



# Gainesville Independent School District Gifted and Talented Services Handbook

## Gifted and Talented Handbook

### Philosophy

Gainesville Independent School District recognizes students from all ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups, regardless of existing handicaps or disabilities, who may demonstrate an exceptional ability in academic or divergent thinking.

In accordance with the Texas Education Code 29.12, Gainesville Independent School District defines “gifted and talented” as a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who exhibits high-performance capability, or excels in a particular academic field. It is the goal of GISD to ensure all such students are provided with a variety of educational experiences which support their individual potential for excellence.

Gainesville Independent School District has adopted policies and designed programs to address the unique needs of those students identified by a local review committee as needing additional services through our gifted and/or talented program. Identified gifted and talented students are provided with ongoing educational services through the district’s gifted/talented programs and services.

### Programs and Services

#### 1-6th Grade

Driven by student inquiry and initiative, the gifted and talented class focuses on authentic, real-world problem solving through the use of long-term student-designed projects. Students will further develop written and verbal communication skills, practice critical thinking, and demonstrate imaginative skills and time management while learning to collaborate with peer teams and outside experts. The goal of this class is to provide students with the necessary skills to think creatively, readily accept challenges, and take control of their own learning, ultimately preparing them to engage in a post-secondary environment.

At the elementary campuses, gifted and talented classes occur at a minimum of 45 minutes each week. Students attend gifted and talented classes during “flexible schedule” time at each individual campus. For specific days and times your student would attend gifted and talented classes, please contact your campus G/T teacher. G/T students are also clustered in their homerooms to allow for collaboration.

At the intermediate level, students identified as gifted and talented are served by a G/T trained teacher through Google Classroom. All core subject teachers are trained in the nature and needs of G/T students, and instruction is differentiated to allow for depth, complexity, and pacing appropriate for gifted and talented learners.

### 7th-12th Grades

In grades 7-12, students identified as gifted and talented participate in G/T services through advanced academic courses. These include Honors, AP, and dual credit courses. All core subject teachers are trained in the nature and needs of G/T students, and instruction is differentiated to allow for depth, complexity, and pacing appropriate for gifted and talented learners.

## **Identification Process**

Gainesville Independent School District has designed programs to address the unique needs of students identified as gifted and/or talented through multiple qualitative and quantitative data reviewed by a committee trained to identify students with such characteristics. It is the goal of GISD to ensure all such students are provided with a variety of educational experiences which support their individual potential for excellence.

Students are nominated and screened at least once a year for services provided as a part of the program for gifted students. Students in grades K-12 shall be assessed and, if identified, provided services. (TEC §29.122 and 19 TAC §89.1(3)) Based on a review of information gathered during the assessment process, the selection committee recommends placement for students whose data reflect that program placement is the most appropriate educational setting.

The gifted/talented selection committee will include an assistant principal, counselor, G/T trained teacher, and classroom teacher. Other persons may attend the meeting as approved by the counselor or campus principal. The majority of members of the selection committee have completed thirty (30) hours of training as delineated in 19 TAC §89.2(1).

Identification practices rely on several criteria to look for students with gifts and talents, including multiple time periods for screening and testing, types of information, and sources of information. No single criterion will ensure or prevent a student's identification as gifted. The selection committee's decision will be based upon a thorough review of the student's individual profile.

Students identified as gifted/talented according to the criteria established by GISD, in accordance with the Texas Education Agency guidelines, will be notified in writing and invited to participate in the G/T program.

## Kindergarten-Grade 2

- Classroom teachers, parents, and community members may refer a student in grades K-2 using the district referral form. All 2nd grade students will be given the opportunity to participate in G/T testing under our Universal Testing initiative.
- For current school year testing, referral forms must be submitted by November 30 of the assessment year. All referrals received after that date will be accepted for the following school year.

## Grades 3-12

- Classroom teachers, parents, and community members may refer a student in grades 3-12 using the district referral form. Students may also self-refer.
- For current school year testing, referral forms must be submitted by November 30 of the assessment year. All referrals after that date will be accepted for the following school year.

## **Assessment, Screening, and Data Collection**

Multiple sources of both qualitative and quantitative data are used to determine whether or not a student qualifies for the Gifted and Talented program in Gainesville ISD. No student will be refused services based solely on one assessment or data point. Accommodations will be provided for students identified with an IEP, 504, or EL in accordance with their regularly provided accommodations within the classroom. Some of the data points considered for qualification are:

- Universal Screener Data
- Parent Inventory
- State Achievement Tests
- Teacher Inventory
- Minimum of two overall intellectual ability assessments
- Additional observations, data points, etc.

