



# Hillsboro

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

## **Program for Academically**



## **Gifted and Talented Students**

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# Gifted and Talented Program

## State Goal for Services for Gifted and Talented Students

Students who participate in service 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.

*Section 29.123 of the Texas Education Code (TEC), the State Plan forms the basis of Gifted/Talented (G/T) services and accountability. The plan offers an outline for services without prohibitive regulation. The standards in the State Plan reflect actions required in state law and/or SBOE rule.*

## Hillsboro ISD Vision and Mission Statements

The Vision Statement of Hillsboro ISD is “The Choice for Student Success”.  
The mission of Hillsboro ISD is to “Prepare Today’s Students for Tomorrow’s World”.

## Definition of Gifted and Talented

Hillsboro ISD defines gifted and talented as any child 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.

## Position Statement

Research indicates that there are many students in our nation’s schools who have high capabilities, but have been generally unchallenged by the regular educational environment and have failed to develop their full potential. There is a need for educational institutions to provide experiences consistent with the abilities and potential of gifted and talented students.

The Hillsboro Independent School District has students who readily master the basic skills but who, when not challenged, may not achieve their full potential.

The Hillsboro Independent School District Program is designed to make maximum use of the personnel, facilities, and resources available and reinforces the strengths, needs and interests of gifted and talented students. This program is compatible with other programs in the school district.

*The program plan is in compliance with: The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students, Texas Education Code Sections 29.121-29.123, Section 42.156, and Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 89, Subchapter A.*

## **Program Goals**

Hillsboro ISD recognizes the fact that goals which are specific, yet flexible, are an essential part of an effective program designed to meet the needs of gifted and talented students. District program goals will include the following:

- Identify students in grades K-12 who are gifted and talented, using the criteria established by the district, policy approved by the Board, and in compliance with the state law (including students who speak a different language other than English, migrant students, and students with disabilities).
- Provide students with multiple opportunities to participate in learning experiences using advanced content (within the four core areas) which are differentiated in depth, complexity, and range through the use of a variety of strategies; such as centers, independent studies, flexible grouping, tiered assignments, etc. The students will be able to work independently, with groups of other gifted and talented students, with groups of non-gifted peers, with adults, and with society.
- Enhance and refine the abstract and complex thinking and reasoning of these students through more student-led creative and critical thinking as they reflect and refine their own learning process.
- Identify professional needs and plan opportunities for staff development to train professional and paraprofessional personnel to work effectively with students in the gifted and talented program.
- Develop communication, participation, and support with parents and community members.
- Evaluate program effectiveness on a regular basis, providing a continuum of information targeting evaluation of key features of the program and measuring its effectiveness in relation to student growth and achievement.

## **Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Individuals**

Gifted students are those who consistently excel, or those who show the potential to excel in one or more areas. Since wide variation exists among the gifted, any list of characteristics must be a

very general description of the group as a whole. A gifted individual may possess one or more of the following traits:

- Acquires basic skills and knowledge rapidly
- Perceives more unusual relationships and displays unusual sensitivity to expectations and feelings of others
- Comprehends advanced ideas and concepts; forms generalizations; better at sensing discrepancies and recognizes implications.
- Displays independence and exhibits self-sufficiency
- Formulates superior abstractions
- Possesses a keen and unique sense of humor
- Demonstrates intellectual curiosity, demonstrates a stronger need to know
- Is more innovative and imaginative than their peers
- Responds positively to being challenged by intellectual and creative tasks
- Reads widely and intensively with an advanced level of language development

## **Gifted and Talented Identification Procedures and Processes K-12**

Hillsboro ISD maintains board approval on the identification procedures and process for the identification of students K-12 for the services of the Gifted and Talented Program. These procedures meet state requirements (TEC Section 29.122 and TAC Chapter 89) and have been designed to ensure the identification of any student who qualifies for the services of the program under the established guidelines. Board policies on student identification are to be reviewed at least once every three years and modified as needed.

The criteria for identification ensures the fair assessment of students with special needs, such as the culturally diverse, the economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. Information regarding the Gifted/Talented Program and the referral process is available on the district website.

