

HUNTSVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Gifted &  
Talented/Advanced  
Academics**

**PROGRAM HANDBOOK**



Dear Parent,

This handbook is intended to provide parents with an overview of Huntsville Independent School District's Advanced Academics/GT Program and services for gifted and talented students. This document is designed to answer many of your questions and help you understand the policies and procedures our district employs to meet the needs of our gifted and talented students. In addition to your student's classroom teachers, counselors in each school will help answer your questions or concerns about services. Each school has a staff member who can assist you with the identification process or obtaining appropriate instructional modifications to meet your student's unique rate and level of learning. The staff contacts are listed by school building:

### 2018-2019 School Year

Stewart Elementary	Judy Phillips, 936-435-6703, <a href="mailto:jcphillips@huntsville-isd.org">jcphillips@huntsville-isd.org</a>
Samuel W. Houston Elementary	Kelli Vossler, 936-435-6753, <a href="mailto:kvossler@huntsville-isd.org">kvossler@huntsville-isd.org</a>
Scott Johnson Elementary	Marsha Stringer, 936-435-6253, <a href="mailto:mstringer@huntsville-isd.org">mstringer@huntsville-isd.org</a>
Huntsville Elementary	Sarah McNeel, 936-435-6860, <a href="mailto:sbmcneel@huntsville-isd.org">sbmcneel@huntsville-isd.org</a>
Huntsville Intermediate	Guillermo Jimenez, 5 <sup>th</sup> grade, 936-435-6506, <a href="mailto:gjimenez@huntsville-isd.org">gjimenez@huntsville-isd.org</a> Stephanie Sanders, 6 <sup>th</sup> grade, 936-435-6504, <a href="mailto:ssanders@huntsville-isd.org">ssanders@huntsville-isd.org</a>
Mance Park Middle School	7 <sup>th</sup> - Elizabeth Matchett, 936-435-6407, <a href="mailto:ematchett@huntsville-isd.org">ematchett@huntsville-isd.org</a> 8 <sup>th</sup> - Natali Gee, 936-435-6409, <a href="mailto:nrgee@huntsville-isd.org">nrgee@huntsville-isd.org</a>
Huntsville High School	<u>Grades 9-12</u> Last Names A-C & Grade 12 Sm-Z: Jennifer Kempton, 435-6208 <a href="mailto:jbkempton@huntsville-isd.org">jbkempton@huntsville-isd.org</a> Last Names D-I & Grade 11 Sm-Z: Catherine Greeves, 936-435-6109, <a href="mailto:cngreeves@huntsville-isd.org">cngreeves@huntsville-isd.org</a> Last Names J-M & Grade 9 Sm-Z: Sophia Willis, 936-435-6180, <a href="mailto:sdwillis@huntsville-isd.org">sdwillis@huntsville-isd.org</a> Last Names N-SI & Grade 10 Sm-Z: Ginger Jenkinson, 435-6207 <a href="mailto:gjenkinson@huntsville-isd.org">gjenkinson@huntsville-isd.org</a>  College and Career Completion Counselor: Dawn Shaw, Room 6130, 936-435-6181, <a href="mailto:dshaw@huntsville-isd.org">dshaw@huntsville-isd.org</a>

Huntsville ISD is committed to providing instruction to meet the individual needs of all our students and to provide the services needed to help our gifted and talented students achieve their academic potential. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. My office is located in the Hawkins Administration Building and I can be reached at 936-435-6338. Please note that this information is available electronically on the Huntsville ISD website at [www.huntsville-isd.org](http://www.huntsville-isd.org).

