

Gifted/Talented Program Manual 25-26 School Year



**DIGITAL ACADEMY
OF TEXAS**
POWERED BY STRIDE K12



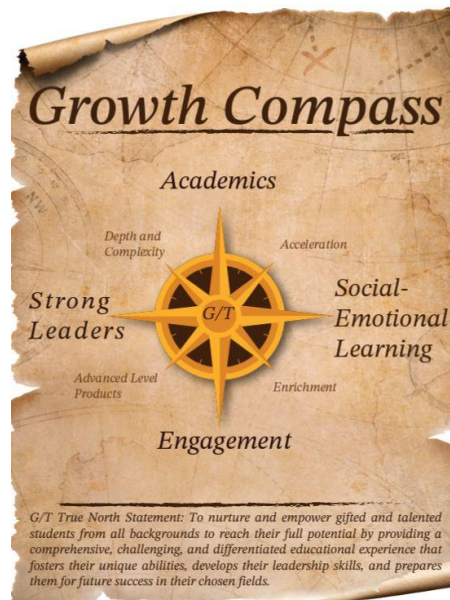
**TEXAS
ONLINE PREPARATORY
SCHOOL**
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**LONE STAR
ONLINE ACADEMY
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**TEXAS
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INTRODUCTION/GOALS

RATIONALE FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

In 1977 the Texas Legislature passed its first legislation concerning the education of gifted students. In 1979, state funds for providing services to gifted children were made available, but providing such services was optional for school districts. In 1987, The Texas Legislature mandated that all school districts must identify and serve gifted students at all grade levels. In 1990, The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students was adopted and revised in April 2019, and again in 2024. Pursuant to Section 29.123 of the Texas Education Code (TEC), the State Plan forms the basis of Gifted and Talented (G/T) services and accountability.

STATE DEFINITION OF GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS

Per TEC 29.121: A gifted and 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:

- (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.*

Academically gifted and talented students are those who consistently excel or show the potential to excel in critical and productive thinking. Their superior intellectual abilities allow them to achieve excellence in specific subject areas at a significantly higher level and faster pace than that of their peers.

STATE GOAL FOR SERVICES FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

As stated in the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented 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 student will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.

K12 PHILOSOPHY OF GIFTED EDUCATION IN TEXAS

K12 Texas Schools recognizes that G/T students thrive in a non- traditional setting and welcome challenging curriculum and the ability to work at an accelerated pace and/or dive deeper into the curriculum. K12 Texas Schools and partner independent school districts respect parents who are schooling their gifted students and as partners in each student's education strive to offer support to set each student up for success.

K12/Stride TXSS G/T Beliefs

1. We believe that G/T students need to
 - complete a rigorous and multifaceted program to help them learn
 - receive a differentiated curriculum
 - receive support to foster their academic and affective needs
 - receive support to foster their talents
 - explore post-secondary education/training of their choice
 - receive the opportunity to participate in leadership roles
 - be served by teachers who continue to acquire and develop skills and attitudes to differentiate curriculum and instruction
2. We believe that G/T students can:
 - Develop sophisticated products/performances with real world applications and audiences
 - Develop skills to succeed in areas other than their identified areas of strength
 - Be involved, with their families, in the process of making decisions about student learning
3. We believe that G/T students in all subgroups should be identified and subsequently served through a comprehensive holistic identification process.

MISSION

K12 Texas Schools' mission is to provide curriculum and experiences that are appropriate and offer the greatest opportunity for excellence and learning for each child based on where they are today and where they have the possibility and potential to go tomorrow.

In coordination with the K12 Advanced Learner Program (ALP) National Instructional Model, K12 Texas Schools will increase the overall quality and options for gifted and talented learners through the development of consistent procedures and offerings at Texas virtual academies as measured by program satisfaction ratings and retention data of identified gifted and talented students and their families.

Additionally, K12 Texas schools are committed to increasing the value of quality G/T programming as a vital component of Texas schools in order to attract and retain gifted and talented learners.

K12 GOAL FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM

K12 Texas Advanced Learner Program goals:

- To identify, nurture, and serve advanced potential through a robust, challenging, and engaging curriculum;
- To provide academic support and assist parents in meeting the social and emotional needs of their children and providing parent and/or learning coach training on issues associated with giftedness; and
- To train instructional staff on the nature and needs of gifted and talented students, including research-based strategies to maximize instruction.

