

SOUTH TEXAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Always Innovating

**South
Texas ISD**

RIO GRANDE VALLEY | GRADES 6-12

A Comprehensive Manual for the Gifted and Talented

6TH – 12th Grade

**Board of Trustees Approved:
November 2025**

Table of Contents

PREFACE.....	3
DEFINITION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS	3
PHILOSOPHY/RATIONALE.....	3
PROGRAM VISION.....	3
PROGRAM MISSION	3
PROGRAM OBJECTIVE	4
PROGRAM GOALS	4
I. PROGRAM SERVICE DESIGN.....	5
II. STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFICATION	6
COMMUNICATE THE PROCESS TO PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	6
1. REFERRAL.....	6
2. SCREENING	7
3. ASSESSMENT	7
TRANSFER STUDENTS	8
FURLOUGHS	8
REASSESSMENT	9
EXITING STUDENTS FROM PROGRAM SERVICES.....	9
APPEAL PROCESS REGARDING SERVICES	9
IV. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION.....	9
V. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS/PERFORMANCE	10
VI. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	11
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DOCUMENTATION	11
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EVALUATION	12
VII. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	12
GIFTED/TALENTED ADVOCACY/PARENT ASSOCIATION GROUP.....	12
PRODUCTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF STUDENTS SHARED WITH COMMUNITY	12
VIII. G/T PROGRAM EVALUATION	13
IX. CERTIFICATION AND REPORTING.....	13
X. PEIMS REPORTING.....	14
XI. GLOSSARY	15
XII. DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION.....	18

Preface

South Texas ISD is committed to providing program and curricular options to meet the unique needs of the gifted/talented student. This document presents the official policies, processes, and procedures for organizing, operating, and evaluating the gifted and talented services at South Texas ISD.

Definition of Gifted and Talented Students

“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 exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area, possesses an unusual capacity for leadership, or excels in a specific academic field (TEC Subchapter D §29.121).

Philosophy/Rationale

The philosophy of South Texas ISD reflects an understanding of the uniqueness of individual gifted/talented students. Because the learning characteristics of gifted and talented students dictate learning experiences that differentiate from those provided for them in the regular school program, the district recognizes that special provisions must be made for these students in order to stimulate and maximize their achievement as well as provide for their social and emotional needs.

South Texas ISD recognizes that gifted and talented students are found in all cultures, socioeconomic groups, geographic locales, and environments. South Texas ISD will serve the needs of those students who perform at or show the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment.

Program Vision

South Texas ISD will be a leader and innovator in the development of the gifted and talented students intellectual, creative and leadership potential through participation in an exemplary program that fosters the gifted and talented students’ unique needs and abilities.

Program Mission

It is the mission of STISD’S Gifted and Talented Program to implement best practices by which we identify, teach, support and nurture gifted and talented students to be lifelong scholars, critical thinkers, innovators, leaders and global contributors.

Program Objective

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.

South Texas ISD will:

- comply with gifted/talented accountability standards and monitor the effectiveness of assessment and services for gifted/talented students.
- implement identification procedures and progress monitoring that allows students to demonstrate and develop their diverse talents and abilities.
- implement viable service options which provide a research-based learning continuum that is developed and consistently implemented throughout the district to meet the needs and reinforce the strengths and interests of gifted/talented students.
- ensure all personnel involved in the planning, creation, delivery and administration of services to gifted/talented students possess the knowledge required to develop and provide differentiated programs and services, and
- involve family and community members in services designed for gifted/talented students throughout the school year.

Program Goals

Goal 1: Establish an equitable and effective identification process for gifted and talented students.

Goal 2: Maintain equitable participation and increase performance in advanced academic opportunities.

Goal 3: Expand and diversify enrichment experiences (academic, creative, social-emotional) to meet the varied strengths and interests of gifted and talented students.

Goal 4: Equip families, teachers, and staff with accessible, ongoing training and resources to effectively advocate for and support the needs of gifted and talented students.

