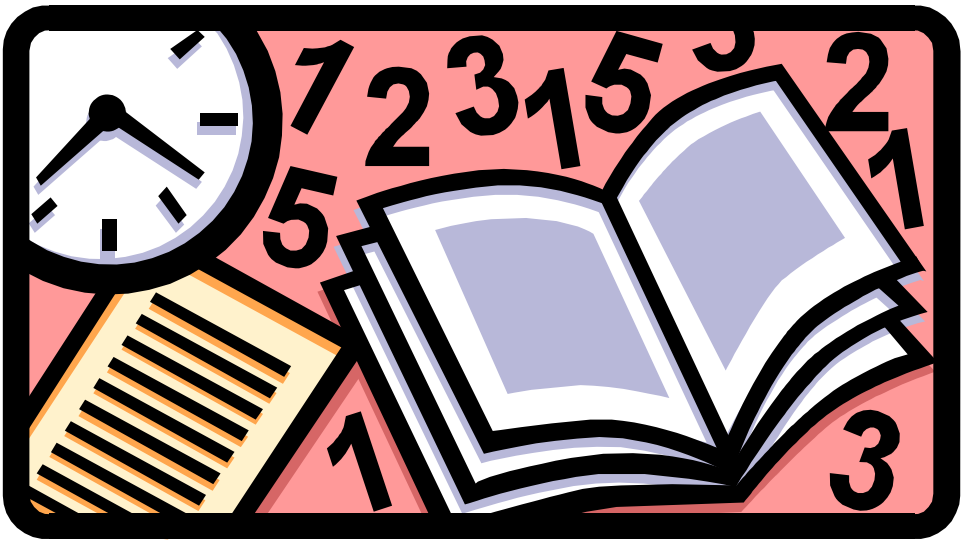
SALADO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

SERVICES FOR
GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS



Policies and Regulations
Handbook

SERVICES FOR
GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Administrative Information……3-4

State Goals……..5

Program Goals……....6

Nomination Process……...7

Evaluation Process……8

Overview of Services……9-12

Testing Calendar……...13

Program Design……14

Texas Education Code/State Plan for Gifted & Talented……....15

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	Salado Independent School District PO Box 98 Salado, Texas 76571
TITLE OF PROGRAM:	Services for Gifted and Talented Students
PROGRAM ORIGIN:	Gifted and talented program services were initiated in 1979 and grew out of Title IV-C gifted reading program begun in 1976.
PROGRAM BUDGET:	State and local funds
AREAS OF GIFTEDNESS:	General intellectual ability and specific academic achievement
GRADE LEVELS:	K-12
CURRICULUM AREAS:	Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies
SUPERINTENDENT:	Dr. Michael Novotny
PROGRAM GOAL:	To develop independent learners who can critically question, analyze, apply and create exemplary products and presentations.
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES:	Differentiated instruction through: ➢ alternative assessment, ➢ compacting curriculum, ➢ learning centers/stations, ➢ learning contracts, ➢ productive questioning, ➢ thematic inter-disciplinary units, ➢ tiered assignments ➢ independent study (both as a course and within the class) ➢ student research, product development and presentation, and acceleration.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT:

Teachers must have participated in at least **five days or thirty (30) hours** of Basic Gifted and Talented professional development prior to teaching in the Gifted and Talented Program. An additional **six (6) hours** of staff development in gifted education or advanced training in subject area is required each year for teachers assigned to working in the Gifted and Talented Program. In the event that a teacher with insufficient training must be assigned Gifted and Talented Program responsibilities, the campus will develop a written plan, signed by the teacher, to insure necessary training is acquired during the **first semester** of the school year.

District/campuses will provide Gifted and Talented staff development during the school year and in the summer to support teachers in attaining G/T Basic Training and annual update training.

District/campuses will encourage **all teachers** to become knowledgeable in needs and identification of gifted students.

PARENT/COMMUNITY:

The parents and community are involved in the **Services for Gifted and Talented Students** in a variety of ways by:

- assisting with instructional enrichment projects and academic competitions;
- nominating/referring students for the program;
- participating in individual parent conferences, parent meetings, G/T classes visitation or special GT programs and student presentations;
- participating in program needs assessments;
- providing concurrent enrollment courses and/or use of college/university resources and facilities;
- serving as group leader, mentor, or expert;
- serving as volunteers for field trips, creating resource materials, classroom speakers, and partners in projects;
- serving on parent/educator advisory committee;
- serving as judges and audience for student presentations.

