WICHITA FALLS ISD GIFTED & TALENTED PROGRAM GUIDE

Equipped learners.
Endless possibilities.

www.wfisd.net/gt

940-235-1021

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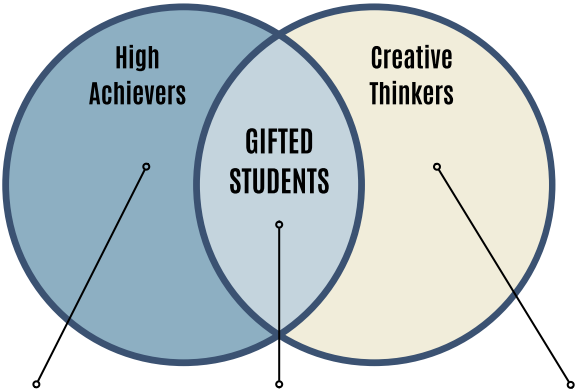
GENERAL

What does it mean to be gifted?

For students in grades K through 12, being "gifted" may present itself in a range of characteristics. Often, giftedness is associated with being a high achiever--or, someone who gets high grades and test scores. Other times, creative thinkers are given the label of being gifted, because of their out-of-the-box ideas and wild imaginations.
In our District, we seek to recognize giftedness as a combination of both advanced achievement and creative thinking.



Remembers the answers...
Are attentive...
Work hard to achieve...
Generate advanced ideas...
Complete assignments on time...
Memorize well...
Absorb information...
Gets A's...
Are receptive...
Perform at the "top" of the group...
Enjoy the company of age peers...

Pose unforseen questions
Are selectively attentive
Learn with efficiency
Generate complex, abstract ideas
Extend assignments in new directions
Guess & infer well
Manipulate information
May not be motivated by grades
Are intense
Are often beyond the group
Prefer the company of intellectual peers

...See exceptions
...Daydream; may seem off-task
...Play with ideas & concepts
...Overflow with ideas, but...
...May never develop or finish plans
...Create & brainstorm well
...Improvise
...May not care about grades
...Are unconventional
...Are their own group
...Enjoy the company of creative peers but often works alone

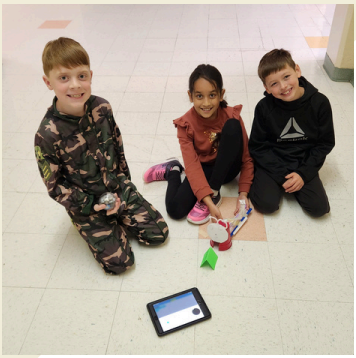
from Janice Szabos (1989)

In our state, Texas Education Code defines a "gifted and talented student" 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.

TEC §29.121 (Chapter 29, Subchapter D)

OUTCOMES



What are the goals of the GT program?

Our goal is directly in line with the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students.* Specifically, students who qualify for gifted/talented services are charged to

> *develop innovative, advanced-level products and peformances that reflect individuality and creativity.*

Here are some examples from actual WFISD students *(names have been changed).*

Lauren & Alex (grade 3) created a “sled attachment” for a Sphero robot after learning about transportation difficulties in the Arctic Circle. Students were challenged to consider how technology can be used to positively impact the transportation of goods across an arctic tundra. They used the engineering design process to plan and build their attachment. Then, they coded a pathway for their robot to follow.

Caroline & Sean (grade 4) learned all about Egypt --- its landscape, history, and art. In a mini-STEM challenge, students were asked to design and build a water tower with a prototype pipeline system out of recyclable materials. Students had to collaborate to successfully complete the challenge and meet specific limitations.

For his independent passion project, **Thomas (grade 5)** asked *How can I make an anime creature as a moving robot?* He created his design using Tinkercad software, built a VEX robot for his base, and then fabricated a character shell out of various materials. He then presented his project to his peers.

Sam & Riley (grade 7) worked together on a project to design an original product and create a marketing plan for it. Their invention was a universal gaming remote that would be compaitble with various gaming systems (like Xbox, PlayStation, or Switch). As a team, the two students built a prototype and created a presentation, which they used to pitch their idea to adults who visited their classroom (like investors from the “Shark Tank” show on ABC).

