



Lago Vista
Independent School District

**Gifted and Talented
Handbook**

Lago Vista Independent School District District Philosophy of Gifted Education

We believe that every student has the right to optimal development. Each person is unique; therefore we are committed to an educational program that recognizes the special value and needs of the individual student. Providing programs and materials for gifted students who perform at or show the potential for performing at a remarkable high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment (§29.121) is an integral part of this commitment.

We believe that gifted students need a continuum of learning experiences that leads to the development of advanced level products and/or performances (§89.3 TAC). Modifications in instructional strategies, content, and the development of skills and/or products are part of the services provided. The program helps develop self-actualized learners by encouraging effective communication, guiding learners to be focused and self-directed, nurturing intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, and focusing on independent research study skills, as well as developing critical and creative thinking and problem solving skills.

The purpose of the program is to seek, identify, and provide gifted learners with experiences that develop the potential of each individual. Identified gifted students should be challenged in order to fully develop their abilities.

State Goal for Services for Gifted Students

Students who participate in services designed for gifted 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 participated in services for gifted students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services (Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, Revised May 2009, Texas Education Agency).

District Goals for Gifted Students

It is the goal of Lago Vista ISD to use the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students as the guide for continuous improvement of district G/T services. Improvement and modifications of services include:

- Differentiated instruction and curriculum options in intellectual, creative or artistic areas, leadership, and specific academic fields;
- Opportunities for acceleration in areas of exceptional academic strength; and
- Depth and complexity as an integral part of the state/district curriculum with students creating sophisticated products and/or performance assessed by experts in the field that is the focus of the product.

Gifted and Talented Program Description

The G/T program in Lago Vista ISD provides a combination of in-class enrichment and special classes to provide an array of learning opportunities that enable identified G/T students to work with their gifted peers, to work with other students, and to work independently. In grades K-5, students are pulled out of the regular classroom for enrichment provided by a campus G/T facilitator. In grades 6-8, students have the option of enrolling in a G/T elective and/or Pre-AP courses. Pre-AP courses are offered in language arts, math, and science. Differentiation for G/T students is achieved by providing modifications in content taught, processes used for learning and student products. The campus G/T facilitator exists as a resource to classroom teachers who are responsible for providing a challenging curriculum for identified students. At the high school level, Pre-AP, AP, and Dual Credit courses form the foundation for the G/T program. Students may also choose to participate in enrichment activities offered outside of class, including the G/T Independent Study Mentorship course. The High School G/T Facilitator works with classroom teachers to ensure that coursework meets the student's needs.

Identified G/T students are assured an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with their abilities and that emphasize content in the four (4) foundation curricular areas. Services are available during the school day, as well as the entire school year (19 TAC §89.3). G/T students are ensured opportunities to work together as a group, work with other students, and work independently during the school day, as well as the entire school year as a direct result of gifted/talented service options (19 TAC §89.3(1)). Out-of-school options relevant to the students' areas of strength are provided by the District, whenever possible (19 TAC §89.3).

The evaluation of G/T services in Lago Vista ISD is based on evidence obtained through gifted/talented appropriate performance measures, such as those provided through the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP). As a part of the exemplary G/T service design recommended by the *Texas State Plan*, a person with a gifted/talented endorsement and supplementary certification is assigned to coordinate the District's K-12 gifted/talented education services.

Elementary and Intermediate Gifted and Talented

The Lago Vista Elementary G/T program focuses on general intelligence and uses core subject areas of language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics as a base for developing higher level thinking skills and problem solving strategies. All of the LVISD elementary teachers have extensive training, including the 30 hour required state G/T training and annual 6-hour updates. A variety of G/T staff development is offered to all LVISD teachers - including nature and needs, identification and assessment of gifted students, curriculum and instruction (differentiation), social and emotional needs, and creativity.

The G/T facilitator is responsible for directing and facilitating the G/T program by implementing the District's identification process (including referral/screening, assessment, notification and documentation), providing differentiated instruction support for classroom teachers, providing enrichment for identified G/T students, and conducting the annual G/T campus program evaluation.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten students who are identified for the G/T program are provided services by the campus G/T facilitator starting on or before March 1st of their kindergarten year.

