



Marble Falls ISD

Horizons Program Handbook

For

Gifted and Talented

Students

K-12

For more details on state guidelines: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6420>

Table of Contents

I. HORIZONS GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. State Definition/Goal
- B. Program Mission Statement/Goals
- C. Program Information Page
- D. Program Continuum

II. HORIZONS PROGRAM PROCEDURES

- A. Parent Communication
- B. Assessment Philosophy
- C. Assessment Procedure
- D. Student Transfers
- E. Reassessment Procedures for Non-Qualifying Students
- F. Student Elementary Placement
- G. Appeals Procedures and Timeline
- H. Furlough/Exit Procedure
- I. File Transfer Procedures
- J. Reporting to Parents

II. APPENDIX I

- A. Horizons Program Nomination Form
- B. EFBB Legal/Local

GENERAL INFORMATION

Texas State Definition

“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. (Senate Bill 1, Sec. 29.121)

Texas State Goal

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. (*Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*, Texas Education Agency, September 2009, Austin, TX, p. 1)

Marble Falls ISD Horizons Program

MISSION STATEMENT

The Horizons Program in MFISD:

- exists to meet the social, emotional and cognitive needs of an identified student population through individualized instruction, enrichment and extension (*Mission*)
- will offer opportunities for students to explore and enrich their giftedness in core subjects and fine arts (*Vision*)
- will provide unique learning opportunities that celebrate:
 - Individuality
 - Creative Thinking
 - Critical Thinking
 - Self-Discovery (*Values*)

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and serve the Gifted and Talented student areas of:
 - a. general intellectual ability
 - b. creativity
 - c. advanced academic achievement
2. Provide exemplary units of study that both challenge and engage all identified students both intellectually and creatively
3. Train students in high order thinking skills, research skills, decision making, problem solving and reasoning
4. Assist classroom teachers in the process of differentiation for each identified student
5. Address the social and emotional needs of identified students through locally developed affective curriculum
6. Provide students opportunities for learning outside of the regular school day
7. Encourage and model lifelong learning

PROGRAM INFORMATION PAGE

What is the Horizons program?

The Horizons program is the academic enrichment/acceleration program provided for students who have been identified as intellectually gifted and talented.

How are students identified?

Students who are referred for the Horizons program go through an academic screening and assessment process which involves the following areas: nonverbal aptitude, reasoning, achievement, creativity, teacher recommendations, and portfolios.

Who refers students?

A teacher, parent, student, or other interested persons observing a student with consistent evidence of gifted characteristics may refer him/her.

What are some of the characteristics of a gifted student?

- advanced/extensive vocabulary
- work advanced beyond the grade level/age
- extremely inquisitive, asks many questions, often challenging, provoking and/or demanding
- in-depth understanding of complex concepts
- persistence is evident in areas of interest
- high level of curiosity, energy, enthusiasm and vigor for new ideas
- advanced reasoning
- feels keenly about own ideas and solutions to problems, and often expresses them regardless of what others may think
- likes to examine new possibilities for problems/solutions, rather than fitting within a structure
- especially original imagination
- sustained attention span
- initiates projects and often prefers to work alone
- keenly observant
- keen sense of humor
- perfectionism
- asynchronous development
- over-excitabilities

If you would like more information about the Horizons Program, please contact the Campus Horizons Program Specialist or Counselor on your campus.

Program Continuum

- Elementary Grades –
 - Grade Level Pullout
 - Texas Performance Standards Project
 - Affective Curriculum
 - Product Fair
 - Field Trips
 - Recognition Program
 - Horizons students are clustered with other identified students
- Middle School –
 - Horizons students are clustered for Pre AP Courses
 - GT Explorations Class offered to qualified students
- High School –
 - AP Courses
 - Dual Credit
 - Credit by Exam

PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Parent Communication

Each campus specialist is responsible for holding an orientation meeting for parents of GT students informing parents on how their students receive GT services at the respective campus. Meetings must be held during the fall semester of each school year. Teachers will post specific GT information and options on their campus websites.

Assessment Philosophy

The Horizons Program is available to all qualifying students regardless of race, gender, socio-economic status, special need or limited English proficiency.