State Goals for Gifted Student Services

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 reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment. High school graduates who participate in services for gifted students will produce products and performances of outstanding quality as part of their program services.

District Mission Statement

Salado Independent School District empowers today's youth to be leaders in a global society through educational excellence. We are committed to ***S****uccess,* ***I****nnovation,* ***S****elf-Reliance, and* ***D****etermination*.

Rationale of Salado ISD Gifted Programs

The provisions of our gifted programs are based upon the beliefs:

- That education in a democratic society values individual differences;
- That gifted students need and deserve educational experience beyond that offered through grade level curriculums;
- That gifted students should have opportunities to interact with their social peers and with their intellectual peers;
- That it is the school's responsibility to identify the gifted population and to provide services which allow them to develop their unique gifts.

Program Goals

- Develop critical thinking skills
- Develop self-confidence through creating solutions to problems
- Improve communication skills
- Develop and improve research techniques
- Develop teamwork skills
- Increase interest in learning
- Provide full certification of staff

Student Goals

- The student will develop a realistic awareness of his/her strengths and weaknesses by completing assignments of varying difficulty.
- The student will demonstrate a working attitude of respect and conciliation, recognizing the rights and differences of others when given the opportunity to interact with them.
- The student will develop the ability to think critically by generating ideas that reflect analysis of given information.
- The student will interpret data and state valid generalizations indicating specificity of given information.
- The student will demonstrate the ability to synthesize by utilizing data.

GIFTED AND TALENTED ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mission:

to inspire students to reach their full potential

- Fund and sponsor enrichment activities
- Develop public awareness
- Provide resources/ideas for teachers
- Provide workshops, seminars, verbal and written communication

NOMINATION PROCESS

A recommendation is made for placement in G/T through the following process:

- The parent or teacher referral will be submitted during the referral window (October 1 – November 30).
- A parent consent form must be signed prior to evaluation.
- The parent input form will be completed and returned to the school.
- The teacher input form will be given to the current teacher(s) for completion.
- A minimum of three (3) criteria will be used for assessment.

After the testing has been completed, the G/T placement committee consisting of at least three campus educators who have received training in G/T will meet and evaluate the results. A balanced examination of all assessment data collected through the district's gifted/talented assessment process is conducted and used by the placement committee in making identification decisions.

Assessments

Data collected through both objective and subjective assessments shall be measured against the criteria approved by the Board to determine individual eligibility for the program. Assessment tools may include but are not limited to achievement tests, intelligence tests, and qualitative observations completed by teachers and parents. Teacher nominations are based on classroom observations and student work products.

Any outside testing may be provided as additional information to the placement committee. It will be up to the committee to decide if they will consider that testing.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Referral window: October 1 – November 30
Testing window: Testing will begin in January. If a student qualifies, services will begin the next school year.

- Referral received: from parent, teacher, peer, student
- Send home parent permission for evaluation
- Once parent permission is received:
    - Send home parent checklist
    - Send out teacher checklist
        - Checklists provide qualitative data.
        - Anecdotes and examples are very helpful to the committee
    - Assess student
        - quantitative data
        - tested in 3 areas: Verbal, Quantitative, Nonverbal

Criteria for Placement

- There are two criteria by which a student may qualify for the program:
    1) Top 2%- a percentile test score of 98 or above on a nationally normed standardized test of intellectual ability will result in automatic admission.
    2) Top 7%- student must score at or above the 93rd percentile on at least two assessments. The campus committee will review the matrix to determine student eligibility for the program. The committee may look at other criteria and factors such as: parent/teacher anecdotes and interviews, portfolios, grades, or other school assessments.
- All assessment information will be placed in a designated file within the student's permanent records.
- Parents will be notified of the results.
- Written parent permission must be obtained prior to the student's participation in the program.