Irene (grade 10) researched smiling and laughter, from their biological origins to their social benefits. She summarized her findings in a slideshow and presented the information in a 7-minute “TED talk” to students, staff, and community members during a school forum.

As GT students near the end of high school, these products and performances should reach professional quality.

For more samples, visit the *Texas Peformance Standards Project (www.texaspsp.org)* or find more information on the TEA website.

https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/gifted-and-talented-education

ELEMENTARY SERVICES

In line with state guidelines, students in our GT program are assured an array of learning opportunities that emphasize academics and also allow GT students to work together as a group, with other students, and independently.

In **Kindergarten**, students can be identified for GT services. However, these services do not begin for students until they start 1st grade.

In **Grades 1-2**, GT students are served by their classroom teachers. In addition to routine activities involving differentiated and small-group instruction, GT students are given time in class to complete one project each nine weeks, based on recommendations from the Texas Performance Standards Project (www.texaspsp.org).

A few samples are described below:

Grade 1 -*Animal Nation*. Students study different animals to learn about their basic needs and ecosystems, then prepare a report to the class in which they predict the animals' futures if their needs are not met.
-*Songwriter's Club*. After studying songs and lyrics as storytelling devices, students compose and present original songs that tell a story about their own lives.

Grade 2 -*Who's Who*. Students research the biography of a famous or unique person, and prepare a presentation to the class (such as a costumed interview, a poster/artwork, slideshow).
-*Everybody on the Move!* Students create a public service announcement (PSA) about why people should be involved in some form of physical activity. The PSA can be a commercial, skit, or brochure.

Franklin Elementary GT students work on various projects during the school year.

In **Grades 3-4-5**, GT students are served through the TAG pull-out program. Students take a bus to special GT classes for half a day, one day per week. The TAG program seeks to strengthen students' skills in the 4 C's (collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking) through various projects and activities, such as:

- Makerspace challenges
- Coding
- Research projects
- Digital design
- STEM challenges
- Art integration
- Passion projects
- Puzzling/Spatial Reasoning

Students travel to TAG 1x per week by school bus for a morning OR afternoon session. Morning sessions are from 8:50 a.m.-11:15 a.m. and afternoon sessions are from 11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

The TAG program provides a valuable opportunity for gifted students to collaborate with similarly skilled peers, learn resilience in the face of academic challenge, and pursue independent interests.

TAG is located at the **Carrigan Center** at
1609 Blonde St.
940-235-1021

TAG Instructors:

Mrs. Alison Colemere, ext. 26009
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SECONDARY SERVICES

MIDDLE SCHOOL

In **Grades 6-7-8**, GT students are served in two ways:

- Advanced academic classes in English, Math, Science, & Social Studies
- Courses where GT students are grouped together for special projects.

Grade	Courses (GT Groups)	Advanced Academics
6	GT students are scheduled into specific periods/ sections of elective courses, during which they are given time (at least one day per week) to work on special GT projects. In 6th grade, these courses are: • Tech Apps / Leadership	All students in middle school can sign up for advanced academics classes in English, Math, Science and Social Studies. Advanced courses prepare students for high school and college, so students are expected to: • Exhibit positive academic skills and higher-order thinking (in reading, discussion, and analysis) • Adapt to a faster pace (less review, more topics) • Meet more stringent content requirements (longer assignments, greater depth) In mathematics, students in grades 7-8 who meet certain requirements also have the opportunity to take courses for high school credit, such as Honors Algebra I. (For more information, see *Advancement* on pages 11-12.)
7	GT students are scheduled into specific periods/ sections of elective courses, during which they are given time (at least one day per week) to work on special GT projects. In 7th grade, this course is: • Global Investigations	
8	GT students are scheduled into specific periods/ sections of elective courses, during which they are given time (at least one day per week) to work on special GT projects. In 8th grade, this course is: • College & Career Prep	

HIGH SCHOOL

In **Grades 9-10**, GT students are served through Honors classes in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies, as well as Languages other than English. Within these courses, specific teachers are expected to allow GT students to collaborate on projects focusing on the development of advanced-level products and peformances.

