

Palestine Independent School District Gifted and Talented Program

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Mission Statement

The mission of Palestine Independent School District is to foster relationships that excite, engage, and empower our students and community to achieve excellence.

Core Values

*P*ositive Attitudes

*I*ntegrity

*S*hared Responsibility

*D*edication to Excellence

District Goals

1. Educate, empower, and communicate with all stakeholders to increase STAAR scores and provide a solid foundation in the core academic areas with an emphasis on math/science and cross curricular writing skills to increase state assessment measures.
2. Attract and retain a highly qualified faculty and provide all teachers with staff development that assures all state mandates regarding faculty training requirements and all priority district needs are met.
3. Maintain a safe and orderly environment creating an atmosphere conducive to learning including facility upgrades to support a high quality learning environment.
4. Increase positive attitude of School District throughout the Community by fostering Community Partnerships.
5. Implement HB 5 in order to foster innovative, collaborative learning experiences through district wide STEAM education, College Readiness, and CTE certifications.

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Program Overview

Consistent with TEC 29 and the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students adopted June 2019, Palestine Independent School District has developed and approved written policies and procedures for identifying and serving gifted and talented students. As a district we subscribe to the state goal for services for gifted/talented students:

Students who participate in services designed for gifted/talented student 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.

PISD strives to identify students at every grade who “show the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment.” These students express high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, and/or artistic area and/or a particularly strong capacity for leadership.

As identified in the Texas State Plan for the Gifted/Talented Students, the following six areas are integral components of the PISD Gifted/Talented program:

1. Fidelity of Services
2. Student Assessment
3. Service Design
4. Curriculum and Instruction
5. Professional Learning
6. Family/Community Involvement

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Fidelity of Services

School districts comply with gifted/talented accountability standards and monitor the effectiveness of assessment and services for gifted/talented students.

Compliance

Palestine ISD strives to ensure that all components of assessment and services provided to identified G/T students are in compliance with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented students. (19 TAC 89.5)

Curriculum and Instruction

Development and delivery of curriculum for gifted/talented students is monitored by the Instructional Services Office. Resources used for instruction are reviewed and evaluated for appropriate differentiated learning.

Evaluation of the G/T Program

Ongoing evaluation is an important component of a program that continues to meet the needs of the changing population and times. Successful programs seek to evaluate the growth of the program based on information from numerous sources. Administrators, parents, and regular education teachers complete an annual evaluation of the program. G/T students complete an evaluation on the effectiveness of the program. The District Action Team, along with Instructional Services administrative staff, reviews the results from the evaluations to look at suggestions for improvement that arise. These evaluations help guarantee that the program options continue to meet the expressed goals of G/T education.

Funding

Palestine ISD follows the state guidelines for funding gifted/talented student education in both the federal and local funds received. The effectiveness of funds for programs and services is reviewed annually.

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Student Assessment

Gifted/talented identification procedures and progress monitoring allow students to demonstrate and develop their diverse talents and abilities.

Written policies for gifted/talented services are approved by district board of trustees and are available on the Palestine Independent School District website under EHBB Local. Prior to the nomination phase, campuses will provide an overview for families regarding the assessment procedures and services offered for gifted/talented students in the language that families can understand.

Nomination Phase

Nominations for the Gifted/Talented program for grades K-11 are solicited from parents, teachers, community members and students. Parents and community members may pick up nomination forms from any school counselor. Nomination phases are announced in the local newspaper, through campus and district newsletters, on social media including Facebook, Instagram, and through the PISD website. Parents of nominated students must sign a “Permission to Test” form before further considerations are made. All forms and letters used in the G/T program are provided in both English and Spanish and are district specific.

Kindergarten

At the end of the Pre-K school year, students are nominated to be included in the LAUNCH program which is the program that is used to serve all GT students in grades K-5 and is used in early Kindergarten to provide enrichment. All kindergarten students are provided enrichment through Genius Hour. Formal identification for gifted/talented services takes place in the spring of the Kindergarten year and, if selected, students are served as part of the GT program.

Grades 1-11

Nomination for students in grades 1-11 is scheduled for the fall of the school year. Students may be already served in the LAUNCH Program or may be found in a regular educational setting.

