

CONROE ISD

Gifted & Talented Program



District Guidebook

for

Gifted and Talented Services

Updated August 2020

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Gifted and Talented Program Staff

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Assistant Principal or Counselor at each campus	

The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented

[The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented](#), published by the Texas Education Agency Division for Advanced Academic Services and revised in 2019, mandates specific objectives for fidelity of services, student assessment, service design, curriculum and instruction, professional learning, and family/community involvement.

This policy manual, the latest revision, is the synthesis of the dedicated work of many individuals on the local, state, and national level. Its purpose is to organize information in a useful manner, to correlate CISD policy and TEA requirements, and to guide decisions for gifted and talented students. The appropriate educational experience of every child remains our guiding principle.

The CISD Gifted and Talented Program was affirmed by the document. Critical evaluation of Conroe's Gifted and Talented Program, including revisions to comply on a state accountability and exemplary level are included.

CISD GT Program Mission Statement

Conroe ISD Gifted & Talented (GT) program educates students to increase high levels of academic performance through the development of staff capacity for rigorous instruction and differentiated, individualized student programming.

CISD GT Program Philosophy

All Conroe I.S.D. students have the opportunity to be assessed and identified for the Gifted and Talented (GT) program. Those identified to participate in GT services through the CISD screening process are served through programs and courses designed to meet their unique social, emotional, and intellectual needs.

CISD GT Program Vision

We strive to meet the intellectual, academic and social emotional needs of the gifted learner by providing more depth, complexity and independent study beyond the regular curriculum. We will serve students participating in the GT program by providing a relevant and deeper understanding and application of their developed knowledge and skills, and motivate our students to become lifelong learners and leaders.

TEA/CISD Definition of GT

29.121 Definition -- In this subchapter, “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 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.

CISD GT Education Program Goals

- Develops positive self-concepts and an appreciation of giftedness to enable students to be productive citizens who interact effectively with peers, community, and society.
- Develops critical, creative, and evaluative thinking processes that lead students to produce advanced level products.
- Develops student behaviors and skills necessary for lifelong learning, exploration of new ideas, and individual responsibility.

- Uses the Texas State Plan for the education of Gifted and Talented students for evaluation of services and resources, and the Conroe ISD gifted and talented program curriculum will be modified based on regular evaluations.
- Ensures equitable access for identification of student populations participating in gifted services.

CISD GT Student Performance Goals

- All students participating in the gifted program (grades K-12) will achieve advanced academic performance level in their identified area of academic giftedness.
- All students participating in the gifted program (grades 7-12) will complete an Advanced Level Program, College Board Advanced Placement, and/or Dual Credit level course in one or more subjects per semester.
- All students participating in the gifted program (grades 1-6) will participate in project-based learning opportunities.

GT Program Design

A flexible system of viable service options provides a research-based learning continuum that is developed and consistently implemented throughout the district to meet the needs and reinforce the strengths and interests of gifted/talented students.

Services Provided

Conroe ISD offers a variety of learning opportunities commensurate with the abilities of gifted and talented students. Services provided are comprehensive, structured, sequenced, and appropriately challenging. During the school day they include options in the four core academic areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Information concerning available opportunities (contests, academic recognition, summer camp, community programs, volunteer opportunities, etc.) is disseminated to parents and community members. Specialists and advocates for gifted students are consulted in the development of these program policies and options.

Grouping

Program options allow gifted and talented students to work together, to work with other students, and to work independently during the school day throughout the entire school year.

Flexible Pacing

Conroe ISD school board policies are developed to be consistent with the State Board of Education rules on credit by examination (19TAC74.24) and Early High School Graduation (TEC 56.203). Flexible grouping patterns and independent investigations are used to allow students to learn at the pace and level appropriate for their abilities and skills. Students may participate in dual/concurrent courses and distinguished achievement program courses at the secondary level.

Program Evaluation/Improvement

Conroe ISD provides student assessment and services which comply with the accountability standards included in the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students. An advisory group of community members, parents of gifted and talented students, school staff, and gifted and talented education staff meet regularly to review and recommend program policies and procedures to guarantee continued program improvement and development. Annual evaluation activities are conducted and used to continually improve and develop the program. Long-range evaluation of services is based on evidence obtained through gifted/talented appropriate measures such as those provided through the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP).

Campus GT Facilitators

Conroe ISD supports Gifted and Talented programming with a campus GT Facilitator at each campus. The GT Facilitator

holds the GT 30 Foundational certificate and is assigned to coordinate campus level testing, content instructional support, and program services for students participating in gifted and talented.

