



Texarkana
Independent School District

*Gifted & Talented
Academy*

GIFTED & TALENTED PROGRAM

*Staff Procedures
Manual*

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INTRODUCTION

GIFTED EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Texarkana Independent School District is committed to developing creative, productive leaders. This commitment can be met by nurturing the abilities of the academically talented child in a creative, relaxed, and stimulating environment. The TISD gifted and talented program will focus on teaching the child to think and encouraging the child to create. A program for the gifted and talented must be flexible and individualized to provide for the maximum development of academic talents, creativity, original thinking, and self-actualization.

The curriculum for the gifted will be purposeful, motivating, and dynamic, and will allow the learner freedom to experience a wide range of approaches to learning and doing, including interaction with the community.

GOALS FOR NURTURING EACH STUDENT'S DEVELOPMENT:

- Students will develop ability in high-level thinking skills through research using content that is related to broad-based issues and units of study.
- Students will develop ability in logical reasoning and critical thinking skills.
- Students will develop ability in creative and productive thinking through fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.
- Students will develop an understanding of self and others, will develop self-confidence, and will recognize the worth of others.
- Students will enhance communication skills and gain valuable knowledge by networking with and utilizing the expertise of resource persons in the community.

GIFTED AND TALENTED STATE GOAL AND DEFINITION

GOAL

The state's goal for G/T students is to ensure that those students who participate in G/T services demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication. G/T students develop innovative products and sophisticated performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are targeted to an audience outside the classroom.

DEFINITION

A gifted/talented student 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:

- Exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area;
- Possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or
- Excels in a specific academic field. (Texas Education Code §29.121)

PROGRAM DESIGN

The district-wide G/T program was first implemented in 1977 and has continued to expand and change to the current format.

GRADES K

Kindergarten students are identified and served within the regular classroom beginning no later than March 1 of their kindergarten year.

GRADES 1 – 5

Students in grades 1 – 5 participate in a pull-out program. All elementary gifted classes for grades 1-5 are held at GT Academy, located on the Westlawn Elementary School campus.

GRADES 6 – 8

The purpose of the gifted program at the middle school level is to provide a bridge from the elementary GT Academy program to the secondary gifted program.

In the grades 6 – 8, differentiated curriculum for gifted students is provided through Pre-Advanced Placement classes and Think Tank Factory, an advanced studies course.

GRADES 9 – 12

The concurrent enrollment program allows high school students the opportunity to enroll in college-level courses to earn high school as well as college credit for the completed coursework. The program provides a continuum of learning from high school to college for students who choose to pursue a post-secondary degree or certificate after high school graduation. This continuum increases opportunities for students to progress through the program of study at an accelerated pace.

The Advanced Placement program allows high school students the opportunity to enroll in college-level courses and earn college credit while still in high school. Students show mastery in these courses by taking the AP exams that are administered in May of each school year.

Independent Research is another avenue through which high school students pursue their talents and interests.

GIFTED CHARACTERISTICS

- I. Grasps and retains knowledge
 - A. Comprehends meaning
 - B. Responds quickly and accurately
 - C. Questions critically
 - D. Transfers learning to new situations

- II. Conveys ideas effectively
 - A. Follows logical sequence and order
 - B. Has extensive vocabulary and uses it appropriately
 - C. Is selective
 - D. Is critical
 - E. Is fluent

- III. Shows skill in abstract thinking
 - A. Makes generalizations
 - B. Senses cause and effect
 - C. Recognizes relationships
 - D. Understands and apply rules
 - E. Foresees new possibilities

- IV. Uses wide variety of resources
 - A. Is versatile
 - B. Is self-reliant when meeting a problem

- V. Has creative and inventive power
 - A. Shows curiosity and originality
 - B. Is alert to possibilities
 - C. Enjoys experimentation
 - D. Uses trial and error
 - E. Finds ways to extend ideas

- VI. Exhibits power to work independently
 - A. Shows ability to plan
 - B. Shows ability to organize
 - C. Shows ability to execute
 - D. Shows ability to assess

- VII. Assumes and handles responsibility
 - A. Shows perseverance
 - B. Shows desire to forge ahead
 - C. Shows will to succeed

