HORIZON HANDBOOK

Argyle ISD
Gifted and Talented Program K-12

Argyle Independent School District
Comprehensive Gifted and Talented Program Framework
General Intellectual Ability/Core Academic Areas

Elementary K-5
K-2 Differentiated Instruction in Classroom
3-5 Pull-out Program with G/T Teacher

Middle School 6-8
Served through Advanced Specific Subject Courses
Elective Coursework for High School Credit

High School 9-12
AP Program
Dual Credit Enrollment
Elective Coursework



ARGYLE ISD GIFTED AND TALENTED MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

Mission Statement
The Argyle Independent School District Horizon program exists to meet the social, emotional and cognitive needs of an identified student population through individualized instruction, enrichment and extension, small group instruction, and differentiation in the classroom.

Philosophy Statement
The Argyle Independent School District faculty and staff believe that special provisions should be provided to accommodate the needs of gifted and talented students in all educational situations and settings that may be categorized as accelerated and/or enriched.

Texas State Board of Education Definition of Gifted and Talented Students
Texas State Code §29.121 defines “gifted and talented students” 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.

REFERRAL PROCESS AND IDENTIFICATION

Argyle ISD provides an academically based gifted and talented program to serve students at all levels. The identification of students for the Horizon program is a systematic approach. The nomination, screening and selection phases of the identification process are as follows:

Nomination:

At the elementary level all students comprise the nomination pool. At all levels parents, students and teachers may make nominations.

Following the review of the achievement and intelligence testing, screening is completed on those students meeting specific criteria. Nomination forms may be obtained from the district website.

Screening:

Screening for the academically based Horizon program will be completed for those students meeting the specific achievement and intelligence testing criteria. Screening tools may include, but are not limited to, achievement tests, mental abilities tests, inventories and/or observations completed by classroom teachers and gifted and talented facilitators. Both quantitative and qualitative data collected shall be used to determine individual eligibility for the program. Results from these instruments, but not limited to these instruments, will be gathered for those students meeting the specific testing criteria:

(1) intelligence test – elementary and secondary Cognitive Abilities Test (COGAT – Lohman – Hagen) - Scoring 94% or above in Verbal, Quantitative, Non-Verbal battery (Age Norm)

(2) achievement test – elementary level –MAP Assessments - Scoring 94% or above in Reading and/or Mathematics totals

(3) a teacher observation scale instrument – (GATES)

(4) additional testing for those students showing evidence of giftedness who are identified as dyslexic, (or with other learning restrictions), using TEA test accommodations for dyslexic and ESL students

Selection:

Students shall be identified as gifted and talented in accordance with the following:

1. A definition of gifted students that is consistent with Education Code 29.121.

2. A Selection Committee shall evaluate each student meeting the specific achievement and intelligence testing criteria according to the screening criteria outlined above. The committee will select any student meeting at least three of the qualifying assessment criteria, and place them in the program. Appropriate instruments will be used in the screening and identification procedures for the Horizon Program to ensure equity of opportunity for all students.

3. Parents shall be informed in writing of the placement decision. If needed, an appeal form is available on the district website.

Transfer:

When a student identified as gifted and talented by a previous school district in which they were enrolled in a GT program transfers into the District, the student's records shall be reviewed by the GT committee. These students are eligible for participation in Horizon as long as the following conditions are met:

1. The students have been tested using the same or comparable instruments and timeline as those used for admission to Horizon. If comparable instruments were not used, new students to Argyle ISD that were previously identified shall be tested using Horizon identification criteria.

2. The students' test scores correlate to the requirements as set forth on Horizon identification profile.

The selection committee shall make its determination within 30 days of the student's enrollment. After the committee has reviewed transferring student's records, those students meeting the above qualifications will be placed in Horizon. Students who have participated in other districts' GT classes but do not meet the above qualifications will be considered for Horizon after Spring testing. Parents will be notified in writing as to the placement of their children.

Students new to the district who have not previously participated in a gifted and talented program will become part of the nomination pool along with other students and complete testing at the same time as currently enrolled students.

APPEAL PROCEDURE*

Parents or designated representatives may appeal any final decision of the Selection Committee regarding selection for the gifted and talented program. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the campus gifted and talented coordinator, with all paperwork complete (appeal form on the district website), and must include information supporting that one or more of the appeal conditions exist.* (Note: Only assessment data gathered from AISD administered tests are utilized in making decisions. Test results and/or assessment information from outside practitioners, clinicians, and/or psychologists are not admissible.) The campus coordinator will submit the Appeal to the gifted and talented selection committee within 5 days. The selection committee will meet to review the appeal and a decision will be made. Parents will be notified of the committee's decision in writing within 10 days of the meeting.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT FURLOUGHS and PROBATION

Students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the gifted and talented program may be placed on probation or furlough for a period of time deemed appropriate by the Campus Selection Committee. The minimum length of time for the probation or furlough is nine weeks. The maximum is one school year.

