



## *Gifted and Talented Program Handbook*

*In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Elgin ISD, does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including CTE programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Acts of 1990 (ADA), as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.*

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## STATE GOAL FOR SERVICES FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

Students who participate in services designed for gifted students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment and reflect individuality and creativity. High school graduates who have participated in services for gifted 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*

## STATE DEFINITION OF A GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENT

§ 29.121. DEFINITION: In this subchapter, "gifted and talented 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:

- 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.

*-Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, § 1, eff. May 30, 1995*

## ELGIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT DEFINITION OF GIFTED LEARNERS

Elgin ISD defines gifted and talented as any child or youth in grades K-12 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 general intellectual ability; or
- 2) Excels in one or more specific academic fields: math, science, language arts, and/or social studies

## ELGIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS FOR THE GIFTED/TALENTED SERVICES

- 1) **Goal 1:** Identify students in grades K-12 who demonstrate an academic need for gifted services using the criteria established by the district, approved by the board, and in compliance with the state mandates.
- 2) **Goal 2:** Maintain equitable participation and increase performance in advanced academic opportunities.
- 3) **Goal 3:** Increase and vary enrichment resources and opportunities for gifted & talented students.
- 4) **Goal 4:** Provide students with multiple opportunities to participate in learning experiences using advanced content which are defensibly differentiated in depth, complexity and range through modification to content and/or process and/or product.

## IDENTIFICATION & ASSESSMENT OF GIFTED LEARNERS

Elgin Independent School District has board approval on the identification procedures and processes of students K-12 for the services of the Gifted/Talented Program. These procedures meet state requirements (§29.121 & TAC 89.1) and have been designed to ensure the identification of any student who demonstrates educational need for the services of the program under the established guidelines.

## REFERRAL PROCESS

Referrals can originate from teachers, parents or community members during the Fall referral period advertised on all campuses. Students are nominated with a questionnaire available in digital or hardcopy available at each campus's front office. If a parent refers a student, the parent/guardian is thereby approving that their child be tested. If a teacher or community member submits the referral, parent/guardian permission is required before GT testing may occur.

When a referral is submitted for a child, their parent or guardian will be prompted to complete a Parent/Caregiver GT observation form.

## SCREENING/ASSESSMENT PROCESS

### 2nd Grade GT Screener:

Beginning Fall of 2025, Elgin ISD will screen *all* 2nd graders for high-ability needs using a nonverbal, language, and culturally-neutral ability test. This means that students do not have to wait for a referral to be assessed. As with other district-wide testing, 2nd-grade students in Elgin ISD are screened unless the parent/guardian opts out of district testing.

### Data Collected to Make Placement Decisions

- School Abilities Test (Quantitative), such as the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT3), the CogAT or other school abilities tests, as deemed appropriate for the student;
- Achievement Tests (Quantitative) such as the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), NWEA MAP, or other achievement tests as deemed appropriate for the student;
- Divergent thinking assessment (Qualitative) such as Draw-A-Person, Torrence Test of Creative Thinking, or other divergent thinking assessments as deemed appropriate for the student;
- Teacher and/or Parent Rating Scales (Qualitative) such as the HOPE Teacher Rating Scale, the Renzulli-Hartman Teacher Rating Scales, the Purdue Teacher Rating Scales, or other rating scales as deemed appropriate for the student;
- Student product/portfolio

**QUALIFICATION PROCESS** The Gifted/Talented committee consists of at least three district educators. All committee members have been trained in the nature and needs of gifted students. The Gifted/Talented Committee makes a professional judgment based on the recorded student profile data. As the committee evaluates the data on the students nominated, the committee has three options:

- The majority of profile data indicates the student exhibits educational need and would benefit from the services offered in the Gifted/Talented program.
- There is insufficient evidence in the documentation at this time indicating that the student's educational needs would best be met by the Gifted/Talented program. The preponderance of evidence indicates the student's educational needs would best be served with the services of the regular curriculum.
- Once the identification process is complete, parents or guardians are notified of the
- Gifted/Talented Committee's decision within ten school days. Parents of all screened

students may request a conference to examine their child's assessment results. Requests should be made through the student's home campus.

## **ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR TRANSFER OF STUDENTS**

All students who have participated in gifted and talented programs prior to coming to Elgin ISD may be considered for the Gifted/Talented Program. Once screening records are received from the student's previous district, the records will be examined for correspondence to Elgin ISD's criteria. If the transfer data is insufficient, Elgin ISD will assess the student to see if placement in the program is in the student's best interest. A decision will be made regarding qualification within 30 school days of the receipt of the student's Gifted/Talented assessment results from the previous district. If a student has no prior data, then the student will be assessed during the next testing window.

