

**La Grange  
Independent School District**



**2023 - 2024  
Gifted and Talented Handbook**

## **TALENT POOL/LEAP PROGRAM GOALS FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION IN LA GRANGE ISD**

- To develop a positive self-concept that meets emotional and intellectual needs to enable students to interact effectively with peers, community, and society and become productive citizens
- To develop critical, creative, and evaluative thinking skills that lead to production of advanced level products and problem solving ability
- To reinforce self-directed learning skills through investigating advanced, more complex subject matter to help them become independent life-long learners
- The population of the gifted program will reflect the population of the district.

### **LEAP STUDENT PERFORMANCE GOALS**

- All students participating in LEAP (grades 3-11) will master all state assessment objectives annually with 90% of identified gifted students attaining the advanced academic performance level.
- All students participating in the gifted program (grades 9-12) will complete a Pre-AP, Advanced Placement, or Dual Credit level course in at least one subject each semester. 90% of all LEAP students enrolled in AP classes will take and pass an AP exam with a score of 3 or better.

## **SERVICE DESCRIPTION**

Research has shown that gifted and talented students need to be part of a learning environment that allows for independent study, group work with peers of like ability, and group work with peers who represent a heterogeneous population. Therefore, the Talent Pool/LEAP program is one of a special grouping design in which students will be pulled out of their regular classroom to go to a resource room for a certain period of time in grades K-6. The Talent Pool program for grades K-2 is designed to meet the needs of both gifted students and students with the potential to be gifted in the areas of general intellectual ability, specific academic ability, and creative and productive thinking. Both identified gifted students and students whose scores on the identification criteria cause them to come close to being identified as gifted are served in Talent Pool. LEAP services for grades 3-12 serve only identified gifted students in the areas of general intellectual ability, specific academic ability, and/or creative and productive thinking.

### **Grades K-6**

Students identified as Talent Pool/LEAP in grades K-6 will receive services through a pullout program. Interdisciplinary units will include all four core academic areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies.

### **Grades 7-8**

Identified Gifted and Talented students in seventh and eighth grades will be served by a trained GT teacher during normal class periods. These students will receive advanced instruction in core content areas through critical thinking skills, problem solving and content. GT students will be clustered in their core content classes with at least 4 other

students so that they can interact with their peers.

An accelerated math program enables qualifying seventh graders to take Pre-Algebra, and eighth graders to take Algebra I to receive high school credit. In addition, Advanced Placement classes are offered for grades 7 and 8.

Emphasis in all programs is on providing a learning environment and activities which will foster the development of critical and creative thinking skills, problem solving skills, communication skills, and independent study/research skills. In addition, each child will be helped to develop a healthy self-concept and relationship with peers. Out of school options include UIL academics, field trips, writing and speech competitions, and community service projects. Summer study opportunities are shared with students and parents.

### **Grades 9-12**

La Grange High School students will be serviced in LEAP during Honors or AP classes or during concurrent dual credit or advanced classes. Students work with college-level material in AP classes and are expected to take the Advanced Placement test produced by the College Board. Students who meet specific criteria set by each college or university on an AP exam receive credit for specific college courses. La Grange ISD offers the following Honors and AP classes:

|                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Honors English I       | Honors Biology   |
| Honors English II      | AP World History |
| Honors World Geography | AP US History    |
| AP English III         | AP Biology       |
| AP English IV          | AP Chemistry     |
| AP Computer Science I  | AP Calculus      |
| Honors Geometry        | Honors Algebra 2 |
| Honors Pre-Calculus    | AP Physics       |

Extracurricular offerings provide additional opportunities for students to participate in and pursue individual interests. Students may participate in UIL academic competitions, foreign language competitions, fine arts competitions in music, art, and drama, and leadership development programs. High school students are eligible to take credit by examination and earn credit toward graduation. The La Grange High School counselors supervise the credit by exam programs. Students shall request approval from the principal or counselor prior to taking the exam. Students must score 90 or higher to pass the exam to receive course credit.

## **IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

Identification and selection of students for services is determined through a comprehensive process consisting of three steps: nomination, screening, and selection. Nomination involves the formation of a talent pool from which selection will be made. Screening is the process designed to identify students for selection. Selection involves consideration of each nominated and screened student to determine if services are appropriate. Identification must be conducted by a committee and through the use of multiple and specific criteria which include both objective and subjective measures. No single measure can be the determining factor for acceptance or denial of entry into the program.

