

Christoval Independent School District



District Plan for the Education Of Gifted and Talented Students 2014-2015

Approved by School Board April 14, 2014

State Goal for Services for Gifted/Talented Students

“Students who participate in services designed for gifted/talented students will demonstrate skills 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. High school graduates who have participated in services for gifted/talented students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.” (2009)

District Goals for Services for Gifted/Talented Students

The staff of Christoval ISD believes that ALL students can learn. We believe that our school’s purpose is to educate all students to high academic performance while fostering positive growth in social/emotional behaviors and attitudes. We accept the responsibility to teach ALL students in a safe and disciplined environment.

The Christoval ISD Gifted and Talented (GT) Program recognizes that academically gifted children often require a different learning climate and/or an accelerated curriculum. These students learn at a faster rate, with greater depth and intensity, and require a more stimulating curriculum. The Christoval ISD GT program seeks to identify and provide gifted learners with the appropriate classroom instruction and services that help them reach their fullest potential.

Christoval ISD will strive to:

- promote self-directed learning through activities that encourage the students to communicate using critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving;
- provide appropriate opportunities to challenge the students and expand their area(s) of giftedness;
- develop the students’ understanding of their unique gifts through the interrelationship of self, peers, parents, and community to become responsible, lifelong learners able to exert a positive influence on society;
- foster the individuality of students and encourage expression of their individuality and creativity in their innovative products and/or performances.

State and Local Definition

The state of Texas defines a gifted student as a child or youth who 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 and who:

- exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area;

- possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or
- excels in a specific academic field.

(TEXAS EDUCATION CODE CHAPTER 29. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS Subchapter D. Education Programs for Gifted and Talented Students)

The Christoval ISD GT Program serves students who are currently identified as gifted and talented. Their giftedness may surface as an outstanding aptitude in one or more of the areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies. Learning experiences will be differentiated by content, process, and products while addressing the specific affective needs of the gifted learner in grades kindergarten through twelve.

Characteristics of the Academically-Gifted Students

Listed below are some differences to help you distinguish between a bright child and a gifted learner (Janice Szabos, *Challenge*). The list below does not describe all the traits and attitudes of gifted children, as all children are diverse in their characteristics; however, it is a good reference of distinguishing characteristics.

Bright Child

1. Knows the answers
2. Is interested
3. Is attentive
4. Has good ideas
5. Works hard
6. Answers the questions
7. Top group
8. Listens with interest
9. Learns with ease
10. 6-8 repetitions for mastery
11. Understands ideas
12. Enjoys peers
13. Grasps the meaning
14. Completes assignments
15. Is receptive

Gifted Learner

1. Asks the questions
2. Is highly curious
3. Is mentally and physically involved
4. Has wild silly ideas
5. Plays around, yet tests well
6. Discusses in detail; elaborates
7. Beyond the group
8. Shows strong feelings and opinions
9. Already knows
10. 1-2 repetitions for mastery
11. Constructs abstractions
12. Prefers adults
13. Draws inferences
14. Initiates projects
15. Is intense

Program Design

The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students requires schools to provide gifted and talented students with the opportunity to collaborate with others of similar ability, work independently, and work with other students. Therefore, Christoval ISD has designed its gifted program in the following manner:

1. Nominations

Nominations will be accepted from parents, teachers, community members, faculty/staff, and students themselves. Nominations will be solicited in the spring of each year via newspaper releases, school print publications, parent letters, and school

web publications. All kindergarten students are automatically considered for gifted/talented and other advanced level students.

2. Assessment

After parent permission has been obtained, all nominated students will be assessed using multiple measures, both qualitative and quantitative to determine their aptitude, performance, and productive thinking abilities. Measures will vary depending on the grade of the nominated student.

Assessment tools may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- achievement tests;
- intelligence tests;
- behavioral checklists completed by teachers and parents, and student work products, if available.

Additionally, Christoval ISD reserves the right to request additional information where accumulated data is inconclusive the school counselor(s)/campus GT coordinator are responsible for the administration of the testing measures and for the maintenance of the candidate files.

Private testing is not considered for the screening or identification process.

The district shall not perform reassessments; however, the district will re-evaluate identified GT students in fifth grade during the spring semester. This re-evaluation will determine the students' strengths in an effort to make appropriate educational placement decisions for the secondary level.

3. Placement

The Selection Committee consists of at least three local district educators who have received at least 30 hours of GT Training in the nature and needs of the gifted student.

The committee may request additional information such as a portfolio of student work, an interview with the student, and/or an additional critical or creative thinking assessment in order to determine how best to meet the student's needs.

Data from the screening measures will be placed on Christoval ISD's Gifted and Talented Profile. During the placement meeting, each student's profile will be presented to the committee anonymously. The committee recommends placement only for students whose data reflect that the GT Program is the most appropriate educational setting for them. This is determined by a preponderance of evidence. The committee does not focus on any single measure. Screening procedures are designed to assure that all students, including those with special needs, those from different cultures, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are provided equal access to the program.

