



**ROUND ROCK ISD**  
GIFTED & ADVANCED ACADEMICS

**Talented & Gifted  
Program Manual**

[Website: RRISD Gifted and Advanced Academics](#)

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# **District Contact Information**

Please direct any questions or concerns to the campus level first. The elementary TAG specialist or secondary TAG counselor will be the most appropriate place to initiate an inquiry regarding identification or services.

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# **Definitions and Goals for Services**

## **State Definition of Gifted/Talented**

This definition is now codified in The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students (Texas Education Agency, 2009), it is the basis for identification and services that must be provided for gifted and talented students in Texas.

“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:

- exhibits high-performance capability in an intellectual, creative or artistic area;
- possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or
- excels in a specific academic field.

## **State Goal for Services of Gifted/Talented Students**

Students who participate in services designed for gifted/talented students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment. High school graduates who have participated in services for gifted/talented students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.

*This means that we must provide students with the opportunity to create Advanced Level Products and Performances each year. These student-driven products and performances should include critical thinking, research, and creativity. They do not have to be completed individually. They may be completed in groups, but each student should participate in all the above skills.*

## **Round Rock ISD Goal for Services of Gifted/Talented Students**

To design a quality education for all students and support the unique needs of gifted learners.

# **IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT**

To be considered for potential placement in gifted services, a student must be referred for testing. A referral can be completed by a parent/guardian, teacher, counselor, administrator, or the student. Once a referral is submitted, students go through the screening and placement process, which includes both quantitative and qualitative assessments (outside testing does not replace Round Rock ISD data, but can supplement). The results of the data generated through the referral process is reviewed by the campus screening and placement committee. The committee is composed of 3-5 trained professional staff who will make placement decisions using a case study holistic approach. Students that do not automatically qualify for gifted services based on the assessments administered and local norms, may qualify for an exception with a preponderance of evidence.

*\*Note: Students are eligible to test once per year for talented and gifted services.*

## **Universal Screening**

There are two opportunities in elementary school in which all students in a grade level are screened for gifted services. Specific activities are conducted with all kindergarten students to consider those who exhibit characteristics of gifted learners. These results are evaluated by classroom teachers and Elementary TAG Specialists who will recommend the referral process to parents/guardians of students who appear to be a good candidate for gifted services.

In addition, all 2nd grade students take a cognitive abilities test as a universal screener. A universal screener is an assessment that is given to the entire group and not just those who were referred for screening. These scores are reviewed by the campus screening and placement committee who will recommend the referral process to parents/guardians of students who appear to be a good candidate for gifted services.

The intent of universal screening is to include, not to exclude, students from the process.

## **Referrals**

### **Annual Testing Referral Window**

A student can be referred for screening at any grade level, Kindergarten through 12th grade. This occurs once annually. The timeline is as follows:

#### **October**

Campus and District information meetings pertaining to identification and services are held on campuses and made available online through the district website. During the months of October and November, all 2nd grade students are given a nationally normed assessment that will become part of their data collection for placement in gifted services (universal screening).

#### **November-December**

The referral window is open to request screening of students for gifted services. See campus and district websites for exact dates. During this window, any student can be referred for testing by filling out the online form linked on the district or campus website. The online referral form includes the “permission to test” and “permission to serve” upon completion.

#### **January-February**

Assessments will be administered to students with an online referral for TAG services submitted during the district window. The quantitative scores from these assessments, qualitative data, teacher input, and parent input will be collected to generate a profile for each student. The campus screening and placement committee uses a case study holistic approach for each student referral as they review the data and make placement decisions. Students that do not automatically qualify for gifted services based on the assessments administered and local norms, may qualify for an exception with a preponderance of evidence (outside testing does not replace Round Rock ISD data, but can supplement).

#### **March**

Placement decisions are finalized and families are notified of results. In grades 2-4, additional testing to determine subject area support will be administered to qualifying students.

## April

Services for newly identified kindergarten students will begin. For newly identified students 1st-12th grades, full services will begin in the following year.

