

SMYER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY AND PROCEDURES
FOR ACADEMICALLY GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

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Nondiscrimination

SMYERISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, economic status, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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STATE GOAL FOR SERVICES FOR 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 are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment and reflect individuality and creativity. 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.

-Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students

STATE DEFINITION OF GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENT

§ 29.121. DEFINITION: In this subchapter, "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.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, § 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

SMYER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT'S DEFINITION OF GIFTED

SMYER ISD defines gifted and talented as any child or youth in grades K-12 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 general intellectual ability; or
- (2) Excels in one or more specific academic fields: math, science, language arts, and/or social studies

SMYER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT'S GOAL FOR THE GIFTED/TALENTED 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 are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment and that reflect individuality and creativity. High school graduates who have participated in services for gifted students will produce **products and performances of professional quality** as part of their program services.

PROGRAM GOALS FOR THE GIFTED/TALENTED SERVICES K-12

1. IDENTIFICATION - Identify students in grades K-12 who demonstrated an academic need for gifted services using the criteria established by the district, approved by the board, and in compliance with the state mandates.
2. SELF-DIRECTED LEARNERS - Develop the students' capacities to become self-directed and to be confident in their ability to research and process information and to create and communicate their findings as they produce and present advanced-level products or performances as well as products and performances of professional quality at the high school exit level.
3. COMPLEX THINKING SKILLS - Enhance and refine the abstract and complex thinking and reasoning of these students through more sophisticated creative and critical thinking activities as they reflect and refine their own thinking processes.
4. APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES - Provide students with multiple opportunities to participate in learning experiences using advanced content (within the four core areas) which are defensibly differentiated in depth, complexity and range through modification to content and/or process and/or product. Students will be able to work independently, with groups of other gifted students, and with groups of non-gifted peers.

IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES

K-12

SMYER Independent School District has board approval on the identification procedures and processes of students K-12 for the services of the Gifted/Talented Program. These procedures meet state requirements (§29.121 & TAC 89.1) and have been designed to ensure the identification of any student who demonstrates educational need for the services of the program under the established guidelines.

Texas Administrative Code §89.1: Student Assessment.

School districts shall develop written policies on student identification that are approved by the local board of trustees and disseminated to parents. The policies must:

- (1) Include provisions for ongoing screening and selection of students who perform, or show potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment in the areas defined in the Texas Education Code, §29.121;
- (2) Include assessment measures collected from multiple sources according to each area defined in the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students;
- (3) Include data and procedures designed to ensure that students from all populations in the district have access to the assessment process and, if identified as having significant educational need for advanced academics, services for the gifted/talented program;
- (4) Provide for final qualification of students (through a blind process) to be made by a committee of at least three local district educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted students; and
- (5) Include provisions regarding furloughs, reassessment, exiting of students from program services, transfer students, and appeals of district decisions regarding program placement.

District Identification Timeline:

Referral procedures published in local newspaper and on district website	November
Referrals accepted from parents, teachers, community members	November
Screenings, assessments and reassessments conducted after written parental permission obtained	December – January
Gifted/Talented committee meets on kindergarten screenings	February
Written parental permission for services obtained for identified students in Kindergarten	February
Services begin for identified kindergarten students	Prior to March 1
Gifted/Talented committee meets on grade 1-12 screenings	February
Written parental permission for services obtained for identified students in grades 1-12	March
Services begin for identified students	August

DISSEMINATING INFORMATION

Anyone may nominate a student for the program at the period of annual referrals listed on the timeline above. Referral forms are available in each campus office and/or on the district web site. Referral forms may be submitted to the campus office only during the time period of referral acceptance. Late referrals will not be accepted. The screening instruments will match the program's services.

Parents are informed of the identification policies through the district or campus handbook, and/or the district website, and/or by request of the written policy and procedures for the Gifted/Talented program.