OVERVIEW OF GIFTED AND TALENTED SERVICES FOR SALADO ISD

Targeted Population

Salado Independent School District (SISD) seeks to identify students from varied ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds who demonstrate exceptional academic skills and abilities and/or other characteristics that are significantly advanced in relationship to students of similar age, experience, or environment to the degree that differentiated curriculum and instruction are necessary to meet their educational needs.

Building Teams

The G/T placement committee is comprised of a committee of at least three (3) local district or campus educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted/talented students.

Parental Consent

Parental consent shall be obtained before any special testing or individual assessment is conducted as part of the screening and identification process. All student information collected during the screening and identification process shall be an educational record, subject to the protections set out in policies.

Transfer Students

When a student identified as gifted by a previous accredited school district transfers into Salado Independent School District, the student will be given a screening assessment to qualify for our program. To be placed into the program, the student must score at or above the 93rd percentile on the screener. The results of the screener as well as the student's previous school records shall be reviewed by the appropriate campus placement committee to determine if placement in the district's program for gifted and talented students is appropriate. If a student does not meet the minimum requirements on the screening, he/she will be referred for testing during the next testing window.

The placement committee shall make its determination within 30 days of receiving the student's records and shall base its decision on the transferred records and assessment data.

Active military connected children who qualified for G/T services in a previous district will automatically be placed in the Gifted and Talented Program once records are received by Salado ISD.

Furlough

A furlough is a temporary "leave of absence" from the Gifted/Talented Program designed to meet the individual needs of an identified student. Anyone may request a furlough: parent, student, teacher, or administrator. 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 of time 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 not last longer than one school year. A furlough does not indicate a permanent exiting of 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 over-commitment, family concerns, serious illness, or any other circumstances which would inhibit or curtail the student's performance in the program. The furlough may also be used prior to 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 an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the Gifted/Talented committee. A furlough is arranged to meet the individual needs of the student.

Exit Provisions

After a student is admitted to the program, he/she will remain in the program unless one of the following two options is exercised:

- Parent(s) request(s) their child be dropped from the program. This request should be submitted in writing to the child’s principal, after the parent(s) have attempted to resolve their concerns with the school.
- The gifted and talented committee determines that the student is experiencing difficulties in one or more of the following areas; academic, social, emotional, or behavioral and the furlough probationary period has been exhausted.

Reassessment

Students who have been identified for the Salado ISD Gifted and Talented (GT) Program do not need to requalify each year. Salado ISD does not conduct routine GT reassessments. However, in rare circumstances, the campus selection committee may recommend a reassessment if additional information is needed to better understand a student's educational needs. Any reassessment is conducted with the goal of ensuring the student receives the most appropriate educational opportunities and support.

Appeal Process

A parent/guardian or staff member who wishes to appeal a Gifted and Talented (GT) identification or placement decision made by the campus GT Selection Committee may do so by following the District's appeal process outlined in Board Policy. To be considered, the completed appeal form must be submitted within 15 calendar days of receiving the student's assessment results.

Professional Development

Teachers who provide services and instruction that are part of the program for gifted and talented students must have a minimum of 30 clock hours of staff development that includes nature and needs of G/T students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for the gifted students. In addition, teachers who provide the services for gifted students must receive a minimum of six hours professional development annually in gifted education. Teachers will be encouraged to attend G/T conferences, conventions, and workshops. Staff development is ongoing, based on need.

All staff receive an orientation to the campus program for G/T students and training in the nature and needs of the gifted.

Administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions must receive six hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented student and program options for gifted and talented students.

Evaluation of professional development activities for gifted/talented education is ongoing, and the results of the evaluation are used in making decisions regarding future training plans. G/T staff is involved in the planning and conducting of the professional development.

Professional development for the gifted and talented program is based on the following principles. The program:

- will concentrate on local needs,
- will provide a variety of activities and experiences for the purpose of improving teaching,
- will offer opportunities for expanding the employees' educational vision and understanding,
- will seek to create a cooperative atmosphere by providing communication that is active and open,
- will involve all levels of administration,
- will provide release time to ensure maximum participation,
- will state goals and objectives in a clear, concise manner, and
- will utilize data aimed in evaluation as a basis for future training.

Family and Community Involvement

Salado ISD shall ensure that information about the gifted and talented program is available to parents and community members and that they have an opportunity to develop an understanding of and support for the program.

