



GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (GATES) PROGRAM REVIEW MARCH 7, 2016

Vision Statement:

The best and most sought-after school district where every student is future ready:

- *Ready for college*
- *Ready for the global workplace*
- *Ready for personal success*

Mission Statement:

Northwest ISD, in partnership with parents and community, will engage all students in a premier education, preparing them to be successful, productive citizens.

ace, and ready for personal success. To accomplish this goal, a student who graduates from NISD *will be*:



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- **Robert Thornell, Ed.D.-** Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
- **Stephanie Espinosa, Ed.D.-** Executive Director of Curriculum and Professional Development
- **Melissa DeSimone, Ph.D. –** Director of Research, Assessment, and Accountability
- **Audra Rowell-** Coordinator of Advanced Academics

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this program evaluation is multi-faceted:

- Ensure program alignment with district mission, vision, and goals;
- Assess strengths and weaknesses of the program;
- Measure the success of the program in meeting its expressed goals; and/or
- Result in improvements in or revisions to the program.

TEXAS STATE PLAN FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

- **Student Assessment:** Assessment instruments and gifted/talented identification procedures provide students an opportunity to demonstrate their diverse talents and abilities.
- **Service Design:** 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.
- **Curriculum and Instruction:** Districts meet the needs of gifted/talented students by modifying the depth, complexity, and pacing of the curriculum and instruction ordinarily provided by the school.
- **Professional Development:** All personnel involved in the planning, creation, and delivery of services to gifted/talented students possess the knowledge required to develop and provide appropriate options and differentiated curricula.
- **Family and Community Involvement:** The district involves family and community members in services designed for gifted/talented students throughout the school year.

DATA AND RESOURCES USED

- This evaluation is composed of data from the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years, focus group feedback of teachers, students and parents, and legal and board documents relating to providing gifted and talented services to identified students.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Texas Administrative Code Pertaining to serving students identified as Gifted and Talented:

TEXAS EDUCATION CODE CHAPTER 29. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

- **Subchapter D. Education Programs for Gifted and Talented Students**
- **§29.121. Definition.**
- 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.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This evaluation is composed of data from the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 school years and will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. *How are students identified for Gifted and Talented Educational Services (GATES)?*
2. *What services and learning opportunities are currently available to gifted and talented students in elementary, middle, and high school?*
3. *How does the district ensure that appropriately challenging curricula is available in the four foundation areas for GT students in grades k-12?*
4. *How does the district ensure that those impacting GT education have the state required training?*
5. *How does the district support family & community involvement in gifted services?*

QUESTION #1

How are students identified for Gifted and Talented Educational Services (GATES)?

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

- Universal Screeners: Kindergarten and 2nd grade
- Multiple screeners for diverse learners
- Transfer students assessed and placed within 30 days

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Figure 5: Percentage of each race represented in Gifted and Talented Educational Services in relation to the percentage of each race overall in Northwest ISD.

	Hispanic	Hispanic	Am. Indian	Am. Indian	Asian	Asian	African Am.	African Am.	White	White
	% of GT Students	% of Total Students	% of Students	% of Total Students	% of GT Students	% of Total Students	% of GT Students	% of Total Students	% of GT Students	% of Total Students
2013-14	9.3%	20.1%	0.8%	0.6%	5.1%	2.9%	2.1%	6.3%	80.1%	67.4%
2014-15	9.7%	20.1%	0.5%	0.5%	4.5%	3.0%	4.5%	6.4%	80.5%	67.2%
2015-16	10.4%	20.7%	0.5%	0.5%	4.6%	3.3%	2.2%	6.9%	79.2%	66.0%

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Figure 6: Graph of percentage of Economically Disadvantaged GATES students and total percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Northwest ISD students.