### **Summer Testing Referral**

Any student who moves to the district AFTER the annual referral window closes or who will be new to the district the following school year is eligible for summer testing. This testing is NOT for students who have been enrolled for the entirety of the previous school year. In order to enroll, parents should contact their campus TAG Specialist (elementary) or Counselor (secondary) beginning in April through mid-July. Testing will occur over two days, typically in early August. Testing schedules and specifics are sent to parents/guardians after registration closes. For additional information on summer testing, please contact Melissa Vasquez at 512-464-5925 or [melissa\\_vasquez@roundrockisd.org](mailto:melissa_vasquez@roundrockisd.org) (Elementary) or Michelle Moak at 512-464-5195 or [michelle\\_moak@roundrockisd.org](mailto:michelle_moak@roundrockisd.org) (Secondary).

Results from testing are forwarded to the campus screening and placement committee to review the data and make placement decisions. The committee is composed of 3-5 trained professional staff who will make placement decisions using a case study holistic approach. Students that do not automatically qualify for gifted services based on the assessments administered and local norms, may qualify for an exception with a preponderance of evidence (outside testing does not replace Round Rock ISD data, but can supplement). Parents/Guardians will be notified of the results by the end of the first week of school. Results are only released to parents/guardians of students who are ENROLLED in Round Rock ISD.

Depending on the grade level of the student, additional assessments may be given after the initial placement decision to determine subject areas of strength.

### **Transfer Testing Referral**

A student is eligible for transfer testing if he/she was identified for and receiving gifted services from their previous school district. Those who qualify for transfer testing should provide documentation of service from their former school to the TAG Specialist (elementary) or Counselor (secondary). A parent/guardian may also provide any assessment data from the sending campus. The campus screening and placement committee will review the data presented and determine how to proceed, which may or may not require further testing. Once the documentation is received from the prior campus, the screening and placement committee will have 30 school days to complete the screening and placement process.

If a student identified in Round Rock ISD through the screening and placement process leaves the district, they are exited from the campus TAG program. Should they return within two years of receiving services from Round Rock ISD, the student will be placed in the campus TAG program and receive talent development. Additional assessments may be given after the placement to determine subject areas of strength.

If **more than two** years have passed since receiving services from Round Rock ISD, the student will be re-evaluated for TAG services. Students will be given assessments and

qualitative data will be collected to generate a profile for each student for the campus screening and placement committee to review and make placement decisions.

### **Process for Formal Reconsideration**

If it is determined that a student does not demonstrate a need for gifted services by the Campus Screening and Placement Committee, a parent/guardian or RRISD personnel, may request a formal reconsideration of the decision if one of the following three criteria are met:

- The home language of the student is not English, and there is evidence that this has impacted the results of the district's assessments.
- The student has a disability as identified through the ARD or 504 committee that may have an impact on testing.
- The student meets the criteria on at least one quantitative assessment used for TAG identification\* **and** exhibits a need for gifted services as supported by a preponderance of evidence using additional qualitative and quantitative data.

\* Nationally normed ability assessment given by RRISD

Those who meet the specified criteria above may request reconsideration after review of scores and an informal conversation with a member of the committee (by phone, email, or in person). If the student is eligible, a committee member will provide the link to the online reconsideration form.

Parents will need to fill out the online form to request a formal reconsideration. The review of scores, receipt of formal reconsideration, and the additional information requested to complete the reconsideration must be completed within 15 school days of the receipt of scores.

Committee decisions are made at the local level and based on a demonstrated need for services when compared to students of the same age, experience, and environment.

Within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the request for formal reconsideration, the principal shall schedule a meeting of the Campus Screening and Placement Committee. The person initiating the appeal shall appear before the committee in person and/or submit written testimony and evidence supporting the reconsideration.

Within ten (10) working days of the reconsideration meeting, the Campus Placement Committee will make a decision and communicate it in writing to the person requesting the reconsideration. Should the person requesting reconsideration disagree with the Campus Placement Committee then the process in board policy FNG(LOCAL) may be followed as a formal complaint with the district.