Placement in the GT program is voluntary and requires written permission of the parents or legal guardian(s). Notification of the committee's decisions will take place when campus committees have met and are ready to remit notification letters. Students not placed in the program may be re-nominated the following year and will follow the same screening procedures. This allows for further observation and increased student maturity.

4. Appeals

Parents or students may appeal any final decision of the selection committee regarding selection for or removal from the GT program by contacting the campus counselor/GT campus coordinator prior to the start of the next school year. If possible, additional information will be collected by the counselor/campus GT coordinator and presented to the selection committee. The selection committee will examine the new data along with the data previously collected. The parents and student will be notified of the committee's decision and, if not satisfied, may appeal to the superintendent. The final decision will rest with the superintendent.

5. Transfers

Students who transfer into Christoval ISD who have formerly been identified as gifted and talented will be placed in the GT program based on conditional acceptance until supporting documentation showing previous GT placement has been received. Within six weeks of enrollment, the selection committee shall determine placement based upon the transferred records, observation reports of the district teachers, and, if possible, student and parent conferences. On occasions where previous school's documentation and teacher observation are conflicting, Christoval ISD reserves the right to request additional information and extend the six-week timeline before the placement committee makes a decision.

6. Furloughs

A furlough is a period of time in which a student participating in the program may take a leave of absence from program services. A furlough for one semester may be granted to a student when extenuating circumstances prevent the student from being a productive member of the GT program.

Extenuating circumstances might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- death of a loved one
- family divorce
- illness or injury
- family separation
- scheduling conflicts
- the placement of a student in an alternative setting that would require absences from the program.

Students who wish to receive a furlough should contact the campus counselor/campus GT coordinator to discuss the reasoning behind the request. Furlough requests will be

considered by the placement committee at the appropriate level. The committee's decision will be documented in the student's cumulative folder.

If a student does not return for readmission to the GT Program at the end of the furlough period, the student will be exited from the program. The exited student may apply for admission to the GT Program again at any time in the future, at which time the application will be processed following standard screening and placement options.

7. Exit Procedures

A request to exit from the GT Program may be initiated by the student, a parent, or the selection committee. The person initiating the request to exit must complete an exit form and identify the reason for the request.

Reasons for initiating an exit request may include, but are not limited to any one, or a combination of the following:

- failure to meet a satisfactory standard (70) for two six week periods in each class that the student qualified as gifted;
- failure to demonstrate mastery in any of the four core areas of the STAAR that the student qualified as gifted;
- failure to demonstrate at the secondary level, mastery in any core area of End of Course tests that the student qualified as gifted; student and parent/legal guardian request

The request to exit form is submitted to the campus counselor/campus GT coordinator who will then forward a letter to the parent/legal guardian to notify them of the request. After the counselor/campus GT coordinator meets with the student and the parent, the appropriate placement committee will convene and determine action. All involved parties will be notified of the results.

If, during a six-week period, a student is not progressing satisfactorily in the program, the student will meet with the campus counselor/campus GT coordinator to discuss his/her progress and possible intervention strategies. If improvement is not noted after the next six weeks, the student, along with his/her parent, will once again meet with the counselor/campus GT coordinator, and a growth contract will be written specifying areas of concern and improvements required.

If the student has not complied with the terms of the contract after the next six weeks period, the student may be exited from the GT Program. Students who are exited will be eligible for nomination following district guidelines each subsequent year for identification for GT.

Program Description

Christoval ISD will develop appropriate and challenging learning experiences in grades kindergarten through twelve in language arts, math, science, and social studies based on TEKS standards. The focus will be on creative thinking, analysis, research and advanced-level products

and/or performances. Opportunities will be provided to accelerate in area(s) of student strengths. The school district will inform parents of available opportunities. Christoval ISD ensures that no more than 15 percent of state funds allocated for gifted and talented education are spent on indirect costs as defined in the Financial Accounting Resource Guide.

The Gifted and Talented Program Christoval Elementary School

The classroom teacher will differentiate instruction to maximize the advanced abilities of the GT student. GT identified students will also be given the opportunity to participate in a pull-out program in which they come together at least once a week with the campus GT coordinator. The pull-out program allows GT students the opportunity for enrichment experiences that expand and extend learning. The program inside the classroom provides differentiated instruction and an array of learning opportunities emphasizing content in the four core areas in their regular classroom. Out-of-school opportunities are available to allow students to explore interests outside of the regular school day.

As part of the GT program, all GT identified students will be expected to participate in the following enrichment opportunities that are offered by the school:

- UIL Academic Competitions
GT identified students will participate and compete in the District Academic UIL event.
- Field Trips
The pull-out program may incorporate various field trips to enrich the GT program. If a field trip is scheduled, the GT students are expected to attend.
- Science Fair
GT identified students will participate and compete in the campus Science Fair.