Year	Economically Disadvantaged	Not Economically Disadvantaged	Total identified
2015-2016	109	2093	2202
2014-2015	107	2036	2143
2013-2014	98	1777	1875

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

➤ Strengths

- Early universal screening (Kinder & 2nd)
- Multiple paths for student identification
- Committee reviews transfer students

➤ Opportunities

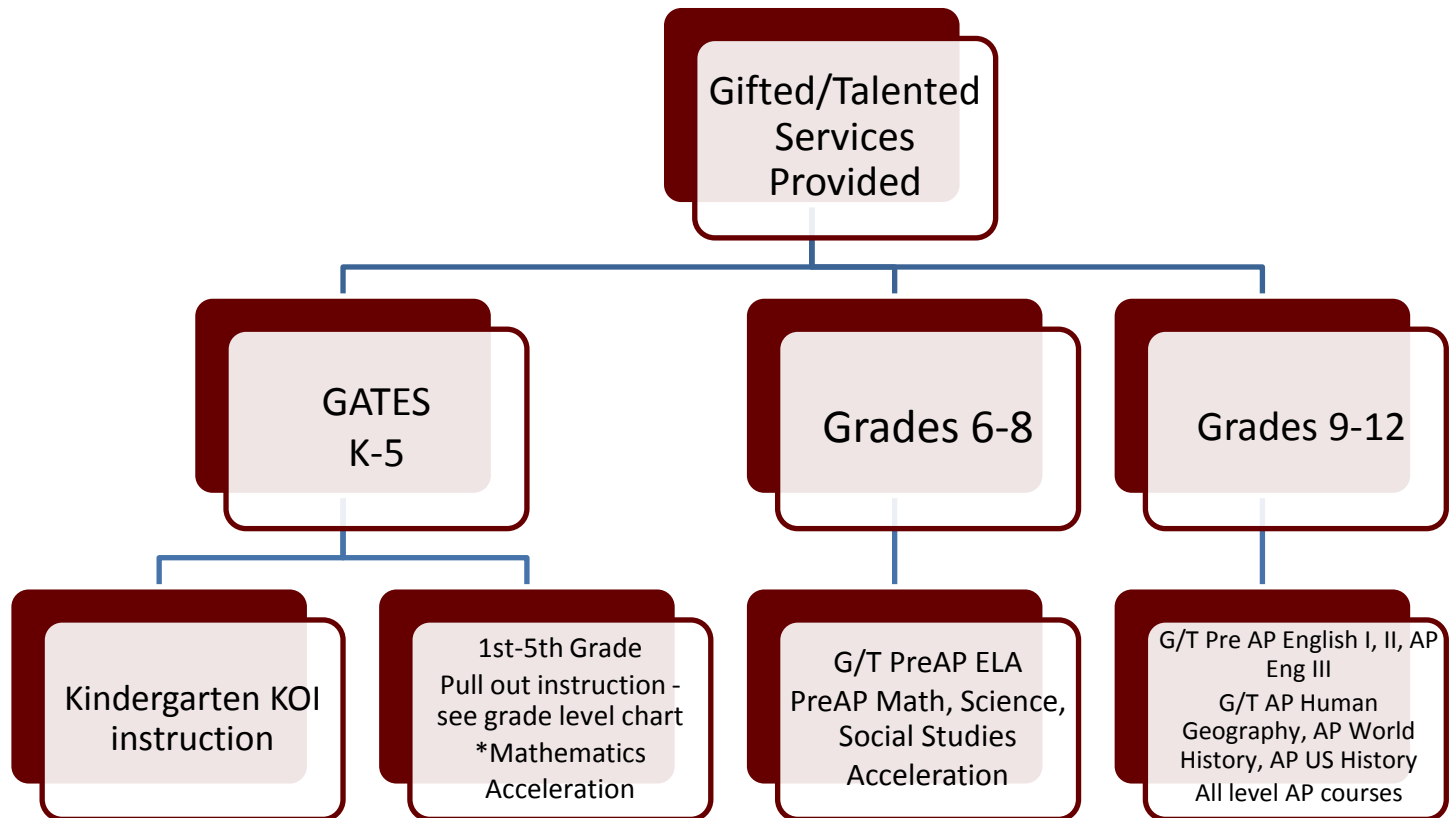
- Intermediate grade universal screener
- Demographic identification to increase numbers in all student groups
- Address under identification of economically disadvantaged students

QUESTION #2

- *What services and learning opportunities are currently available to gifted and talented students in elementary, middle, and high school?*

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Figure 7: Continuum of GATES services by grade level cluster:



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Elementary

- Level 1: GT Specialist may collaborate with classroom teachers for ideas on differentiation.
- Level 2: Students may be involved in a variety of enrichment learning activities with flexible grouping under GT Specialist guidance.
- Level 3: Identified GATES students will work with GT Specialist in a pullout setting that provides activities designed to enhance skills within the GATES goals.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Figure 8: Current required minutes for Elementary GATES students.

