

# **Talented and Gifted Program**



**Hutto ISD**

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## Background

According to Section 29.123 of the Texas Education Code, the [Texas State Plan](#) forms the basis of G/T services and accountability. The plan offers an outline for services without prohibitive regulation. Districts are accountable for services as described in the “in compliance” column of the State Plan where performance measures are included for five aspects of G/T service design. These standards reflect actions required in state law and/or SBOE rule.

In 1999, the 76th Texas Legislature introduced Rider 69, which spurred the initial development and ongoing refinement of the Texas Performance Standards Project for Gifted/Talented Students (TPSP) as a vehicle through which districts might address the state goal. With the TPSP and ongoing research to inform and improve practice, Texas educators are committed to meeting the unique needs of G/T students and to expanding the ways to do so.

**The two documents described above, the [Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students](#) and the [Texas Performance Standards Project for Gifted and Talented Students \(TPSP\)](#), guide the design of the Hutto Independent School District program for gifted and talented learners.**

### Definition of a Gifted/Talented Student

The Texas Education Code 29.123 specifies that a “gifted and talented student” is 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.

## Overview

The mission of the Hutto ISD GT program is to inspire excellence in academics, character, and community by providing open-ended opportunities for students to reach their highest potential. Within our GT program, we are committed to realizing Hutto ISD’s vision of being the premier choice in education through innovation, leadership, and diversity. We measure the success of our program through parent surveys, teacher reports on individual student growth, and the State Plan for the Gifted.

### Elementary Services

GT students will be served in a pull-out model during intervention/extension periods. The curriculum will be interdisciplinary and promote students’ independence, creativity, and all core subject area skills.

### **Gifted and Talented Elementary Program Description**

Hutto ISD's elementary Talented and Gifted program is called BLAST. This acronym stands for Building Leadership and Scholarly Talents BLAST is a pull-out program designed to meet the needs of students who excel or show potential to excel in a combination of two of the areas of giftedness as defined by the state of Texas:

- High general intellectual ability
- Creative and productive thinking

The BLAST program serves the needs of the whole child by providing opportunities in all four content areas, and addressing social and emotional needs while helping students manage common GT issues such as perfectionism, procrastination, and high expectations. Students are presented avenues through which to explore STEM experiences, personal interests, and other opportunities to reflect their individuality and creativity all the while experiencing self-directed learning, thinking, research and communication. Students will share products and learning with families and communities throughout the year.

### **22-23 Elementary GT Specialists**

Campus	Teacher
VHES	Adriana Guerrero
KES	Tiffany O'Connell
HES	Julia Alford
RES	Chelsea Velasco
CCES	Ericka Espana
HNES	Rebecca Bales
NJES	Staci Gideon

### **Gifted and Talented Secondary Program Description**

#### **Middle School Services**

GT students will be served at our middle school campuses by GT trained teachers in regular core subject classes or in Advanced classes where applicable. In these classes, students will master the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills objectives and move on to advanced-level content in high school. Students identified as gifted and talented will automatically be enrolled

in Advanced courses in their identified area(s) of giftedness unless parents waive the requirement in writing. Each middle school has a GT Secondary Lead Specialist to provide leadership to the GT programming for their assigned campus in the areas of academic enrichment, communication, and administration.

## **22-23 Secondary GT Lead Specialists**

Campus	Teacher
HMS	Dana Dillon
FMS	Jill North

### High School Services

Gifted and Talented services at Hutto High School prepare students for college-level work. Pre-AP, AP and Dual Credit classes are available for grades nine through twelve in the four core subject areas. During their junior and senior years, students may receive college credit by passing the appropriate AP exams and/or after successful completion of Dual Enrollment courses offered by Temple College.

## **22-23 District Improvement Goals for Gifted and Talented Services**

Goal 1: Improve Hutto ISD's score on the Texas Education Agency Gifted and Talented (GT) Program implementation rubric to move from accountable to exemplary in the areas of Service Design and Professional Learning.

## **Assessment and Identification**

A three-step process determines the identification and placement of students for participation in the district's Gifted and Talented Program:

1. Referral
2. Screening and/or assessment
3. Selection and placement

The identification process for students in grades K-12 includes both qualitative and quantitative measures that seek to determine whether a student has a special educational need to receive services through the Gifted and Talented Program.

## **Referral process**

Parents, guardians, teachers, other certified staff members, and community members may refer students who they believe exhibit the characteristics of giftedness. Referrals should be made by an individual familiar with the student's abilities, past records, and potential future performance by completing the current referral form within the referral period. Referral forms are available in English and Spanish on the district website ([www.hipponation.org](http://www.hipponation.org)), during the referral window. All elementary (K-5th) referral forms should be sent to the campus G/T teacher. All secondary (6th-12th) referral forms should be sent to the campus counselor.

