

Skidmore-Tynan ISD

Gifted and Talented

Handbook



Updated June 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Texas State Definition
2. Texas State Goal
3. Skidmore-Tynan ISD Philosophy
4. Skidmore-Tynan ISD GT Mission Statement
5. Program Objectives
6. State Codes for Gifted and Talented Students
7. Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Students
8. Program Design
9. Program Options
10. Curriculum and Instruction
11. Professional Development
12. Gifted and Talented Identification Procedures
13. Nomination
14. Assessment and Evaluation
15. Screening and Selection
16. Reassessment
17. Student Transfers
18. Appeals Procedure
19. Furlough/Exit Procedure

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 receive 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)

Skidmore-Tynan ISD Philosophy

We believe Gifted and Talented (GT) students possess the potential for self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by innovative products and performances reflecting individuality, creativity, and intellectual ability more advanced than the majority of students of the same age or grade.

Therefore, we will endeavor to provide services to develop and opportunities to demonstrate their potential.

Skidmore-Tynan ISD GT Mission Statement

The Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District GT program will meet the social, emotional, and cognitive needs of the identified student population through individualized instruction, enrichment, and extension. S-TISD will offer opportunities for students to explore and enrich

Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District - Gifted and Talented Program

their giftedness in core subjects, humanities, and fine arts. S-TISD will provide unique learning opportunities through depth and complexity that celebrate:

- individuality
- creative thinking
- problem solving
- critical thinking
- self-discovery

Program Objectives

1. Identify and serve the student population in similar ethnic and economic distribution patterns as the general student population in the areas of:
 - a. general intellectual ability
 - b. creativity
 - c. advanced academic achievement
2. Provide units of study that 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. Address the social and emotional needs of identified students.
5. Encourage and model lifelong learning.
6. Provide students with multiple opportunities to participate in learning experiences using advanced content (within the four core areas) which are differentiated in depth, complexity, and range through the use of a variety of strategies (Centers, Independent Study, Flexible Grouping, Tiered Assignments, Appropriate Questioning Strategies). Students will be able to work with groups of other gifted students, groups of non-gifted peers, adults, the community, and work independently.

State Codes for the Gifted and Talented Students

The Texas State Board of Education mandated that gifted and talented students in grades K-12 be identified and served. Skidmore-Tynan ISD has complied with this mandate and will continue to do so by implementing plans to continuously improve the quality of services for our gifted students as stated in the Texas Education Code (TAC), Subchapter D., 121-29.121 to

Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District - Gifted and Talented Program

29.123; Subchapter C., 42.156 and the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 19, Part II, Chapter 89, 89.1 to 89.5. TEC 29.121 provides a definition for gifted and talented students, the establishment of a program, and for a state plan for gifted and talented students. The code reads:

§29.121. Definition

In the subchapter, “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:

- (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.

Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Students

Gifted students are those who consistently excel, or those who show the potential to excel in one or more areas. Since wide variation exists among the gifted, any list of characteristics must be a very general description of the group as a whole. A gifted individual may possess one or more of the following traits:

- Acquires basic skills and knowledge rapidly
- Perceives more unusual relationships and displays unusual sensitivity to expectations and feeling of others
- Comprehends advanced ideas, concepts, forms generalizations, better at sensing discrepancies, and recognizes implications
- Displays independence and exhibits self-sufficiency
- Formulates superior abstractions
- Possesses a keen and unique sense of humor
- Demonstrates intellectual curiosity with a stronger need to know
- Is more innovative and imaginative than their peers
- Responds positively to being challenged by intellectual and creative tasks
- Reads widely and intensively with an advanced level of language development

Each gifted individual possesses varied and divergent characteristics, traits, and behaviors. Individuals develop and demonstrate their gifts and talents at different developmental stages. This is particularly true in the preschool, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and the primary years through grade two.

