LAKE DALLAS
Independent School District
INSPIRE • EDUCATE • EMPOWER

Gifted &Talented

Handbook
2026-2027

Lake Dallas Independent School District
104 Swisher, Lake Dallas, Texas 75065
(940) 497-4039

August 1, 2026

Lake Dallas ISD does not discriminate based on age, color, creed, disability, national origin, race, gender, socioeconomic status, or English proficiency in its educational programs and activities.

Contact Information

Campus	Contact	Phone Number
Lake Dallas High School	Counselors	940-497-4031
Lake Dallas Middle School	Counselors	940-497-4038
Corinth Elementary	Allison McCowen	940-497-4010
Lake Dallas Elementary	Karen Anderson	940-497-2222
Shady Shores Elementary	Kami Tipps	940-497-4035

Philosophy

The Lake Dallas Independent School District is dedicated to developing the personal, social, and intellectual competence of its gifted and talented students. We are committed to providing materials, activities, and instruction for these students of varying abilities, interests, needs, and environmental backgrounds so they may experience success in the development of their potential.

Position Statement

In all areas of human endeavor, excellence is recognized, applauded, and rewarded. Professions, industries, and arts have acknowledged eminence in their respective fields through multiple and varied channels. It is an acknowledged fact that the world desperately needs the fruits of the finest minds in all areas.

Education makes a significant contribution by recognizing the potential for excellence among students, by nurturing its expansion and growth, and by removing impediments to the development of all students to the maximum potential.

Educators in the Lake Dallas School District are aware that there are students in the district who have the potential for excellence and that more could be done to foster their development. The Texas State Legislature, the Texas State Board of Education, and the Texas Education Agency have emphasized the need to provide appropriate instructional programs for these students.

Goals and Objectives

Certain lifelong learning skills should be a part of every gifted/talented student's school program. Gifted/Talented students should develop advanced research and study skills. They should be able to think critically and creatively about problems that are presented to them. They should possess the poise and understanding of group dynamics that will make them effective leaders in the future, and they should recognize likenesses and differences between themselves and others.

This does not mean that research and personal study skills, critical and creative thinking ability, and leadership skills are the exclusive domain of gifted/talented students. Gifted/Talented students, however, tend to master the essential knowledge and skills more quickly than most students. Because of this, they should be permitted to extend their education as far and as completely as they can in areas that are of importance to their development.

Lake Dallas ISD has adopted the following goals for its Gifted and Talented Program: The Gifted and Talented Program will provide space, time, encouragement, and opportunities for gifted/talented students to explore areas of their interest and ability. Specifically, these students will:

1. utilize higher, more complex-level thinking skills to develop intellectual curiosity in critical, creative, and productive thinking;
2. develop the research skills and personal study skills necessary for self-directed learning. They will conduct independent studies and research projects that extend the regular curriculum and result in the synthesis of elaborate products;
3. understand and apply the problem-solving process in a cooperative group setting through analysis and evaluation of real-life situations;
4. use listening, speaking, and written communication skills to integrate and extend skills in their regular classrooms;
5. gain an understanding and respect of individual abilities, recognizing the likenesses and differences between themselves and others, while developing their own unique abilities.

Gifted and Talented Program Design

The Gifted and Talented Program at Lake Dallas Independent School District offers instruction and opportunities for students identified by their general intellectual ability.

Gifted and Talented students at every level have the opportunity to work together as a group, with other students, and to work independently. Services are available during the school day and throughout the school year. Out-of-school options are also available. Some of these extracurricular activities are the University Interscholastic League (UIL) Academic Contests, Junior National Honor Society, National Honor Society, and various specialized organizations.

The Gifted and Talented teachers are trained to provide instruction that will lead to the completion of projects that require complex thinking, problem-solving, and advanced learning. The use of a variety of organizational patterns will effectively lead to maximizing the potential of gifted and talented students.

Grades Kindergarten-5th

The Gifted and Talented services are provided as a model to a clustered classroom approach. In this model, identified G/T students will be grouped together within the general education classroom and supported through differentiated instruction tailored to their advanced learning needs. This allows students to engage more consistently in rigorous, high-level thinking while remaining connected to their classroom community.

In addition, the **Falcon Discovery Academy** will provide all students, including those identified for G/T services, with access to specialized learning opportunities in areas such as music, theatre, dance, and STEM. For our G/T students, Falcon Discovery Academy will serve as a key component of their gifted services, offering dedicated time for creative exploration, problem-solving, and advanced enrichment aligned to their strengths and interests.

This model allows us to:

- Provide daily access to advanced instruction rather than limiting services to scheduled pull-out times.
- Foster collaboration among intellectual peers within the classroom.
- Expand enrichment opportunities through the Discovery Academy in both the arts and STEM fields.
- Support the whole child, blending academic challenge with creativity and innovation.

