

Gifted & Talented Program Evaluation Summary

Background:

The Gifted & Talented Program should be evaluated annually, during the month of April as required by local policy. No specific requirements exist regarding the process of the evaluation. Upon research and collaboration with professional associations for the education of the gifted and talented, it was determined to combine data from evidence of the *Texas State Plan for the Gifted & Talented* implementation and from a teacher/parent survey.

Survey Data:

The following data is a summary of both parent and teacher responses to a similar set of survey questions. The intention of the survey is to obtain information from the perspective of both audiences. Data will be used to identify perception gaps and address any concerns of the program implementation within the district and campus improvement plans.

Question 1 is omitted from the reported data selection to protect the identification of staff and students associated with the survey. Similarly, comments that were submitted will also be omitted from the results, but will be used to help identify further concerns.

Question:		Percentage of Responses with 'Agree or Strongly Agree'	
		Teacher Response	Parent Response
2)	As the provider of G/T services, I understand the characteristics and needs of gifted children.	90%	
	My child's classroom teacher understands the characteristics and needs of gifted children.		64%
3)	As the service provider, I adjust assignments and instruction based on my children's learning needs.	89%	
	My child's classroom teacher adjusts assignments and instruction based on my child's learning needs.		58%
4)	As the service provider, I communicate and collaborate with parents regarding their child's learning needs.	71%	
	My child's classroom teacher communicates and collaborates with me about my child's learning needs.		44%
5)	As the service provider, I believe that my services have had a positive influence on the students' attitudes toward school.	89%	
	The gifted/talented services my child receives have had a positive influence on my child's attitude toward school.		73%

6)	As the service provider, my students are provided opportunities to work with other students with similar interests and abilities.	94%	
	The gifted/talented services my child receives provide opportunities for my child to work with other children with similar interests and abilities.		74%
7)	As the service provider, I provide learning opportunities that are challenging for the students.	97%	
	The gifted/talented classes my child attends provide learning opportunities that are challenging for my child.		77%
8)	My gifted/talented services provide opportunities for students to pursue their passions and develop new topics of their personal interest through independent learning.	69%	
	The gifted/talented services my child receives provide opportunities for my child to pursue his/her passions and develop new topics of his/her personal interest through independent learning.		41%
9)	The amount and level of difficulty of the work that each child completes is appropriate for his/her learning level.	94%	
	The amount and level of difficulty of the work my child completes is appropriate for his/her level.		60%
10)	The services provided have been effective in improving my students' academic achievement.	91%	
	The gifted/talented services my child receives has been effective in improving his/her academic achievement.		68%
11)	There is adequate communication between parents, teachers, and administrators about the gifted/talented program.	40%	
	There is adequate communication between parents, teachers, and administrators about the gifted/talented program.		31%

Texas State Plan for the Gifted & Talented:

The *Texas State Plan for the Gifted & Talented*, referred to as the 'state plan', identifies five (5) general areas of program compliance. The state plan provides guidance and specific attributes used to ensure compliance with legal requirements, as well as attributes that contribute to recommended and exemplary practices. The five areas/sections are:

Section 1: *Student Assessment*: Assessment instruments and gifted/talented identification procedures provide students an opportunity to demonstrate their diverse talents and abilities.

Section 2: *Service Design*: A flexible system of viable service options provide a research-based learning continuum that is developed and consistently implemented throughout the district to meet the needs and reinforce the strengths and interests of gifted/talented students.

Section 3: *Curriculum and Instruction*: Districts meet the needs of gifted/talented students by modifying the depth, complexity, and pacing of the curriculum and instruction ordinarily provided by the school.

Section 4: *Professional Development*: All personnel involved in the planning, creation, and delivery of services to gifted/talented students possess the knowledge required to develop and provide appropriate options and differentiated curricula.

Section 5: *Family/Community Involvement*: The district involves family and community members in services designed for gifted/talented students throughout the school.

Data Review:

The evaluation design of the state plan involved the collaboration of teachers from multiple grade levels and an overview from each campus principal. An instrument was designed for teachers to review and provide specific evidence for the state plan's attributes for compliance and recommended/exemplary practices. Campus principals reviewed the evidence presented from each campus/district-level for the five program areas. A rubric tool was used to determine if the campus was in compliance and/or implementing recommended or exemplary practices. An overall summary for each area and for the district program as a whole was then determined.