Sincerely,

Ana Thomas  
Bilingual/ESL & GT Coordinator  
[athomas@huntsville-isd.org](mailto:athomas@huntsville-isd.org)

HUNTSVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ADVANCED ACADEMICS PROGRAM HANDBOOK

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Curriculum and Instruction

Talent Pool (K-2) ..... 1  
Elementary Program (Grades 3-4)..... 1  
Intermediate Program (Grades 5-6)..... 1  
Secondary Program (Grades 7-12) ..... 1

Identification Timeline and Procedures

Kindergarten..... 2  
First Grade ..... 3  
Second Grade ..... 4  
Third through Fourth Grade..... 5  
Fifth through Sixth Grade..... 6  
Seventh through Twelfth Grade..... 7

Appeals ..... 8  
Exit Process ..... 8  
Furlough ..... 8  
Reassessment ..... 9  
New Students ..... 9  
Student Transfers..... 10  
Staff Development ..... 11  
Family-Community Involvement ..... 11  
Website ..... 11

# CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Identified students will participate in challenging learning experiences in kindergarten through grade twelve in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies based on Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards. Focus will be on creative thinking, critical thinking and analysis, research and advanced-level products and/or performances. Students will have opportunities to interact with regular students and to work with gifted students. Opportunities will be provided to accelerate in areas of student strengths. The school district will inform parent of available opportunities.

## Talent Pool (K-2)

Trained teachers will deliver differentiated assignments to Talent Pool students through clustering. The curriculum will be comprised of interdisciplinary units, which include English language arts, social studies, mathematics and science. Content will be open-ended and problem-solving based.

## Elementary Program (Grades 3-4)

The curriculum will be enriched in two blocks: language arts/social studies and mathematics/science. Differentiated lessons should develop productive, complex, abstract and higher level thinking skills in identified students. Differentiated curriculum will be student-centered and open-ended and will produce divergent and critical thinking skills.

## Intermediate Program (Grades 5-6)

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

The curriculum will be taught in each core curricular area of language arts, social studies, mathematics and science. Differentiated lessons should develop productive, complex, abstract and higher level thinking skills in identified students. Differentiated curriculum will be student-centered and open-ended and will produce divergent and critical thinking skills.

### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

The curriculum will be taught through Pre-AP courses in the four core curricular area of language arts, social studies, mathematics and science.

## Secondary Program (Grades 7-12)

Curriculum will be based on the College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Program that provides access to high quality education, accelerates learning, rewards achievement, and enhances both high school and college programs. Qualified students will choose subject specific courses. The curriculum will be taught in both Pre-AP and AP courses where students learn a subject in depth, develop analytical reasoning skills, and form disciplined study habits.

## KINDERGARTEN IDENTIFICATION TIMELINE AND PROCEDURES

- October** All kindergarten students will receive a form requesting permission for administration of the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test.
- November** All kindergarten students who return the permission slips are to be administered the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT). The kindergarten teachers will administer the test. Test booklets must include the **student's birthday** and **PEIMS** number to facilitate accurate scoring.
- December** NNAT results will be screened by a committee of personnel trained in the nature and needs of gifted students. Students scoring 73% or higher on the NNAT will complete Phase II testing. Parents of students who do not meet this 73% score on the screener have the right to appeal and request additional screening.
- Phase II testing will include the CogAT Verbal section. Classroom teachers will complete three sections of the Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scale (GATES) on each student who enters Phase II. The three sections to be completed on the GATES are the intellectual ability scale, academic skills scale, and the creativity scale.
- January** The screening committee will meet to review individual student matrices. Students must meet the district's criteria in **two** of the four following criteria:
- 90% or higher on the NNAT
  - 90% or higher on the CogAT Verbal
  - 90% or higher on the CogAT Quantitative
  - 60% or higher on one or more subsection (intellectual, academic or creativity) of the GATES
- February** Notification letters will be sent to parents prior to March 1. Students will be served weekly during the spring semester beginning the week of March 1 by a kindergarten teacher who has completed 30 hours of state required staff development.

