# Gifted/Talented Program Guide



## **TEXAS TECH K-12**

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#### TEXAS TECH K-12 Gifted/Talented Program Contact List

TEXAS TECH K-12 Administration Office Contact:

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#### Texas Education Agency's Definition of Gifted/Talented

A gifted/talented student is 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

- exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area;
- possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or
- excels in a specific academic field. (Texas Education Code §29.121)

TEXAS TECH K-12 Goals for Gifted/Talented Students

#### TEXAS TECH K-12 Gifted/Talented Students will:

- Study issues, themes, and problems of a discipline of study to create in-depth understanding
- Become creative problem-solvers and use complex thinking skills effectively
- Generate a variety of original products of professional quality through skills and information gained from in-depth study
- Develop a healthy self-concept and sense of pride in accomplishment as it relates to self and others
- Develop leadership skills that will enable these students to become leaders beyond their school days and into the work world

## TEXAS TECH K-12 Gifted/Talented Program Design

The Gifted/Talented program at the elementary level is a virtual pullout program utilizing the Texas Performance Standards Project curriculum.		
Kindergarten- 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Identified students in these grades are served through a virtual pullout program. These students participate in an advanced thematic curriculum designed to allow for in-depth exploration of complex topics and issues that require high-level thinking. In addition to the foundational skills formally introduced, a strong emphasis is placed on further development of self-acceptance, group investigations, research skills, technology applications, leadership development and communication skills. Students will be enrolled in an online course where a teacher will facilitate their creation and execution of projects and performances.	

#### **Referral Process**

#### **Referral of Students**

During the academic school year, all students in the full-time tuition free program will have the opportunity to be referred and tested.

Teachers, administrators, and parents may refer students for the Gifted/Talented program. The referral process is held annually or as needed for students new to the district. All students referred will be screened for placement.

**Referral Window** 

January 20-January 31, 202

#### Characteristics of a Gifted Learner

There is a difference between the bright student and the gifted learner. The bright student is a pleasure to teach and is always eager to please. He/she will most often receive many honors for academic achievements during his/her public-school experience. Gifted learners are distinct in their thinking, and no two gifted learners are exactly the same. Although it is not exhaustive, the information on pages 6-10 can help you to consider whether to consider referring your child to be screened for the Your ISD Gifted/Talented program.

Bright Child	Gifted Learner
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
ls interested	Is highly curious
Has good Ideas	Is mentally and physically involved
Works hard	Has wild, silly ideas
Answers the question	Plays around, tests well
Listens with interest	Discusses in detail, elaborates
Learns with ease	Shows strong feelings and opinions
6-8 repetitions for mastery	Already knows
Understands ideas	1-2 repetitions for mastery
Enjoys peers	Constructs abstractions
Grasps the meaning	Prefers adults
Completes assignments	Draws inferences
Is receptive	Initiates projects
Copies accurately	ls intense
Enjoys school	Creates a new design
Absorbs information	Enjoys learning
Technician	Inventor
Good memorizer	Good guesser
Enjoys straightforward, sequential presentations	Thrives on complexity
Is alert	Is keenly observant
Is pleased with own learning	Is highly self-critical

By Janice Szabos

### Evidence of Giftedness in Primary Children

Unusual Curiosity

- Asks questions repeatedly
- Takes objects apart
- Repeats activities to do them differently

Unusual Sensitivity

Notices things that other children do not

Advanced Conceptualization

Ability to think abstractly, do analogies, use more attributes

Unusual Ability to Comprehend and Utilize Various Symbol Systems

- Speaks more than one language
- · Reads early
- Understands numeral, letter, or musical systems

Unusual Memory and Avid Interest in a Variety of Topics

Becomes expert in a single topic before moving on

Unusual Degree of Independence in Thought or Action Wants to do things on his/her own without help

Unusual Task Commitment or Persistence - A Drive to Be Perfect

- Stays with an activity for a long time
- Satisfied only with own standards

Unusual Leadership Ability

- Organizes and leads activities
- Prefers company of adults

Unusual Sense of Humor

- Sees humor in situation that others do not
- Enjoys puns and riddles and play on words

#### **Characteristics Related to Potential Giftedness**

There are certain student characteristics related to potential giftedness that can be more reliably appraised by teachers, parents, and others who have extended opportunities to observe students than by tests or formal instruments. Some of the more important ones are:

**1. Student's use of language.** This includes such things as range of vocabulary, precision in the use of words, and complexity of sentence structure. Although these can be appraised in a test situation, one obtains a better appraisal of the level of habitual use of language through observation in a wide variety of everyday situations.

**2. Quality of students' questions.** Most children ask questions, and some children ask many questions. Although it is true that bright children typically ask many questions, it is the quality rather than the number of questions that discriminates most sharply between the potentially gifted child and other children. One wants to look at the unusualness of a question in relation to age or grade or the insightfulness of a question, i.e., indications that the individual has grasped the central nature of the phenomenon, or indications that the individual is relating the present task or situation to other experience.

