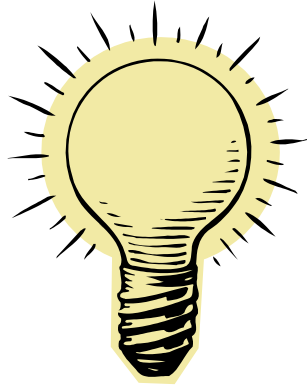


**ROUND ROCK
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**



**IDENTIFICATION and
NOMINATION PACKET**

**FOR
TALENTED AND GIFTED
(TAG) PROGRAMS**

2007-2008

**Department of Gifted and Advanced Academic Services
Instructional Support Services
Round Rock Independent School District**

Parents: Please retain in your files for future reference.

RRISD TAG Program Overview

The Round Rock ISD Programs for Talented and Gifted (TAG) students provide instructional opportunities and other services designed to meet the unique needs of students with significantly advanced general intellectual ability and/or specific subject matter aptitude in language arts, science, social studies and/or mathematics. These programs shall provide an appropriately differentiated curriculum and ensure the students are instructed in all essential elements and demonstrate an acceptable degree of mastery. As needed, the programs will modify delivery of instruction for students by accelerating and/or providing for greater depth, more complex content, and enrichment activities. TAG classes and/or services are available in kindergarten - 12th grades. Teachers serving identified TAG students have met the state requirements necessary for assignment of gifted and talented students.

RRISD TAG Program Goal

The general goal of the TAG Programs is to provide a differentiated educational program for gifted and talented students in the district.

TAG Program Description by Level

Elementary School Overview

In the elementary grades, identified gifted students are clustered together with TAG trained teachers in otherwise heterogeneous classrooms. An ideal cluster is 6-8 students. The campus TAG Specialist works closely with the grade level cluster teachers to meet the needs of each identified child. They determine the best learning plan for him/her including aligned TEKS-based lessons which explore content in depth and with complexity. Some differentiated lessons occur in the regular classroom with the cluster teacher and/or the TAG Specialist, and some occur in the TAG resource room. Opportunities exist for students to engage in independent study options that allow them to go into great detail in their areas of interest and strength. Students may also compact and accelerate through the curriculum commensurate with their abilities. Specific services may vary based on campus and student needs.

Primary Grades

At the primary level (K-2) services are primarily provided by the cluster teacher within the regular classroom with support from the TAG Specialist. As time allows, enrichment activities in the TAG resource room are encouraged. In addition, kindergarten enrichment is provided which involves the TAG specialist rotating through the kinder classrooms providing at least one lesson per class per month in creative/critical thinking.

Intermediate Grades

For 3rd-5th grade math instruction, the TAG Math Curriculum, a combination of accelerated pacing and depth/complexity which takes the 3rd-8th grade TEKS and compacts them into 3rd-6th grade, is taught through TAG Academic Classes with the TAG Specialist. Accompanying benchmarks for the TAG students are administered in place of regular grade level benchmarks to ensure proper delivery of the TAG curriculum occurs.

For 3rd-5th grade language arts instruction, the TAG LA Curriculum is currently under development. The delivery of this curriculum will be through TAG Academic Classes as much as possible, although due to staffing constraints at some campuses, the cluster teacher may need to incorporate some components of the curriculum in the cluster classroom.

Science and Social Studies

At all grade levels, science and social studies differentiation will mainly occur in the cluster classroom with the support of the TAG Specialist as needed. This should also include independent study opportunities, which may be facilitated by the TAG Specialist.

Affective Needs

To address the affective needs of TAG students, a social and emotional needs curriculum which includes one lesson at the end of the year for newly identified kindergarteners, four lessons for first graders, eight lessons each for second and third graders, and nine lessons each for fourth and fifth graders exists. The curriculum may be delivered by the campus counselor or by the TAG Specialist or some combination thereof.

