



**Gifted and Talented  
Services Handbook  
2024-2025**

## BISD MISSION

The mission of the Bastrop Independent School District is to develop and educate every student so they can make a positive impact on their families, the workforce, and the greater community.

- School is a place of belonging, dignity, and mutual respect.
- Learning experiences that encourage students to be creators and producers will prepare them to reach their full potential.
- Emotional intelligence and practical work skills are as important as academic knowledge.
- Analyzing information and thinking critically should be part of the daily life of students and staff.
- Strong relationships between families, educators, businesses, and non-profit agencies will ensure our students and our community thrive.



## BISD GOALS FOR GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION

Bastrop ISD's Gifted & Talented Program recognizes goals that are specific, yet flexible for the needs of students and campuses, and are an essential part of an effective program designed to meet the needs of gifted and talented learners. The district commits to:

- Identifying as Gifted and Talented six to eight percent of its student population in similar ethnic and economic distribution patterns as the general student population in the areas of:
  - General intellectual ability
- Provide differentiated instruction to all GT learners K-12, including differing pace (acceleration) and level (depth and complexity), beyond regular curriculum requirements and offerings;
- Provide services to meet the social and emotional needs of GT students;
- Identify professional learning needs and plan professional development for teachers, counselors, and administrators of GT students accordingly;
- Ensure all special populations are considered for the program and offered differentiated curriculum when appropriate;
- Provide and publicize opportunities outside regular school calendar in which gifted and talented students may participate;
- Inform and seek the involvement of parents and community members in the program for gifted students; and
- Evaluate program effectiveness on a regular basis with input from the community.

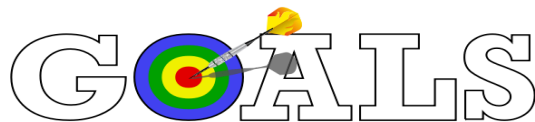
## DEFINITION OF GIFTEDNESS (TEC.29.121)

“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, Subchapter D, Sec. 29.121

## STATE GOAL FOR SERVICES FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

Students who participate in services designed for gifted/talented 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/talented students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.



## BISD GIFTED & TALENTED SERVICE DESIGN

### Service Design: Grades K-5

**GT Cluster Grouping:** Cluster grouping is a method that Bastrop ISD uses to meet the academic needs of GT students. In Bastrop ISD schools, GT students are clustered with a GT trained classroom teacher. The GT cluster teacher is responsible for teaching the core content academic curriculum as well as differentiating instruction for the GT students. The GT cluster classroom teacher provides differentiated learning opportunities to those students who have been formally identified for GT services. Flexible grouping and acceleration opportunities are prescribed by the GT cluster teacher.

### Service Design: Grades 6-8

**GT Cluster Grouping:** Cluster grouping is a method that Bastrop ISD uses to meet the academic needs of GT students. In Bastrop ISD schools, GT students are clustered with a GT trained classroom teacher. The GT cluster teacher is responsible for teaching the core content academic curriculum as well as differentiating instruction for the GT students. Identified students are offered differentiated learning opportunities within the classroom. Flexible grouping and acceleration opportunities are prescribed by the classroom teacher.

**Advanced Math:** Students with strength in Math are eligible to participate in advanced Math services utilizing a compacted curriculum. Four years of math instruction are compacted into three years with students completing Algebra I in their eighth grade year. Identified students are offered differentiated learning opportunities within the classroom. Flexible grouping and acceleration opportunities are prescribed by the classroom teacher.

**Honors Courses:** In addition, honors classes are offered in Reading/ Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies by educators who are trained in advanced curriculum and in gifted and talented education for students. These courses are advanced in nature and serve as preparation for college courses. Identified students are offered differentiated learning opportunities within the classroom. Flexible grouping and acceleration opportunities are prescribed by the classroom teacher.