Grade	Courses (GT Groups)	Advanced Academics
9-10	Starting in 2022, GT students began completing special projects (one per semester) when enrolled in the following courses: • World Geography, • Chemistry, • Algebra II	Students in high school can sign up for advanced (or, "Honors") classes in English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Spanish. Honors courses prepare students for college-level work by focusing on: • Academic skills & higher-order thinking • Fast pacing • More stringent course requirements
10	Students in the IB Program at Legacy High School will have the opportunity to complete an extended Personal Project under the supervision of a teacher mentor.	

In **Grades 11-12**, GT students can self-select into any wide range of District programs that meet their individual needs and interests, where students are expected to create professional-quality products and peformances.

- ***Advanced Placement (AP)***. Students can earn college credit through AP exams.
- ***International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program***. Students can complete requirements to earn college hours.
- ***Dual credit courses***. Students take courses through a college (such as Vernon College or Midwestern State University) to satisfy specific high school requirements.
- ***Career and Technical Education***. Students can obtain industry certifications in numerous areas.
- ***Other electives***. Students can demonstrate skills in the arts, in leadership, or through service organizations.

ASSESSMENT

How are students identified for placement in the GT program?

In adherence with state guidelines, WFISD uses multiple measures to identify GT students (both *qualitative* surveys and *quantitative* assessments).

Month	Activities	Responsibility
Nov.	GT staff meet with campus GT liaisons to review the assessment process.	District-level
Dec.	Schools advertise and notify parents and teachers about upcoming events related to GT assessment.	Campus-level
Jan.	***GT Nomination Window*** • **Advertise -** Please encourage parents to nominate their child by sharing flyers through ParentSquare, posting flyers in reception areas, or encouraging teachers to speak directly with parents for students they feel could be gifted. **To nominate a student for GT testing:** Parents, Teachers, and Counselors can nominate a student, but we must receive permission from a parent to test. If a parent is nominating, they will complete the entire nomination form. If a school faculty member is nominating, they will complete Sections 1-3 and 5-11, but a parent/guardian must also given permission to test on the printable survey.	
Feb.-Mar.	**GT Testing**. Our district uses the *Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT).* For more information about this test, visit www.riversideinsights.com/solutions/cogat. In WFISD, KG students test *on paper*. Students in grades 1-11 test *on computer.*	Testing is completed by each campus Guidance Counselor.
Mar.-Apr.	A District committee meets to analyze assessment data and **set the testing criteria** for entrance into the GT program. Each year the committee can adopt new requirements; however, for several years, acceptance criteria has been: **Age percentile ranks of 85 or more on at least 3 of the 4 scores reported on CogAT.** Students scores can be categorized as: **Do Not Qualify, Need More Information,** or **Qualifying Scores.**	The committee must include 3 or more people, and is typically comprised of the Associate Director, the GT Specialists, and teachers.
May	Administer the *NNAT2* or the *Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking* for any students we need more information on.	
May-June	Address any testing issues or scoring appeals on a case-by-case basis. Create updated GT list by adding newly qualified GT students.	
July-Aug.	Update GT indicators in Skyward for newly qualified GT students. Update campus lists to reflect newly enrolled, transfers, and withdrawals. Begin GT services in August.	

Here's a sample letter that describes the information a parent might receive if a student is found eligible for gifted services:

WICHITA FALLS ISD — Spring 2024

Gifted/Talented (GT) Student Evaluation Report

Student: Sample, Sabrina — DOB: 05/14/2015

Campus: EXAMPLE ELEMENTARY — Grade: 4 — ID Number: 100001

QUALITATIVE DATA

PARENT SURVEY			
Category	***Criteria**	**Raw Score**	***Meet criteria?**
Learning	24 out of 32	26	YES
Creativity	27 out of 36	26	NO
Motivation	24 out of 32	30	YES
Leadership	21 out of 28	25	YES
Communication	21 out of 28	22	YES
TEACHER SURVEY			
Category	***Criteria**	**Raw Score**	***Meet criteria?**
Learning			
Creativity			
Motivation			
Leadership			
Communication			

Total number of QUALITATIVE indicators that meet criteria: **4**

*This year, to qualify for the GT program, a student must meet criteria on at least 2 qualitative measures.

