

ELKHART INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

PLAN FOR GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION

And

APPENDICES

DISCOVERY PROGRAM for Grades K-12

Revised June 2016 (Reviewed and Updated April 2017)

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APPENDICES

DISCOVERY PROGRAM for Grades K-12

Revised June 2016 (Reviewed and Updated March 2017)

I. Identification of G/T Students:

A. Nomination – Any person familiar with a student’s abilities, potential performance, and/or past performance may nominate that student, grades K-12, for the G/T program. The Nomination Form may be completed by the student, a peer, parent or guardian, grandparent, Elkhart ISD personnel, or other interested community member.

Kindergarten students will be nominated at the beginning of the second semester in order to be served by March 1, as specified in the state plan. While assessment activities occur in the fall for students in grades 1-12, nominations of students in those grades are ongoing and will be accepted at any time during the school year. The counselor of each campus will be responsible for disseminating and collecting the nomination forms and maintaining a list of nominees and dates nominated to be considered by the screening committee.

Parents are informed of the identification process by information disseminated in the school’s handbook, publications in the local newspaper, and posting of the G/T plan and appendices on the district website.

B. Screening – A signed parent consent form shall be obtained before the screening process is begun. If a parent does not want the child to be screened, written documentation must be kept on file. Each campus shall maintain a screening committee, composed of at least three, but no more than five, professional educators, including the campus principal (or assistant principal) and campus counselor, who have received a minimum of 6 hours professional development that includes nature and needs of gifted students and program options for G/T students, and from one to three G/T trained teachers, who have received the 30 hours of professional development and an annual 6 hours update.

The screening committee compiles and organizes data to facilitate decision making for the selection of students consistent with district policy and procedures. The counselor develops and maintains a file for collecting screening data, one in which confidentiality is assured regarding the rights of privacy of the individual according to legal standards. Information collected is available only to those with educational need to know, as well as to parents or guardians.

Students will be assessed using four or more criteria that include both qualitative and quantitative measures collected from multiple sources for each area of giftedness served by the district. Two criteria must come from the following list:

- Previous enrollment in a Gifted/Talented Program in another district
- Parent Identification Survey
- Classroom Teacher Inventory

- Student’s Self-survey of Interests
- Student Interview

In addition to the criteria above, screening committees must consider two of the following criteria:

- Aptitude/Achievement Test
- Non-verbal Reasoning Test
- Product/Portfolio that demonstrates Gifted/Talented qualities

All nominees for the Discovery Program are screened, without discrimination in regard to race, color, creed, religious affiliation, economic disadvantage, sex, or disability, in accordance with written campus procedures. Students are assessed in languages they understand or with nonverbal-based tests. Data and procedures assure that all populations of Elkhart ISD have access to assessment and, if identified, services offered as part of the program for gifted students.

C. Selection – After equitable screening of students, the screening committee reviews each nominee’s file. The matrix that measures data according to the established criteria to determine eligibility in the Discovery Program is individually evaluated, and the screening committee makes a professional judgment based on that matrix. The committee will select those students for whom the gifted/talented program placement is the most appropriate educational setting, and will determine those students whose needs can be met within the regular educational program.

Students and their parents/guardians shall be notified in writing of the screening committee’s decision. Qualifying students are advised that participation in any program or service provided for gifted/talented students is voluntary; parental permission must be obtained for students to participate in the Discovery Program. Parents/guardians of non-qualifying students will be sent a letter to notify them of the screening committee’s action, and to advise them that the decision may be discussed with the campus principal and/or G/T screening committee, at the discretion of the principal.

II. Provisions for Transfer, Furlough, Exit, and Appeal:

A. Transfer – When a gifted/talented student withdraws and transfers to another district, the sending district should include documented information on the student’s G/T assessment data. The student’s G/T identification records (G/T matrix and/or profile) from the previous school shall be reviewed by the campus screening committee to determine if placement in the Discovery Program is appropriate. If further screening is required, the campus screening committee will consider utilizing its own evaluation criteria. The committee shall make its determination within 6 weeks of the student’s enrollment date.

G/T students may transfer from campus-to-campus within the district with no effect on G/T status. Procedures for identification are consistent throughout all grade levels, kindergarten through 12th grade.