District and campus G/T committee members will meet regularly to review and recommend program policies and procedures to the district. The group will also offer support and assistance to the district in the program planning and improvement. Specialists and advocates for gifted students will be consulted in the development of program policies and options.

Education activities involving parents of gifted/talented students may include:

- displaying the work of G/T students on their home campuses,
- involving parents in the program evaluation through a district survey in May of each year,
- encouraging parents to contact the G/T coordinator and G/T teachers during the school year, and
- encouraging parents to participate in organizations dedicated to supporting gifted/talented education.

Suggested activities involving community awareness may include the following:

- preparing articles concerning the program for inclusion in the local newspaper,
- utilizing speakers for enrichment sessions, and
- encouraging school board members and community leaders to visit G/T classes and programs.

Program Accountability and Planning

The program will be evaluated annually through student and parent surveys. Each summer, G/T coordinators will review survey results and plan for the upcoming year based upon:

- G/T survey results (including a needs assessment),
- district mission and vision statement,
- district annual goals and objectives,
- district test results, and
- district long-range planning.

GT Testing Calendar

Nomination window open	October 1-November 30
Testing window	January-April
Notice to parents of identification and evaluation results	May
Notice to parents of committee's decision about new student previously enrolled in G/T programs	Within 30 school days of receiving records
Qualifying students start receiving GT services	Fall of the next school year
Qualifying kindergarten students start receiving GT services	March of kindergarten year

PROGRAM DESIGN FOR GRADES K-12

Elementary

The elementary gifted and talented (G/T) program is offered in Grades K – 5, by providing educational opportunities and experiences that are comprehensive, structured, sequenced and appropriately challenging. Emphasis will be placed on the development and integration of higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills throughout the four core academic areas and the arts. Students will be encouraged to develop and expand their leadership qualities, abstract reasoning abilities, self-directed research and study skills, as well as individual strengths, talents, and abilities through the use of flexible grouping patterns and interactions with peers, mentors, instructors and community members. The Independent Study program provides experiences which serve students who have been identified as generally intellectually able and whose assessment has shown them to have creative and productive thinking abilities. The students must be formally identified and placed in the G/T program by a committee of district/campus staff. Individual students may be nominated by district personnel or parents. Students are then screened with a variety of tests and other screening instruments administered by trained personnel. Students are given responsibilities to direct their own learning through hands on learning experiences through active research using scholarly approaches. Methods to be used can include the following:

1) Student driven projects and products;
2) Enriched instruction from classroom standards;
2) Individualized instruction;
3) Guest speakers/industry networking

Secondary

The G/T program at the middle school and high school will serve and meet the needs of all identified G/T students by providing services that are comprehensive, structured, sequenced, and appropriately challenging. Methods to be used can include the following:

1) Student selected projects and products
2) Individualized instruction;
3) Guest speakers;
4) Student organization of special district-wide programs
5) Honors, Pre-AP, and AP classes
6) Field trips

TEXAS EDUCATION CODE FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED

TEXAS EDUCATION CODE
SUBCHAPTER D

Educational programs for gifted are discussed in Subchapter D of the Texas Education Code. Section 29.121 provides a definition previously cited in this document. The next two sections of this subchapter amplify program regulations:

Subchapter D, Section 29.121: ESTABLISHMENT. Using criteria established by the State Board of Education, each school district shall adopt a process for identifying and serving gifted and talented students in the district and shall establish a program for those students in each grade level. A district may establish a shared service arrangement program with one or more districts.

Section 29.121: STATE PLAN ASSITANCE: The State Board of Education shall develop and periodically update a state plan for the education of gifted and talented students to guide school districts in establishing and improving programs for identified students. The regional education service centers may assist school districts in implementing the state plan. In addition to obtaining assistance from a regional education service center, a district may obtain other assistance in implementing the plan. The plan shall be used for accountability purposes to measure the performance of districts in providing services to students identified as gifted and talented.

TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE
CHAPTER 89 SUBCHAPTER A

Guidelines for Gifted/Talented Education are presented in chapter 89, subchapter A of the Texas Administrative Code. A copy of these guidelines can be found at: www.tea.state.tx.us