High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Thinker

A High Achiever...	A Gifted Learner...	A Creative Thinker...
Remembers the answers.	Poses unforeseen questions.	Sees exceptions.
Is interested.	Is curious.	Wonders.
Is attentive.	Is selectively mentally engaged.	Daydreams; may seem off task.
Generates advanced ideas.	Generates complex, abstract ideas.	Overflows with ideas, many of which will never be developed.
Works hard to achieve.	Knows without working hard.	Plays with ideas and concepts.
Answer the questions in detail.	Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives.	Injects new possibilities.
Performs at the top of the group.	Is beyond the group.	Is in own group.
Responds with interest and opinions.	Exhibits feelings and opinions from multiple perspectives.	Shares bizarre, sometimes conflicting opinions.
Learns with ease.	Already knows.	Questions: What if...
Needs 6 to 8 repetitions to master.	Needs 1 to 3 repetitions to master.	Questions the need for mastery.
Comprehends at a high level.	Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas.	Overflows with ideas--many of which will never be developed.
Enjoys the company of age peers.	Prefers the company of intellectual peers.	Prefers the company of creative peers but often works alone.
Understands complex, abstract humor.	Creates complex, abstract humor.	Relishes wild, off-the-wall humor.
Grasps the meaning.	Infers and connects concepts.	Makes mental leaps: Aha!
Completes assignments on time.	Initiates projects and extensions of assignments.	Initiates more projects that will ever be completed.
Is receptive.	Is intense.	Is independent and unconventional.

Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District - Gifted and Talented Program

Is accurate and complete.	Is original and continually developing.	Is original and continually developing.
Enjoys school often.	Enjoys self-directed learning.	Enjoys creating.
Absorbs information.	Manipulates information.	Improvises.
Is a technician with expertise in a field.	Is an expert who abstracts beyond the field.	Is an inventor and idea generator.
Memorizes well.	Guesses and infers well.	Creates and brainstorms well.
Is highly alert and observant.	Anticipates and relates observations.	Is intuitive.
Is pleased with own learning.	Is self-critical.	Is never finished with possibilities.
Gets A's.	May not be motivated by grades.	May not be motivated by grades.

Kingore, B. (Spring 2004). High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Learner.
 Understanding Our Gifted.
www.bertiekingore.com

Program Design

Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District offers a variety of learning experiences and opportunities for Gifted and Talented students in grades K-12. Instructional and organizational patterns will be flexible. Students have opportunities to work together with other GT students, to work together in diverse groups, and to work independently. Flexible grouping is essential.

During the school year parents are notified of options that are relevant to the needs and areas of strength of the gifted and talented students.

Program options are available K-12 (See the following pages for Program Options). Identified students in grades 1-5 also receive approximately 1 hour per week in a pullout program.

Students in grades 6-12 receive services at every grade level in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Program Options

Elementary:

Grade Level Pullout

Texas Performance Standards Project

Affective Curriculum

Products and Talents Showcase

Specials: Art and Music

Differentiated Instruction Services in regular classroom

Junior High:

6th Period Elective Class

Credit by Exam

Products and Talents showcase

Academic/Enrichment Field Trip

Differentiated Instruction Services in regular classroom

High School:

AP courses: Calculus, Chemistry

Pre AP courses: English 1 and 2, Algebra II, Geometry, Pre-Calculus,
Biology, Chemistry, Physics

Dual Credit: English 1301, English 1302, Speech, Government, Economics, Psychology,
U.S. History, World History

Independent Study

Credit by Exam

Differentiated Instruction Services in regular classroom

Curriculum and Instruction

Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District develops campus and district improvement plans to improve the services of the program and to be in compliance with state expectations. Each campus' improvement plan allows students to be provided an array of learning opportunities in the four core areas within the regular and pull-out classes at the elementary, electives at the junior high, and Pre-AP (Advanced Placement), AP (Advanced Placement), and dual credit at the high school. Each campus will offer a variety of program services, or options, for the delivery of services to the students identified on that campus. Opportunities to address students' individual learning styles and intelligences will be embedded in the curriculum and instructional process.

Differentiation

A variety of strategies are employed in order to differentiate the curriculum and instruction to meet the individual needs of gifted and talented students. Because of the traits, behaviors, and characteristics of these students, they often learn in different ways and at a different pace than other students. Challenges are imperative for these students. A differentiated curriculum can provide those challenges that will address the gifted students' learning styles and pace. Combinations of these strategies are utilized in grades K-12 in the delivery of the curriculum.

- Questioning Strategies
- Tiered Assignments
- Flexible Skills Grouping
- Learning Centers
- Interest Groups
- Independent Study/Projects
- Acceleration

The depth and complexity within the content the student studies or investigates is most important. In looking for depth and complexity, the options would include:

Depth

- longer period of time to study content/concept
- use of professional/advanced vocabulary or terms
- use of generalizations/broad-based themes
- examination of unanswered questions
- exploration of an ethical issue or judgment
- examination of rules, principles, or laws

Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District - Gifted and Talented Program

Complexity

- content/concept is studied over time (past, present, future)
- content/concept is approached from different or multiple perspectives, view points, or roles
- content/concept has interdisciplinary connections
- non-examples of the content/concept are investigated within the theme or generalization

The basic principles of differentiation have been recognized and are a large part of the learning experience for gifted students. Those principles include:

- real world problems/issues
- open-ended problems
- use of more advanced/sophisticated resources
- use of an inquiry or inductive approach
- student choices in learning
- effortful and challenging lessons
- advanced thinking skills not expected of peers at that time

Outside of the school day, students and their parents are notified of any area opportunities that might be of interest or related to a student's area of strength. Each campus provides a variety of enrichment activities to meet individual needs. These options include formal services, enrichment services, awards/recognitions, and contests for the nature and needs of gifted students.