Grade	Minutes per week
Kindergarten	20-30 minutes a week push-in September to December 60 minutes a week pull out February – May
1st grade	60 minutes
2 nd grade	90 minutes
3 rd grade	120 minutes
4 th grade	150 minutes
5 th grade	150 minutes

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Figure 9: 2015-2016: Number of campuses meeting the current required minutes by grade level.

Grade Level	Number of schools not meeting the required minutes	Number of schools meeting the required minutes
Kindergarten	2	15
1st grade	0	17
2 nd grade	2	15
3 rd grade	0	17
4 th grade	2	15
5 th grade	2	15

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Middle School

- GATES students are serviced through G/T ELA sections in each grade level.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Figure 10: Number of GT Students served in PreAP GT English/Language Arts and PreAP English/Language Arts.

Class	6 th 2014	6 th 2015	6 th 2016	7 th 2014	7 th 2015	7 th 2016	8 th 2014	8 th 2015	8 th 2016
ELA GT PreAP	144	172	198	127	151	172	123	148	155
ELA PreAP	18	25	12	21	18	23	12	12	8
ELA On Level	1	7	2	3	3	13	16	17	13
Total	163	204	212	151	172	208	151	177	176

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

High School

- PreAP English I and II GT
- AP English III GT
- AP Human Geography GT
- AP World History GT
- AP US History GT.

Not all campuses offer AP English III GT or AP US History GT at this time based on course requests and overall student numbers.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

➤ Strengths

- Weekly pullout services for all GATES students in elementary
- Specific course offerings exclusively for G/T students at the secondary level

➤ Opportunities

- Increase minutes in the upper elementary grades
- Expand secondary services through math and science G/T strands

QUESTION #3

- *How does the district ensure that appropriately challenging curricula is available in the four foundation areas for GT students in grades K-12?*

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Elementary

- *Problem Solving*
- *Critical Thinking*
- *Creative Thinking*
- *Research Skills*
- *Independent Learning*
- *Communication Skills*

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Middle School

- Middle school G/T students served through English/Language Arts courses designed to meet the needs of gifted students by combining PreAP strategies with enhanced depth, complexity and pacing of the Language Arts curriculum.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

High School

- PreAP/GT courses are designed to meet the needs of the GT student by incorporating cross-curricular connections, complex and abstract thought, and flexible grouping strategies. This includes an in-depth study of literary genres, models of writing, grammar as needed and in relation to composition, and vocabulary study.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

➤ Strengths

- Elementary has a variety of 21st century skills embedded into their activities
- Secondary services have a rich curriculum with a focus on written expression and curricular connections.

➤ Opportunities

- Expand secondary services through math and science G/T strands

QUESTION #4

- *How does the district ensure that those impacting GT education have the state required training?*

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

- The Texas State Plan states that a minimum of 30 clock hours of professional development is required for teachers who provide instruction and services that are part of the district's defined gifted and talented services (4.1.1C).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Current training specific to G/T teacher certifications:

	Teachers who have the 30 Hours of State approved G/T training
Elementary GATES	14/15
Middle School GT ELA	3/13*
High School GT ELA	1/5*
High School GT Social Studies	0/7**

**G/T ELA teachers at the secondary level have been training in the PAP/AP SpringBoard curriculum and instructional standards*

***High School G/T Social Studies (as well as other contents have been trained through the College Board Advanced Placement Institute)*

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

➤ Strengths

- NISD annually offers a G/T Institute that allows teachers the opportunity to receive their 30 hours of G/T professional development hours.
- All teachers are eligible to attend the G/T Institute

➤ Opportunities

- Procedures in place to ensure that G/T clustered students have a teacher of record that has the 30 hour G/T professional development hours.