The process has three steps:

1. Referral
2. Screening
3. Selection

### Step 1: Referral

Referral is the process of establishing a pool of students for screening. All students are considered for referral based upon common characteristics of gifted students and may be referred during designated times by parents, teachers, counselors, themselves, or any other interested person. Referral procedures and forms for assessment of gifted/talented students are communicated to families in English and Spanish. The District will offer access to an informative overview of the services for gifted/talented students and assessment procedures prior to the referral period for referred students and families. All provided communication will be available in both English and Spanish. The district will advertise for referral of students not yet

identified and will conduct screenings for services that are a part of the program for gifted students once a year. Dates for accepting referrals for students in grades 1-12 will be made available to all interested persons through newspaper articles, the district website, and district social media platforms.

At the kindergarten level, all students are screened and will be identified by March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The district will issue a formal invitation for students enrolled in HISD in grades 1-12 to be referred to the G/T program during the spring of each school year. A referral packet must be completed and returned to the campus office by a designated date and time in order for the student to undergo the annual screening process. All students, K-12, if identified, will be provided services.

Students who are transferring in from other districts who are already identified G/T will be reviewed by the selection committee for placement into the G/T program within thirty days. (See Transfer Policy)

### Step 2: Screening

Screening is the process of determining which referred students will qualify for placement into the Gifted/Talented Program. This process includes collecting different kinds of qualitative and quantitative data which are effective indicators of a student's need for a differentiated program and summarizing that data. Within the screening process, Hillsboro ISD strives to provide access to assessment for all students in the most appropriate educational setting possible, including taking academic language dominance and/or special needs into consideration.

At the Kindergarten level all students are assessed using the Renzulli Teacher Judgement of Student Characteristics in the areas of Learning, Creativity, Motivation, and Leadership. Students who perform at remarkably high levels of accomplishment relative to age peers will move forward in the screening process if parent permission is granted. Once obtained, students will also be assessed in the areas of Nonverbal Reasoning, Verbal Reasoning, Language Arts/Social Studies, and Math/Science using the SAGES-3. The mClass Middle of Year (MOY) Reading and Math Composite scores will also be a part of data reviewed as an indicator of academic strength. Additionally, students will complete the Kaplan Portfolio. This entails three separate activities that combine both creativity and academic skills. These data pieces will be assessed by a committee of staff trained in the GT identification process. During the entire review process, all data will be reviewed anonymously.

In grades 1-12 qualitative and quantitative data are collected through three (3) or more measures and used to determine whether or not a student needs gifted/talented services. Assessment tools can include but may not be limited to: SAGES-3 (Verbal Reasoning, Nonverbal Reasoning, Language Arts/Social Studies, Mathematics/Science) achievement test; student product portfolios; academic data; observation checklists completed by teachers and parents; teacher referral based on classroom observations; and student/parent conferences.

For all areas of assessment, the criteria will ensure the fair assessment of students with special needs, such as the culturally different, the economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. Data and procedures will assure that all populations of the district will have access

to assessment and, if identified, services will be offered as part of the program for gifted/talented students. The district will strive toward having the population of the gifted program reflect the population of the district.

The gifted/talented teacher on each campus is responsible for overseeing the collection of data on referred students. A folder containing selection criteria is established for each student referred. Data is recorded on a student profile form. All student information collected during the screening and identification process shall be an educational record, subject to the protections set out in policies at FL. The screening process will maintain confidentiality of student information. Parent permission is required before any special testing or individualized assessment is conducted as part of the screening and identification process.

### Step 3: Selection

Selection of students for program participation is based upon data collected during screening. Final selection of students for services designed for gifted students is made by a committee of at least three (3) educators at each campus who have completed thirty (30) hours of gifted/talented training (including nature and needs of gifted students) and are current with the six-hour update training as required in 19 TAC 89.2(2).

