

HISD GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS

What is Gifted and Talented (G/T)?

According to the Texas Education Code, section 29.121, Gifted and Talented means a child who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a 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

How do I know if my child is Gifted and Talented?

All gifted children are not the same. It is important to note that there are not **one** or **two** characteristics that an educator can point to in order to say that a student is G/T. It is a **combination** of characteristics. Some signs that a student might be gifted include, but **are not limited to**:

- Extraordinary memory compared to peers
- Highly curious
- Highly creative
- Exhibits abstract reasoning and problem-solving skills
- Draws inferences and grasps underlying principles
- Initiates projects
- Discusses things in detail, elaborates

What does “Vanguard” mean?

In HISD, the term “Vanguard” means the same thing as Gifted and Talented. Vanguard is used to refer to G/T programs, whereas Gifted and Talented refers to the student.

What is the HISD Vanguard Program?

The Vanguard program is designed for G/T students in grades K-12 who excel in general intellectual ability in combination with having exceptional creative/productive thinking and/or leadership ability. Vanguard programs provide services for these students that are comprehensive, structured, and appropriately challenging. The Vanguard curriculum (or plan of study) is differentiated by modifying the depth, complexity, and pacing of the general school program, utilizing higher-level thinking skills, and developing independent research skills focusing on advanced-level products.

Which schools offer Vanguard Programs?

All HISD schools offer some form of a Vanguard program for G/T students in grades K-12.

What is the Vanguard Neighborhood Program?

The Vanguard Neighborhood program is designed to meet the needs of G/T students at their neighborhood or zoned school.

How do you apply for the Vanguard Neighborhood Program?

Students in all grades can apply for Vanguard services in their neighborhood (zoned) school with the Vanguard application process. If they are identified as G/T, they will enter the program the following school year.

G/T IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

How are students identified as G/T?

Identification as G/T begins with a parent submitting an application, which will lead to the G/T testing process.

What and when is the G/T testing process?

All kindergarten and fifth-grade students not previously identified as G/T are screened for G/T services during Universal Testing, which consists of the following tests during the specified times:

- Nov. 14-17: CogAT Abilities Test
- Dec. 1-9: Iowa Assessments or Logramos Achievement Test

Students in all other grade levels must submit an application to be tested during the G/T testing window, which is from December 10, 2016, to January 14, 2017.

If my child took the G/T test before entering kindergarten and qualified for Vanguard, do I need to apply for them to get those services at their neighborhood school, or do they get them automatically?

Your child will automatically get the services and not have to reapply/test, but you will need to take a copy of the identification matrix to the school where your child is enrolling. The only time this will not apply is if your child leaves the district for more than six academic months; if they leave for more than six academic months, they must re-apply.

What if my child is not in kindergarten or fifth grade?

Parents should apply for testing by submitting an application to the Vanguard Coordinator by **Dec. 9, 2016**. The G/T Identification Process takes place once a year for services to begin the following year. Students in this category are tested between Dec. 10, 2016, and Jan. 14, 2017.

Can my child be tested more than once a year?

No, he or she can only be tested once a year. If your student is tested twice, the first test administration will be used to determine if your child is identified as G/T.

Does my child need to be tested again to stay in the program?

No. Once your child qualifies to receive G/T services, they will continue to receive them unless you request otherwise or if your child leaves the district for more than six academic months; if they leave for more than six academic months, they must re-apply.

What if I no longer want my child to receive G/T services?

At any time during a school year, you have the option to voluntarily withdraw your child from the G/T program by submitting the Voluntary Exit Form to the Vanguard coordinator at your child's school.

What are the steps involved in the G/T Identification Process?

The G/T Identification Process takes place as follows:

1. Parent applies to Vanguard Neighborhood program (August through December) by visiting the Advanced Academics website and completing an application online available [here](#), picking up an application from their child's school, or contacting the Advanced Academics Dept. at 713-556-6954.
2. Parent collects required documents (see application for specific details)
3. Parent submits application to their neighborhood (zoned) campus
4. School schedules G/T testing (December through January)
5. Vanguard Neighborhood Admissions Committee meets (March)

6. Parent is notified of qualification or non-qualification based on the G/T Identification Matrix (March)
7. Student qualifies and begin the following school year in the Vanguard program at their neighborhood school, OR
8. Student does not qualify, and they are eligible for re-assessment in 12 months.

Is my child identified as G/T based on test scores alone?

No, identification as G/T is determined by points obtained based on test results and other criteria. Scores are entered and converted into points on HISD's G/T Identification Matrix.

Who has the final say over whether or not my child is admitted to a Vanguard program?

HISD's Advanced Academics Department develops the criteria for admission, which is based on the **Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students**. Admission criteria are the same for the Vanguard Neighborhood and the Vanguard Magnet programs. The Advanced Academics department also conducts the admission committee meetings for the HISD Vanguard Magnet programs. For information on the Vanguard Magnet programs, see this [page](#).

If my child qualifies, do they automatically get G/T services, or do I have to formally request them?

Your child will automatically get G/T services if they attend the school where they applied, because that school processed their application and they are aware that the child is qualified. If your child enrolls at a different campus than the one they applied to, they will need to provide that school with a copy of the matrix.

HISD VANGUARD PROGRAM SERVICES

Which services are offered at HISD elementary schools?

Kindergarten through fifth-grade G/T students receive instruction from a G/T-trained teacher implementing the G/T Curriculum Framework in four foundation curricular areas (reading, math, science, social studies) utilizing advanced lesson plans.

Which services are offered at HISD Montessori schools?

Certain campuses incorporate the Montessori program for grades K-5. Students may receive G/T instruction via the Montessori Curriculum Framework. Montessori supports G/T scholars in the following ways: multi-age classrooms; individual work plans; flexible grouping; accelerated work; stable classroom assignments for the three-year cycle; curriculum compacting; supportive, nurturing classroom environments; emphasis on research and inquiry-based learning; interdisciplinary studies; independent studies and extensions; heterogeneous groups in class to support real-world applications; and cooperative learning.

Which services are offered at HISD dual-language schools?

Certain dual-language schools incorporate G/T for grades K-5. The learning needs of each student will be met, whether in their own classroom with their own teachers (G/T-certified and certified in ESL); by another teacher of a higher or lower grade level; or by a specially trained teacher for specific needs. Accommodations will be made to differentiate for students showing mastery in either language.

Which services are offered at HISD secondary schools?

In Grades 6-12, G/T students will be scheduled in Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) classes in two foundation curricular areas with G/T-, Pre-AP/AP-, or IB-trained teachers implementing the G/T Curriculum Framework utilizing advanced lesson plans. Schools must enroll G/T identified students into at least two advanced-level courses: Pre-AP/AP, Pre-IB/IB, or dual credit. All students enrolled in AP/IB courses are expected to take all AP/IB exams.