

# Advanced Academics

## Pearland ISD



### **Gifted/Talented Program Services Guide A Handbook for Parents, Community Members, and Campus Personnel**

**2024 - 2025**

Pearland ISD  
Advanced Academics  
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## **Definition of Gifted and Talented Students**

“Gifted and talented (G/T) student” 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 exhibits high performance (TEC Subchapter D §29.121).

## **Pearland ISD Mission Statement**

In partnership with the community, families, and students, Pearland ISD prepares all learners to achieve their highest potential.

## **Pearland ISD Vision Statement**

Pearland ISD will empower, inspire, and develop courageous, confident individuals who excel in a global society.

## **Advanced Academics Mission Statement**

In order to meet the specific needs of G/T learners, Pearland ISD offers a comprehensive array of differentiated learning opportunities to integrate depth and complexity, to encourage creative problem-solving, to develop necessary research and communication skills, and provide the social and emotional supports necessary to better prepare the G/T students of today for the world of tomorrow.

## **Advanced Academics Core Beliefs**

G/T students have specific learning needs. They are passionate about learning, solve problems in unique ways, and require support from trained teachers/mentors who are sensitive to their individual needs.

Program services for G/T students will enable them to work successfully alone, with other G/T students, and with students not identified as G/T.

G/T students come from all races, socio-economic strata, geographic locales, and environments. They display unique needs and possess unusual abilities and talents which merit recognition and nurturing.

## **Program Objective**

### **State Goal for Services for Gifted/Talented Students**

Students who participate in services designed for G/T 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 G/T students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services. Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted Talented Students.

## **Program Commitments**

Pearland ISD will:

- Comply with G/T accountability standards
- Monitor the effectiveness of student assessment
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the G/T program service design
- Meet the needs of G/T students by supporting, and monitoring the differentiation of the curriculum for G/T students
- Ensure that all personnel involved in the planning, creation, delivery, and administration of services to G/T students receive the required professional learning needed to develop, implement, and/or monitor G/T program services
- Provide opportunities for G/T student, family, and community involvement in the design and evaluation of G/T services

## **Program Service Design**

G/T services in Pearland ISD are designed for students who are identified for G/T services according to Pearland ISD's identification procedures. Program service design will include one or more of the following options:

- Push-in: A G/T trained teacher provides occasional services to a student while the student is in the regular classroom.
- Full-time G/T Only: The student receives most of their core subject instruction from a G/T trained teacher or teachers with peers who are identified as G/T.
- Full-time Inclusion: The student receives the majority of their core subject instruction from a specific G/T trained teacher or teachers, but the classes may include peers who are not identified as G/T.

### **Elementary (K-4)**

The G/T program in kindergarten through fourth grade is designed to provide differentiated instruction for identified G/T students. Differentiated instruction offers a variety of learning options designed to tap into students' interests and abilities by providing academic enrichments and extensions to the grade level curriculum.

At each grade level, identified students will be clustered within a class taught by a teacher who has completed the G/T foundational professional learning as required by the state of Texas. If team teaching, both teachers will complete the professional learning. If there are more than 22 G/T students identified in one grade level, the students will be clustered in two classes with teachers who have completed the state-mandated professional learning to teach G/T students.

All kindergarten students are automatically considered for G/T and other advanced level services. Kindergarten gifted student services begin the first school day in March of every year. G/T kindergarten services will follow a model determined by the campus.

## **Dual Language**

G/T students who are also in dual language will be clustered within a class taught by a teacher who has completed the G/T foundational professional learning as required by the state of Texas. If team teaching, both teachers must complete the TEA required G/T professional learning.

## **Intermediate (5-8)**

In grades 5-8, teachers who have completed the G/T foundational professional learning as required by the state of Texas provide services to identified students through Pearland Advanced Program (PAP) classes in the four core areas (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies). In 5th and 6th grades, students identified as G/T may be placed on a G/T team in all PAP classes or may receive G/T instruction in one or more identified content areas. G/T students are clustered together with an expectation of a 40% or higher representation of G/T students in core foundation classes to the extent possible.

Students in grades 7-8 who are identified as G/T may be placed on a G/T team in all PAP classes or may receive G/T instruction in one or more identified content areas. G/T students are clustered together with an expectation of a 33% or higher representation of G/T students in a core foundation class to the extent possible. Some classes are expected to meet the specific needs for G/T students. Please refer to the junior high course selection handbook for specific recommended course listings.

G/T students also have the option to submit their interest in receiving G/T services at the G/T Academy rather than their attendance-zoned campus. See page 11 of this document for information about the G/T Academy.