## **GUIDELINES FOR NOMINATION**

- Nominations are accepted from any person familiar with the student's abilities, potential performance, or past records and include the following:
  - Members of the La Grange ISD professional staff including administrators, counselors, and teachers
  - Parents/Guardians, community members, peers
  - Students may nominate themselves.
- Nominations are due by November 15 for fall kindergarten screening and due by February 1 for spring screening in grades K-11.
- Students will be screened no more than once during a twelve month period.
- Students must be passing all classes and have passed the most recent state assessment to be eligible for nomination.

Nominations are accepted for students currently enrolled in La Grange ISD. A nomination period prior to the district's testing is advertised on each campus, on the district website, and in the community through the local newspapers and radio stations. Nomination forms are available from each campus office, the school website and from the district GT Coordinator. Students who are new to La Grange ISD and have been previously identified for gifted services in another district will be screened for services through LEAP for La Grange ISD. New students who attended a school where there were not gifted and talented services available and who enroll in La Grange ISD before the start of the school year may be screened before the beginning of the school year. Students who attended a school where there were not gifted services and who enroll after the start of the school year may be screened during the spring assessment.

## **SCREENING**

Criteria to identify gifted and talented students are board approved and specific to the state definition of gifted and talented. Criteria shall ensure the fair assessment of students with special needs, such as the culturally different, the economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. Written parental permission is required before screening or any special testing begins. Students are screened by collecting both qualitative data such as teacher perception scales, product portfolios, and creativity assessments and quantitative data such as ability tests and achievement tests. A student profile is used to identify those students who perform at a remarkable high level of accomplishment relative to their age, peers, experience, or environment. Assessment instruments may include, but are not limited to:

- Ability testing with a nonverbal logical reasoning test
- Achievement testing
- Behavioral checklists completed by teachers and/or parents
- Creativity testing
- Student Portfolio

Possible tests could include, but are not limited to, the Iowa Tests, Sages-3 Reasoning, Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, Torrance Test of Creativity-Figural, Slocumb/Payne Teacher Perception Inventory, and the Renzulli Hartman Scale for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students.

## **SELECTION**

Students are selected for the Talent Pool/LEAP services by a campus selection committee composed of at least 3 people from the following: teacher, counselor, administrator, and GT Coordinator. Each committee member has received a minimum of 6-hours of gifted training in the nature and needs of gifted students and assessment of gifted students. Each campus selection committee determines qualification for gifted services based on the educational needs of each student. The decision is based on the committee's observation of the preponderance of evidence on the student's profile in alignment with board approved established criteria. Students should have a preponderance of three scores in the superior range of 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher to be identified as needing gifted services. Students with two scores in the superior range of 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher will be given a provisional status in the GT program. Students who have been formally screened and demonstrated potential for advanced ability with at least two scores in the superior range are placed in Talent Pool for grades 1-2. At the end of second grade, Talent Pool students will be reassessed to determine future placement. Students in grades K and 1 who had a preponderance of scores in the superior range will be identified as LEAP and will not retest at the end of second grade. Prior to receiving services, a student must have a Permission to Enroll form signed by a parent on file.

## **APPEALS**

A parent may appeal the final placement or exit decision. A written appeal directed to the GT Coordinator must be made within 15 days of the notification of placement. The campus selection committee will re-evaluate all testing information, examine additional information provided by the student and parents, make a decision concerning the student's qualification for gifted services, and inform the parent of the decision in writing or conference with the parent. Subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with FNG (LOCAL) beginning at Level Two.

## **FURLOUGHES**

A furlough defined as a temporary "leave of absence" from gifted services to meet the needs of an identified GT student. Parents, students, teachers, or administrators may request a furlough for educational, psychological, or personal reasons. A furlough may also be used for students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the gifted services. If a student in 7-12 grade chooses to not enroll in an honors, advanced, AP, or dual credit class for the year, they will be furloughed. If they choose to not enroll again the following year, they will be exited from the GT program. If a child fails the state mandated test, he/she will be placed on furlough for one year until passing the next year's test. If the child fails the test again, he/she will be considered for exit from LEAP.

## **EXIT**

Students in LEAP may be exited based upon a recommendation of the parent, teacher, counselor, or principal that the student is not progressing satisfactorily. Students may be exited for poor performance or for not participating in advanced level classes in grades 9-12. The campus selection committee will review issues before a final decision is made in the student's best interests. An exited student must be reassessed and meet current district criteria before reentering LEAP.

When a student is exited, application to receive services may be initiated the following academic year through the regularly scheduled identification process to meet current La Grange ISD identification criteria.