QUANTATIVE DATA

Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)		Percentile Rank		
Category	***Criteria**	**By Grade**	**By Age**	***Meet criteria?**
Verbal	Verbal ≥ 85 (either)	91	92	YES
Quantitative	Quantitative ≥ 85 (either)	98	98	YES
Nonverbal	Nonverbal ≥ 85 (either)	91	92	YES
Composite	Composite ≥ 85 (either)	97	97	YES
Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (NNAT2)				
Category	***Criteria**	**Score**		***Meet criteria?**
Nonverbal abilities				
Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking				
Category	***Criteria**	**Score**		***Meet criteria?**
Fluency				
Flexibility				
Originality				
Elaboration				

Total number of QUANTITATIVE indicators that meet criteria: **4**

*This year, to qualify for the GT program, a student must meet criteria on at least 3 quantitative measures.

*The scores and levels required to "meet criteria" are determined annually by a District committee.

Based on these guidelines, this student:

[X] **QUALIFIES** to receive services in the District's Gifted/Talented (GT) program.

[ ] has been **PLACED** into the District's Gifted/Talented (GT) program based on other measures. (See below.)

Other:

In other words, the student has been selected to participate in the GT program!

- Please note, the letter for students who "do not qualify" for gifted services only reports the quantitative data (CogAT scores). When analyzing data, the committee starts by looking at the quantitative data (CogAT) **first**. This helps the team identify students who may possibly qualify for gifted services. If CogAT scores do not meet the minimum criteria, the qualitative data (Parent and/or Teacher Survey) is not reviewed, as students cannot be found eligible for gifted services based solely on qualitative data.

-Qualitative Data-
Both the parent and teacher surveys have scores reported in 5 categories:

- Learning
- Creativity
- Motivation
- Leadership
- Communication

*Teacher surveys are only collected if they nominate a student or if it's needed for further information.

-Quantitative Data-
CogAT has 4 reported scores:

- Verbal
- Quantitative
- Nonverbal
- Composite VQN

Each score is compared to criteria set by a District committee of teachers and specialists.

Students who meet the criteria are found eligible for gifted services.

Students who are close to qualifying may require further assessments, such as:

- Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (NNAT2)
- Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (Figural)

ADVANCEMENT

What options are available for students to accelerate?

The District provides opportunities for students to earn credit for (or "skip") certain courses—and, in some cases, entire grade levels—through credit by exam (or, CBE).

REQUESTS

If interested in requesting an exam for credit, **parents** should complete a CBE request form, available on the District website at www.wfisd.net/cbe.

TESTS

In **grades 1 - 8**, students can earn credit by exam for courses in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. To place out of an entire **grade level**, students must pass exams in **all four** subject areas.
In **grades 9-12**, students can earn credit by exam for most high school **courses**. Each year-long course is associated with **two** tests —one for each semester.

PREP

Our District only uses tests for CBE from the two vendors listed below.

- University of Texas - UT High School. https://highschool.utexas.edu/cbe_study_guides
- Texas Tech - TTU K-12. http://www.depts.ttu.edu/k12/current-students/forms/cbe-review-sheets/

SCORING

To earn credit by exam, students must score 80 or above.

- To skip a grade (1 - 8), students must score ⩾80 on all four subject-area tests.
- For year-long high school courses, students must score ⩾80 on both semester tests.

FEES

For students in WFISD, the District covers the cost of exams (**first time taken**).

TIMELINE

Although requests can be made at any time, we wait to order and schedule tests during two different assessment windows:

- Fall (November) / to prepare for the second semester
- Summer (June) / to prepare for the start of school

Rules for credit by exam are determined by state policy (*Texas Education Code*) as well as through regulations developed by our District's Board of Trustees.
For more information on these guidelines:

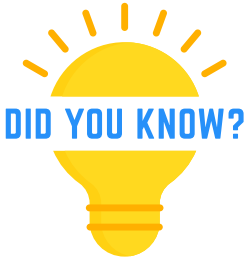
- Visit the WFISD online policy manual (https://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/1228).
- Search for policy EHDC.