Program Description

Elementary School

Gifted and Talented students on the elementary level enjoy a flexible system of options based on a district-wide learning continuum that reinforces their strengths, needs and interests. Services are comprehensive, structured, sequenced, and appropriately challenging. Conroe ISD offers gifted and talented service options in the four academic areas on the elementary level. Gifted students work together as a group, with other students, and independently. Flexible grouping patterns and independent investigations are employed in the four core academic areas. Flexible pacing and curriculum compacting allow students to learn at the pace and level appropriate for their abilities and skills.

Classroom teachers serving their campus in the education of gifted students actively collaborate with the campus GT Facilitator. Based on identified areas of strength, the child is provided enrichment opportunities. These services are provided

by the teacher, the pull-out teacher, or a combination of the two working together, and include both in-class grouping for service and pull-out options. Pull-out option is available to all elementary campuses in The Woodlands High School and Grand Oaks High School feeder zones.

Elementary gifted and talented students are offered extra-curricular options on a campus and district-wide level. These services are available during school and after-school hours. Examples of such services may include Destination Imagination and Robotics. Extra-curricular services vary by campus according to interest and need. Students are informed of opportunities to participate in advanced academic competitions and programs outside the district. They are encouraged to apply for academic summer scholarships through the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented.

Intermediate School

In Fifth and Sixth grades, services are provided by the teacher. Students are served through differentiated curriculum in the core areas. Advanced level program course is offered in mathematics. Flexible pacing and curriculum compacting is employed to allow students to learn at the pace and level appropriate to their abilities and skills. After-school activities are offered to provide additional learning and passion interest opportunities. Examples of such activities may include Destination Imagination and

Robotics. Extra-curricular services vary by campus according to interest and need. UIL competitions in many academic areas are available to allow students the opportunity to meet their needs and passions in advanced learning during after-school hours.

Junior High School

Students are offered gifted and talented services in the four core subject areas through academic course selection for language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students are encouraged to choose those courses in which their talents and interests lie. Advanced level program courses are offered in the core content academic areas. Course electives provide an array of learning opportunities. In addition, after-school activities are offered to provide options relevant to the students' areas of strength and passions. These activities may include participation in the Fine Arts, Destination Imagination, Math clubs, Science clubs, Robotics, and UIL competition events.

High School

Gifted and talented students create comprehensively structured and coherently sequenced four-year plans through individualized conferences with parents, counselors, and their high school teacher(s). Each learning path includes, but is not limited to, choices from a full range of Advanced Academics such as Advanced level Program courses, College Board Advanced Placement classes, and concurrent Dual Credit classes. A wide range of extracurricular offerings provides additional

opportunities for students to participate in and pursue individual passions.

Student Identification Procedures

Assessment instruments and gifted/talented identification procedures provide students an opportunity to demonstrate their diverse talents and abilities.

Quick Reference

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Communication of Policy

Written policies of student identification for the Conroe Independent School District Gifted and Talented Program are approved by the CISD Board of Trustees and are available to all parents. Referral procedures for assessment of gifted and talented students are communicated to families in a language and form that the families understand.

Parental Permission

Written parental permission is required for students enrolled in Grades K-12 before assessment for participation in the Gifted and Talented Program may begin. Parents of students eligible for participation in GT Services are notified in writing. Written parental permission is also required prior to participation.

Referral

Teachers, parents, administrators and peers may refer students for gifted and talented assessment. Students may also self-refer. Referrals are accepted for students in grades K through 12.

A student may be referred and assessed only once during a given academic year.

The referral process for services provided as part of the gifted program in the fall semester and then in the spring semester.

Transfers

Appropriate placement for all students is essential to the success of students and the program. Students transferring into Conroe Independent School District must qualify for participation in the Gifted and Talented Program. Students new to CISD may be referred upon enrollment.

- Previous placement is considered during the identification process but does not guarantee participation.
- Placement decisions regarding transfer students are to be completed within thirty days of enrollment. Test scores may be accepted from private sources provided the tests are compatible to CISD measurements and do not violate test/retest reliability.

When a gifted and talented programmed student withdraws from CISD and transfers to another district, CISD will send GT assessment data to the receiving district.

Identification and Assessment

Students in grades K-12 are eligible for assessment for services in the CISD

Gifted and Talented Program. All kindergarten students are informally screened using a Universal Screener.



Students transferring within the district retain their gifted and talented status.