B. Furlough – A gifted/talented student is allowed a furlough (temporary leave of absence) from G/T program services for specified reasons and for a designated period of time without being exited from the program, as determined by the campus screening committee. A furlough request is made through the campus principal by the G/T student, parent, teacher, or administrator, and may cover various circumstances affecting the student’s performance in the Discovery Program. The purpose of the furlough is to provide the most appropriate

educational placement for the individual student at all times. At the end of the designated furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed and further decisions made concerning re-entry into the Discovery Program.

C. Exit – Occasionally, providing the most appropriate educational placement for a student requires that he/she be exited from the G/T program. The exit process is based on multiple criteria, including student performance in the program. The exit may be initiated by the G/T student, parent, teacher, or administrator; request must be made through the campus principal. The exit of a student from the Discovery Program requires a campus screening committee decision, and will only be finalized after consultation with the student and parents regarding the most appropriate educational placement for the student. Once a student is exited from the program, re-entry must follow Identification Procedures, and cannot be initiated until the year following the exit.

D. Appeal - A decision regarding identification, furlough, or exit may be appealed by the student, parent, teacher, or administrator to the campus screening committee. An appeal, offering the opportunity to present new data, should follow the screening committee's assessment decision in a timely manner, as set forth in campus G/T guidelines. If the matter remains unresolved, any subsequent appeal should follow the Elkhart ISD's local policies governing appeal processes.

III Service Design:

Elkhart ISD provides a program to serve students who are gifted in the areas of intellectual ability and/or creative and productive thinking. The organizational design of the Discovery Program offers an array of research-based learning opportunities that emphasize content in the four core academic areas, enabling G/T students to work together as a group, work with other students, and work independently during the school day for the entire school year. Service options, including the following, are available to G/T students, kindergarten-12th grade, as outlined in written campus procedures for the Discovery Program:

- Regular classroom with G/T-trained teacher providing differentiated instruction
- Elementary pull-out program with G/T-trained resource teacher
- Out-of-school options will be provided by the school district.
- Pre-Advanced Placement core academic with G/T- and AP-trained teacher
- Advanced Placement core academic with GT- and AP-trained teacher
- College Dual/Concurrent Credit courses arranged between EISD and Trinity Valley Community College
- Credit by Examination to accelerate instruction, in accordance with agreement with Region VII ESC, possibly resulting in Early High School Graduation
- Distinguished Achievement Program

Eighty-five percent of the funds allocated to gifted education for Elkhart ISD shall be spent on assessment and services for gifted students, with no more than 15% spent on indirect costs, as defined in the Financial Accountability Resource Guide. Elkhart ISD does

ensure that student assessment and services comply with accountability standards included in the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students.

IV. Curriculum and Instruction:

Each campus at Elkhart ISD will offer a variety of program services for delivery to its G/T students, and shall inform parents of all opportunities available in written campus guidelines. Curriculum for the academically talented must be differentiated from that in the regular classroom and be congruent with the characteristics of gifted children. Appropriately challenging learning experiences that emphasize content from the four core academic areas and address students' individual learning styles and intelligences will be embedded in the curriculum and instructional process for gifted learners in kindergarten through 12th grade. This continuum will lead to the development of advanced-level products and/or performances such as those provided through the Texas Performance Standards Project, providing opportunities for students to accelerate in their areas of strength.

A comprehensive manual/program guide that describes all programs, procedures and services for gifted students in grades k-12 is provided each campus through Region VII ESC. Annual evaluation of the Discovery Program includes review of curriculum and instruction, and may result in improvement/modification of services to G/T students as stated in district and campus improvement plans.

V. Professional Development:

In order to provide quality services for our gifted/talented students and to comply with TEA guidelines, Elkhart ISD will implement the following requirements concerning professional development in advanced academic areas:

A. Prior to assignment in the Discovery Program, teachers who provide instruction and services that are part of the defined program for gifted/talented students have a minimum of 30 clock hours staff development that includes the following:

- Nature and needs of gifted/talented students
- Identification and assessment of gifted/talented students
- Curriculum and instruction of gifted/talented students

B. Teachers without the required training who provide instruction and services that are part of the gifted/talented program must complete the 30-hour training within the first semester of being assigned to teach gifted/talented students.

C. Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the defined program for gifted/talented students receive an annual minimum of 6 hours professional development in gifted education, with the district G/T coordinator and curriculum director determining eligibility of training for gifted/talented education that is related to state teacher educator standards.