Grades 6th-8th

Students will be served in the Honors courses offered in the areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies:

- Sixth grade-Honors courses in reading and math.
- Seventh grade-Honors courses in reading, math, and science.
- Eighth grade-Honors courses in reading, science, social studies, and Algebra I

The Honors teachers have received professional learning in the discipline that they teach, nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction to serve gifted and talented students. Students must enroll in one of these classes to be considered a part of the Gifted and Talented program at the middle school level. Students who do not meet this requirement will be furloughed for that year if no other furlough has been taken.

Grades 9th-12th

Students have the opportunity to enroll in Honors, Advanced Placement, or Dual Credit courses taught by qualified teachers who have received professional learning in nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction to serve gifted and talented students. These teachers will complete the College Board Advanced Placement professional learning. These classes will be offered in the four core areas of Math, Science, English, and History. Upon entering the ninth grade, students will also have the option of enrolling in Dual Credit courses.

High school gifted/talented students must enroll in at least one Honors, Advanced Placement, or Dual Credit course per semester to be considered a part of the Gifted and Talented Program at the high school level. Students who do not meet this requirement will be furloughed for that year if no other furlough has been taken or exited from the program if a furlough has happened before the year in question. The AP Coordinator is

available to assist gifted/talented students with preparation for the Distinguished Achievement Program, college and scholarship applications, and any special situation that may arise.

Gifted and Talented Placement Committee

The Gifted and Talented Placement Committee on each campus will be composed of the principal, counselor, and Gifted/Talented teacher. This committee will be responsible for the final identification of students for Gifted and Talented program placement, furloughs, transfers, and the exiting of students from the program.

The Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee will meet as needed to provide support and assistance to the Gifted and Talented Program regarding program planning and improvement. Membership shall include, but not be limited to, the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Gifted and Talented Coordinator, classroom teachers, Gifted and Talented teachers, parents of a Gifted and Talented student, and a community member.

Referrals and Screening Process

Referrals are an ongoing process. The Gifted and Talented teachers will accept nominations at any time. Nominations may come from faculty, parents, community members, or by self-nomination.

The following qualitative and quantitative instruments will be used in the screening process in Spring for nominated students in **kindergarten:**

- Teacher Rating Characteristics in Learning, Creative, and Leadership
- Student Portfolio
- Achievement Test
- Intelligence/Abilities Test

The following qualitative and quantitative instruments will be used in the screening process for nominated students in **grades 1st-12th:**

- Teacher Characteristics Rating in Learning, Creative, and Leadership
- Parent Characteristics Rating in Learning, Creative, and Leadership
- Achievement Test
- Intelligence/Abilities Test

Reassessment

Reassessment of gifted/talented students is not performed unless a request is made by the teacher, parent, or student.

Furloughs

A student may request a furlough from the Gifted and Talented program for up to one school year for personal reasons. After meeting with the Gifted and Talented Placement Committee, parental permission is required for the furlough to be in effect. The student will be automatically re-enrolled in the program when the time of the furlough has elapsed. A student may have only one furlough throughout their school career unless the placement committee determines that it would be in the best interest of the student to approve a subsequent furlough.

Exiting

Exiting from the Gifted and Talented Program will only occur when continued placement would not be the most appropriate educational placement for a student. If the Gifted and Talented teacher believes that participation in the program is not meeting a student's needs, the student will be placed on Gifted and Talented Probation for a set period. If, at the end of that probationary/furlough period, the student is still not making the appropriate gains, a meeting will be held to discuss exiting that student. A parent or a student may also request exiting from the program. Educational, psychological, and personal reasons will be considered. An exited student may not reapply for admission until one full year has elapsed. At that time, the student will be required to requalify for the program.

Transfer Students Grades Kindergarten-Twelfth

Students transferring to the Lake Dallas Independent School District from a gifted and talented program at their previous school will be considered for placement once the previous district's scores are received and reviewed by a committee.

Appeals Procedure

A parent or staff member who wishes to appeal an identification decision may do so by following these steps:

1. Submit a written request to the GT Coordinator no later than ten days after the Gifted and Talented Placement Committee has announced its identified decisions.
2. The campus Gifted and Talented Placement Committee (Appeals Committee) shall review the screening information and obtain additional information if necessary within ten days of the appeal request and may schedule a meeting with the parent or staff member who requested the appeal.
3. A unanimous vote of the campus Gifted and Talented Placement Committee (Appeals Committee) is required to admit that student on a probationary status to the program.
4. If the person making the appeal wishes to appeal the decision of the Appeals Committee, the person must follow the district's local policies governing appeals.