## **APPEALS PROCESS**

Once the identification process is complete, parents or guardians are notified of the results within 10 school days of the committee's decision. A parent or staff member may appeal an identification decision by writing an appeal letter to the Gifted/Talented committee after the committee has issued letters documenting its qualification decisions. The appeal letter must be postmarked within 10 business days of receipt of the parent/guardian letter written indicating the committee's initial decision. The committee will reconvene in order to consider the need for further assessment data or other information.

## **FURLOUGH PROCEDURE**

A furlough is a temporary "leave of absence" from the Gifted/Talented Program designed to meet the individual needs of an identified student. Parent requests for a furlough will be given to the campus administrator and members of the Gifted/Talented committee for consideration. A student may be furloughed for a period deemed appropriate by the Gifted/Talented committee. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed, and the student may re-enter the Gifted/Talented program, be removed from the program, or be placed on another furlough. Furloughs are designed to be short-term and temporary and should never be used for an entire school year.

A furlough does not indicate a permanent exit from the program. Furloughs could be utilized for a variety of extenuating circumstances. Any student may be granted a furlough from the program for various issues such as overcommitment, family concerns, serious illness, or any

other circumstances that would inhibit or curtail the student's performance in the program. The furlough may also be used before a formal exit from the program for those students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the learning opportunities of the Gifted/Talented program. A furlough might also provide the student with an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the Gifted/Talented committee. A furlough is arranged to meet the individual needs of the student.

## **REASSESSMENT**

A student may be reassessed up to 2 times (not including) the 2nd grade screener.

## **EXIT**

Student performance in the program shall be monitored. A student shall be removed from the program at any time the Gifted/Talented committee determines it is in the student's best interest and a furlough has been ineffective. If a parent requests that their child be removed from the program, the Gifted/Talented committee shall grant the request. Once a student is exited from the program he/she must adhere to the identification procedures and exhibit educational need to be readmitted.

## **Gifted & Talented Service Design in Elgin ISD**

Elgin Independent School District offers a variety of learning experiences and opportunities for Gifted/Talented students in grades K-12, which meet the mandates of the Texas Administrative Code. These services include, but are not limited to, integrating Depth and Complexity into the curriculum, requiring advanced-level products and performances, and allowing identified Gifted/Talented students the opportunity to work with other identified students.

### **Elementary/Intermediate GT Service Model (Grades K-6)**

The primary delivery method of GT services for grades K-6 is through a pull-out program led by certified GT teachers/specialists. The pull-out program provides GT students with the opportunity to work with other gifted children on an advanced curriculum that utilizes a variety of differentiation strategies. All students also have the opportunity to be a part of school clubs or competitions such as Lego/Robotics or selection to the UIL A+ Academic Team.

### **Texas Performance Standards Project**

The Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) is a resource for providing differentiated instruction to gifted/talented (G/T) students. The TPSP provides a coherent package of standards, curriculum, and assessments for use in G/T programs from kindergarten through high school.

The goal of the TPSP is to provide the opportunity for G/T students to create professional-quality work in alignment with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students.

At each grade level, the TPSP provides guidelines for independent learning experiences and research projects. The projects, or “tasks,” are based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and focus on the foundation content areas of English language arts and reading, mathematics, science, and social studies with interdisciplinary connections. More information can be found at [www.texaspsp.org](http://www.texaspsp.org).

### **Secondary GT Service Model (Grades 7-12)**

Secondary GT services include instruction by a teacher with the appropriate GT Foundations training and annual required specialized training in the following options:

- Advanced Courses
- Advanced Placement (AP)
- Dual Credit Courses
- UT OnRamps
- Advanced-level CTE Courses
- Advanced-level Fine Arts Courses
- Participation in Clubs/Organizations and Competitions such as UIL Academic Meet

Acceleration provides GT students with a choice of concentrating on their strengths and/or interests through the selection of their course schedule. Academic options provided will vary based on the student’s chosen pathway and graduation plan and requirements.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ONGOING TRAINING IN GIFTED EDUCATION**

Elgin Independent School District is committed to providing its staff with appropriate and meaningful professional development which enables the staff to meet the unique and individual educational needs of all students including services for gifted/talented students.

It is important that all staff who are responsible for formally servicing these students obtain appropriate training for educating the gifted child. The district will require at least the minimum hours of training as mandated by the state:

### **Texas Administrative Code §89.2. Professional Development**

- 1) Prior to assignment in the program, 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 that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students;
- 2) Teachers without training required in paragraph (1) of this section who provide instruction and services that are part of the gifted/talented program must complete the 30-hour training requirement within one semester;
- 3) Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students receive a minimum of six hours annually of professional development in gifted education; and
- 4) Administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions have a minimum of six hours of professional development that includes the nature and needs of gifted/talented students and program options.

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

Elgin ISD will annually evaluate the Gifted/Talented program by surveying all stakeholders including students, parents/guardians, and teachers. The evaluation data will be presented to the school board and will be used as a needs assessment to be addressed in the district/campus improvement plans.