I. Program Service Design

Gifted and Talented services at South Texas ISD are designed for students who are identified as gifted and talented according to South Texas ISD's identification procedures. South Texas ISD's offers a full-time inclusion program:

- The student receives a majority of their core subjects from a specific teacher or teachers with gifted/talented 30-hour foundational and 6-hour update training, but the classes may include peers who are not identified as gifted /talented.

In accordance with the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*, the district is accountable for the following:

1. Identified gifted/talented students are assured an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with their abilities and that emphasize content in the four (4) foundation curricular areas. Services are available during the school day as well as the entire school year, and parents are informed of these options (19 TAC §89.3(3)).
2. Information concerning special opportunities is available and disseminated to parents and community members.
3. Services for gifted/talented students are comprehensive, structured, sequenced, and appropriately challenging, including options in the four (4) foundation curricular areas.
4. Gifted/talented students are ensured opportunities to work together as a group, work with other students, and work independently during the school day as well as the entire school year as a direct result of gifted/talented service options (19 TAC §89.3(1)).
5. Flexible grouping patterns and independent investigations are provided throughout the program design/services.
6. Out-of-school options relevant to the students' areas of strength are provided by school districts whenever possible (19 TAC §89.3(3)).
7. Local board policies are developed that are consistent with State Board of Education rules on credit by examinations (19 TAC §74.24) and early high school graduation opportunities (TEC §56.203).
8. Acceleration and flexible pacing are employed, allowing students to learn at the pace and level appropriate for their abilities and skills, and are actively facilitated by district administrators, counselors, and teachers.
9. Local board policies are developed that enable students to participate in dual/concurrent enrollment, distance learning opportunities, and accelerated summer programs if available.
10. A person who has thirty (30) hours of professional learning in gifted/talented education and annual six (6) hour professional learning updates as required in 19 TAC §89.2(1) is assigned to coordinate district level services for gifted/talented students in grades K – 12.
11. Develop and implement services to address the social and emotional needs of gifted/talented students and their impact on student learning.

II. Student Assessment and Identification

Students are identified for the Gifted and Talented Program through a three-stage process:

1. Referral
2. Screening and Assessment
3. Selection

Communicate the Process to Parents and Community

Prior to the referral period, South Texas ISD will conduct an awareness session for families to provide an overview of the assessment procedures and services for gifted/talented students. To ensure equity, all family meetings and/or informational media will be offered in a language family can understand, or a translator or interpreter will be provided to the extent possible. Input from family and community representatives on gifted/talented identification and assessment will be encouraged.

In addition, information regarding the overview of assessment procedures and services for gifted/talented students will be outlined on South Texas ISD G/T website.

All referral procedures and forms for assessment will be provided to families in a language that the families understand, or a translator or interpreter is provided to the extent possible.

1. Referral

A student may be referred by a parent/guardian, teacher, counselor, administrator, the student, or other interested persons.

The Campus GT Committee, made up of an administrator, counselor, and teachers, will solicit and accept referrals at any time throughout the school year as guided by the referral calendar:

1. 2nd Nine Weeks
2. 3rd Nine Weeks
3. 4th Nine Weeks

However, referrals may be submitted at any time during the year to ensure students identified as gifted receive services through diverse program options to meet their specialized educational needs. Students may be referred by teachers, counselors, parents, or other interested parties.

Referral forms are available at by request from the campus counselor, and on the district website and must be returned to the student's campus counselor by the deadline indicated on the referral form.

Support will be provided for completing documents on an as needed basis or as requested. Additional materials regarding the unique characteristics of gifted students as well as nature and needs of gifted learners may be found on the district Gifted/Talented webpage.

2. Screening

Members of the Campus GT Committee will review referrals and other internal and external sources of information on students who demonstrate potential for the gifted and talented program with a focus on equity (e.g., students who score above average on a standardized achievement and/or test of general ability, students whose grades in subjects related to or prerequisite for the program being offered indicate high performance, and students whose creativity or outstanding products in program related areas indicate high potential).