Screening Phase

Once the Nomination Phase ends, campus counselors begin the Screening Phase by collecting data as outlined below. Parents are notified prior to each test administration and/or screening process. Screening assessments, which have been suggested for use by the “Texas Association of Gifted and Talented”, are available for students with

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linguistic or cultural differences. The screening instruments consist of the following objective (quantitative) and subjective (qualitative) instruments:

- Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) - Achievement Test
- Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) - Intellectual Abilities Test
- Student Portfolio - Examples of original student work
- Additional tests as needed
 - Raven's Progressive Matrices - Nonverbal Test of Fluid Intelligence
 - Creativity Assessment Packet by Pro-Ed - Creativity

Selection Phase

The campus counselor is responsible for collecting data as outlined in the district-wide screening calendar. Once the tests have been administered and scored, the counselor transfers the data to blind matrices. The blind matrices (matrices without student names) are submitted to the District Screening Committee that is comprised of teachers, counselors, and administrators who have received training in the area of gifted education. The campus counselor has the responsibility to recommend that individual tests be administered in cases where data seems to indicate that a child's scores are not indicative of his/her true potential because of physical or academic impairments or linguistic or cultural differences. In such a case, the counselor selects the measure that most clearly meets the needs of the child and scores from that measure are added to the matrix prior to final consideration.

Once all blind matrices are completed, they are given to the District Screening Committee for review. This committee determines the cut-off score for placement into the district's G/T program. A cut-off score is determined by compiling all matrix score totals for a grade level in ranked order. The committee identifies the cut-off score based on the "natural break" of scores as reflected in the matrices for K-5 students due to the large number of students screened. As determined by the PISD Board of Trustees, the District Screening Committee has the final decision making authority for the placement of students.

Placement Phase

Campus counselors will notify parents of those students meeting program criteria. Parents are asked to sign a "Placement form" stating that they agree to have their child placed in the G/T program and to receive services. Parents receive notice in writing in a language they can understand.

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Appeals

Parents may appeal the decision of the District Screening Committee by submitting a letter to their child's campus principal within five (5) working days of receiving the committee's written decision. Parents are given an opportunity to first visit with the campus principal and counselor to discuss their child's assessment results. If parents then want to meet with the District Screening Committee, a conference will be scheduled. At that time, parents may present additional data for consideration by the screening committee. The decision of the committee is communicated in writing to the parents within five (5) working days. As directed by the PISD Board of Trustees, the District Selection Committee has the final decision making authority regarding program placement.

Furloughs

Once students are identified as Gifted and Talented, they remain in the program through the twelfth grade unless parents request, in writing, that their student be exited from the program. Identified students are also allowed to request furloughs. Students may be granted a leave of absence from the G/T program for a specified period of time. If the student's parents and/or the student decides to re-enter the G/T program, they may do so at the first appropriate time such as at the beginning of the six weeks or semester period.

Exits

Some students may not be adequately served nor appropriately identified through the PISD Gifted/Talented program. Discipline and poor performance are not grounds for automatic dismissal. If a student consistently has difficulty in the program, the teacher, student, parent, campus counselor, or campus administrator may request that a conference be held to discuss the problems in an effort to provide intervention strategies and to determine the nature of the problems. The recommendations and outcomes from each conference will be recorded with specific attention given to the nature of the problem and the methods of intervention to be attempted. Three interventions must be made which will incorporate modifications of the curriculum and program along with modifications in the student's efforts in relation to the problem before a student will be dismissed from the program. Students who are exited are eligible for future G/T programs in subsequent grades. Such instances will require students to be reassessed according to the standard expectations for entrance into the G/T program. Parents may withdraw students from the program at any time by contacting the campus principal and submitting written notification.

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Transfers

Palestine ISD accepts data submitted from students who have been identified in the gifted/talented programs in other public schools in Texas. Data that is comparable to the assessments used by PISD and is less than two years old is accepted automatically. The district reserves the right to require tests when scores are not comparable or when tests are more than two years old. Additionally, PISD G/T facilitators are afforded the opportunity to correspond with the sending school district regarding transfer student information. In all instances, PISD strives to consider a previously identified transfer student within six weeks of his/her admission to the district. Students are admitted to the program at six weeks or semester openings to facilitate the transition into the course or program design.

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Service Design

A flexible system of viable service options provides a research-based learning continuum that is developed and consistently implemented throughout the district to meet the needs and reinforce the strengths and interests of gifted/talented students.