Based on the results submitted by each campus principal, and a preponderance of evidence, the following program rating was determined for this year:

Section 1:	Student Assessment:	Recommended
Section 2:	Service Design:	Compliance
Section 3:	Curriculum and Instruction:	Recommended
Section 4:	Professional Development:	Compliance
Section 5:	Family/Community Involvement:	Compliance
Overall		Compliance

Findings:

Response rates for the surveys yielded 100% participation from teachers providing services, while only 33% from parents of students served in the program. While we would like to see 100% participation from all stakeholders, some very interesting and meaningful data can be determined.

There were significant perception gaps present on most responses, but due to the percentage of parental participation, we will be most interested in common strengths and weaknesses as described below.

Both teachers and parents were consistent in providing the highest ratings in Q6 and Q7, regarding opportunities for students to work together and be challenged. However, results for Q9 showed the

greatest perception gap, which interestingly measured the appropriateness in the level of difficulty of the work the students complete. Ironically, the teachers rated this particular question with a 94% agreement, the second highest level. This would also be consistent with the findings on the state plan rubric, showing a recommended rating for Section 3: Curriculum and Instruction.

Similarly, we find parents and teachers disagreed most with Q8 and Q12. It is evident that communication is critical and lacking between administration, teachers, and parents, as this area was the lowest in rating. Teachers and parents agreed to disagree that services provided opportunities for students to pursue passions and interests through independent learning. This data was consistent with the findings from the state plan rubric, as it pertains to Section 2: Service Design.

According to the state plan evaluation rubric, there were a few concerns that were specifically related to the findings in the surveys. Campus principals reported that gifted/talented students are *not* 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. Further, it was reported that a continuum of learning experiences is not consistently provided that leads to the development of advanced-level products and/or performances such as those provided through the Texas Performance Standard Project (TPSP). It was also noted that the campus improvement plans (CIPs), also known as the 21st Century Learning Plans, did not specifically include provisions to improve services to gifted/talented students. Although three campuses met 100% compliance in required professional development, one campus did have two teachers providing service that were not up to date with all required training.

Commendations, as evidenced by ratings of exemplary practices, were found in the areas of Student Assessment/Policies and Procedures. The district does have written policies and procedures that are consistently applied regarding the identification of gifted and talented students. There were also a number of commendations in the area of curriculum and instruction.

Conclusions:

The findings of this report were not completely surprising. However, information needed to be gathered to identify some of the most critical areas to address. Over recent years, with such emphasis placed on school accountability, much effort and focus has been placed on one end of the spectrum, ensuring student success on state assessments, and fewer efforts on extending opportunities and advancement for students with high aptitude. While many schools have found themselves in this circumstance, focus must return to providing appropriate levels of instruction based on the individual needs of students. Hence, the district felt the need to fully evaluate all programs, including those for the gifted and talented.

The findings are rather clear. The following items should be addressed , some immediately, for the betterment of the Gifted and Talented Program:

- 1) Clear communication: Communication between administration, teachers, and parents should exist, including: updated website information, establishing a parent email listserve with frequent

postings, improved teacher-parent communication, district-wide parent meeting(s), and ease of access to district policies and procedures.

- 2) Professional development: Teachers must understand the needs and nature of gifted students and create assignments and projects appropriate to the individual need of each student. 100% of staff should be in compliance with requirements to provide services within the program. Students must be provided learning opportunities for students to further develop and pursue individual passions and interests through independent learning.
- 3) Service design: Students should be provided opportunities to work together as a direct result of gifted services. These opportunities may extend to multi-age groupings as needed.
- 4) Curriculum and instruction: A continuum of learning experience should be provided that lead to advanced-level products and/or performances.
- 5) Provisions to improve the general program shall be written in the campus/district plans.

Final thoughts:

Hudson ISD appreciates the work and effort of all parties throughout this evaluation process. Questions/comments and recommendations are always welcome and may be directed to the campus administration or to the district assistant superintendent.

Hudson Independent School District fosters a community of life-long learners by providing an environment that builds self-worth, integrity, and respect for diversity while striving for academic and social excellence.