## FIRST GRADE IDENTIFICATION TIMELINE AND PROCEDURES

- January** Students in first grade who are not currently being served in the Developmental Talent Pool may be referred for screening by their teachers, parents or peers. Teachers who refer a student for the talent pool must complete must complete the district's referral form and return it to the campus counselor. Parents and peers may refer students by contacting the campus counselor or the GT Coordinator's office.
- February** Students referred in the first grade will be administered the NNAT as the district's universal screener. Students scoring 73% or higher on the NNAT will complete Phase II testing. Parents of students who do not meet this 73% score on the screener have the right to appeal and request additional screening.
- Spring** Phase II students will be administered the verbal and quantitative sections of the COGAT Abilities Test. The intellectual ability, academic, and creativity subsections of the Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scale (GATES) will be completed on the students once they qualify for Phase II of the testing.
- June** The screening committee will meet to look over individual student matrices. Students must meet the district's criteria in three of the four following criteria:
- 90% or higher on the NNAT
  - 90% or higher on the CogAT Verbal
  - 90% or higher on the CogAT Quantitative
  - 60% or higher on one or more subsection (intellectual, academic or creativity) of the GATES
- June** Notification letters will be sent to parents. They will begin receiving services during their second grade year.

## SECOND GRADE IDENTIFICATION TIMELINE AND PROCEDURES

All students being served in the Developmental Talent Pool will automatically be referred for the Advanced Academics Program. Students not currently being served in the talent pool may be referred for screening by teachers, parents or peers.

- January** Teachers who refer a student for the talent pool must complete the district's referral form and return it to the campus counselor. Parents and peers may refer students by contacting the campus counselor or the GT Coordinator's office.
- February** All referred students will be given the NNAT as the district's universal screener. Students scoring 73% or higher will complete Phase II screening. Parents of students who do not meet this 73% score on the screener have the right to appeal and request additional screening.
- Spring** The school counselor will administer the additional Phase II testing. Tests included in Phase II are the CogAT Verbal and Iowa Test of Basic Skills Achievement Test. Phase II tests will be scored and returned to the assessment office for screening. Students may qualify in the areas of mathematics/science and/or language arts/social studies.
- June** The screening committee will meet to review individual student matrices. Students qualifying for the mathematics/science EEP class must meet the district's criteria in three of the four following criteria:
- 92% or higher on the NNAT
  - 92% or higher on the ITBS mathematics section
  - 92% or higher on the ITBS science section
  - 60% or higher on one or more subsection (intellectual, academic or creativity) of the GATES
  -
- Students qualifying for the language arts/social studies EEP class must meet the district's criteria in three of the five following criteria:
- 92% or higher on the NNAT
  - 92% or higher on the CogAT Verbal
  - 92% or higher on the ITBS language arts section
  - 92% or higher on the ITBS social studies section
  - 60% or higher on one or more subsection (intellectual, academic or creativity) of the GATES
- June** Notification letters will be sent to parents.

## THIRD THROUGH FOURTH GRADE IDENTIFICATION TIMELINE AND PROCEDURES

All students not being served in the Gifted and Talented Program may be referred for screening by their classroom teachers, parents or peers.

- January** Teachers who refer a student must complete the district's referral form and return it to the campus counselor. Parents and peers may refer students by contacting the campus counselor or the GT Coordinator's office.
- Spring** All referred students will be given the NNAT as the district's universal screener. Students scoring 73% or higher will complete Phase II screening.
- The school counselors will administer Phase II testing. Tests included in Phase II are the CogAT Verbal and Iowa Test of Basic Skills mathematics, science, reading and social studies sections. Phase II tests will be scored and returned to the assessment office for screening. Students may qualify in the areas of mathematics/science and/or language arts/social studies.
- June** The screening committee will meet to review individual student matrices. Students qualifying for the mathematics/science EEP class must meet the district's criteria in three of the four following criteria:
- 92% or higher on the NNAT
  - 92% or higher on the ITBS mathematics section
  - 92% or higher on the ITBS science section
  - 60% or higher on one or more subsection (intellectual, academic or creativity) of the GATES
- Students qualifying for the language arts/social studies EEP class must meet the district's criteria in three of the five following criteria:
- 92% or higher on the NNAT
  - 92% or higher on the CogAT Verbal
  - 92% or higher on the ITBS language arts section
  - 92% or higher on the ITBS social studies section
  - 60% or higher on one or more subsection (intellectual, academic or creativity) of the GATES
- June** Notification letters will be sent to parents.



## FIFTH THROUGH SIXTH GRADE IDENTIFICATION TIMELINE AND PROCEDURES

Teacher, parent and peer referral will also be accepted for fifth through twelfth grade students not currently identified for Gifted and Talented Program.

