

Sec. 2.14.1. GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM

The Superintendent or designee shall develop a gifted and talented program that is approved by the Board and disseminated to parents. The program shall provide an array of learning opportunities for gifted/talented students in kindergarten through grade 12 and shall inform parents of the opportunities. Options shall include:

1. Instructional and organizational patterns that enable identified students to work together as a group, to work with other students, and to work independently;
2. A continuum of learning experiences that leads to the development of advanced-level products and/or performances;
3. In-school and, when possible, out-of-school options relevant to the student's area of strength that are available during the entire school year; and
4. Opportunities to accelerate in areas of strength.

19 TAC 89.1, 89.3.

For purposes of this policy, "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, experience, or environment and who:

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

Education Code 29.121.

Sec. 2.14.2. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The program developed by the Superintendent shall incorporate the following requirements:

Sec. 2.14.2.1. Nomination

Students may be nominated or referred for the gifted and talented program during the scheduled referral windows by teachers, counselors, parents, or other interested persons.

Sec. 2.14.2.2. Conferences

This section intentionally omitted.

Sec. 2.14.2.3. Screening and Identification Process

Assessment opportunities related to the screening and identification process for nominated and referred students shall be conducted at least once per school year.

Sec. 2.14.2.4. Parent Consent

Written parent 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 an educational record, subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Sec. 2.14.2.5. Identification

The program shall establish criteria to identify gifted and talented students. The criteria shall conform to the state definition of gifted and talented, and shall ensure the fair assessment of students with special needs, including the culturally different, the economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities.

Sec. 2.14.2.6. Assessments

Individual eligibility for the program shall be determined from data collected through both objective and subjective assessments measured against the criteria approved by the Board. Assessment tools may include, but are not limited to, achievement/ability tests, creativity tests, behavioral/observational checklists completed by teachers and parents, teacher nominations/referrals, student/parent conferences, and available student work product.

Sec. 2.14.2.7. Selection

Each Life School campus shall establish a selection committee to evaluate each nominated student according to the established criteria. The committee shall be composed of at least three educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted students. The committee shall select those students for whom gifted and talented services is the most appropriate educational setting.

Sec. 2.14.2.8. Selection Notification

Parents and students shall be notified in writing upon selection/placement of the student for gifted and talented services. Participation in any program or services provided for gifted students is voluntary. Life School shall obtain written permission from the parent(s) before placing a student in the program.

Sec. 2.14.2.9. Reassessment

Reassessment of gifted/talented students is based on performance in response to gifted/talented services and, if reassessment occurs, it shall be no more than once in elementary grades, once in middle school grades, and once in high school.

Sec. 2.14.2.10. Transfer Students

Transfer students shall meet Life School’s criteria to be admitted to the gifted and talented program. A student previously identified by the sending school shall be screened for possible placement in the Life School gifted and talented program and appropriately placed within six weeks of enrollment in Life School. All transfer students shall be assigned to regular classes until assessments are completed.

The committee will base its determination on the transferred records and a review of screening criteria. The parent will be notified in writing of the placement decision.

Sec. 2.14.2.11. Furloughs

Any student who is unable to maintain satisfactory performance or whose educational needs are not being met within the gifted and talented program may be placed on furlough. Life School, a parent, or the student may initiate a furlough.

The selection committee shall document the specific reasons for granting the furlough and the time period for which the furlough shall last. At the end of a furlough, the student may reenter the program, be placed on another furlough, or be exited from the program.

Sec. 2.14.2.12. Program Exit

Student performance in the program shall be monitored. The selection committee may exit a student from the program at any time if the committee determines it is in the student’s best interest and his or her educational needs. If a student or parent requests removal from the program, the selection committee shall meet with the parent and student before granting the request.

Sec. 2.14.2.13. Appeals

A parent or student may appeal a final decision of the selection committee regarding selection for or removal from the gifted and talented program. Appeals shall first be made to the selection committee. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with the policy on Parent and Student Complaints, beginning at Level One.

Sec. 2.14.3. GIFTED AND TALENTED TEACHERS

The Superintendent shall ensure that:

1. Prior to assignment in the program, teachers who provide instruction and services that are part of the program for gifted students have a minimum of 30 hours of staff development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students;
2. Teachers without the required training who provide instruction and services that are part of the gifted and talented program complete the 30-hour training requirement within one semester;
3. Teachers who provide instruction and services that are part of the program 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.

19 TAC 89.2.

Sec. 2.14.4. PROGRAM EVALUATION

The gifted and talented program shall be evaluated annually and information from the evaluation will be used to modify and update the gifted and talented program as needed. Parents shall be included in the evaluation process. Evaluation information shall be shared with Board members and shared/made available to administrators, teachers, counselors, students in the gifted and talented program, and the community. Evaluation information shall also be used to modify and update the program.

Sec. 2.14.5. COMMUNITY AWARENESS

This section intentionally omitted.