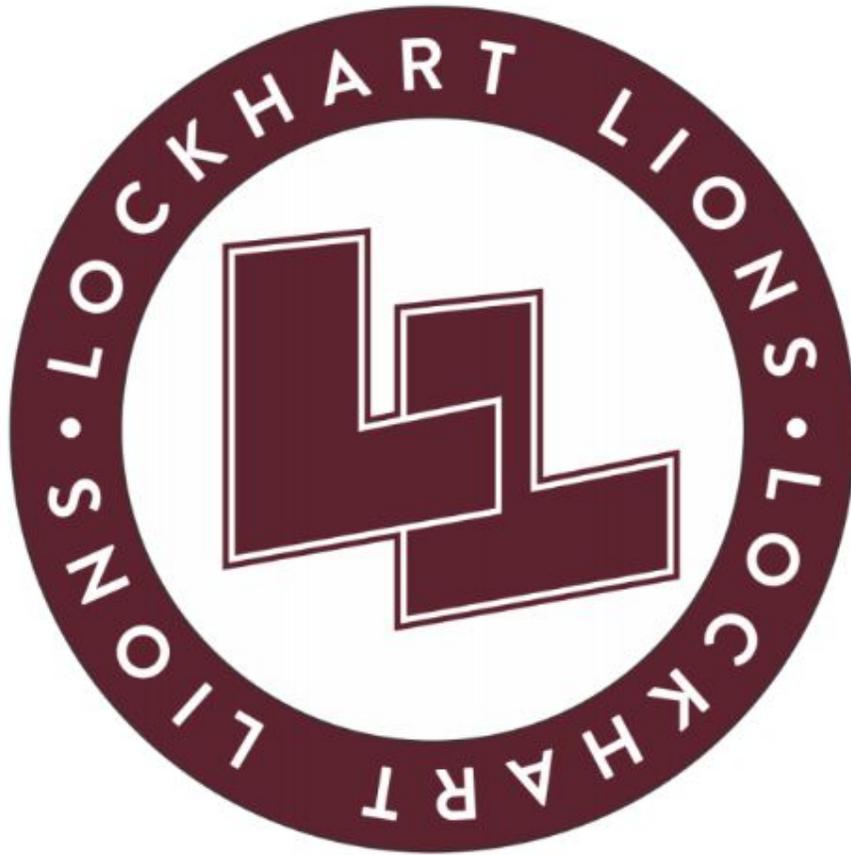


Lockhart I.S.D.



Gifted and Talented Handbook

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For more information regarding Gifted and Talented Services in
Lockhart ISD, please refer to the Gifted and Talented Website:

http://www.lockhartisd.org/about_us/departments/curriculum_instruction/gifted_and_talented

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Forward

This comprehensive manual includes district policies and procedures reflective of state guidelines for gifted and talented students. In accordance with the Fidelity of Services on the Texas State Plan, this manual provides information for all Gifted and Talented programs, services, assessments, and communication which is accessible to parents, community, and students. A program evaluation is performed annually to review and update any areas of need of the program. During the program evaluation, feedback is collected from various stakeholders including parents, G/T identified students, teachers, and administrators. The intent of this Gifted and Talented Handbook is to:

- Inform the public about the Lockhart ISD's Gifted and Talented Program
- Communicate the K-12 identification procedures
- Reflect Lockhart ISD's compliance with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students
- Share framework for accountability and program evaluation

Lockhart ISD Mission

The mission of the Lockhart Independent School District is to graduate all of its students as citizens who are educated, productive, and self-fulfilling lifelong learners. The school district's community, parents, trustees, staff and students will provide a safe, caring, and challenging learning environment in which all students develop to their fullest potential.

Lockhart ISD Gifted and Talented Education Mission

The mission of Lockhart's Gifted and Talented Educational Program is to foster critical and creative thinking, collaboration, and problem solving while meeting the social, emotional and academic needs of gifted students. The goal is to create independent learners who are challenged to discover their gifts and talents and contribute to a global society.