Meeting criteria in at least two (2) of the following areas will permit the referred students to enter the screening phase:

- Previously enrolled in a GT Program in another public-school district
- Parent input
- Teacher input
- Student self-evaluation of interests
- Grades (top 10% of semester average within language arts and/or mathematics)

If additional testing is recommended, the parents of those selected will receive a letter asking for permission to test. South Texas ISD students may be referred and re-screened once every year, with twelve months passing between each assessment event. South Texas ISD strongly suggests that students not be referred for more than two sequential years without a significant change in the data. The District will not initiate the referral unless the parent requests it.

3. Assessment

- i. South Texas ISD will provide assessment opportunities for gifted/talented identification at least once per school year. Data collected from multiple sources for each area of giftedness served by the district are included in the assessment process for gifted/talented services. This assessment process allows for student exceptionalities to the extent possible. Access to assessment and, if needed, gifted/talented services is available to all populations of the district. Students will be assessed in languages they understand or with nonverbal assessments.
- ii. Based on a review of information gathered during the assessment process, those students whose data reflect that the District's G/T service options would best meet their identified educational needs will be recommended by the selection committee for gifted/talented services.

- iii. In grades 6 - 12, qualitative and quantitative data are collected through three (3) or more measures and used to determine whether a student needs gifted/talented services.
- iv. Final determination of students' need for gifted/talented services will be made by a committee of at least three local district or campus educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted/talented students and who have met and reviewed the individual student data.

Once identified, students will be provided services based on their strengths and interests and provided opportunities to produce advanced level products, such as those provided by the Texas Performance Standards Projects.

In addition, as commensurate with their abilities, students will be provided opportunities to accelerate in their areas of strength.

III. District/Campus Procedures

Transfer Students

- 1. When a student identified as gifted by a previous school district transfers into the District, the committee will make its determination based on the sending district's assessment data, observation records of District teachers who instruct the student, and any additional data deemed appropriate by the committee to determine if placement in the District's program for gifted and talented students is appropriate.
- 2. Intradistrict Transfer: The District shall not reassess intradistrict transfers. A student who transfers from one campus in the District to the same grade level at another District campus shall continue to receive services in the District's gifted and talented program.
- 3. When a student identified as gifted transfers to another district, South Texas ISD will provide the receiving district the student's assessment data.

Furloughs

- 1. A furlough (the opportunity for students to have a leave of absence from gifted/talented program services) may be implemented for specified reasons for a certain period of time without being exited. These reasons may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the gifted/talented program
 - b. Education needs are not being met within the structure of the gifted/talented program
 - c. Specific personal or life circumstances

2. A furlough may be initiated by the district, the parent, or the student.
3. A student may be furloughed for a specified period of time as deemed appropriate by the district. At the end of the furlough, the student may re-enter the gifted program, exit from the program, or be placed on another furlough.

Reassessment

1. If it is determined that it is in the best interest of an identified student to be reassessed, the district will inform parents/guardians and the student of the committee's decision and a reassessment will be conducted.
2. If reassessment does occur, it will be no more than once at the middle school level, and once at the high school level.

Exiting Students from Program Services

1. Student progress in the program shall be monitored. Exiting from gifted/talented services is based on multiple criteria including but not limited to:
 - a. student performance in response to services
 - b. parent and/or student request to be exited
2. Exiting of a student is finalized by committee decision after consultation with parents and student regarding the student's educational needs.

Appeal Process Regarding Services

1. A parent, student or educator may appeal any placement decisions in a timely manner and present new data, if appropriate. Appeals shall be made first to the committee. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with FNG(LOCAL) beginning at Level Two.

IV. Curriculum and Instruction

South Texas ISD is committed to meeting the needs of gifted and talented students by providing curriculum and instruction that offer greater depth, complexity, and an accelerated pace beyond standard district offerings. Identified students participate in a range of learning experiences aligned with the four foundational curricular areas, ensuring access to appropriate academic challenges throughout the school day and year.

South Texas ISD will assure identified gifted/talented students are provided an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with their abilities and that emphasize content in the four (4) foundation curricular areas. South Texas ISD will provide services during the school day as well as the entire school year. Inclusionary programs are designed to be structured, modified, and/or accommodated to address individual strengths and interests, with a special focus on core academic subjects. Students may participate in Honors courses, Advanced Placement (AP), and Dual Enrollment classes to further challenge and engage them at appropriate levels of rigor.

