

# **Rusk Independent School District**

## **Gifted and Talented Manual**

**K-12**



**It is the policy of Rusk Independent School District not to discriminate based on sex, race, religion, disability, color, or national origin in any of its educational programs. Rusk Independent School District will take steps to assure that lack of English skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in any program.**

## **Definition of Gifted and Talented Students**

"Gifted and talented student" means a child or youth that 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. A "gifted and talented student" also exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area, possesses an unusual capacity for leadership, or excels in a specific academic field.

## **Position Statement**

The gifted and talented are those "for whom the typical in-grade learning experiences are insufficient because of the child's ability to learn at a faster pace, to handle abstract concepts with greater insight, and master high levels of content at an earlier age than grade-level peers."

The gifted and talented are found in all races, socioeconomic groups, geographic locals and environments. The responsibility of a school district in a democratic society is to provide for the needs of all students, including the unique needs of the gifted/talented.

Rusk ISD recognizes that there are those children who, having a sufficient need for a qualitatively differentiated curriculum, can be identified as gifted and talented. The United States Department of Education and the Texas Education Agency have determined that three to five percent of all children exhibit achievement or potential for achievement in the areas of creative and productive thinking, intellectual ability, specific subject matter, leadership, and/or achievement in the visual and performing arts. Therefore, these students can be referred to as a gifted/talented segment of the population.

Rusk ISD has every reason to believe it serves a normal population and that three to five percent of a local population are gifted students. Rusk ISD, therefore, will provide a program for the educational development of the students who are identified as gifted and talented.

## **Goals**

Rusk ISD will provide the opportunity for gifted and talented students to:

- Increase creative thinking and problem-solving skills
- Develop skills in logical reasoning and critical thinking
- Extend skills in research and independent study
- Provide an array of challenging learning opportunities
- Provide an opportunity to accelerate in the areas of strengths

## **Program Objectives**

Rusk ISD will:

- Assure all students equal opportunities to be screened, identified, and served in the Gifted and Talented program
- Utilize a differentiated program that will meet the diversified needs of the identified students
- Provide a learning environment that will enable students to develop skills in higher orders of intellectual activity
- Develop the skills for initiating, planning, and conducting independent research
- Provide opportunity for academically talented students to associate with and share with peers of similar intellectual abilities

## Program Description

Rusk ISD Gifted and Talented program is designed for students who are identified as gifted and talented according to Rusk ISD's identification procedure.

Emphasis will be placed on providing a differentiated learning environment and activities that foster development of higher order thinking, problem solving, and communication skills.

## Identification

Identification criteria for gifted and talented students is established in the Board-approved program for the gifted and talented. The criteria shall be specific to the state definition of gifted and talented and shall ensure the fair assessment of students with special needs, such as the culturally different, the economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. The committee will consider culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment procedures to ensure equity of opportunity for all students. Accommodations will be made for LEP and ESL students which may include, though not be limited to, nonverbal IQ test, test instructions in Spanish, and parent interviews in Spanish.

Written parental consent shall be obtained before any special testing or individual assessment is conducted as part of the screening and identification process.

Identification and selection for the gifted and talented program will be determined through a process of three steps:

1. **Nomination**
2. **Assessment**
3. **Selection**

**Nominations** will be obtained annually from parents, guardians, grandparents, teachers, counselors, peers, district personnel, self, or other community members. A completed referral form will be required for each nominated student. Kindergarten nominations will be made at the beginning of the second semester in January in order to identify gifted and talented students and begin service by March 1<sup>st</sup>. In order to offer services for the G/T Program on an ongoing basis, nominations of other students will be accepted at any time during the school year.

**Assessment** will be conducted annually on each student nominated for the gifted and talented program. Screening will be completed in a timely manner, usually within 45 working days, although occasionally, additional days may be necessary. Criteria may include, though not be limited to the following:

- Achievement test
- Ability test
- Student product
- Teacher survey
- Parent survey

The screening process will take into account all culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment procedures and will provide for Spanish interpretation for parents when necessary.

The **selection committee** will review and determine those students who qualify for placement in the gifted program. The selection committee, who has been trained in nature and needs of gifted learners, consists of the principal, the gifted and talented teacher, and counselor. The committee will make sound, professional decisions on student placement. The Rusk ISD matrix and perceived student educational need will be used to consider students for placement in the gifted and talented program.

