




# Standard Operating Procedures

## Gifted and Talented Handbook

APPROVED: DATE: September 30, 2019

# Policy Cross Reference Sheet

This handbook is an administrative procedure of the District and subject to policies adopted by the Board of Trustees. In case of conflict between administrative procedures and Board policy, policy shall prevail.

Date of Superintendent Approval: 9-80-19 

Version Number: (i.e. "2018.1") 2019.1

The contents of this handbook relate to the following Board policies:

Policy	Title	Page(s)
<b>EHBB(LOCAL)</b>	<b>SPECIAL PROGRAMS GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS</b>	<b>*</b>

\* The above listed policy relates to areas in which the special program, gifted and talented students, is necessary. This handbook speaks directly to these situations.

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# GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM

## **Philosophy**

The Board believes every student shall be inspired and equipped to reach his or her full potential in a nurturing and innovative learning environment that meets his or her unique educational, social, and emotional needs.

## **Procedures**

Campus staff will implement the Administrative Procedures with consistency and fidelity. District staff will monitor and support effective implementation of the Administrative Procedures.

# IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION

Criteria to identify students for gifted and talented services shall be aligned to the state definition of gifted and talented and shall ensure the equitable assessment of students of all populations (See Exhibit A). The identification of gifted students in FBISD is based on qualitative and quantitative measures. To ensure access for all FBISD students, all second grade students will take a cognitive abilities test that assesses quantitative, verbal, and nonverbal skills. This cognitive abilities test serves as the quantitative measure of FBISD GT identification. In addition, research-based locally determined norms on this cognitive ability test may be used to facilitate equity on designated FBISD campuses. The qualitative measures include parent and teacher surveys.

The Campus Selection Committee must be comprised of a campus administrator and/or Gifted and Talented (“GT”) counselor, and at least three teachers who have met the training requirements for gifted and talented programs. The GT counselor will collect all data and forward information to the Campus Selection Committee. In evaluating all data, the Campus Selection Committee shall be mindful of the following guidelines:

1. Make professional decisions based upon a thorough review of the student’s profile considering national, state, and District standards.
2. Reflect on the student’s profile indicating strengths and program placement that best meet their immediate and long-term educational needs.
3. Notify the parents/guardians in writing of their child’s gifted and talented evaluation decision.
4. Advise parents/guardians of their rights to appeal regarding gifted and talented evaluation decision.

A timeline for referral windows, testing windows, parent/guardian notification, appeals and placement is included in this Handbook (See Exhibit A).

# REFERRALS

Local policy uses the word ‘nominate’ for student program admission. The word ‘referral’ will be used in place of ‘nominate’ within administrative procedures to align with the *Texas State Plan for Gifted and Talented*.

The District shall provide assessment opportunities to complete the screening and identification process for referred students in a manner that is fair and equitable. Students enrolled in Fort Bend Independent School District (“FBISD”) who are not yet identified shall be screened on an ongoing basis for referral.

1. All non-identified District enrolled students in grade 2 will be automatically screened for gifted and talented referral.
2. All non-identified District enrolled students in grades K-1 and 3-12 shall be considered for referral by the classroom teacher using criteria such as student products, teacher observations, previous achievement test data and/or previous mental abilities testing.
3. Parents/Guardians or other persons familiar with students who are not identified for services may refer any District enrolled student in grades K-12 for gifted and talented evaluation.

## **Referral Procedures**

A designated building counselor(s) will be the gifted and talented test facilitator(s) on each campus. The counselor shall be available for consultation on all aspects of the screening and assessment for students in grades kindergarten through twelve.

Listed below are the referral procedures for FBISD students.

1. Information on gifted and talented services will be provided in the student handbook to inform parents/guardians of general characteristics of gifted and talented children, and of their opportunity to refer their children for gifted and talented evaluation.
2. Campuses will host an awareness session including information about traits of students with gifts and talents, as well as the procedures for referring students, assessment, and identification during the referral window.
3. Referrals will be accepted no later than the first school day in October and may begin as early as August 1. The actual date shall be announced through various District communications such as District website, campus websites, campus marquees, School Messenger, student folders, and/or campus newsletters.
4. Referrals for students enrolled after the fall window has closed will be accepted no later than the last school day in March and may begin as early as February 1. The actual date shall be announced through various District communications.
5. An online application will be available for referrals.
6. The designated campus GT counselor or trained GT liaison will collect and forward information to the Campus Selection Committee.

