

# Gifted/Talented Education Frequently Asked Questions

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## Section 1: Identification and Assessment

- 1. Must Kindergarten students be screened for gifted/talented (G/T) services? What is the deadline for identifying and serving Kindergarten students?**

Students in Kindergarten to grade 12 shall be assessed and, if identified, provided G/T services (Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.122; 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §89.1(3); *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* (State Plan) 1.4C).

In order to code identified G/T students through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and to have these students eligible to be included in a district's G/T weighted funding, students must be identified and receive services before March 1 ([Student Attendance Accounting Handbook \(SAAH\), Section 8.2](#)).

- 2. May a local district refuse a student the opportunity to participate in the full G/T assessment process based on one criterion (i.e., an aptitude test score)?**

No. Data collected from *multiple sources* for each area of giftedness served by the district must be included in the assessment process for G/T services (TAC §89.1(2) and State Plan 1.5.1C). In grades 1-12, qualitative and quantitative data are required to be collected through three or more measures and used to determine whether a student needs G/T services (State Plan 1.5.4C).

- 3. Should special provisions in identification procedures such as testing accommodations and/or modifications be made available to ensure equitable access to G/T services for students with special needs, i.e. English language learners or students with learning disabilities or other handicaps?**

Yes. If a student has testing accommodations recorded on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 accommodations in place, then accommodations must be available when assessing for gifted/talented services. Access to assessment and, if needed, G/T services must be made available to all populations of the district (TAC §89.1(3); State

Plan 1.6C). Students must be assessed in languages they understand or with nonverbal assessments (State Plan 1.5.2C).

**4. How may a district ensure that students with special needs are genuinely considered for services in G/T education?**

Final determination of students' need for G/T services is made by a committee of at least three local district or campus educators who have received training in the nature and needs of G/T students and who have met and reviewed the individual student data (TAC §89.1(4); State Plan 1.7C)

## **Section 2: Service Design**

**5. Is participation in the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) required?**

No, school districts are not required to participate in the TPSP. Please note that the TPSP was developed in alignment with the *State Goal for Services for Gifted/Talented Students* and provides one option for schools to meet the requirements of the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*. TPSP is available for any Texas public school district or charter school to improve the rigor and relevance of its advanced academic instruction in Kindergarten to grade 12. For more information on TPSP, please visit <http://www.texaspsp.org/>.

**6. May a district offer G/T services exclusively at the “zero-hour” period or after school?**

No. A school district is required to offer in-school learning opportunities relevant to the student's area of strength throughout the entire school year (TAC §89.3(3) and State Plan 2.1C). A district may offer *supplemental* services outside of the regular school day.

**7. Who is responsible for ensuring that a district is in compliance with state mandates for G/T services?**

The local board of trustees has primary responsibility for ensuring the district is in compliance with all applicable requirements of state education programs (TEC §7.028(b) and TAC §89.5).

**8. Must open-enrollment charter schools and/or private schools identify and serve G/T students?**

Open-enrollment charter schools are not required to serve G/T students unless G/T services are included in their charter (TEC §12.059). Private schools are not under the authority of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and do not receive (G/T weighted) state funding so they are not bound by state law and rule.

**9. Must every identified G/T student participate in G/T services?**

No. Parents must have the opportunity to deny services. However, students identified as G/T through PEIMS must be served through a district's defined G/T services (TEC §29.122; TAC §89.1(3) and (5); State Plan 1.4C). School districts are required to provide an array of learning opportunities for G/T students in Kindergarten to grade 12 and shall inform parents of the opportunities (TAC §89.3).

**10. May a district offer services in G/T through Advanced Placement (AP<sup>®</sup>), Pre-AP<sup>®</sup>, International Baccalaureate (IB), and/or dual credit classes?**

Yes. Local districts have the flexibility to determine through which classes G/T students are served. Districts are required to provide an array of learning opportunities for G/T students in Kindergarten to grade 12 and shall inform parents of the opportunities. Please note that G/T students in AP, Pre-AP, IB, and/or dual credit courses must still receive differentiated instruction from a G/T-trained teacher (TAC §89.3).