TEXAS STATE PLAN FOR THE EDUCATION OF GIFTED/TALENTED

State Definition of Gifted/Talented

§29.121. In this subchapter, “gifted and talented students” 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.

District Definition of Gifted/Talented

Gifted students are those who excel or have the potential to excel in one or more of the areas of creativity, general intelligence, and leadership. These students need services or enriched activities not ordinarily provided in the regular school program. The district recognizes that students identified as gifted may come from diverse populations.

The G/T program will vary the content taught, the instructional strategies used to teach it, the environment in which it is taught, and the student’s role in learning.

We believe that gifted students need a continuum of learning experiences that leads to the development of advanced level products and/or performances (§89.3 TAC). Modifications in instructional strategies, content, and the development of skills and/or products are part of the services provided. The purpose of the program is to seek, identify, and provide gifted learners with experiences that develop the potential of each individual. Identified gifted students should be challenged in order to fully develop their abilities.

GOALS FOR THE EDUCATION OF GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS

State Goal for Services for 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.

Goals of the LISD Gifted and Talented Program

- Provide a safe environment in which students can explore their talents, take risks, and examine their own strengths and weaknesses.
- Provide learning experiences which foster problem solving and higher level thinking.
- Facilitate and reinforce the mastery of basic skills.
- Develop self-directed and independent learning skills in students.
- Provide an environment which encourages leadership growth, desire for excellence and a sense of individual responsibility to the school and community.

Students who participate in the program will:

- Develop creative/productive thinking skills in the areas of fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.
- Develop thinking, research, and communication skills
- Develop 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 participated in services for gifted/talented students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.
- Interact positively, influentially, and cooperatively with their peers, listening to and respecting the opinions of others.
- Recognize their own capabilities and develop healthy self-concepts while working with other gifted/talented students.

REFERRAL PROCEDURES

Students shall be identified as gifted/talented in accordance with a local policy that includes a definition of giftedness consistent with the state definition.

The G/T program in Lockhart I.S.D. is centered around general intellectual ability and creativity. Every effort is made to encourage the development of specific-academic ability and leadership gifts while enhancing academic achievement.

The identification process shall be accomplished in three stages:

- Referral of students for the program screening
- Screening/assessing of students using appropriate instruments
- Selection of students for whom the gifted program is an appropriate educational intervention

Students in kindergarten through 12th grade may be referred for services provided by the gifted/talented program. The referral process may be initiated through any of the following ways: teachers, parents, self, peers, counselors, librarians, administrators, community members, parents, relatives, or legal guardians. After referrals have been submitted to the campus G/T facilitator, parents of referred students must give written permission for further assessment.

Prior to the referral period, the principal, counselor, or G/T facilitator shall communicate referral and screening/assessment procedures and timelines to faculty members and parents. This communication may be completed through the distribution of appropriate materials, as agenda items for discussion at faculty meetings, in one-on-one meetings with teachers, or through other means deemed appropriate on individual campuses.

Efforts will be made to secure referrals of students from diverse backgrounds, including:

- economically disadvantaged
- those with special needs
- historically underrepresented groups

Examples of efforts to be made by the principal or designee may include individual conferences with parents or guardians of the students and training of teachers and others in the methods of identifying gifted minority students.

SCREENING/ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Lockhart I.S.D. uses a holistic method of screening students for placement in the G/T program. The G/T facilitator on each campus administers the tests and is responsible for gathering and maintaining all of the needed information on each candidate. Teachers will assist facilitators in providing work samples and other documentation to aid in identification process. The information collected during the screening process shall be confidential with information available and used only for educational purposes. The G/T facilitator will compile and organize data in a form that assists decision-making for the appropriate identification of students.

Screening procedures will consider all students who might benefit from the G/T program regardless of sex, race, creed, handicapping condition, ethnic origin or religious preference. State guidelines for identification require that students be selected for the program based on criteria that include both qualitative and quantitative instruments.