REFERRAL PROCESS

Referrals can originate from teachers, parents or community members during the referral period. Students are nominated with a formal referral sheet to be given to the campus office. Written parent or guardian permission is required to screen/assess a student. If a parent does not want his/her child to be screened, this information will be documented.

SCREENING/ASSESSMENT PROCESS

A student profile is used to identify those students who perform, or show the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment relative to their age, peers, experience, or environment. The profile will reflect a **minimum of three (3)** criteria used in the assessment. The criteria used will be a combination of **qualitative and quantitative** instruments and **may include**:

- School Abilities Test such as the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT), the Otis-Lennon School Abilities Test (OLSAT), The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), the Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary and Middle School Students Edition 2 (SAGES2), or other school abilities tests as deemed appropriate for the student;
- Achievement Test such as the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT), the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), the Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary and Middle School Students Edition 2 (SAGES2), or other achievement tests as deemed appropriate for the student;
- Divergent thinking assessment such as the Torrence Test of Creative Thinking, the Creative Assessment Packet (CAP), or other divergent thinking assessment as deemed appropriate for the student;
- Teacher and/or Parent Rating Scales such as the Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scales (GATES), the Renzulli-Hartman Teacher Rating Scales, the Purdue Teacher Rating Scales, or other rating scales as deemed appropriate for the student;
- Student interview; and/or
- Student product/portfolio

QUALIFICATION PROCESS

The student profile identifies the student's strengths and weaknesses. The percentiles and/or scores from the assessment instruments are plotted on the student profile. Each student's profile is individually evaluated by the Gifted/Talented Committee through a blind (no name) process. A student clearly qualifies for Gifted/Talented services if the majority of the evidence on the profile falls within the *High* and/or *Superior* ranges on the profile. The decision is based on the committee's observation of the preponderance of the evidence on the student's profile.

The Gifted/Talented committee consists of at least three district educators. All committee members have been trained in nature and needs of gifted students. The Gifted/Talented Committee makes a professional judgment based on the recorded student profile data. As the committee evaluates the data on the students nominated, the committee has three options:

- The preponderance of profile data indicates the student exhibits educational need and would benefit from the services offered in the Gifted/Talented Program.
- There is insufficient evidence in the documentation at this time indicating the student's educational needs would best be met by the Gifted/Talented program. The preponderance of evidence indicates the student's educational needs would best be served with the services of the regular curriculum.
- Further information is requested for the committee to make a qualification decision.

Once the identification process is complete, parents or guardians are notified of the Gifted/Talented Committee's decision via U.S. Mail within ten school days. Parents of all screened students may request a conference to examine their child's assessment results. Request should be made through the student's home campus.

ADDITIONAL POLICES AND PROCEDURES

TRANSFER OF STUDENTS

All students who have participated in gifted and talented programs prior to coming to SMYER ISD may be considered for the Gifted/Talented Program. Once screening records are received from the student's previous district, the records will be examined for correspondence to SMYER ISD's criteria. If the transfer data is insufficient, SMYER ISD will assess the student during the school referral timeline to see if placement in the program is in the student's best interest. The student's Gifted/Talented assessment results from the previous district will also be considered by the committee when making a decision.

APPEALS PROCESS

Once the identification process is complete, parents or guardians are notified of the results via U.S. Mail within 10 school days of the committee's decision. A parent or staff member may appeal an identification decision by writing an appeal letter to the Gifted/Talented committee after the committee has issued letters documenting its qualification decisions. The appeal letter must be postmarked within 10 business days of receipt of the parent/guardian letter written indicating the committee's initial decision. The committee will reconvene in order to consider the need for further assessment data or other information.

FURLOUGH PROCEDURE

A furlough is a temporary "leave of absence" from the Gifted/Talented Program designed to meet the individual needs of an identified student. Anyone may request a furlough: parent, student, teacher, or administrator. Requests for a furlough will be given to the campus administrator and members of the Gifted/Talented committee for consideration. A student may be furloughed for a period of time deemed appropriate by the Gifted/Talented committee. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed, and the student may re-enter the Gifted/Talented program, be removed from the program, or be placed on another furlough. Furloughs are designed to be short-term and temporary and should **never be used for an entire school year**.