- VIII. Adjusts easily to new situations
 - A. Understands and accepts reasons for change
 - B. Anticipates outcome
 - C. Maintains optimistic attitude toward new adventures
 - D. Is challenged by new ideas

- IX. Has physical competence
 - A. Is alert
 - B. Is active
 - C. Is energetic

- X. Appreciates social values
 - A. Senses right and wrong
 - B. Respects the rights of others
 - C. Is willing to share
 - D. Contributes constructively to group activities
 - E. Is conscientious and truthful

IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES

GIFTED AND TALENTED NOMINATION AND IDENTIFICATION

Students in grades K – 12 are considered for nomination at least once a year. Parents, teachers, counselors, and other interested persons are invited to nominate students for the gifted program. After nomination, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their strengths and abilities through the identification process. Assessment includes, but is not limited to, data collected from multiple sources:

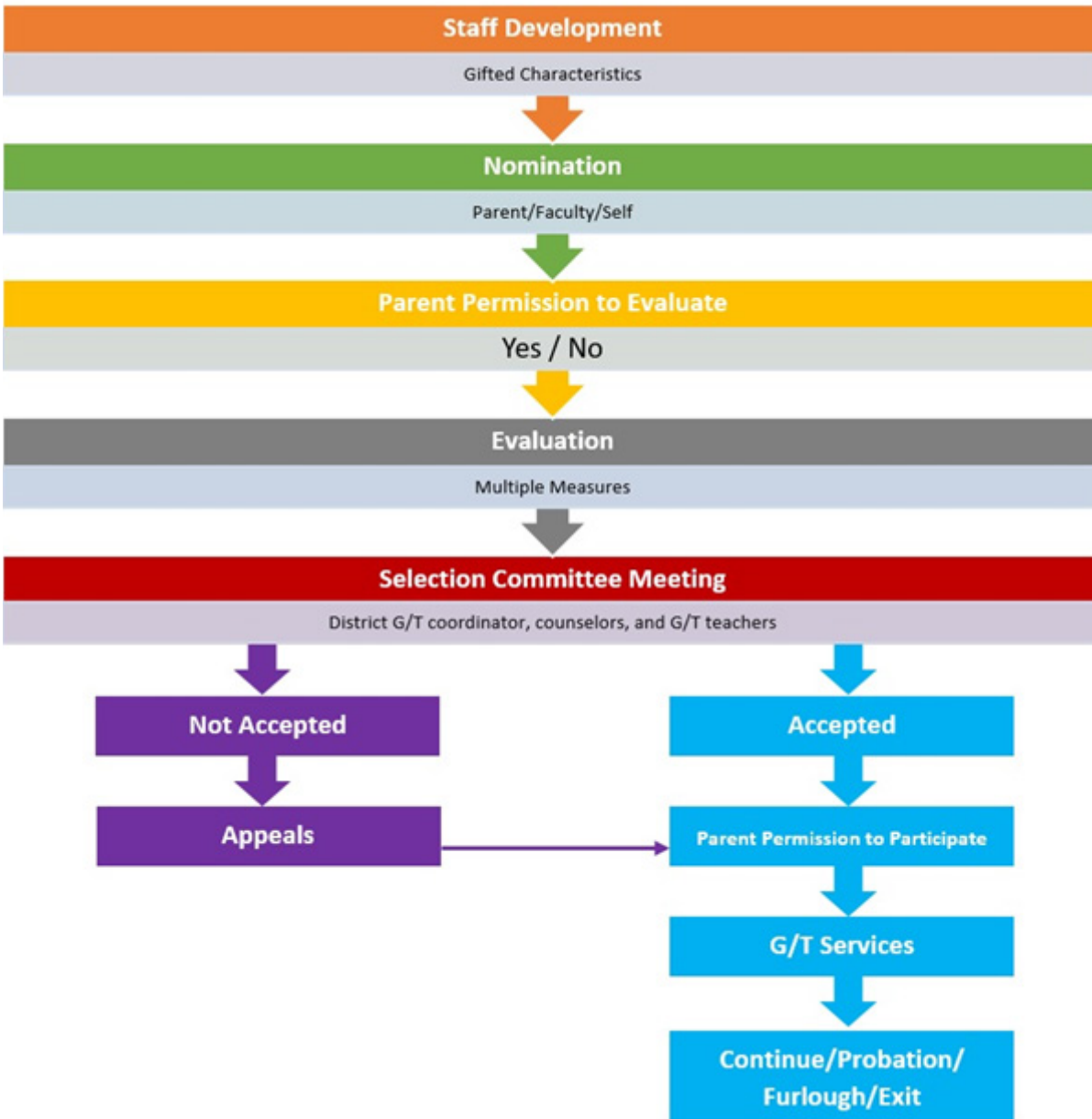
- Intelligence tests
- Achievement tests
- Creativity tests, surveys, etc.
- Teacher inventories

Additional data for each student may be reviewed to determine the degree to which the student will benefit from the gifted program.