Assessment tools may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Achievement tests
- Ability tests
- Behavioral checklists completed by teachers and parents
- Parent conferences/interviews
- Student conferences/interviews
- Creativity measures
- Student products/portfolios

Screening procedures are designed to assure that all students, including those with special needs, those from different cultures, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are provided equal access to the G/T program. Instruments will be chosen with the goal of allowing students to display optimal performance. Other instruments may be added as the need arises with the approval of the district's selection committee.

SCREENING/ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Identification Procedures

Final identification for program placement is made by the selection committee at the district level. The district committee consists of at least three professionals who have completed the required, initial basic 30-hr G/T training and yearly, approved 6-hour G/T update or administrator training. The selection committee may include district/campus administrators, counselors, G/T facilitators, and/or regular classroom teachers. These members must be knowledgeable of the needs and potential of gifted and talented students and familiar with the state guidelines for G/T programs.

During the placement meeting, each student's performance and potential is considered and discussed. The selection committee does not focus on any single measure in making its decision. The appropriate educational placement of the student is the overriding goal in the decision making process.

Identification for the program is determined by a "preponderance of evidence" and the welfare of the student is at the heart of every decision. Depending on individual needs, a student may be simultaneously serviced in more than one special program. For example, a student may be served in both the special education and G/T programs. Students identified by the committee as not requiring G/T services may be re-evaluated the following year. At least one calendar year must pass before re-administration of quantitative measures.

The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be notified of the selection committee's decision in writing. The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) must provide Lockhart I.S.D. permission in writing for the student to participate in the G/T program. The G/T campus facilitator will provide the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) secretary pertinent student placement information immediately following a change in student placement.

In addition to the placement of students in the G/T program, the selection committee is charged with the review and monitoring of the progress of gifted and talented students. These actions allow the committee to deal with possible errors in identification, transfer of students, and removal of students from the program.

Once a student is identified, GT services will continue until graduation or the student furloughs or exits from the program.

SCREENING/ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Appeal Process

Parents, legal guardians, educators, and/or students may appeal in writing any final decision of the selection committee regarding selection, request for furlough, or exiting the Lockhart Independent School District's G/T program. Appeals will be made first to the selection committee. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with FNG (LOCAL) beginning at Level Two. The initial appeal will be considered and acted upon by the next selection committee meeting. A written decision will be provided to the appellant.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Parents are responsible for providing the GT facilitator/Counselor with documentation of prior GT program placement. Upon a signed letter from the parent/guardian, a student may continue GT services with LISD on a probationary period. The GT Committee will review identification data from the former school district. Additional assessment may be required. See Board Policy EHBB (LEGAL/LOCAL).

The committee shall make its determination within six weeks of the student's enrollment in the district and shall base its decision on one or more of the following: transferred records, comparable test scores, observation reports of district educators who instruct the student, and student and parent conferences.

Because no one system or process can encompass all the exceptions and unforeseen problems, transfer students should be treated with the same fairness and consideration as other students. The first consideration and primary guideline for dealing with transfer students is to ensure that procedures being used are in compliance with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students. Transfer students are afforded all the necessary information that all students within the district have available.

A student who transfers from one campus in the District to the same grade level at another District campus shall continue to receive services in the District's gifted and talented program.

OTHER PROGRAM POLICIES

FURLOUGHS

A furlough is a period of time in which a student participating in Lockhart I.S.D. G/T program may take a leave of absence from program services. A student may be considered for furlough 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 at that time. An identified G/T student, parent/guardian, or an educator may request a furlough. Reasons for furlough may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Increased demand on time caused by scheduling an/or outside interests
- 2) The student has demonstrated over a substantial length of time (at least one semester) that they are not benefiting from the program.
- 3) Emotional problems stemming from self, school, or home
- 4) Inability to participate because of scheduling conflicts

Furlough should NOT be used as a disciplinary tool and should be granted without adding undue pressure on the student.

The decision to furlough shall be made by the selection committee comprised of the student, when appropriate and as determined by age and maturity; parent(s)/guardian(s); the LISD educator; and the district's G/T coordinator.

A campus PEIMS clerk will be notified of any changes to a student's GT status using the current PEIMS Data Entry Form for the GT program.

