ROISD Gifted and Talented Program Handbook



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Program Goals and Descriptions

Rationale

The Texas Legislature has mandated that each local school district shall design and implement a program to meet the needs of identified gifted and talented students in grades K-12 within its district. (Section 29 121, Texas Education Code).

Each child is a unique individual who deserves the opportunity and guidance to reach his or her maximum potential. With this strongly held belief, the Red Oak Independent School District acknowledges the special needs of the gifted and talented students in our district. These students deserve time and attention to spark their individuality and a continued love of learning. They must be supported and challenged in their intellectual efforts.

Definition of Gifted and Talented Students

Texas Education Code defines "gifted and talented students" as 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.

State Goal Adopted by the Texas State Board of Education

"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."

ROISD Program Philosophy

Gifted and talented students require an academic program designed to facilitate their continued development from grades K-12. The learning experiences of these students should allow opportunities to explore their nature and needs, so that they may gain a better appreciation of themselves and others. Exposure to a broad field of studies should provide for the enhancement of critical and creative thinking in each of the four core areas. This aligns with ROISD's District Improvement Plan which calls for the facilitation of higher-level thinking skills.

ROISD GT Program Goals

To ensure that provisions for gifted and talented students are implemented equitably district-wide, ROISD has established the following program goals:

- Develop and implement an ongoing identification process of screening and selecting gifted and talented students in grades K-12; the process will occur through a selection committee and be based on qualitative and quantitative criteria.
- Ensure that all populations have equal opportunity for referral, screening, and selection into the Gifted and Talented Program through multiple measures, including verbal and nonverbal evaluations.
- Develop and implement an effective program for the academically gifted and talented students in grades K -12.
- Develop and implement appropriately differentiated and gifted and talented K -12 curriculum options which are meaningfully linked to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
- Provide ongoing and appropriate staff development to teachers involved in meeting the needs of gifted and talented students.
- Ensure administrators and counselors have participated in the administrator GT training.
- Develop and implement a design to evaluate the acceptability, effectiveness, and efficiency of the Gifted and Talented Program in grades K-12 by using relevant, data-based information in the areas of identification, curriculum, staff development, parent and community involvement, and program options.

Gifted and Talented Identification Procedures

The purpose of identifying students for the GT Program is not simply to label students as gifted, but to determine which students require alterations in their educational program due to their unique learning needs. To provide appropriately differentiated curriculum for this population of students, ROISD has adopted specific guidelines for identifying students for participation in the GT Program.

The identification and selection of students for participation in the program is determined by a three-step process: (1) referral, (2) assessment, and (3) selection. The district will provide communication to both staff members and parents to make them aware of this process.

All kindergarten students are automatically considered for GT through a universal screening process towards the end of the fall semester.

Referral:

Students may be referred to the GT Program by any of the following persons:

- Parents
- Teachers who are familiar with the student's capabilities, performance potential, and/or past records
- Counselors
- Administrators
- Students may self-nominate
- Other persons who are familiar with the student's abilities, performance potential, and/or past records

Identification for the GT Program occurs during specific windows each year which can be found at https://www.redoakisd.org/departments/curriculum-instruction/gifted-talented-program. Students can go through the referral process once a school year.

Referrals are submitted online through a specific platform that is available throughout the school year. Students may be referred at any time and are then tested during the windows listed at https://www.redoakisd.org/departments/curriculum-instruction/gifted-talented-program.

Screening

Once referred, the student proceeds to screening. In this process, relevant data is collected which shows the student's ability to perform or the potential to perform at the level of accomplishment which might indicate a student's need to be placed in the G/T Program. In accordance with the *Texas State Plan for the Education of the Gifted and Talented,* ROISD incorporate multiple criteria in the screening process. These criteria include both quantitative (measured) and qualitative (descriptive) measures.

Once a referral has been submitted, the campus will begin the screening process which may include:

- Request for completion of Parent Observation Checklist and Permission to Test
- Request for completion of Teacher Observation Checklist
- Collection of existing student data, which includes but is not limited to:
    - prior GT screening data
    - standardized assessment data
    - other observations or information from planned experiences
- Use of assessment tools to collect quantitative student data on aptitude and achievement

Selection

Decisions regarding placement of students in the GT Program are made by a GT committee composed of district and campus educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted/talented students. The committee meets and reviews individual student data following screening procedures.The committee may request the collection of additional data beyond the data collected during screening to make the most appropriate placement recommendation. Parents are notified by letter regarding the District GT Committee's recommendation. Parent permission is required to begin services.