K12 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

GIFTED AND TALENTED MANAGER

K12 Texas Schools Gifted and Talented Program will be led by the K12 Texas Gifted and Talented Manager. The G/T Manager will serve as the lead staff member in the development, planning, and monitoring of the Advanced Learner Program as part of the broader Special Services Team.

CERTIFICATION

The G/T Manager will hold a Texas Gifted and Talented Endorsement and/or supplementary certification in Texas. Furthermore, it is recommended the Manager holds a master's degree in education.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and Management

- Assess current system effectiveness
- Participate in national and local professional development to knowledge, skills and understanding at an appropriate level of 'expertise and scholarship'
- Communicate between departments and staff members regarding the provision for G/T students
- Assure effective information transfer from previous school
- Provide high quality of support for staff members and students, including mentoring systems and support for independent learning
- Assure assessment policies, particularly the policy of identification, are in compliance with state requirements

Enhancing Own Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

- Become familiar with the range of strategies for identifying and providing for diverse types of abilities
- Keep up to date with developments and thinking in the teaching of advanced learners

Professional Development and Raising Awareness

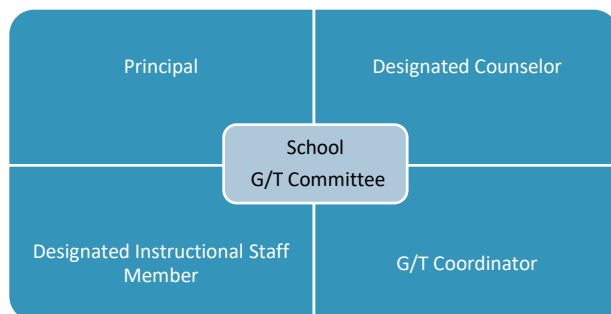
- Support colleagues in applying a range of strategies for identifying diverse types of ability in their own areas
- Increase colleagues' awareness of the needs of advanced learners
- Ensure that staff members have appropriate training and development opportunities in the identification of, and provision for, advanced learners
- Participate, organize, and lead relevant continuing professional development and evaluating its impact

Liaison to Broaden the Curriculum

- Encourage the use of resources from the wider community and collaborating with other Virtual Academies to make the full range of desirable learning opportunities available to all gifted and talented students

CAMPUS G/T COMMITTEES

Additionally, for compliance with the State Plan, each Texas K12 School will have at least one Gifted and Talented committee consisting of the following staff members:



If possible, each grade band will have their own G/T Committee.

COMMITTEE CREDENTIALS

To serve on the G/T Committee, each member will have a minimum of 6 hours of professional development on the Nature and Needs of Gifted and Talented Students. However, it is recommended that the majority of the committee are trained in the Foundations of G/T in the 30-hour State developed program.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each campus committee, in compliance with the Texas State Plan for Gifted and Talented program management, will work to:

- Publicly Announce Nomination Process
- Assign students to the G/T program
- Place students on probation or furlough
- Exit students
- Monitor, evaluate, and make recommendations for program improvement