Middle School

In middle school, TAG courses are available using curriculum designed specifically to meet the special needs of gifted students with emphasis on modifications in content taught, processes used for learning, and student products. Students in these courses are required to complete guided as well as independent research.

High School

At the high school level, programs are provided for students who demonstrate talent in academic areas. These programs are designed for students who wish to delve into the disciplines in more depth and expand their understandings at a faster pace. The structure of the classroom encourages students to be more involved in the direction of their learning, and to approach their studies as though they were professionals in the field. In addition, TAG high school students may be interested in several programs including Pre-Advanced Placement, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate (Westwood High School), Virtual High School, and Dual Enrollment. Classes are offered in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, foreign languages, art, music, and computer science. College credit may be received after participation in AP classes and successfully passing the appropriate AP exams. Select Virtual High School courses are also offered.

Student Goals for Gifted Education

- **THINKING SKILLS**
Gifted students will develop their abilities in higher level, more complex thinking skills including critical, creative, and productive thinking activities that are extensions of the regular curriculum.
- **SUBJECT MATTER KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**
Gifted students will study advanced-level content and master the major concepts, skills, and processes of specific disciplines in which they demonstrate ability.
- **RESEARCH AND INDEPENDENT STUDY SKILLS**
Gifted students will develop the skills necessary for self-directed learning, conduct independent studies and research projects, and develop advanced-level products.
- **SELF-CONCEPT AND LEADERSHIP**
Gifted students will gain an understanding and respect for each person's abilities, recognizing the similarities and differences between themselves and others, and will develop their own unique abilities for the betterment of both themselves and others.

TAG Identification Process

Phase I: Nomination

Through an open and on-going nomination system, efforts are made to secure nominations from any person familiar with a student's abilities, potential performance, and/or past performance. Students may be nominated by one of the following:

- parent, guardian and/or client
- student - self or peer(s)
- principal
- counselor
- teacher
- librarian
- administrator
- community member
- psychologist

Special effort is made to secure nominations of students who are culturally different, economically disadvantaged, or who have special needs. Campuses provide an annual fall orientation session for anyone considering nomination of students for the TAG program.

A completed nomination and parental consent form are required for all special testing. These forms are located in the back of this booklet.

Phase II: Screening

The principal on each campus is responsible for organizing a Screening and Selection Committee composed of three to five professional staff members to coordinate the identification process activities. This committee is composed of campus administrators, classroom teachers, counselors, and TAG teachers.

This committee compiles and organizes available data to facilitate decision-making for the selection of the students consistent with district policy and procedures. The process will not discriminate against students with regard to race, color, creed, religious affiliation, sex, or disability. Written parental consent is required for any special testing.

A member of the committee is selected to develop and maintain a file for collecting screening data. Confidentiality is assured regarding the rights of privacy of the individual according to legal standards. Information collected is available only to those who need to use it for educational purposes.

In order to screen students for the TAG programs, data is collected from various sources and instruments. Sources and instruments may include but are not limited to: Abilities/Aptitude tests; Gifted screening assessments for academics and reasoning; Behavior checklists completed by teachers and parents that identify observed characteristics of gifted children; Non-verbal reasoning tests; Other measures comparable to those listed above.

Phase III: Selection

The Campus Screening and Selection Committee considers each nominated student. Based on established district standards, the committee may place the student in other special programs, recommend that the student remain in the regular program, or place the student in the TAG program if the student meets the qualifying criteria. Selection for the TAG program will be based upon a preponderance of the qualitative data and quantitative data gathered which appears at or above the 95th percentile on the summary profile. The student's need for the educational experiences planned for the program and the student's potential to benefit from the program will be considered. The data for students who qualify for the program will be further analyzed to determine the subject area(s) of strength for which the student will receive services.

A member of the committee is available to confer with the parent/guardian to explain findings of the committee and the rationale for the decision. All collected data will be available to parents.