Professional Development

The Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District is committed to providing its staff with the appropriate and meaningful professional development that enables the staff to meet the unique and individual needs of all students including services for gifted and talented students.

It is imperative that all staff, who are responsible for formally servicing these students, possess appropriate training for educating the gifted child. S-TISD will require at least the minimum hours of training as mandated by the state:

- All teachers providing formal services must have a minimum of thirty hours training in gifted education in the three major areas: nature and needs, identification and assessment, and curriculum and instruction.
- All instructional staff including aides will participate in six hours annually to update their training. We feel that this is important since GT students

Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District - Gifted and Talented Program

are gifted in many ways and in classes other than core content areas.

- All administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions must have a minimum of six hours of professional development that addresses the nature and needs of gifted and talented students and program options for gifted and talented students, including Pre-AP and AP overviews and activities.

Gifted and Talented Identification and Procedures

Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District has Board approval for procedures and processes used for identifying candidates for the Gifted and Talented Program. These procedures meet state requirements (§29.121 & TAC 89.1) and have been designed to ensure the identification of any student who qualifies for the services of the program under the established guidelines. The criteria for identification ensures the fair assessment of students with special needs, such as the culturally diverse, the economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities.

The process following a simple three step process:

Step One – Nomination,

Step Two – Assessment/Evaluation

Step Three – Screening and Selection

Nomination

Nominations may be made from multiple sources. Parents, guardians, teachers, administrators, and students are invited to nominate students they feel might benefit from the GT program. All nominated students will be screened to determine whether they meet Board approved criteria for placement in the program.

The nomination process will be advertised with a letter of announcement in the local newspaper, on the District's webpage, and sent home via each student communicating nomination procedures and timelines.

Parents will be notified when their child is nominated for the GT screening with a form requesting permission for testing.

Assessment and Evaluation

The Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District GT program is available to all qualifying students. The assessment and evaluation of students for the GT program includes multiple measures of general intellectual ability. Qualitative and quantitative measures are used in the identification process. Quantitative data includes the results of nationally normed ability tests, teacher assessments, other available test data, such as standardized tests and baseline assessments. All identification instruments are selected according to program services, curriculum and instruction, validity, reliability, and appropriateness for the population for the district. Qualitative information includes teacher observation and student products. The campus GT coordinator and/or other appropriate professionals will conduct testing.

Screening will occur for nominated Kindergarten students in the spring semester of their kindergarten year.

Screening will also occur for nominated students in grades 1-12 in the spring semester.

A student may be assessed once in an academic year.

Some students who are not placed in the GT program after screening may remain in the screening pool at the direction of the screening committee to be re-assessed at subsequent screenings.

Screening and Selection

Unless a student is withdrawn from the screening pool, collection of data pertinent to the screening criteria will be collected and assembled for presentation to the placement/identification committee. The committee of at least three local professional educators trained in the nature and needs of gifted students from within the District will determine if the student meets criteria for identification and placement into the GT program.

The GT placement/identification committee will consider placement of nominated students based on Board-approved selection criteria. These criteria include both quantitative and qualitative measures which help to identify students capable of advanced thinking or performance when compared with age/grade peers. The committee will place students whose performance profiles indicate that they meet or exceed at least 3 of these multiple criteria. The committee may, upon consideration of this data, call for more information on a given individual before reaching a final decision or may make additional placement of students not meeting

Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District - Gifted and Talented Program

criteria in three areas if, in their professional judgment, the nominee's best interest is served by such placement.