PISD strives to provide program organizational patterns in grades K-12, which are compatible with the district's philosophy, goals, and objectives, and which promote differentiated learning experiences for its gifted/talented population. Services are provided in the four (4) foundation curricular areas throughout the school year. Information regarding special opportunities for G/T students (contests, academic recognition, volunteer programs, summer camps, community programs, etc.) are provided to parents and the community. The district G/T program is coordinated by a district level administrator who has completed thirty (30) hours of professional learning and is up-to-date on the required annual six (6) hour professional learning updates.

Local board policies have been developed that are consistent with State Board of Education rules on credit by exam and early high school graduation opportunities.

The district's G/T program is divided into two (2) program prototypes:

- Grades K-5: Inclusion through the LAUNCH classroom
- Grades 6-12: Enrollment in Pre-Advanced and Advanced Placement courses

Grades K-5

The G/T program for grades K-5 is designed to challenge students, address unique learning needs, and to help students fulfill their potential. There is an array of learning opportunities that emphasize the content in four core academic areas and are commensurate with the abilities of gifted and talented students. Concepts, units, themes, and skills are explored in greater depth and complexity. This program promotes engaging curriculum that allows students to perform, lead, create, accelerate, research, share interest and develop products.

Grades 6-12

Identified G/T students in grades 6-12 are served through the Pre-Advanced and Advanced Placement courses. Students are given opportunity to take Pre-AP and AP courses in the areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies. This program allows students to take college-level preparatory (grades 6-10) and college-level (grades 11-12) courses and offers them the opportunity to show they have mastered the advanced material by taking AP exams. In addition to Pre-AP

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and AP courses, G/T students, along with all other students, have the opportunity to participate in dual credit courses through our partner community colleges and universities.

Grades K-12

G/T students are provided opportunities within the classroom and throughout the school day to work together as a group, work with other students, and work independently. Flexible grouping patterns and independent investigations are provided within the classroom setting. Acceleration and flexible pacing is provided as an option when appropriate to both the student and content.

As part of our compliance to the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, the district will develop and implement services to address the social and emotional needs of g/t students and their impact on student learning.

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Curriculum and Instruction

Districts meet the needs of gifted/talented students by modifying the depth, complexity, and pacing of the curriculum and instruction ordinarily provided by the school.

Curriculum development for gifted/talented students centers upon the importance of recognizing the skills that these students must acquire in order to become life-long learners. This curriculum incorporates both cognitive as well as affective skills that recognize unique learning styles of G/T students.

The district's annual improvement plan and campus plan emphasize G/T instruction content from the four (4) core areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies. The PISD G/T program is developed around learner objectives and a scope and sequence of skills in the core areas emphasized by critical, creative, and productive thinking, independent research, and affective growth that include leadership skills. The curriculum can be modified in its pace, sequence, content, process, and products. Additionally, the curriculum includes methods for ensuring basic skills are acquired and that individual interests and talents are explored and nurtured. Teachers provide opportunities for students to develop advanced-level products and performances by using the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) and other similar experiences, that are targeted to an outside audience. Products and performances may be cross-curricular in nature and may be selected based on grade-level, content, and student interest.

Gifted/talented students may also be "twice-exceptional, highly gifted, or English learners". Educators adapt and/or modify their curriculum to meet the needs of these students with special needs.

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Professional Learning

All personnel involved in the planning, creation, delivery, and administration of services to gifted/talented students possess the knowledge required to develop and provide differentiated programs and services.

According to the Texas Administrative Code, PISD has created a professional development plan that includes specific training for gifted/talented education which is reviewed and updated based on the annual evaluations and input solicited from teachers, students, parents, and community.

Teachers

The initial thirty (30) clock hours of professional learning for g/t teachers is provided by Region 7 Gifted/Talented staff to ensure the learning includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students, identification and assessment of gifted/talented students, and curriculum and instruction for gifted/talented students. Any teacher who provides instruction and services to g/t students are required to complete the full thirty (30) hour training prior to school starting, or no later than the end of the first semester of school. Teachers are encouraged to seek additional training for working with gifted/talented students. After the initial thirty (30) hours of training, teachers who continue to provide instruction and services in the g/t program are required to receive a minimum of six (6) hours annually of professional development update that aligns to the state teacher gifted/talented education standards. Teachers may attend training that is provided by district personnel or any approved provider. Gifted/talented teachers are involved in planning, reviewing, and/or conducting professional learning related to gifted/talented instruction.