Transfer Students

Placement in the GT program is consistent throughout the district. Transfers from within the district are automatically placed in the program. Students new to the district and not in a GT program will be referred on the same basis as other students within the district and with the same identification procedures. Students new to the district who have been in a GT program in another district must meet Red Oak ISD identification criteria to be placed, which may vary from the criteria used in another school district. Assessment data from another district may be utilized if the test(s) administered are comparable to those used in ROISD for GT identification and if the data is less than two years old. If, however, the identification data is not found to be comparable, reassessment may take place.

Furloughs

A furlough is defined as a leave of absence from program services. The District may place any student on furlough who is unable to maintain satisfactory performance or whose educational needs are not being met within the structure of the GT Program. A furlough may be initiated after a meeting of concerned parties by the student, parent(s), teacher(s), counselor(s), or administrator(s). The intent of a furlough is for temporary reasons only. Furloughs may not be granted for more than one grading period unless there are serious extenuating circumstances. At the end of a furlough, the student may re-enter the program, be placed on another furlough, or be exited from the program.

Exiting the Program

Every effort is made to ensure that students are accurately evaluated and correctly placed in the GT Program. Once the student is placed in the GT Program, efforts are made to meet needs at his/her level of achievement. However, if the program is no longer the appropriate placement for the student, exit procedures may be initiated by the student, parent(s), teacher(s), counselor(s), or administrator(s).

A request to exit the program must be made in writing to the campus counselor stating the reasons for the request. The campus counselor will then forward the request to the District GT Coordinator. The District GT Committee will review the request and the available student information. The District GT Committee shall meet with the parent and student before considering the request. The District GT Committee may determine that student progress should be monitored closely for a period of time, or possibly that the student should be placed on furlough. If the District GT Committee determines that it is in the best interests of the student and his/her educational needs, the District GT Committee may exit the student from the program.

Program Re-Entry

Students who exit the GT Program may re-enter the Program but must re-qualify according to district criteria. Test scores must be current and may not be used if more than two years old. Campuses will follow the same procedures as for any student referred for the first time.

Appeals

If a parent/guardian believes there are valid reasons for reconsideration of a District GT Committee decision, he/she must submit a written letter stating the reasons for the request to the campus counselor who will then send it to the District GT Coordinator. This written request must be submitted no later than two weeks after receiving communication regarding the decision. Upon appeal, the District GT Committee will review the student's available data and make decisions about whether additional assessment or data collection is needed to re-evaluate the decision.

Description of GT Program Services

The Gifted and Talented Program provides differentiated curriculum opportunities including both enrichment and acceleration for students in grades K-12. Thinking strategies play an active role in GT classrooms, providing students with appropriate challenges and in-depth understanding. Students learn to work together as a group, with other students, and independently. Experiences are available to students to encourage growth in areas of strength as well as the development of advanced-level products and performances.

Teacher Training Requirements:

Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students have a minimum of 30 hours of staff development including, but not limited to nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students. They also complete six hours annually of additional professional development in gifted education.

Program Organization

- Elementary Program: In addition to the homeroom classroom teachers meeting training requirements described above, GT students in grades 1-5 also take part in a pull-out program. They are served by a GT teacher who has had training in all aspects of gifted education. Curriculum units used are interdisciplinary, based on broad themes, and incorporate higher level thinking strategies into the core content. GT teachers also work with regular classroom teachers so that, along with the pull-out program, gifted students may experience challenging learning opportunities in their regular classroom.
- Middle School Program: GT students in grades 6-8 must participate in at least one Honors level course. Honors courses are fast-paced and rigorous, and are designed to challenge students and accelerate through the curriculum in some cases.
- High School Program: GT students in grades 9-12 must participate in at least one Honors, Advanced Placement(AP), or Dual Credit (DC) course.

Texas Performance Standards Projects

The Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) is a resource for differentiated instruction developed by educator committees with the Texas Education Agency. At each grade level, the TPSP provides guidelines for independent learning experiences and research projects that are adaptable and based upon the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in the foundation content areas. Red Oak ISD utilizes these resources for challenging, individualized interdisciplinary projects that are tied to the grade-level foundation curriculum.

Parental Involvement

ROISD recognizes the importance of parental involvement and collaboration in the design and delivery of GT Program services. Parent meetings are organized to provide support and input for the program. Meetings will be held twice per year with additional meetings as needed. Information regarding updates, service design, and identification will be shared with parents and the community.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation of the ROISD GT Program will take place each year. ROISD staff and community members may provide input. GT-specific information from Student and Community Engagement surveys will also be used in the evaluation process.

Resources

ROISD School Board Policy: http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/432

Texas Education Agency GT Webpage: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6420

Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147507377&libID=2147507368

Texas Performance Standards Project: http://www.texaspsp.org/

Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented: http://txgifted.org/

Baylor Talent Identification Program: https://gifted.soe.baylor.edu/baylor-tip

Northwestern University Center for Talent Development: http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/

For Questions or Comments, please contact:

Campus GT Teacher

Campus Counselor

Campus Principal