Elementary (Grades 1-3) and Intermediate (Grades 4-5)

Identified gifted students are grouped together in classes with trained G/T teachers at each grade level. The G/T facilitator provides enrichment services and facilitates higher-level thinking skills. Appropriately challenging learning experiences related to the four (4) core academic areas (language arts, math, social studies, and science) for gifted and talented students are offered at the elementary level through a variety of instructional strategies. Examples include acceleration or compacting of grade level curriculum, in-depth critical investigations, and/or thematic units. Curriculum is differentiated in content depth and complexity, process, and/or product. In addition to differentiated instruction, services are also provided to G/T students through clustering, enrichment services, and regularly scheduled field trips. Emphasis is placed upon activities that develop the student as a life-long learner.

Elementary and intermediate enrichment are provided through a pull-out program. During this time, students participate in project-based learning using the Texas Performance Standards Project model. Students will select a project in an area of their interest to develop into a final product. Students will have the opportunity to present their final products at an annual Gifted and Talented Showcase.

Secondary Gifted and Talented

Middle School (Grades 6-8)

6th - 8th grades – Critical Thinking Through Cultural Awareness – (G/T)

This class is designed to meet specific needs of identified Gifted and Talented students. Emphasis is on intellectual exploration and the development of critical thinking and problem solving through an appreciation of cultures. An enrichment curriculum integrates core content areas and explores the process of problem solving through both independent and team-based development of advanced projects. This class incorporates aspects of communication, character development, and effective use of technology/resources. Assessment is based on both product quality and process skill. This class is open to identified Gifted and Talented students.

In middle school G/T elective, students will participate in project-based learning using the Texas Performance Standards Project model. Students will select a project in an area of their interest to develop into a final product. Students will have the opportunity to present their final products at an annual Gifted and Talented Showcase.

Other delivery methods

Services may also be provided to G/T students through clustering, during- and after-school enrichment opportunities, and Pre-Advanced Placement courses. A variety of Pre-Advanced Placement courses are offered in middle school. Pre-Advanced Placement courses offer differentiated content with more depth and complexity and are designed to prepare students for Advanced Placement courses.

High School (Grades 9-12)

G/T Independent Study Mentorship - Grades 9-12

Please see the G/T Independent Study Mentorship section of this handbook for detailed information about this elective course. Students who participate in the G/T Independent Study Mentorship course will have the opportunity to present their final products at an annual Gifted and Talented Showcase.

Distinguished Achievement Plan (For Students Entering Grade 9 Prior to 2014)

Lago Vista High School offers several options for Gifted/Talented students. Students may elect to complete a Distinguished Achievement Plan for graduation, which includes four advanced measures. Any combination of four of the following measures will apply:

- Original research/project - Gifted Students should consider the Independent Study Mentorship and work with a mentor from the community for this independent research opportunity;
- Test data – appropriate qualifying scores on The College Board Advanced Placement exam, International Baccalaureate exam, or PSAT exam;
- College course credit - Dual high school/college credit courses are offered at Lago Vista High School. For information on college credit earned from high school courses, students should contact the campus counselor.

Distinguished Level of Achievement (For Students Entering Grade in 2014 or After)

The foundation graduation program also involves the term “distinguished level of achievement,” which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits.

Pre-Advanced Placement Courses

A variety of Pre-Advanced Placement courses are offered at the secondary level. Pre-Advanced Placement courses offer differentiated content with more depth and complexity and are designed to prepare students for Advanced Placement courses. These are offered at both the Middle School and High School levels. Students may take Pre-Advanced Placement courses without being required to take Advanced Placement courses.

Advanced Placement and Dual Credit Courses

Advanced Placement and Dual Credit courses, usually taken during the junior and senior year of high school, are college level courses and receive Lago Vista ISD’s Weighted Ranking. See the High School Course Guide for AP and Dual Credit course listings.

Other Delivery Methods

Services may also be provided to G/T students through clustering, as well as through during- and after-school enrichment opportunities. In high school enrichment, students have the opportunity to participate in project-based learning using the Texas Performance Standards Project model. Students will select a project in an area of their interest to develop into a final product. Students who choose to create an enrichment project will have the opportunity to present their final products at an annual Gifted and Talented Showcase.