South Texas ISD will ensure opportunities are provided for students to accelerate in areas of strengths. G/T students at South Texas ISD participate in inclusionary programs which are structured, modified, and/or accommodated to meet their individual strengths and interests and are based in the four core areas. These programs may include Honors, Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Enrollment classes. Opportunities are provided for participation in the Texas Performance Standards Project and other experiences that foster the development of advanced-level products. The district also offers enrichment and extracurricular opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting, including those provided by Region 1 Education Service Center, University Interscholastic League (UIL), and specialized events related to students' strengths and interests. Examples include Innovative Inventions for grades 6–8 and Robotics and Science Olympiad for grades 7–12.

- ❖ Additional opportunities such as the UIL and specialized events related to the strengths and interests of gifted students may be provided.

All these opportunities are extended to both identified gifted students and other learners selected by the campus or district, reflecting South Texas ISD's commitment to inclusivity and educational excellence. Through this comprehensive approach, the district fosters an environment where all advanced learners are empowered to achieve their highest potential.

South Texas ISD instructional staff, as appropriate, will adapt and/or modify the standard curriculum to meet the needs of gifted/talented students and those with special needs such as twice-exceptional, highly gifted, and English learners.

V. Assessment of Student Progress/Performance

South Texas ISD will periodically assess student progress and/or performance using district developed standards associated with the areas identified and served and parents or guardians will be informed. Assessment standards may include, but are not limited to:

- Grades received in courses designed for gifted students
- Progress reports including the standards of services outlined in the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*. These standards of service include modifying the depth, complexity and pacing of the curriculum and instruction ordinarily provided by the school, appropriately challenging learning experiences, and advanced-level products and/or performances.
- Rubrics such as those found on the Texas Performance Standards Projects website (www.texaspsp.org) or other sources that indicate student progress and growth in the areas of identified giftedness.
- Other assessment of student progress and performance based on local district service options.

VI. Professional Learning

Opportunities for professional learning in the area of gifted/talented education are provided on a regular basis, and information on these opportunities is disseminated to professionals in South Texas ISD. Each teacher new to the district will receive an orientation to the district's gifted/talented identification processes and the district's services for gifted/talented students.

Requirements

- **Administrators/Teachers with Supervisory Duties**

South Texas ISD administrators as well as teachers who have supervisory duties for service decisions, will complete a minimum of six hours of professional development that includes the nature and needs of gifted/talented students and service options.

- **District Personnel Assigned to Coordinate Gifted/Talented Program**

A South Texas ISD staff member who has thirty (30) hours of professional learning in gifted/talented education and annual six (6) hour professional learning updates is assigned to coordinate district level services for gifted/talented students in grades K – 12.

- **Counselors**

South Texas ISD counselors who work with gifted/talented students will complete a minimum of six hours of professional development that includes the nature and needs of gifted/ talented students, service options, and social-emotional learning.

- **Teachers**

South Texas ISD teachers who provide instruction and services that are part of the South Texas ISD's G/T services will complete a minimum of 30 hours of professional learning related to identification and assessment, nature and needs, and curriculum for gifted and talented students. Teachers without the required training who are assigned to provide instruction and services that are part of the district's defined gifted/talented services are required to complete the thirty (30) hour training within one semester.

Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the district's defined gifted/ talented services receive a minimum of six (6) hours annually of professional development in gifted/talented education that is related to state teacher [gifted/talented education standards](#).

Professional Learning Documentation

Evidenced-based documentation of G/T professional learning will be maintained by:

- Central Office
- Curriculum Department
- Other District Level staff such as human resource director, etc.

Professional Learning Evaluation

South Texas ISD's evaluation of G/T professional learning will be ongoing and related to state teacher [gifted/talented education standards](#). The information gathered from the evaluation will be used in making decisions related to future G/T staff development opportunities. A written plan for professional learning in the area of gifted/talented education that is based on identified needs is implemented and updated annually.