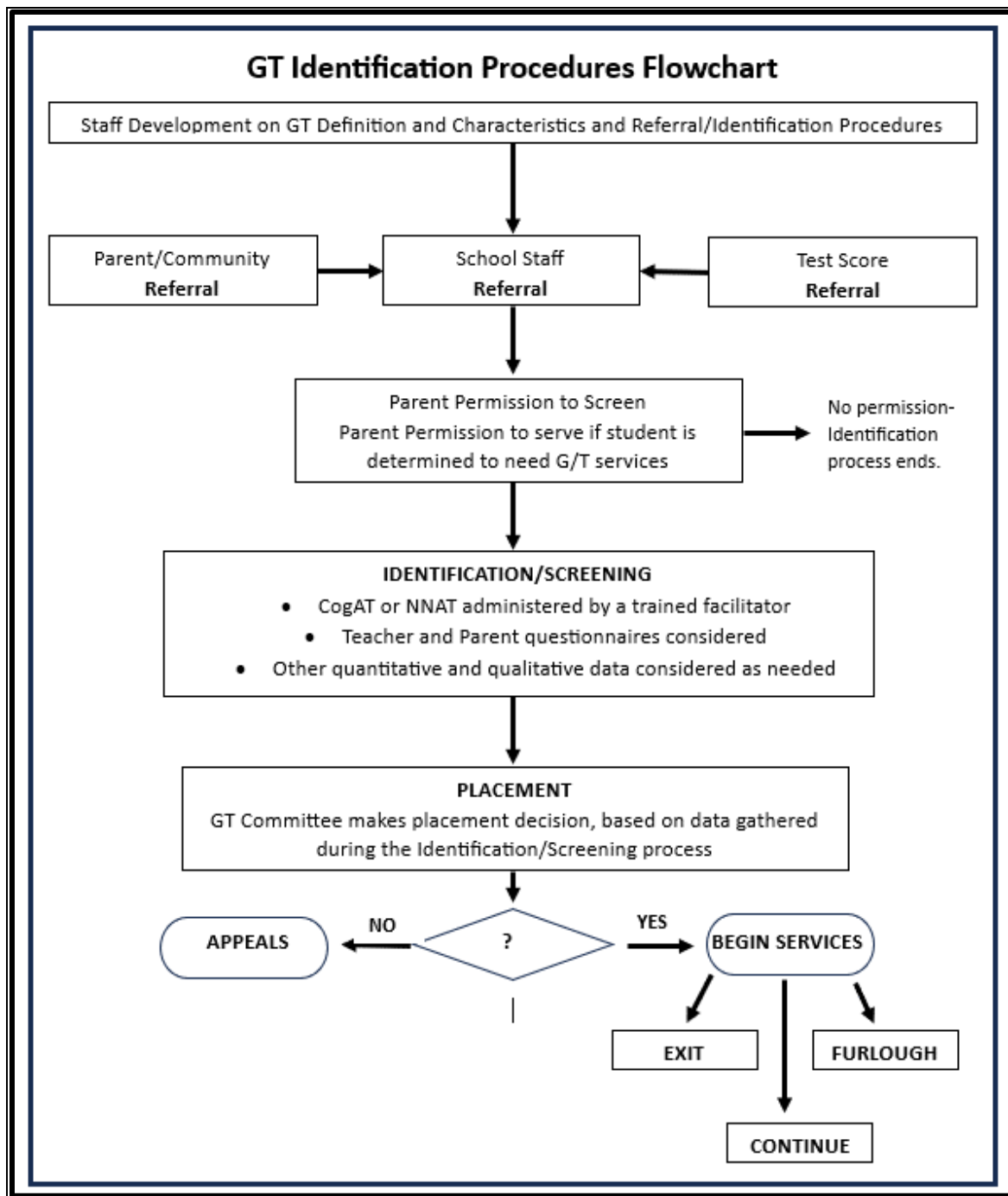
PROGRAM EVALUATION

The comprehensive Gifted and Talented Program is evaluated annually through various means including, but not limited to:

- Parent and Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Teacher Input
- Student Academic Progress Data
- Advisory Team Recommendations

Results from evaluations are communicated to partnering districts, administration, staff, and families of G/T students.

Student identification is a vital component in the K12 Texas Gifted and Talented Program and summarized in the flowchart below.



The identification process of gifted and talented students at K12 Texas campuses is accomplished through referrals and grade specific screening as applicable. Overall, no single characteristic will be used solely for identification of advanced learners who served as gifted and talented students.

Nominations and referral procedures and forms are communicated to families in a language and form that families understand, or a translator or interpreter will be provided upon request.

REFERRALS

Referrals are solicited from:

- Teachers
- Administrators
- Counselors
- Parents and/or Learning Coaches
- Community Members
- Students

In coordination with partner ISDs, students may be referred for the Gifted and Talented program on an on-going basis throughout the school year.

Any person desiring to refer a student will complete the K12 Texas Gifted and Talented Referral form and submit it to the Texas G/T Coordinator. The name of students being referred will be added to the screening list and screening and assessment will be conducted once each semester. The referral and evaluation window will be publicly announced and placed on the school assessment calendar.