Assessment results may be drawn from quantitative and/or qualitative data from a range of several areas:

- a. quantitative data including the results of nationally normed ability tests, teacher assessments, other available test data, such as standardized tests and baseline assessments
- b. qualitative information including teacher observation and student product

Testing occurs at the end of each semester for nominated students.

A student may be assessed once in an academic year, and these scores remain valid for a period of two years. There must be a minimum of one year between assessment periods for a student to be reassessed.

Assessment Procedure

A parent, teacher, community member, or student may nominate a student in grades 1 - 11 for assessment for the Horizons Program.

Nomination forms may be obtained from the GT specialists or in the appendix of the Horizons Program Handbook and must be completed and returned. Nomination forms must be in place prior to the beginning of the assessment period, or the nominated student must be assessed during the next opportunity.

All Kindergarten students will be screened for GT testing.

Screening

1. Permission Forms for Horizons Assessment are obtained
2. Retrieve available Reading/Math data and TEKS Based Assessment scores (grades 1-2)
Retrieve report card grades in core classes and TEKS Based Assessment scores (grades 3-5)
Retrieve report card grades/GPA (grades 6 – 11)
3. Retrieve data from student inventory (Kindergarten)
4. If the screening criteria are met, the student will be further assessed

Assessment

1. Administer achievement test
2. Administer aptitude/reasoning test
3. Administer creativity test
4. If needed, collect portfolio entries

After Selection Committee signatures are obtained, Horizons Program Assessment Results Letter indicating whether a student qualifies or does not qualify will be mailed to parents.

The Assessment Profile will be placed in the student's cumulative folder. If the student qualifies, the registrar at the campus will be notified and the student will be coded accordingly.

Assessment Instruments and Data Forms will be filled out and kept by the respective campus Horizons Campus Specialist for one year.

The instruments and other paperwork will be in a file separate from the cumulative folder with the student's name, date, and "qualifies" or "does not qualify status." At the Elementary Campuses, the file is kept in the Horizons Specialist's room. For the Secondary Level, files are to be kept in the campus registrar's office.

MARBLE FALLS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Gifted Education Program

There is a difference between the bright student and the gifted learner. The bright student is a pleasure to teach and is always eager to please. He/she will most often receive many honors for academic achievements during his/her public school experience. Gifted learners are distinct in their thinking. If your child exhibits the gifted learner characteristics listed below to such a degree that you feel he/she may benefit from a special program, you may consider nominating your child to be screened for the Marble Falls Gifted Education program.

BRIGHT CHILD	GIFTED LEARNER
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Is attentive	Is mentally and physically involved
Has good ideas	Has wild, silly ideas
Works hard	Plays around, yet tests well
Answers the question	Discusses in detail, elaborates
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings and opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows
6-8 repetitions for mastery	1-2 repetitions for mastery
Understands ideas	Constructs abstractions
Enjoys peers	Prefers adults
Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences
Completes assignments	Initiates projects
Is receptive	Is intense
Copies accurately	Creates a new design
Enjoys school	Enjoys learning
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
Technician	Inventor
Good memorizer	Good guesser
Enjoys straightforward, sequential presentation	Thrives on complexity
Is alert	Is keenly observant
Is pleased with own learning	Is highly self-critical

by Janice Szabos

Student Transfer

A student who has verification of being an identified gifted/talented student from another school district will be temporarily placed in the appropriate environment until the scores are verified and the assessment meets district criterion OR assessment can be completed. Parents will be contacted regarding local criteria for the gifted/talented program. Records will be requested indicating a qualifying assessment for GT identification and parent permission for temporary placement will be obtained.

GT students withdrawing from Marble Falls ISD will, upon request, have a letter forwarded to the receiving school district verifying identification and participation in the GT Program, including a copy of the student profile.

Reassessment Procedures for Non-Qualifying Students

Reassessment may occur on an annual basis. In order to preserve test integrity, there must be a minimum, twelve month lapse between assessment periods. This provides an opportunity to include students in the Horizons program at the beginning of the following school year.