For more details about the G/T Academy, please see the campus website or contact the campus:

Leon Sablatura Middle School (grades 5-6)  
2201 N. Galveston Ave. Pearland, TX 77581  
Phone: 281-412-1500  
Website: <https://www.pearlandisd.org/domain/420>  
GT Academy Specialist: Stacy Mueller, [muellers@pearlandisd.org](mailto:muellers@pearlandisd.org)

Pearland Junior High West (grades 7-8)  
2337 N. Galveston Ave. Pearland, TX 77581  
Phone: 281-412-1222  
Website: <https://www.pearlandisd.org/domain/472>  
GT Academy Specialist: Stacy Mueller, [muellers@pearlandisd.org](mailto:muellers@pearlandisd.org)

Additional program options, which may vary based on campus interest and feasibility, may include: Spelling Bee, Quiz Bowl, Future Problem Solvers, Robotics, and Texas Math and Science Coaches Association (TMSCA). Please check with your child's campus about which programs are offered at that campus.

## **Secondary (9-12)**

In grades 9-12, teachers who have completed the G/T foundational professional learning required by the state of Texas provide acceleration opportunities to identified students through Advanced Placement (AP) and Pearland Advanced Program (PAP) courses in the four core areas and many elective areas as well. AP and PAP courses offer challenging learning experiences for advanced and gifted learners. To the greatest extent possible, G/T students are clustered within the PAP and AP courses. AP coursework is college level curriculum with high school support for potential college credit by means of an end-of-year exam issued by the College Board. PAP coursework is college preparatory with no nationally recognized exam for college credit. G/T students are expected to enroll in a selection of PAP and AP courses in areas of their strength and interest. For a full listing of courses offered, please refer to the [Pearland ISD High School Course Selection Handbook](#).

Due to the global perspective provided, the embedded aspects of collegiate research skills, and the foundational skills that support degree plans in multiple discipline areas, the Capstone courses, AP Seminar and AP Research, are highly recommended courses for G/T students. These courses are designed for students to demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances of professional quality.

Advanced extracurricular opportunities, which may vary based on the campus your student attends, may include Academic Decathlon, Model United Nations, Future Problem Solvers, and Robotics. Please check with your child's campus about which programs are offered at that campus.

Credit by exam provides an additional opportunity for G/T students to accelerate. For information, please refer to [PISD's Credit by Examination](#) webpage.

Dual Credit courses are not considered G/T program options in Pearland ISD.

**Students must enroll in at least one AP or PAP class to remain a G/T identified student in PISD.**

## **Referring Students for G/T Services**

### **Communication of the Process to Parents and Community**

- Prior to the referral period, Pearland ISD will communicate to families an overview of the assessment procedures and services for G/T students.
- Input from family and community representatives on G/T identification and assessment will be encouraged.

### **How to Refer Students for G/T Identification**

- Referral forms for initial G/T assessment are available through Project G/T beginning September 1 and must be completed by September 30 for students to be assessed for G/T services that school year. To be assessed for G/T services, students must be enrolled and attending school in Pearland ISD.
  - If your child enrolls in Pearland ISD after September 30, please contact the Advanced Academics office for assistance.
- Parents needing assistance in completing the referral form may contact the Advanced Academics office for assistance within the established timeline.
- Members of Pearland ISD professional staff, including principals, teachers, counselors, special program teachers, or others who have knowledge of the student may refer students.
- Parents/Guardians, other family members, and/or community members may refer students.
- Students may refer themselves.

### **Identification**

- Based on a review of information gathered during the assessment process, those students whose data reflect that the district's G/T service options would best meet their educational needs will be identified by the committee for G/T services.
- Final determination of students' need for G/T services will be made by a committee of at least three local district or campus educators who have received training in the nature and needs of G/T students and who have met and reviewed the individual student data (19 TAC §89.1(4)).
- Once identified, students will be provided services, as well as opportunities to produce advanced-level products.
- Students who do not qualify or are not enrolled in G/T services can participate in open enrollment in advanced courses in grades 5-12.
- Once a student is identified in Pearland ISD for G/T services, the eligibility remains in place for the duration of their school career in our district. If you move out of the district, and return in the future, your student will retain the G/T placement. Please contact the Advanced Academics Coordinator to assist you.