SCREENING FOR NEW REFERRALS

In coordination with policies and procedures for each partnering Texas ISD, the G/T Manager and respective Texas Gifted and Talented Committees will review both qualitative and quantitative measures to create a body of evidence, including but not limited to:

- Ability Testing (more than one may be given)
- Achievement testing on STAAR, NWEA MAP, or other testing in math and reading
- Family perception survey to be completed by a primary caregiver
- Teacher Perception inventory
- Student Interview (if requested by the Committee)
- Student Portfolio (if submitted by the student)

Written permission of the parents is secured for any assessment, evaluation, or testing needed for screening or selection purposes. Furthermore, a Matrix is used to determine eligibility for services.

PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT

The identification and placement process of gifted and talented students at K12 Texas campuses in grades K-12 who have previously qualified for Gifted and Talented Services at another district will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Texas G/T Manager. The G/T Manager will review assessment documentation and determine if the student's eligibility is comparable or if re-evaluation is necessary. Qualifying documentation will be used to determine placement and acceptance into the Gifted and Talented program. Documentation required will include referral information and date, evaluation results, eligibility determination, placement documentation, and current participation information.

If a family or previous district is unable to provide documentation of eligibility and services, the student will be placed on the referral list for screening during the next available referral window and be served as "Enrichable" in the TVS system pending re-evaluation.

Parents of students will be informed through written notification or personal contact discussing placement determination.

STUDENT SELECTION/PLACEMENT

Student selection is a G/T Committee decision and based on eligibility criteria listed in the approved K12 Texas Schools Gifted and Talented Program matrix.

ELIGIBLE STUDENT PLACEMENT

The G/T Committee will recommend placement of eligible students as they qualify on the Gifted and Talented Matrix.

The G/T Manager will contact parents of all students selected for program participation. Participation in the program is voluntary and requires a permission form signed by the parent or guardian.

If a parent or child refuse services, the student file will be noted, and the student will be eligible for re-assessment after one school year.

An orientation meeting will be held under the direction of the K12 Texas Schools G/T Manager to explain program expectations, requirements, and options for students.

DESIGNATION FOR QUALIFYING GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

Students who have parental consent for services will be coded as follows:

Qualified Gifted and Talented – Students will be marked as “Gifted” in PowerSchool.

In Texas, students who are coded Gifted will meet the approved definition of Gifted and Talented by the Texas Education Agency.

Documentation will be noted in PowerSchool including but not limited to:

- Date of documents received
- Qualification/Placement Decision
- Parent Permission for Services Received Date
- Start Date of Student Service

CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY FOR QUALIFYING STUDENTS

Continuing Eligibility Students who have been identified for the K12 Texas Gifted and Talented program will remain in the program through the twelfth grade unless they are exited or furloughed from the program through the K12 and partnering ISD’s approved exiting procedures.

If program placement does not offer the best instructional setting for the student, continued placement will be reviewed by the G/T Committee and the appropriate procedures will be followed for exiting or furloughing the student.

APPEALS PROCESS FOR NON-QUALIFYING STUDENTS

Parents of ineligible students have the right to review placement determination. The TX G/T Coordinator will respond to all appeals and requests for placement determination information.

All appeals must be made in writing within thirty calendar days of the initial placement decision directly to the TX Gifted and Talented Coordinator. The Manager will inform the G/T Committee of an appeal, protecting confidentiality and ensuring the anonymity of the student.

After studying the anonymous appeal, the committee may request more data be collected before making a second decision. If the Selection Committee decides not to change its decision, then an appeal can be made to the Director of Special Programs. The Director will study the data and decide to maintain the Selection Committee's decision, gather additional data, or annul the Selection Committee's decision and place the student in the Gifted and Talented Program.

EXIT PROCEDURE

Recommendations to consider exiting a student from the program may be made by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, or the student and should be addressed to the TX G/T Manager.

Exiting a student from the G/T program will be based on multiple criteria relating to the student's performance in the program, including participation in G/T curricular requirements. This criterion includes data such as observed behavior changes, changes in performance, indication of stress, or for other reasons in the best interest of the student.

Non-participation in the gifted program curricular requirements negates the ability to review multiple criteria and shall be cause for removal from the gifted and talented program. The exit procedure is a three-step process as outlined below:

Step 1. Conference with student (parent will be notified)

Step 2. Conference with student and parent or learning coach

Step 3. Exit conference involving the G/T committee. Parent and student will be invited to attend.

