

## LA GRANGE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

### LA GRANGE ISD VISION STATEMENT

**STUDENT PERFORMANCE** Student performance reflecting each child's maximum potential as an individual and as a collaborative educational partner shall instill positive feelings in students, staff, and community. On-going monitoring for continued high levels of success coupled with personal and public recognition of accomplishments is in place. Divergent thinking, the ability to discover more than one right answer, and convergent thinking, the ability to focus and prioritize, shares equal status for problem solving. **CURRICULUM** A sound, diverse K-12 curriculum, strong in basics with the flexibility to expand to specialized courses, balanced in content and levels of difficulty, integrated with technology, and entwined with appropriate, relevant, and meaningful instructional strategies is provided to promote, optimal learning and prepare students for the real world in the 21st century.

### PHILOSOPHY / RATIONALE

The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students defines gifted and talented students as a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkable 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 or (2) possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or (3) excels in a specific academic field (Texas Education Code, Chapter 29, Educational Programs, Subchapter D, 29.121)

La Grange Independent School District recognizes that gifted and talented students are found in all cultures, socioeconomic groups, geographic locales, and environments. La Grange ISD also recognizes that gifted students have unique social, emotional, and educational needs. The gifted curriculum will provide identified students with opportunities beyond the regular curriculum to stimulate and challenge those students to maximum achievement.

La Grange ISD will serve the needs of those students who demonstrate above average achievement or potential in the areas of general intellectual ability and creative and productive thinking as identified through multiple and specific criteria. La Grange ISD Policy (EHBB (Local): Criteria to identify gifted and talented students shall be established in the Board-approved program for the gifted and talented. The criteria shall be specific to the state definition of gifted and talented and shall ensure the fair assessment of students with special needs, such as the culturally different, the economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. **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.

## TALENT POOL/LEAP\* PROGRAM GOALS FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION IN LA GRANGE ISD

\*LEAP stands for Learning Experiences for Advanced Performance. To develop a positive self-concept that meets emotional and intellectual needs to enable students to interact effectively with peers, community, and society and become productive citizens

To develop critical, creative, and evaluative thinking skills that lead to production of advanced level products and problem solving ability

To reinforce self-directed learning skills through investigating advanced, more complex subject matter to help them become independent life-long learners

The population of the gifted program will reflect the population of the district.

## LEAP STUDENT PERFORMANCE GOALS

All students participating in LEAP (grades 3-11) will master all state assessment objectives annually with 90% of identified gifted students attaining the commended level of performance.

All students participating in the gifted program (grades 9-12) will complete a Pre-AP, Advanced Placement, or Dual Credit level course in at least one subject each semester. 90% of all LEAP students enrolled in AP classes will take and pass an AP exam with a score of 3 or better.

Complete the Distinguished Achievement Program.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Research has shown that gifted and talented students need to be part of a learning environment that allows for independent study, group work with peers of like ability, and group work with peers who represent a heterogeneous population. Therefore, the Talent Pool/LEAP program is one of a special grouping design in which students will be pulled out of their regular classroom to go to a resource room for a certain period of time each day in grades K-8. The Talent Pool program for grades K-2 is designed to meet the needs of both gifted students and students with the potential to be gifted in the areas of general intellectual ability and creative and productive

thinking. Both identified gifted students and students whose scores on the identification criteria cause them to come close to being identified as gifted are served in Talent Pool. The LEAP program for grades 3-12 serves only identified gifted students in the areas of general intellectual ability and/or creative and productive thinking.

#### Grades K-6

Students in kindergarten will participate in the Talent Pool program during their enrichment period starting on or before March 1 during the second semester. Students in grades K-6 will participate in the gifted program through a pullout program. Interdisciplinary units will include all four core academic areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies.

#### Grades 7-8

Students in the seventh & eighth grade will receive service in the LEAP program during their advanced/honors classes at La Grange Middle School. An accelerated math program enables qualifying seventh graders to take Pre-Algebra, and eighth graders to take Algebra I to receive high school credit.

Emphasis in all programs is on providing a learning environment and activities which will foster the development of critical and creative thinking skills, problem solving skills, communication skills, and independent study/research skills. In addition, each child will be helped to develop a healthy self-concept and relationship with peers.