### **Acceleration**

Regardless of whether a student is identified for gifted service or not, there are opportunities for a student to accelerate. Students in grades K-5 may accelerate a full grade level by successfully taking exams in math, science, social studies, and language arts. Secondary students may accelerate in a single subject area or in multiple subject areas.

Students must take the Exam for Acceleration prior to instruction in that grade level or course. The exams are offered through The University of Texas or Texas Tech University. These exams are based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and the intent is for a student to show

mastery of content prior to accelerating. More information can be found on the district website at: [Examination for Acceleration](#).

## **SERVICES**

Gifted program services are delivered in a variety of ways. Students who are identified for gifted services may experience some or all of these types of support. In all cases, teachers have met the state mandated training requirement for providing gifted services. This training prepares them to support the social and emotional needs and curriculum differentiation of their students.

### **Whole Class**

These classes are composed of all or a majority of students identified for gifted services.

### **Cluster Class (“Stacked”)**

These classes are general and gifted education students combined in a classroom. Students identified for gifted services receive a differentiated learning experience as appropriate.

### **Push In**

These services occur when a specialist goes into a classroom to support students with gifted services and differentiation in their regular education classroom.

### **Pull Out**

These services occur when the specialist takes a group of students identified for gifted services from the regular education classroom to provide services in another location.

## **PROGRAMS**

### **Kindergarten**

During the fall semester, Elementary Talented and Gifted Specialists (ETAGS) will visit every Kindergarten classroom and deliver critical and creative thinking skills lessons to students, as well as consider them for further assessments for gifted services. ETAGS, classroom teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents/guardians can refer any student for screening and placement. When testing and placement are complete, students who demonstrate an educational need for gifted services will be placed in Talent Development and will start receiving gifted services from the TAG specialist.

### **1st - 2nd Grade**

Students who show an educational need for gifted services in 1st and 2nd grades will also be placed in the Talent Development program. Talent Development consists of completing Advanced Level Products and Performances and participating in a showcase each year. Additionally, students will receive social and emotional support and will work with the ETAGS on campus. Students will be clustered with other students who are identified for gifted services (cluster class) and a classroom teacher who has completed the necessary training to support



identified students. The cluster classroom teacher and TAG Specialist will work together to provide differentiated support in the classroom as needed. At the end of second grade, additional assessments are given to determine specific subject areas of strength.

### **3rd - 5th Grades**

All students identified for gifted services will be placed in Talent Development. As in 1st-2nd, Talent Development consists of completing and showcasing Advanced Level Products and Performances, social and emotional support, placement in cluster classes, and support from ETAGS.

Students who are identified for gifted services in grades 3-5 will take additional assessments to determine whether specific subject area support is appropriate. Students who demonstrate an educational need in a specific academic area will receive services in that area from the cluster classroom teacher and/or the TAG Specialist.

Students who are identified for math services will participate in an accelerated math curriculum. This acceleration compacts 4.5 years of math into 3 years while in elementary school. Students who continue TAG math services into middle school will participate in one of two pathways which will culminate in either one or two high school credits during middle school (algebra, geometry).

Those identified for reading, science, and/or social studies will receive support in these areas through pacing and enrichment provided by the cluster classroom teacher and/or TAG specialist. Curriculum can be differentiated through content, process, or products. Depth and complexity strategies are used to meet the needs of these students.

### **6th - 8th Grades**

Students receive gifted services in content areas for which they have demonstrated an educational need. Middle school courses for TAG are taught by teachers who have received the state mandated training for providing gifted services. These courses can consist of all gifted education students or “stacked”. Differentiated learning opportunities are provided as needed, including opportunities to develop and participate in products and performances that are advanced in relation to students of the same age, experience, and environment.

There are two pathways for TAG math services in middle school. Pathway A - students will complete Algebra 1 by the end of 8th grade and receive high school credit. Pathway B - students will complete Algebra 1 and Geometry by the end of 8th grade and receive two high school credits.

