



# Gifted and Talented Plan

Revised 2010

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## **Definition**

### **Wharton ISD Definition of Gifted and Talented Students:**

Gifted and Talented students are those who perform at or show the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to 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

These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to maximize their individual potentials and their contributions to society.

## **Goals**

### **State Goal for Services for Gifted/Talented 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.

## **Wharton I.S.D. Gifted/Talented Program Goals:**

1. Gifted/talented students will develop problem solving and critical thinking skills to conduct independent research on topics that require in-depth and complex analysis and result in advanced-level creative products.
2. Gifted/talented students will develop communication skills through opportunities to work with others and independently to present their research and products effectively.
3. Gifted/talented students will develop insights into the strengths, areas of desired improvement and interests of themselves and others through a differentiated curriculum.
4. Gifted/talented students will receive social and emotional support that enables them to work to their potential.

# **Wharton I.S.D. Gifted and Talented Operational Program Overview**

The Wharton I.S.D. Gifted/Talented Program will identify and serve approximately 3-5% of the district population in grades K-12. Students will be identified for general intellectual ability through a variety of objective and subjective criteria. Teachers who teach gifted students in the four core areas will have a minimum of 30 hours of gifted training that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students with 6 hour annual updates to provide differentiated instruction in the regular classroom. Education of the gifted/talented is not the exclusive domain of the specialist, but results from the cooperative efforts of all professionals who come into contact with identified gifted students.

Teachers in the four core areas without required training who provide instruction and services for gifted/talented students must complete the 30-hour training requirement within one semester.

Administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions will have a minimum of six hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students and program options. Administrators and counselors without required training must complete the 6 hour training requirement within one semester.

## **Program Descriptions**

### **Elementary School Level**

Students identified as gifted/talented will be cluster grouped in the regular classroom and work with the Elementary Gifted/Talented specialist on a weekly half-day(three hour) pull-out basis using the Performance Standards Projects. While these students are out of the regular classroom it should be understood by the classroom teacher that they are working on grade level work and they do not have to make up missed class work when they return. Any missed tests or work that will impact future work however, should be made up in a timely fashion. In the regular classroom they will receive differentiated instruction that addresses their social and emotional development and that has the depth and complexity commensurate with their abilities.

## **Junior High Level**

Students identified as gifted/talented will be cluster grouped in the regular classroom and will receive an accelerated curriculum through honors courses in the four core areas (Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies). Beginning with sixth grade this year and continuing with subsequent grade levels each year, teachers in the four core areas will work together to utilize the Performance Standards Projects with these students at least one period per week with accelerated instruction the other four days. Sixth grade gifted/talented students will be cluster grouped with students selected for the class on the basis of high TAKS scores from the previous year. Parent consent will be required for all students in these classes. All students identified as gifted will present a final product as a result of the Performance Standards Project that is evaluated by teachers, peers and self.

## **High School Level**

Students identified as gifted/talented will have opportunities commensurate with their abilities through dual concurrent enrollment, Pre-AP, AP, honors courses, and extracurricular activities and competitions in individual areas of interests. Teachers will further differentiate the depth and complexity of the curriculum in these courses, commensurate with the needs of the gifted/talented.

# Wharton I.S.D Gifted/Talented Program Entry, Exit, and Transfer Procedures

## I. ENTRY PROCEDURE

### A. Nomination (Grades 2-11)

Students may be nominated using the district nomination form for the program by:

- Teachers
- Counselors
- Librarians
- Administrators
- Parents
- Self
- Peers
- Members of the community

Nominations will be accepted at any time during the year. Nominated students will be evaluated for participation in the program during the spring semester.

### B. Screening

1. All students K-1 will be automatically screened for the program.
2. Students in grades 2-11 who have been nominated will be screened for the program as soon as all necessary data becomes available. Data will be collected beginning in the fourth six weeks for second and third grade and the fifth six weeks for the fourth through eleventh grades. Screening will be conducted by a Building Screening, Selection, and Exit Committee composed of, at least:
  - campus principal
  - Counselor/diagnostician
  - Teacher or Coordinator of Gifted/Talented
  - Additional teachers as appropriate

The screening committee will be responsible for compiling and organizing data appropriate to the age/grade level of the student and displaying the data on a profile in order to facilitate decision-making for selection of students. If special tests are to be administered, written parental consent **must** be requested and received before further testing will be initiated. **Only** Wharton I.S.D. administered test scores will be accepted for identification of Gifted/Talented students.