Out of school options include UIL academics, field trips, writing and speech competitions, and community service projects. Summer study opportunities are shared with students and parents. The Duke University Talent Identification Program for grade 7 is a national search for talented students who have scored exceptionally high on nationally referenced tests or on state assessments such as the STAAR(State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) test in Texas. Students may have the opportunity to participate in leadership academies through the summer as part of the Duke TIP program.

#### Grades 9-12

La Grange High School students will participate in the LEAP program during AP/honors classes or during concurrent dual credit classes. Students work with college-level material in AP classes and are expected to take the Advanced Placement test produced by the College Board. Students who meet specific criteria set by each college or university on an AP exam receive credit for specific college courses. La Grange ISD offers the following AP and Honors classes:

Honors English I  
Honors English II  
Honors World Geography  
AP English III  
AP English IV  
AP Computer Science I  
Honors Geometry  
Honors Pre-Calculus

Honors Biology  
AP World History  
AP US History  
AP Biology  
AP Chemistry  
AP Calculus  
Honors Algebra 2  
AP Physics

Extracurricular offerings provide additional opportunities for students to participate in and pursue individual interests. Students may participate in UIL academic competitions, foreign language competitions, fine arts competitions in music, art, and drama, and leadership development programs. High school students are eligible to take credit by examination and earn credit toward graduation. The La Grange High School counselors supervise the credit by exam programs. Students shall request approval from the principal or counselor prior to taking the exam. Students must score 90 or higher to pass the exam to receive course credit.

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## IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Identification and selection of students for each of the programs is determined through a comprehensive process consisting of three steps: nomination, screening, and selection. Nomination involves the formation of a talent pool from which selection will be made. Screening is the process designed to identify students for selection. Selection involves consideration of each nominated and screened student to determine if placement in the program is appropriate.

Identification must be conducted by a committee and through the use of multiple and specific criteria which include both objective and subjective measures. No single measure can be the determining factor for acceptance or denial of entry into the program.

## GUIDELINES FOR NOMINATION

Nominations are accepted from any person familiar with the student's abilities, potential performance, or past records and include the following:

Members of the La Grange ISD professional staff including administrators, counselors, and teachers, Parents/Guardians, community members, Peers, & Students may nominate themselves.

Nominations are due by November 15 for fall kindergarten screening. Nominations are due by February 1 for spring screening in grades K-11. Students will be screened no more than once during a twelve month period. Only kindergarten students who did not complete the fall screening are eligible for nomination for spring screening.

Nominations are accepted for students currently enrolled in La Grange ISD. A nomination period prior to the district's testing is advertised on each campus, on the district website, and in the community through the local newspapers and radio stations. Nomination forms are available from each campus office and from the district GT Coordinator.

Students who are new to La Grange ISD and have been previously identified for a gifted program in another district will be screened for placement in the LEAP program for La Grange ISD. New students who attended a school where there was not a gifted and talented program available and who enroll in La Grange ISD before the start of the school year may be screened before the beginning of the school year. Students who attended a school where there was not a gifted program and who enroll after the start of the school year may be screened during the spring assessment.

## SCREENING

Criteria to identify gifted and talented students are board approved and specific to the state definition of gifted and talented. Criteria shall ensure the fair assessment of students with special needs, such as the culturally different, the economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. Written parental permission is required before screening or any special testing begins. Students are screened by collecting both qualitative data such as teacher perception scales, product portfolios, and creativity assessments and quantitative data such as ability tests and achievement tests. A student profile is used to identify those students who perform at a remarkable high level of accomplishment relative to their age, peers, experience, or environment. Assessment instruments may include, but are not limited to

Ability testing with a nonverbal logical reasoning test  
Achievement testing in reading and math  
Behavioral checklists completed by teachers  
Creativity testing  
Student Portfolio

Possible tests could include, but are not limited to, the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, Sages-2 Reasoning, Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, Torrance Test of Creativity-Figural, Slocumb/Payne Teacher Perception Inventory, and the HOPE rating scale.

## SELECTION

Students are selected for the Talent Pool/LEAP program by a campus selection committee composed of at least 3 people from the following: teacher, counselor, administrator, and GT Coordinator. Each committee member has received a minimum of 6-hours of gifted training in the nature and needs of gifted students and assessment of gifted students. Each campus selection committee determines qualification for gifted services based on the educational needs of each student. The decision is based on the committee's observation of the preponderance of evidence on the student's profile in alignment with board approved established criteria. Students should have a preponderance of scores in the superior range of 95th percentile or higher to be identified as needing gifted services.