**11. May G/T students be served in the regular classroom, or are districts required to offer special classes? Is there a minimum time requirement for G/T services?**

G/T students may be served in the regular classroom; however if this is the instructional design that is used to deliver services, the regular classroom teacher must have the 30- hour foundational G/T training as delineated in TAC §89.2(1) and an annual update of six hours of professional development in G/T education (TAC §89.2(2)). Campuses and districts must ensure G/T students have opportunities to work together as a group, work with other students, and work independently during the school day throughout the entire school year as a direct result of G/T service options (TAC §89.3(1) and (3); State Plan 2.2C). Please note that a group is defined as a minimum of three students. In addition, if G/T students are provided services in the regular classroom, students must be assured an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with their abilities and that emphasize content in the four foundation curricular areas (TAC §89.3(1) and (3); State Plan 2.1C).

There is no minimum time requirement in either law or rule.

**12. When is it appropriate to exit or furlough an identified G/T student?**

Policies regarding exiting or furloughing identified G/T students are made at the local level. Provisions regarding furloughs and exiting of students from program services are required to be included in written policies that are approved by the local board of trustees and disseminated to parents (TAC §89.1(5); State Plan 1.2C).

### **Section 3: Curriculum and Instruction**

**13. What is meant by “a continuum of learning”?**

A continuum of learning experiences refers to articulated intellectual, artistic, creative, and/or leadership activities and opportunities that build upon one another each year a

student is in school. The intent of the language in the State Plan is that instruction must be seamless and vertically aligned in order to achieve the state goal of developing advanced-level products and/or performances (State Plan 3.2C and State Plan Glossary).

**14. What is meant by “appropriately challenging learning experiences”?**

An array of learning experiences is a menu of challenging activities or opportunities that fit the unique interests and abilities of advanced-level students (State Plan Glossary). The State Plan requires an array of appropriately challenging learning experiences in each of the four foundation curricular areas be provided for G/T students in Kindergarten to grade 12 and parents be informed of the opportunities (TAC §89.3 and State Plan 3.1C).

**15. Must a district provide services in each of the four foundation curricular areas?**

Yes. Opportunities that are commensurate with G/T students’ abilities and that emphasize content in the four foundation curricular areas must be provided for G/T students in Kindergarten to grade 12 (State Plan 3.1C). Students should be served based on individual strengths and should not be required to participate in all four foundation curricular areas (State Plan 2.1C).

**16. If districts serve high school G/T students through Pre-AP, AP, and/or IB courses and students who are not identified G/T are in the class, must the teacher differentiate the curriculum for the G/T students?**

Yes. The State Plan requires that districts provide G/T students an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with their abilities (State Plan 2.1C). Districts meet the needs of G/T students by modifying the depth, complexity, and pacing of the curriculum and instruction ordinarily provided.

## **Section 4: Professional Development**

**17. Who is required to have professional development in G/T education?**

Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the district’s defined G/T services are required to receive a minimum of 30 clock hours of professional development *prior* to their assignment to provide G/T services and instruction. This 30-hour training must include nature and needs of G/T students, identification and assessment of G/T students’ needs, and curriculum and instruction for G/T students. Teachers without required training must complete the 30-hour training within one semester of assignment to provide G/T services and instruction. Teachers must also receive a minimum of six hours annually of professional development in G/T education (TAC §89.2(1), (2) and (3); State Plan 4.1.1.C, 4.1.2.C and 4.2C).

Administrators and counselors who have authority for service decisions for G/T students are required to receive six hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of G/T students and service options for G/T students (TAC §89.2(4); State Plan 4.3C). Any campus or district-level administrator (including the superintendent) or

counselor who has authority to make scheduling, hiring, and/or program decisions should have the six hours of training (TAC §89.2(4); State Plan 4.3C).

