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The *Gifted/Talented Handbook* is to serve as a guiding tool to help facilitate consistent procedures among all campuses. Note that the handbook is not dated due to annual revisions that may be necessary in some sections. As necessary revisions are made, replacement pages will be sent to campus administrators. If additional information is needed, please contact Mrs. Delma Salinas, Gifted /Talented Coordinator, 400 W. Ligustrum, 767-6600 ext. 2092.

## Program Overview

Throughout the United States, there has been a call for America's students to master more complex skills and to demonstrate understanding of more sophisticated content. In response, states throughout the country have increased their expectations for student performance. However, while basic competencies are being raised, often there is little done to enhance services for more advanced learners.

To assure that this trend is reversed in Texas, the State Board of Education adopted the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* to ensure Districts provide gifted learners with services that meet *in compliance, recommended, or exemplary* performance measures. The Texas State Board of Education adopted the following as the goal for gifted and talented services.

### State Goal for Gifted Services

*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.*

The Robstown Independent School District will ensure our community productive, motivated, and responsible citizens, academically prepared for successful lives. This will be accomplished by a competent and sensitive staff dedicated to implementing a well-balanced, relevant curriculum in a student-centered environment conducive to learning. The District seeks to provide the best education possible to all students through a variety of specialized programs and services in Grades K-12. Students are given opportunities to develop individual capabilities through differentiated experiences and are serviced by trained staff. The District believes that gifted students:

- Are found in every race and in every socioeconomic level.
- Will demonstrate above average achievement or potential in such areas as general intellectual ability and specific academic fields, including creative and productive thinking.
- Are entitled to specialized curriculum, instruction, and services that will enable them to reach their full potential.
- Will flourish in a nurturing, motivating, and challenging environment that meets their needs when served by teachers trained in gifted education.

# Program Services

The *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* defines gifted/talented students as children or youth who perform at or show the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared with others of the same age, experience, or environment; and who:

- Exhibit high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area;
- Possess an unusual capacity for leadership; or
- Excel in a specific academic field.

The Robstown Independent School District provides gifted/talented services at the elementary, intermediate, junior high, and high school campuses:

- Grades K-5 – Gifted/Talented students are serviced through a “self-contained” program that provides curriculum extensions by teachers trained in gifted education.
- Grades 6-12 – Gifted/Talented students are serviced through Pre-Advanced/Advanced Placement courses daily for approximately 50 minutes.

The Gifted/Talented Program utilizes rigorous, academic curriculum units to ensure students are challenged within the four content areas. The curriculum offers enriched opportunities for students to excel in areas of interest through differentiated techniques utilized in the gifted classroom. In addition to advanced curriculum, other program options are also implemented:

## Field Experiences

Field experiences may be planned in coordination with gifted/talented curriculum extensions allowing students to have enriching experiences that they may not have the opportunity to have otherwise to extend classroom experiences beyond school. All field experiences must be related to core subject curriculum, seminars, and/or independent study projects with plans to include student activities related to the experience. Students will have the opportunity to participate in at least one field experience per year.

## Seminars/Lectures/Workshops

Scheduled seminar/lectures/workshops may be planned on topics that are of interest to gifted/talented students. These activities can be scheduled during or outside the instructional school day with assistance from the gifted/talented teachers, Pre-AP/AP teachers, and/or the G/T instructional coach. Each activity must contain a curriculum connection.

## **Mentorships**

Mentors can be selected by gifted/talented students from the campus faculty or community who can work with students to help them pursue interests that require expert assistance. Mentorships may be associated with an independent study project or be available to meet with the student as needed to develop and/or enhance their interest of study.

## **Academic Competitions**

Gifted/Talented students are encouraged to participate in at least one academic competition. Academic competitions allow students to excel in areas of strength with guided assistance.

## **Extracurricular Opportunities**

A variety of extracurricular activities are offered to students to participate at each campus. Students participating in extracurricular activities, clubs, sports, and/or functions support the interests of gifted/talented students.

# Committees

Membership and responsibilities of committees established to oversee the Gifted/Talented Program include the following:

- Gifted/Talented Advisory Committee
- District Selection/Review Committee
- Campus Review Committee

## District Selection/Review Committee

The District Selection Committee establishes procedures for identifying and placing students in the Gifted/Talented Program. The committee meets in the fall and in the spring after each testing screening/testing cycle to review student data based on established criteria. The Gifted/Talented Coordinator chairs the committee and ensures that each member represents a special population and/or grade level. Members of the committee may include:

- Gifted/Talented Coordinator
- Gifted/Talented Instructional Coach
- Elementary/Secondary Assistant Principal of Instruction
- Campus Counselor
- Bilingual Representative
- Educational Diagnostician

As required by the state, a minimum of three members have received training in the area of *nature and needs* for gifted learners.