The following occurrences will move a student into the exit procedure/process:

- Failure to create an advanced level product
- Failure to comply with behavioral expectations listed in the district's Student Code of Conduct
- Failure to achieve minimum passing standards on state assessments.
- Failure to successfully complete (pass) any of the four core subject areas during any two or more grading periods.

RE-ENTRY PROCEDURE

If a student has been exited by the school through the exit procedure as outlined above, he/she may reenter by qualifying in the identification and referral processes present on campus. Students must meet all qualification requirements and will not be eligible for re-entry for at least one academic year from the date of exit. If a student is exited second semester, they will be eligible for evaluation in the second semester of the following school year. The referral and eligibility will only take place during the normal evaluation window.

FURLOUGH FROM SERVICES

If a student is unable to comply with the established service plan, a furlough from services may be requested at any time by the student or caregiver. A furlough from services gives the student a designated time to be removed from services and not fully exited from the program for extenuating circumstances and is considered a "leave of absence" from the G/T Program. Furloughs must be approved by the G/T Committee.

Furlough request must be made in writing and include the proper furlough form. Students and families will be notified of furlough decisions in writing.

SERVICE/PROGRAM DESIGN

K12 Texas Schools service design for the G/T program is based on the principles that all students are to receive an education appropriate to their individual capabilities, interests, and need; that students have learning opportunities that help develop their abilities to the highest level; and that students' intense interests and talents change over time.

K12 Schools create a flexible system of viable service options which provide a research- based learning continuum that is developed consistently and implemented through Texas K12 Schools to meet the needs and reinforce the strengths and interests of gifted/talented students.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN

K12, in partnership with independent school district partners, will promote the use of strategies found by research to support the diverse range of gifted learners including:

- Individual and small group research and work with active student ownership in modification and alignment of core curriculum.
- Flexible progression strategies within content areas, creativity and leadership development including extension activities, as well as suggestion by learning coaches and teachers.

MODEL FOR PROVIDING SERVICES

The gifted and talented continuum of services for each K12 Texas school is outlined in the tables below:

Gifted and Talented Program Overview			
	K-5	6-8	9-12
Content Driven Services	<p>Students will be clustered.</p> <p>Content teacher is G/T trained and provides differentiation synchronously and asynchronously.</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to participate in challenging courses where differentiation is provided.</p> <p>Students will be clustered.</p> <p>Content teacher is G/T trained and provides differentiation synchronously and asynchronously.</p>	<p>Students may be served through Honors, Pre-AP, Dual Credit, and AP Courses, with differentiated instruction in those courses.</p> <p>Students may be clustered.</p> <p>Content teacher is G/T trained.</p>
Enrichment Services	<p>Students are encouraged to join clubs, as well as outside competitions and honor organizations.</p> <p>Students are required to attend "Engaged Learner Lab (G/T)" courses, held by the G/T teacher, where enrichment activities will be offered.</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to join clubs, as well as outside competitions and honor organizations.</p> <p>Students are required to attend "Engaged Learner Lab (G/T)" courses, held by the G/T teacher, where enrichment activities will be offered.</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to join clubs, as well as outside competitions and honor organizations.</p> <p>Students who choose NOT to enroll in AP or Honors courses will be required to attend "Engaged Learner Lab (G/T)" courses, held by the G/T teacher, where G/T enrichment activities will be offered.</p>
Self-Exploration	<p>Students are encouraged to complete a project or portfolio piece. Presentations occur once each year.</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to complete a project or portfolio piece. Presentations occur once each year.</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to complete a project or portfolio piece. Presentations occur once each year.</p>
Staff Instructional Support	<p>Support for instructional strategies (including Depth and Complexity), differentiation, acceleration, and compacting curriculum will be provided by the G/T team.</p>	<p>Support for instructional strategies (including Depth and Complexity), differentiation, acceleration, and compacting curriculum will be provided by the G/T team.</p>	<p>Support for instructional strategies (including Depth and Complexity), differentiation, acceleration, and compacting curriculum will be provided by the G/T team.</p>

TEKS ALIGNMENT/MODIFICATION OF CORE CURRICULUM

Regardless of the program design used to deliver services to gifted/talented students, content modifications of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are to be offered in the four core areas:

- Language arts,
- Mathematics,
- Science, and
- Social Studies

An array of learning opportunities allows students to do advanced work reflecting the depth and complexity of the general school curriculum. Learning opportunities may include any of the following, alone or in combination.