**\*\*** Students are encouraged to take advanced level courses in their identified strength areas.

## Service Design: Grades 9-12

**Honors Courses:** Advanced courses are offered in Math, Reading/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies by educators who are trained in advanced curriculum and in gifted and talented education. These courses are advanced in nature and serve as preparation for college courses. Identified students are offered differentiated learning opportunities within the classroom. Flexible grouping and acceleration opportunities are prescribed by the classroom teacher.

**Advanced Placement:** The Advanced Placement (AP) Program, sponsored by the College Board, offers motivated and capable high school students an opportunity to take college-level courses while in high school. AP courses have open enrollment and participation is based on the course prerequisites as indicated in the course catalog. In addition to all Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, a wider range and greater depth of content is taught, with an emphasis on higher-level critical thinking skills as well as provisions for creative and productive thinking.

**Dual Credit:** Through a partnership with Austin Community College, high school students may enroll in college concurrently with high school to extend learning or accumulate college hours. Credit earned through dual credit may result in college and high school credit and is designed to fulfill high school graduation requirements. In order to receive high school credit for a college course, the course must cover the required state curriculum.

**Dual Enrollment:** Through a partnership with the University of Texas at Austin OnRamps offers dual enrollment courses designed to engage students in authentic college experiences. Courses count for high school credit and students have the option to accept college credit.

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Students are identified as gifted and talented in accordance with the district's written board-approved definition of giftedness.

## REFERRAL FOR GIFTED SERVICES

### Referral Procedures

Students enrolled in BISD may be referred for the gifted and talented program by teachers, parents, administrators, counselors, or other interested persons (EHBB-Local). The advertised BISD Gifted and Talented referral window happens yearly during the months of November and December.

Referrals will be made using the district referral form. GT referrals for the annual screening and identification must be received by the last day of the advertised window in order to be placed in the January screening and testing process.

Referrals received after the deadline will be screened in the next available screening and identification period.

### Referral Parameters

Students not identified as eligible for GT services during the annual screening/identification period may be nominated during another nomination window. Screening of students may only occur once during the same school year.

## PARENTAL CONSENT

All nominations must secure written parent/guardian permission for further assessment. All student information collected during the screening and identification process shall be education record, subject to the protection set out in policies at EHBB- local.

## IDENTIFICATION CRITERIA AND SERVICE DATES

Criterion to identify gifted and talented students in BISD seeks to discover the general intellectual and creative needs of students. Students screened will display an educational need for gifted and talented services based on a range of evidence from the following measures

- Scores at the District GT level on identified measures in the areas of Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal
- Display high degrees of gifted characteristics demonstrated on a parent and/or teacher checklist

### **Service Start Dates**

All students in BISD screened and identified as gifted and talented will receive services beginning March 1, according to Texas law. If a student is recommended for screening after the nomination window closes, the screening will occur during the next school year's window. Exceptions to this may be approved by the Advanced Academics Coordinator.

State guidelines for identification require that students be referred for the program based upon criteria that include both qualitative and quantitative instruments. Once identified in BISD, students will not be rescreened in order to remain in the program. Students identified on any BISD campus are eligible for services on any other BISD campus.

## **GIFTED AND TALENTED SELECTION PROCESS**

A Gifted and Talented (GT) Committee shall evaluate each referred student according to the established criteria and shall select those students for whom gifted program placement is the most appropriate educational setting. The GT Committee, comprised of at least three members, will have a minimum of 30 hours of training with a special emphasis on the nature and needs of gifted students or an administrator with 6 hours of training in the nature and needs of gifted students. (*EHBB Local*).

1. Although data collection and entry of data on the matrix may be completed by the campus GT facilitator, final selection of students shall be made by the GT Screening Committee which will base its decision on the screening results displayed on the matrix.
2. If the results displayed on the matrix are determined by the committee to reflect lower abilities than anticipated, the committee may use its discretion in requesting an additional assessment(s) using instruments drawn from the approved list.
3. No students who are otherwise qualified according to the district's cut-off score will be disqualified on the basis of grades, behavior, or other factors extraneous to the matrix criteria. (Students may, however, be found to be unprepared to benefit from specific GT instructional settings after identification.)