After the assessment process is complete, the Selection Committee* (Coordinator of Gifted Education, guidance counselors, and gifted and talented teacher) reviews data as measured against district criteria. Parents are notified in writing of the selection committee's decision.

** Final determination of students' need for G/T services is made by a committee of at least three local district or campus educators who have received training in the nature and needs of G/T students and who have met and reviewed the individual student data.*

GIFTED AND TALENTED IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES



KINDERGARTEN IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

ALL KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS ARE CONSIDERED FOR THE G/T PROGRAM.

- _____ 1. Assessments are ordered by the district G/T coordinator through the district assessment office.
- _____ 2. In coordination with the public relations department, district G/T coordinator notifies parents of G/T nominations. Notification letters are sent home with all kindergarten students. Notice is published on the TISD website and printed in the newspaper. (K – November/ December)
- _____ 3. District G/T coordinator sends nomination forms to campuses for distribution. Nomination forms are provided to parents upon request. Completed forms are submitted to counselors.
- _____ 4. Counselors receive assessment materials from the district assessment coordinator.
- _____ 5. Counselors distribute teacher inventories and administer assessments.
- _____ 6. Inventories and assessments are scored.
- _____ 7. Counselors gather additional data as needed.
- _____ 8. Assessment data and vital comments are recorded on Student Profiles and matrices.
- _____ 9. Copies of Student Profiles and matrices are submitted to the district G/T coordinator.
- _____ 10. District G/T coordinator compiles matrices, removes identifying information, and assigns random testing ID numbers to students.
- _____ 11. Selection Committee meets. (K – February)
 - Review scores.
 - Make decision: Yes/No/Trial.
 - Verify and sign Student Profiles.
- _____ 12. District G/T coordinator notifies parents of Selection Committee’s decision via mailed letter. (K – Prior to March 1)
- _____ 13. District G/T coordinator provides updated list of G/T students to principals and counselors and confirms G/T status is properly identified in TEAMS.
- _____ 14. Identification documentation is filed in the district G/T office.
 - Copy of nomination letter
 - Selection Committee sign-in sheet
 - Selection Committee minutes
 - Copies of signed Student Profiles
 - Copies of parent notification letters
 - Copies of Parent Consent Forms
- _____ 15. Kindergarten students receive G/T services in the regular classroom by March 1. Teachers document services in lesson plans and through products.
- _____ 16. Quality assurance and recording keeping:
 - Campus counselors enter and confirm the accuracy of G/T records.
 - o Individual G/T student folders are kept in counselor’s office.
 - o G/T status is identified in TEAMS.
 - o For *identified* students: Student Profiles, Parent Consent Forms, and documentation of changes (probation, furlough, and exit) are filed in cumulative folders.
 - o G/T testing records are kept in counselor’s office.

