

Gifted and Talented Program Waco Independent School District

Nomination of Students for Screening

The Program

The gifted and talented program of Waco ISD is a special program dedicated to providing the most appropriate educational services for gifted and talented students in grades K-12.

Gifted and talented students are those who perform at or show 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 or excel in a specific academic field.

Nomination of Students

Anyone may nominate a student to receive the services of the gifted and talented program, and all students nominated will be assessed and evaluated by district personnel trained in the practice of gifted and talented education. Assessment and evaluation of nominated students includes data from multiples sources both qualitative and quantitative, and identification decisions are made by campus screening committees.

To nominate a student for the gifted and talented program, complete the form below and return it to one of the following: GT Lead Teacher, the student's classroom teacher, the counselor, or the principal. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Waco ISD office of Advanced Academic Studies at (254) 755-9564.

Gifted and Talented Nomination

Student: _____ Date: _____

Campus: _____ Grade: _____

Nominated by: _____
(*please print*)

Relation to nominated student:

Briefly describe the setting in which you have observed the student performing or potentially performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment

Overview of the Process for Placement of a Student in the Gifted and Talented Program

1. Student is nominated for placement in the gifted and talented program.
2. Assessment of the student begins with the gathering of existing data.
3. Additionally data may be obtained as part of the assessment process. Parental permission is obtained before the student undergoes further testing.
4. A campus ARE (Admission-Review-Exit) committee meets to consider all nominations for placement in the gifted and talented program.
5. A campus ARE committee makes a placement decision and notifies the director of advanced academic studies who in turn notifies parents of the student's recommended placement.
6. Parental permission to participate in the program is obtained, and the student begins receiving the program services of for gifted and talented students.

Nomination of Students

- Students may be nominated for the gifted and talented program at any time by teachers, counselors, parents, or other interested persons.
- Each nominated student is evaluated and his/her assessment profile is presented before the campus ARE committee.
- Nomination forms are distributed to all teachers, counselors, and administrators.
- Nomination forms are distributed annually to parents/guardians of all students.
- Nomination forms are available in both English and Spanish at every campus and in the administrative offices of the district.
- A call for nominations will be published in the local newspaper at least once per academic year.
- A call for nominations will be published on the WISD TV station at least once per academic year.
- All campus newsletters will include a call for nominations for the G/T program.

Identification Criteria

A gifted and talented student is one who performs at or shows potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area, possesses an unusual capacity for leadership, or excels in a specific academic field.

Thus, the identification criteria that are applied for the assessment of students for placement in the gifted and talented program are the following:

Criterion 1

- What evidence supports the nominated student is performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment?
- If the nominated student is not currently performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment, what evidence supports the student shows potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment?

Criterion 2

- What evidence supports the nominated student exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual area, creative area, or artistic area?
- What evidence supports the nominated student possesses an unusual capacity for leadership?
- What evidence supports the nominated student excels in a specific academic field?

Campus ARE Committees

Each campus will have an ARE (Admission-Review-Exit) committee responsible for considering all nominations for the GT program and making appropriate recommendations according to selection guidelines. The ARE committees are to be formed according to the following guidelines:

1. Each campus shall have an ARE committee composed of 5 members.
2. Each member of the ARE committee shall have completed at least 6 hours of training in the nature and needs of gifted students.
3. Proposed ARE committee members are to be submitted by the campus principal to the Director of Advanced Academic Studies for approval.
4. The Director of Advanced Academic Studies will verify training records of proposed ARE committee members and approve only those who have documented evidence of training in the nature and needs of gifted and talented students.
5. ARE committee members will be proposed and approved prior to the first day of October each year.

ARE Committee Records

Each campus ARE committee is required to keep the following records in the ARE committee notebook.

1. A printed agenda for each meeting of the ARE committee.
2. A record of the meeting minutes attached to a copy of the agenda.
3. A sign-in sheet to document ARE committee members present.

ARE committee records are to be reviewed annually by the Coordinator of Compliance for the Gifted and Talented Program.

Selection for Placement in the Gifted and Talented Program

An ARE (Admission-Review-Exit) committee considers each nominated student for placement in the gifted and talented program. The committee is composed of five professional educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted students.

For each nominated student, the ARE committee reviews information collected from multiple sources including both qualitative and quantitative data. The ARE committee makes a decision based upon the established criteria (describe above).

Guidelines for ARE Committee Decisions

- The ARE committee performs anonymous evaluations of each nominated students. In other words, all evidence and paperwork that is used to assess a student should bear only an assigned student number and not the student's name.
- If the committee determines that sufficient evidence exists to support one of the descriptors in criterion 1 and one of the descriptors in criterion 2, they should recommend placement of the student in the gifted and talented program.
- If the committee does not determine that sufficient evidence exists to support descriptors in criteria 1 and 2, the committee may deny placement in the gifted and talented program or extend the evaluation of the student by requesting additional data. In the case that the ARE committee requests additional data, a specific description of the data should be written and placed in the student file and a reasonable timeline should be established in which to acquire the additional data.
- The committee should not recommend placement in the gifted and talented program if only one of the two criteria are met. Rather, the committee needs conclude that both criteria are supported with evidence.
- In cases where the ARE committee cannot agree on the best placement for a student based upon the evidence provided, more data should be requested to assure a thorough and fair assessment of the nominated student.

Folders of Nominated Students

Each campus is required to keep a folder on each nominated student including both those recommended for the GT program and those not recommended for the GT program.

