

Educating America's Children



# Gifted and Talented Program K-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Handbook

# GIFTED CHILDREN

At last,

We are beginning to understand you, we  
realize your beauty,  
your ability  
your potential....

A lifetime

of excitement,  
joy, involvement, creativity and passion awaits you....  
But first we must nurture you....

We must give you the opportunity

to accept and value  
your strengths  
and your differences....

to accept and value  
the strengths  
and differences of others....

The opportunity

to actively pursue your passions,  
your areas of adventure,  
and your dreams....  
to help make our world  
a better place in which to live....  
where, as you choose, you may become  
the explorers, the inventors,  
the artists,  
the poets,  
the leaders of tomorrow....

But, most importantly,

we must help you to become  
your true "selves,"  
to withstand the pressure  
from outside,  
and to listen closely to  
your hearts  
so that you may  
develop your potential,  
and become what  
you truly can be,  
what you truly are....

George T. Betts

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# Killeen ISD Mission and Vision

## *MISSION STATEMENT*

Teach so that students learn to their maximum potential.

## *VISION STATEMENT*

Through the implementation of a full, innovative, rigorous, comprehensive education program, KISD will provide superior learning opportunities so that upon graduation, students are prepared for success in the workforce and/or in higher education.



## **Texas State Goal for Services of Gifted Students**

Students who participate in services designed for gifted students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment. High school graduates who have participated in services for gifted students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.

## INTRODUCTION

According to Section 29.123 of the Texas Education Code, the Texas State Plan forms the basis of GT services and accountability. The plan offers an outline for services without prohibitive regulation. Districts are accountable for services as described in the "in compliance" column of the State Plan where performance measures are included for five aspects of GT service design. These standards reflect actions required in state law and/or SBOE rule.

In 1999, the 76th Texas Legislature introduced Rider 69, which spurred the initial development and ongoing refinement of the Texas Performance Standards Project for Gifted and Talented Students (TPSP) as a vehicle through which districts might address the state goal. With the TPSP and ongoing research to inform and improve practice, Texas educators are committed to meeting the unique needs of GT students and to expanding the ways to do so.

**The two documents described above, the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students* and the *Texas Performance Standards Project for Gifted and Talents Students* (TPSP), guide the design of the Killeen Independent School District program for gifted and talented learners.**

The Texas Education Code 29.123 specifies that 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.

## IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

Identifying students for **the KISD GT** (Gifted and Talented) program is accomplished through a comprehensive identification process consisting of three steps (nomination, screening, and selection).

### **A. Nomination**

Students may be nominated for the gifted and talented program at any time by teachers, counselors, parents, or other interested persons. English and Spanish nomination forms are available on all campuses. Parents will be notified when the student nomination has been received. At this time, a parent has the option to withdraw his/her child from the GT identification process. Written parental permission is required before screening/testing is begun. No student may be denied access to the GT Program on the basis of race, creed, or handicapping conditions. **If a student qualifies, a class change will be necessary if the current teacher is not GT certified.**

### **B. Screening**

Gifted and Talented screening is on-going throughout the school year for students in grades K-12. Students new to the district may be screened at the summer District Enrollment Center or at their home campus.

Qualitative and quantitative data are collected through three (3) or more measures and used to determine whether or not a student needs gifted/talented services. The following assessments are used:

- The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition – NNAT 3 is an age-normed test that uses visual analogies to provide information about students' information processing abilities. The NNAT 2 uses progressive matrices to allow for a culturally neutral evaluation of students' nonverbal reasoning and general problem-solving abilities, regardless of the individual student's primary language, education, culture or socioeconomic background.
- Measures of Academic Progress Test – The MAP is a nationally-normed standardized test of student achievement and is aligned to both state and national standards. It identifies what the student knows and is able to do.
- A student interview – The interview is designed to provide insight into student interests, skills, vocabulary, and task commitment.