# ASSESSMENT

Assessment of students for gifted and talented programs shall include quantitative and qualitative data collected from multiple sources for each area of giftedness served by the District. Assessment tools may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Cognitive abilities tests
- Behavioral inventories or observations completed by parents/guardians and classroom teachers

Referred students will be assessed in the areas of intellectual ability and specific academic fields using a minimum of three (3) appropriate criteria.

The designated GT counselor will coordinate testing and data collection including:

1. Qualitative data that may include, but not limited to, teacher and parent/guardian observation inventories.
2. Quantitative assessment data that may include, but not limited to, individual or group mental abilities tests.

## **Data Analysis Procedures**

All referred students' profiles will be reviewed by the Campus Selection Committees. Unless otherwise noted, the student profile for grades K - 12 will initially include:

1. Mental abilities test data for the current school year. These tests will be administered by FBISD no later than the last day in November for fall referrals and no later than the last day in February for spring referrals.
2. Scores from the Teacher and Parent/Guardian Inventories for the current identification period.
3. Optional assessments may include testing for services from other sources.

# REASSESSMENT

Parents/Guardians of students currently receiving Gifted and Talented services may request a GT reevaluation to add an area of identification during the spring referral window. If approval to reassess in any unidentified area is granted, fees for material and processing must be received no later than five (5) business days before the start of the Spring GT testing window. Fee waivers may be provided for students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Fees for material and processing shall be included in this Handbook prior to the beginning of the school year.



# TRANSFERS

## **New Enrollment**

Upon enrollment into the District, students from public, private, or homeschools shall have access to the program admission, assessment, and appeals process to determine the need to receive FBISD Gifted and Talented services in the immediate school year.

## **Grades 1 –12**

When a student in grades 1-12 identified for gifted and talented services by their previous public school district enrolls in the District, the District shall review the student's records within 20 school days to determine if the GT identification criteria used by the previous district coordinates with the criteria used by the District.

If the GT evaluation criteria used by the previous public school district does not coordinate with the District's criteria, the student shall be evaluated using District criteria during the District's next referral window. The Campus Selection Committee shall determine if placement in the District's program for gifted and talented students is appropriate. All available student data collected shall be placed on the Gifted and Talented Transfer Profile.

Prior to final determination, initial placement of the transfer student may or may not be in a gifted and talented class/course.

## **Intradistrict Transfers**

Prior to scheduling, all intradistrict transfer students shall have their cumulative files and learning plans reviewed for gifted and talented services. If a student received services at the previous campus, student coding shall be entered to reflect continued eligibility for gifted and talented services. Services shall begin immediately upon enrollment at the campus.

# FURLOUGHS

The District may place on a furlough any student who is unable to maintain satisfactory performance or whose educational needs are not being met within the structure of the gifted and talented program. A furlough may be initiated by the District, the parent/guardian, or the student.

A furlough shall be granted by the Campus Selection Committee for specified reasons and for a specified period of time. At the end of the furlough, the student may re-enter the gifted program, be placed on another furlough, or exited from the program. A timespan for a furlough may be one semester or one school year.

## **Plan of Action**

At any time during the year when a student is not performing at the expected levels within the specified curriculum, a gifted and talented teacher-parent/guardian conference can be requested by the parent/guardian or teacher. Parents/Guardians must request conferences in writing to the teacher(s). Conferences shall be scheduled with the parents/guardians being notified of the conference date and time within ten (10) school days of the request.

Student performance will be addressed and documented on a Plan of Action Form (See Exhibit C). A copy of the completed form will be sent to the campus counselor and parents/guardians by the gifted and talented teacher(s) within five (5) school days of the conference. Additionally, the student's gifted learning plan shall be reviewed and modified as determined by the parent/guardian and teacher.