Assessments

To assess nominated students, data is collected from multiple sources. Both objective data and subjective data should be assembled for the purpose of measuring the nominated student against the standards of the criteria stated above.

Assessment tools may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Achievement test scores
- Assessment of reading level
- Classroom grades
- Classroom observation records
- Creativity test scores
- Intelligence test scores
- Parental input
- Student interviews
- Student products
- Teacher input
- Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores

Notification

Once placement decisions have been made by the ARE committee, parents and students are notified in writing from the Director of Advanced Academic Studies. Participation in the programs and services for gifted students is voluntary, and the District will obtain written permission from the student's parents/guardians before a student is served in the gifted and talented program.

Appealing the Decision of the ARE Committee

ARE Decisions that do not recommend placement in the gifted and talented program may be appealed by the nominated student's parents/guardian in the following manner:

1. A request for reconsideration is made in writing to the Director of Advanced Academic Studies.
2. At the first level of appeal, the campus ARE committee reconvenes and reconsiders the evidence. After reconsideration, the campus ARE committee notifies the Director of Advanced Academic Studies of its decision to stand by

or reverse its original decision.

3. Parents/guardian may appeal the campus committee's decision to the district identification appeals committee. The district appeals committee consists of the Director of Advanced Academic Studies, the Executive Director of Curriculum, and three teachers within the district with a background in teaching gifted and talented students. In the case that one of the teachers on the district committee teaches at the campus from which the appeal originates, an alternate will be used. The teachers for the district level appeals committee (including an alternate) should all represent different campuses and should be identified at the beginning of each academic year.
4. The district appeals committee shall review all preceding information and may gather additional information if deemed necessary or warranted. The district committee may also hear a statement from the student, parents, or guardian. Upon reaching a decision to stand by or reverse the ARE committee's placement decision, the Director of Advanced Academic Studies will notify in writing the parents/guardian of the nominated student.
5. A request for a review of the decision made by the district appeals committee may be made in writing to the Superintendent within five days after receipt of the written notice from the Director of Advanced Academic Studies. The Superintendent shall provide the parent/guardian written notice of the date, time, and place of the review within five days of the appeal request. The review shall be scheduled within 15 days after the Superintendent has received the written request. The decision of the Superintendent shall be communicated to the parent/guardian in writing.
6. A request to the school district Board of Trustees to appeal the decision made by the Superintendent shall be made to the Board within five days after receipt of the notice from the Superintendent. The Board shall hear the appeal within 30 days of receipt of a written request for an appeal unless the hearing is postponed by mutual consent.

Transfer Students

Students who are new to Waco ISD from another school district and who have been identified as gifted and talented by their previous district's identification procedures shall be admitted to the gifted and talented program of Waco ISD. The school district in which the student was identified needs to provide written records of the student's placement in the gifted and talented program.

Monitoring Student Performance in the GT Program

Students placed in the gifted and talented program shall be monitored on an ongoing basis based on the following guidelines:

- Students in the gifted and talented program are those who are performing at or potentially performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of similar age, experience, or environment.
- Gifted and talented teachers will provide parents/guardian of each GT student a written performance report each grading period.
- The performance report should be based upon the student's performance in the curriculum and instruction of the gifted and talented program as well as performance on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

Furlough from the GT Program

Students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the gifted and talented program due to extenuating circumstances may be placed on furlough by the ARE committee. The purpose of the furlough is to provide the student an opportunity to remain in the gifted and talented program when performance is unsatisfactory due to circumstances outside the ordinary. A furlough may be granted at the request of a student or a parent, or it may be granted in place of an exit by the ARE committee when evidence exists that performance is influenced by extenuating circumstances. A furlough will only remain in place through the end of the semester in which it was granted. At that point the ARE committee must review the student's performance and either grant another furlough, exit the student from the GT program, or simply reinstate the student in the GT program.

Parents are to be notified in writing of all furlough decisions including a description of the circumstances affecting performance and the duration of the furlough.

Exit Provisions for the GT Program (Elementary)

Parents may request a student to be removed from the program at any time. After consultation with the appropriate administrator, parents, teacher(s), and the student, the Exit Form may be executed and the student removed from the GT program and any services that entails.

If an elementary student is not progressing satisfactorily, a teacher, counselor, or administrator may request a Campus ARE committee meeting to consider probation. If the ARE committee decision is for probation, the parent, student, and the GT teacher(s) enter into a Growth Contract, describing the time limits and the situation that must be improved. If the situation is not improved by the end of the period stated in the Growth Contract, the student may be exited from the program.

The exited student may apply for admission to the GT program again, but not before the beginning of the next academic year, at which time the nomination will be processed following standard screening and placement procedures.

Kindergarten GT Assessment

Waco ISD assesses all kindergarten students, and considers all kindergarten students for placement in the GT program. Each year kindergarten screening is conducted between December and February, and students recommended for placement in the GT program will begin receiving program services on or before March 1st.

Three sources of data are collected for each kindergarten student:

1. SAGES 2 (Reasoning)
2. SIGS Teacher Inventory (Abbreviated)
3. Student Work Sample

The ARE committee must review folders for every kindergarten student. Based on the data presented in the three sources, the committee must answer yes or no to the following questions:

Does the evidence support that the student performs or shows potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environments?

Does the evidence support that the student exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual area or excel in a specific academic field?

If the ARE committee concludes that the answer to both questions is yes, the kindergarten student is recommended for placement in the GT program.