Criteria measures Grades 1-12:

- 90th percentile or above on standard ability measures such as: NNAT3, Sages, OLSAT, CogAT, or other non-verbal scale.
- 90th percentile or above on achievement assessments such as: ITBS
- 86th percentile on parent checklist (Williams Scale)
- Scores of 55 or above on Renzulli Learning OR Renzulli Motivation OR 45 or above on Renzulli Creativity Teacher Checklists,
- Portfolio/Work Samples showing preponderance of student work advanced for grade/peer upon committee request

Criteria Measures for Kindergarten

- 90th percentile or above on standard ability measures such as: NNAT3, OLSAT, CogAT, or other non-verbal scale.
- Goodenough Draw-A-Person Test \geq 90th Percentile
- Scores of 55 or above on Renzulli Learning OR Renzulli Motivation OR 45 or above on Renzulli Creativity Teacher Checklists,
- 86th percentile on parent checklist (Williams Scale)
- Portfolio/Work Samples showing preponderance of student work advanced for grade/peer

The campus committee will consist of various participants such as: the campus principal, the campus counselor, the campus GT coordinator, and at least one trained classroom teacher. Written parent or guardian permission is required to evaluate a student. Once the student qualifies, the campus will be notified and the student will be coded accordingly. The parents will receive through the mail a letter stating their child "does qualify" or "does not qualify". This letter includes the Parent/Guardian Consent Form for students who qualify.

Reassessment

Although district policy allows for reassessment as students move from one campus to the next, this will not be routinely done. However, if a student is not performing well in the program and is being considered for exiting, reassessment may be initiated. Reassessment may also take place for students who have been furloughed from the program for longer than one year.

Student Transfers

Students who enter Skidmore-Tynan ISD from another school district where they were identified and placed in a Gifted and Talented program and whose prior school provides written verification of such identification and placement may automatically enter the GT program until the next regularly held screening. At that time, the placement committee will evaluate how effective the GT program seems to be for the student's needs. If the student is progressing well in the program, he/she may be placed permanently by the committee without further re-evaluation or assessment.

Students who cannot provide written documentation of identification from their prior school will be placed into the screening and will follow the same screening procedures as all other students.

Appeals Procedure

Parents will be notified in writing of the results of the screening committee's recommendations as to placement or non-placement into the GT program.

- Parents who disagree with this decision may appeal in writing to the Special Programs office within 10 days of the notification.
- The District GT coordinator and the counselor from the student's campus will meet with the parents within 10 days of receipt of an appeal letter to review the data considered by the committee and the comparison of the child's profile with the Board-approved criteria.
- If the parent wishes to go forth with an appeal, they should notify the Superintendent in writing within 48 hours after meeting with coordinators. After

Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District - Gifted and Talented Program

this point, the procedures will follow regular District due-process guidelines in accordance with FNG(LOCAL), Level Two. Further appeal would go to the Skidmore-Tynan ISD Board of Trustees.

- Board of Trustee decisions will be final after their review.

Furlough/Exit Procedure

Students or parents may request in writing a furlough of up to one year from the GT program. A furloughed student may reenter the program at the beginning of the following school year upon written request without further screening. Furloughs of longer than one year will require reassessment by the selection committee to reenter the GT program.

The following procedures are followed when considering exiting a student from the GT program:

Parent request: GT is a voluntary program. A parent may request in writing that their child be exited from the GT program at any time. The student will then be exited from the program at the end of the current nine weeks. (In case of an emergency, immediate action may be taken.) The campus counselor and selection committee should meet with the parents of an exiting student to discuss the action and counsel them concerning their student's progress and participation in the program as well as the consequences of his/her exiting the program.

Student request: A student may request in writing to exit the program. Upon receipt of such request, the campus GT coordinator should schedule a meeting with the student and his/her parents. If, after appropriate counseling, the student and parents decide to have the student exit the program, the student will be exited at the end of that nine weeks.

Teacher request based on observations of student performance and products:

A teacher request initiates a nine week observation period during which the parents, teachers, campus counselor, and District GT coordinator shall meet to discuss the request and then will monitor and communicate regularly about the student's progress. Formal reassessment may also occur at this point to provide current data for the consideration of the selection committee.

At the end of the nine week period, the selection committee will use information gathered during this observation period to make a final decision regarding the student's exit from the program.

Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District - Gifted and Talented Program

This decision may be appealed by the parents following the regular appeal procedure. A student who has been exited from the program, either voluntarily or involuntarily, must follow regular nomination and screening procedures to be eligible to reenter the program.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information on this or any program offered at Skidmore-Tynan ISD, please contact:

Dr. Stephanie Ashworth
Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
stephanie.ashworth@stbobcats.net
361-287-3426

Or

Campus Counselors

Skidmore-Tynan Elementary School
Christine Gonzalez
christine.gonzalez@stbobcats.net
361-287-3319

Skidmore-Tynan Junior High
Judy Garza
judy.garza@stbobcats.net
361-287-0714

Skidmore-Tynan High School
Traci Younts
traci.younts@stbobcats.net
361-287-0146