EARLY ALGEBRA

In mathematics, some students are ready to take Honors Algebra I for high school credit while still in middle school. Before taking Algebra I, students must meet certain requirements—notably, they must have completed 8th grade math or its equivalent (TEC §111.39).
In WFISD, the Advanced Math 7 course satisfies this requirement.

Here is the most common path to early Algebra I.

Grade 6	Take *Advanced Math 6*.
Grade 7	Take *Advanced Math 7*. Take the District's Algebra Readiness Test. Take the Grade 7 STAAR test.
Grade 8	Students can enroll in Honors Algebra I if they meet at least 2 of 3 criteria below. • Pass the Algebra Readiness Test. • Reach Meets or Masters level on STAAR 7. • Get a teacher recommendation.



In very unique situations, a student may be eligible to take Algebra I in 7th grade. With approval from an academic counselor or director, such a student could try one of these paths.

- Before entering middle school, earn credit by exam (CBE) for 6th grade math. In 6th grade, take Advanced Math 7, and pass the Algebra Readiness Test. Then, with approval, take Honors Algebra I in 7th grade.
- In 6th grade, take Advanced Math 6. Then, in the following summer, earn credit by exam (CBE) for 8th grade math. Then, with approval, take Honors Algebra I in 7th grade.

FAQ - PARENTS

- **I think my child is gifted. What can I do?**

  Every January, the district's GT nomination window opens. Testing is available for students in grades K-11. You can fill out the parent request form at home online, or, on paper at your child's campus. This gives the district permission to administer GT testing in Feb.-March. Scoring occurs in April, and you will be notified of your child's scores in May.

- **My child didn't qualify for GT. Can they test again?**

  Yes. You can nominate your child again during the next school year's GT nomination window (every January).

- **My 3rd-5th grade GT student attends TAG. What should they do about what they're missing on their school campus?**

  Your child's teacher will work with them to provide *necessary* information that is missed while attending TAG. Students will be given time to make up missed *assessments* or high-value projects. However, students are not required to make up all classwork that occurs during their time at TAG. TAG is school too!

- **Can I pick my child up or drop them off at the Carrigan Center?**

  Yes, if you are running late or a student needs to check out early, you can sign your child in/out. The Carrigan Center is located at 1609 Blonde Street. Park in the lot facing Bridwell St. and ring the buzzer. You will be required to show ID, and only those listed in Skyward will be permitted to sign students in/out.

- **I have questions about my GT child's schedule.**

  If you have questions or concerns about your GT child's schedule, please reach out first to your campus Guidance Counselor.

- **I think my child could skip a grade or course and be successful. What can I do?**

  See pp.12-13 of this guide to learn about possible acceleration.

FAQ - EDUCATORS

- **I think one of my students is gifted; what should I do?**

  Each year, the GT nomination window is in January. Reach out to the student's parents and give them the nomination information. You can also nominate a student. Until then, provide enrichment and differentiation where you can.

- **Can I require my 3rd-5th grade GT student to make up the work they miss when they attend TAG?**

  GT students who attend TAG are not required to make up all classwork/assignments missed while attending TAG. However, please give students grace to complete needed assessments or high-value projects.

- **What are the CEU hour requirements for teaching GT students?**

  State guidelines require that all teachers responsible for providing GT services must have **30 hours of foundation training** in the following areas: Nature & Needs (6hrs), Assessment & Identification of GT (6hrs), Curriculum & Instruction for Gifted Students (18hrs).

  WFISD supports Gifted and Talented (G/T) students at all grade levels throughout the school day, with the understanding that G/T students are gifted and talented all day, every day. In 2024-25, WFISD introduced the expectation for all K-12 campus staff to receive the 30 hours of foundation training in G/T.

  Teachers of **grades 6-12** can count hours earned from other approved professional development sessions, such as:
  - College Board / Advanced Placement (AP) conferences, including two-day sessions (fall/spring) and summer institutes.
  - International Baccalaureate (IB) content-specific training.

  All **AP** and **IB Diploma Program** teachers are expected to attend summer institutes once every three years.

GT HOURS UPDATE:

In addition to the initial 30-hours of training, teachers are also required to obtain 6-hour professional development updates **annually**. In addition to select sessions offered by the school district, teachers may also attend training at the regional service center (Region 9 ESC).

Meet
THE TEAM

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