

Gifted Gazette



Raul Yzaguirre School for Success

EXCITING CHANGES UNDERWAY

When you work in education, change is the order of the day.

With that in mind, we face a new academic year with several changes in mind for the Gifted & Talented program, born from both necessity and experience.

Some of these changes will affect how and when we identify new candidates for or re-evaluate existing members of the GT program. The identification process currently consists of several steps, beginning with nomination. We spent a good deal of time last school year refining this process, and we received several quality nominations during the allotted timeframe. Those students will be evaluated this year, along with this year's nominees. Also considered for evaluation are the students' grades, his or her standardized test scores, recommendations from teachers, and scores on a nonverbal ability test. Each student portfolio is examined individually by members of the GT committee.

Some of the changes we are making will require an addendum or change to our plan with the state of Texas, and will be completed with the invaluable assistance of Monica Brewer, Statewide Coordinator for Gifted & Talented Education. Our program falls under the auspices of the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students (available at <http://bit.ly/TEA-GTPlan>) so any changes we make to our operating procedures must be approved through the Texas Education Agency.

The focus of the program will also shift slightly this year. Read on inside for further details!

Gifted & Talented



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LINER NOTES

Look in the sidebars on each page to find answers to some of the most frequently asked questions regarding the Gifted & Talented program

Gifted & Talented

2016 SUMMER PROGRAM

This summer, the Gifted & Talented program offered a summer enrichment camp. Several students participated, and were involved in a number of activities.

We went to the Miller Outdoor Theatre to enjoy some classical music that kids may have recognized from their favorite cartoons. The conductor explained how each song was a part of a larger opera or orchestral piece.

We also took the time to visit The Green-sheet. This local, free paper is a staple in the Houston market, and has had an interesting history from its humble beginnings as one of the first woman-owned large businesses in the area. First, we visited the printing press, looking at how the machines worked and

learning the history of the machines. Then, we went to their local downtown offices to find out how the paper is designed and put together using graphic design principles before it is printed.

Finally, we got to visit the Mad Potter studio to learn about pottery, painting, kilns, and the creative process. Each student was able to paint and decorate a unique piece or two to take home to their families.

Students also visited Space Center Houston for a day of out-of-this-world fun!



“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”

—Albert Einstein

GT FAQs

Can a student be identified as both Gifted & Talented AND Special Ed?

Absolutely! We call these our twice exceptional students. Keep in mind that many students are gifted in one area, but struggle in another. Also, a student may be identified as Special Education due to a medical condition which requires non-academic accommodations in the classroom. Each child is completely unique.

What if a parent does not want their child to participate in Gifted & Talented programs?

That is entirely up to the parent; however, we encourage everyone to allow their children to participate, and we try to point out all of the benefits that being identified as Gifted & Talented can offer.

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Many teachers have come through their preparation programs learning about Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. The Gifted & Talented program seeks to recognize and work within these categories with gifted students.

Many of our programs this year will cater to the different types of intelligences our students possess, allowing them to work in small groups to solve problems in a creative way. They will also learn how to best interact with others who may have different qualities and to appreciate the diversity which ultimately helps them succeed. These skills will not only be useful in this program, but also as they move forward in life.



The eight identified intelligences are:

- Verbal/Linguistic (Word Smart)
- Logical/Mathematical (Number Smart)
- Naturalist (Nature Smart)
- Body/Kinesthetic (Body Smart)
- Musical/Rhythmic (Music Smart)
- Inter-personal/Social (People Smart)
- Intra-personal/Introspective (Self Smart)
- Visual/Spatial (Picture Smart)

Each kind of “smart” brings a unique blend of talents to the table, and by working together, students learn to build on each others’ strengths and complement weaknesses.



If you give a kid the world, he will find a way to make it better.

DESTINATION IMAGINATION

This year, our Gifted & Talented program will partner with Destination Imagination to offer our students an exciting and enriching bonus curriculum which supports teamwork, problem-solving, creative thinking and more.

