

LAKE TRAVIS ISD

GT/DISCOVERY PROGRAM

GUIDE



This document contains the Lake Travis ISD's guidelines and procedures for the Gifted and Talented Program for grades K-12. For more detail on state guidelines:

http://tea.texas.gov/Curriculum_and_Instructional_Programs/Special_Student_Populations/Gifted_and_Talented_Education/Gifted_Talented_Education/

MISSION STATEMENT

The GT/Discovery Program in LTISD is committed to:

1. Developing a passion for learning, and personal growth so that students reach their talent potential as a life-long learner
2. Delivering an enriched, rigorously accelerated curriculum apart from the standard classroom curriculum for identified students
3. Differentiating curriculum and instructional delivery to align with the needs of students
4. Directing all identified students toward intellectual, emotional, and social success in academics and life

So that all students' intellectual, social, emotional and creative needs are met.

PROGRAM GOALS

1. Identify and serve students who perform in the top 3-5% of the students nationally in the areas of:
 - a. general intellectual ability
 - b. creativity
 - c. advanced academic achievement
2. Provide exemplary units of study that both challenge and engage all identified students both intellectually and creatively.
3. Provide learning opportunities in high order thinking skills, decision making, problem solving and reasoning.
4. Address the social and emotional needs of identified students with the assistance of counselors, mentors, and peers.
5. Assist classroom teachers in the process of differentiation for identified students.
6. Strive to achieve exemplary status on the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students*.

GT/DISCOVERY PROGRAM QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the GT/Discovery program?

Discovery is the academic enrichment/acceleration program provided for students who have been identified as intellectually and/or creatively gifted and talented.

How are students identified?

Students who are referred for the Discovery program go through a screening process, which involves five areas: verbal aptitude, nonverbal aptitude, achievement in math and reading, creativity, and qualitative data collection.

Students whose dominant language is Spanish will go through a screening process, which involves four areas: nonverbal aptitude, achievement in math and reading, creativity, and qualitative data collection. Achievement, aptitude, and creativity tests will be administered in Spanish when appropriate.

Who refers students?

A teacher, parent, student, or other interested persons observing a student with consistent evidence of gifted characteristics may refer him/her.

What are some of the characteristics of a gifted student?

- advanced/extensive vocabulary
- work advanced beyond the grade level/age
- extremely inquisitive, asks many questions, often challenging, provoking and/or demanding
- in-depth understanding of complex concepts
- persistence is evident in areas of interest
- high level of curiosity, energy, enthusiasm and vigor for new ideas
- advanced reasoning
- feels keenly about own ideas and solutions to problems, and often expresses them regardless of what others may think
- likes to examine new possibilities for problems/solutions, rather than fitting within a structure
- especially original imagination
- sustained attention span
- initiates projects and often prefers to work alone
- keenly observant
- keen sense of humor

If you would like more information about the Discovery Program, please contact the Campus Discovery Program Coordinator.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

It is the policy of Lake Travis Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in any programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact Holly Morris-Kuentz, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative and Community Services, 3322 Ranch Road 620 South, Austin, TX 78738, (512) 533-6024.

Es norma de Lake Travis Independent School District de no discriminar por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo o impedimento, en sus programas, servicios o actividades, tal como lo requieren el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, según enmienda; el Título IX de las Enmiendas en la Educación, de 1972, y la Sección 504 de la Ley de Rehabilitación de 1973, según enmienda. Para información sobre sus derechos o procedimientos para quejas, comuníquese con Holly Morris-Kuentz, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative and Community Services, 3322 Ranch Road 620 S., Austin, TX 78738, (512) 533-6024.

DESCRIPTION OF GIFTED TALENTED/DISCOVERY PROGRAM

Grade Level: Elementary

The Elementary Discovery Program is a cross-curricular thematic based pullout program for students in grades K-5. Participating students will demonstrate skill in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment.

Grade Level: 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade

This elective is an inquiry, project based course that makes connections across the disciplines and meets the state mandates for the Gifted and Talented. This course is only available to identified Gifted and Talented students.