RE-ENTRY POLICY

If the student is granted a furlough, the date of re-entry must be stated. The furlough will be in place for a minimum of nine weeks and may not exceed one school year. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed, and the student may re-enter the gifted program, be exited from the program, or be placed on another furlough.

If the student elects to exit the program at the end of the furlough, exit policy procedures should be followed, with re-entry accomplished through the identification process.

The furlough and re-entry forms shall be completed at the committee meeting and filed in the student's GT records.

OTHER PROGRAM POLICIES

EXITS

An exit is complete removal from program services in the district. 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 at that time. An identified G/T student, parent/guardian, or an educator may request an exit. Reasons for exit may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Increased demand on time caused by scheduling an/or outside interests
- 2) The student has demonstrated over a substantial length of time (at least one semester) that they are not benefiting from the program.
- 3) Emotional problems stemming from self, school, or home
- 4) Inability to participate because of scheduling conflicts

EXIT should NOT be used as a disciplinary tool and should be granted without adding undue pressure on the student.

The decision to exit shall be made by the selection committee comprised of the student, when appropriate and as determined by age and maturity; parent(s)/guardian(s); the LISD educator; and the district's G/T coordinator.

- If an educator initiates the petition, that educator shall provide documentation from multiple sources to support his/her request for exit from services.
- If a student or parent/guardian requests removal, the district shall honor that request after a conference with the student, parent/guardian, and the selection committee or its representative.

Should a student exit from G/T program services, the process shall be accomplished in such a manner as to avoid adding undue pressure to the student or parent(s)/guardian(s). Should a student desire to re-enter the GT program, the district will re-administer the required assessment tools.

A campus PEIMS clerk will be notified of any changes to a student's GT status using the current PEIMS Data Entry Form for the GT program.

RE-ASSESSMENTS

Reassessment is the re-administration of the GT assessment tools. Reassessment may occur under the following circumstances:

- A student has exited from the program and wishes to re-enter.
- A student did not qualify and wishes to be reassessed after the one-year waiting period.

OTHER PROGRAM POLICIES

ANNUAL REVIEWS

Students who qualify for the GT program are subject to an informal review at the end of each academic year. Each student's progress will be evaluated based on satisfactory performance in the program. Satisfactory performance is defined as demonstrated development in higher level thinking skills, mastery of major concepts, and development of advanced level products that include independent study habits and initiative.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students requires that a “flexible system of viable service options provides a research-based learning continuum that is developed and consistently implemented throughout the district to meet the needs and reinforce the strengths and interests of gifted/talented students.

Identified gifted/talented students are assured an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with their abilities and that emphasize content in the four (4) foundation curricular areas. Services are available during the school day as well as the entire school year. All parents are informed of these options.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

The program options and instructional arrangements provided by Lockhart I.S.D. are practices promoted in literature that have been reported to be best practice and most successful for gifted/talented students in schools across the country. The options provide schools' administrators and teachers with models for implementation in their individual schools. The options may be used independently or in combination to provide the best delivery of services for the needs of gifted/talented students at that school. Program options allow gifted/talented students to work together as a group, work with others, and work independently during the school day as well as throughout the school year. The gifted/talented instructional program will provide a minimum of 150 minutes per week depending on age of students and scheduling arrangements.

1. Clustering: Identified gifted/talented students are clustered together in groups of up to 6 and at least three students in a regular classroom with a trained teacher at the elementary schools and by subject area for secondary students. Differentiated instruction is provided to students in these classrooms. This arrangement provides time for students with similar ability peers for intellectual stimulation. This strategy enables students to proceed through the curriculum at a faster pace or with an increased depth or breadth.
2. G/T Classes: A G/T facilitator on each elementary campus works with the gifted/talented students and their teachers to provide enrichment and acceleration as needed. Gifted/talented students are pulled-out from the regular classroom on a designated day or days for a specific amount of time each week at the elementary level. While students are outside of the normal classroom setting, teachers will not introduce new concepts, information, or TEKS. Students at the secondary level are served through differentiated instruction in the core content areas with a trained teacher and may also be offered a G/T course if available.
3. Academically Enriched Classes: At the secondary level a cluster of gifted students is grouped with other high achievers with special enrichment provided for the gifted students by a trained teacher.
4. Accelerated Curriculum: Honors classes in four academic content areas will be available for gifted/talented students in their area of strength at the middle school level.
5. AP Classes: Identified gifted/talented students at the High School level are served in their area of strength in AP classes in the four academic content areas by a trained teacher.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Principles and Criteria for Differentiated Curriculum