GRADES 1 - 5 IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

- _____ 1. Assessments are ordered by the district G/T coordinator through the district assessment office.
- _____ 2. In coordination with the public relations department, district G/T coordinator notifies parents of G/T nominations. Notification letters are sent home with all kindergarten students. Notice is published on the TISD website and printed in the newspaper. (Grades 1 – 5 – February/March)
- _____ 3. District G/T coordinator sends nomination forms to campuses for distribution. Nomination forms are provided to parents upon request. Completed forms are submitted to counselors.
- _____ 4. Counselors receive assessment materials from the district assessment coordinator.
- _____ 5. Counselors distribute teacher inventories and administer assessments.
- _____ 6. Inventories and assessments are scored.
- _____ 7. Counselors gather additional data as needed.
- _____ 8. Assessment data and vital comments are recorded on Student Profiles and matrices.
- _____ 9. Copies of Student Profiles and matrices are submitted to the district G/T coordinator.
- _____ 10. District G/T coordinator compiles matrices, removes identifying information, and assigns random testing ID numbers to students.
- _____ 11. Selection Committee meets. (Grades 1 – 5 – May/June)
 - Review scores.
 - Make decision: Yes/No/Trial.
 - Verify and sign Student Profiles.
- _____ 12. District G/T coordinator notifies parents of Selection Committee’s decision via mailed letter. (Grades 1 – 5 – June)
- _____ 13. District G/T coordinator provides updated list of G/T students to principals and counselors and confirms G/T status is properly identified in TEAMS.
- _____ 14. Identification documentation is filed in the district G/T office.
 - Copy of nomination letter
 - Selection Committee sign-in sheet
 - Selection Committee minutes
 - Copies of signed Student Profiles
 - Copies of parent notification letters
 - Copies of Parent Consent Forms
- _____ 15. Students in grades 1 – 5 receive G/T services through GT Academy beginning the following school year.
- _____ 16. Quality assurance and recording keeping:
 - Campus counselors enter and confirm the accuracy of G/T records.
 - o Individual G/T student folders are kept in counselor’s office.
 - o G/T status is identified in TEAMS.
 - o For *identified* students: Student Profiles, Parent Consent Forms, and documentation of changes (probation, furlough, and exit) are filed in cumulative folders.
 - o G/T testing records are kept in counselor’s office.

GRADES 6 - 11 IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

- _____ 1. Assessments are ordered by the district G/T coordinator through the district assessment office.
- _____ 2. In coordination with the public relations department, district G/T coordinator notifies parents of G/T nominations. Notification letters are sent home with all kindergarten students. Notice is published on the TISD website and printed in the newspaper. (Grades 6 – 11 – February/March)
- _____ 3. District G/T coordinator sends nomination forms to campuses for distribution. Nomination forms are provided to parents upon request. Completed forms are submitted to counselors.
- _____ 4. Counselors receive assessment materials from the district assessment coordinator.
- _____ 5. Counselors distribute teacher inventories and administer assessments.
- _____ 6. Inventories and assessments are scored.
- _____ 7. Counselors gather additional data as needed.
- _____ 8. Assessment data and vital comments are recorded on Student Profiles and matrices.
- _____ 9. Copies of Student Profiles and matrices are submitted to the district G/T coordinator.
- _____ 10. District G/T coordinator compiles matrices, removes identifying information, and assigns random testing ID numbers to students.
- _____ 11. Selection Committee meets. (Grades 6 – 11 – May/June)
 - Review scores.
 - Make decision: Yes/No/Trial.
 - Verify and sign Student Profiles.
- _____ 12. District G/T coordinator notifies parents of Selection Committee’s decision via mailed letter. (Grades 6 – 11 – June)
- _____ 13. District G/T coordinator provides updated list of G/T students to principals and counselors and confirms G/T status is identified in TEAMS.
- _____ 14. Identification documentation is filed in the district G/T office.
 - Copy of nomination letter
 - Selection Committee sign-in sheet
 - Selection Committee minutes
 - Copies of signed Student Profiles
 - Copies of parent notification letters
 - Copies of Parent Consent Forms
- _____ 15. Students in grades 6 – 11 receive G/T services beginning the following school year.
- _____ 16. Quality assurance and recording keeping:
 - Campus counselors enter and confirm the accuracy of G/T records.
 - o Individual G/T student folders are kept in counselor’s office.
 - o G/T status is identified in TEAMS.
 - o For *identified* students: Student Profiles, Parent Consent Forms, and documentation of changes (probation, furlough, and exit) are filed in cumulative folders.
 - o G/T testing records are kept in counselor’s office.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

Final determination of students' need for G/T services is made by a committee of at least three local district or campus educators who have received training in the nature and needs of G/T students and who have met and reviewed the individual student data.

The Selection Committee considers each nominated student individually according to the established criteria. The Selection Committee selects students for whom gifted program placement is the most appropriate educational setting.

After reviewing data collected for each nominee, the Selection Committee makes a recommendation:

- Yes – Recommended for placement in the gifted program
- No – Does not qualify at this time
- Trial – Recommended for placement in the gifted program on a trial basis
 - o Ongoing monitoring is based performance in the G/T program. Students on trial may be removed from the gifted program if progress is not maintained. Before removal, the defined probation, furlough, and/or exit procedures are followed.

