White Settlement
Independent School District
Gifted and Talented Program

DRAFT Revised 2016-2017
White Settlement ISD
Gifted and Talented Program

Philosophy

The White Settlement I.S.D. philosophy and goals for Gifted and Talented (GT) education are to:

- Broaden the scope of the GT Program to include all students, while maintaining a commitment to meet the needs of the identified gifted and talented population,
- Encourage parent involvement in the GT Program through training, orientation, and educational resources,
- Provide continuous support for gifted and talented specialists as well as general education teachers through shared planning, training, modeling, and consultation opportunities so that all students in White Settlement I.S.D. can enjoy the benefits of a successful and challenging education.

Gifted Student

In the state of Texas, a gifted student has been defined as a “child or youth” who performs 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:

- Exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area
- Possesses an unusual capacity for leadership
- Excels in a specific field *(Texas Legislature, 1995)*
Gifted and Talented Curriculum

The Gifted and Talented Program within the White Settlement Independent School District is an integral part of the district’s fundamental commitment to meet the individual needs of all students. The program will provide specialized instruction to students who have been identified as having well above average potential in any of the following areas:

- General intellectual ability
- Specific academic aptitude
- Leadership
- Creative, productive and visual performing arts

White Settlement ISD is dedicated to the development of each student’s talents and abilities. In order to serve the students identified as gifted and talented, the GT Program will provide a curriculum which matches these student’s needs and interests.

The focus of the GT Program will be to design educational alternatives that promote affective, intellectual, and academic growth. The GT program will offer a combination of acceleration and enrichment opportunities that provide time for work with other gifted and talented students, time for work and play with students their own age, and time for work on creative self-directed projects.

**Learning experiences for the GT Program will focus on:**

- Higher level thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation)
- Critical thinking skills (decision-making, forecasting, problem solving, reasoning)
- Creative-productive thinking skills (fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration)

**Opportunities will be provided to encourage:**

- Appropriate affective behaviors (risk taking, curiosity, imagination)
- A variety of meaningful learning strategies (cooperative learning, organizational techniques, research skills)
# Program Design

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## Elementary and Intermediate (K-6) Program Design

Each school will have at least one teacher designated for the GT Program for grades K-6. This GT Specialist will be responsible for training classroom teachers in the characteristics of the gifted, as well as in methods of differentiating curriculum for the gifted under the direction of the principal.

The campus GT Specialist will screen Kindergarten students in the spring semester and first grade students as needed. Students in grades 2-6 may be nominated for testing once per six weeks period.

Gifted students who miss regular classroom instruction while attending weekly Gifted Learning Opportunities (GLO) pull-outs are responsible for the knowledge but not the completion of the specific assignment.

The Kindergarten through sixth grade component of the GT Program may consist of any of the following:

- Talent Pool
- Enrichment opportunities
- Independent projects
- Collaboration with classroom teachers
- Weekly pullout for identified students
- Multi-age grouping
Program Design

Middle and High School Grades 7-12 Program Design

The components for grades seven through twelve grade may consist of any of the following:

- Honors classes
- AP and Pre-AP classes
- Dual Credit classes
- Independent projects
- Collaboration with classroom teachers

Advanced level courses are offered for all WSISD students, not just students identified as gifted. Students registering for these classes must meet all pre-requisite qualifications in accordance with local and state policies.

Advanced Placement and Pre-AP teachers will receive the necessary training for teaching these specific courses. In addition, teachers are required to have specialized training in the nature and needs of gifted students and an annual update in accordance with the Texas State Plan.

Weighting of Advanced Courses

For high school students the determination of grade average, rank in class, and honor graduate status including valedictorian and salutatorian, the semester grade for each course will be multiplied using standard weighting guidelines.

- Grade level class 1.00
- Pre-AP class 1.10
- AP class 1.15
- Dual Credit class 1.00
- Dual Credit class when AP equivalent class is offered 1.15

Starting with the class of 2018, the weights will be as followed:

- Grade level class 1.00
- Pre-AP class 1.10
- AP class 1.10
- Dual Credit 1.00
- Dual Credit class when AP equivalent class is offered 1.15
Gifted and Talented Procedures

The White Settlement Independent School District will seek to identify those students who possess exceptional abilities and require special gifted and talented programs to meet their educational needs. Through the procedure described below, an ongoing, comprehensive, and systematic review of all students will be made in an attempt to identify those students in need of GT services. The purpose of identification is to determine which students will benefit from the services provided in the district’s program for gifted and talented students.