Identification Processes for Gifted and Talented

Referrals for Gifted and Talented Screening

A student enrolled in Lago Vista ISD may be nominated for the Gifted and Talented program by:

1. A teacher, counselor, or campus administrator;
2. His or her parent/guardian; or
3. Another adult who has knowledge of his/her abilities.

Parents must consent to screening for G/T. Referrals for screening of students in grades 1-12 will be accepted beginning the first week of school. Referrals may be submitted at any time throughout the school year. Testing for referrals will occur twice a year: fall and spring.

The referral deadline for fall semester screening is October 1st for students in grades 1-12. The referral deadline for spring semester screening is February 1st for students in grades 1-12. Referrals are not needed for kindergarten. However, upon enrollment, parents will be asked for written consent to screen kindergarten students. All kindergarten students with parent consent are screened in January.

Parents will be notified of results after testing is completed. All placement decisions will be made by a committee of G/T educators as required by the Texas State Plan (§89.2(1) TAC). Services for identified students will begin the following semester.

Identification Procedures

The formal identification process for the Gifted and Talented program occurs in the fall and spring semesters for students in grade 1-12 and in January for students in kindergarten. Students may be screened for the LVISD Gifted and Talented program only once within a 12-month period.

Data collected from multiple sources are included in the assessment process for gifted/talented services (19 TAC §89.1(2)). Assessments in the areas of intellectual and academic fields with a minimum of three criteria are used. Students must qualify using at least one qualitative AND one quantitative measure from the list below. A combination of the following may be used during the identification process.

Quantitative measures (95% or Above)

- Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (NNAT)
- Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)
- Otis-Lennon School Abilities Test (OLSAT)
- Kaufmann Brief Intelligence Test
- Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT)
- Other comparable measures of intellectual ability

Qualitative measures

- Traits, Aptitudes, and Behaviors Rating Scale (TABs)
- Kingore Observation Inventory (KOI)
- Purdue Academic Rating Scales
- Gifted Rating Scales (GRS)
- Other qualitative measures

Assessment data are reviewed and analyzed. The final determination of a student's need for gifted/talented services is made by a committee of local District or campus educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted/talented students and who have met and reviewed the individual student data (19 TAC §89.1(4)). As part of an exemplary program outlined by the *Texas State Plan*, the selection committee is formed of a majority of members who have completed thirty (30) hours of training and are current with the six-hour training update as delineated in 19 TAC §89.2(2). Additional data beyond that collected through the District's standard gifted/talented assessment process are considered, as needed, by the selection committee in making identification decisions in order to make the most appropriate placement.

Parents/guardians will be notified of the committee's decision. Parents/guardians of all qualifying students must give written consent for their child to participate in the G/T program. Parents of non-qualifying students may request a conference to review the testing results. If the parents or guardians question the decision of the District G/T committee, they may initiate the appeal process. All appeals will go to the Deputy Superintendent.

In the case of transfer students, the G/T Committee will review identification data and will accept assessment results for the purpose of identification using results from other current tests that are comparable to those used for identification in Lago Vista ISD. Additional assessment may be required.

Students in the LVISD Gifted and Talented program are identified as general education students.

Gifted and Talented Program Policies

Appeal Process

A parent/guardian or student may appeal the final placement decision made by the District's G/T committee. The appeal must be made in writing within 30 days of the notification of placement or non-placement in the G/T program. The appeal should be directed to the Deputy Superintendent. The District's G/T Committee will re-evaluate all testing information/processes, examine additional information provided by the student and/or parents, make a decision concerning the student's qualification for gifted services, and inform the parent/guardian of this decision in writing. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with Board Policy FNG (LOCAL).

Transfer Students

Parents are responsible for providing the campus with documentation of prior G/T program placement, including all assessment information used for placement in the previous district. Based on a review of such documentation, transfer students who have been identified for a G/T program in another district will be considered for entry into the LVISD G/T program.

The G/T Committee will review identification data from the former school district and will consider assessment results from other current tests that are comparable to those used for identification in Lago Vista ISD. Additional assessment may be required. See Board Policy EHBB (LEGAL/LOCAL).

