

GRADY ISD GIFTED AND TALENTED PLAN

School Board Approved Fall of 2021



OVERVIEW OF GRADY ISD GIFTED AND TALENTED PLAN

Grady ISD is committed to excellence in education for all students. Recognizing that this commitment demands fostering and developing the abilities of identified gifted and talented students, Grady ISD accepts the responsibility of developing a GT program that meets the needs of identified students.

Because of their exceptional abilities, gifted and talented students can progress far beyond the essential knowledge and skills of the regular school curriculum. By providing experiences that are consistent with the abilities or potential of gifted and talented learners, we believe the education of all students will be improved. The emphasis of this academic program shall be to provide opportunities for enrichment in any/all of the four core areas: Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies, according to a student's area(s) of strength. Additional focus may center on creative and productive thinking, higher order thinking skills, and problem solving.

The gifted and talented program of Grady ISD is one which, through its goals and objectives, will reflect a dedication to excellence coupled with an understanding of the unique educational and emotional needs of gifted and talented students. The outcome of the program will be students who are self-confident, creative, and productive thinkers who can be contributing members of society.

Grady ISD does not discriminate against participation in the GT program based on gender, race, or socioeconomic status. If at any time, a parent or student is not a native English speaker, Grady ISD will use whatever means necessary to provide information, assess, and communicate using the native language of forementioned parent or student

DISTRICT/STATE GOAL FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

Grady ISD embraces the goals of the state of Texas for services to students as outlined in the state plan:

“Students who participate in services designed for gifted students will demonstrate skill in self-directed 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, 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.”

Through combined efforts of Grady ISD, Education Service Center Region 18, and the Texas Education Agency, all children will have an education that provides challenging academic opportunities that will enable them to reach their full potential.

PROGRAM GOALS

The goal of Grady ISD is to provide a differentiated program for the academically gifted and talented student which will afford opportunities to develop a level of competency consistent with his/her aptitudes, goals, and interests. Differentiation for the academically gifted student will be provided in the areas of content, complexity and abstractness, processes in the learning environment, and product(s).

**Cognitive:* The identified gifted student will develop tools for further learning with emphasis on process and product in:

**Research:* To develop an understanding of the various types of research and a knowledge of the skills and products needed for each type through the practical utilization of these methods.

**Thinking Skills:* To develop the critical thinking skills of observing, inferring, collecting data, classifying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating; to develop expertise in the use of scientific process and logical reasoning through study and the direct application of these skills; to develop problem-solving skills.

**Creativity:* To develop creative and productive thinking by utilizing such techniques as brainstorming and open-ended exercises to encourage divergent thinking and to develop capacities for fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.

**Affective:* The identified gifted student will develop an:

**Understanding of self and others, a feeling of self-confidence, and a recognition of the worth of others through guided study and interaction with peers.*

**Responsibility and independence through self-directed learning.*

**Leadership skills through decision-making and practice.*

**Knowledge of different disciplines of study and vocations by exposure to professional, scholarly, cultured, and talented persons.*

TEACHER TRAINING

Teachers providing instruction and services for gifted and talented students in the four core instructional areas will have a minimum of thirty hours of staff development that includes nature and needs of gifted and talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students. In addition, all GT teachers will receive a minimum of 6 hours of training in gifted education annually. Teachers that are new to the district must complete the 30 hour training within one semester of their date of hire. The district coordinator will provide orientation to the new hires to the district. In addition, the district coordinator will disseminate information to staff of additional GT trainings that are available throughout the year

OTHER TRAINING

The GT coordinator for the district will also have the 30 hour staff development and 6 hour annual updates for the length of their service. In addition to these trainings,

the GT coordinator will be responsible for attending training sessions and gaining information about updates and requirements from TEA.

Administrators, counselors, and others who have authority for the program's decisions will have a minimum of six hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of GT students as well as program options for gifted education. The local district school board will also participate in the state issued school board training within one semester of the beginning of their service on the school board. The district coordinator and superintendent will coordinate the needed training for the school board.

NOMINATION AND IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

A student may be nominated for assessment for the GT program by a teacher, counselor, administrator, parent, community member, peer, or the student himself/herself. If desired, a conference will be held with the nominated student and/or parent(s) to determine if the student is interested in the program. Nominations may be made at any time during the school year, however, nominations will be emphasized in the fall semester, and assessment of GT candidates will occur within 30 days of receiving parent approval for assessment. A student who is nominated but not identified in a previous screening can be nominated at the beginning of the next school year or at the discretion of the screening committee under extenuating circumstances.

SCREENING/PARENTAL CONSENT

Written parental consent shall be obtained before any special testing or individual assessment is conducted as part of the screening and identification process. All student information collected during the screening and identification process shall be part of the student's educational record. Parents are allowed to view students' results by setting up a meeting with the district coordinator.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

A selection committee composed of professional educators who have received training in the nature and needs of GT students shall be established by the GT coordinator, campus principal, or designee. The committee shall evaluate each nominated student according to the established criteria and shall select those students for whom the GT placement is the most appropriate educational setting.

The Selection Committee for a campus shall consist of the following individuals:

- *Three teachers, one from each grade band - elementary, junior high, high school
- *Campus level administrator - Ad-hoc member
- *GT coordinator - disseminates data, keeps student information confidential to prevent bias, and only provides guidance to the staff as they decide which students qualify for the program

ASSESSMENT

Criteria to identify gifted and talented students shall be established and shall be specific to the state definition of gifted and talented and shall also ensure the fair assessment of students from all populations.