**January** Referral letters will be sent to all fifth through eleventh grade teachers in the core curricular areas of mathematics, science, language arts and social studies. Parent and student referrals will also be accepted.

Teachers who refer a student must complete the district's referral form and return it to the campus counselor. Parents and peers may refer students by contacting the campus counselor or the GT Coordinator's office.

**Spring** All referred students will be given the NNAT as the district's universal screener. Students scoring 73% or higher will complete Phase II screening.

The school counselors will administer Phase II testing. Tests included in Phase II are the CogAT Verbal and Iowa Test of Basic Skills mathematics, science, reading and social studies sections. Phase II tests will be scored and returned to the assessment office for screening. Students may qualify in the areas of mathematics/science and/or language arts/social studies.

Students qualifying for the mathematics and science identification must meet the district's criteria in three of the five following criteria:

- 94% or higher on the CogAT nonverbal
- 94% or higher on the CogAT quantitative
- 94% or higher on the ITBS mathematics section
- 94% or higher on the ITBS science section
- Yearly average of 96 or higher in mathematics or science (grades only count as one measure)

Students qualifying for language arts and social studies identification must meet the district's criteria in three of the four following criteria:

- 94% or higher on the CogAT Verbal
- 94% or higher on the ITBS language arts section
- 94% or higher on the ITBS social studies section
- Yearly average of 96 or higher in language arts or social studies (grades only count as one measure)

**June** Notification letters will be sent to parents.

## **SEVENTH THROUGH TWELFTH GRADE IDENTIFICATION TIMELINE AND PROCEDURES**

Teacher, parent and peer referrals will also be accepted for fifth through twelfth grade students not currently identified for the GT/Advanced Academics Program.

**January** Referral letters will be sent to all fifth through eleventh grade teachers in the core curricular areas of mathematics, science, language arts and social studies. Parent and student referrals will also be accepted.

Teachers who refer a student must complete the district's referral form and return it to the campus counselor. Parents and peers may refer students by contacting the campus counselor or the GT Coordinator's office.

**Spring** Testing will occur during the spring semester. Students may qualify in the areas of mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies.

Students qualifying for the English language arts class must meet the district's criteria in two of the three following criteria:

- 94% or higher on the CogAT Verbal
- 94% or higher on the ITBS vocabulary/reading sections
- Yearly average of 96 or higher in language arts

Students qualifying for the social studies class must meet the district's criteria in two of the three following criteria:

- 94% or higher on the CogAT Verbal
- 94% or higher on the ITBS social studies section
- Yearly average of 96 or higher in social studies

Students qualifying for the mathematics class must meet the district's criteria in two of the three following criteria:

- 94% or higher on CogAT Quantitative section
- 94% or higher on the ITBS mathematics concepts and problem solving sections
- Yearly average of 96 or higher in mathematics

Students qualifying for the science class must meet the district's criteria in two of the three following criteria:

- 94% or higher on CogAT nonverbal section
- 94% or higher on the ITBS science section
- Yearly average of 96 or higher in science

**June** Notification letters will be sent to parents.

## APPEALS

Students who do not qualify under the screening procedure may appeal in writing to the District Appeals Committee for reconsideration. All appeals must adhere to established guidelines and timeframes. This written appeal must state reasons why the student and or parents feel reconsideration is merited. This committee will review testing information and additional data presented. All decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.

The District Appeals Committee may place a student in the program for a nine-week probationary period. At the end of this nine-week probationary period the teacher, the school counselor and the Director for Accountability and Assessment will review the student's progress in the class and determine final placement in the program.

## EXIT PROCESS

Student performance in the Advanced Academics Program will be monitored to assure that the needs of each student are being met. At any time, the parents of an identified student, the student who is in grades 6 through 12, or appropriate campus personnel may request a review of the student's placement.

Every effort will be made to continue the placement of a student in the program. A student may be removed from the program at any time the District Placement Committee determines it to be in the student's best interest.