A furlough does not indicate a permanent exiting of the program. Furloughs could be utilized for a variety of extenuating circumstances. Any student may be granted a furlough from the program for various issues such as overcommitment, family concerns, serious illness, or any other circumstances which would inhibit or curtail the student's performance in the program. The furlough may also be used prior to a formal exit from the program for those students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the learning opportunities of the Gifted/Talented program. A furlough might also provide the student an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the Gifted/Talented committee. A furlough is arranged to meet the individual needs of the student.

REASSESSMENT

SMYER ISD will reassess a student if he/she has been given a second referral by a teacher or a parent. Reassessments may occur within consecutive years.

EXIT

Student performance in the program shall be monitored. A student shall be removed from the program at any time the Gifted/Talented committee determines it is in the student's best interest **and** a furlough has been ineffective. If a parent requests their child be removed from the program, the Gifted/Talented committee shall grant the request. Once a student is exited from the program he/she must adhere to the identification procedures and exhibit educational need to be readmitted.

PROVISION OF STUDENT SERVICES

SMYER Independent School District offers a variety of learning experiences and opportunities for Gifted/Talented students in grades K-12 which meet the mandates of the Texas Administrative Code. These services include, but are not limited to, integrating Depth and Complexity into the curriculum, requiring advanced level products and performances, and allowing identified Gifted/Talented students the opportunity to work with other identified students.

Texas Administrative Code §89.3. Student Services

School districts shall provide an array of learning opportunities for gifted/talented students in kindergarten through Grade 12 and shall inform parents of the opportunities. Options must include:

- (1) Instructional and organizational patterns that enable identified students to work together as a group, to work with other students, and to work independently;
- (2) A continuum of learning experiences that leads to the development of advanced-level products and performances as well as differentiated strategies in the regular classroom and the Pre-AP and AP classrooms;
- (3) In-school and, when possible, out-of-school options relevant to the student's area of strength that are available during the entire school year; and
- (4) Opportunities to accelerate in areas of strength.

A continuum of learning experiences will be provided in the Gifted/Talented services which lead to the development of advanced-level products and/or performances. Such services will include use of depth and complexity elements, differentiation of content, process and/or product in the regular or Pre-AP/AP classroom, a pull-out program, participation in regional Gifted/Talented student seminars, independent studies, participation in the Texas Performance Standards Project, concurrent or dual-enrollment classes, and other services as deemed appropriate for the student. Services are available in all four core academic areas including Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies. Identified students will work independently, with other identified students, and with students of other abilities.

Documentation of services will be maintained and parents will be notified of in-school and out-of-school options during the school year that are relevant to the needs of the gifted and talented students. Progress reports may be included in the student's report card. Credit by Examination is available through Region 17 Education Service Center to assist students in acceleration through classes and/or grade levels. For more information on Credit by Examination, contact the student's campus.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ONGOING TRAINING IN GIFTED EDUCATION

SMYER Independent School District is committed to providing its staff with appropriate and meaningful professional development which enables the staff to meet the unique and individual educational needs of all students including services for gifted/talented students. It is important that all staff who are responsible for formally servicing these students obtain appropriate training for educating the gifted child. The district will require at least the minimum hours of training as mandated by the state:

Texas Administrative Code §89.2. Professional Development

1. Prior to assignment in the program, teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students have a minimum of 30 hours of staff development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students;
2. Teachers without training required in paragraph (1) of this section who provide instruction and services that are part of the gifted/talented program must complete the 30-hour training requirement within one semester;
3. Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students receive a minimum of six hours annually of professional development in gifted education; and
4. Administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions have a minimum of six hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students and program options.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

SMYER ISD will annually evaluate the Gifted/Talented program by surveying all stakeholders including students, parents/guardians, and teachers. The evaluation data will be presented to the school board and will be used as a needs assessment to be addressed in the district/campus improvement plans.