Criteria for Assessment

Assessment of students for the Conroe ISD Gifted and Talented Program includes data collected from multiple sources for each area of giftedness served by the district. Based on a review of information gathered during the assessment process, students whose data reflect that gifted/talented services will be the most effective way to meet their identified educational needs are recommended by the selection committee for gifted/talented services.

Students are assessed in languages they understand or with non-verbal based tests. All populations of the district have access to assessment, and, if identified, GT services are offered. It is our goal that the population of the gifted and talented program reflects the population of the total district. In grades K-12, qualitative and quantitative data are collected through three (3) or more measures and used to determine whether or not a student will receive gifted/talented services.

Identification Instruments

Students referred for participation in the CISD Gifted and Talented Program complete a battery of tests and measurements chosen to reflect the diverse abilities and intelligences of the gifted population. Students in the Bilingual Program are tested in their native language. Qualitative and quantitative data are considered.

A gifted and talented evaluation inventory is used to assess the referred student in the areas of intellectual ability and academic skills. The inventories are to be completed by the parents and teacher for testing.

Selection Committees

Campus Selection Committees are composed of at least three campus educators that have completed training in Nature and Needs of G/T students (i.e. GT Facilitator, campus administration, counselor, teacher). Six hours of update training are required annually for these committee members.

Selection

A balanced examination of all assessment data collected through the district's gifted/talented assessment process is conducted and used by the selection committee in making identification decisions.

Campus Selection Committees review all student data based on set district standards for participation approval. This selection process is meant to be inclusive of individualized special student considerations.

Appeals

Parents, educators, and students may appeal campus committee decisions within 15 working days of parent notification.

Additional data used to determine giftedness may be presented for consideration at the time of the appeal. Appeals forms should

be submitted to the Gifted Specialist serving the Gifted and Talented program.

Furlough

Furloughs allow students to take a leave of absence from gifted and talented services for specified reasons and time periods. Reasons for furlough may include identifiers such as student stress or inhibiting personal constraints. Determination for accepted furlough will be determined on a case-by-case, individual student needs assessment basis. At the end of a furlough, the student may re-enter the gifted program, be placed on another furlough, or be exited from the program.

Probation

The District may place a probation status any student who is unable to maintain satisfactory performance or whose educational needs are not being met within the structure of the gifted and talented program. A probation may be initiated by the district, the parent, or the student. In accordance with administrative regulations, a probation shall be granted for specified reasons and for a specified period of time. At the end of a probation, the student may re-enter the gifted program, be placed on another probation, or be exited from the program.

Reassessment

Reassessment of gifted and talented students is based on individualized student needs and programming.

Exit

The Exiting policy is based on multiple criteria including student performance in the program and is finalized by the Campus Selection Committee after consultation with parents and students (if appropriate) regarding the student's educational needs.

The campus shall monitor student performance in the program. If at any time the campus selection committee determines it is in the best interest of the student and his or her educational needs, the committee may exit a student from the program. If a student or parent requests removal from the program, the campus selection committee shall meet with the parent and student (if appropriate) before honoring the request.

Reasons for possible exit from the program may include academic performance and personal constraints. The student's choice to discontinue participation in gifted and talented services will be considered refusal of service and the student may be exited from the program services.

Student Improvement Plan

Referral for exit or low academic performance may result in the development of a Student Improvement Plan within the probationary status. The campus GT specialist or campus administrator, a GT teacher, and a counselor may conference with the student and parents to develop the improvement plan and a timeline for improvement goals to be met. Documentation of the Student Improvement Plan will be used to determine the student's progress toward intervention goals and improved achievement.

At the time specified within the Student Improvement Plan, usually one academic marking period, the committee meets to evaluate student progress toward meeting goals identified. The Student Improvement Plan may be extended, modified, or rewritten by committee consensus. Outcomes of student progress towards achievement may result in program exit or continuation and will be communicated with the student and parent. Parents and/or students have the right to appeal this decision to the district GT Specialist. Exited students are eligible for future referral with full assessment.

Curriculum and Instruction

Conroe ISD meets the needs of students participating in gifted and talented programs by modifying the depth, complexity, and pacing of the curriculum and instruction.

Differentiation

Conroe ISD provides a variety of appropriately challenging learning experiences for gifted and talented students in grades K-12 with emphasis on content from the four core academic areas. Opportunities are provided for students to pursue areas of interest for selected disciplines through guided and independent research.

Product/Performance Development

Students at all grade levels are involved in experiences that result in the development of advanced-level products or performances. All GT students will have the opportunity to be involved in project-based learning. Opportunities for additional products may be present in a number of ways throughout the year.