## **Universal Screening 2nd Grade**

“Universal Screening” means the systematic assessment of all students within a grade level for the purpose of identifying students with exceptional ability or potential, especially populations underrepresented in Gifted and Talented programming. **Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, all students in second grade will be assessed with the *Cognitive Ability Test (CogAT)* in the fall.** This practice will enable us to more equitably serve our students. Students for whom this assessment would not be appropriate due to disabilities that would render the assessment would be exempt from the screening.

The CogAT assessment allows students to show their ability and potential in areas such as reasoning, perception, creativity, motivation, and problem solving. Data collected through this assessment will provide information to support instructional planning for all students.

## **Screening/assessment process**

A testing profile is used to identify students who perform at remarkably high levels of accomplishment relative to their age, peers, experience or environment. The profile will look at both qualitative and quantitative instruments that **may** include:

- Parent nomination forms
- Teacher rating forms
- Student products
- Achievement scores
- Aptitude scores
- Reasoning scores
- Creativity scores

Students with special needs will receive their documented accommodations throughout the testing process. Linguistically diverse students are assessed in the language they understand or with non-verbal assessment measures.

## **Identification and Placement Committees**

The testing profile, once complete, will indicate a student's strengths and weaknesses, and help the Identification and Placement Committee to determine whether or not the data

indicates a special educational need for Gifted and Talented services. The decision for qualification to receive Gifted and Talented services is based on the Committee's observations about whether or not a preponderance of evidence exists indicating a special educational need for services.

The Identification and Placement Committee will consist of (at a minimum) three district and/or campus educators who have been trained in the nature and needs of gifted learners. The committee is responsible for final decisions regarding the identification and placement of students into the Gifted and Talented Program. As the Committee evaluate the data, there are three placement options:

- 1) The preponderance of evidence indicates that the student exhibits a special educational need for Gifted and Talented Services (and in which of the academic areas)
- 2) The preponderance of evidence does not indicate that a student has a special educational need for Gifted and Talented Services, and would best be served through the general education curriculum.
- 3) Additional data and/or observation is required in order to make a placement decision.

Once the assessment and identification process is complete, parents and/or guardians will be notified of the Committee's decision in writing within 10 working days. Parents and/or guardians of all students may request a conference with the elementary campus GT Teacher or secondary campus counselor to examine their child's assessment results.

### **Appeals**

Parents/guardians and/or students may appeal the placement decision of the Identification and Placement Committee by submitting a written request within ten (10) working days of the Committee's written notification. The request must include reasons for the appeal, and must be submitted to the elementary campus GT teacher or secondary campus counselor. Upon receipt of the request, the GT Appeals Committee has twenty (20) working days to respond to the request in writing.

### **Transfers**

GT students who transfer within the district will continue to receive services through the Gifted and Talented Program at the receiving school. All documentation of a student's placement should be included in the student's cumulative folder when it is sent to the receiving school.

Students transferring from outside the district must provide documentation of the student's qualification for Gifted and Talented services and placement decisions. The student may be placed, at the principal's discretion, pending review of records by the Placement Committee.

## Acceleration

Hutto ISD offers opportunities for students to accelerate as appropriate. Secondary students may earn credit in academic subjects, and elementary students may accelerate a grade level, by passing the appropriate examinations for acceleration. Exams will be offered for all elementary grades and most TEKS-based courses in grades 6-12. GT screening and testing instruments, however, are not utilized as examinations for grade or course acceleration.

See Hutto ISD Policy and Regulations regarding acceleration on our [district website](#). Internal processes for grade level acceleration may be viewed here: [HISD Credit by Examination Procedures](#)

## Changes in Placement

Once a student is identified as exhibiting a special educational need for Gifted and Talented Program services, that student remains identified for those services unless program performance based on program goals is not satisfactory, or if the student, parent, or teacher, requests a furlough (leave of absence) or to be exited from the program. A campus-level committee (to include the parent, GT trained teacher, GT trained counselor, GT trained administrator, and student, when appropriate) will make any necessary decisions for a change in a placed student's status.

### Furlough

A furlough is a temporary leave of absence from receiving services through the Gifted and Talented Program for a very specific reason and for a very specific period of time, without being exited completely. A furlough is intended to help students who need a temporary break from the program in order to be successful. An identified student, parent/guardian, teacher, counselor, or school administrator, may request a furlough if all indications support the probability that the student will be able to successfully resume activities at a later date. Reasons a furlough may be granted could include (but are not limited to):

- increased demand on time caused by scheduling conflicts and/or outside obligations
- concern about emotional stress (that could stem from the student, the school, the home environment, etc.)
- extenuating circumstances preventing the student from participating for a short amount of time

A furlough is not to be used as a disciplinary tool and should be granted without adding undue pressure to the student. A furlough may not exceed one academic year. If the committee grants a furlough, Change of Placement paperwork must be completed, to include the date of re-entry and placed in the student's GT folder.

If a student elects to exit the program at the conclusion of the furlough, exit procedures should



be followed.