According to their website, “The Destination Imagination program is a fun, hands-on system of learning that fosters students’ creativity, courage and curiosity through open-ended academic Challenges in the fields of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), fine arts and service learning... Participants learn patience, flexibility, persistence, ethics, respect for others and their ideas, and the collaborative problem solving process.” These and other 21st century skills are emphasized in a highly adaptable program where the students themselves direct their learning as they work to solve a problem or meet a challenge.

The program offers several levels of projects, ranging from Early Childhood through full-time college students. We will begin by making teams and identifying which challenge each team would like to work on. If they do well, their ideas can go to local tournaments to compete, where winners move on to regional tournaments, and ultimately on to the national competition.

There are several different challenge areas:

- Technical Challenge: Complete tasks by using engineering, research, strategic planning, and related skills
- Scientific Challenge: Blend research and curiosity of science with the thrill and creativity of theater arts
- Engineering Challenge: Design, build, and test load-bearing structures out of specific materials
- Fine Arts Challenge: Experiment with different types of artistic media and theater arts, write scripts, and design props
- Improvisational Challenge: Spontaneity and storytelling are in the spotlight, with skits created and produced on the spot
- Instant Challenge: Engage in quick, creative, critical thinking

Stay tuned for more details as this exciting new partnership takes form!

GT FAQs

What is Gifted & Talented?

According to the TEA, “A gifted/ talented student is a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment, and who exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area; possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or excels in a specific academic field.

How do you identify which students display Gifted & Talented characteristics?

The identification process is both multi-stepped and multi-faceted. First, someone nominates the student. This may be a parent, community member, teacher, or even another student. Then, we administer a nonverbal ability test (which doesn’t require strong reading skills in English), and pull the students’ records; test scores alone do not determine qualification for the program. We look at a student’s teacher recommendation, grades, standardized test scores, and nonverbal test scores. These items are scored on a matrix, and a determination is made by the GT committee regarding his or her suitability to the program.

I saw a kid in the program who I used to teach, and he or she doesn’t seem gifted to me at all. What gives?

Not all children are gifted in the same way or in the same area. Some are incredibly gifted at Math, but may struggle with Language Arts, for example. Just because you may not see it, does not mean that child does not display any gifted characteristics.

RAUL YZAGUIRRE SCHOOL FOR SUCCESS GIFTED & TALENTED PROGRAM

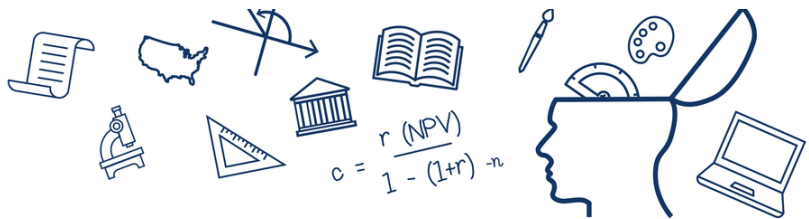
The Gifted & Talented program is entering its fourth year, and is growing every day.

Thank you for wanting to know more about this exciting program, and for any and all help you can give each day!

TIPS & TRICKS FOR DIFFERENTIATION

Many teachers—sometimes even veterans—wonder how they can appropriately differentiate for their Gifted & Talented students. Here are a few quick tips:

- ◇ **Change the product:** If the student has already proven that they've mastered writing an essay, allow them some choice in demonstrating that they understand the material—write a song, make a movie, paint a picture, etc. As long as it shows mastery of the content, give them some freedom in the how.
- ◇ **Add depth:** If a student has already mastered the basic facts of a concept being studied, allow them to dig deeper, looking into the causes and effects or perhaps creating a rubric they might use to evaluate a website on the topic.
- ◇ **Add breadth:** Allow the students to make connections between the new information and that which they already know. For example, if in a math class, how might this concept apply in English, or what concept within English is similar and why?



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