Qualifying scores in any one area remain valid for a period of two years for in-district reassessment.

Student Elementary Placement

Identified elementary GT students are required to be placed with teachers who have the 30 hour state GT training.

The research on best practice recommends that elementary GT students be clustered in the regular classroom in groups of 3 to 8 students. The ideal situation being defined as 5 to 6 students per cluster group.

It is recommended that the campus GT Specialist be involved in student placements.

Appeals Procedures and Timeline

In the event of an appeal, the District Horizons Committee will review the appeals form and accompanying evidence to ensure proper placement of all students without regard to race, gender, socio-economic status, special need or limited English proficiency.

The District Horizons Committee will be composed of at least one GT Specialist, principal and other district personnel. Members of the committee should not be from the student's campus. All information that can aid in the placement of the student must be presented in written form to the committee with the appeals form.

Upon receiving the appeals form, the District Horizons Committee will meet and deliver a response within six business weeks. The parents/guardians will receive notification by mail within one business week of the District Committee's decision.

Furlough/Exit Procedure

Note: The following procedures are to provide a temporary break from the Horizons Program and do not pertain to or affect the student's GT identification on the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

At any time if a parent, teacher or the campus principal has evidence a gifted/talented student is not profiting fully from their educational program, a conference will be scheduled with the student, teacher, campus principal and the parent/guardian. If the student is to be exited from the gifted/talented program, the district gifted/talented committee will meet to review the student's progress and act accordingly.

The district gifted/talented committee will, at any time upon request from parent/guardian or student, grant a furlough from the gifted/talented program not to exceed two years. Furloughs will be granted at the district gifted/talented committee's discretion.

File Transfer Procedure

Persons Responsible

The campus principal and campus GT specialist (as designated by the campus principal) will be responsible for the maintenance of student's GT records.

Procedures for Student Records

The campus GT specialist will maintain required GT information in a folder. A profile form will be filed in a qualified student's cumulative folder.

The data in the GT folder may be organized with the most recent data on top. The GT folder checklist will be stapled in the front of the folder and checked and dated as appropriate.

When students in the program are transferred or promoted from one campus in the district to another (example, from elementary to middle school), the campus coordinator will send a roster of those students to the receiving campus GT coordinator, counselor(s) and registrar. The GT folder will be included in the cumulative records transferred to the campus.

Reporting to Parents

Elementary students will be graded holistically at the end of each semester. His/her work will be evaluated using a rubric/reporting system. This report will be sent to parents as part of the standard classroom report card at the end of each semester.

Secondary student grades will be inclusive in the Pre AP/AP coursework grades.

APPENDIX

MARBLE FALLS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Teacher/Parent Nomination Form for Student G/T Screening

Date

Name of Student:

(Student's Birthday)

(Student's I.D. Number)

(Homeroom Teacher)

(Current Campus)

(Current Grade)

Name of Parents:

Address:

Zip Code

Phone

Name of Person Making Nomination

(Address or Campus)

Relationship to Student

(Parent, Teacher, Principal, Friend, etc.)

Should my child meet the screening criteria I give permission to Marble Falls ISD personnel to administer necessary assessments for possible gifted and talented identification to

_____. Grade Level: _____

(Student's Name)

Parent/Guardian signature

Date

Telephone #

Please return this completed form to your child's teacher or counselor.

Form GTA (08/14)

Marble Falls ISD
027904
SPECIAL PROGRAMS EHBB
GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS (LEGAL) DATE
ISSUED: 2/5/2001
UPDATE 65
EHBB(LEGAL)-P

The District shall establish a process for identifying and serving gifted and talented students and shall establish a program for those students in each grade level. The District may establish a shared services arrangement with other districts. *Education Code 29.122*

“Gifted and talented student” 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 exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area, possesses an unusual capacity for leadership, or excels in a specific academic field. *Education Code 29.121*

Students shall be identified as gifted/talented in accordance with a written policy that includes:

1. Provisions for ongoing screening and selection of students who perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment in the areas defined in Education Code 29.121.
2. Assessment measures collected from multiple sources according to each area defined in the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students.
3. Data and procedures designed to ensure that students from all populations in the District have access to assessment and, if identified, to services provided for the gifted/talented program.
4. Provisions for final selection of students to be made by a committee of at least three local District educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted students.
5. Provisions regarding furloughs, reassessment, exiting of students from program services, transfer students, and appeals of District decisions regarding program placement. *19 TAC 89.1*

The District shall provide an array of learning opportunities for gifted/talented students in kindergarten through grade 12 and shall inform parents of the opportunities. Options shall include:

1. Instructional and organizational patterns that enable identified students to work together as a group, to work with other students, and to work independently.
2. A continuum of learning experiences that leads to the development of advanced-level products and performances.
3. In-school, and when possible, out-of-school options relevant to the student’s area of strength that are available during the school year.
4. Opportunities to accelerate in areas of strength. *19 TAC 89.3*

SPECIAL PROGRAMS EHBB GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS (LOCAL)
DATE ISSUED: 1/27/2010 1 of 2
LDU 2010.01
EHBB(LOCAL)-X

NOMINATION Students may be nominated for the gifted and talented program at any time by teachers, counselors, parents, or other interested persons.

PARENTAL CONSENT Written parental consent shall be obtained before any special testing or individual assessment is conducted as part of the screening and identification process. All student information collected during the screening and identification process shall be an educational record, subject to the protections set out in policies at FL.

IDENTIFICATION CRITERIA Criteria to identify gifted and talented students shall be established in the Board-approved program for the gifted and talented. The criteria shall be specific to the state definition of gifted and talented and shall ensure the fair assessment of students with special needs, such as the culturally different, the economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities.

ASSESSMENTS Data collected through both objective and subjective assessments shall be measured against the criteria approved by the Board to determine individual eligibility for the program. Assessment tools may include, but not be limited to, the following: achievement tests, intelligence tests, creativity tests, behavioral checklists completed by teachers and parents, teacher nominations based on classroom observations, student/parent conferences, and available student work products.

SELECTION A selection committee shall evaluate each nominated student according to the established criteria and shall select those students for whom gifted program placement is the most appropriate educational setting. The committee shall be composed of at least three professional educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted students and shall be established for the District.

NOTIFICATION Parents and students shall be notified in writing of selection for the gifted program. Participation in any program or services provided for gifted students is voluntary. The District shall obtain written permission of the student and the parents before a student is placed in a gifted program.

REASSESSMENT The District shall not perform routine reassessments. **TRANSFER STUDENTS**

When a student identified as gifted by a previous school district transfers into the District, the student's records shall be reviewed by the selection committee to determine if placement in the District's program for gifted and talented students is appropriate. The committee shall make its determination within 30 days of the student's enrollment in the District and shall base its decision on the transferred records, Marble Falls ISD

SPECIAL PROGRAMS EHBB GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS (LOCAL)

DATE ISSUED: 1/27/2010

ADOPTED: 2 of 2

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EHBB(LOCAL)-X

observation reports of District teachers who instruct the student, and student and parent conferences.

FURLOUGHS A student who is unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the gifted and talented program may be placed on furlough by the selection committee. The purpose of such a furlough is to provide the student an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the selection committee. A furlough also may be granted at the request of the student and/or parent.

A student may be furloughed for a period of time deemed appropriate by the selection committee. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed, and the student may reenter the gifted program, be removed from the program, or be placed on another furlough.

EXIT PROVISIONS Student performance in the program shall be monitored. A student shall be removed from the program at any time the selection committee determines it is in the student's best interest. If a student or parent requests removal from the program, the selection committee shall meet with the parent and student before honoring the request. A parent or student may appeal any final decision of the selection committee regarding selection for or removal from the gifted program.

APPEALS Appeals shall be made first to the selection committee. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with FNG(LOCAL) beginning at Level Two.

PROGRAM EVALUATION The gifted program shall be evaluated periodically, and evaluation information shall be shared with Board members, administrators, teachers, counselors, students in the gifted and talented program, and the community.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS The District shall ensure that information about the District's gifted and talented program is available to parents and community members and that they have an opportunity to develop an understanding of and support for the program.