

Parent Guidance Document for GISD's 18+ Services for Students with Disabilities

Last edit: 9/4/2025

18+ Overview

18+ services, known as the Bridges Program in GISD, are provided as part of FAPE (Free and Appropriate Public Education). The services are geared toward the student's transition from high school to adult life. Instead of focusing on grade level curriculum, which the student has already completed, these services focus on the domains of adult life: employment, lifelong learning, community access, and independent living.

18+ services emphasize putting the adult schedule in place, including needed supports, while the student and their family still have assistance through public education.

18+ services support each student in:

- Building a sustainable adult schedule
- Increasing independence
- Learning the functional skills needed to meet postsecondary goals
- Eliminating barriers to employment and community access
- Fading school support while developing natural/paid supports



Last edit: 9/4/2025

Eligibility

Most students with disabilities complete their graduation requirements in 4 years and are no longer eligible for special education beyond high school. However, some students receiving special education services are eligible to continue enrollment in public school if they meet ALL of the following requirements:

- Student received modified curriculum in any classes in high school or student received accommodations only, but did not pass more than 2 EOCs
- Student's ARD committee has determined the student requires continued support to meet transition needs
- Student has met all state graduation course credit requirements
- Student has met all state assessment requirements for graduation, as determined by the ARD committee.
- Student has not reached the age of 22 by September 1st of the academic year

Graduation

Students who have completed their high school graduation requirements, but are continuing on with 18+ services will be issued a certificate of attendance. These students have the right to participate in the graduation ceremony with their peers, if they choose to do so. After completion of their IEP in the 18+ program and being exited from services, the student will receive their high school diploma.



Last edit: 9/4/2025

Phases

Think of 18+ in terms of phases instead of school years. 18+ services do not just automatically continue until the student turns 22 years old. Students move through phases that are not based on the school calendar.

Phase 1 Discovery-Before 18+	**Phase 2 Implementation**	**Phase 3 Consistency**	**Phase 4 Transfer**
Develop a clear picture of the anticipated adult schedule. Identify the skills the student already has and what they will need to learn in 18+ services. So Phase 1 is during their time in High School.	Begin "filling in the blanks" on the adult schedule. Find the places in the community where the student can be successful. Identify what will be needed to teach the skills and increase independence.	Problem-solving to remove barriers, increase independence, and begin fading support. Determine how supports will be transferred to the paid/unpaid supports available after exiting school.	Facilitate transfer of adult schedule to student/family, with paid and natural supports taking on the responsibility for all needed assistance. Student graduates and exits. *Ideally this phase is reached before the student turns 22, so they can return for services if they should encounter difficulties.*

Graduation While in 18+ services

Graduation will be reviewed annually to determine if the student has mastered their IEP and should graduate, or if the student has more need for educational services. While a student may be eligible for services through age 22, it can be helpful to exit before eligibility ends to be sure their schedule and supports are working.

Last edit: 9/4/2025

Curriculum and Grading

The students accessing 18+ services have completed high school credits, so the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) are not required. The “curriculum” for 18+ settings is customized to meet the individualized needs of the students, as outlined by their annual goals. Areas of instruction can include life-long learning, vocational skills, independent living, and recreation/leisure. IEP progress reports will outline student growth and progress towards mastery of their goals. Students receiving 18+ services are awarded pass/fail on report cards instead of numeric grades.

Length of School Day

Students receiving 18+ services generally do not have the same length of day as they did in high school. Since students are not attending classes such as reading, math, and science, their day is typically shorter, such as 3-5 hours a day, and is based on the needs of the student.

Returning for Services After Receiving a Diploma

Students who are eligible to continue for 18+ services after meeting graduation requirements are also eligible to return for services after receiving a diploma and exiting.