A student who is exited from the program may not re-enter until one full academic semester has elapsed. Students who exit the program and later decide to re-enter will be considered new students to the program and must again meet the selection criteria at the next regular screening period.

## FURLOUGH

Students who wish to be withdrawn for a temporary period of one year may request furlough status. They or their parents should present to the District Placement Committee the reasons for wishing to be furloughed and their educational plans for the intervening period. The committee may grant limited extension of a furlough, if the student and/or parents present appropriate documentation. Students who do not re-enter the program at the end of the furlough period of one academic year may re-enter at a later date through the standard identification process.

## **REASSESSMENT**

Students may be referred by their classroom teacher for reassessment if they have not previously qualified for placement in the Talent Pool, Enhanced Elementary Program or the Advanced Academics Program. The HISD Office of Accountability and Assessment considers all testing data current for two calendar years. Students will be reassessed on a biannual basis. Parents may appeal to the assessment office for their child to be screened before the end of the two-year time period.

All Talent Pool students will be reassessed at the end of their second grade year for placement in the Enhanced Elementary Program. Students in the Enhanced Elementary Program will be grandfathered into the Advanced Academics Program at the end of their sixth grade year.

## **NEW STUDENTS**

New students to the district who were not previously identified as gifted and talented in their former school district will be screened if they meet the Huntsville ISD's criteria for testing. The percent passing on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) will be used if it available on the student. The average must be 90 percentile or higher in order for a student to be screened. If the STAAR average is not available on the student, the counselor and/or GT Coordinator will look at all records and determine if testing is appropriate.

## STUDENT TRANSFERS

Parents of students who enroll with records reflecting that their child was a current participant in an Advanced Academics Program in another school district will be encouraged to set up a conference to discuss criteria for placement in the previous district. Campus personnel will provide information regarding the criteria for placement in the HISD program and post the following options:

1. Parents may request that their child be included in the talent pool or Advanced Academics Program.
  - If the parent requests that their child participate in the talent pool or Advanced Academics Program, student records will be reviewed by a designated district administrator. If the student meets prerequisites of the program, the student may be placed in appropriate classes for a probationary period of nine weeks. At the end of the nine weeks, the classroom teacher and a school administrator will review the student's progress and determine if the student should remain in the program.
  - If no transitional problems occur within the nine-week probationary period, the student will be designated as a talent pool or AAP/GT student in Huntsville ISD. Campus personnel should code the student appropriately on PEIMS and notify the Director for Accountability and Assessment of the student's placement.
  - If a student has participated in advanced services in the previous school but does not have placement documentation from that institution (private school, out-of-state student, etc.), the student will be tested using instruments which HISD designates. The testing will be done within 30 days of enrollment. The student may be placed in the advanced classes pending the results of the testing.
2. Parents may request that their child be screened using the HISD criteria and will adhere to HISD established timelines.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Teachers who provide instruction and services to students in the GT Program must have a minimum of thirty hours of training that includes the nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for identified students. In addition, teachers delivering instruction to students in the GT program must receive a minimum of six hours annually of professional development in gifted education.

Administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions must have a minimum of six hours of professional development that includes the nature and needs of gifted/talented students and program options.

In addition to required training for teachers and administrators, specialized staff development opportunities are encouraged and supported. Advanced Academics Program teachers participate in College Board institutes, vertical team institutes and other discipline-specific training opportunities to enhance course content and the delivery of instruction.

## **FAMILY-COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Parents and community members are encouraged to become partners in the Gifted & Talented/Advanced Academics Program (AAP). Parents will be informed of written policies and learning opportunities through dissemination of the Parent-Student Handbook. The GT/Talent Pool Parent Information Night program will also serve as a source of information about the program. Input from parents will be solicited and used in program evaluation.

Parents are encouraged to conference with the teachers throughout the year on the progress of their child (children). The development of individual student talent is enhanced through parental support.

Community members and business representatives are encouraged to work with the teachers in the AAP to develop mentorships.

## **WEBSITE**

To access this information online, please go to the District Webpage at [huntsville-isd.org](http://huntsville-isd.org), "Parents/Students," and "Gifted & Talented/Advanced Academics."