1. Students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance after being placed on a Plan of Action may be placed on furlough by the Campus Selection Committee for a minimum of one (1) semester to a maximum of one (1) school year from the effective beginning date.
2. The furlough will be documented on the Program Furlough/Exit Form (See Exhibit C). The completed form will be filed in the student's cumulative folder.
3. The academic performance of a student placed on furlough will be monitored by the GT counselor throughout the furlough period. The student will retain gifted and talented eligibility but will not receive program services.
4. At the end of the furlough period, the student's progress will be evaluated by the GT counselor and the parent/guardian. The Campus Selection Committee may decide to extend the furlough period up to a cumulative time period of one year, return the student to receiving program services, or exit the student from the program.

# EXIT AND RE-ENTRY

Students who have participated in the District's Gifted and Talented Program shall continue in the program unless they are unable to perform within the structure of the Gifted and Talented Program.

## **Exit by Campus Selection Committee**

If the Campus Selection Committee determines that the student's performance continues to be below expected levels within the specified curriculum, the Committee may decide to extend the time period for the Plan of Action, or may decide to exit the student from the program.

If the Campus Selection Committee decides it is most appropriate for the student to exit the program, the Committee will complete a Program/Probation/Furlough/Exit Form (See Exhibit C). No single criterion may be the determining factor for exiting the program. A meeting must take place with the student's parent/guardian to review the student's learning plan for possible modifications to prevent and/or exit, as well as the data on which any recommendation for exiting the program is made. The exited student will not receive Gifted and Talented Program services for the remainder of that academic year.

A student who has exited from the program may reenter the program at the beginning of the next school year only if he/she is retested according to the approved District testing calendar and qualifies for the program using the most recent Gifted and Talented qualifications standards.

The campus principal will be responsible for communicating the Campus Selection Committee's decision regarding program exit to the parent/guardian and for obtaining the parent/guardian's signature on the Program Probation/Furlough/Exit Form (See Exhibit C). When all signatures have been obtained, the form will be filed in the student's folder.

If the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the decision of the Campus Selection Committee, the parent/guardian must send a letter to the campus principal. The letter should state the reasons for not accepting the decisions of the Campus Selection Committee. The letter must be received within ten (10) business days of the documented date of parent/guardian notification. Until a decision is made on the appeal, the student will remain in the Gifted and Talented Program. (Refer to Appeals Procedure section on page 13 for continuation of the Gifted and Talented appeals process.)

## **Exit by Parent/Guardian Request**

The student may exit the program upon written parent/guardian request and after consultation with a representative of the Campus Selection Committee. The written request will be filed in the student's folder.

A student who is exited by parent/guardian request will not receive services for the remainder of the year, but may reenter the program at the beginning of the next school year with no additional testing and parent/guardian request in writing. However, if the student remains out of the program for longer than one (1) full academic year, the student must be reassessed for eligibility for the Gifted and Talented Program.

## **Withdrawn from District**

Students who withdraw from the District shall be administratively exited from the Gifted and Talented Program.

**Re-Entry**

In order to re-enter the program, a student who has been administratively exited must be reassessed and qualify for the program by meeting the most current gifted and talented qualification standards.

# APPEAL PROCEDURES

A parent, guardian, designated representative, student, or professional staff member may appeal a probationary, furlough, exit or identification decision made by the Campus Selection Committee). For professional staff appeals, see Board Policy DGBA(LOCAL). The student may be represented by a parent/guardian at any level of the complaint. The appeal must be submitted through the GT Online Nomination App within ten (10) school days from the date of the Campus Selection Committee decision date.

Reasons appeals may be submitted are:

- Illness during testing with documentation of the illness.
- Emotional duress during testing due to family crisis.
- Testing irregularity – an inequitable or inappropriate application during the testing process is alleged or documented accommodations were not provided.
- Substantial evidence – representative has substantial evidence to introduce that when added to existing information creates a compelling preponderance of the evidence regarding the students' need for program services.