Furlough

Furloughs from G/T services are intended to help students who need a temporary break from the G/T program, not to remove non-performing students. The G/T Committee may grant a furlough when it is deemed to be in the best interest of the student.

A furlough may not exceed one academic year. At the end of the furlough period, the student may reenter the gifted program, be placed on another furlough, or be exited from the program. See Board Policy EHBB (LOCAL).

Professional Development

All teachers of gifted and talented students have completed an initial thirty hours of prescribed professional development including nature and needs of the gifted student, assessment training, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students which includes differentiation and creativity strategies (19 TAC §89.2 (1)). Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the gifted and talented program also receive six hours of yearly update training (19 TAC §89.2 (3) and TAC §233.1).

Administrators and counselors are required to have at least six hours of administrative training in nature and needs; identification and assessment; curriculum and instruction; and program options for gifted and talented students (19 TAC §89.2 (4)).

All LVISD classroom teachers are provided opportunities to participate in trainings in a variety of settings such as district workshops, online programs, state level conferences, or workshops offered by the Education Service Centers, the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented, and/or the College Board. Teachers are responsible for implementing their training in the classroom to meet gifted students' needs.

Family and Community Involvement

The District recognizes the vital importance of parent/guardian support and community involvement to the success and growth of the Gifted and Talented Program. In accordance with the recommendation in the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*, the District will provide an orientation meeting for all parent/guardians of identified gifted students. This orientation meeting will be held in the fall.

Community volunteers are encouraged to share their expertise by presenting lectures/demonstrations on various topics related to the themes studied in each grade or as mentors to students who are involved in independent study in an area of special interest.

Support and assistance in G/T program planning and improvement is encouraged through Gifted and Talented Parent Advisory (G/TPAC). Parents and guardians also provide valuable feedback on program effectiveness through discussions and/or campus and District surveys.

Curriculum and Instruction

Identified G/T students are assured an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with their abilities and that emphasize content in the four (4) foundation curricular areas. Services are available during the school day, as well as the entire school year (19 TAC §89.3(3)). The curriculum and instructional needs of gifted students are met by modifying the depth, complexity, and pacing of the academic content, learning processes, and evaluation products relevant to the general school program. This modification is accomplished through a differentiated, academically enriched learning environment, as well as through instructional methods and materials that encourage independent scholarship. The following are principles of differentiation that came from the National Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and Talented and continue to be the basis for differentiated experiences.

1. Present content that is related to broad base issues, problems, or themes.
2. Integrate multiple disciplines into an area of study.
3. Present comprehensive, reinforcing, mutually related experiences within an area of study.
4. Allow for the in-depth learning of a self-selected topic.
5. Develop independent or self-directed study skills.
6. Develop research skills and methods.
7. Focus on open-ended tasks.
8. Develop productive, complex, abstract, and/or higher level thinking skills.
9. Integrate basic and higher level thinking skills within the curriculum.
10. Encourage the development of self-understanding, i.e., recognizing and using one's abilities, becoming self-directed, appreciating likenesses and differences between oneself and others.
11. Encourage the development of products that challenge existing ideas and produce new ones.
12. Encourage the development of products that use new techniques, materials, and forms.
13. Evaluate student outcomes by using appropriate and specific criteria through self-appraisal, criterion referenced and/or standardized instruments.

The principles of differentiation fall into three categories: content, process, and product. The content items are the first four principles and deal with what students are taught. The process items are the next five and include how students obtain skills and develop thinking. The final four principles are product items. Products are the ways in which students demonstrate learning and how we communicate what we have learned.

As a part of the recommended curriculum and instruction provided by the *Texas State Plan*, participation in the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP), or other experiences that result in the development of sophisticated products and/or performance that are targeted to an audience outside the classroom, is available through the gifted/talented curricula. These products are presented by students at an annual Gifted and Talented Showcase.

Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP)

The Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) provides a series of TEKS-based performance tasks and assessments for gifted/talented (G/T) students in grades K-12. These interdisciplinary research units, some of which have a discipline-specific focus, can be used by schools and districts as a framework for G/T programming.

