Gifted & Talented Assessment Committees on the Gifted & Talented Profile Form. A signed Parent Permission Form indicating permission to participate must be on file.
6. All members of the Gifted & Talented Assessment Committee shall observe all laws and regulations governing confidentiality of information concerning the placement of students. Annual training to committee members is required.

Adjustments to the assessment procedure may be made to accommodate students with special needs, including English Language Learners and students qualifying for special education services at the discretion of the District Gifted & Talented Coordinator.

#### Placement Timeline

Students who qualify will begin services at the beginning of the upcoming school year or at an appropriate time as determined by the campus principal in consultation with the parent or guardian.

#### **Appeals Process**

An individual requesting reconsideration may meet with the District Gifted & Talented Coordinator to review the student's profile prior to beginning the appeals process. If a student meets the criteria for appeal as stated in the Procedures for Placement Guidelines section, an appeal form may be submitted to the District Gifted & Talented Coordinator. The District Gifted & Talented Assessment Committees are responsible for hearing, approving, or denying appeals.

#### Procedures for the Appeals Process

1. An individual initiating an appeal will complete the Gifted & Talented Identification Appeal Form indicating the reason for the appeal and will submit it to the District Gifted & Talented Coordinator or Gifted & Talented Specialist by the date communicated in the committee decision. Qualifications for requesting an appeal:
  - a. The student qualified for four of six indicators
  - b. The student has a disability which may have impacted testing, as identified through special education ARD and/or 504 committee, and those accommodations were not adhered to during assessment.
2. The campus and district assessment committee will hear any official appeals within ten (10) working days. The District Gifted & Talented Coordinator or Gifted & Talented Specialist will inform the parent/student of the date and time of the appeals committee meeting.
3. The committee may reconsider placement in the Gifted & Talented program by reviewing the following information:
  - a. Review of information from the Gifted & Talented Student Profile Form(s) and district assessment results.
  - b. Presentation of data related to the category with the four qualifying indicators and other materials by the student, parent and/or guardian, such as a portfolio of additional student work.
  - c. Presentation of other materials deemed appropriate to the purpose of the committee.

4. Decisions regarding the appeal will be made within 10 working days of the appeal hearing. Parents will be notified in writing of the committee's decision.

Should an individual requesting reconsideration disagree with the Gifted & Talented Assessment Committee's decision, the parent or student may file an appeal grievance within fifteen working days in accordance with FNG (LOCAL) beginning at Level Two.

## **Furloughs and Exits**

Students in the gifted programs are subject to furlough and exit procedures at any time during the academic year. The District Gifted & Talented Coordinator and campus administration will be primarily responsible for the furlough and exit procedures.

### **Procedures for Furlough**

1. If a student or parent requests a furlough from the program, this request must be entered on the District Furlough/Exit Request Form and submitted to the campus Gifted & Talented Specialist or the District Gifted & Talented Coordinator.
2. Students who choose not to participate in the Gifted & Talented Program due to a scheduling or programmatic conflict, illness, or any other reason deemed valid may request to go on furlough.
3. At the middle school and high school level, failure to participate in an identified Gifted & Talented program offering will constitute a furlough.
4. A student may be furloughed for a period of time not to exceed one calendar year. At the end of the furlough, the student will re-enter or be exited from the gifted program.

### **Procedures for Exit**

1. If a student or parent requests removal from the program, this request must be entered on the District Furlough/Exit Request Form.

## **Student Records**

The permanent records of students participating in the program will include records of all testing, referral forms, student profile and parental consent forms as prescribed in district procedures. The District Gifted and Talented Coordinator, along with designated campus personnel, will be responsible for the maintenance of student's gifted and talented records.

### **Procedures for Student Records**

1. The District Gifted and Talented Coordinator, along with designated campus personnel, will maintain required gifted and talented information in the qualified student cumulative folder or electronically. A profile form will be filed in a qualified student's cumulative folder or in the student's electronic portfolio.
2. When students in the program are transferred or promoted from one campus in the district to another, the District Gifted and Talented Coordinator, along with designated campus personnel, will provide a roster of those transferred or promoted students to their new campus.

## **Program Evaluation**

Monitoring of the program is a state and local responsibility. The DSISD Gifted and Talented Program will be evaluated annually by the District Gifted and Talented Coordinator and the Gifted and Talented Advisory Council. The evaluation information will be shared with board members, administrators, teachers, counselors, students in the gifted and talented program, and the community.

## **The District Gifted and Talented Advisory Council**

The purpose of the Gifted and Talented Advisory Council is to serve in an advisory capacity to the district administration and gifted and talented staff regarding the DSISD Gifted and Talented Program. The Gifted and Talented Advisory Council will review and assist in the revision of the Gifted and Talented Long Range Plan as needed.

The Gifted and Talented Advisory Council is composed of the District Gifted and Talented Coordinator, the District Elementary Gifted and Talented Specialists, secondary gifted and talented classroom teachers, parents of gifted and talented students representing each campus, one or more campus administrators, one or more campus counselors, one or more community members, and others as needed.