A child who has not reached the age of 22 by September 1st of the academic year may return to school as long as the child was awarded a diploma that met the following conditions:

- The child was required to successfully complete their IEP; **and**
- Received accommodations only, but did not pass more than 2 EOCs **OR**
- Received modified content in one or more courses **and**:
- Has obtained employment in addition to mastering sufficient self-help skills to enable the child to maintain the employment without direct and ongoing educational support of the school; **or**
- Has employability skills and self-help skills that do not require direct ongoing educational support of the school; **or**
- Has access to services that were not within the legal responsibility of public education or employment or educational options for which the child has been prepared by the academic program

Last edit: 9/4/2025

18+ Services in GISD

Independent Living Skills

Students learn many functional living skills needed to develop self-confidence and greater independence. Students practice skills including laundry, grocery and retail shopping, meal preparation/cooking, household chores, medical care, banking, learning about different housing options, maintaining personal hygiene, performing basic manners and social skills, and making healthy choices. Students are also provided opportunities to visit sites that provide living options for adults with disabilities.

Community Experiences

Students are provided with experiences to expand their knowledge of their community resources such as exploring the Georgetown Square and shopping centers, taking public transportation, using library, banking, and postal services, recreation and leisure activities, as well as learning about and practicing public and individual safety.

Postsecondary Education

Students explore different college programs available for students with disabilities and are provided with opportunities for college tours.

Vocational Skills

18+ services provides vocational skills instruction through the work-based learning model and includes 4 tiers: Developmental, Campus Volunteer, Community Volunteer, and Intern.

Developmental: Students receive individualized skills training through a combination of classroom instruction and campus-based work experiences. Students, along with assistance from job coaches, learn and practice their daily living and vocational skills in an apartment, kitchen and simulated job sites as well as different businesses on campus.

Volunteer: Students receive vocational skills training through a combination of classroom instruction and service-based experiences. Students, along with assistance from job coaches, learn and practice their skills by volunteering at sites in the community or on campus.

Some of our community partners for volunteer sites include: IHop, Helping hands, Meals on Wheels, Georgetown Public Library, Schlotzsky's, All things Wild, and YMCA.

Last edit: 9/4/2025

Students at both the Campus and Volunteer tiers also engage in student-led business enterprises. They are involved with candle making, jewelry, t-shirt, horticulture, homemade soaps sugar scrubs and have opened “Bridges Boutique” to sell their products to the community. They also run a Bridges Brew coffee shop at the Future Ready Complex in Georgetown ISD>

Intern: Students receive vocational skills training through a combination of classroom instruction and non-paid internships. Students rotate through different industries (retail, grocery, restaurant, custodial) to be able to experience various work tasks and environments and gain employability skills that are transferable among a variety of jobs. The goal of the worksite rotations is to assist students in discovering job possibilities that link skills, abilities, interests, values, needs and to assist students in finding competitive, integrated employment. Several interns have also earned certifications in different job fields including technology. Culinary and are working on gaining custodial certifications as well.

Some of our community partners for job sites include: Hat Creek Burger Company, Academy Sports and Outdoors, Kohl’s, Goodwill, H.E.B, Sprouts, Chili’s, Double Dave’s Pizzaworks, and Tru Texas BBQ.

Along with learning and practicing specific work duties on campus, at volunteer sites, or internships, students at all tiers are taught employability skills such as:

- Punctuality and time management
- Reliability
- Strong work ethic
- Ability to follow directions
- Willingness to accept and respond to feedback
- Work-related decision-making and problem-solving skills
- Social and communication skills in the workplace
- Maintenance of personal appearance and grooming
- Getting along with co-workers and becoming strong members of the work team
- Basic knowledge of what is expected in the workplace
- Writing resumes, filling out job applications, and interviewing skills

Location of 18+ Services in GISD

18+ services are provided at the Bridges Program at the Future Ready Complex off Airport road in Georgetown, Tx. This was a new facility for the 24-25 school year and provides opportunities for 18+ students to connect with the community and collaborate with many other programs in our district, like Career and Technical Education.

Location of 18+ Services outside of GISD

Some students receive 18+ services through Project Search. Students are still a GISD student but all learning is through Project Search at one of their community sites.