In order for students to remain active in the GT Program, they must participate in Honors or Pre-AP Coursework. Students who do not participate in any of these courses will receive a letter noting that they are choosing to “furlough” those requirements for a year. If a student furloughs for more than one year they are considered inactive and may be exited from the program.

High School

Identified GT students are served through group and individualized instruction in the classroom as well as through special programs. These special programs include extensions of the classroom programming, accelerated pacing, enrichment activities, specially designed courses, Pre-AP and AP classes, dual credit coursework, grouping with GT peers, and exams for acceleration.

All students who have previously been identified gifted by Lake Travis ISD are admitted into the program. Teachers, parents, or students may nominate students for the program. Nominated students will have the option to participate in assessment to determine eligibility for the program according to district guidelines.

In order for students to remain active in the GT Program, they must participate in Honors, Pre-AP, AP or Dual Credit Coursework. Students who do not participate in any of these courses will receive a letter noting that they are choosing to “furlough” those requirements for a year. If a student furloughs for more than one year, they are considered inactive and may be exited from the program.

GT Graduation Recognition Criteria

- Up to three of the criteria may come from successful completion of an AP class (with a final, un-weighted grade of a B or higher) and/or passing the AP exam with a score of 3 or higher.
- At least one of the criteria must come from meeting one of the standards listed below: (students may not repeat any of these as part of their 4 criteria, i.e., two 2nd place finishes at the regional level = 1 criteria)
 - Completion of an advanced GT independent study.
 - National Merit Scholar - Commended or higher designation.
 - Publication in an approved nationally or state recognized journal or magazine (can be print article, photo, or art publication). No Internet publication will be accepted.
 - Individual Regional Placement (1st -6th) or any Individual Statewide Recognition or Qualification in any UIL Competition, including academics, arts, athletics, band, cheer, choir, dance, forensics (speech and debate), orchestra, theatre, DECA, HOSA or VASE.

Seniors who are in year one of a GT furlough and meet the above criteria will be eligible for recognition. Seniors who are in year two of a GT furlough are considered inactive and will not qualify for the GT recognition.

Students must complete the required criteria and submit the appropriate documentation to the counseling office prior to May 1st of their senior year.

DISCOVERY PARENT COMMUNICATION

Each campus coordinator is responsible for holding an orientation meeting for parents of GT/Discovery students informing parents on how their students receive GT/Discovery services at the respective campus.

Individual teachers will post specific GT/Discovery information and options on their individual campus websites under the “Families” tab. Additionally, the campus coordinator is also responsible for disseminating information about out-of-district opportunities for GT/Discovery students to their parents (i.e. summer camps, scholarships, etc.)

ASSESSMENT PHILOSOPHY FOR DISCOVERY PROGRAM

The Discovery Program is available to all qualifying students regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, special need or limited English proficiency. The identification process for the Discovery Program is rigorous and fair. It is also flexible enough to accommodate students who join the school from other districts.

Assessment results may be drawn from quantitative and/or qualitative data from a range of several areas:

- a. quantitative data including the results of nationally normed ability tests, teacher assessments, other available test data, such as standardized tests and baseline assessments.
- b. qualitative information including classroom observation.

DISCOVERY SCREENING PROCEDURES

Fall Semester – The last day of the 1st grading period is the referral deadline for grades K-12. Services for identified students will begin 2nd semester.

Spring Semester– The last day of the 3rd grading period is the referral deadline for any NEW students in grades K-12 enrolled in LTISD after **the last day of the 1st grading period**. Services will begin in **September** of the next school year.

A teacher, parent, student, or other interested persons observing a student with consistent evidence of gifted characteristics may refer him/her during the appropriate referral window.

Selection Committee

- District Selection Committee consists of at least three educators who have 30 or more hours in Gifted Education training, (1.7.1E Texas State Plan).
- District Selection Committee reviews results of the *GT/Discovery Identification Profile* of each student and determines if student meets the qualifications for the GT/Discovery program.
- District Selection Committee will determine if additional data is needed to make an appropriate placement decision (1.7.2E Texas State Plan).