The Gifted and Talented Program Christoval Junior High/Christoval High School

At the secondary level, all students identified as gifted and talented have the option of advanced classes (Honors, Pre AP, or AP) in all core areas when available. These advanced classes contain students who have been identified as GT as well as other high achieving students. All other students are mixed heterogeneously. The GT students are given assignments that require them to work alone, with others, or as a class.

The classroom teacher will differentiate instruction to maximize the advanced abilities of the GT student. The program inside the classroom provides differentiated instruction and an array of learning opportunities emphasizing content in the four core areas in their regular classroom. Out-of-school opportunities are available to allow students to explore interests outside of the regular school day.

As part of the GT program, all GT identified students will be expected to participate in the following enrichment opportunities that are offered by the school:

- UIL Academic Competitions
GT identified students will participate and compete in the District Academic UIL event.
- Field Trips
If a field trip is scheduled, the GT students are expected to attend.

Christoval Middle School – Beginning in 2014-2015, middle school students can advance one year in the core class(es) of their identified strength. When available, GT students can enroll in PAP or Honors classes.

Christoval High School – Pre AP courses offered in the secondary schools are rigorous and demanding. These accelerated, college preparatory classes will provide challenging research opportunities for students with high interest in academic exploration and will include numerous out-of-class assignments. Pre AP classes are designed to extend and enrich the content of the regular curriculum while preparing students for success in Advanced Placement (AP) classes. AP courses are sponsored and approved by The College Board. Each AP course has a curriculum of college-level work taught at the high school level by specially trained teachers. AP courses are designed to give students an opportunity to place out of college course work by scoring within the college accepted range on a national exam given in May of each year. Gifted and talented high school students will be expected to take Pre AP and AP courses whenever these courses are offered in the area that they have been identified as gifted.

Christoval High School offers Dual Credit Enrollment through Howard College. When AP courses are not available, GT students may enroll in Howard College to receive college credit while in high school. Dual Credit enrollment is a program that allows high school students to enroll in college courses while still attending high school. Courses are taken in place in of the normal course load at high school. High school as well as college credit may be earned upon successful completion of the course.

Students enrolled in Howard College will be eligible to be awarded credit toward high school graduation for completing certain college-level courses. The process of earning high school and college credit simultaneously is called Dual Credit.

Area school districts have identified specific courses at Howard College for which high school credit will be granted upon successful completion of the college course with a minimum grade established by each school. Year-long high school courses typically require a two-semester college course sequence. Semester long high school courses are generally associated with a one-semester college course.

Curriculum and Instruction

Differentiated instruction is required for students identified as gifted/talented in the state of Texas. Where advanced classes are not offered, students will have educational experiences

commensurate with their areas of strength that are qualitatively different from the general education program. GT students are taught and assigned work that matches the student's instructional level in his/her identified areas. Modified curriculum focuses on depth, complexity, problem solving, thinking skills (higher level, critical, creative, and cognitive), questioning, and real-world application of core knowledge and skills. Student-selected topics of interest enhance the student's learning. Curriculum modification and instructional differentiation should focus on production, allowing students to exhibit their learning through abstract and concrete products. Since GT curriculum is inherently individual and unique, Christoval ISD recognizes the need to provide teachers of the gifted and talented with dedicated time to develop and refine an appropriately differentiated curriculum. Therefore, Christoval ISD will allocate funds to provide these teachers with release time for curriculum development. Christoval ISD will work closely with Education Service Center specialists to develop, refine, and evaluate its curriculum for GT students. Working through each campus site-based decision making committee, further assignments and tasks will be assessed and implemented for curriculum development for GT.

Professional Development

All teachers serving GT students will have the state-mandated 30 hours of GT training. These initial hours will be accepted from Education Service Center Institutes or through university or college credit. Teachers will be expected to acquire six hours of advanced training annually. The staff development may be used in coordination with the curriculum development days described above. Administrators and counselors are required six hours of training in the nature and needs of gifted and talented students and program options.

Family-Community Involvement

Because education for the academically talented requires a strong partnership between parents and teachers, and cooperation with the community, the Gifted and Talented Program will promote the active involvement and support of parents and community through the following:

- Parents and community members will participate in the identification process by nominating prospective students for the program;
- Parents and community members will be invited to serve as resources and mentors for the program;
- Information regarding the program will be dispersed through school print publications, newspaper releases, parent letters, and school web sites;
- Parents will have the opportunity to participate in the GT Advisory Committee and have input in program organization;
- Parents will be given the opportunity to complete a program evaluation survey each year; and/or
- Parents will be given the opportunity to increase their awareness of the unique qualities of a gifted child.