**Students may be assessed only once during a twelve-month period.**

### **C. Selection**

A District GT Selection Committee, composed of at least three district staff members trained in the nature and needs of gifted learners, reviews the student assessment/screening profiles. Using an established student profile criterion, students who qualify to receive GT services are identified. The campus GT coordinator then informs the parent of the results of the identification process. **If a student qualifies, a class change will be necessary if the current teacher is not GT certified.**

### **D. Appeal Process**

After the District Selection Committee reviews the student's testing results, a letter will be sent home to the parent. If a parent desires to appeal the selection committee decision, he/she initiates the appeal by contacting the campus GT Coordinator. A written appeal is required and must be submitted to the campus GT Coordinator within 10 business days from the date on the selection letter. Additional assessment data and/or student information may be gathered and reviewed for a final selection decision.

PARTICIPATION IN THE GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM IS  
VOLUNTARY AND REQUIRES WRITTEN PARENT PERMISSION TO  
PARTICIPATE.



**TRANSITIONS**

## **Furlough Procedures**

A furlough allows a student to take a “leave of absence” from the program for specified reasons and for a designated period of time without being exited.

- A furlough may be granted at the request of the student and/or parent.
- The campus GT coordinator meets with the student and parent to discuss the advisability of a furlough. The GT teacher, campus GT coordinator, parent, and student must agree that a leave of absence will benefit the student.
- A “Request for GT Furlough” form must be completed and must specify the beginning and ending date of the furlough. Furloughs are considered at the monthly District Selection Committee meeting. The furlough form requires signatures from the campus GT coordinator, the principal, and the district GT coordinator.
- A furlough can be for no longer than one school year and no shorter than one semester.
- At the end of the furlough, the student must re-enter the program or exit.

Furloughs may be granted for the following:

- A student’s long-term illness which affects his/her performance and participation in the GT classroom
- A home or family crisis which affects a student’s performance and participation in the GT classroom
- An unavoidable schedule conflict
- Placement in DAEP

Furloughs cannot be granted for the following:

- A student who does not like a particular teacher and/or classmate
- A student who prefers another teacher other than the G/T teacher
- A student who does not care to attend G/T class because his friends are not in that class

*If, after the furlough period, the student and family do not want the student returned to active status, the parent will need to conference with the campus GT Coordinator about exit procedures.*

## **Exit Procedures**

The primary focus of the gifted/talented program’s exit policy is, “What can be done to help the student?” If an exit from the program is being considered, the campus GT coordinator schedules a conference. At the conference, the student, the parent, the GT teacher(s), and the campus GT coordinator discuss the areas of concern and develop a plan for improvement.

State guidelines specify that NO SINGLE criterion may be used to determine exit from the gifted/talented program. If the improvement plan is not successful and/or the GT teacher(s), parent, and campus GT coordinator agree that continued program participation would not benefit the student, the campus GT coordinator submits the signed exit form to the district GT coordinator for consideration.



A student who exits the GT program may apply for re-admittance no earlier than one year from his/her exit date. The student must have a full re-evaluation and qualify for re-admittance.

### **Transfer Procedures**

GT students who transfer within the district are placed in the gifted/talented program at the receiving school. All gifted/talented documentation should be included with the student's cumulative folder when it is sent to the receiving school.

Students transferring from a GT program in another district or another state must provide documentation of GT qualification and participation. The student is initially placed at the principal's discretion pending review of records by the District Selection Committee. The District Selection Committee may request that a local GT evaluation be completed.

For military students, if the sending district is in a compact state, Senate Bill 90 requires that the receiving district initially honor GT placement based on current educational assessments conducted at the school in the sending state. This does not preclude the school in the receiving state from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement of the student.

## **ELEMENTARY PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

### **Service Model**

Killeen ISD serves the K-5<sup>th</sup> grade GT students in an inclusive classroom model. The inclusion model places GT students in a regular classroom with a teacher who has had a minimum of 30 hours of professional learning in gifted education. Each year, the GT teacher must receive 6 additional hours of gifted education training. GT students may or may not be placed in the same classroom; however, they are provided opportunities to work with other GT students.

The occasions that may call for the GT students to be "pulled" to work on differentiated learning tasks and activities.