Selection decisions are based on multiple criteria rather than a single score or performance. To prevent bias, an identification number rather than student name will be used during the selection. Based on a review of information gathered during the assessment process, the selection committee recommends placement for students whose data reflect that program placement is the most appropriate educational setting.

Families and staff are informed in writing of student placement and given opportunities to schedule conferences to discuss assessment data. Participation in the gifted program is voluntary and requires written permission from the parents and/or student before placement of the student is made. Results of the screening process, parent permission forms to test, and parent and student permission forms to participate will be kept in the student's permanent file (green folder).

Additional data beyond that collected through the district's standard gifted/talented assessment process are considered, as needed, by the selection committee in making identification decisions in order to make the most appropriate placement.

## **Reassessment**

The District shall not perform routine re-assessments.

## **Student Progress Review**

At any time during the school year, a student progress review may be requested by the school, parent, or student. Additionally, at the end of each year, each student's progress will be

reviewed. Recommendations will be made for continued placement or exit. The selection committee has the responsibility for reviewing and/or acting upon these recommendations. Unless there is documentation of evidence that a student has been misidentified, students will remain in the program.

### **Transfer Policy**

A student transferring into Hillsboro ISD from another accredited school who was enrolled in the gifted program of that school at the time of withdrawal shall be reviewed by the selection committee for consideration of placement into the HISD gifted program. Parents will be asked to complete a consent for release for G/T records from the previous district.

Placement shall be based on transferred records, provided the placement criteria at the sending school are equal to and are of the same nature as those of the HISD; observation reports of District teachers who instruct the student; and/or student and parent conferences. If necessary, the selection committee may recommend that additional identification data be collected as according to the above described collection procedures. The committee shall make its determination within thirty (30) days of the student's enrollment in the District.

### **Furlough Policy**

If at any time it is determined by the GT Committee that it is in the best interest of the student to be temporarily removed from the gifted program, furlough options will be considered. The purpose of such a furlough is to provide the student an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the team. School personnel, parents, or an identified student may request a furlough.

A student may be furloughed in the program for a period of time deemed appropriate by the selection committee. At the end of the furlough period, the student's progress will be reassessed and a determination will be made as to the educational setting that will be most appropriate for the student at that particular time. The team may decide that the student may re-enter the program, be exited from the program, or be placed on another furlough.

### **Exit Provisions**

Student performance in the program shall be monitored on a regular basis. A student may be exited from the program at any time the selection committee determines it is in the student's best interest. Parents of the student and/or the student may be given the opportunity to meet with the GT Committee to discuss the decision.



Multiple criteria that determine if a student is to be exited will include but will not be limited to: 1.) student is not maintaining satisfactory performance in the G/T classroom, 2.) student or parent requests exit.

If a student or parent requests removal from the program, the District shall honor that request after a conference with the selection committee or its representative. The student's most appropriate educational placement must have been discussed.

Student and parents will be notified in writing of the selection committee's decision to exit the student from the program.

If a student is exited from the program for any reason other than moving out of the district, the student may not re-enter the program during the same school year. However, this student may be referred for screening for the following year, in which case, new screening data and selection materials may be required.

## **Appeals**

Parents or students may appeal any final decision of the selection committee regarding selection or removal from the gifted program. Parents, students, and educators can expect appeals to be handled within a timely manner (within ten business days) and may present new data (in assessment decisions), if appropriate.

Appeal shall be made first to the selection committee. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with FNG (LOCAL) beginning at Level Two.

## **Community Awareness**

Hillsboro ISD shall ensure that information about their gifted and talented program is available to parents and community members and that they have an opportunity to develop an understanding of and support for the program.

An advisory committee of the community members, parents of gifted/talented students, school staff, and gifted/talented education staff will review and recommend program policies and procedures to the district. The group will also offer support and assistance to the district in program planning and improvement. Specialists and advocates for gifted students will be consulted in the development of program policies and options, when attainable.

The district or campus will provide periodic updates for parents of students identified and served in options that are part of the gifted program.