Principle I: The curriculum for gifted/talented students is based on a strong theoretical foundation and is differentiated from the regular core curriculum.

1. Curriculum for the gifted is based on the characteristics and needs of gifted students.
2. Release time and resources are provided for curriculum development and time is provided for regular classroom teachers and teachers of the gifted to coordinate their instruction.
3. Curriculum for the gifted extends, reinforces, and/or replaces the regular curriculum, though care must be taken to assure that gifted students have mastered the TEKS included in the core curriculum.
4. The program goals and student objectives are differentiated for gifted learners and will produce measurable outcomes.
5. Curriculum has a district wide scope and sequence (K-12) for the content to be studied, the processes to be mastered, and the products to be generated.

Principle II: Curriculum for gifted and talented students includes provisions for differentiation of content.

1. Content is differentiated by encouraging students to move beyond merely factual information toward concepts and generalizations.
2. Differentiated content is achieved vertically by acceleration of knowledge and/or skills that correlate with the student's mental rather than chronological age, complement the student's interest, and/or satisfy the student's quest for advanced or complex information.
3. Differentiated content is achieved horizontally by providing for in-depth expansion of student knowledge.
4. Differentiated content is achieved by relating what is learned in one area of study to other areas and by crossing the boundaries of different disciplines to promote the application and transfer of learning.
5. Differentiated content is achieved by using multi-level resources that are varied and that are beyond those reserved or designated for the regular curriculum.
6. Differentiated content is achieved by allowing and encouraging students to pursue areas of interest in selected disciplines.

Principle III: Curriculum for gifted/talented students includes provisions for differentiation of processes.

1. Processes are differentiated by extending opportunities for students to develop critical thinking.
2. Processes are differentiated by extending training for students in creative and productive thinking.
3. Processes are differentiated by empowering students to conduct more extensive guided and independent research.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Principles and Criteria for Differentiated Curriculum

Principle IV: Curriculum for gifted/talented students includes provisions for differentiation of products.

1. Students develop complex products that provide evidence of the differentiated content and processes that have been acquired.
2. Students develop products that are often audience-targeted.
3. Students develop expertise in using new experiences, resources, and technology not ordinarily used in product development.
4. Students are encouraged to select the types of products they produce through analysis of their needs and interests.
5. Students develop skills necessary for assessing their own performance/products and those of their peers using student and/or teacher designed criteria.
6. Students learn to accept and use critical feedback in a productive manner.

Principle V: Curriculum for gifted/talented students includes provisions for affective growth.

1. Differentiated curriculum ensures the development of insights into one's strengths, weaknesses, interests, learning styles, and preferences.
2. Differentiated curriculum ensures understanding of the student's responsibilities in a complex and diverse society and as a gifted/talented individual.
3. Differentiated curriculum ensures opportunities for career and leadership assessment and training as well as appropriate fellowship roles.
4. Differentiated curriculum ensures opportunities to investigate the relationship between oneself and others.

Principle VI: The learning environment supports and enhances the differentiated curriculum for gifted students.

1. The learning environment nurtures the cognitive and affective development of gifted students.
2. Learning resources are both effective and consistent with the program and student goals.
3. Materials and resources are differentiated in use or kind from those used in other options including general education, honors courses, and/or Advanced Placement courses.
4. District guidelines for evaluation of materials and resources for the gifted are established and used in selecting those appropriate for differentiated learning.