**3.** Quality of examples, illustrations, or elaborations that a student used in explaining something or in describing events or in telling stories. Not only do exceptional students have a good command of language, but they also tend to use examples that are apt and original or to produce unusual analogies to illustrate points. Some students show an unusual ability to translate verbal materials into pictorial modes or models or schematic diagrams. All these behaviors indicate a high level of understanding of the material that the students are using, ability to communicate ideas, and originality.

**4. Student's use of quantitative expressions and quantitative reasoning.** An example to illustrate this comes from the writer's experience in observing a kindergarten class where the students were playing a game in which each round resulted in the elimination of one child. After the game had progressed for several rounds, the teacher asked the children, "Are there more girls left in the game or more boys?" One child responded, "There are only one-half as many boys left as girls." Not only was the response correct, it was also a highly unusual quantitative response for a kindergarten child to make. Some children exhibit the ability to translate rather lengthy, sometimes complex, verbal material into quantitative terms. The ability to do this kind of translation requires a level of abstraction and facility with quantitative expression that is important to identify.

**5.** Student's ability to devise or adopt a systematic strategy for solving problems and to change the strategy if it is not working. This ability discriminates between excellent problem-solvers and average problem-solvers. Children who are exceptional in cognitive development tend to have mastery of a large number of strategies for attacking novel or difficult problems and tend to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy as they

work on the problems and change strategies when the one they are using does not appear to be working. Other children either have no systematic strategy or only one strategy, which they persist in using, even though it should be apparent to them that it is not working.

6. Special skills students exhibit that are unusual for their age or grade. The first five categories listed relate primarily to verbal, quantitative, or problem-solving skills. However, an observant teacher, parent, or other adult may notice children doing other kinds of things that are quite unusual for their age or grade. For example, the writer saw a first-grade child during a free activity period drawing in perspective, which is quite unusual for a child that age. There are numerous opportunities to observe such things as skill in expressive movement, artistry in mimicry or dramatizations, and originality in design or model building or art.

**7.** Student's innovative use of common materials in the classroom or outside of it. Some students show exceptional ingenuity in using everyday materials in new ways of adapting or combining common materials to serve quite different purposes from those for which the materials were originally designed. This type of ingenuity is a good indicator of creativity and originality as well as problem-solving.

**8. Student's breadth of information.** There are numerous opportunities both in and out of the classroom to observe the range of topics or areas in which a student appears to have some knowledge. The breadth of information that a student has is usually a good indicator of the variety of his or her interests. It is also a good indicator of effective long-term memory and the store of information a student has, both of which are strongly related to problem-solving ability.

**9. Student's depth of information in a particular area.** Some students develop an extensive knowledge about some particular area such as space, birds, art, or music. A student who has gained such extensive knowledge has probably done so on his or her own as a result of an extensive long-term interest. Like breadth of information, depth of information is a good indicator of effective long-term memory and store of information, both related to problem-solving ability.

**10. Student's collections of materials or hobbies.** Exceptional children tend to have hobbies or to make collections of materials that are quite different from those of typical children of their age or grade group. For example, a potentially gifted fourth grade boy may have a collection of photographs of spiders' webs, whereas other fourth grade boys collect pictures of baseball players. Sometimes the content of the collections may be the same, but the potentially gifted child organizes his or her collection in a more systematic or novel way than does the typical child. Parents are particularly good sources of information about these kinds of things.

**11. Student's persistence on uncompleted tasks.** Potentially gifted students tend to have a high level of desire to reach closure on a task or problem. They want to continue to work on uncompleted tasks and resist interruptions. They will use play time or miss meals or

delay going to bed to complete something if they are permitted to do so. Other children do not seem to be bothered by leaving a task or problem before it is solved. They may work on the task during the allotted time but do not come back to the task or spend extra time of their own to complete it.

**12. Student's absorption in intellectual tasks.** Gifted students tend to focus intensively on intellectual tasks and become so absorbed in them that they are completely unaware of everything else that is going on around them or of the passing of time. When they are working on intellectual problems, they are highly resistant to distraction.

**13. Extensiveness of student's exploratory behavior.** Gifted students tend to be curious. As a result, they tend to engage in intensive exploratory activities when they see new materials or devices or face novel situations. Their exploratory activities are not only intensive; they are also purposeful, i.e., directed toward eliciting information about the materials, devices, or situations.

**14. Student's criticalness of his or her own performance.** Recent research on problemsolving indicates that one of the characteristics that discriminates excellent problem-solvers from average or poor problem-solvers is the ability of the former to evaluate their solutions objectively and realistically. Excellent problem-solvers appear to have an inner set of standards to judge the quality of their performance, which they constantly use and constantly refine. This type of self-criticism is not a reflection of false self-modesty but rather an indicator of the ability to look at oneself and the performance in an objective, analytical way.

**15. Student's preferences for complexity, difficulty, and novelty in tasks.** Potentially gifted students tend to prefer to work at tasks that are complex and difficult. When permitted to choose the tasks or problems on which they work, they most frequently choose the most complex or difficult ones or ones that present new challenges to them.

Hagen, Elizabeth. (1980) Identification of the gifted. Teachers College, Columbia University, pp.23-26.