## The Instructional Program

### *A. Description*

The instructional program for gifted students in HISD is referred to as “The GATE Program.” Although presented in different formats at each campus, each level provides an instructional program for gifted students that is congruent with the characteristics that identify them as a special population. This includes opportunities in as many of the following ways as is practical and appropriate:

- Development of high-level cognitive and affective processes
- Accelerated or advanced content
- Higher degree of complexity of content
- Content beyond prescribed curriculum
- Self-selection of content according to interest
- Adjusted learning schedule
- Use of outside lay experts (voluntary mentors)
- Participation in academic contests

### *B. Teacher Training and Staff Development*

Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students have a minimum of thirty (30) hours of staff development that includes the nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction of gifted/talented students. Teachers are encouraged to pursue advanced degrees or obtain additional professional development in their teaching discipline. Release time is provided for teachers and administrators to visit campuses or districts that have model programs for gifted/talented students.

Administrators and counselors who have authority for gifted/talented service decisions receive a minimum of six (6) hours annually of professional development in gifted/talented education. Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the district’s defined gifted/talented services receive a minimum of six (6) hours annually of professional development in gifted/talented education that is related to state teacher education standards. The District Director is responsible for ensuring that the teachers on the campus get the six (6) hours annually.

All staff receive an overview of the district’s gifted/talented identification processes and gifted/talented services provided by the district or campus, along with informational training on the nature and needs of the gifted/talented. Evaluation of professional development activities for gifted/talented education is ongoing, and the results of the evaluation are used in making decisions regarding future staff development plans. Opportunities for professional development in the area of gifted education are provided on a regular basis and disseminated to professionals in the district. Gifted/talented service staff input in planning and conducting the district’s gifted/talented training is encouraged.

*C. Implementation*

Hillsboro ISD shall provide services for gifted/talented students (kindergarten through grade twelve) that are comprehensive, structured, sequenced, and appropriately challenging, including options in the four (4) foundation curricular areas, arts, leadership, and creativity. Services will be available during the school day as well as the entire school year. Information concerning special opportunities (contests, academic recognition, summer camps, community programs, volunteer opportunities, etc.) will be available and disseminated to parents and community members through the district website. When possible, the district shall provide out-of-school options relevant to the student’s area of strength.

Flexible grouping patterns and independent investigations will be employed in the four (4) core subject areas. Students will be allowed opportunities to work together as a group, to work with other students, and to work independently. This continuum of learning experiences will lead to the development of advanced products and performances. Students will be afforded opportunities to accelerate in areas of strength which include in-school, and when possible, out-of-school options that are available during the school year. Acceleration options are actively facilitated by district administrators, counselors, and teachers.

Ongoing formative and summative evaluation strategies, based on quantitative and qualitative data, are reviewed by the school board and used for substantive program improvement and development. Local board policies are consistent with the State Board of Education rules of credit by examination (19 TAC 74.24) and Early High School Graduation (TEC 56.203). Local policies also enable students to participate in dual/concurrent college enrollment, online learning, accelerated programs, and Distinguished Level of Achievement and Performance Acknowledgements within the Foundations High School Program.

Menu of options and opportunities:

Elementary (K-6)

Formal Services	Clustered in groups in heterogeneous classrooms Weekly Pull-Out program: Independent Study Facilitated by GT Teacher Accelerated Classes (6th grade) Credit by Exam, request and review required
Informal Services	Arts and Music Chess Club
Formal Differentiation Strategy Options (such as, but not limited to)	Centers Differentiated Assignments Compacting Curriculum Critical Questioning and Thinking Flexible Grouping

	Independent Study Formal Enrichment: STEM, provided during Specials Rotation
Curriculum	Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) - TEA Resource G/T Teacher Toolkit - TEA Resource Equity in Gifted Education - TEA Resource Reading Strategies for Advanced Primary Readers - TEA Resource Other curriculum used must meet standards of the TPSP
Enrichment (such as, but not limited to)	Accelerated Reader Musicals Art Club TechSperts Chess Club
Awards, Contents, Recognition (such as, but not limited to)	Poster/Essay Contests Honor Roll Accelerated Reader Awards STAAR Academic Recognition Presidential Physical Fitness Award Six Weeks Attendance Award End of Year Awards in each Core Discipline University Interscholastic League
Guidance Services (such as, but not limited to)	Scheduled Affective Sessions Parent Meetings/Conferences Resources for Parents