Identification and Assessment Criteria

To qualify for entrance into the White Settlement ISD Gifted and Talented Program, a student must meet the standards set by the district’s comprehensive identification process. This identification process consists of nomination, screening, and selection phases. In accordance with the State of Texas Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students, identification will occur according to the nomination and selection process described below:

Nomination

A student may be nominated for the GT program at the end of first grade. Nominations may be made by a parent or legal guardian, a teacher, or a member of the community through the GT Specialist at each campus. Though nominations are accepted at any time, nominations will be solicited the last six weeks of each school year for the following year.

Selection

A district-level selection committee will meet each year to evaluate the current GT Program. The committee will confirm the validity of the instruments used in the selection process and establish a minimum level of performance for each instrument in order to establish a district minimum standard of qualification. The selection committee may consider the percentage of students in the district currently served by the district GT Program before establishing entrance requirements, but must strive to maintain consistency within reason.
Gifted and Talented Procedures

Screening

Using the criteria established by the district, the Campus Selection Committee shall evaluate each nominated student to decide if placement in the gifted program is the most appropriate educational setting. If a decision on a particular student cannot be made by the campus committee, the case will be referred to the District GT Committee, whose decision shall be final and may be appealed beginning with Level II as outlined below.

Procedure for Appeals

Parents or students may appeal a final decision of the selection committee regarding selection for or removal from the GT Program. Appeal shall be made first to the district selection committee.

LEVEL I APPEAL – The selection committee, using their professional judgment, may place the student to the GT Program with a unanimous vote.

LEVEL II APPEAL – The Superintendent (or designee) will appoint a committee of qualified professional educators from the district who have knowledge of the GT Program to evaluate the case to determine the most appropriate course of action.

All subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with WSISD school board policy.
Gifted and Talented Procedures

Furlough Procedure

Students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the GT Program or in the regular classroom may be placed on furlough by the selection committee. The purpose of such a furlough is to provide the student an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the Selection Committee. A furlough also may be granted at the request of the parent or guardian.

A student may be furloughed for a period of time deemed appropriate by the selection committee. At the end of the furlough, the student’s progress shall be reassessed, and the student may re-enter the GT Program, or be exited from the program.

Exit Procedure

Student performance in the program and regular classroom shall be monitored. If at any time, the Campus Selection Committee determines that participation in the GT Program is no longer in the student’s best interest, the parent will be notified and the student will be exited from the program.

Re-Entry Procedure

A student who leaves the program, but not the district, may not be considered for re-entry until the next academic year. The student will need to repeat the identification process.

A student who moves from and returns to the district within the same academic year remains eligible for that year. Students returning after a longer period of time must go through the normal re-screening process.

Students New to the District

All identified students must be assessed using the same criteria. Therefore, students new to the district must meet all current screening criteria. All new students will be given an opportunity to be considered for the GT Program within six weeks of enrollment.
Definitions

Advanced Placement Classes (AP, Pre-AP)

The AP and Pre-AP program provides students the opportunity to pursue college-level studies while in high school and to receive advanced placement, credit, or both while in college. These courses are taught by high school teachers with training in the characteristics and needs of gifted students.

Campus GT Selection Committee

Campus GT Selection Committee will consist of an administrator, a counselor, and the campus gifted and talented specialist. This committee provides guidance for the campus Gifted and Talented Program.

District GT Committee

The WSISD Gifted and Talented Committee shall be composed of at least three professional educators. A majority of the educators serving on the committee will have received 30 hours of training or a gifted and talented endorsement on the nature and needs of gifted students. This committee provides guidance for the WSISD Gifted and Talented Program.

Dual Credit Classes

The Dual Credit program allows students to take courses taught by college professors. Students are able to earn high school credit and college hours simultaneously.

Enrichment Opportunities

Differentiated activities provided within the classroom setting, during school hours or beyond the school day.

GT Specialist

The GT Specialist is an integral part of the curriculum planning, development, implementation and assessment of the state goals and objectives at each grade level. This includes the use of instructional strategies, resources, and activities designed to enrich the educational experiences for students at a higher level.
Independent Study

Independent study provides students with opportunities for extending and enhancing content within the regular curriculum.

Talent Pool

Second semester Kindergarten and first grade students are nominated by teachers for a weekly pull-out enrichment lab. These students will be given the opportunity to qualify for a GT identification during second grade. Students that miss regular instruction while attending the pullout are responsible for the knowledge but not the completion of each specific assignment missed.

Weekly Pullout

Identified GT and Talent Pool students are pulled from their regular classroom once a week to work with other identified students on differentiated activities, higher level thinking skills, critical thinking skills, and creative-productive thinking skills. Students that miss regular instruction while attending the pullout are responsible for the knowledge but not the completion of each specific assignment missed.