

# **Big Sandy Independent School District**



**An Educational Program for the Gifted and Talented**

**Kindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Revised July 2013**

## **STATE GOAL FOR SERVICES FOR GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS**

Students who participate in 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 which 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.

### **Preface**

Big Sandy I.S.D. is committed to providing the curriculum to meet the needs of the gifted and talented student. This document presents the official policies, processes, and procedures for organizing, operating, and evaluating the G/T program at Big Sandy I.S.D. The appendices contain the forms that may be used to implement and maintain the program components.

### **Definition of Gifted and Talented Student**

According to Texas Education Code 29.121, “gifted and talented students” 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.

### **Philosophy/Rationale**

The philosophy of Big Sandy Independent School District reflects an understanding of the uniqueness of individual students. Because the learning characteristics of gifted and talented students dictate learning experiences which differentiate from those provided for them in the regular school program, the district recognizes special provisions must be made for these students in order to stimulate and maximize their achievement.

Big Sandy I.S.D. recognizes gifted and talented students are found in all cultures, socioeconomic groups, geographic locales, and environments. Big Sandy I.S.D. will serve the needs of those students who demonstrate above average achievement through multiple and specific criteria.

## **Goals**

Big Sandy I.S.D. will provide the opportunity for gifted and talented students to:

- increase creative thinking and problem solving skills
- develop skills in logical reasoning and critical thinking
- extend skills in research/independent study
- provide an array of challenging learning opportunities
- provide an opportunity to accelerate in the areas of strength

## **Program Objectives**

Big Sandy I.S.D. will:

- assure all students equal opportunities to be screened, identified, and served in the G/T program
- utilize a differentiated program that will meet the diversified needs of the identified students
- provide curriculum and instruction that meets the needs of gifted/talented students by modifying the depth, complexity, and pacing of the general school program
- develop the skills for initiating, planning, and conducting independent research
- provide opportunity for academically talented students to associate with and share with peers of similar intellectual abilities
- encourage community and family participation in services designed for gifted/talented students

## **Program Description**

The Big Sandy I.S.D. Gifted and Talented Program is designed for students who are identified as gifted and talented according to Big Sandy I.S.D.'s identification procedure. Each campus manual will have specific identification procedures and criteria.

Emphasis will be placed on providing a learning environment and activities that foster the development of higher order thinking skills, creative thinking skills, problem solving skills, and communication skills. Students will be exposed to experiences and information outside the bounds of the regular curriculum and will be encouraged to develop advanced level products and performances. In addition, each student will be assisted in the development of a healthy self-concept and relationship with peers.

The district shall provide an array of learning opportunities for gifted and talented students in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and shall inform parents of the opportunities. Options shall include:

1. Challenging learning experiences that emphasize content from the four core academic areas.

2. Instructional and organizational patterns that enable identified students to work together as a group, to work with other students, and to work independently. (Chapter 89.3.1)
3. A continuum of learning experiences that leads to the development of advanced-level products and performances. (Chapter 89.3.2)
4. Opportunities to accelerate in areas of strength. (Chapter 89.3.4)

### **Identification**

Identification and selection for the gifted and talented program will be determined through a process of three steps:

1. Nomination
2. Screening
3. Selection

Nominations will be made in the spring of each school year. Nominations will be obtained by completion of the referral form by parents, guardians, teachers, counselors, or other persons who have an educational interest in the student. The nomination process will be advertised via several avenues of communication, which may include the district website, local newspaper, and staff notification.

The g/t coordinator, counselor, and/or teaching staff will be responsible for disseminating and collecting the nomination forms. A list of nominations will be maintained and considered by the screening committee.

Screening will be conducted on each student nominated for the gifted and talented program. Written parental consent shall be obtained prior to any testing or assessment is conducted as part of the screening and identification process.

Data collected through both objective and subjective assessments shall be measured against the criteria approved by the Board to determine individual eligibility for the program. Assessment tools may include, but not be limited to, the following: intelligence tests, achievement data, creativity activity, student work products, and behavioral checklists completed by teachers and parents.

Assessments for grade levels 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> will be completed by the campus G/T coordinator prior to the first day of instruction for the school year immediately following the nomination.

**Kindergarten students will be screened and served prior to March 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year.**

A selection committee shall evaluate each nominated student according to the established criteria and shall select those students for whom gifted program placement is the most appropriate educational setting. The committee shall be composed of at least three professional educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted students and shall be established at each campus.

Parents and students shall be notified in writing of selection for the gifted program. Participation in any program or services provided for gifted students is voluntary. The District shall obtain written permission of the student and the parents before a student is placed in a gifted program.

### **Furloughs**

A student who is unable or unwilling to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the gifted and talented program may be placed on furlough by the selection committee. The purpose of such a furlough is to provide the student an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the selection committee. A furlough also may be granted at the request of the student and/or parent.

A student may be furloughed for a period of time deemed appropriate by the selection committee. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed, and the student may reenter the gifted program, be removed from the program, or be placed on another furlough.

### **Reassessment**

The District may reassess students as needed to determine appropriate program placement. Reassessment shall not occur more than once in the elementary grades, once in the middle school grades, and once in the high school grades.