VII. Family and Community Involvement

South Texas ISD will ensure that parents and guardians are informed annually about the district's policies and procedures related to the identification of gifted and talented students. These policies will be made accessible through multiple platforms, which may include the district's Gifted and Talented (GT) webpage, the student handbook, local media outlets, or other methods determined appropriate by the district. By utilizing a variety of communication tools, the district aims to reach all families and provide clear guidance regarding the identification process.

Each year, South Texas ISD will seek input from families and community members regarding gifted and talented identification and assessment procedures. The district will share information and hold meetings to gather recommendations about students who may benefit from gifted and talented services.

To further support families, South Texas ISD will provide an orientation for parents of students who are newly identified as gifted and talented, as well as periodic updates throughout the school year. These sessions will offer information about available services, program expectations, and ways parents can support their child's academic and social-emotional growth. By maintaining regular communication and offering ongoing education, the district ensures that families are well-equipped to partner in their child's gifted education journey.

Gifted/Talented Advocacy/Parent Association Group

South Texas ISD, to the extent possible, will provide parents and community members an opportunity to participate in a parent and/or advocacy group. In addition, orientation and periodic updates will be provided for parents of identified G/T students through our Gifted and Talented website.

Products and Achievements of Students Shared with Community

Throughout the school year, South Texas ISD will showcase products and achievements of gifted learners via a variety of methods which may include, but is not limited to: social media, and District website.

VIII. G/T Program Evaluation

South Texas ISD will annually evaluate the effectiveness of gifted/talented services and share the information with the board of trustees and parents of identified G/T students. This information will be used to modify and update district and campus improvement plans. Parents will be included in the evaluation process.

The evaluation process may include, but is not limited to:

1. Effectiveness of G/T services based on student and teacher growth.
2. Identified gifted/talented demographics population is reflective of total district demographics.
3. Professional development completed by staff based on:
 - teacher needs relative to designing curriculum for gifted students.
 - understanding characteristics of gifted English learners, economically disadvantaged, twice-exceptional, highly gifted, migrant, homeless, and military students.
 - the nature and social-emotional needs of gifted students.
4. Successful completion of Texas Performance Standards Projects or other experiences that lead to the development of advanced level products and/or performances.

IX. Certification and Reporting

South Texas ISD shall annually certify to the commissioner that South Texas ISD has established a program for gifted and talented students as required by Texas Education Code Chapter 29. Subchapter D and that the program is consistent with the state plan developed under Section 29.123. If the commissioner determines South Texas ISD district has failed to comply with Subsection (a) for a school year, the commissioner shall reduce the total amount of funding to which the district is entitled under Chapter 48 for that school year by an amount equal to the basic allotment multiplied by the product of 0.12 and an amount equal to five percent of the students in average daily attendance in the district. The commissioner may restore to South Texas ISD all or part of the funding withheld from the district's entitlement under Subsection (b) if during the school year the district complies with Subsection (a). At the same time that a school district makes the certification required under Subsection (a), the district shall report to the commissioner regarding the use of funds on the district's program for gifted and talented students as provided by State Board of Education rule.

X. PEIMS Reporting

October:

1. Submission of district level PEIMS indicator (5 Categories)

A district may include more than one program design in the reporting.

- a. 01 – Pull-out
- b. 02 – Push-in
- c. 03 – Full-time gifted only
- d. 04 – Full-time inclusion
- e. 05 – Special day school

2. Identified and Served Students

Reference Section 8 [Student Attendance Accounting Handbook](#)

Program Intent Code 21

Instruction	Central Administration
11 Instruction	41* General Administration
Curriculum Development & Staff	District Operations
13 Development	52 Security and Monitoring
Total:	53 Data Processing
	34 Student Transportation
	Total:
Instructional Support	Other
21 Instructional Leadership	61 Community Service
23 School Leadership	91 Contracted Instructional Services Between Public schools
31 Guidance & Counseling, Evaluation	93 Payments to Fiscal Agents for Shared Service Arrangements
32 Social Work Services	99 Inter-government charges not Defined in Other codes
33 Health Services	Total:
36 Co-curricular/ Extra-curricular Activities	
Total	