Project Search is a worldwide transition-to-work, one school year employment preparation internship that strives to prepare young people with disabilities for success in competitive integrated employment.

The program provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent-living skills, long-term job coaching, and continuous feedback from teachers, skills trainers, and employers to help young people with disabilities make successful transitions to productive adult life.

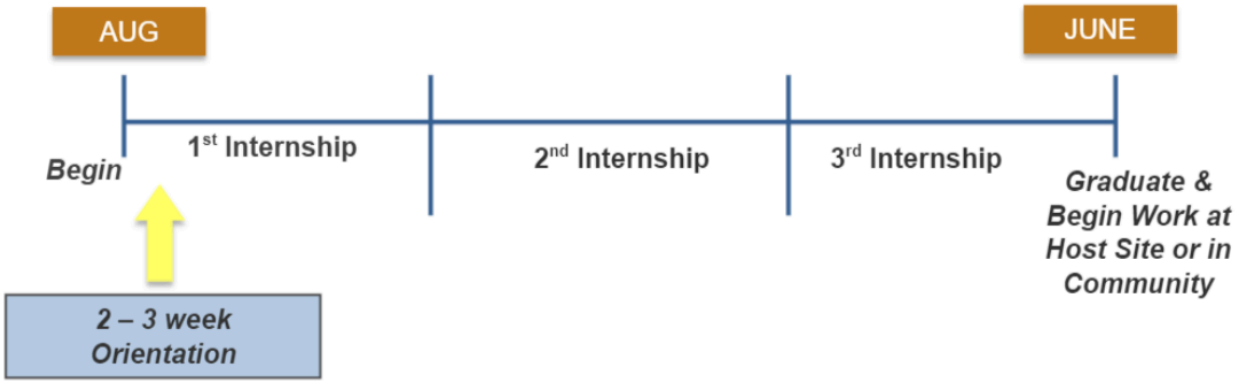
As a result, at the completion of the training program, students with disabilities are employed in nontraditional, complex, and rewarding jobs.

Program Description

- The internship is a 9 month program that aligns with school year
- There are 10 - 12 young people going through the internship at a time
- The program accepts individuals with a variety of disabilities, ages 18-21
- Students rotate through 3 unpaid internships w/continual feedback
- Students gain competitive, marketable, transferable skills

Last edit: 9/4/2025

Sample Year Schedule



Sample Daily Schedule

- 8:30 Staff Meeting: Employability Skills
- 9:30 Worksites
- 11:30 Lunch
- 12:00 Worksites
- 2:30 Review, Reflect, Plan
- 3:00 Depart

Basic Eligibility Guidelines

- [ ] Young adults with a variety of disabilities who have completed high school if they go through TWC-To go through GISD they must meet the same criteria as listed above for 18+ services.
- [ ] Appropriate hygiene, social, and communication skills
- [ ] Ability to work independently, take direction, and change behavior
- [ ] Pass drug screen, background check, immunizations (including COVID) - whatever is required of other employees
- [ ] Desire to Work!

Sample Application Timeline

February: Application due for Project SEARCH

March: Selection committee meets to interview and select interns

April: Applicants receive notification of selection status

Last edit: 9/4/2025

Employment Outcomes

- ★ Competitive employment in an integrated setting (among co-workers with and without disabilities)
- ★ Year round, non-seasonal employment
- ★ 16 hours/week or more
- ★ Prevailing wage
- ★ 33% of graduates become employed by the host site, 67% become employed outside of the host site
- ★ Average hourly wage after graduation from program is $9.13
- ★ Average hours worked after graduation from program is 25.39/week

Current Internship Job Sites

- ➢ Kalahari Resorts and Conventions Round Rock, TX

For more information on GISD's 18+ services and/or Project SEARCH, please contact:

- Eden Guthrie - GISD Special Education Coordinator of 18+ Services
  - guthriee@georgetownisd.org
  - 512-943-5000 ext 6069

Last edit: 9/4/2025