

EUSTACE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT GIFTED AND TALENTED GUIDELINES

STATE GOAL FOR SERVICES FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

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 have participated in services for gifted students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.

DEFINITION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

The Eustace Independent School District recognizes that “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:

- (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.

Texas Education Code §29.121

DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY

The Eustace Independent School District recognizes that giftedness is not bound by race, geographical locale, socio-economic factors, or environment. The district’s educational philosophy stresses that education begins at an individual’s own level, takes place at an individual’s own rate of development and does not try to fit every student into a preconceived instructional plan.

The district’s educational position presses the staff to extend higher-level instructional benefits to all grade levels. With this commitment, the district subscribes to the goal of providing instruction for all academically gifted students in grades kindergarten through twelve.

DISTRICT PROGRAM GOALS

Eustace Independent School District shall provide an array of learning opportunities for gifted and talented students in kindergarten through grade twelve. Options shall include:

- (1) Instructional and organizational patterns that enable identified students to work together as a group, to work with other students, and to work independently.
- (2) A continuum of learning experiences that leads to the development of advanced-level products and performances.
- (3) In-school, and when possible, out-of-school options relevant to the student's area of strength that are available during the school year.
- (4) Opportunities to accelerate in areas of strength.

19 TAC 89.3

PROGRAM CONTENT

The gifted and talented program will provide a differentiated curriculum that offers an opportunity for students to learn more in both qualitative and quantitative terms. The curriculum emphasizes content in the four core academic areas – language arts, math, science, and social studies.

A. Primary, Intermediate, and Middle School

- (1) A variety of curricular options and opportunities
- (2) Developing research and evaluative skills
- (3) Inquiry training
- (4) Problem solving techniques
- (5) Student directed learning experiences
- (6) Development of new and original ideas
- (7) Analysis and critical thinking
- (8) Individual projects which result in products superior to those normally expected
- (9) Depth and breadth of learning experiences.
- (10) Accommodation to creative learning styles
- (11) Small group learning experiences with other gifted and talented students
- (12) Attendance at cultural, political and civic events

B. High School

Eustace High School will provide services for the gifted/talented students through Advanced Placement classes. Students also have the opportunity to participate in special interest study groups as part of or separate from these classes.

AP level teachers have received the thirty hours of training in gifted education.

Upon completion of the 11th grade, gifted students may enroll in area community colleges with the student receiving credit from both the high school and the college concurrently. (19 TAC Sec. 75.167)

Students may take and receive credit on advanced placement examinations (19 TAC Sec. 75.172), and credit by examination with the acceptable score. (TAC Sec. 75.166)

IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

Criteria to identify gifted and talented students is established in the Board-approved program for the gifted and talented. The criteria is specific to the state definition of gifted and talented and does ensure the fair assessment of students with special needs, such as the culturally different, the economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities.

Identification and selection of students for the gifted and talented program must be determined through a comprehensive process consisting of three steps: (1) NOMINATION, (2) SCREENING, and (3) SELECTION. Nomination involves the completion of the GT nomination forms by the party making the nomination and a survey of scores on standardized ability and achievement tests. Screening is the process designed to identify students for the program. Selection involves consideration of each nominee and screened student and the selection of those students who match (meet) the criteria for the program.

Specific identification procedures and entry/transfer/exit policies for grades K-12 are also included in this plan.

NOMINATION POLICY

Students may be nominated for the gifted and talented program at any time by teachers, counselors, parents, or other interested persons. Students not yet identified are considered for nomination and screened at least once a year for services that are a part of the program for gifted students. (19 TAC §89.1(1)) Testing will usually occur the first two weeks in December. Kindergarten students are nominated in the spring semester, with services beginning by March 1st. Nomination forms are available in each campus office.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Students in grades K – 12 shall be assessed and, if identified, provided services. (TEC §29.122 and 19 TAC §89.1(3)) Students are assessed in languages they understand or with non-verbal based tests. Assessment in the areas of intellectual and specific academic fields, grades 1 – 12, uses a minimum of three (3) appropriate criteria that include both

qualitative and quantitative measures. Each criterion will carry equal weight. A student profile will be compiled from criteria on a summary chart. Data and procedures assure that all populations of the district have access to assessment and, if identified, services offered as part of the program for gifted students.

Selection Criteria

The following qualitative and quantitative assessment measures may be used for the purpose of screening each student for possible placement into the program.

