

HARDIN-JEFFERSON

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

GIFTED/TALENTED  
PROGRAM GUIDE



**Updated August 2023**

## Hardin-Jefferson ISD Mission Statement

To provide the best possible education for all students in an environment that promotes and develops responsible, productive citizens through a cooperative effort of all parents, students, teachers, administrators, and the Hardin-Jefferson community.



### HJISD Gifted and Talented Coordinators

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# STATE GOAL AND DEFINITION FOR GIFTED EDUCATION AND SERVICES



Students who participate in services designed for gifted students will demonstrate skills in self-direction learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the **development of innovative products and performance** that are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experiences, 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, experiences, or environment and who:

1. Exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area;
2. Posses an unusual capacity for leadership; or
3. Excels in a specific academic field.

-Added by Acts 1995 74<sup>th</sup> Leg., 260, §1, eff. May 30 1995

# IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

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## REFERRALS

Teachers, counselors, parents, students or other interested persons may refer students for screening for the Gifted and Talented Program. Referrals are accepted throughout the year, with assessments and review meetings occurring during specific assessment windows.

Students are referred with a referral form to be given to the campus GT coordinator. 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.

An awareness session providing an overview of the assessment procedures and services for GT students is offered for families prior to the referral period.

## IDENTIFICATION

In accordance with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, the District will use the guidelines for identifying HJISD students for the Gifted and Talented Program.

Written parent consent shall be obtained before any special testing or assessment is conducted as part of the screening and identification process. All screening and identification procedures for GT purposes are conducted in-district, during the school year, by school personnel at no cost to the parent. HJISD does not assess students who are not currently enrolled in the district.

The district reserves the right to screen referred students for common characteristics of gifted students prior to completing a full identification profile.

Assessment opportunities for GT identification are made available to students at least once a semester. However, students may only be assessed one time during each school calendar year. Identification will consist of at least three (3) qualitative and quantitative assessments, including, but not limited to, achievement tests, ability tests, intelligence tests, creativity tests, characteristic checklists completed by teacher and parents, teacher referrals based on classroom observations, and student work products, if available.

If a parent wishes to submit scores from a source outside the district's testing service, the qualifications of the test administrator must be available to the screening committee. Only state licensed/certified evaluators will be acceptable. The district reserves the right to provide different testing.

A district review committee shall evaluate each referred student per the established criteria and shall determine if a preponderance of evidence exists of a GT learning need. The district review committee shall be composed of at least three professional educators who have completed the 30 hours of gifted training. As the committee evaluates the data on the students nominated, the committee has three options:

1. The preponderance of profile data indicates the student exhibits educational need and would benefit from the services offered in the GT Program.
2. There is insufficient evidence in the documentation at this time indicating the student's educational needs would best be met by the GT Program. The preponderance of evidence indicates the student's educational needs would best be served with the services of the general education curriculum.
3. Further information is requested for the committee to make a qualification decision. The student will be placed on "monitored" status for up to an additional semester before a final decision can be made.

If a preponderance of evidence for a GT learning need presents itself, the profile document shall be signed by committee members and placed in the gifted and talented folder with all supporting documentation collected during the identification process. Parents will be notified and asked to attend a conference on campus. must sign an Acceptance of Service form for services to begin. In grades K-5, services begin immediately. In grades 6-12, services will begin at the beginning of the next semester.

Depending on individual needs, a student may be simultaneously served in more than one special program. For example, a student may be simultaneously served in the GT Program and in the special education program. Appropriate placement is the goal of the committee with the welfare of the student at the heart of every decision.

Once the identification process is complete, parents or guardians are notified of the Gifted/Talented Committee's decision. The notification letter will also specify a parent meeting time. During the parent meeting, the GT Program will be explained, questions will be addressed, and parents will sign a permission slip enabling their child to participate in the GT Program.

# ANNUAL IDENTIFICATION TIMELINE



Referral information published on district website and social media	September and January
Referral window closes for current semester	October 1 and February 1
Screening and assessments conducted after written parental permission obtained	October and February/March
Gifted/Talented committee meets on identification data	November and April
Written parental permission for services obtained for identified students	December and May
Services begin for newly identified students	No later than beginning of next semester

# OTHER PROGRAM PROCESSES



## **Transfer Students**

When an identified gifted student transfers from another school district, the student's records shall be evaluated by the review committee to determine if placement into the Hardin-Jefferson ISD Gifted and Talented Program is appropriate. The district review committee shall make its determination within thirty (30) days of the student's first day of attendance in the District and shall base its decision on the transferred records. If needed, the committee may request additional data to make its determination. If the presented data does not match HJISD criteria, the transfer parent or the district may request further assessment.

When a GT student served in HJISD transfers to another district either in or out of Texas, that district is provided with the student's assessment data by HJISD.

## **Appeal Process**

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. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with HJISD Board Policy FNG (Local) beginning at Level Two.

