Gifted/Talented District Plan



WHITHARRAL

Independent School District

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FOREWORD

Copies of Whitharral ISD Gifted/Talented Handbook are provided to the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, principals, counselors and campus Gifted & Talented teachers as a written resource of information.

The intent of the policies and procedures in this handbook is to:

- Maintain a student-centered program
- Provide continuity among campuses
- Reflect Whitharral ISD's compliance with the Texas State Plan for Gifted Education
- Provide a framework for accountability and program improvement

Compliance Statement

It is the policy of Whitharral ISD to comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws and regulations by ensuring that no person shall be discriminated against on the basis of sex, disability, race, color, age, or national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Title VI, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Whitharral ISD Gifted/Talented Program Contact List

<u>Whitharral ISD Contact:</u>
Ben Prowell, Superintendent
Nick McCollister, Principal
Kristi Chase, Coordinator of Advanced Academics & Gifted/Talented

Texas Education Agency's Definition of Gifted/Talented

A gifted/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 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. (Texas Education Code §29.121)

The Texas Education Code 29.123 specifies that students who are gifted have outstanding mental abilities and above-average achievement or potential in:

- General intellectual ability
- Specific subject matter aptitude
- Creativity/productive thinking abilities
- Leadership ability

Whitharral ISD Philosophy on Gifted/Talented Education

Whitharral ISD recognizes the gifted/talented student as a student whose abilities, talents and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require a variety of special provisions to meet their educational needs. As students, they are found in all races, socioeconomic groups, geographic locales and environments; as adults, they are leaders in government, medicine, invention, creative arts, communicative arts, philosophy, industry, science, and many other fields. Whitharral ISD seeks to offer educational opportunities appropriate to each student's ability including providing for the unique needs of the gifted/talented.

Gifted/talented students are those who excel consistently or who show the potential to excel in general intellectual ability and/or specific subject matter achievement. These students require educational experiences beyond those normally provided by the regular school program.

The ultimate goal of the program is to provide experiences whereby the students will be challenged academically, socially, and emotionally to achieve their greatest potential to manage change and to have a sense of responsibility for self, school, community, and society.

District Goals for Gifted and Talented Students

<u>Whitharral ISD Gifted/Talented Students will:</u>

- Study issues, themes, and problems of a discipline of study to create in-depth understanding
- Become creative problem-solvers and use complex thinking skills effectively
- Generate a variety of original products of professional quality through skills and information gained from in-depth study
- Develop a healthy self-concept and sense of pride in accomplishment as it relates to self and others
- Develop leadership skills that will enable these students to become leaders beyond their school days and into the work world

Program Design

- Students who are identified as gifted/talented require differentiated education programs and services beyond those normally provided with the general education classroom. Whitharral ISD has chosen to develop a combination of programs configured to meet the unique needs of identified gifted/talented students.

- Students from kindergarten through twelfth grade will be identified using three or more assessments based on annual referrals. The curriculum will include elements of creative and critical thinking as well as problem solving.

- Gifted/talented teachers who provide services to identified students will have a minimum of thirty (30) hours in G/T training, according to the requirements of the State Plan. The curriculum will include elements of creative and productive thinking, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.

- Based on the State Plan, program options must enable identified G/T students to work together as a group, work with another student, and to work independently. Therefore, identified G/T students are required to attend their gifted and talented class at the scheduled time and should not be prevented from attending.

- While students are responsible for the content covered in their general classroom during their pullout session, they are not required to make up assignments missed while attending the gifted and talented class. Students should not have additional homework or stay in from recess for assignments missed due to participation within the gifted/talented class.

Whitharral ISD Gifted/Talented Program Program Design

The Gifted/Talented program at Whitharral ISD is a pullout program.	
Kindergarten 1st-12th Grade	Identified students in these grades are served in a pull-out program. These students can participate in an advanced thematic curriculum designed to allow for in-depth exploration of complex topics and issues that require high-level thinking. In addition to the foundational skills formally introduced, a strong emphasis is placed on the further development of self-acceptance, group investigations, research skills, technology applications, leadership development, and communication skills.

Professional Development

Each teacher designated as a Campus Gifted/Talented teacher will complete a minimum of 30 hours of professional development that includes (1) Nature and Needs of Gifted/Talented Students (2) Assessing Student Needs and (3) Curriculum and Instruction for Gifted Students. This training must be completed within the first semester of the G/T teacher's assignment. Additionally, each campus G/T teacher will receive a minimum of six hours annually of professional development in gifted education.

Administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions will have the required hours of professional development in gifted education in the areas designated under the State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students.

Members of the Campus G/T Placement Committee will have the required hours of professional development in gifted education in the areas designated under the State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students.

Parent/Community Involvement

Meetings

To encourage parental and community involvement in Whitharral ISD's Gifted/Talented program, the district and/or campuses will hold meetings during the year for parents/community.

- **G/T Program Information Meeting**
  - Designed for parents with children already being served in the program to highlight service design and curriculum used within the program
  - Informs parents of opportunities that exist for students and parents beyond in-school services
- **G/T Referral Process Meeting**
  - Provides information about the referral process for both parents and/or teachers
  - Provides referral windows for the current year
- **G/T Advisory Committee**
  - Composed of members (including parents, G/T teachers, and community members) in accordance with the State Plan
  - Held at least twice per year
  - Provides the opportunity for suggestions to be made for improvements/changes to the program

Student-Parent-School Communications:

Good communication is one of the keys for success in any organization, and the teachers in Whitharral ISD Gifted/Talented program are interested in keeping the lines of communication open between themselves, the students, and the parents at all times. Below is a list of some of the ways in which communication can be achieved.

- **Letters**
  - Permission to test for G/T services
  - Notification of Placement/Non-placement (Q or DNQ)
  - Parent permission for service in the G/T Program
  - Parent and Student Surveys
- **Conferences**
  - Offered parent and G/T teacher at parent's request

Identification Procedures

Referral of Students

During the academic school year, all students in grades K-12 will have the opportunity to be referred and tested. (Students in grade 12 can be tested and identified but will not be served since they will graduate before services would begin.) Teachers, administrators, and parents may refer students for the gifted/talented program in Whitharral ISD. Students will be considered referred for the program when a referral packet has been completed and parental permission for testing has been received. The referral process is held annually or as needed for students new to the district. All students referred and for whom parent permission to test has been granted will be screened for placement. There is no limit to the number of years a child can be referred. (For example, a child who does not qualify may be referred again the following year for testing.)

Referral Window

The referral window for different grade levels is posted on the district website. At least one additional method of communication (call-out, letter home, email, etc.) about referral windows will be made.

Student Profile Summary

A student profile summary will be prepared for each student referred. This profile summary will be utilized in considering students for final identification and placement in the program. Included in this profile will be a compilation of results obtained from appropriate quantitative and qualitative measures.

Evaluation Procedures

There is no single method or instrument that adequately identifies giftedness in an area of human endeavor because giftedness is a multifaceted trait. Therefore, each student referred will be screened with multiple criteria. Evaluation for EB students will be conducted in the student's primary language or using non-verbal instruments whenever possible.

All students must have a parent permission to test form signed by their parent(s) before they can be evaluated.

The screening tools listed below have been chosen as ways to portray as accurately as possible a picture of each nominee's "gifts" in leadership, creativity, specific academic ability, and general intellectual ability.

- Elementary/Junior High: SAGES 3: Screening Assessment for Gifted Students or NGAT
- High School: NGAT (80% score)
- A teacher survey rates leadership, creativity, academic ability, and task commitment is completed by the students' teachers
- Elementary: A parent survey includes rating the child's unique characteristics, creativity, task commitment and special interest, skills, and abilities
- High School: STAAR scores

Students continuously enrolled may be referred and screened only once each calendar year.

Campus Placement Committee
Each campus will have a Campus Placement Committee, which consists of an administrator, teacher, and District G/T Coordinator at a minimum. (Only staff who have met the requirements of the State Plan will serve on this committee.) The Campus Placement Committee will make placement decisions as soon as testing procedures have been completed. The committee makes the final placement into the Gifted/Talented program and has the authority to overrule any testing results. Letters to parents regarding their child's placement will be sent home following committee decisions.

Placement of Students:
Students who have been identified as gifted and talented by Whitharral ISD and who have parent permission to be served will be placed in the district's program and will remain in the program through graduation or as long as they are enrolled in the district. If an identified student withdraws from Whitharral ISD, his/her student profile sheet with testing results will be passed on to the district receiving the student.