D. Administrators and counselors who have authority for Discovery Program decisions are required a minimum of 6 hours professional development that includes the following:

- Nature and needs of gifted/talented students

- Service options for gifted/talented students

E. All staff will receive an annual orientation to the district and campus Discovery Program, including briefing on the nature and needs of gifted/talented students.

F. Local district boards of trustees are encouraged to receive training on the *Texas State Plan and Guidelines for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students*.

VI. Family/Community Involvement:

In order for Elkhart Independent School District to be effective in educating its academically advanced students, it is necessary to encourage family and community involvement in the G/T program. The following measures will promote active participation and support from those groups:

A. School board-approved written policies concerning all facets of the Discovery Program are disseminated to parents and community members in the school's handbook and through posting on the district website.

B. The district or campus provides information about the Discovery Program through annual meetings and/or articles published in the local newspaper and campus newsletters and through posting on the district website.

C. Family and community members participate in the identification process by nominating prospective students for Discovery Program services.

D. The Discovery Program shall provide an array of learning opportunities for kindergarten-12th grade G/T students. Parents will be kept informed of requirements of the program, including projects and products to be completed.

E. Parents of G/T students are given the opportunity to complete a program evaluation survey annually. Data collected is utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and to modify and update district and campus improvement plans.

F. A data bank of community resources is compiled for use by G/T students, teachers, and parents as cooperative support from business and community organizations is established and involvement in services for G/T students is solicited.

VII. Program Evaluation:

The effectiveness of the Discovery Program is surveyed annually with input sought from all stakeholders: students, parents, educators, and community members. Elkhart ISD must ensure that student assessment and services comply with accountability standards

included in the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*. Ongoing evaluation strategies, both formative and summative, are conducted for the purpose of continued program development. Quantitative and qualitative data is reviewed by district and campus site-based advisory committee members in order to determine overall effectiveness of the Discovery Program. Results are shared with the school board, administrators, and other stakeholders.

VIII. Glossary:

- A. Area of Giftedness – The specific ability in which a student performs or shows potential to perform at a remarkable high level of accomplishment
- B. Intellectual – Possessing superior intelligence, with potential or demonstrated accomplishments in several fields of study; ability to perform complex mental tasks
- C. Creative – Possessing outstanding imagination, thinking ability, innovative or creative reasoning ability, ability in problem solving, and/or high attainment in original or creative thinking
- D. Artistic – Possessing outstanding ability in the visual and performing arts
- E. Leadership – Possessing the natural ability to influence others; possessing skills in interpersonal relationships demonstrated, for example, by outstanding ability in such activities as student government
- F. Specific Academic Fields – Possessing superior ability or potential in a specific course of study such as science, mathematics, language arts, or social studies
- G. Qualitative Measures – Measures used to assess student needs that include observations, anecdotal records, checklists, interviews, student products, performances, etc.
- H. Quantitative Measures – Standardized tests that are used to assess students
- I. Furlough – A leave of absence from program services that can be due to a variety of circumstances
- J. Depth – Exploration of content within a discipline; analyzing from the concrete to the abstract, familiar to the unfamiliar, known to the unknown; exploring the discipline by going past facts and concepts into generalizations, principles, theories, laws; investigating the layers of experience within a discipline through details, patterns, trends unanswered questions, ethical considerations
- K. Complexity – Extending content in, between, and across disciplines through the study of themes, problems, and issues; seeing relationships between and

among ideas in/within the topic, discipline, and disciplines; examining relationships in, between, and across disciplines over time, and from multiple points of view

- L. Continuum of Learning Experiences – Articulated learning experiences that provide planned experiences that build upon one another each year a student is in school
- M. Array of Learning Experiences – A menu of challenging learning experiences or opportunities that fit the unique interests and abilities of advanced level students
- N. Concurrent Enrollment – The practice of enrolling in a college or university to earn college or university credit while in high school
- O. Dual Enrollment – The practice of enrolling in a college or university while enrolled in high school for the purpose of earning high school and college credit simultaneously

IX. Compliance Statement:

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

- 1) Acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;
- 2) Operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis
- 3) Nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;
- 4) Nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;
- 5) Enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination of the basis of race, color, or national origin;
- 6) Nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and
- 7) Evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 AS AMENDED BY THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1972; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; EQUAL PAY ACT OF 1964; TITLE IX, EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED; IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986; AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990; AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1991.

The Texas Education Agency shall comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws, rules, and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any educational programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or veteran status (except where age, sex, or disability constitutes a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.