OUT OF SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES

Lockhart I.S.D. will provide out-of-school opportunities relevant to the student's area of strength. When possible, out-of-school experiences are provided to gifted/talented students during the school year through field trips and throughout the summer relevant to a current area of study. Some possible options are below:

1. Summer Activities/Camps
2. First Lego League Robotics Competition
3. Young National Scholars
4. U.I.L.
5. Future Problem Solvers of America
6. Destination Imagination
7. Duke University Talent Search
8. Academic Awards

CREDIT FOR EARLY GRADUATION

Local board policies are developed that are consistent with the State Board of Education rules on credit by examination and Early High School Graduation. Dual credit and AP credit are available at the high school level.

STATE G/T FUNDS

School districts shall ensure that no more than 45% of state funds allocated for gifted/talented education are spent on indirect costs as defined in the Financial Accounting and Reporting Module (Financial Accountability Resource Guide). At least 55% of the funds allocated to gifted/talented education is spent on assessment and services for gifted students (19 TAC §105.11).

ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS

School districts shall ensure that student assessment and services follow the accountability standards included in the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students. The Gifted/Talented Program shall be evaluated annually, and evaluation information shall be shared with Board members, educators, students, parents/guardians, and the community. The evaluation process shall ensure that those involved in the planning and implementation of the gifted/talented program are also involved in the evaluation.

Yearly assessment and review of the G/T Program includes evaluation of program services and policies. Appropriate changes will be made with the agreement of the committee. At the end of each school year the G/T facilitators at each campus will deliver end-of-year evaluations to students, parents, and educators. The results will be used to make appropriate changes to meet the needs of all surveyed the following school year.

LISD shall annually certify to the commissioner that the district has established a program for G/T students as required by rule and it is consistent with the [Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students](#) (State Plan) under Texas Education Code Section 29.123.

LISD shall report to the commissioner regarding the use of the funds on the district's program for G/T as provided by the State Board of Education rule.

The LISD Board of Trustees has primary responsibility for ensuring that the district complies with all applicable requirements of state education programs. Recommendations to the Board of Trustees are made by the Gifted/Talented Program Facilitators.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Lockhart I.S.D. is committed to equipping its teachers to meet the special needs of its students and emphasizes continued staff development in the area of gifted education. In accordance with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented, all staff members who work with identified students will receive specialized training; the gifted/talented facilitators will receive additional staff development.

In its Gifted and Talented Program, the district shall:

1. Require a minimum of 30 clock hours of staff development for teachers who work with identified students. This training will include nature and needs of gifted/talented students, identification and assessment of student needs, social/emotional needs of the gifted, and modified/differentiated curriculum/instruction of gifted. The district will ensure that teachers who work with gifted children but who do not have the required 30 clock hours will obtain it within one semester.
2. Require ongoing staff development (6 clock hours) annually of professional development in gifted education.
3. Require administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions to have a minimum of 6 hours of professional development which includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students and program design and options for gifted/talented students.
4. Professional development activities will be evaluated. The results of the evaluations will help determine future training or staff development plans.
5. Secondary teachers may attend a week-long College Board Advanced Placement (AP) or Pre-AP Summer Institute to fulfill 18 hours of the curriculum portion of their 30-hour requirement. Secondary teachers still must attend a nature and needs session and a session on assessment/identification if they use the AP or Pre-AP Summer Institute hours as the curriculum portion of their 30 hours.
6. LISD Board of Trustees is trained to ensure program accountability based on the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students.

FAMILY/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Lockhart ISD provides opportunities for parent involvement via district and campus web sites, the Talented & Gifted brochures, volunteer opportunities, and newsletters or other types of communications.

Lockhart ISD evaluates the effectiveness of the program annually by utilizing evaluation forms in which parents, students, teachers, and administrators provide feedback concerning the program. The district uses this data to modify and update district and campus improvement plans.

RESOURCES

[Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students](#) and [FAQs](#)

[Equity in Gifted/Talented Education](#), Texas Education Agency

Text of the Texas Education Code, Sections 29.121-29.123

Text of the Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 89

Lockhart Board Policy Manual