## **Curriculum and Instruction**

There are two essential components of the KISD Gifted and Talented Curriculum: 1) TEKS Resource System and 2) the Texas Performance Standards Project.

1. TEKS Resource System provides a guaranteed and viable curriculum based on research-based, best practice models. Lessons are all aligned with the state standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills TEKS) and meet the highest standards of rigor and relevance. Many differentiation strategies are embedded in the TEKS Resource System units. In addition, the GT teachers are trained to differentiate the curriculum and to enhance the instruction with greater depth, complexity, and challenge.

*The idea of differentiating instruction is an approach to teaching that advocates active planning for and attention to student differences in classrooms, in the context of high quality curriculums.*

*Carol Tomlinson, 2011*

2. The Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) is a statewide standards and assessment system used to capture the high levels of achievement of gifted/talented students. The goal of TPSP is for students to create work that reflects the professional quality that the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* requires. Student projects are TEKS-based and focus on the core content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies with interdisciplinary connections. Students who successfully complete a project will demonstrate a deep understanding of at least one area of study in one of these disciplines.
  - One student-selected project is to be completed each school year.
  - The project is to be completed by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> 9-week grading period and presented during the month of May.
  - Projects are scored by teachers and students using the six TPSP scoring dimensions:
    - 1) Content and Knowledge Skills
    - 2) Analysis and Synthesis
    - 3) Multiple Perspectives
    - 4) Research
    - 5) Communication
    - 6) Presentation of Learning
  - After the GT teacher approves the student project using the “Topic Submission and Approval Form,” a copy of the form will be submitted to the district GT coordinator.
  - Using the project as a formative or summative assessment is a campus decision.
  - Rubrics to evaluate the projects are available at <http://www.texaspsp.org/resources>.

## **Parent Involvement**

An important component of the KISD Gifted and Talented Program is parent involvement. Each campus will provide a parent orientation at the beginning of the year. Throughout the year, parent meetings and events will offer opportunities to showcase student work and to highlight topics of interest to parents and students.

## SECONDARY PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### Service Model

GT students in grades 6-12 are served in subject specific classes including pre-AP, AP, IB, and dual credit courses for math, science, language arts, and social studies. AP courses are also available in foreign languages and fine arts. Students are placed in the appropriate course with a highly qualified teacher who has professional development in AP, IB, or Dual Credit instruction as well as the minimum of 30 hours of professional learning in gifted education. Each year, the GT teacher must receive an additional 6 hours of gifted education training.

### Curriculum and Instruction

There are three essential components of the KISD Gifted and Talented curriculum at the secondary level: 1) TEKS Resource System, 2) college-level curriculum and 3) the Texas Performance Standards Project.

1. In middle school, TEKS Resource System provides a guaranteed and viable curriculum based on research-based, best practice models. Lessons are all aligned with the state standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills TEKS) and meet the highest standards of rigor and relevance. The GT teachers are trained to differentiate the curriculum and to enhance the instruction with greater depth, complexity, and challenge, as well as a pre-Advanced Placement focus.
2. In high school, The Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Dual Credit programs provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum based on research-based, best practice models. Lessons are all aligned with the state and national standards and meet collegial standards of rigor and relevance. Many differentiation strategies are embedded in each program and GT teachers are trained to differentiate the curriculum to enhance instruction with greater depth, complexity, and challenge.

*All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded the individual.*

*Albert Einstein*

3. The Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) is a statewide standards and assessment system used to capture the high levels of achievement of gifted/talented students. The goal of TPSP is for students to create work that reflects the professional quality that the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* requires. Student projects are TEKS- based and focus on the core content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies with interdisciplinary connections. Students who successfully complete a project will demonstrate a deep understanding of at least one area of study in one of these disciplines. The student-selected projects are to be completed by the 4<sup>th</sup> 9 weeks and presented as a culminating showcase of student learning.

**Parent Involvement**

An important component of the KISD gifted and talented program is parent involvement. Each campus will provide a parent orientation at the beginning of the year. Throughout the year, parent meetings and events will offer opportunities to showcase student work and to highlight topics of interest to parents and students.