QUESTION #5

- *How does the district support family & community involvement in gifted services?*

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

- Northwest ISD annually evaluates gifted education through a self-evaluation rubric known as the Student and Community Engagement and Compliance Rubric, according to guidelines established by the 83rd Texas Legislative Session created House Bill 5 (HB 5).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

House Bill 5: Community Engagement Rubric:

- Scoring base on a District created rubric

Unacceptable	Acceptable	Recognized	Exemplary
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- For a complete review of the survey, see the [NISD Community Dashboard](#)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Focus Groups

- Elementary GATES Teachers focus group: October 23, 2015
- Secondary Gifted and Talented English Language Arts: October 29, 2015
- 7th grade Focus Groups: December 7, 2015
- Parent Focus Groups: December 9, 2015

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

➤ Strengths

NISD has an overall exemplary rating on the Community Engagement Rubric

➤ Opportunities

- Focus groups discussed the need for increased communication and education about the program

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Identification:

- Define and develop guidelines for “preponderance of evidence” as it applies to assessment and identification of students.
- Use ITBS/CogAT for 5th grade screening for acceleration or GT identification.
- Under identified populations
 - Work with campuses to identify areas of concern and develop a plan.
 - Add additional instruments (including languages other than English) to the process that will broaden the net for under identified populations.
- Awareness
 - Create an online course about identification in NISD that is available to ALL teachers and a part of new teacher training.
 - Post windows, how to nominate, and the screening process on the district website.
 - How to use the ITBS & CogAT data beyond gifted screening.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Service Design

- Cluster gifted learners in groups of 6 to 8 students per class with a teacher who has the 30 Clock Hours and maintains with the annual GT Update. In grade levels where team teaching or departmentalization occurs, each teacher should have the required GT professional development.
- It is recommended that each elementary campus have at minimum one full-time GATES specialist.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Elementary Recommended Services

Elementary Gifted Services for 2016-2017		
	# of minutes per week	# of sessions per week
Kindergarten	90 mins	2 or 3
1 st	120 mins	2
2 nd	120 mins	2
3 rd	180 mins	2 or 3
4 th	180 mins	3
5 th	180 mins	3
Enrichment (multiple grade levels)	180 mins	varies based on need

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Middle School

- Cluster gifted learners together in PreAP in Science, and Social Studies classes.
- Designate a G/T section in mathematics in grades 6-8
- Phase in accelerated services in Science beginning in 2016-17.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Middle School

Possible Middle School Science Acceleration timeline:

Year of Implementation	Grade	Science
2016-17	6th Grade	6th & 7th grade TEKS
2017-18	7th Grade	7th & 8th grade TEKS
2018-19	8th Grade	Biology

RECOMMENDATIONS

High School

- Research the possibility of creating an American Experience class for gifted 11th graders at each comprehensive high school. The course would be a combination of AP Lang and AP US History.
- Identify a section in each content area as G/T.
- Ensure that teachers in designated G/T course have the required G/T training.

English	Social Studies	Math	Science
GT PreAP English 1 GT PreAP English 2 GT AP English Lang GT AP English Lit	GT AP Human Geography GT AP World History GT AP US History	GT PreAP Geometry GT PreAP Algebra 2 GT PreAP PreCalculus GT AP Calculus	GT PreAP Biology GT PreAP Chemistry GT AP Chemistry

RECOMMENDATIONS

Curriculum and Instruction

- Collaborate with content coordinators and curriculum writers to incorporate gifted standards and instructional strategies into regular curriculum.
- Develop GATES curriculum based on vertically aligned gifted standards.
- 6th & 7th grade GT Science curriculum will require a specific compacted curriculum.
- Ensure that teachers in designated G/T course have the required G/T training.
- Embedded differentiated curriculum tasks and ideas will be provided as part of the NISD curriculum documents per the District Improvement Plan

RECOMMENDATIONS

Professional Development

- Develop a plan that ensures all teachers who provide gifted services & instruction according to NISD are in compliance with state-mandated(30 Hours & GT Update) gifted education.
- Develop a GT Update Professional Development plan that is specific to teaching assignments and service design.
- Create an online course about identification in NISD that is available to ALL teachers and a part of new teacher training.
- Create a module for administrators and counselors focusing on identification and the nature & needs of gifted learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Family and Community Involvement

- Update the district's website so that it is a resource for families, educators, and the community.
- Establish GT Advisory Council to meet 3 times a year to check the pulse of all stakeholders. GTAC would be comprised of teachers, administrators, counselors, and parents.
- Redesign the HB 5 Student Engagement Gifted and Talented Education Programs Engagement Rubrics.
- Create a plan for parent meetings (district & campus) that cover a variety of topics concerning gifted education.

NEXT STEPS

- The Curriculum and Instruction Department will prioritize the recommendations to be placed in the District Improvement Plan for the 2016-2017 School Year.
- A copy of the full report can be found at:
[NISD Research and Accountability](#)