TRANSFERS

TRANSFER STUDENTS

When a student identified as gifted by a previous school district transfers into the District, the Selection Committee shall review the student's records and conduct assessment procedures when necessary to determine if placement in the District's G/T program is appropriate.

Transfer student procedures:

1. Parents complete G/T Nomination Form and Parent Checklist.
2. Counselor requests records from sending district.
3. The Selection Committee reviews the student's records and conducts assessment procedures when necessary.
4. Parent is notified of the Selection Committee's decision in writing.

For students who are placed in the District's gifted and talented program:

1. Parent completes and returns the Parent Consent Form to counselor.
2. The campus principal and applicable teachers are notified of the student's gifted identification and placement in the G/T program.
3. The counselor ensures that the student's gifted status is identified in TEAMS.

Each campus must have a designated person, i.e. the counselor, to enter and confirm that all G/T records are accurate:

- Individual G/T student folders are kept in counselor's office.
- G/T status is identified in TEAMS.
- For *identified* students: Student Profiles, Parent Consent Forms, and documentation of changes (probation, furlough, and exit) are filed in cumulative folders.
- G/T testing records are kept in counselor's office.

Transfer students who have not been tested for G/T, including private and homeschooled students:

- Transfer students who have not been tested or identified as gifted in their previous district have until the end of the first six weeks grading period to apply for consideration for Texarkana ISD's G/T program. After that date, transfer students may be tested during the next district-level G/T testing time.

OTHER PROCEDURES: APPEALS PROBATION FURLOUGH EXIT CLASSWORK/HOMEWORK

APPEALS POLICY

Parents or students may appeal any final decision of the Selection Committee regarding the selection or removal from the gifted program. Appeals shall be made to the Selection Committee. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with FNG (LOCAL) beginning at Level Two.

APPEALS PROCEDURES:

1. Parents conference with student's counselor and/or principal.
2. Appeals are made in writing to the district G/T coordinator.
3. Selection Committee meets to review relevant data and other information. An appeals decision is made by the Selection Committee.
4. Parents are informed in writing of the selection committee's decision.

PROBATION

DEFINITION

Probationary status places the student and parents on notice that specific changes must be made by the student in order to maintain his status in the G/T program.

PROCEDURE

Students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the G/T program may be placed on initial probationary status by the Selection Committee. The purpose of such status is to provide the student an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the Selection Committee. The student remains in the G/T program with requirements. Probationary status also may be granted at the request of the student and/or parent.

A student may be on probationary status for a period of time deemed appropriate by the Selection Committee. At the end of the probationary period, the student's progress shall be noted, and the student may remain in the G/T program, be placed on a furlough, or be removed from the program.

Probationary status may be assigned for the following reasons:

- Student and/or parent request
- Selection Committee decision
 - o Students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the G/T program may be placed on probation. The purpose of the probation is to provide the student an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the Selection Committee while still receiving G/T services. The parent is invited to the Selection Committee meeting about their child's status and is notified in writing of the Selection Committee's decision via the Parent Communication Form.

FURLOUGH

DEFINITION

A furlough is temporary removal from the G/T program for specific reasons.

PROCEDURE

Students who are not able to participate in the G/T program for a semester or year due to such reasons as scheduling conflicts may be placed on furlough by the Selection Committee. If the student re-enters the G/T program within a year, re-testing is not required. If the student wants to re-enter the G/T program after a year, the identification process must be followed.

Students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the G/T program may be placed on furlough by the Selection Committee. The purpose of such a furlough due to performance 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.

Students having difficulty in the gifted class 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 noted, and the student may reenter the G/T program, be removed from the program, or remain on furlough.

Furloughs may be granted for the following reasons:

- Student and/or parent request
- Selection Committee decision
 - o The Selection Committee may place students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the G/T program on furlough. 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. The parent is invited to the Selection Committee meeting about their child's status and is notified in writing of the Selection Committee's decision via the Parent Communication Form.