ASSESSMENT OF LEP STUDENTS FOR DISCOVERY PROGRAM

Students whose primary language is not English may be identified as LEP through the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee. The campus registrar can provide LEP student lists from PEIMS.

A Spanish version of the ability test will be administered to students identified as LEP and receiving bilingual services.

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS BEING EVALUATED FOR THE DISCOVERY PROGRAM

Recognizing that all public-school students, regardless of their disability or placement in a special program, shall have equal access to placement in GT/Discovery or any program offered by the district to non-disabled students, the following considerations apply for students who are identified as receiving Special Education services and supports.

- If a student with special needs is referred for assessment for the Discovery Program, the referral will be sent to the ARD committee. The ARD committee has the responsibility to determine what kind of assessment is put into place for determining the student's entry into the Discovery program. A Discovery Program campus committee member should attend the ARD committee for this process. According to Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students Sections 1, 1.5.3A, 1.5.4A, and 1.5.5A, both qualitative and quantitative measures for students in grades 1-12 for general intellectual ability and /or specific academic subject ability **MUST** be used. For students in Kindergarten, only qualitative assessments are required (quantitative assessments may also be used). The ARD committee must take into account the student's needs (physical, emotional, and intellectual) when determining which testing tools are used. It is the District Discovery Instructional Needs Committee recommendation that assessment be in the following areas:
 - Aptitude
 - Creativity
 - Teacher Recommendation
 - Achievement (This can be either by a criterion or norm referenced test).
- The Discovery Program member present at the ARD will present and explain the entry process for students in order for the ARD committee to make the decisions needed in terms of recommending appropriate assessment tools for the special-needs child.
- Once assessment is determined, appropriate campus personnel will administer the test(s).
- If new assessments are not required, then the ARD committee will examine the results from previous assessments and make a decision as to how the special-needs child's scores relate to the scores for general-education students
- After assessment is completed, the Discovery Committee will meet and review the student's case and will write up and deliver recommendations for the ARD committee in terms of the student's entry into the Discovery Program
 - a plan for implementation to meet the child's dual-exceptional needs
- The ARD committee, with recommendations from the Discovery Program representative, will make the decision as to the student's entry to and services provided by the Discovery Program.

- If the student qualifies for the Discovery Program and if the parent/guardian of the child is present at the ARD, then he/she may sign all permission forms required for admittance into the Discovery Program. Qualification letter does not need to be sent home.
- If the student qualifies for the Discovery Program, but the parent/guardian of the child is not present then send home the “Does Qualify” (Letter A) along with the permission forms for the child to enter the Discovery Program.
- If the student does NOT qualify for the Discovery Program and the parent/guardian of the child is present at the ARD, then notification of the child’s not being entered into the Discovery Program is given at that time. No letter will be sent home.
- If the student does NOT qualify and the parent/guardian of the child is NOT present at the ARD, then the parents will be notified via the ARD minutes. No letter will be sent home.

504 OR DYSLEXIA STUDENTS BEING EVALUATED FOR THE DISCOVERY PROGRAM

Recognizing that all public-school students, regardless of their disability or placement in a special program, shall have equal access to placement in GT/Discovery or any program offered by the district to non-disabled students the following considerations apply for students who are identified as 504 or dyslexic.

The campus Discovery Program Coordinator will

- Review and utilize any comparable assessment data from dyslexic and/or out-of-district testing against the screening matrix.
- Review the accommodation plan for 504 and/or dyslexia in order to determine what accommodations are required for entry assessment into the Discovery Program.
- Follow the screening matrix WITHOUT regard to the phase sequencing. The matrix will still be used in its entirety, but the coordinator needs to be flexible in following the order of assessment to meet the student’s needs.
- Results will determine if additional comparable assessment is needed.
- Once all assessment is completed, return to step 2 of the Discovery Screening Procedure.

ENTRY PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS TRANSFERRING INTO LTISD

Students identified as gifted in another school district transferring into LTISD must meet the LTISD GT/Discovery program standards and will be required to go through the screening process. Similar tests meeting the same standards as LTISD may be substituted. If a student is transferring from a public school GT program, the campus has 30 calendar days to complete the screening process and make the appropriate placement.