The purpose of the probation is to provide the gifted and talented student who is consistently performing below expectations an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the Campus Selection Committee. Probation may be requested by the student, parent, or gifted and talented teacher.

Furloughs may also be requested from the program if a student is facing extenuating circumstances such as health conditions, a family crisis or it is felt that the GT program no longer fits the child's needs.

While on probation or furlough the student's progress will be monitored on a regular basis by a gifted and talented teacher using a variety of methods. At the end of the probationary or furlough period, the student's progress shall be reassessed and the student may reenter the gifted program, be exited from the program, or be placed on another probation or furlough.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT EXIT PROCEDURE

<u>Elementary/Secondary Exit initiated by the Student or Parents:</u>

1. Hold a private conference with the Horizon Facilitator to discuss reasons for withdrawal or to plan and set goals for maintaining status in Horizon.

2. Period of 2-4 weeks to consider decisions or to work towards goals.

3. Hold a second meeting at which parents, students and members of GT selection committee are present to determine course or action.

4. If a student exits the program, he must state his reasons for doing so in writing and give them to the GT committee.

5. Self-initiated exit is for the remainder of the school year.

<u>Elementary Exit initiated by the GT Selection Committee:</u>

1. The committee is notified of specific problems students are having with grades, participation, and/or behavior in the regular classroom and/or the Horizon class at elementary.

2. Students hold a private conference with the Principal, Counselor and Horizon Facilitator. Students plan strategies and set goals for remediating problems.

3. Period of three weeks' probation during which student does not attend Horizon classes.

4. At the end of three weeks, students may resume attending Horizon classes if the committee agrees that progress is being made toward goals.

5. At the end of the current quarter, the student and his/her parents will meet with the committee to consider the course of action most appropriate for the student.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The Argyle ISD program for the gifted and talented assures an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with the abilities of GT students, and that emphasize content in the four core academic areas. Gifted and talented students possess abilities that enable them to demonstrate high achievement and/or potential in various ability areas. The differences and characteristics that deviate from their peers.

Program options enable GT students to work together as a group, work with other students, and work independently during the school day as well as the entire school year. Flexible pacing and grouping patterns, as well as independent investigations, are also employed in the four core academic areas to allow students to learn at the pace and level appropriate for their abilities and skills. Argyle ISD provides many opportunities relevant to the student's area(s) of strength including advanced coursework and electives, dual credit, UIL, honor societies and various academic clubs.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Classes for Gifted Students

Grades K – 2

K-2 students are served in the classroom through differentiated instruction along with students in their regular education classroom. The Horizon facilitator supports K-2 students through planned classroom experiences.

Grades 3 – 5

Students qualifying for Horizon in third through fifth grades are pulled out of their regular classroom to receive enrichment from the Horizon teacher.

Grades 6 – 8

Students in grades 6-8 are served through advanced specific subject courses and electives.

Grades 9 – 12

Students in grades 9 – 12 are served through advanced coursework and dual credit classes.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Argyle ISD requires that:

1) **All** teachers have a minimum of thirty (30) hours of staff development that includes nature and needs of GT students, assessment and identification, social and emotional needs, differentiated curriculum, and instructional strategies.

2) **All** teachers receive a minimum of six hours annually of professional development in gifted education.

3) 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 GT students and program options for GT students.

Updated hours must be accrued between June 1 and May 31 of each year.

Opportunities for professional development in the area of gifted education are published on a regular basis and are disseminated to professionals in the district on an annual basis. Region XI provides numerous staff development opportunities for AISD teachers. The Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented and the National Association for the Gifted Children Conferences and respected nationally known authors of books and material concerning the gifted are significant sources of information and used during staff development.

To keep teachers current with the latest developments and offerings in the Advanced Placement Program, AISD continually provides opportunities for teachers to attend College Board Advanced Placement and Pre-Advanced Placement Institutes throughout the year.

Staff members of the program for gifted and talented students are involved in planning and conducting professional development activities. Evaluations of professional development activities are ongoing and the results of the evaluations are used in making decisions regarding future staff development plans.

In accordance with the *State Plan for the Education of the Gifted and Talented*, an individual plan has been developed for those teachers who are currently working to complete the required thirty hours.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Families and the community play a vital role in the development of the gifted students in Argyle ISD. Parents are their children's first teachers and can offer great insight into their learning needs and capabilities. Parents are a valuable resource in developing an educational program that best meets the needs of their children. One of the major goals in the Horizon program is to encourage parents to be informed and to be involved in their gifted child's education.

Parents may become a member of the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT) www.txgifted.org.