Data collected through both objective and subjective assessments shall be measured to determine individual eligibility for the program. Assessment tools may include but not be limited to:

- *Achievement tests
- *Intelligence tests
- *Checklists completed by teachers and parents
- *Creativity tests
- *Student work products as available

As per the Texas Education Agency's plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, all enrolled kindergarten students will be assessed beginning in November of that school year.

NOTIFICATION

Parents and students shall be notified in writing upon selection or non-selection of the student for the GT program. Participation in any program or service provided for GT students is voluntary. Grady ISD shall obtain written permission of the student and parents before a student is placed in the program.

RE-ASSESSMENT

If determined necessary by teachers or the selection committee, students who had previously met the qualifications for the GT program and are no longer performing in a manner indicative of a GT student will be re-assessed. However, re-assessment may not occur more than once in a student's elementary, junior high, and high school careers in accordance with TEA's G/T policies.

TRANSFERS

A student who enrolls in Grady ISD and who has been previously identified for the GT program in his/her previous district shall be accepted into the district's GT program upon verification of documentation by the GT coordinator.

FURLOUGHS

A student who is unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the gifted and talented program due to extenuating circumstances (for example, illness, death of a family member, etc.) may be placed on furlough for one semester or one year with parental consent.

A one-time furlough (for the remainder of the school year) also may be granted at the request of the student or parent(s) for extenuating circumstances. At the end of the year, the student's situation will be re-evaluated.

If it is determined that it is not in a student's best interest to return to the GT program, exit procedures will be followed as outlined below. If the student wishes to re-enter the program after he/she has requested an exit, he/she must be re-assessed at the beginning of the next school year through a referral.

EXIT PROCEDURES

Student performance in the program shall be monitored closely. A student shall be removed from the program at any time the selection committee determines it is in the student's best interest. If a student or parent requests in writing removal from the program, Grady ISD will honor that request after a conference with the selection committee or the building administrator.

A student may be exited from the Grady ISD gifted and talented program based on any or all of the following circumstances:

- *Teacher recommendation based on the student's lack of performance or behavior in the program or undue stress caused by the program;
- *Counselor/administrator recommendation based on interviews and observations;
- *Parent request to the building administrator for withdrawal from the program;
- *Student request to the building administrator for withdrawal from the program with parent permission;
- *Personal or social stresses which prevent self-satisfying student performance;
- *A student who does not receive differentiation in an AP/Pre-AP/Concurrent class, or participate in a GT designated class, for more than two consecutive semesters.

Before a student is removed from the gifted and talented program, there will be a parent contact made to discuss the need for exit. The final decision for exit will be approved by the district's gifted and talented committee on the student's campus.

APPEAL

A parent or student may appeal any decision of the committee regarding selection or removal from the gifted and talented program. The appeal must be made in writing and directed to the Grady ISD Gifted and Talented Committee for the student's campus. The appeal must be made within two weeks of receiving the committee's decision based on the results of assessment. The committee's decision on appeal will be final.

EVALUATION

The gifted and talented program shall be evaluated annually by parents, students, teachers, and administrators. The evaluation process shall ensure that those involved in the planning and implementation of the gifted program are also involved

in its evaluation. The data from the evaluations will be used to modify and update district and campus improvement plans. Every April, the selection committee, along with parents of current GT students, will meet to evaluate the GT program. The district school board will then receive a report from the GT coordinator detailing the discussions and suggestions for improvement for the GT program.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

The district shall ensure that information about the gifted and talented program is available to parents and community members and that they have an opportunity to develop support and understanding for the program. Every September, a GT orientation meeting will be held in which community members as well as parents are invited to attend to find out more information about the GT program at Grady ISD. Projects that the GT program produces will also be shared with the community during the late Spring events.

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The Grady ISD gifted and talented program is designed for intellectually and academically gifted students. The philosophy of Grady ISD is that each student should have the opportunity to maximize his/her potential abilities. The district will thus offer a variety of educational alternatives for students with special needs that most likely will not be met in the regular classroom.

The program will use different instructional arrangements as the vehicle to offer appropriately challenging learning experiences for gifted and talented students according to their area(s) of strength with emphasis on the four academic areas: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The Grady ISD gifted and talented program is an inclusion or pull-out program, whereby GT students, working in conjunction with the GT teacher and classroom teachers, have a chance to work on projects in their areas of interest. If applicable, the GT teacher will approve student projects and will monitor progress throughout the school year. Students can work individually or as a group on an approved project, and the GT teacher or student classroom teacher will ensure that GT students have a chance to meet together periodically to interact. The GT teacher may also collaborate with the regular education teacher concerning a project that would be of benefit to a particular student as enhancement of the regular curriculum.

A GT student's regular education teacher is responsible for accommodating the needs of the GT student in their regular classroom lesson plan. In addition to this, the social and emotional needs of the GT student will be considered and monitored with the help of the district coordinator and campus counselor.

The GT coordinator will produce regular communications with parents of GT students to keep them informed of various enhancements for the students throughout the school year. These can include but are not limited to, contests, learning opportunities provided by various venues outside of the school realm, academic UIL events, and other opportunities that would encourage growth and challenges in a GT students' strengths.