### **Exit Procedures**

Students may be exited from the program based on multiple criteria, including student performance in the program based on program goals. A student may be considered for exit if it is in his/her best interest and/or if program services do not seem to be the most appropriate educational placement for the student. State guidelines specify that no single criterion may be used to determine whether or not a student may exit the program. Documentation from multiple sources must be provided to support any teacher request for a student to exit from services. After communication with parents, teachers and the student, the campus committee makes the final decision concerning exiting the program. When a decision is reached for the student to exit the Gifted and Talented Program, Change of Placement paperwork is completed and placed in the student's GT folder.

## **Teacher Expectations**

### **Professional Development**

Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students MUST fulfill the following professional development requirements:

- Obtain their 30-hour foundational training within the first semester of placement in a class with gifted students.
  - This 30-hour foundational training MUST include
    - 6 hours of Nature and Needs of Gifted Students
    - 6 hours of Identification and Assessment of the Gifted
    - 18 hours of Curriculum and Instruction for Gifted Students
      - HISD permits AP Summer Institute training to cover the 18 hours of C&I for secondary teachers, requiring the teacher to make up 6 hours in Nature and Needs of Gifted Students and 6 hours of Assessing Student Needs
- Obtain 6-hours of annual professional development in gifted education within the first semester of placement in a class with gifted students.
  - AP Summer Institute training may also count towards GT annual 6 hour updates for secondary teachers.

Records of all professional development must be maintained in Eduphoria. See the Principal's Secretary at your campus for a detailed description of how to input professional development records into Eduphoria and request approval.

## **Resources**

- Texas Performance Standards Project ([www.texaspsp.org](http://www.texaspsp.org)) is available to be used as a guiding resource
- Depth and Complexity Framework from J. Taylor Education (<https://www.jtayloreducation.com/>)

## **Counselor Expectations**

Counselors at each campus who may be responsible for program decisions are required to have a minimum of six hours of professional development in the education of gifted students. It must include:

- Nature and Needs of Gifted Students
- Program Options

Counselors play a vital role in ensuring that the social and emotional needs of gifted students are met. While gifted students are more intellectually advanced than their peers they may not be as advanced socially or emotionally - this is referred to as asynchronous development. Counselors will be available to work with students who may be struggling with asynchronous development.

Additionally, counselors will be involved in the Gifted and Talented Program in the following ways:

- Facilitate campus orientations and information meetings
- Be the contact person for questions regarding the referral, assessment, and identification and placement processes at the secondary level
- Assist in the administration of assessments for identification
- On a yearly basis, will communicate with appropriate campus staff which students are receiving GT services

## **Administrator Expectations**

Administrators at each campus who may be responsible for program decisions are required to have a minimum of six hours of professional development in the education of gifted students. It must include:

- Nature and Needs of Gifted Students
- Program Options

Additionally, administrators will be involved in the Gifted and Talented Program in the following ways:

- Attend campus orientations and information meetings
- Monitor the service of students, via:
  - Teacher observations
  - Classroom performance

- Local and state assessment results
  - Teacher evaluations
  - Student products
- Monitor teacher gifted and talented professional development hours completed each year (30 hour initial and 6 hour updates)

## Appendix A - Policies Related to the Education of Gifted Students

Links to Policy:

[Special Programs - Gifted and Talented Students - EHBB\(LEGAL\)](#)

[Special Programs - Gifted and Talented Students - EHBB\(LOCAL\)](#)

## Appendix B - Policies Related to Examination for Acceleration

Link to Policy:

[Alternative Methods for Earning Credit - Credit by Examination Without Prior Instruction - EHDC\(LEGAL\)](#)

## Appendix C – Assessment, Identification and Placement Timeline for school year 2022-2023

Date	Activity
October 3 - November 3, 2022	Referral window for grades K-12 2nd Grade Universal Screening GT Referral links are posted on website Create GT Referrals Sheet (Google) for each campus
December 2022	GT Testing Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>order licenses for all testing platforms</li></ul>
Early January 2023	GT Testing Training/Refresher for Counselors/GT Teachers GT Testers info uploaded to testing platforms
Mid-January/February 2023	Kindergarten Testing and 1st - 5th Testing
Late January-early February 2023	Deadline for teachers to complete Online SIGS testing <b>*Deadline to complete Kindergarten testing</b>
Mid February 2023	GT Committee Meeting - K - 5th placement decisions Parents notified - communication sent home Permission to serve forms sent for newly identified students
February 18, 2023	Deadline for identified Kindergarten permission to serve forms to be

	returned to campuses
February 25, 2023	Deadline to code in PEIMS all newly identified Kindergarten GT students <b>*Deadline for completing all 1st - 12th grade GT testing</b>
February 28, 2023 (goal)	GT Services begin for newly identified Kindergarten students.
March 2023	GT Testing and placement decisions for secondary students
Fall 2023	GT Services begin for newly identified 1st through 12th grade students.

## Appendix D – Paperwork Necessary for Changes in Placement

Form Links:

[Gifted & Talented Program Application for Change of Placement](#)

[Gifted & Talented Program Conference to Discuss Change of Placement](#)