Responsibilities of the District Selection Committee include:

- Review student data on the identification matrix.
- Identify and/or recommend appropriate placement for referred students.
- Recommend changes to the identification and/or selection process as deemed appropriate.
- Review appeals for students not qualifying for the Gifted/Talented Program.
- Hearing appeals for students recommended for exit from the Gifted/Talented Program

## **Campus Review Committee**

The Campus Review Committee meets to review and/or evaluate placement and performance of current gifted/ talented students to determine furloughs, scholastic probation, and/or exit status. Members of the committee may include:

- Gifted/Talented Coordinator
- Gifted/Talented Instructional Coach
- District Selection Committee Member
- Campus Administrator
- Campus Counselor
- Gifted/Talented Education Teacher (Grades K-5)
- Pre-AP/AP Education Teacher (Grades 6-12)
- Parent of Gifted Student \*

\* The parent of the gifted student is invited to attend the meeting to discuss appropriate placement and/or status.

Responsibilities of the Campus Review Committee include:

- Review student performance.
- Identify appropriate placement for gifted students (furlough, scholastic probation, and/or exit).
- Recommend changes to the identification/selection process as deemed appropriate.
- Review appeals for students not qualifying for the Gifted/Talented Program.
- Hearing appeals for students recommended for exit from the Gifted/Talented Program.

## **Gifted/Talented Advisory Committee**

A Gifted/Talented Advisory Committee will be developed to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees to implement new procedures and/or assessments for the Gifted/Talented Program. Members of the Gifted/Talented Advisory Committee may include:

- Gifted/Talented Coordinator
- Gifted/Talented Instructional Coach
- District Selection Committee Member
- Campus Administrator
- Campus Counselor
- Gifted/Talented Education Teacher (Grades K-5)
- Pre-AP/AP Education Teacher (Grades 6-12)
- Bilingual Representative
- Educational Diagnostician

Responsibilities of the Gifted/Talented Advisory Committee include:

- Identify and approve quantitative and qualitative instruments to be utilized in assessment and identification of students.
- Establish procedures that ensure all populations of the District have access to assessment.
- Review students assessment measures annually (K-12).
- Establish procedures for disseminating information to the public.
- Establish a working timeline for testing, identifying, and placing students.

# Program Guidelines

Robstown Independent School District implements guidelines for the Gifted/Talented Program to ensure consistency at all levels and campuses. The guidelines are outlined as follows:

## Screening and Identification process

The identification process occurs during the fall and spring semester of each school year for students. Students may only test one time during the current instructional school year. Parents complete a *Referral Form* (Appendix A) to indicate preferred language used during the testing/screening process. Data and procedures used during the identification process ensure students from all populations in the District have access to assessment, and if identified, receive services for the District's Gifted/Talented Program.

Identification of students will be based on the following assessment measures. Results of these assessment measures will be placed on a matrix to identify students.

Fall (October – Referrals) (November – Testing Cycle)	Spring (February – Referrals) (March – Testing Cycle)
Grades K-12 students may be referred and tested in the Fall. Instruments utilized include quantitative and qualitative measures, such as the following:	Students in grades K-12 who were <b>not</b> referred in the Fall may be referred and tested in the Spring for implementation beginning the next school year. Instruments utilized include quantitative and qualitative measures, such as the following:
<u>Quantitative Measures</u> (Test Criteria)	<u>Quantitative Measures</u> (Test Criteria)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Achievement Test</li><li>• Nonverbal Test</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Achievement Test</li><li>• Nonverbal Test</li></ul>
<u>Qualitative Measures</u> (Product/Inventory Criteria)	<u>Qualitative Measures</u> (Product/Inventory Criteria)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parent Inventory</li><li>• Teacher Inventory</li><li>• Student Product</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parent Inventory</li><li>• Teacher Inventory</li><li>• Student Product</li><li>• Report Card Grades (Grades 3-12)</li></ul>

## Placement

After completing the testing cycle and results are processed, parents/guardians are notified of the status for student's placement through U.S. Mail. Letters of notification include *Matrix of Results* form (Appendix B) and information about the appeals process in the event that students are not selected for the program. Parents of identified students will receive a *Conditions for Participation* form (Appendix C) in the District's Gifted/Talented Program.