In grades K-10, the TPSP tasks consist of two phases.

- Phase I, Learning Experiences, involves teacher-driven instruction. In the lower grades, tasks require more teacher guidance than in the upper grades.
- Phase II, Independent Research, allows students to immerse themselves in a project and develop a high-quality end product that demonstrates their knowledge and skills.

Each task has unique requirements. Submission requirements are listed within each task summary. All tasks have a presentation component to accompany the final product. Please note that each task lists options for product development—students do not need to complete all of the options.

Tasks at all grade levels are aligned with a standards-based assessment system that allows students and teachers to evaluate student performance in the following six domains:

- Content Knowledge and Skills
- Analysis and Synthesis
- Multiple Perspectives
- Research
- Communication
- Presentation of Learning

At the high school/exit level, the following additional domains are considered:

- Ethics/Unanswered Questions
- Methodology and Use of Resources
- Relevance and Significance
- Professional Quality

The TPSP provides a way to align the curriculum so that a school or district has a true continuum of G/T services. This alignment helps ensure that G/T programs are meeting the criteria from the Texas State Plan for G/T education. After participating in the TPSP, educators will be able to identify areas of strength and weakness in their program. Because of the open-ended nature of the tasks, the TPSP showcases what gifted students are capable of doing academically.

The TPSP also enables students to become real thinkers and scholars. Students are challenged to think critically, abstractly, and logically to evaluate and solve a problem. Students synthesize new information and comprehend different points of view. They also learn to communicate effectively and clearly in written and oral forms.

For more information, please visit <http://www.texaspsp.org/index.php>.

Gifted and Talented Independent Study Mentorship (G/TISM) Elective

The G/T Independent Study Mentorship (G/TISM) course is a unique learning opportunity that reflects the belief that giving students a structured opportunity to design their own learning experiences or participate in a professional working environment will encourage them to be self-motivated, self-directed learners. This program encourages students to pursue intellectual, artistic, or career interests beyond what is offered in the present high school curriculum.

G/TISM will give students the opportunity to get real-world experience in a work environment of their choice while allowing them to bring a meaningful project to completion. The mentorship is a great way to demonstrate knowledge and skills in an area of study about which they are passionate and helps build their resumes while gaining meaningful professional relationships and connections.

This course provides a unique opportunity for high school students to experience college-level instruction, where learning is initiated by the student and evaluated by individuals with content area expertise. This pairing of rigorous instruction and real world project evaluation prepares students for college and beyond.

Students will work individually with the G/T Facilitator who will oversee the project, handle the student's application, assist with planning the project with the student, and check the student's progress on a regular basis. Course products, if of professional quality, may meet the Advanced Measures requirement of the Distinguished Achievement Program. Students are required to secure their mentor(s) prior to submission of their completed application.

The course is not limited to identified G/T students. Any interested student is encouraged to take the course.

G/TISM Course Details

Eligibility

All high school students with an un-weighted GPA of 3.75 or higher are eligible to apply to enroll in the G/T Independent Study Mentorship course.

Grading

Grades for G/TISM will be given every nine weeks. The student's grade will be based on input from both the GT Facilitator and the mentor.

The student's mentor is consulted in determining the student's grade. Factors such as attitude, commitment to task, and reliability are considered.

The student is accountable for recording each hour of study, research, and direct consultation with his/her mentor in a log. The student must have completed a minimum of 50 hours per semester in the study to receive credit. Failure to keep accurate records can negatively impact the grade.

The end-of-year grade will be based on the final project presentation and will include feedback provided by the mentor.

Mentor

Each student in the G/TISM course must identify a mentor prior to acceptance into the course. The mentor must be an expert in the field of study that is able to help guide the student's research and project proposal.

The G/TISM mentor must be approved by approved by the G/T Facilitator and school administrator. Once approved to serve on the G/TISM project, the mentor must complete a volunteer application and background check through Lago Vista ISD before working with the student.

The mentor should be an expert in the field of the student's interest and must be willing to offer guidance, supervision, and evaluation. The mentor will provide, without pay, an educational experience that will give the student an in-depth study in a particular field of interest. Together, the mentor and student will set goals and expectations. The mentor will communicate with the GT facilitator regularly and report any problems. He/she will inform the school if they are unable to meet on a specific day. He/she will assist in the evaluation of the student at the end of each grading period and at the end of the program.