## **Transfer Students**

If a student transfers from another district (out of state or in-state) and was receiving Gifted and Talented services in their previous district, documentation of those services and prior assessment data, along with other qualifying evidence must be present in the student's transfer paperwork and presented to the campus committee. The committee will review the data to determine whether there is enough evidence to support the student's G/T services in

Gainesville. If the team determines there is sufficient evidence, the student will be matriculated into the GISD Gifted and Talented program within thirty school days of enrollment. Sufficient evidence will be considered as data comparable to assessments utilized in Gainesville for G/T screening and scores comparable to those accepted in Gainesville ISD. Letters from previous teachers, state assessments, student portfolios, etc. will all be reviewed in making a determination.

## **Identification Timeline**

**Ongoing** Assessment for students in grades K-12 transferring into the district from another gifted program, within 30 school days of enrollment.

**Ongoing** Referrals are submitted online for spring testing for students currently enrolled in grades K-12.

**January** Testing begins for students referred by November 30 of the previous fall

**March 1** Deadline for parent notification of assessment results for spring testing session

Qualifying elementary students will begin receiving services as soon as parent permission is received; secondary students will be required to enroll in at least one advanced class or dual credit course the following school year and each subsequent year.

## **Furlough Services**

Due to a variety of circumstances, students may need to furlough a year of G/T services. Upon parent/guardian completion of a furlough request and approval by the campus principal, a student may furlough G/T services for up to one academic year. If a student needs to furlough for a second year, s/he will be exited from the G/T program.

If a secondary student does not enroll in at least one advanced course (Honors/AP) or dual credit course, s/he will be automatically furloughed for that semester. If s/he fails to enroll in advanced coursework for two semesters, the student will be automatically exited from the G/T program. Furlough requests will be available through the campus G/T contact.

## **Exit Services**

If students wish to exit Gifted and Talented services, parents/guardians must complete an exit form and meet with the campus principal to determine if exiting the program is the best decision for the student. The Advanced Academics Coordinator should receive all documentation prior to exit. The student will be required to be reassessed and qualify through committee decision should s/he wish to return to G/T services.

Students may also be exited from the program if the committee determines placement is not in the student's best interest, based upon multiple criteria. Parents/guardians will be consulted regarding any exit decision and the appropriate placement for a student.

Exit service requests will be available through the campus G/T contact.

## **Reassessment for Non-Qualifying Students**

If a student is assessed for Gifted and Talented services and does not qualify, s/he may be referred for reevaluation the following school year. We encourage parents and teachers to review previous data and determine if reassessing is beneficial for the student. It is encouraged to consider the social and emotional aspects repeated testing may have on a student.

## **Appeal of Committee Decisions**

Parents, students, and educators may appeal assessment decisions in writing within ten business days of notification and present new data, if appropriate. The appeal process is first presented to the Selection Committee. If the decision continues to be appealed, the process is as follows:

1. Selection committee & campus principal
2. District Advanced Academics Coordinator
3. Superintendent or designee
4. School Board

## **Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement is a welcome and essential part of any successful school program. A parent advisory committee provides input on assessment and programming decisions. Parents are invited to attend Gifted and Talented project presentations each spring at the elementary campus. A G/T parent night and orientation will be offered each fall semester to help parents better understand the nature and needs of gifted children as well as our district program.

The district evaluates the effectiveness of the program annually and uses the data to modify and update district and campus improvement plans. Parents are included and encouraged to offer feedback in this process.

## **Professional Development**

Through continuous learning and professional development opportunities, teachers receive professional learning for differentiating instruction for individual student needs, learning styles, and abilities. Teachers utilize effective, collaborative lesson design and planning to demonstrate

visible, engaging learning for all abilities.

Teachers who provide services for gifted students are required to participate in an initial 30 hours of staff development which includes the nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted learners. Teachers responsible for providing services for gifted learners without the required training must complete the 30-hour training requirement within one semester.

Additionally, all teachers who provide instruction and services for gifted students receive a minimum of six hours annually of professional development in gifted education. Administrators and counselors who have authority over program decisions have a minimum of six hours of professional development, which must include the nature and needs of gifted/talented students and program options.

## **Forms**

For forms regarding Furlough, Exit, Referral, and other Gifted Services, please contact your student's campus G/T contact or the district Advanced Academics Coordinator.