## Appeal of Placement

A parent has the opportunity to question, or appeal, the student's results and/or placement. Parents receive directions regarding appeal procedures in the notification letter for the Gifted/Talented Program. If the student was not selected for the program, parents may submit a *Request for Appeal of Placement* form (Appendix D) by the date specified on the notification letter. After an appeal is submitted, the Campus Review Committee meets to consider concerns and documentation provided by parents. The Campus Review Committee reviews student information and makes a final decision. If the Campus Review Committee approves the appeal, the student will be placed in the Gifted/Talented Program on a *probationary* status for the current instructional school year. The student's academic progress will be continuously monitored.

## Furlough

A student, parent, teacher, counselor, or administrator may request/recommend that a student be furloughed from the Gifted/Talented Program for a stated length of time during an instructional school year by completing a *Furlough Request* form (Appendix E) available on the district website.

Reasons for a furlough may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Problems stemming from self, school, or home.
- Inability to participate due to scheduling conflicts (i.e., intervention or Acceleration Programs).
- Withdrawal from school district due to relocation.
- Other reasons specified by a parent, counselor, teacher, or administrator.

Provisions include:

- Furloughs are not granted to circumvent assigned projects or special assignments.
- A furlough from the gifted program may not exceed the length of the current instructional school year.
- If a student withdraws, a furlough from the gifted program may not exceed the length of one year from the initial furlough date.
- Student records are reviewed for academic standing prior to reentry.
- An administrator reviews/approves furlough requests.
- When a student has been furloughed and wishes to reenter the District's Gifted/Talented Program, a *Request for Reentry* form (Appendix F) must be completed at the campus.



## **Transfer**

Students new to the District must submit documentation of participation in a public school-approved Gifted/ Talented Program by completing the *Out-of-District Request for Admission* form (Appendix G) available at each campus. Upon submission of the documentation, students are reviewed and/or assessed using District criteria and appropriately placed within six (6) weeks.

## **Intra-district**

A student who transfers from one District campus to another District campus in the same grade level shall continue to receive services in the District's Gifted/Talented Program.

## **Scholastic Probation**

When, according to the professional judgment of the Gifted/Talented Program staff, the student is not succeeding academically, a recommendation for scholastic probation is made. Recommendations are based upon teacher observations of student behavior, performance, products, counselor interviews, and all pertinent data. During the probationary period, there is an expectation for the student to demonstrate successful progress. A scholastic probation should be recommended if a student fails two or more core subject areas at the end of a grading period.

Parents must be informed that the student is being recommended for Scholastic probation and a conference must be scheduled. Prior to placing the student on scholastic probation, a conference with the Campus Review Committee must be scheduled and a plan for success generated. The *Scholastic Probation* form (Appendix H) must be completed to document the length of the probationary period. The period of scholastic probation is a minimum of six (6) weeks, but may extend to the end of the semester/school year. Placement of the student should be determined at the end of the probationary period. If a student is admitted into the Gifted/Talented Program with an approved appeal, the student will begin the program on a probationary status for continuous academic monitoring for the duration of the current instructional school year. If a student's parent/guardian is not in attendance during scheduled conferences, G/T status documents detailing the committee's decision(s) will be mailed.

Documented conferences for Special Education students and/or Limited English-Speaking Proficient (LEP) students in Bilingual Education/ESL being recommended for probation shall include participation by a program representative (i.e., Bilingual Coordinator, Special Education Specialist).

## **Exit**

If a student does not improve during a scholastic probation period/ an exit will be recommended/ enforced by the Campus Review Committee. Exiting a student from the Gifted/Talented Program is based on the determination that the needs of the individual student will best be met in other educational programs or upon request of the parent(s) using the *Exit* form (Appendix I). A review of a student request to exit the program shall indicate that multiple criteria were used to determine the need for exiting.

## **Appeal of Exit**

During the exit conference, the Campus Review Committee shall inform the parent of the right to appeal the withdrawal decision. The parent may request a hearing before the District Selection Committee by submitting a *Request for Appeal of Exit* form (Appendix J), within ten (10) days of the exit conference to Robstown Independent School District, Gifted/Talented Office, 400 W. Ligustrum, Robstown, Texas 78380. The District Selection Committee decides if the student must exit or may remain in the program with agreed upon conditions associated with such a decision. The student shall remain in the Gifted/Talented Program pending an appeal by the parent/guardian. The decision of the District Selection Committee is final.

## **Withdrawals**

If a student withdraws from the District, the student is considered voluntarily withdrawn from the Gifted/Talented Program and provided a furlough up to one instructional school year. A student must be reevaluated to reenter the program when the withdrawal period exceeds one (1) instructional school year.