Students who have been formally screened and demonstrated potential for advanced ability with at least two scores in the superior range are placed in Talent Pool for grades Kindergarten-2. At the end of second grade, Talent Pool students will be reassessed to determine future placement. Students in grades K and 1 who had a preponderance of scores in the superior range will be identified as LEAP and will not retest at the end of second grade.

Prior to receiving services, a student must have a Permission to Enroll form signed by a parent on file.

## APPEALS

A parent may appeal the final placement or exit decision. A written appeal directed to the GT Coordinator must be made within 15 days of the notification of placement. The campus selection committee will re-evaluate all testing information, examine additional information provided by the student and parents, make a decision concerning the student's qualification for gifted services, and inform the parent of the decision in writing (conference with the parent). Subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with FNG (LOCAL) beginning at Level Two.

## FURLOUGHS

A furlough defined as a temporary "leave of absence" from gifted program services to meet the needs of an identified GT student. Parents, students, teachers, or administrators may request a furlough for educational, psychological, or personal reasons. A furlough may also be used for students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the gifted program. Students in grades 9-12 are furloughed for the semester(s) they do not enroll in Honors, AP, or dual credit classes. If a student chooses not to take advantage of the advanced course offerings at high school for two consecutive years, they will be exited from the LEAP program. A furlough will last no longer than the current school year. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed and the student may be reinstated in the LEAP program or exited from the LEAP program based on the recommendation of the campus selection committee. If a child fails the state mandated STAAR test, he/she will be placed on furlough for one year until passing the next year's STAAR test. If the child fails the STAAR test again, he/she will be considered for exit from the LEAP program.

## EXIT

Students in the LEAP program may be exited based upon a recommendation of the parent, LEAP teacher, counselor, or principal that the student is not progressing satisfactorily. Students may be exited for poor performance or for not participating in advanced level classes in grades 9-12. The campus selection committee will review issues before a final decision is made in the student's best interests. An exited student must be reassessed and meet current district criteria before reentering the LEAP program. When a student is exited, application to return to the LEAP program may be initiated the following academic year through the regularly scheduled identification process to meet current La Grange ISD identification criteria.

## TRANSFERS

Students who enroll in La Grange ISD and who previously received gifted services in another district will be evaluated for the LEAP program within 30 days of enrollment. Students should bring documentation of previous placement in a gifted program. Ability and/or achievement test scores obtained from the last two years may be accepted from other schools. New students may be required to complete additional testing. Placement in the LEAP program will depend on meeting the district criteria of test scores. Students who are new to La Grange ISD and who did not have the opportunity to be screened for a gifted program in their previous school may be screened at parent request before the beginning of the school year. Students who enroll after the start of the school year may be screened during the spring assessment. Students must be enrolled or in actual attendance prior to consideration for gifted/talented screening. Students who were identified gifted and who have a parent actively serving in the U. S. military are accepted in the Talent Pool/LEAP program according to TEA guidelines.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Texas Education Agency requires professional development for teachers who are assigned to teach students who have been identified as gifted, as well as administrators and counselors.

According to the Texas state plan, teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the district's defined gifted/talented services must have 30 hours of professional development that includes the nature and needs of gifted/talented students, identification and assessment of gifted/talented students' needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted/talented students. Teachers without the required training who are assigned to provide instruction as a part of the district's gifted/talented services must complete the 30 hour training within one semester. Teachers instructing gifted/talented students as a part of the district's defined gifted/talented services must receive a minimum of 6 hours annually of professional development in gifted/talented education. Honors and AP teachers who have completed the AP Institute and who provide instruction and services that are a part of the district's defined gifted/talented service must complete 12 hours of gifted/talented training which includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students and curriculum and instructional strategies. Each administrator and counselor who has decision-making authority for the gifted/talented program must have a minimum of 6 hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students and service options for gifted/talented students.

## EVALUATION

Each year La Grange ISD will evaluate the effectiveness of the Talent Pool/LEAP program by surveying parents, students, and staff that participate in the program.