## Level One

After the Campus Selection Committee's decision has been received by the parent/guardian, an appeal to the campus principal must be received by the date indicated in the notification letter. The appeal letter should include a statement of the problem, an explanation or information pertinent to the situation, and indicate if the parent/guardian desires to appear personally before the Campus Selection Committee.

The principal will schedule a meeting of the Campus Selection Committee and notify the parent/guardian of the time and date of the meeting. The parent/guardian may appear personally before the Committee. A student who wants to appeal to the Campus Selection Committee should be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

During the meeting, the selection procedures and the individual student's information will be reviewed, along with any new information from teacher(s) and/or parents/guardians. At the conclusion of the meeting, the principal will document the meeting on the student's Identification Profile.

The Campus Selection Committee will respond in writing to the person making the appeal within ten (10) school days after the Committee considers the matter. The letter must explain its intent to uphold or amend its original decision.

A copy of the student's Identification Profile will be sent to the District Gifted and Talented Department.

A Campus Appeal can be waived only upon the collaborative agreement of the Campus Principal and a representative from the Gifted and Talented Department.

## Level Two

Should a parent/guardian want to appeal the placement decision of the Campus Selection Committee, a letter of appeal shall be submitted to the Gifted and Talented Department who will forward the letter to the District Appeals Committee. The letter of appeal should include a statement of the problem and any explanation or information pertinent to the situation. If the person so desires, he/she may appear personally before the District Appeals Committee and should so indicate in the letter of appeal. A

representative from the Gifted and Talented Department will notify the person of the date of the meeting.

All appeals made to the Gifted and Talented District Appeals Committee are made through the Gifted and Talented Department. This committee is appointed annually by the Director of Gifted and Talented and consists of the following:

- One (1) campus principal
- One (1) campus counselor
- One (1) campus gifted/talented teacher
- Two (2) central office administration staff
- Chairperson: Director of Gifted and Talented
- Advisor: Director of Testing and Evaluation

All appeals will be reviewed by at least five (5) members of the committee representing each of the five (5) positions listed above. Whenever possible, campus positions will reflect the appropriate grade level of the student requesting the appeal. To facilitate the hearing of appeals in a timely manner, the Director of Gifted and Talented shall have the authority to designate alternate committee members should the need arise.

The following principles shall guide the staff in responding to appeals:

- a. All information regarding the identification of students is confidential and shall be regarded as such throughout the identification, selection and appeals processes.
- b. No parent/guardian has the right to information about any student(s) other than his/her own child.
- c. The District Appeals Committee will meet to consider appeals as needed.

A student who wants to appeal to the District Appeals Committee should be accompanied by a parent/guardian, a designated representative, or a professional staff member.

The District Appeals Committee will respond in writing to the person making the appeal within ten (10) school days after the committee considers the matter. The letter must explain its intent to uphold or amend the original decision or to gather additional data.

# COMMUNITY AWARENESS

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

1. The Gifted and Talented Department will schedule and plan at least one engaging opportunity for community and family involvement each year.
2. The GT Parent Advisory Committee will meet monthly to provide support and feedback to the District regarding gifted and talented services.
3. Campuses will include strategies in Campus Improvement Plans to promote GT awareness within the community and will include strategies for family involvement.

# LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The District shall provide an array of research-based learning opportunities, including multiple and varied instructional arrangements, for gifted and talented students in kindergarten through grade 12 that meet their social, emotional, and academic needs. The available opportunities shall be consistent in practice for students across the District. Parents/Guardians shall be informed of the opportunities. Gifted and talented students shall have individual learning plans that document students' goals and the learning opportunities that best fit their needs.

Teachers assigned to teach gifted and talented students shall be trained to work with gifted and talented students as required by the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented*. Selection of teachers serving gifted and talented students shall be based on the District's Profile of a Teacher of Students with Gifts and Talents. (See Exhibit B.)