Note: Nationally-normed test scores are valid for two years and are used for placement consideration for two years before retesting.

Placement

A signed Parent Permission Form indicating permission to participate must be on file in the cumulative folder. Program entry for qualified students will be as follows:

- Qualifying Kindergarten students who were screened during their Kindergarten year will begin service as soon as scores are available with written parent permission, and usually not later than March 1.
- Students in grades 1-11 qualifying during the January screening and selection window will begin services at the beginning of the subsequent fall semester with written parent permission.
- Transfer students will begin services as soon as scores are available, with written parent permission.

Process for Formal Reconsideration

After initial review of the data collected on each nominated student and notification of parents/guardians by the Campus Screening and Selection Committee, a formal reconsideration may be filed (Level I, Policy FNG-Local) with the campus principal.

Formal reconsideration (Level I) may be initiated by RRISD personnel, parents/guardians, students, and/or significant others in the child's life on behalf of students who do not initially meet qualifying criteria for the program. Formal reconsideration may be filed for the following reasons:

- The home language of the student is not English and the student in other ways exhibits the need for TAG services;
- The student has a disability, which may have impacted testing, as identified through special education ARD or 504 committees, and the student in other ways exhibits the need for TAG services;
- Extenuating circumstances (the student does not meet the established district standards and the person(s) requesting the reconsideration has other significant data that the selection committee can review)

A completed TAG Reconsideration Form, available from the campus, a letter requesting formal reconsideration, a description of the concern and evidence supporting the remedy sought must be filed with the campus principal within five (5) working days after placement recommendations have been communicated to the parent.

Within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the request for formal reconsideration, the principal shall schedule a meeting of the Campus Screening and Selection Committee. The person initiating the appeal shall appear before the committee in person and/or submit written testimony and evidence supporting the reconsideration.

Within ten (10) working days of the hearing, the Campus Screening and Selection Committee will make a decision and communicate it in writing to the person requesting the reconsideration. Should the person requesting reconsideration disagree with the Campus Screening and Selection Committee decision, a written request should be forwarded to the Superintendent within ten (10) working days following communication of the Committee's decision (Level II). The Superintendent or designee will appoint a hearing officer.

The Level II decision may be appealed to the Board of Trustees (Level III, Policy FNG- Local). The timeline, as outlined in the respective policy for Level III complaints, shall be followed.

Transfer Student Procedures

The Campus Screening and Selection Committee will be primarily responsible for the placement of transfer students. Students transferring into the district who bring written documentation of previous identification as Gifted and Talented in another district will be assessed within 30 school days of enrollment. If testing is declined at this time, the student may be nominated during the next district-wide nomination opportunity. Written documentation from the student's last district must be available to show the student was in an academic gifted program, not one for creativity, Honors or high ability students. If that documentation includes two screening instruments comparable to RRISD screening instruments that meet district criteria, the student may be temporarily placed in the TAG program. Parents must approve of the temporary placement. The student must meet district criteria to be placed or remain in the TAG program.

Annual Review

On an annual basis, the Campus Screening and Selection Committee evaluates an identified student's progress, completes an Annual Review Form, and recommends that a student proceed in the gifted program, be furloughed, or be exited.

Furlough

Students in the TAG programs may be furloughed at the request of the student, parent/guardian, or school personnel. A furlough may not be extended past one year. If the student is not ready to re-enter the program by the beginning of the following school year, the student must be exited from the program. Once a furlough is requested, a conference will be scheduled and the Furlough Form will be completed. The Campus Screening and Selection Committee must approve all requested furloughs.

Elementary and middle school furloughs are in effect for the remainder of the school year in which the furlough was initiated. In May, secondary students may request a furlough for the following school year. Secondary students, with schedule conflicts that prohibit their participation in TAG classes, are placed on furlough for the semester of the conflict.

Exit Procedures

Students placed in the Round Rock ISD's Talented and Gifted program may be exited when it is determined that it would be in the best interest of the student and/or the program to discontinue the student's participation.