## **Assessment**

- Students must be enrolled and attending school in Pearland ISD to be eligible for G/T assessment or services. Please check the [district assessment timeline](#).
- Pearland ISD will provide assessment opportunities for G/T identification once per school year. This assessment process allows for student exceptionalities and language differences to the extent possible. Access to assessment and, if needed, G/T services is available to all populations of the district. All assessment will be consistent with documented accommodations in 504 and Special Education plans.
- At the kindergarten level, at least 3 criteria are used to assess students who show potential of accomplishment relative to age peers. In grades 1 - 12, qualitative and quantitative data are collected through 3 or more measures and are used to determine whether a student needs G/T services.
- Assessment instruments may include, but are not limited to:
  - Ability assessments, including verbal and/or nonverbal
  - Achievement assessments
  - District screener
  - Observation inventory
  - Planned experiences
  - Student portfolio
  - Student interview
  - Review of data from previous years
  - Review of student school performance data
- Parent/guardian permission must be secured for any testing not given to the entire grade level.
- Students who miss G/T assessments due to excused absences may attend a make-up assessment. The make-up assessment will be scheduled by the Advanced Academics Coordinator.

## **Assessment from Outside Sources**

- The Identification Committee will consider the recommendations and results from outside evaluations.
- Costs associated with private assessments will not be reimbursed.

## **Reassessment**

- Student participation is ongoing, and re-evaluation is based on student performance in the program.
- Refer to policy [EHBB \(LOCAL\)](#).

## **G/T Student Transfers**

### **Transfers within Pearland ISD**

- If a Pearland ISD identified G/T student transfers within Pearland ISD, the student continues services at the new campus. Parents should notify Advanced Academics and the campus when the student enrolls.

### **Students Previously Identified G/T by Another School District**

- Transfer students identified G/T by another school district will be properly assessed and appropriately placed following notification of enrollment in the district.
- Students new to Pearland ISD who were identified as G/T by another school district will be placed with a teacher who has completed the state-mandated professional learning to teach G/T students to the extent possible.
- Within six weeks of receiving G/T data, the Identification Committee will evaluate the data provided by the previous school district and any new information to determine if the student is eligible for G/T services in Pearland ISD.
- If, after this records review, the transfer student does not qualify for G/T identification in Pearland ISD, s/he may be referred for testing within the next G/T referral window.
- Students who were identified in their previous school district who have a parent actively serving in the US military will receive G/T services when documentation of G/T identification is received by Advanced Academics.

### **Private and Home-schooled Students**

- Students must be enrolled in Pearland ISD to be eligible for G/T data review by Advanced Academics.
- Within six weeks of receiving G/T data, the Identification Committee will evaluate the data provided by the previous school and any new information to determine if the student is eligible for G/T services in Pearland ISD.
- If the student is not identified as eligible for G/T services based on the data received, they may contact Advanced Academics about referring for G/T assessment and services. See the [district's assessment timeline](#) for more information on G/T assessment.
- If identified as G/T, students will then receive G/T services at their attendance-zoned campus. Students who wish to attend the G/T Academy (GTA) at Sablatura Middle School or Pearland Junior High West (PJHW) must be identified as G/T in Pearland ISD and submit a GTA interest form. GTA interest form must be submitted prior to the deadline published on the Sablatura and PJHW campus websites. Enrollment in GTA is limited. For details about the G/T Academy and their enrollment process and deadlines, please see the campus website or contact the campus.
- Pearland ISD does not offer an assessment program at public expense for non-enrolled students.

## **G/T Academy**

**Starting with the 2024-2025 incoming classes, enrollment for the Gifted and Talented Academy (GTA) is capped at 150 students per grade level. This adjustment is designed to maintain the high quality of education and personalized attention that has become a hallmark of our program. This shift will allow us to continue providing an exceptional learning environment and ensure every student receives the support and resources they need to thrive. We appreciate your understanding and support as we implement this new policy.**

### **Process for Admission:**

For the 2025-2026 school year, all GT identified students wishing to attend the GTA as an incoming 5<sup>th</sup> grade student will submit a GTA Interest Form and enter a 150-seat lottery. Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade student enrollment will be subject to availability based on a 150-seat roster. Any student that expressed interest but did not receive admission will be placed on an Academy waitlist. If spots open for any reason, the waitlist will be utilized to populate openings. (*\*Students must indicate interest in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Geometry Pathway on their GTA Interest Form to be eligible for testing*).

All G/T identified 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students wishing to attend the GTA are eligible to enroll.

Students who are already identified as G/T in Pearland ISD who wish to participate in the G/T Academy program at Sablatura Middle School (grades 5 & 6) or Pearland Junior High West (grades 7 & 8) in school year 2025-2026:

- Must be enrolled in Pearland ISD by October 25, 2024
- Must live in the Pearland ISD attendance zone
- Must submit an interest form to the GT Academy by October 25, 2025

## **Application Timeline for the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Geometry Pathway**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Geometry Pathway is an accelerated mathematics course of study that starts in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and challenges students with greater depth and rigor to help prepare them for AP classes and post-high school education/work. The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Geometry Pathway is only available through the GT Academy, at Sablatura Middle School and Pearland Junior High West.