- (1) Norm-referenced Achievement Test Scores – ITBS.
- (2) Renzulli-Hartman Scale for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students will be completed by the student's teacher(s).
 - a. Learning Characteristics
 - b. Motivational Characteristics
 - c. Creativity Characteristics
 - d. Leadership Characteristics
- (3) Non-Verbal Measure (TONI)
- (4) Gifted Screening
- (5) Student Grades
- (6) Student Product/Portfolio
- (7) Optional Information (Parent Survey, TAKS Texas Percentile – Reading, Math and Writing)

At the kindergarten level, as many criteria as possible, and at least three (3) are used to assess students who perform at remarkably high levels of accomplishment relative to age peers. Identified kindergarten students will receive services by March 1.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

A selection committee shall evaluate each nominated student according to the established criteria and shall select those students for whom gifted program placement is the most appropriate educational setting. The committee shall be composed of at least three professional educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted students. An elementary selection committee will serve grades K – 5, and a secondary selection committee will serve grades 6 - 12. It may be necessary for the selection committee to make placement based on perceived educational need rather than a specific cut-off score.

Review and evaluation of student data will be of a confidential nature. Numbers will be assigned to the Student Identification Profile form in lieu of the student's name. Upon confirmation of data, selection of students to participate in the gifted and talented program will be made.

Each committee member will sign the placement form and a copy will be given to each member showing the exact name of each student who has been selected.

NOTIFICATION

Parents and students shall be notified in writing upon selection of the student for the gifted program. Participation in any program or services provided for gifted students is voluntary. The district shall obtain written permission of the student and the parent(s) before a student is placed in a gifted program.

PARENTAL CONSENT

Written 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 at FL. Written parental consent shall also be obtained prior to student placement in the gifted and talented program.

REASSESSMENTS

The district shall reassess students to determine appropriate program placement when a student moves from the elementary level to the middle school level and when a student moves from the middle school level to high school. Reassessment consists of evaluation of the student's performance in the program. The evaluation is conducted by two regular education teachers and the GT teacher. The GT committee will meet to evaluate reassessment recommendations. If performance is deemed not satisfactory, the GT selection committee may recommend that the student be required to go through the screening process again in order to continue in the GT program.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

When a student identified as gifted and talented by a previous school district transfers into the district, the student's records shall be reviewed by the selection committee to determine if placement in the district's program for gifted and talented students is appropriate.

The committee shall make its determination within 30 days of the student's enrollment in the district and shall base its decision on the transferred records, observation reports of district teachers who instruct the student, and student and parent conferences. If transfer records are not received, the student may continue in the gifted and talented program by completing the formal identification process according to district procedures.

FURLOUGH

Students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the gifted and talented program may be placed on furlough by the selection committee. The purpose of such a furlough is to provide the student an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the selection committee. A furlough also may be granted at the request of the student and/or parent.

A student may be furloughed for a period of time deemed appropriate by the selection committee. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed, and the student may re-enter the gifted and talented program, be removed from the program, or be placed on another furlough.

EXIT PROVISIONS

Student performance in the program shall be monitored. A student may exit the gifted and talented program by a formal meeting of the selection committee. Approval for exiting the gifted and talented program may be based on one or more of the following data:

- Teacher recommendations to the selection committee based on observations of performance or products.
- Counselor recommendations to the selection committee based on interviews, observations, or developmental data on file.
- Parental request for withdrawal from the gifted and talented program.
- Student request for withdrawal from the gifted and talented program with parental permission.
- Evidence of personal or social stresses which prevent self-satisfying student performance.

A conference should be held with the student and the parent or guardian as soon as the selection committee perceives a problem that could necessitate exit from the program. The data and results of the conference should be recorded and placed in the student's cumulative file. If the student does not meet conditions agreed upon in the conference, exit will be recommended.

Students exiting by request (self or parent) may re-enter the gifted and talented program only by completing the formal identification process according to district procedures.

APPEALS

Parents or students may appeal any final decision of the selection committee regarding selection for or removal from the gifted and talented program. Appeal shall be made first to the selection committee. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with FNG (LOCAL) beginning at Level Two.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The gifted and talented program shall be evaluated periodically, and evaluation information shall be shared with board members, administrators, teachers, counselors, students in the gifted and talented program, and the community.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students have a minimum of thirty (30) clock hours of staff development that includes nature and needs of gifted and talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students. *(19 TAC §89.2(1))*

Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students receive a minimum of six (6) hours annually of professional development in gifted education. *(19 TAC §89.2(2))*

Administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions have a minimum of six (6) hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of gifted and talented students and program options for gifted and talented students. *(19 TAC §89.2(3))*

Evaluation of professional development activities for gifted and talented education is ongoing, and the results of the evaluation are used in making decisions regarding future staff development plans. *(19 TAC §89.5)*

FAMILY – COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Eustace Independent School District encourages community and family participation in services designed for gifted and talented students. Written policies on student identification that are approved by the board of trustees are disseminated to parents. Parents are included in the annual evaluation of the gifted and talented program.