REASSESSMENT PROCEDURES FOR NON-QUALIFYING STUDENTS

- 1) Referral opportunities for gifted/talented identification are made available to students once per school year.
- 2) A nationally normed test score is valid for two years. A student will not be allowed to retake the same test within the two year window.

APPEALS PROCEDURES AND TIMELINE

- 1) In the event of an appeal, the District Selection Committee will review the appeal form and accompanying evidence to ensure proper placement of all students without regard to race, gender, socioeconomic status, special need or limited English proficiency.
- 2) The District Selection Committee will be composed of at least two GT Coordinators and the Director of Learning and Teaching or their designee. Voting members of the committee should not be from the student's campus. All information that can aid in the placement of the student must be presented in written form to the committee with the appeals form.
- 3) Upon receiving the appeals form, the District Selection Committee will meet and deliver a response within six business weeks. The parents/guardians will receive notification by mail within one business week of the District Committee's decision.

FURLOUGH PROCEDURES

The following procedures are to provide a temporary break from Discovery Program and do not pertain to or affect the student's GT identification on Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). Following are possible reasons for initiating a furlough: student not taking a Pre-AP, AP, GT class, poor achievement in core subject areas (including Pre-AP, AP, GT classes), or student/parent request.

- 1) A parent/guardian, teacher, or student may initiate the furlough process at any time during the school year.
If the furlough process is initiated by a school representative, a letter describing the reason for furlough will be mailed out to the parents of the student in question and a meeting will be requested.
- 2) A conference will take place to discuss the needs of the Discovery student.
 - a) The conference must include at least three of the following: parents/guardians, at least two school personnel (one of which must be a counselor or an administrator), and the Campus Discovery Coordinator. If the committee agrees, the furlough will take place. If the committee is not in agreement, the decision will go to the District Selection Committee.
 - b) Other school personnel may also attend.
- 3) Furlough and re-instatement will be re-addressed by the campus committee.
 - a) K-5 at nine weeks
 - b) 6-12 annually

EXITING PROCEDURES

The following procedures are for removing a student on a permanent basis from the GT/Discovery program services and results in the student's removal from GT status on the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

- 1) A parent, teacher or student may initiate the exit procedure.
If the Exit Process is initiated by a school representative, a letter requesting a meeting with the parents will be mailed out to the parents of the student in question.
- 2) A conference will take place to discuss the needs of the GT/Discovery student.

- a) The conference must include at least three of the following: parents/guardians, at least two school personnel (one of which must be a counselor or an administrator), and the Campus Discovery Coordinator. If the committee agrees, the exit will take place. If the committee is not in agreement, the decision will go to the District Selection Committee (District GT Coordinators).
- b) Other school personnel may also attend
- 3) An appeals process at the district level is required to invalidate an exit.
 - a) A Parent/guardian, student, or teacher may initiate the appeals process.
 - b) The campus-level Discovery Coordinator will provide the standard appeals form and the initiator of the request will forward the completed form to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.
 - c) The District Selection Committee will review the appeal request and make a final decision.

DISCOVERY FILE TRANSFER PROCEDURES

- 1) At the end of the school year, GT coordinators will box current 5th grade and 8th “Discovery Qualified” and bring to the last GT/Discovery meeting to pass to the MS/HS GT Coordinators. “Discovery Do Not Qualify” folders stay at the originating campus.
- 2) At the time of graduation, files will be handled in accordance with current district policy.

ELEMENTARY DISCOVERY GRADING RUBRIC AND REPORTING TO PARENTS

Students will be graded holistically during each nine week period. His/her work will be evaluated using the indicators explained above. Grades will be sent to parents as part of the standard classroom report card.

- E – Excellent
- S – Satisfactory
- N – Needs Improvement
- U– Unsatisfactory

SECONDARY DISCOVERY GRADING

Students will be graded on a numeric grading scale during each nine weeks. His/her work will be evaluated using project rubrics, teacher made assessments and a participation rubric.