

O'Donnell ISD
G/T Handbook
2023-2024



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Preface

O'Donnell ISD has revised its Gifted/Talented (G/T) program in keeping with the needs of the students as well as State mandates to include and serve a wider spectrum of the student population. The program will identify students who possess or show potential for exceptional creativity and /or exceptional general intellectual ability.

This handbook has been developed for principals, teachers, counselors, and all members of the learning community to enhance their understanding of O'Donnell ISD's G/T program and to provide practical assistance to those individuals directly involved in its implementation.

STATE DEFINITION OF GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS

“Gifted and talented” means 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 (1) exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area; (2) possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or (3) excels in a specific academic field.

DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY ON GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

The number one priority of O'Donnell Independent School District is to assure student achievement for all students commensurate with their learning styles and abilities. There are many variables which influence a child's ability and willingness to learn. The challenge for O'Donnell ISD is to assure success for every child, regardless of background or abilities. The district is aware that there are children whose abilities are so advanced that special programs must be instituted to challenge these students.

Program Design

The O'Donnell G/T program for grades K – 12 will be an enrichment program developed in the regular classroom with the assistance of the G/T Coordinator and classroom teacher. Most learning activities will be designed to enhance the creativity and productive thinking skills of identified students in the four core curriculum areas (Math, English, Science and Social Studies) within the regular classroom setting. The teachers will provide direction, materials and resources to reinforce, extend, and enhance the daily curriculum to meet the gifted and talented student. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), technology and educational materials will be used as a basis but will be extended to challenge the students in the G/T program and to provide a program of experiences which is differentiated from the regular school program.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers who provide services and instruction that are a part of the program for gifted students will have a minimum of thirty (30) clock hours of staff development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students. Teachers who provide services and instruction for the program who have not received the required training must complete the thirty (30) hours of training before the end of the current year. Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program will receive a minimum of six (6) hours annually of professional development in gifted education. Administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions must have a minimum of six (6) hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of the gifted/talented student and program options for the gifted/talented student.

STEPS FOR PLACEMENT IN THE G/T PROGRAM

The six steps for placement in the gifted and talented program are:

Nomination

Identification by multiple criteria

Screening

Building committee review/placement in the program or selection of other options

Re-nomination (if necessary)

Appeal (if necessary)

IDENTIFICATION

The O'Donnell ISD will identify students who excel consistently or who demonstrate the potential to excel in general intellectual ability, specific subject matter aptitude, and creative and productive thinking. The district will provide a differentiated program for these students that go beyond the regular program in grades K-12. The program is open to all cultural groups identified in the school population. The population of the program will reflect the population of the total district.

NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the gifted and talented program may be made by any O'Donnell ISD professional staff member, a parent, or other interested persons.

Students will be considered nominated for the program when a nomination inventory has been completed and parental permission for testing has been received. The nomination process for services provided

as part of the gifted program is held annually. All students nominated will be screened for placement.

Parents of students in O'Donnell ISD will be informed of the district program to serve gifted students by the district and campus handbooks, local newspaper articles, and the O'Donnell ISD web page.

SCREENING AND SELECTION

Data will be gathered using both qualitative and quantitative measures for students that are nominated for the G/T program. Students nominated for the G/T program will be given qualitative and quantitative measures. The district may admit students who show promise but do not qualify due to a handicapping condition, being culturally different, economically disadvantaged, or limited English proficiency, or being a minority student. Admittance will be determined by a G/T Committee which consists of members from the campus. Students not yet identified are eligible for nomination once a year and will be screened for services that are a part of the gifted and talented program only once in any twelve month period.

Timelines for Identification

Nominations for students in grades Kinder- 12th will begin January 1st-31st. The District Identification Committee will make placement decisions no later than the last day of March. Letters to parents regarding their child's placement will be mailed immediately following committee decisions.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Profile Matrix

For any student nominated, a student summary profile/matrix will be prepared. This profile/matrix will be utilized in considering students for final identification and placement in the O'Donnell Independent School District gifted/talented program. Included in this profile/matrix will be compilation of results obtained from appropriate formal and informal instruments. The G/T committee will make the final placement into Gifted and Talented program. This committee has the authority to overrule any testing results.

G/T Transfer Students

A student who has verification of being an identified gifted/talented student from another school district will be placed in the appropriate gifted/talented environment.

G/T students withdrawing from O'Donnell ISD will have a letter forwarded, upon request, to the receiving school district verifying identification and participation in the G/T program, including a copy of the student profile.

Furlough/Exit Procedures

When the Placement Committee recommends placement of a student in the gifted and talented program, the decision to participate or not participate rests with the student and his parent/guardian. If for any reason a parent/guardian of a student does not wish their child to participate in the gifted and talented program, they must provide written notification to the G/T Coordinator for non-placement.

Once placed in the gifted and talented program, students will not be reassessed; however, students in the program will be monitored to ensure appropriate services.

A furlough is defined as a leave of absence from program services for a minimum of one semester that can be due to a variety of circumstances. An exit is defined as a dismissal from program services.

Requests for furlough/exit may be made by professional staff, parent, or student. Reasons for the request may include:

The student transfers to another district. No committee action is required. Student programs records are forwarded.

Unacceptable program performance based on objectives and goals.

Written request from parent and/or student.

Extenuating circumstances as determined by the Gifted/Talented Committee.

Procedures will be as follows:

A written request must be submitted to the district G/T coordinator

A conference will be held with the student, teacher, campus principal, and G/T coordinator to address the request.

Furlough or exit will be decided by the district G/T coordinator and campus principal.

When a furloughed student desires to re-enter the program, a written request must be submitted to the district G/T coordinator by the student or parent.

If an exited student desires to re-enter the program, he will be assessed using the district procedures for identification.

Re-entry into the program will be a gifted/talented committee decision.

A returning transfer gifted/talented student will be placed in the program upon registering in the district

Exiting

Student performance in the program shall be monitored. A student shall be removed from the program at any time the selection committee determines that it is the student's best interest. If a student or parent request removal from the program, the District shall honor that request after a conference with the selection committee.

Evaluation

O'Donnell ISD will evaluate G/T services on an on – going basis. The District Improvement Plan, which contains the Gifted and Talented program provisions, will be modified and updated. The evaluation will be shared with the Board, administration, teachers, students and the community. The evaluation will measure to what extent the goals and objectives of the program are being accomplished and provide recommendations for improvement.