## **Furlough**

A furlough is a temporary "leave of absence" from the GT 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 GT coordinator and members of the Gifted/Talented committee for consideration. A student may be furloughed for a period of time, up to one year, as 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 GT Program, be removed from the program, or be placed in 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 from 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 over-commitment, family concerns, serious illness, or any

other circumstances that 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 GT 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 Procedures**

Hardin-Jefferson ISD will not perform routine reassessment of identified students. If there is any concern regarding the performance or placement of the student, the Gifted/Talented coordinator will contact the parent and confer about available options. Options available are counseling, requesting a furlough, or exiting the student from the program.

### **Exit Provisions**

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 furlough has been ineffective. Exiting of a student is finalized by committee decision after consultation with parents and student regarding the student's educational needs.

If a parent requests removal from the program, the Gifted/Talented committee shall meet with the parent and student before honoring the request. Once exited from the program he/she must adhere to the identification procedures and exhibit educational need to be readmitted.



# SERVICE DESIGN



Services for gifted/talented students are comprehensive, structured, sequenced, and appropriately challenging, including options in the four (4) foundation curricular areas, arts, leadership, and creativity. Identified Gifted and Talented students will be served on their home campus.

## **Kindergarten - 2nd Grade**

Identified GT students remain in assigned classes and are served by a teacher who is highly trained in Gifted Education. Identified GT students will be grouped together for services in general education classes, which may result in heterogeneous grouping. "Cluster classes" will consist of identified GT students at each grade level and will contain at least three (3) GT students unless the grade level at that campus has fewer than three (3) identified students. Clustered students will be served in the 4 core areas using GT appropriate materials/strategies. Highly trained teachers work with the gifted students to provide more advanced, in-depth instruction, plan activities, develop independent study, and to determine student progress.

## **Grades 3rd - 5th**

In addition to being served in a cluster homeroom, gifted students in grades 3rd-5th will have the opportunity to work with other gifted students weekly. The purpose of the pull-out program is to provide additional instruction and acceleration in the 4 core areas. Students will focus on a core subject each grading period through a multidisciplinary unit chosen by the GT teacher. Project-based learning will also be utilized with special consideration given to the Texas State Performance Standards Project (TPSP). The TPSP comprises a set of performance standards, curriculum, and assessments for differentiating instruction and deepening academic learning. TPSP enhances gifted/talented programs from kindergarten through high school.

## **Grade 6**

In 6th grade, all GT students are enrolled in GT/Technology in place of the regular technology class. While covering the same curriculum as the regular technology class, the GT trained teacher in this classroom will also provide additional instruction and acceleration in the 4 core areas. Students also have the option to enroll in an Honors English Language Arts/Reading class.

As the master schedule allows, identified GT students will be grouped together for services in core classes not designated as “honors”, which may result in heterogeneous grouping. “Cluster classes” will consist of identified GT students at each grade level and will contain at least three (3) GT students unless the grade level at that campus has fewer than three (3) identified students. Highly trained teachers work with the gifted students to provide more advanced, in-depth instruction, plan activities, develop independent study, and to determine student progress.

## **Grades 7-8**

Students in 7th and 8th grades are served through honors classes in the core subjects. GT students must participate in at least two advanced courses annually.

As the master schedule allows, identified GT students will be grouped together for services in core classes not designated as “honors”, which may result in heterogeneous grouping. “Cluster classes” will consist of identified GT students at each grade level and will contain at least three (3) GT students unless the grade level at that campus has fewer than three (3) identified students. Highly trained teachers work with the gifted students to provide more advanced, in-depth instruction, plan activities, develop independent study, and to determine student progress.

Additionally, students have the option of taking a GT elective class that will provide additional instruction and acceleration in the 4 core areas. Students will focus on a core subject each grading period through a multidisciplinary unit chosen by the GT teacher. Project-based learning will also be utilized with special consideration given to the Texas State Performance Standards Project (TPSP). The TPSP comprises a set of performance standards, curriculum, and assessments for differentiating instruction and deepening academic learning. TPSP enhances gifted/talented programs from kindergarten through high school.

## **Grades 9th-12th**

Honors and Advanced Placement Courses (AP) are available to gifted and talented students as well as concurrent enrollment in area colleges. GT students must participate in at least two Honors, Advanced Placement, or dual credit courses annually. Administration reserves the right to approve additional coursework that could meet this requirement.

Identified GT students will receive pull out services from a GT trained teacher during “Study Hawk” once a month. This time will focus on topics such as the nature and needs of giftedness, higher level thinking activities, and study skills/strategies.

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Hardin-Jefferson ISD 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. HJISD requires 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 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 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.

HJISD will accept a 30 hour certificate from other districts and/or region centers as verification of training with appropriate documentation.

HJISD will offer several avenues for staff to complete the annual 6 hour update. Procedures are established that outline the timeline for completion and how staff can request that professional development other than district-offered training be considered.

# OTHER PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS



## **Program Evaluation**

Hardin-Jefferson 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.

## **Family/Community Involvement**

The District shall ensure that information about the District's gifted and talented program is available to parents and community members in that they have an opportunity to develop an understanding of and support for the program. Information regarding the gifted and talented program is available on the district's website.

A GT Advisory Council is composed of community members, parents of GT students, school staff, and GT education staff meet once a semester and make recommendations about district GT procedures.

Information concerning special opportunities (i.e. contests, academic recognition, summer camps, community programs, volunteer opportunities, etc.) is available and disseminated when available.