*This list signifies a sampling of opportunities available to elementary and intermediate gifted/talented students.*

Middle School (7-8)

Formal Services	Core Classes Taught by Teachers that have completed 30 hours of training Language Arts - Honors or Advanced Mathematics - Honors or Advanced Science - Honors or Advanced Social Studies - Honors or Advanced Pre-AP Algebra I Credit by Exam, request and review required
Informal Services	Art and Music Band Theater Computer
Formal	Centers

Differentiation Strategy Options (such as, but not limited to)	Differentiated Assignments Compacting Curriculum Critical Questioning and Thinking Advisory/Enrichment Period Flexible Grouping Independent Study
Enrichment (such as, but not limited to)	National Junior Honor Society Chess Club Robotics Club and Competitive Team Student Council Band/Theater Preparation and Performances University Interscholastic League
Awards, Contents, Recognition (such as, but not limited to)	Honor Roll Spelling Bee Essay Contests Presidential Fitness Award Six Week/Year Attendance Awards End of Year Awards in Each Core Discipline
Guidance Services (such as, but not limited to)	Parent Meetings/Conferences Individual/Group Counseling Opportunities Guest Speakers Group Book Studies Resources for Parents Rhithm

*This list signifies a sampling of opportunities available to junior high gifted/talented students.*

High School (9-12)

Formal Services	Core Classes Taught by Teachers that have completed 30 hours of training Pre-AP Courses: English I, English II, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, World History Honors Courses: PreCalculus, Physics AP Courses: Biology, Calculus Dual Credit Courses Credit by Exam, request and review required
Informal Services	Art and Music Band Theater CTE Pathways: Agriculture, Construction, Audio/Visual, Health Services, Human Services, Culinary Services

Formal Differentiation Strategy Options (such as, but not limited to)	Differentiated Assignments Compacting Curriculum Critical Questioning and Thinking Flexible Grouping Independent Study
Enrichment (such as, but not limited to)	National Honor Society Student Council Theater Arts Preparation, Contests, and Performances Band Preparation, Contests, and Performances University Interscholastic League Yearbook JV/Varsity Athletic Activities Community Serve and Learn Future Farmers of America Skills USA Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)
Awards, Contents, Recognition (such as, but not limited to)	Art Contests Writing Contests University Interscholastic League Rotary Youth Leadership Award National Honor Society Certificate of Merit Red Cross Donor Recognition Principal’s Leadership and Patriotism Awards
Guidance Services (such as, but not limited to)	Parent Meetings/Conferences Individual Counseling Opportunities Guest Speakers Resources for Parents Rhithm Advanced Placement Parent Information Night FAFSA Night Graduation Plan Parent Information Meetings University Testing, Enrollment, and Scholarship Counseling Course Selection Counseling

*This list signifies a sampling of opportunities available to high school gifted/talented students.*

**D. Funding**

To the extent that state funding is provided for gifted/talented student education, local funding for gifted/talented student education programs is used to supplement the state funding.

*GT State Plan Fidelity of Services 1.4*

## **Program Evaluation and Planning**

The gifted program shall be evaluated annually, and evaluation information shall be shared with Board members, administrators, teachers, counselors, and students in the gifted and talented program, their parents, and the community. The purpose of the evaluation process is to determine the program's effectiveness and use the evaluation data to modify and update district and campus improvement plans. The evaluation process shall ensure that those involved in the planning and implementation of the gifted program are also involved in its evaluation. Parents are included in the evaluation process.

Based on input from a variety of sources (parents, teachers, students, administrators, G/T Advisory Committee, campus and district needs assessments), strategies for improving the G/T program will be placed in district and campus improvement plans.

## **Personnel Roles**

The duties performed by the following personnel assure a successful program.