### **9th - 12th Grades**

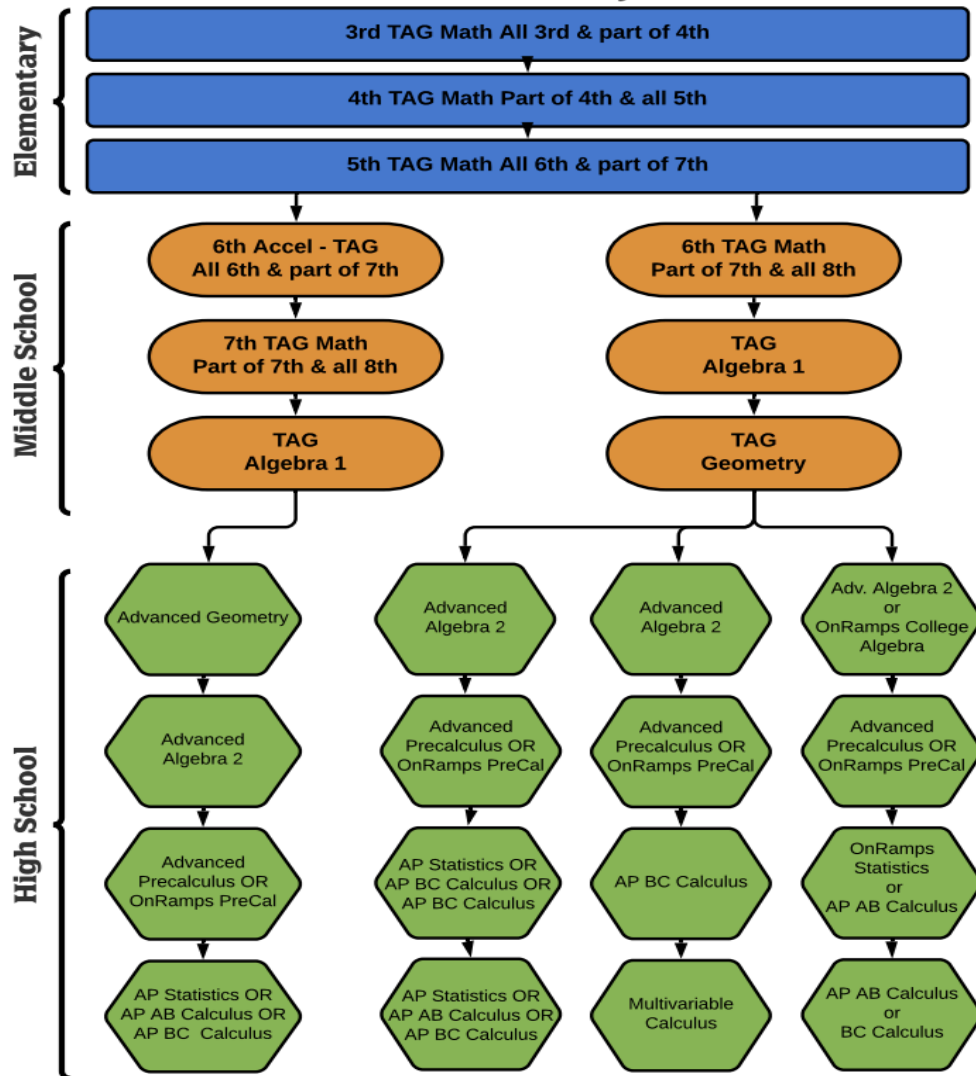
Students identified for gifted services have an array of opportunities to meet their needs during high school. It is an expectation that all students identified for gifted services participate in advanced courses in their subject area(s) of strength. Additionally, these students are expected to participate in advanced level products or performances that demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication.

Flowchart of possible TAG Math courses on next page.

## Flowchart of Possible TAG Math Courses



### TAG Math Pathway



It is the expectation that our TAG math students continue four years of math in high school. These represent four paths a TAG student might take for math in high school. Keep in mind that it is possible to take more than one math course in a year, depending on the course. For example, Geometry and Algebra 2 could be taken in the same year. There are also TAG sections of these courses. Also, with ACC dual credit, UT OnRamps, and IB options (Stony Point and Westwood) there are many possible scenarios. Please see the course catalog and speak to the high school counselor to explore the best options.