These opportunities shall include, but are not limited to:

1. Flexible pacing and access to advanced materials in area(s) of identification to provide content acceleration commensurate with the student's need and abilities. These may include, but are not limited to, textbooks, articles, and applications that may typically be reserved for grade levels beyond the student's current grade. Students may be accelerated beyond the assigned grade level curriculum in identified areas.
2. Instructional and organizational patterns that support flexible grouping to maximize student growth and that facilitate identified students working together as a group, with other students, and independently.
3. Self-selected independent research projects (e.g. Texas Performance Standards Projects, GT Power Hour) evaluated by those with expertise related to the projects' fields of study.
4. A continuum of learning experiences that lead to the development of advanced-level products and performances that support content integration leading to mastery and development of critical attributes outlined in the District's Profile of a Graduate.
5. In-school, and when possible, out-of-school enrichment relevant to the student's area(s) of identification that are available during the entire school year.

## **Classroom Placement Strategies**

Campuses shall select from the following research-based classroom placement strategies to facilitate delivery of learning opportunities for gifted and talented students. The purpose of grouping gifted and talented students is to facilitate a teacher's provision of appropriately advanced, accelerated, and differentiated curriculum to gifted learners. Campuses shall select classroom placement strategies that best facilitate the delivery and support of the learning opportunities for gifted and talented students described above within their campus structures.

At the secondary level, these classroom placement strategies and teacher training requirements apply to Pre-AP, AP, Beyond AP, Dual Credit, and other advanced courses where gifted and talented students are provided learning opportunities.



***Designated GT Classroom:***

Students identified as gifted and talented shall be placed in a classroom together. When the number of gifted and talented learners in a single classroom exceeds class size limits, students identified as gifted and talented shall be placed in classrooms based on their areas of identification (math, science, English/language arts, and/or social studies).

***GT Cluster Classroom:***

When there are more than six identified gifted and talented students at a grade level, a minimum of six students identified as gifted and talented shall be placed in a classroom as a cluster with other students. Gifted and talented students shall be clustered by area of identification, whenever possible, to facilitate students' access to advanced and accelerated curriculum as needed. The range of students who need instructional interventions shall be limited within a cluster classroom.

***Modified GT Cluster Classroom:***

When there are fewer than six identified gifted and talented students at a grade level, the students shall be placed in a classroom as a cluster. Highly capable students with a history of high achievement shall be placed in the classroom to increase the talent cluster to a minimum of six students. When there is only one identified gifted and talented student in a grade level, opportunities shall be provided to enable that student to work with other identified students across grade levels during the school day.

**Kindergarten**

Students identified for gifted and talented services in Kindergarten must begin receiving services no later than March 1. Kindergarten gifted and talented students shall receive differentiated instruction commensurate with their instructional needs which includes flexible pacing, in-class flexible grouping and flexible materials use.

In the event there is no teacher who has been trained to provide these services, the campus, working with district level gifted and talented leadership, shall design a program to meet the needs of identified kindergarten students.

# Exhibit A

## Gifted and Talented Identification and Selection Timeline

Fall GT Referral Window	First Day of School – Last school day in September
Fall GT Testing Window	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade will be tested from the end of September to end of October based on district calendars. All other grade levels will be tested from the end of October to beginning of November based on district calendars.
Parent/Guardian Identification Notification	February
Parent Submits Campus-Level Appeal Request	Within ten (10) school days of identification notification
Campus-Level Appeals Meetings	March
Parent/Guardian Campus-Level Appeal Notification	Within ten (10) school days of appeals meeting
Parent Submits District-Level Appeal Request	Within ten (10) school days of campus-level appeal decision notification
Spring GT Referral Window**	First Day of Spring Semester-Last school day in January **The 2019 Spring Referral window is for FBISD students who enrolled after the close of the Fall Referral Window and for students currently identified for gifted services in FBISD in Math/Science OR ELA/SS
Spring GT Testing Window	February
District-Level Appeals Meetings	April
Parent/Guardian District-Level Appeal Notification	Within ten (10) school days of appeals meeting
Placement for Services	Kindergarten services begin on March 1 of tested school year. Grades 1 – 11, services will begin the first day of school of the following school year