### *A. Building Principal*

- Recruit and assign qualified staff to serve as teachers of gifted students at each designated level.
- Assign specific responsibilities as needed. Examples are competitions, screening, duties, communications, committees, etc.
- Ensure student participation in program activities.
- Assist program teachers with scheduling.
- Provide opportunities for the campus program to be communicated to all staff.
- Provide, with help of the coordinator, appropriate opportunities for staff development.
- Provide opportunities for parents to be informed.
- Serve on the screening/selection committee.
- Recognize student accomplishments and provide opportunities for gifted and talented students to be actively involved during in-school and out-of-school activities.
- Along with the coordinator, be accountable for the successful implementation of the gifted and talented program on his/her campus.

### *B. Gifted and Talented Coordinator*

- Actively pursue training in the area of gifted and talented education.
- Assist each teacher serving gifted and talented students to execute his/her duties; observe gifted and talented classes and provide feedback to teachers of the gifted and talented; work with campus staff to provide appropriate programs for gifted and talented students.
- Guide the screening and selection processes of the program. Examples are accepting referrals, collection of student data, and ensuring proper communications to parents.
- Serve as a resource in gifted education for students, staff, and parents.
- Provide an instructional program for students.

- Provide instructional continuity between campuses by developing or seeking curriculum for gifted students and planning jointly with other gifted and talented teachers.
- Maintain communication with parents through parent meetings, website, etc.
- Keep accurate records of the program and of student progress.
- Work with the campus principal to implement the program in his/her campus.
- Support parents in their efforts to provide worthwhile experiences for their children.
- Provide current information regarding program compliance with TEA standards to campus principals and the superintendent.

### *C. Gifted and Talented Teacher*

- Continue to grow professionally through staff development and inquiry in the area of gifted and talented education (6 hours per year).
- Assist in collecting screening data on each referred student.
- Serve on the screening/selection committee.
- Develop differentiated lesson plans that reflect how the regular curriculum is enriched and extended to meet student needs. Differentiation should emphasize higher order thinking skills.
- Communicate to parents information concerning: program objectives, student progress, seminars and programs of interest, available in-school and out-of-school learning opportunities for G/T students, program evaluation, identification, and G/T orientation meetings.
- Recruit parents and other business community members to serve as resources and mentors for G/T students.
- Meet on a regular basis with G/T Coordinator and other resource teachers.
- Share regularly with other staff members the needs/achievements of identified students and monitor their progress in all subject areas.
- Share gifted teaching strategies with team members.
- Conduct end-of-year student reviews.
- Collaborate with the G/T Coordinator and campus principal in the annual program evaluation.
- Give input into the campus and district improvement plans with strategies to improve the G/T program.
- Assume duties with identified students as assigned by campus principal.

## **Family and Community Members**

Hillsboro ISD will encourage family and community participation in services designed for gifted and talented students. Written policies of student identification, approved by the Board of Trustees, will be available to parents, as will be information regarding the learning opportunities offered to identify students as part of the gifted and talented program. Hillsboro ISD will evaluate the effectiveness of the program annually and will use the data gathered to modify and update district and campus improvement plans. Parent surveys may be sent home to include parents in the evaluation process.



- Information regarding processes will be provided annually to inform parents and community members of assessment procedures, district programs.
- Progress reports will be provided to parents/guardians informing them of the performance of their child in the gifted and talented program.
- Parents will be informed of available out-of-school, week-end, and summer programs for gifted students.
- Parents and community members will be given the opportunity to serve as mentors and/or experts for gifted students. These volunteers must complete volunteer paperwork before being approved.
- Parents and community members will be encouraged to visit classrooms and view the products developed by gifted students.
- Products and achievements of gifted students will be shared with families and community members.
- Hillsboro ISD will encourage community members and businesses to be involved in and support programs and services for gifted and talented students.
- A listing of community resources and mentors may be maintained as a reference for students, teachers and parents.

Hillsboro ISD may encourage parents to participate in a parent association for the gifted and talented. The district may also offer professional development opportunities to community members and parents. The District may organize and train community volunteers to work with identified students.