- Interdisciplinary projects
- Special units or projects from each of the core areas
- Differentiation of curriculum in each of the core areas within the regular classroom
- Acceleration in an area of particular strength
- Advanced Placement (AP) classes with appropriate G/T modifications
- Pre-AP classes with appropriate G/T modifications
- Field trips
- National collaborative opportunities
- Leadership Development Opportunities
- Creativity Development and Application Opportunities

SUBJECT ACCELERATION

Acceleration of curriculum follows the district-based policies and procedures of each K12/Stride Texas based school. Students who would like to request any acceleration or modification to curriculum progression should make a request in writing, directly to the school-based representative and Gifted and Talented Manager.

OTHER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Students are able to participate in multiple school-based development opportunities to foster growth in leadership, academic, and creative areas. Acceptance into each group or club is not guaranteed to identified Gifted and Talented students, but they are encouraged to follow all procedures and policies put into place for participation.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All K12 personnel involved in the planning, creation, and delivery of services to gifted and talented students will have the knowledge and required professional development to provide appropriate options and differentiated curricula to identified students. K12 staff are encouraged to explore credentialing and additional training.

STAFF TRAINING

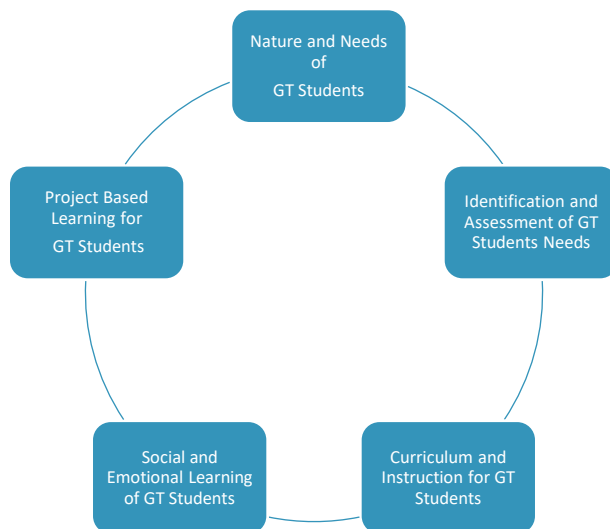
An annual K12 staff development plan and calendar will be released to communicate training requirements to K12 TX school staff.

ALL CAMPUS STAFF

Campus staff are trained annually by the Texas Gifted Manager on the Referral Process and given an orientation to the K12 Gifted and Talented Program.

TEACHERS

In accordance with the State G/T Plan, teachers serving G/T students will receive an initial minimum of thirty (30) clock hours of professional development which includes:



A teacher without the required training who is assigned to provide instruction and services must complete the training within one semester of the assignment. After completion of the initial 30 hours of training, teachers are required to complete an annual 6-hour update from an approved list of offerings. In addition, teachers are encouraged to pursue advanced credentialing and obtain professional certification in gifted education.

ADMINISTRATORS, COUNSELORS, STAFF, AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

All staff, including administrators, who have authority for program decisions receive a minimum of six (6) hours of professional learning, which includes nature and needs of gifted and talented students and service options for identified students in gifted/talented education, with an update after each legislative session.

Counselors who work with gifted/talented students are required to complete a minimum of six (6) hours of professional development learning that includes nature and needs of gifted/ talented students, service program options for gifted/ talented students, and social emotional learning with an update after each legislative session.

Local district boards of trustees are trained on the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students to ensure program accountability.

After each legislative session, an update is provided to administrators, counselors, and board of trustees.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

K12 schools are committed to involving families and community members in services designed for gifted and talented students throughout the school year.

ORIENTATION

Orientation for parents and community members is provided annually, and G/T services are communicated to parents. The Texas G/T Manager will work with Texas K12 Schools to provide multiple orientation opportunities for students and families.

PERIODIC UPDATES

Periodic updates are delivered to learning coaches, families, and community members through electronic and print distribution. Updates may include programmatic changes, new events, and offerings, or highlights of student work and reflection.

A data bank of community resources with G/T related news and topics is available for use by students and their families.

SOLICITATION OF CAREGIVER INPUT

Parents are given a variety of opportunities to provide feedback on services and make recommendations of suggestions on service improvement.