### **Exiting**

Student performance in the program shall be monitored. A student may be removed from the program if unwilling and unable to meet the requirements of the program or at the request of the student or parent. A conference shall be held with the parent and/or student prior to consideration of exiting a student. The selection committee will meet to review all relevant data pertaining to the exiting of the student and shall notify and obtain written consent from the parent and student before the student is exited from the program. All data and results from the conference and committee meeting shall be recorded and placed in the student's file. Students exiting by self or parent request may re-enter the gifted and talented program only by completing the formal identification process according to district procedures.

A student may exit the gifted and talented program by a formal meeting of the selection committee. Approval for exiting the g/t program may be based on one or more of the following data:

- Teacher recommendation to the selection committee based on observation of performance or products
- Counselor recommendation to the selection committee based on interviews, observations, or developmental data on file
- Parental request for withdrawal from the g/t program
- Student request, with parental permission, for withdrawal from the g/t program
- Evidence of personal or social stress which prevents self-satisfying student performance

## **Transfer Students**

When a student identified as gifted by a previous school district transfers into the District, the student's records shall be reviewed by the selection committee to determine if placement in the District's program for gifted and talented students is appropriate. If records do not match the requirements of Big Sandy I.S.D., then additional testing may be required for selection purposes.

The committee shall make its determination within six weeks of the student's enrollment in the District and shall base its decision on the transferred records, observation reports of District teachers who instruct the student, and student and parent conferences.

## **Appeals**

A parent or student may appeal any final decision of the selection committee regarding selection for or removal from the gifted program. Appeal shall be made first to the selection committee. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with FNG (Local) beginning at Level Two.

## **Parent and Community Involvement**

Big Sandy I.S.D. believes education of the academically talented requires a strong partnership between parents, community, and teachers and seeks to promote the active involvement and support of parents and community through the following measures:

- Parent and community involvement will be encouraged through newsletters and meetings as needed
- Information concerning the G/T program will be published in the local newspaper and campus newsletters
- Nomination procedures will be advertised locally
- Identification procedures will be printed in the student handbook
- Parents and community members will participate in the identification process by nominating prospective students for the G/T program

## **Program Evaluation**

The gifted program shall be evaluated periodically, and evaluation information shall be shared with Board members, administrators, teachers, counselors, students in the gifted and talented program, and the community.

## **Professional Development**

Staff members who work with students in the gifted and talented program will be encouraged to attend professional conferences and workshops for the purpose of improving competencies in instructional strategies and program development. Big Sandy I.S.D. shall ensure that:

- Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students have a minimum of 30 hours of staff development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students;

- Current Big Sandy I.S.D. teachers who are assigned to the program will have a two-year window to complete the 30 hours of staff development;
- Newly hired teachers assigned to the program will have a one year window to complete the 30 hours of staff development;
- Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students receive a minimum of six hours annually of professional development in gifted education;
- Administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions are required to complete a minimum of six hours of professional development (TEC 89.2)

### **Curriculum & Instruction**

The curriculum for gifted and talented students consists of content to be learned and the processes that make learning possible. The district shall provide an array of learning opportunities for gifted and talented students and shall inform parents of the opportunities. They shall include:

- Appropriately challenging learning experiences in each of the four (4) foundation curricular areas are provided for gifted/talented students in grades K-12
- A continuum of learning experiences is provided that leads to the development of advanced-level products and/or performances
- Opportunities are provided to accelerate in areas of student strengths
- Provisions to improve services to gifted/talented students are included in district and campus improvement plans

### **Program Options**

#### *Elementary*

##### Kindergarten

- The gifted student will begin the program by March 1<sup>st</sup>
- Students will be served through a pull-out program by a certified G/T teacher who has completed the minimum 30 clock hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of g/t students, identification and assessment of g/t students' needs, and curriculum and instruction for g/t students.
- Students will attend one time per week

##### First – Fifth Grades

- The student is given opportunities to work with students of varying abilities in his/her regular classroom

- Students will spend a portion of each week in a classroom with students of similar ability and will be given opportunity to pursue independent projects in his/her own area of strength and interest
- (CATS program – Creative and Academically Talented Students)  
The CATS program is a general intellect program covering a broad range of interests related to the four core areas of study. The material covered is advanced and the pace is accelerated. CATS emphasizes the following skills: study skills, research skills, creative and critical thinking skills, and leadership skills.

### *Junior High*

- Students are served through an assigned class with students of like ability.
- The teacher will have completed the minimum 30 clock hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of g/t students, identification and assessment of g/t students' needs, and curriculum and instruction for g/t students.
- The program will continue to strengthen creative and critical thinking skills.
- Students are provided with continued learning opportunities to develop leadership skills as well as working within a group or partnership.

### *High School*

- Gifted/Talented students will be served according to identified strengths in one or more of the core area(s): English/Language Arts, math, science, social studies.
- Teachers will have completed professional development that includes nature and needs of g/t students.
- Students will be given opportunities to participate in independent study projects.
- The program will continue to strengthen creative and critical thinking skills through differentiated curriculum.