Reference [Financial Accountability System Resource Guide](#)

XI. Glossary

Term	Definition
Acceleration	Acceleration is an academic intervention that matches the level, complexity, and pace of the curriculum with the readiness and motivation of the student. It involves mastering knowledge and skills at a rate faster or at an age earlier than the norm. From <i>A Nation Deceived</i> —Colangelo, N., Assouline, S., & Gross, M. U. M. (2004). <i>A nation deceived: How schools hold back America's brightest students</i> (Vol. 1). Iowa City: University of Iowa, Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development
Area of Giftedness	the specific set of abilities in which a student performs or shows potential to perform at a remarkably high level of accomplishment
Array of Learning Experiences	a menu of challenging activities or opportunities that fit the unique interests and abilities of advanced-level students
Artistically Gifted	possessing outstanding ability in the visual and/or performing arts
Complexity	extension of content in, between, and across disciplines through the study of themes, problems, and issues; seeing relationships between and among ideas in/within the topic, discipline, and disciplines; examining relationships in, between, and across disciplines over time and from multiple points of view
Concurrent Enrollment	the practice of enrolling in a college or university to earn college or university credit while in high school
Continuum of Learning Experiences	articulated intellectual, artistic, creative, and/or leadership activities and opportunities that build upon one another each year a student is in school
Creatively Gifted	possessing outstanding imagination, thinking ability, innovative or creative reasoning ability, ability in problem solving, and/or high attainment in original or creative thinking
Credit by Exam (CBE)	method in which a student may receive credit for a subject/ course or accelerate through a grade by taking one or more exams
Depth	exploration of content within a discipline to include analyzing from the concrete to the abstract, the familiar to the unfamiliar, the known to the unknown; exploring the discipline by going beyond facts and concepts into generalizations, principles, theories, laws; investigating the layers of experience within a discipline through details, patterns, trends, unanswered questions, and/or ethical considerations
Differentiation	modification of curriculum and instruction according to content, pacing, process, and/or product to meet unique student needs in the classroom

Diversity	the presence of difference between individuals and among groups including but not limited to age, socioeconomics, education, race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, culture, and religious beliefs
Dual Credit	an opportunity for a student to earn high school credit for successful completion of a college course
Flexible Pacing	Flexible pacing is defined as placing students at an appropriate instructional level and allowing them to move forward in the curriculum as they master content and skills. Flexible pacing is achieved by such methods as continuous progress, compacted
Foundation Curricular Areas	English language arts/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies
Furlough	a leave of absence from program services
Gifted in Leadership	possessing the natural ability to influence others; possessing skills in interpersonal relationships demonstrated, for example, by outstanding ability in such activities as student government
Gifted in Specific Academic Fields	possessing superior ability or potential in a specific course of study such as English language arts/reading, mathematics, science, or social studies
Gifted/Talented Services	services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school that are specifically designed to fully develop the capabilities of students who give evidence of high achievement or capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity
Independent Study	self-directed learning strategy where the teacher acts as guide or facilitator, and the student plays a more active role in designing and managing his or her own learning
Intellectually Gifted	possessing superior intelligence, with potential or demonstrated accomplishments in several fields of study; ability to perform complex mental tasks
Qualitative Measures	performance indicators that cannot be recorded numerically and that include observations, anecdotal records, checklists, interviews, student products, performances, etc.
Quantitative Measures	performance indicators that can be expressed in terms of definite numbers or amounts such as scores on achievement tests
Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP)	statewide standards and assessment system which includes instructional materials designed to provide assistance as districts achieve the state goal for gifted/talented students (complete information at http://www.tpsps.org/)

Twice-Exceptional	A “twice-exceptional learner” 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: 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) and who also gives evidence of one or more disabilities as defined by federal or state eligibility criteria.
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XII. District Contact Information

Exectutive Director for Special Programs: Brenda de la Garza, Ed.D.

Phone: 956.260.2259 | Email: brenda.delagarza@stisd.net

Executive Director for Academic Excellence: Niranda Flores

Phone: 956-565-2454 | Email: niranda.flores@stisd.net