Teachers who provide instruction and services to gifted/talented students in the Pre-AP at the secondary level are trained in twenty-four (24) initial clock hours of AP training and teachers providing instruction in the AP courses receive forty (40) initial clock hours of AP training. The thirty (30) hours of g/t professional development can be substituted for part of those AP hours. These teachers still receive six (6) hours annually of g/t professional development in their content area.

Administrators

To support teachers who provide instruction for the g/t program, PISD administrators complete a minimum of six (6) hours of professional development over nature and needs of gifted/talented students and service options for gifted/talented students.

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Counselors

To support teachers who provide instruction for the g/t program, PISD counselors complete a minimum of six (6) hours of professional development over nature and needs of gifted/talented, service options for gifted/talented students, and social emotional learning.

District Board of Trustees

In order to support teachers, administrators, and counselors who provide instruction to gifted/talented students, the local district board is trained on the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students.

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Family/Community Involvement

The district involves family and community members in services designed for gifted/talented students throughout the school year.

Extensive and positive family and community involvement distinguishes successful gifted and talented programs from those who fail. Families need to be involved in the evaluation and planning of the G/T program, as well as, in providing support for the programs by serving as community resource people. PISD takes every opportunity to encourage family involvement in gifted education. The district fosters opportunities for parents and the community to support the district's gifted and talented program through involvement in the planning, implementing, and evaluating of the gifted and talented program.

The Strategic Planning Committee, which is a parent/teacher/community advisory committee, offers support and assistance to the district in program planning, improvement, and evaluation. The district holds annual meetings and provides information pertaining to the Gifted/Talented program.

The district uses both formative and summative measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and to modify and update district and campus improvement plans. Parents are provided with awareness information about the identification of G/T students and the educational needs of those students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

TIMELINE FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM (Grades 1-12)

Nomination	September 7, 2019	Nomination notice published in newspaper
	September 9, 2019	Nomination surveys available from school counselor Nomination Phase begins: Secure Nomination Surveys (all forms are to be stamped in with date of receipt)
	September 20, 2019	Nomination Phase ends Parent Permission for Testing due to campus counselors Send list of names and IDs of nominated students to Instructional Services
Screening	September 30, 2019 – October 11, 2019	Administration of ITBS & CogAT Test Train teacher on collection of portfolio data *only required for teachers of nominated students
	October 18, 2019	ITBS & CogAT tests (along with appropriate cover pages) due to Instructional Services Office
	September 30, 2019 – October 11, 2019	Portfolios done and assessed
	December 4, 2019	District Screening/Selection Committee Meeting to Determine eligibility/non-eligibility for G/T Program
Selection	December 6, 2019	Parents notified of eligibility/non-eligibility to G/T program (includes a copy of the matrix) Return Identified Data page and Evaluations to the Instructional Services Office
	December 19, 2019	Last day to request appeal of non-placement
	January 7, 2020	Classes Begin

Christmas Break is December 23, 2019 – January 6, 2020

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TIMELINE FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM (Kindergarten)

Nomination	January 4, 2020	Nomination notice published in newspaper
	January 7, 2020	Nomination surveys available from school counselor Nomination Phase begins: Secure Nomination Surveys (all forms are to be stamped in with date of receipt)
	January 24, 2020	Nomination Phase ends – Send Parent Permission for Testing home
	January 24, 2020	Parent Permission for Testing due to campus counselors Send list of names and IDs of nominated students to Instructional Services
Screening	February 3-13, 2020	Administration of ITBS & CogAT Test Train teacher on collection of portfolio data *only required for teachers of nominated students
	February 21, 2020	ITBS & CogAT tests (along with appropriate cover pages) due to Instructional Services Office
	February 3-13, 2020	Portfolios done and assessed
	March 12, 2020	District Screening/Selection Committee Meeting to Determine eligibility/non-eligibility for G/T Program
Selection	March 13, 2020	Parents notified of eligibility/non-eligibility to G/T program (includes a copy of the matrix) Return Identified Data page and Evaluations to the Instructional Services Office
	March 27, 2020	Last day to request appeal of non-placement
	April 6, 2020	Classes Begin

Spring Break is March 16-20, 2020