Placement of Transfer Students
A student who has been identified as gifted and talented by a previous school district and who enrolls in Whitharral ISD, will be considered for placement into Whitharral ISD's program. The Campus Placement Committee shall review the student's profile sheet and testing records from

the previous district, and if they are similar to the identification measures used by Whitharral ISD, the student may be placed in the program without additional testing. If the student's profile sheet and testing records are not similar to the identification measures used by Whitharral ISD, the student may be reassessed following parent consent. Testing of transfer students previously identified as gifted/talented does not have to be completed within normal testing windows and can occur at any point in the school year. Within 30 calendar days of enrollment, the Campus Placement Committee shall determine if the student meets the criteria for gifted and talented services within Whitharral ISD.

Middle School and high school transfer students may not be enrolled in any course designated for only gifted/talented students until the assessment process has been completed and/or eligibility has been determined by the Campus Placement Committee. These students may be enrolled in advanced courses that are open to all students regardless of gifted/talented identification.

Placement of Intra-District Transfer
Identified gifted/talented students who move within the district should immediately be placed in the gifted/talented program at the receiving school. The Campus G/T teacher at the sending school should include any G/T documentation with the student's cumulative folder when it is sent to the receiving school.

Withdrawal from Whitharral ISD
G/T students withdrawing from Whitharral ISD will have a letter forwarded, upon request, to the receiving school district verifying identification and participation in the G/T program, including a copy of the student profile.

Student Records
The permanent records of identified G/T students participating in the program shall include the student gifted and talented summary profile.

Assessment data of students who were referred and tested for the G/T program who did not meet eligibility requirements will be kept for one year at the campus and then sent to the District G/T Coordinator. The permanent records of those who were not identified but tested shall include the most current student gifted and talented summary profile.

Furlough, Appeal, and Exit Procedures

Furlough Procedure

A furlough from the Whitharral ISD Gifted/Talented Program is a departure from the program providing services for a prescribed length of time, not to exceed one school year. Furloughs from the G/T program may be initiated by parents or school personnel and may also be granted for extenuating circumstances other than academic performance. If a parent, teacher, or the campus principal has evidence an identified gifted/talented student is not profiting fully from the placement in the campus G/T program, a conference will be scheduled. This conference will include the student (if age appropriate), a campus G/T teacher, a campus principal, and the parent/guardian. No student will be furloughed without parent permission to do so. If furloughed, the student remains coded as GT in the PEIMS database.

When considering a furlough, the Campus Placement Committee will consider the following questions:

- What is the most appropriate educational placement for the student at this time?
- Is the gifted/talented program detrimental to this student?
    - Is the student experiencing undue stress due to the program participation?
    - Is competition in the program too demanding for the student at this time?
- Is the subject matter and difficulty of material appropriate for the student's abilities and educational development?
- Are teachers and parents clinging to the following misconceptions or unrealistic expectations about the gifted such as...
    - Gifted students should be making straight A's.
    - Gifted students should be model students and never present discipline problems.
    - Gifted students should be able to keep up with all their work and never get behind.
    - Gifted students should excel in all subject areas.

A student may be furloughed from the G/T program for a maximum of one year. At that time, a decision must be made by the parent for the student to either re-enter the G/T program or to exit from the program.

Placement Appeal Procedures

Appeal of the G/T Campus Placement Committee's decision begins at the building level. To appeal the Campus Placement Committee decision about your child's eligibility for the Whitharral ISD Gifted/Talented Program:

1. The parent submits a written appeal (form on following page) to the campus G/T teacher or District G/T Coordinator within one week after receiving placement information.
2. The campus principal and District G/T Coordinator will be informed of the appeal.
3. The campus G/T teacher presents the written appeal to the Campus Placement Committee.
4. The Campus Placement Committee responds in writing to the parent within two weeks after receiving the written appeal.
5. In accordance with board policy, any subsequent appeals shall be made to additional staff in the following order: the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Assistant Superintendent, and Superintendent.

Exit Procedure

Once a student is placed in the gifted/talented program he/she will most likely continue in the program. If, however, it becomes evident that an error has been made in the placement of a student it may be in the best interest of the student to exit him/her from the program. Evidence may include the student is consistently non-productive or exhibits behavioral problems inhibiting the learning of other students. All methods of intervention should be utilized before the Campus Placement Committee determines and proceeds with formal exit. Parents are notified and involved in intervention strategies. The final exit decision should be based on educational, psychological and personal reasons with no single criterion as the determining factor for exiting the student. If formal exit is deemed appropriate, parent permission is required, and a copy of the decision is placed in the student's file.