## NOTIFICATION



- Notification of the screening determination to parents of students nominated for the BISD GT Program will occur at the end of February. Notification should be made with an official Screening and Identification Results letter. Parents should have access to testing results.
- Before a student can participate in the program, parents must return a signed Screening and Identification Permission form. This permission form must be filed in the students permanent cumulative folder along with testing results and GT Matrix.

## BISD APPEALS PROCESS

A parent or guardian may appeal the placement decision of their student by completing and returning the [Appeal of GT Placement Decision Form \(English\)](#) or [Appeal of GT Placement Decision Form \(Spanish\)](#) to the campus GT teacher *within 10 business days of placement notification*. The appeal process is designed to ensure that quality and appropriate decisions are made in the best interest of students and according to district guidelines. Appeal decision will be made within 30 days of the date the appeal is submitted.

- The GT committee convenes and reviews documents submitted as compelling evidence regarding the student's need for program services.
- The committee will consist of a minimum of 3 qualified GT teachers. (The Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Services will aid the committee as needed/requested by the committee.)
- After the testing is reviewed, the committee will make the decision to confirm the original decision or review the decision and move forward with further testing.
- The campus GT Teacher informs parents of the decision by completing the information at the bottom of the appeal form.
- If further testing is required, the campus GT Teacher informs the parent of the day and time of testing and conducts the testing on campus.

The scores obtained from this additional testing will be added to the student matrix. If the scores move the student into the Excellent or Superior category and meet the district criteria, the student will be added to the BISD GT program.

Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with [FNG \(LOCAL\)](#).



## ADMITTING TRANSFER STUDENTS TO THE GIFTED PROGRAM

- **Transferring Out of District:** In the event an identified student from BISD transfers out of district, BISD will send documentation of screening/identification, with the other records of the student - placed in the cumulative folder, to the receiving district.
- **Transferring within District:** GT students who transfer within the district are placed in the GT program at the receiving school. All GT documentation should be included in the student's cumulative folder when it is sent to the receiving school (EHBB Local)
- **Transferring from Another District:** When a student identified as gifted by a previous school district enrolls in 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 program for gifted and talented students is appropriate (EHBB Local)
- **Military Transfer Students:** The District shall initially honor the placement of the student in gifted and talented services based on current educational assessments conducted at the sending district or participation/placement in like programs in the sending state/location; however, subsequent evaluations can be given upon review of student records or student performance to ensure appropriate placement and continued enrollment of the student in the course(s) (FDD – Legal). See Admitting Transfer Students to the G/T Program from Other School District above for district revaluation procedures.

**Transfer students unable to provide GT documentation from their previous school district will be placed into regular classes and may be nominated for screening during the next screening window.**

## Guidelines for Exiting, Reentering, Furloughs, and Reassessment

Students should be considered for exiting/furloughing from their assigned GT program under the following conditions:

- (a) They have demonstrated over a substantial length of time (at least one semester) that they are not benefiting from the program; or
- (b) The student requests removal from the program; or
- (c) The student's parent(s) requests that the student be removed from the program.

Although grades are often an indication of high achievement, some students excel in their areas of giftedness despite receiving poor grades. For this reason, it is important to realize that grades are not always a good measure of true ability or potential.

Grades should not be the sole criterion used when considering whether or not a student is benefiting from GT placement. Just as no single indicator is sufficient for program placement, no single method or instrument should be used to remove a student once

identified as gifted from the program to which he/she has been assigned.

The following procedures will be followed on all campuses when considering exiting a student from a GT placement:

1. The GT Committee will serve as a review board for considering the exiting of GT students.
2. The committee will employ at least 3 of the following measures to determine whether or not the student being considered is benefiting from his present placement:
  - a. Current achievement testing
  - b. State assessment performance
  - c. Student interview
  - d. Grades for at least the past grading period
  - e. Involvement in co-curricular or extracurricular activities
3. The committee members will base their decision regarding program appropriateness on a comparison of the above progress indicators and current GT curriculum expectations.
4. A consensus of the committee members is required to exit, furlough, re-entry an identified student from the GT program.
5. At the time of the meeting, the committee will complete and sign the ***Recommendation for GT Program Exit, Furlough, Re-entry*** form and forward a copy to the district GT office. The committee must indicate on the form if the student should be retested if she/he wishes to reenter the GT program at a later date.
6. A parent or student may request a meeting with the full committee to consider any additional information which the parent or student feel should impact the decision.
7. In case of a lack of consensus on the GT committee or parental disagreement with the decision, the appeals process through BISD may be employed by the parents.
8. A student or parent may request a furlough, due to extenuating circumstances, for up to six (6) months, and if granted, may reenter the program without retesting. When participating in such a furlough, the student will not be carried as GT on PEIMS. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reviewed and the student may re-enter the gifted program, be removed from the program, or be placed on another furlough.

The purpose of furloughing GT students from a specific placement and reentering them in a more appropriate placement at a later time is the same---to provide the learning experiences which are most appropriate to their interests and abilities.

## BISD GT FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

BISD will encourage family and community participation in services designed for gifted and talented students. Written policies of student identification, will be available to parents on the district website, as will be information regarding the learning opportunities offered to GT identified students. BISD will evaluate the effectiveness of the program annually and will use data gathered to modify and update district and campus improvement plans. Parent surveys are available online to include parents in the evaluation process.

The Coordinator of Advanced Academics and GT facilitators will communicate with parents and encourage participation through a variety of methods, which may include:

- Providing information at Fall orientation parent night regarding assessment procedures, district programs, and issues relating to gifted and talented education;
- Providing information to parents/guardians each semester informing them of the performance of their child in the GT program;
- Informing parents of available out-of-school, weekend, and summer programs for gifted students;
- Encouraging parents and community members to serve as mentors and/or experts for gifted students. These volunteers must complete volunteer paperwork before being approved.
- Encouraging parents and community members to visit classrooms and view products developed by gifted students;
- Displaying products and achievements of gifted students in-school or on school/district website;
- Encouraging community members and businesses to be involved in and support programs and services for gifted students;
- Maintaining and updating website, listserv, and print materials;
- Facilitating and/or encouraging appropriate opportunities for GT students to display on-going projects to parents and other interested parties;
- Encouraging parents to participate in a parent association for the gifted and talented;
- Advertising local, regional, and state professional development opportunities to community members and parents;
- Providing notification of services;
- All meetings are open to the public.



## COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

While it is unusual for a child to manifest all of the following characteristics, gifted students may exhibit many of these, even at an early age (Blum, 1985; Webb, Gore, Amend, & DeVries, 2007):

- Possesses a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics
- Prefers complex and challenging tasks
- Sees connections between apparently unconnected ideas and activities
- Prefers to work independently
- Prefers older companions
- Is a perfectionist
- Has a sophisticated sense of humor
- Loves puzzles, mazes and numbers
- Is able to elaborate on ideas
- Enjoys solving problems, especially with numbers and puzzles
- Is persistent
- Reads with comprehension at an early age
- Shows quick mastery and recall of factual information
- Has insight into cause-effect relationships
- Has a ready grasp of underlying principles
- Is a keen and alert observer
- Exhibits advanced vocabulary for age or grade level
- Displays curiosity about many topics
- Has a passionate interest area
- Is intense; gets totally absorbed in activities and thoughts
- Displays asynchronous development...physical skills may lag behind cognitive abilities, etc.
- Unusual alertness, even in infancy
- Rapid learner; puts thoughts together quickly
- Excellent memory
- Unusually large vocabulary and complex sentence structure for age
- Often self-taught reading and writing skills as preschooler
- Deep, intense feelings and reactions, highly sensitive
- Thinking is abstract, complex, logical, and insightful
- Idealism and sense of justice at early age
- Concern with social and political issues and injustices
- Longer attention span and intense concentration
- Wide range of interests (or extreme focus in one area)
- Puts idea or things together that are not typical
- Desire to organize people/things through games or complex schemas
- Vivid imaginations (and imaginary playmates when in preschool)