One or more of the following conditions must be met:

- The student may, with parental permission, request to be removed from the program. In such cases, a conference between the parent/guardian, principal, TAG teacher, and the student (if appropriate) must be held before the student is exited. Appropriate documentation, signed by the parent/guardian and the principal is placed in the student's TAG record at the conclusion of this process. The student must remain out of the program for one school year and must be rescreened, tested, and requalify before re-entry into the program.

- The parent/guardian may request that the student be removed from the program. In such case, the procedure outlined above is followed.
- The TAG teachers, principal, or counselor may recommend the exiting of a student who, in their opinion, is not benefiting by continued participation in the program, or who may have extreme behavioral problems that distract from the education of others in the class. In such cases, a conference between the parent/guardian and appropriate school personnel will be held, and the student may be exited upon recommendation of the majority of the members of the Campus Screening and Selection Committee.
- A student is exited from the TAG Program if he/she fails to meet the criteria of the annual review, including attainment of satisfactory progress. Satisfactory progress is defined as demonstrable development of a student's abilities in higher level thinking skills, mastery of major concepts and skills of relevant disciplines, development of the skills necessary for research and independent study, and development of self-concept and leadership. Student progress in these areas will be measured by the Campus Screening and Selection Committee through the use of a variety of instruments (mastery of district standards, appropriate improvement of achievement test scores, student products, successful completion of the program components, etc.).
- If at any time a student is not performing at expected levels, the teacher sends a report to the parent/guardian no later than the mid-point of a reporting period or more often if necessary. Copies of all reports are filed in the TAG folder and reviewed by the Campus Screening and Selection Committee.

If a student's work or behavior does not improve, a conference is held with the student, his/her parent/guardian, the classroom teacher, assistant principal and/or principal, and other staff as appropriate. This is done at the end of a grading period or sooner, as needed. If exiting is considered, a written plan for improvement is developed. The school personnel, student, and parent/guardian work together to develop a Growth Plan to assure that the optimum situation is created for the student to improve. The plan specifies what the student must do to improve and what school personnel and parents will do to help.

At a time designated in the written plan, a re-evaluation of student progress is made relative to the expectations established for the student in cooperation with his/her parent/guardian and teachers. If the student has shown improvement, but not fully achieved expectations, another Growth Plan is completed with a new timeline.

If the student fails to make a reasonable amount of progress toward the goals and objectives in the plan, the Screening and Selection Committee, after review, will place the student in an appropriate regular school program. If exiting from the program is recommended, the principal will notify the parent/guardian who may request a conference and re-evaluation of the student's progress through the reconsideration process.

Students removed from the program must remain out of the program for one school year and must be rescreened, tested, and requalified before re-entry into the program.

Students exited from the program may be recommended by the Campus Screening and Selection Committee for other appropriate programs (e.g. at the high school level, the Advanced Placement programs or International Baccalaureate program).

Annual TAG Testing Timeline

July Assessment/testing for students entering grades 1-12 who moved into the district after the April 30th transfer student deadline for August placement.

Ongoing	Assessment/testing for students in grades 1-12 transferring into the district from another gifted program; must occur within 30 school days.
November	Nominations submitted to the campuses for January testing for students currently enrolled in grades K–11.
January	Assessment/testing for students currently enrolled in grades K–11.
April 30	Deadline for assessment/testing for students in grades 1-12 transferring into the district from another gifted program
May 1	Deadline for parent notification of assessment results for March placement of students in Kindergarten and August placement of students in grades 1–11 who tested in January.



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**PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION TO TEST
TALENTED AND GIFTED PROGRAM**

My child, _____ has my permission to be given the additional tests that are necessary for decisions about placement in the TAG Program. My signature also verifies I have received a copy of the RRISD TAG Identification Packet, which informs me about the TAG identification process and timelines.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Completed form due in school no later than _____.