### C. Criteria for Identification

The following six categories will be used to identify students for the Gifted/Talented Program in K-8:

- Intelligence Test/ School Ability Test
- Reading Achievement Test
- Math Achievement Test
- Teacher Checklist
- Parent Rating
- Products/ Authentic Assessment

The following six categories will be used to identify students for the Gifted/Talented Program in grades 9-11:

- Intelligence Test/ School Ability Test
- Reading Achievement Test
- Math Achievement Test
- Teacher Checklist
- Parent Rating
- 3 semester GPA in the four major academic areas

### D. Criteria

Nominated students will be recorded on the Wharton I.S.D. profile sheet and placed in the student's permanent record folder.

## E. Selection

The Building Screening, Selection, and Exit Committee will examine all of the data that have been collected on each child. **Students who perform in the top five percent (1.65 standard deviations above the mean) on any four of the six measures will be identified as eligible for placement into the Gifted/Talented Program.**

**\*This Committee is authorized to admit students into the program who, in their professional judgment, would benefit from the program but do not meet the established criteria of scoring in the top 5% on 4 of 6 measures.**

## F. Placement

Selection for placement in the Gifted/Talented Program will be made by the Building Screening, Selection, and Exit Committee. Once the Committee has determined that a student is eligible to participate in the program, s/he will be placed into the Program upon obtaining written permission from the student's parent/guardian.

## G. Appeals

When appeals arise as to the Selection Committee's decisions, or if more information is requested by parents/guardians, the following procedure will be used:

1. A written letter of appeal will be made to the Principal
2. If the problem is not resolved, the written letter of appeal is made to the Superintendent
3. If the problem is not resolved, the written letter of appeal is made to the School Board

## I. FURLOUGH PROCEDURE

A student may be temporarily removed from participation in the gifted and talented class(es) for a six-week period of time by:

- Student/ Parent refusal
- Teacher/ Committee recommendation

Parent(s)/ Guardian(s) and student will be required to sign a permission form prior to the student's receiving furlough status. The Screening, Selection, and Exit Committee will grant the furlough.

### III. EXIT PROCEDURE

Requiring a student to exit from the Gifted/Talented Program is a serious consideration. Care and sensitivity will be the two overarching attitudes that guide educators and parents when considering the exiting of a student from the Gifted/Talented Program.

The Screening, Selection, and Exit Committee will make final decisions regarding exiting of students from the program for educational, psychological and personal reasons after consultations with both student and parent(s)/guardian(s). Such decisions will be based on any or all of the following data:

- Parental requests for withdrawal from the program or services
- Student requests for withdrawal from the program or services with parental permission
- Teacher(s) of the Gifted/Talented recommendation(s) based on observation of student behaviors, performance, and products
- Counselor recommendation based on interviews and observations

The parent(s)/guardian(s) and student will be given the opportunity to meet with the Selection Committee or a representative of the committee before the student is exited.

Prior to formal exit from the program, these steps will be followed by the Screening, Selection and Exit Committee:

1. Review of student progress in the Gifted/Talented Program
2. Documentation of progress
3. Conference(s) with student, parent and professional staff
4. Completion of Request for Exit Form
5. Notification of parent(s) and student by Notification of Exit Form.

NOTE: A student who is exited from the program may be re-nominated the following year and must go through the screening policy, and re-qualify for the services.

#### IV. TRANSFER PROCEDURE

A student transferring from another district is not automatically qualified for the Gifted/Talented program in Wharton I.S.D. Data must be reviewed by the Screening, Selection, and Exit Committee to determine alignment with Wharton's criteria. If the transferring student requires additional testing to determine his/her eligibility, testing must occur and the Screening, Selection, and Exit Committee must evaluate the results before determining eligibility for the Gifted/Talented Program in Wharton I.S.D.