# **Courses Recommendations for Students Receiving Gifted Services**

## **Advanced courses**

These courses are advanced in nature and serve as preparation for college courses. These courses may be a whole class or “stacked” classes with gifted and regular education students.

## **Advanced Placement**

The Advanced Placement (AP) Program, sponsored by the College Board, offers motivated and capable high school students an opportunity to take college-level courses while in high school. AP courses have open enrollment and participation is based on the course prerequisites as indicated in the course catalog. In addition to all Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, a wider range and greater depth of content is taught, with an emphasis on higher-level critical thinking skills as well as provisions for creative and productive thinking.

## **AP Capstone Diploma**

\*Highly recommended for gifted learners. The AP Capstone Diploma is an innovative program which compliments and enhances discipline-specific AP courses through the AP Seminar and AP Research courses. Students who earn scores of 3 or higher in both of the AP Capstone courses and on four additional AP exams of their choosing taken at any point throughout high school will receive the AP Capstone Diploma. For more information, see <https://advancesinap.collegeboard.org/ap-capstone>. (Currently AP Capstone is offered at McNeil, Round Rock, and Cedar Ridge High Schools)

## **International Baccalaureate**

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme is a rigorous, holistic curriculum based on international standards. Students who successfully complete the challenging two-year program (junior/senior level) may earn college and university credit as well as the IB Diploma. IB's broad range of subjects accommodates diverse student interests and intentions. The balanced academic experience encourages development in languages, literature, science, mathematics, social studies, and electives. IB diploma recipients complete the Theory of Knowledge class, an Extended Essay, and the Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) components. IB's multi-disciplinary approach encourages students to develop their approaches to learning and allows students to delve into academic inquiry.

## **Dual Credit**

High school students may enroll in college concurrently with high school to extend learning or accumulate college hours. Credit earned through dual credit counts for college and high school credit and fulfills high school graduation requirements if the college course covers required state curriculum. Early College High School is a partnership between high school and Austin Community College. ECHS provides students with up to 60 college credit hours towards a Bachelor's degree at no cost to the student. More information can be found on the ECHS website <https://earlycollege.roundrockisd.org/>

## **University of Texas OnRamps**

RRISD is partnered with the University of Texas at Austin to provide dual enrollment courses during the school day on high school campuses. Students are taught by a high school teacher in collaboration with a college professor and take college assessments over the course of the year. High school grades and college grades are recorded separately.

Note: There may be costs related to these courses. Some courses may be weighted and included in GPA/RIC. Available courses vary by campus.

[Round Rock ISD Course Catalog](#)

## **Parents/Guardians and Community**

### **GTAG**

Gifted and Talented Advisory Group. Gifted/talented education policies and procedures are reviewed and recommendations for improvement are made by an advisory group of community members, parents/guardians of gifted/talented students, school staff, and gifted/talented education staff, who meet regularly for that purpose.

### **TAGPAC**

The Talented and Gifted Parent Advisory Council is an association made of one, two, or three representatives from each campus. The goal of TAGPAC is to assist RRISD by providing insight, support, and encouragement for the programs and services directed towards children identified as Talented and Gifted. The TAGPAC meets twice annually, once each semester.

### **District Website**

Information about identification, programs, and services can be found on the district website <https://teachlearn.roundrockisd.org/gifted-and-advanced-academic-services/tag/>.

## **Enrichment Opportunities**

### **District Enrichment Organizations and Competitions**

Students at all campuses have the opportunity to be involved in Academic UIL and programs like Destination Imagination, Chess, and Math Pentathlon. The district supports and facilitates these programs that will help gifted students develop academic prowess and creativity.

### **District Enrichment at Specific Campuses**

Some campuses also offer opportunities like Spanish Academic Meet and the Jr. Botball program, which would also be beneficial for gifted students.

## **Campus Enrichment**

Certain campuses offer during-school enrichment that will provide an opportunity for gifted students to engage in non-academic topics for whole-student development with their peers. There are a variety of enrichment opportunities from campus to campus. For more information on these, contact your child's home campus.

For more information on enrichment opportunities: [RRISD Enrichment and Clubs](#)