EXIT

EXIT PROCEDURES:

1. Upon the first indication of a student having difficulty with G/T instruction, the G/T teacher will initiate a conference with the counselor and/or principal and the parent.
2. If the initial parent conference is not effective, the counselor will initiate a Student Intervention Team (SIT) conference with the student's parents, principal, G/T teacher, and the district G/T coordinator. The options are:
 - a. Probation – The student remains in the G/T program with a corrective action plan.
 - b. Furlough – If corrective actions are not successful, furloughs may be granted for the following reasons:
 - i. Student and/or parent request
 - ii. Selection Committee decision
 1. The Selection Committee may place students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the G/T program on furlough. 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. The parent is invited to the Selection Committee meeting about their child's status and is notified in writing of the Selection Committee's decision via the Parent Communication Form.
 - c. Exit – After a probationary period and furlough, the SIT committee considers whether continued placement in the G/T program is the most appropriate placement for the student. The student is informed as appropriate to the best interest of the student. Forms verifying that these conferences were held are signed by those in attendance.

ADDITIONAL EXIT PROCEDURES

If a student or parent requests removal from the program, the SIT committee shall meet with the parent and student before honoring the request.

A student exited from the G/T program for any reason other than moving out-of-district may not re-enter the program during the same school year. This student may be re-nominated for screening the following year.

CLASSWORK AND HOMEWORK FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

DIFFERENTIATION IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM

Classroom teachers are required by the Texas Education Agency to differentiate for gifted children in the regular classroom. Among instructional strategies that can help teachers manage differentiation and help students find a good learning “fit” are:

- Use of multiple texts and supplementary materials
- Use of computer programs
- Interest centers
- Learning contracts
- Compacting
- Tiered sense-making activities and tiered products
- Tasks and products designed with a multiple intelligence orientation
- Independent learning contracts
- Complex instruction
- Group investigation
- Product criteria negotiated jointly by student and teacher
- Products or activities requiring higher level thinking skills
- Graduated task and product-rubrics

DOCUMENTATION OF DIFFERENTIATION FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

Evidence of differentiation of the TEKS through depth, complexity, and pacing are reviewed. Districts will be monitored for providing an array of challenging learning experiences that emphasize content in the four core academic areas for gifted/talented students.

There are a variety of ways that teachers can document differentiation. It may be done in the lesson plans where the teacher would indicate instruction and/or assignments that differ for gifted students. Differentiation may be included in curriculum guides or documents. Classroom schedules may also indicate flexible grouping with differentiated instruction. Copies of assignments or handouts given to students that indicate students have options in reading assignments, projects, etc. may also be used.

MAKE-UP WORK ON GT ACADEMY PULLOUT DAYS

On the days when they attend GT Academy, G/T students shall not be required to complete every assignment presented in their regular class nor all homework assigned in the regular classroom. Instead, these students should be required to complete only the portion of the regularly assigned work that is necessary to ensure that they have mastered the knowledge and skills required for the class.

Teachers should either furnish assignments necessary for mastery to students the day prior to GT Academy or should allow an extra day for completion of necessary assignments after returning to the regular classroom. When making assignments or setting timelines for completion of regular classroom work, classroom teachers should consider homework and special projects that are assigned at GT Academy.

Students who are absent from school on the day GT Academy services are provided are required to make up critical elements in both the regular and GT Academy classrooms according to board policy.

EVALUATIONS

STUDENT EVALUATION

Kindergarten G/T students are evaluated according to the grading procedures used in the regular classroom. Elementary students attending GT Academy are evaluated on critical and creative thinking skills, behavior characteristics, comprehension of unit content, products/performances, research, and study skills.

At the middle school level, students enrolled in Pre-AP classes and Think Tank Factory receive standard grades according to the district's grading policy.

At the high school level, students enrolled in concurrent courses, AP, Independent Research, and International Studies receive standard grades according to the district's grading policy.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The District annually evaluates the effectiveness of the G/T program, and the results of the evaluation are used to modify and update the District and campus improvement plans. The District includes parents in the evaluation process and shares the information with Board members, administrators, teachers, counselors, students in the G/T program, and the community.

PARENT & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A GT Academy parent orientation meeting is held annually.

Families and community members are invited to become involved in TISD's G/T advocacy organization. Members meet four times annually and benefit from guest speakers and networking with other members. They also support the gifted program by providing an audience for student products, presentations, and performances.

Input from family and community representatives is invited annually.