Participation in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Geometry Pathway is dependent upon admission to the GTA and other criteria.

Once the 150-seat lottery is complete, students receiving admission will be contacted to participate in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade geometry testing. Testing will be limited to students receiving admission. Any student that expressed interest but did not receive admission will be placed on an Academy waitlist. If spots open for any reason, the waitlist will be utilized to populate openings.

Please see the [8<sup>th</sup> Grade Geometry Pathway FAQ document](#) for more information on the pathway.

# **Furloughs and Exit Procedures**

## **Furloughs**

Furloughs are for students who need a specified time away from the academic rigor of the G/T Program. Reasons for furloughs could include, but are not limited to, death in the family and/or a student's physical or mental health. A furlough cannot be used to change the class schedule or because of poor academic performance.

- The parent/guardian or student (with parent/guardian signature) completes the Furlough Request Form and submits it to the Advanced Academics department.
- A G/T Student Support Committee led by a member of the Advanced Academics team, a campus administrator, and a parent/guardian (and student, when appropriate) review the request and student data to grant or deny the furlough.
- After the time specified in the furlough, a G/T Student Support Committee will determine if the student will resume services in the G/T program, exit the program, or be placed on another furlough.
- Copies of the completed furlough form will be provided to, Advanced Academics, the parent/guardian, and the student's permanent folder.

## **Intervention & Exit Procedures**

A request for G/T Intervention should be made when there is an indication that a G/T student is not achieving academically at the expected level of performance. Interventions are required prior to a committee decision regarding exit from G/T services.

A request for G/T Intervention, initiated by a student, parent, teacher, counselor, or administrator, must be submitted to Advanced Academics identifying areas of concern for the student. Advanced Academics will then convene a G/T Student Support Committee meeting including (but not limited to) a campus administrator, a member of the Advanced Academics team, and a parent/guardian, with the student to identify intervention strategies and timeline (6-9 weeks) for implementation and monitoring.

The student continues participation in G/T services during the implementation and monitoring period, and at the end of this period, the G/T Student Support Committee will review the student's performance record and recommend either exit or continued intervention and monitoring. Exiting of students from G/T services must be based on multiple criteria, including, but not limited to, student performance in response to services and interventions, educational needs, social/emotional needs, and any limiting factors at home or at school that are interfering with learning.

Exiting of a student is finalized by a committee decision after completion of the intervention and consultation with parent and student regarding the student's educational needs.

## **Withdrawal**

Parents wishing to withdraw their child from G/T services should contact the Advanced Academics office. Reinstatement for G/T services, after withdrawal, requires a complete reassessment process. For this reason, we recommend intervention or furlough prior to withdrawal.

## **G/T Appeal Process**

If a student does not qualify for the Pearland ISD G/T Program, parents/guardians have due process rights to request an appeal. The request for appeal must follow the guidelines outlined below.

### **Level 1 Appeal**

A parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the Identification Committee regarding identification for the G/T program. To file a Level 1 appeal, please complete the Pearland ISD Gifted and Talented Program Appeal Form: Level One. The appeal form must be submitted to the Advanced Academics Coordinator within 10 business days of the date on the denial of placement letter.

The Level 1 Appeal Committee will include the initial identification committee and may also include campus administrators and/or campus counselors. During the appeal process, all assessment data, including new information from the parent/guardian as to why the original decision should be overturned, will be considered. Within five business days after the Level 1 Appeal Committee decision, the decision will be communicated to the parent/guardian.

### **Level 2 Appeal**

If the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the Level 1 Appeal Committee's decision, written request for a Level 2 Appeal must be submitted to the Director of Advanced Academics. To file a Level 2 Appeal, please complete the Pearland ISD Gifted and Talented Program Appeal Form: Level Two, appeal form must be submitted to the Director of Advanced Academics within 10 business days of the date on the denial of placement letter from the Level 1 Appeal Committee.

A parent/guardian conference will be scheduled with the Director of Advanced Academics. At this conference all assessment data, including new information from the parent or guardian as to why the Level 1 Appeal decision should be overturned, will be considered. The Level 2 conference must occur within 15 business days of the request. Within five business days after the District Level 2 conference, a letter with the decision will be mailed to the parent/guardian.

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the Level 2 Appeal decision, they may contact the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services to follow the District Policy for Appeals.

## **Parent Resources Link**

For additional parent resources, please see the Advanced Academics website.