Examination for Acceleration

Students enrolled in grades K-12 with no previous instruction in the course requested are provided the opportunity to gain credit for course or grade levels through successful completion of

appropriate examinations. Information about examination may be obtained from the school counselor or administration.

Advanced Level Program Course and Advanced Placement

Advanced level program in the core area of mathematics is offered in grades 5-6. Pre-Advanced Honors Placement classes are offered in grades 7-10. College Board Advanced Placement classes are offered from grades 9-12 (per campus offerings).

Improvement Plan

Conroe district and campus improvement plans include provisions to improve/modify services to gifted/talented students as needed. Curriculum is modified based on annual evaluations and current research. Resources and planning time are provided for curriculum development for services in the gifted and talented program. The Texas State Plan for Gifted and Talented programs and district guidelines for evaluation of resources are used in selecting materials that are appropriate for differentiated learning. Specialists in content areas, instructional techniques, and gifted/talented education work with curriculum planners as curriculum is being designed and evaluated.

Family & Community Involvement

Conroe ISD encourages community and family participation in services designed for gifted and talented students.

Parent Communication

Conroe ISD offers a variety of learning opportunities for gifted and talented students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Parents are informed of the available opportunities through campus communication.

Conroe ISD provides information about the referral process and student identification policies to all parents. Communication is provided in the form of letters, emails and/or website postings provided for parents.

Parent Advisory Council

Parents have the opportunity to participate in a parent committee for the gifted and talented. The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) offers support and assistance to the district towards ongoing improvement of Gifted and Talented programming. Such support may include program planning and improvement feedback, mentorship at campuses, independent study programs and professional learning opportunities. Parents involved receive program updates, information related to events locally, and participate in open communication focused on programming opportunities in our district.

Community Outreach

Conroe ISD evaluates the effectiveness of its gifted and talented program annually by surveying parents, regular education teachers, gifted and talented teachers and students. The district uses this information to improve the effectiveness of the program.

Professional Learning

All personnel involved in the planning, creation, and delivery of services to gifted students possess the knowledge required to develop and provide appropriate options and differentiated curricula.

Teachers

Teachers who provide instruction and services to gifted students are required to have a minimum of thirty (30) clock hours of professional learning that include nature and needs of gifted and talented students, identification and assessment, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students. Teachers are required to have completed the thirty hours prior to gifted/talented teaching assignments. Teachers without required hours must obtain the hours within one semester.

Teachers serving gifted and talented programs are required to earn an additional six hours of training annually.

Administrators and Counselors

Administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions have a minimum of six hours annually of professional

learning in gifted education. Local district boards of trustees are encouraged to pursue professional learning on the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students.

Staff Development Evaluation/Plan

Evaluation of professional learning activities for gifted and talented education is ongoing. Evaluation results are used in making decisions regarding future staff development plans.

The district GT Specialist provides annual updates to the District Board of Trustees on changes in the district gifted and talented program.

Definition of Terms

Area of Giftedness	the specific ability in which a student performs or shows potential to perform at a remarkably high level of accomplishment
Intellectual	possessing superior intelligence, with potential or demonstrated accomplishments in several fields of study; ability to perform complex mental tasks
Specific Academic Fields	possessing superior ability or potential in a specific course of study, such as language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies
Qualitative Measures	measures used to assess student needs that include observations, anecdotal records, checklists, interviews, student products, performances, etc.
Furlough	a leave of absence from program services that can be due to a variety of circumstances
Depth	exploration of content within a discipline; analyzing from the concrete to the abstract, familiar to the unfamiliar, known to the unknown; exploring the discipline by going past facts and concepts into generalizations, principles, theories, laws; investigating the layers of experience within a discipline through details, patterns, trends, unanswered questions, ethical considerations
Complexity	extending content in, between, and across disciplines though the study of themes, problems, and issues; seeing relationships between and among ideas in/within the topic, discipline, and disciplines; examining relationships in, between, and across disciplines over time, and from multiple points of view
Continuum of Learning Experiences	the articulated learning experiences that provide planned experiences that build upon one another each year a student is in school
Array of Learning Experiences	a menu of challenging learning experiences or opportunities that fit the unique interests and abilities of advanced level students

The CISD Gifted and Talented Program continues to grow and develop through the decades. District leaders and many dedicated professionals have helped shape the program. Staff development in the area of education of the gifted and talented has been made available to all CISD teachers, administrators and parents through the district's involvement in the Houston Area Cooperative for the Gifted and Talented and district provided training. Dynamic programming, specifically designed to incorporate current research findings in the fields of education, psychology, and physiology, remains a goal of Conroe ISD.