Research

During the first semester, the student is required to establish a regular meeting schedule with his/her mentor to develop a research proposal on the student's topic in order to develop expertise on the subject.

Product/Presentation

The second semester focuses on the production of a professional quality product. Project options include, but are not limited to: a written report, a multi-media presentation, model building, demonstration, an exhibit, a performance, etc. All products will be presented to and evaluated by a panel consisting of: the G/T facilitator, an administrator, a counselor, and the student's mentor. Individuals that possess expertise in the designated field are invited to assess the student's knowledge base, performance, and product.

Student Expectations

G/TISM is a significant responsibility. The student must demonstrate self-discipline, motivation, and the ability to work with a minimum of direction and supervision (i.e., be an independent worker). Students who accept the challenge of the ISM should expect to:

1. Complete an in-depth study in an area of interest.
2. Document three to five hours of work each week for the course of the school year, with a minimum of 50 hours per semester.
3. Submit weekly time logs of the G/T Facilitator.
4. Meet with a mentor on a regular basis.
5. Meet with the G/T Facilitator outside of academic course time on a regular basis.
6. Maintain a minimum of a "B" in the G/TISM class.
7. Present a final project of professional quality to a panel of experts.
8. Follow all school policies and represent Lago Vista High School and Lago Vista ISD in a respectful and professional manner.

Application Deadline

In order to choose students who are self-motivated, organized, punctual and professional to represent LVHS, the application and all required components must be completed and returned to the LVHS G/T Facilitator.

The application deadline is second Friday in May with the G/TISM course to be taken the following academic year.

Selection Criteria

G/TISM is an elective class for high school students, with priority given to junior and senior students. The established selection criteria are designed to help in selecting students who have a good chance of success in the G/TISM course. Because this is a very challenging course resulting in a professional quality product, enrollment is very limited. In addition to identified G/T students, others considered for recruitment include those successfully completing AP, Pre-AP, and/or dual-credit classes.

The selection criteria include:

1. A minimum un-weighted grade point average of 3.75.
2. The application is completed and returned on time.
3. The student has written a thoughtful description of what he/she expects to accomplish in the study.
4. The student has identified a mentor for the project and has secured a signed Mentor Agreement.
5. The teacher has written a favorable teacher narrative recommendation.
6. The student has a 90% or better attendance rate at school.
7. The student has no record of serious or persistent disciplinary infractions.

Selection Timeline

Students selected for the GT/ISM will be notified at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the fall semester.

Termination

If a student experiences significant difficulty in meeting the requirements of the G/TISM course or if a mentor encounter difficulties with a student that are irresolvable, the G/T Facilitator should be notified. Every effort will be made to rectify the situation. If it is found that the situation cannot be rectified, the study will be discontinued and the student's grade will be determined based on work completed to that date and the circumstances under which the Independent Study Mentorship was terminated.

G/T Independent Study Mentorship Elective Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the Independent Study Mentorship (ISM) Elective Course?

The G/TISM course is based on the Exit Level Texas Performance Standards Project and offers a non-traditional learning experience to those gifted and/or high achieving students who have the ability to create innovative products. The course provides students the opportunity to explore an area of personal talent and interest at levels of depth and complexity comparable to those experienced by professionals in the field of study.

2. What is an advanced measure?

Advanced measures are those items that meet the two standards included in TAC§74.13(a)(3): they reflect student performance at a college or professional level and are assessed by external evaluators. Students who entered high school prior to 2014, fulfill specific course requirements and who successfully complete four (4) advanced measures qualify to graduate under the Distinguished Achievement Program.