**18. If a teacher completed the 30-hour foundational G/T training several years ago and has not continued with the 6-hour annual G/T professional development updates, must he/she retake the 30-hour training to be considered a G/T trained teacher in Texas?**

There is no such requirement in law or rule; however local district policies may include this requirement.

**19. Must all teachers complete the annual six-hour G/T professional development update?**

All teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the district's defined gifted/talented services program for G/T students must receive a minimum of six hours annually of professional development in G/T education that is related to state teacher education standards(TAC §89.2(3); TAC §233.1; State Plan 4.2C).

**20. Must administrators/counselors participate in a six-hour G/T professional development update each year?**

There is no such requirement for districts to be in compliance with rule; however, local district policies may include this requirement. Exemplary programs require an annual six-hour G/T update for administrators/counselors as indicated in the State Plan 4.3E.

**21. What training should be offered to teachers in the required six-hour annual G/T professional development update?**

The decision not to mandate what should be offered as six-hour update training was deliberate. The annual update should be based on individual teacher needs related to the objectives of the district's G/T program services. The intent of the six-hour update is to provide teachers of G/T students with training that will enable the teacher to differentiate and adjust the depth, complexity, and pacing of lessons to meet the needs of G/T students. The teacher and his/her supervisor may collaboratively make this decision based on the needs identified in campus and district improvement plans (TAC §89.2(3); State Plan 3.4C).

**22. Is a teacher who has completed the 30-hour foundational G/T training considered G/T certified in Texas?**

No. *G/T certified* refers to a teacher who has obtained the G/T Supplemental Certificate available through the State Board of Educator Certification after successfully challenging the G/T TExES. This certificate alone, however, does not qualify a teacher to teach gifted students in Texas. It must be accompanied by the 30-hour foundational G/T training required by TAC §89.2. A teacher with the appropriate 30-hour training, but without the supplemental certificate, is considered G/T trained (TAC §89.2 and State Plan 4.1.1C).

**23. Are Pre-AP/AP or IB teachers required to complete the 30-hour foundational G/T training? If so, can their Pre-AP/AP or IB training count toward G/T training requirements?**

If Pre-AP/AP or IB classes serve as the mode of delivery for services to G/T students, teachers must have the required 30-hour foundational G/T training. Substitutions from the College Board five-day summer institute or IBO training may be made for the curriculum and instruction component of the 30-hour foundational G/T training, but the teacher would still require training in the nature and needs of G/T students and identification and assessment of G/T students' needs.

## **Section 5: Family and Community Involvement**

**24. Must districts/campuses offer a parent awareness session each year?**

For a district to be in compliance with the State Plan, no annual parent meeting is required. Please note that school districts are required to provide certain information to parents. This includes informing parents of the array of learning opportunities available for G/T students in Kindergarten to grade 12 (State Plan 5.2C) and disseminating written policies on student identification to parents (State Plan 5.1C). For a district to be recommended by this indicator, orientation and periodic updates are provided for parents of students identified for and provided G/T services (State Plan 5.2.1R).

**25. The law says that the State Plan shall serve as the basis for district accountability in providing services to G/T students. How and when will districts be held accountable for the indicators in the State Plan?**

The board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of an open-enrollment charter school has primary responsibility for ensuring that the district or school complies with all applicable requirements of state educational programs (TEC §7.028). Provisions to improve services to G/T students must be included in district and campus improvement plans (State Plan 3.4C). The effectiveness of G/T services must be evaluated annually, and the data used to modify and update district and campus improvement plans. Parents must be included in the evaluation process (State Plan 5.3C). The method of evaluation is a local district decision.

**26. Must districts evaluate their G/T program each year?**

Yes. The effectiveness of G/T services must be evaluated annually and the data used to modify and update district and campus improvement plans. Parents must be included in the evaluation process (State Plan 5.3C). Districts shall evaluate services annually through a locally developed process that meets the requirements of law and rule.