Parents will receive written notification of placement or non-placement of their child in the gifted program. Parents who do not agree with the decision of the selection committee may appeal the decision to the committee, at which time the selection process may be reviewed. Measures will be taken to assure that this process is culturally and linguistically appropriate for all. Minutes will be kept of every selection committee meeting.

### **Transfer Students**

When a student identified as gifted by a previous school district transfers into Rusk ISD, the student's records shall be reviewed by the selection committee to determine if placement in Rusk ISD's program for gifted and talented students is appropriate.

The committee shall make its determination within 30 days of the student's enrollment in Rusk ISD and shall base its decision on the transferred records, observation reports of Rusk ISD teachers who instruct the student, and student and parent conferences.

### **Furloughs**

Students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the gifted and talented program 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 student and/or parent.

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 gifted program, be removed from the program, or be placed on another furlough.

### **Exit**

Student performance in the gifted and talented program shall be monitored. A student shall be removed from the program at any time the selection committee determines it is in the student's best interest. If a student or parent requests removal from the program, the selection committee shall meet with the parent and student before honoring the request.

### **Reassessment**

If Rusk ISD reassesses students in the gifted and talented program, the reassessment inventory shall be based on a student's performance in response to services and shall occur no more than once in elementary grades, once in middle school grades, and once in high school grades.

### **Appeals**

Parents or students may appeal any final decision of the selection committee regarding selection for or removal from the gifted program. Appeal shall be made first to the selection committee. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with FNG (LOCAL) beginning at Level Two.

## Curriculum and Instruction

The curriculum consists of an array of learning opportunities that emphasize the four core areas and will be differentiated from the regular curriculum. A continuum of learning experiences that leads to advance level products and/or performances is provided. The curriculum is based on the following:

- Activities that emphasize the development of higher order thinking skills
- Critical and creativity thinking skills
- Development of oral and written communication skills
- Active involvement of the learner
- Individual needs, abilities and interests
- Develop knowledge and skills of themes, generalizations and problem solving which include investigation and exploration of real-world problems
- Develop an understanding of perspectives
- Development of independent learning skills

## Program Service Design

Gifted and Talented services at Rusk ISD are designed for students who are identified as gifted and talented according Rusk ISD's identification procedures. Program service design will include one or more of the following options:

1. **Pull-out:** Part-time services in a classroom, other than the student's regular class, that take place on a regular schedule provided by a gifted/talented 30-hour foundational and 6-hour update trained teacher.
2. **Push-in:** A gifted/talented 30-hour foundational and 6-hour update trained teacher provides occasional services to a student while the student is in their regular classroom.
3. **Full-time Inclusion:** The student receives a majority of their core subjects from a specific teacher or teachers with gifted/talented 30-hour foundational and 6-hour update training, but the classes may include peers who are not identified as gifted /talented.

## Primary and Elementary (K-5)

G/T students at the primary and elementary levels will participate in a structured program (pull-out, push-in, or full-time inclusion) that is modified, and/or accommodated to meet their individual strengths and interests and is based on the four core areas. Out-of-school options such as those provided by Region 7 Education Service Center that may be provided include:

- a. Imagination Fair
- b. Primary Robotics
- c. 4th - 6th Robotics
- d. 4th - 6th Innovative Inventions
- e. 6th – Model United Nations

## **Middle School - High School**

G/T students at the middle and high school levels may participate in inclusionary programs which are structured, modified, and/or accommodated to meet their individual strengths and interests and are based in the four core areas. These programs may include Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes.

Opportunities for students to participate in Out-of-school options such as those provided by Region 7 Education Service Center may include:

- a. 7th - 12th Robotics
- b. 7th - 12th Model United Nations
- c. 9th - 12th Mock Trial (this option is available for gifted students as well as the district selects.

Teachers who provide services to the gifted and talented students receive an initial 30 hours of gifted training. These teachers also receive six hours annually of professional development in gifted education. The staff development calendar for this six-hour update runs from August 1<sup>st</sup> through July 31<sup>st</sup>.

Administrators and counselors who have authority for the gifted program have a minimum of six hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of the gifted learner.

## **Program Evaluations**

The gifted program shall be evaluated annually. Each campus conducts a survey which is campus specific and meets the particular need of that campus.

## **Family and Community Involvement**

Rusk Independent School District is proud of our family and community involvement with our Gifted/Talented Program, as well as all other areas. The local board, administration, and teachers encourage community and family participation with all G/T activities. Parents are informed of the program, encouraged to participate in activities, and given input when their children are being considered and/or served by the program.

Parents and community members are always welcome on Rusk Independent School District Campuses to view special projects and products done by the G/T students.