# Exhibit B

## Profile of a Teacher of Students with Gifts and Talents

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### **PROFESSIONAL/EDUCATIONAL**

**From a professional/educational standpoint, an ideal candidate would have a mix of the following credentials ...**

- Subject-specific bachelor's, Master's preferred (Teachers with less than five years of experience)
  - Evidence of broad interdisciplinary work in college programs and as a professional
  - Involvement in G/T-focused research and advocacy organizations
  - Large digital PLN (<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/how-do-i-get-a-pln-tom-whitby> )
  - G/T trained (30 hrs)+ supplemental certificate (optional) with evidence of a commitment to G/T-specific professional development beyond the six-hour update
  - A "digital native" or "digital immigrant"
  - Has already or is willing to implement(ed) Standards-Based Grading
  - Curriculum development experience (subject-specific, G/T enrichment, interdisciplinary, etc.)
- 

### **PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES**

**Intellectually and affectively, an ideal candidate would be ...**

- Potentially G/T themselves or high G/T mindset
  - Intense empathy with exceptional children: "Gets them..."
  - Strong sense of humor/willingness to laugh at themselves
  - Commitment to flexibility and failing forward (with evidence)
  - Strong creative impulse (with evidence)
  - Seeks coaching and collaboration (with evidence)
  - Strong leadership impulse (with evidence)
  - Comfortable with questioning authority on behalf of students
  - Does lots with little, readily identifies outside resources
  - Willing and articulate advocate for G/T needs and rights to administrators, educators, parents, and community members
  - A lifelong learner/reader who is familiar with both classical and cutting-edge practice, research, and philosophy
  - Maintains awareness of legislation that potentially impacts G/T services
  - Willing to hand over control to students with evidence of constructivist pedagogical methods
  - Comfortable letting students create and apply knowledge and learning
- 

### **EDUCATIONAL BELIEFS**

**An ideal candidate would have a mix of the following beliefs about G/T students....**

- They exist and have special needs that must be addressed
  - They have rights that need to be respected and protected
  - They are not gifted all of the time at everything
  - Those that are 2E, ELL, and socioeconomically disadvantaged are under-identified and underserved
  - Their social and emotional needs are equally as important as their intellectual needs
  - They are not perfect, are still kids, and deserve to experience childhood fully
  - They are, by their nature, at a higher risk for destructive and self-harming behaviors
  - They are people to be nurtured, not a resource to be tapped; having them meet their full potential is a side effect of an education that values them as people
  - The underservice of G/T students at all educational levels represents a silent national crisis that must be rectified
  - There is a difference between more work and better work
  - Being G/T is often a burden, not a reward
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# Exhibit C

## Program Furlough/Probation/Exit Form

**FORT BEND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION  
PROGRAM FURLOUGH/PROBATION/EXIT FORM**

CAMPUS \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE LEVEL \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF G/T IDENTIFICATION \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE \_\_\_\_\_ SUBJECT AREA \_\_\_\_\_

**PURPOSE OF THIS ACTION:**

(Check one)

☐ FURLOUGH \* (does not receive services)

Specify length of time: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ PROBATION \* (receives services)

Specify length of time: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ EXIT \*

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBJECT AREA FOR THIS ACTION:**

(Check all that apply)

☐ ENGLISH AND SOCIAL STUDIES

☐ MATH AND SCIENCE

☐ ALL AREAS

**REASON FOR CAMPUS DECISION:**

(Check one)

☐ A) FAILURE TO MEET G/T PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

☐ B) PARENT/STUDENT REQUEST

☐ C) OTHER

**EXPLAIN:**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

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# COMMITTEE

ADMINISTRATOR\_\_\_\_\_

PARENT\_\_\_\_\_

COUNSELOR\_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT\_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER\_\_\_\_\_

OTHER\_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER\_\_\_\_\_

OTHER\_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER\_\_\_\_\_

OTHER\_\_\_\_\_

\*NOTE: If student does not initiate re-entry after one year, he/she will automatically be exited from the program. If a student is exited, to re-enter they must be referred, tested, and qualified for Gifted and Talented services.