3. What does it mean when a student meets Exit Level criteria?

Exit Level criteria are the scoring criteria established by Texas Education Agency (TEA) for high school credit and advanced measures under the Independent Study Mentorship course. The nine (9) scoring dimensions include:

- Knowledge and skills
- Innovation and application
- Analysis and synthesis
- Ethics/unanswered questions
- Multiple perspectives
- Methodology and use of resources
- Communication
- Relevance and significance
- Professional quality

The Exit Level criteria form the basis of the Scoring Scale that is used to evaluate (1) the student's learning process, (2) his/her effective communication, and (3) his/her final product. A student must earn a minimum score of 2 in each of the areas—process, communication, and product—in order to receive high school credit and an advanced measure. See TEA:

<http://www.texaspsp.org/resources/ExitGuidePrintVersion.pdf>

4. What are the required project components?

A project consists of the long-term development of a question or idea that is significant to professionals in the student's specified field of study. Grounded in the content of the TEKS, the project allows students to develop an important content area question or idea in depth, but it does not necessarily reflect broad content knowledge of the field. Additionally, the project will demonstrate the use of sophisticated and advanced research methods and the use of technology appropriate to the field of study. The project results in learning that is demonstrated through products appropriately to and comparable in quality to those of a professional who works in the field of study.

A project consists of:

- A product;
- An abstract;
- A process record;
- A presentation; and
- A question-and-answer session.

The selection of the format of the product must convey the knowledge and skills learned in the project. The product is the focus of the scoring process. The culmination of the student's comprehensive study must exhibit mastery of content and thinking skills. Developing the final product is the focus of the student's learning process. When submitting a project for scoring, the student should include an abstract that summarizes the project. The abstract includes:

- The title of the project;
- The purpose or goals of the student's project;
- A description of the student's product; and
- A brief description of the project's relation to the TEKS.

Along with the product, each student submits a process record that documents the student's learning advancement. The process record enables a reviewer to follow the student's learning throughout the project. Each student also submits a video of a public presentation consisting of a brief explanation of the project and a question-and-answer session with an audience. The teacher/facilitator may have additional requirements.

5. Who determines whether or not a project is successful and meets the standard for high school credit and an advanced measure?

Every Independent Study project will be reviewed and scored by a panel consisting of:

- A counselor;
- A campus administrator;
- A high school teacher in the content area;
- A District-level administrator;
- The G/T Facilitator; and
- The project mentor.

6. What happens if a student completes the project but the project does not meet the Exit Level criteria?

Final project submission/due dates will be established far enough in advanced to allow students the opportunity to significantly revise their projects in order to meet the Exit Level criteria. If a student chooses not to revise his/her project, he/she will receive elective credit based on the quality of the work submitted. If a student does choose to revise his/her project, the timeline for revision will be established by the teacher/facilitator and the project will be deemed "incomplete" in the interim. The timeline for revision will not exceed the end of the school year in which the project was begun.

7. How does my student enroll in the Independent Study Mentorship course?

Students who are interested in the Independent Study Mentorship course must see the campus counselor in order to receive a course application.

Additional Resources

American Association for Gifted Children at Duke University

<http://www.aagc.org>

The American Association of Gifted Children at Duke University (AAGC) is the nation's oldest advocacy organization for gifted children. Their mission is "to foster a better understanding of the needs and capabilities of gifted children, to encourage research in the field of education and nurturing of gifted children, and to accomplish and encourage other initiatives relating to the development of gifted children."

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)

<http://www.nagc.org>

NAGC supports and develops policies and practices that encourage and respond to the diverse expressions of gifts and talents in children and youth from all cultures, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic groups

National Society for the Gifted and Talented (NSGT)

<http://www.nsG/T.org>

NSGT's mission is to advance the development of gifted, talented, and high potential youth, in the United States and abroad, through opportunities, advocacy, and exemplary programs and practices.

Texas Association of Gifted and Talented (TAGT)

<http://www.txgifted.org>

TAG/T offers a parent affiliate membership that provides various resources to support parents.

Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP)

<http://www.texaspsp.org/>

The TPSP provides a coherent package of standards, curriculum, and assessments for use in G/T programs from kindergarten through high school.

Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/>

The State Plan provides requirements for and guidance to districts as they meet the unique needs of the Gifted/Talented population in Texas.

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)

<http://www.SENGGifted.org>

SENG's mission is about empowering families and communities in reaching goals. SENNG focuses on the social and emotional needs of gifted individuals.



Program Contacts

For more information on the
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