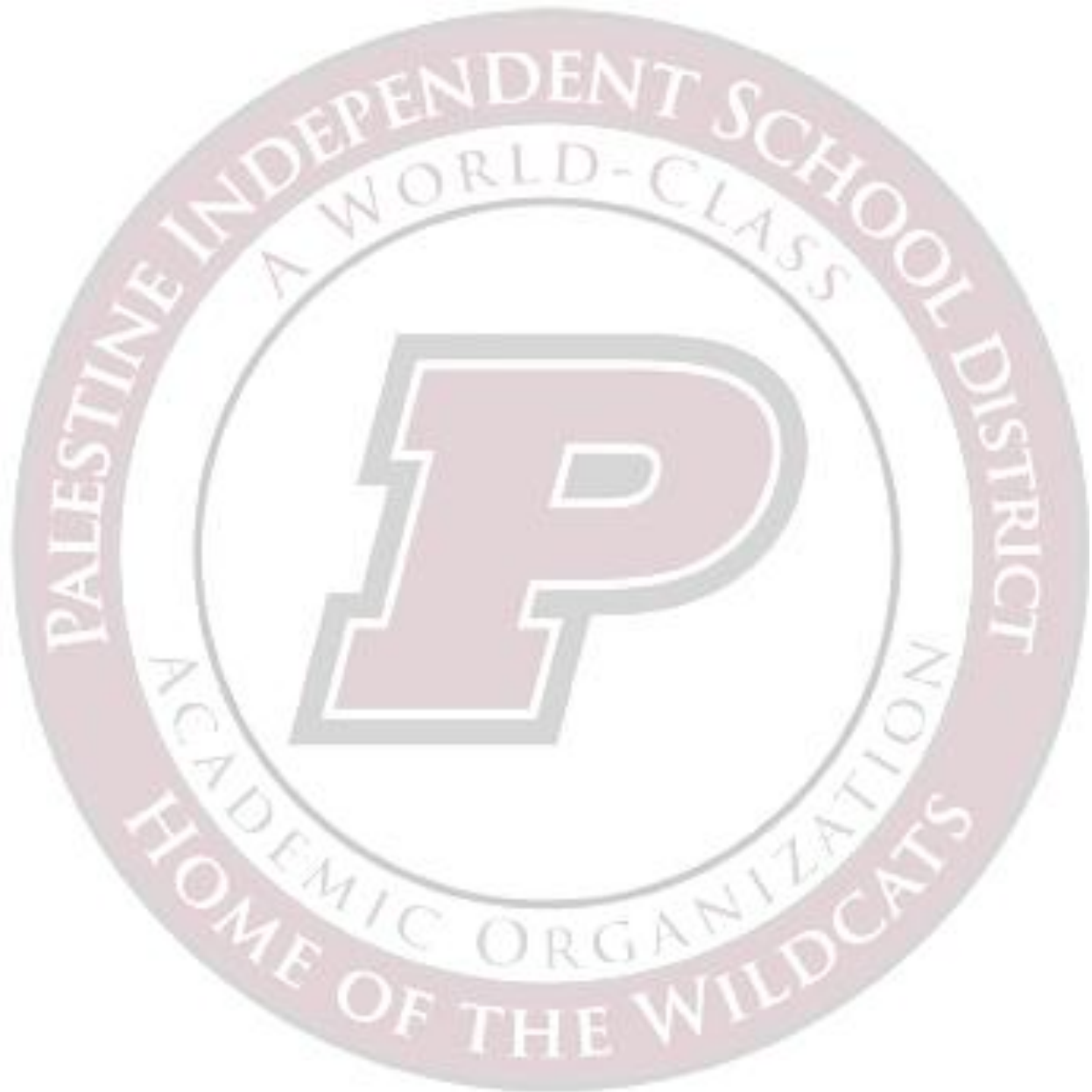


Gifted and Talented Program



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Mission Statement

The mission of Palestine Independent School District is to foster relationships that excite, engage, and empower our students and community to achieve excellence.

Core Values

*P*ositive Attitudes

*I*ntegrity

*S*hared Responsibility

*D*edication to Excellence

District Goals

1. Educate, empower, and communicate with all stakeholders to increase STAAR scores and provide a solid foundation in the core academic areas with an emphasis on math/science and cross curricular writing skills to increase state assessment measures.
2. Attract and retain a highly qualified faculty and provide all teachers with staff development that assures all state mandates regarding faculty training requirements and all priority district needs are met.
3. Maintain a safe and orderly environment creating an atmosphere conducive to learning including facility upgrades to support a high quality learning environment.
4. Increase positive attitude of School District throughout the Community by fostering Community Partnerships.
5. Implement HB 5 in order to foster innovative, collaborative learning experiences through district wide STEAM education, College Readiness, and CTE certifications.

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Program Overview

Consistent with TEC 29.121, the Palestine Independent School District has developed and approved written policies for identifying and serving gifted and talented students. The district's policies include the state's definition of gifted students; provisions for screening and selection of nominated students based on a minimum of four equally weighted criteria that represent both qualitative and quantitative measures; provisions regarding exiting of students from the program; provisions for gifted students transferring into the district; provisions for furloughs from the program; provisions for reassessment; a framework for appeals of district committee decisions; provisions for community understanding and staff development; expectations for instructional implementation; measures for student and teacher accountability; and parameters for the continued development of an exemplary program.

PISD strives to identify students at every grade who “show the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment.” These students express high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, and/or artistic area and/or a particularly strong capacity for leadership.

With this in mind, and in compliance with the TEC expectations, the final selection of students is made by a District Selection Committee made up of teachers, counselors, and administrators who participate in the facilitation of programs to serve gifted students. Data and procedures used during the identification process are analyzed in order to progress towards having the population of the program reflect the demographic composition of the entire school district.

Kindergarten students are nominated in January of each year for the program and are screened for possible placement in the spring of the school year. During the fall of each school year, the nomination phase begins for placement in Grades 1-5. Identified students in K-5 are served through the LAUNCH program. Identified students in grades 6-12 are served through the Pre-Advanced and Advanced Placement courses and or G/T certified teachers in a regular classroom.

Once students are identified for the Gifted/Talented program according to PISD's guidelines and criteria, students are continuously eligible for the district's program. Students are not re-identified for further placement in the G/T program. However,

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participation within the program is voluntary and students, in conjunction with parents, teachers, and administrators, continually assess the effectiveness of the program for the student and his/her unique needs.

As identified in the *Texas State Plan for the Gifted/Talented Students*, the following five (5) areas are integral components of the PISD Gifted/Talented program:

1. Student Assessment
2. Program Design
3. Curriculum and Design
4. Professional Development
5. Family-Community Involvement

Student Assessment

State Goal: Instruments and procedures used to assess students for program services measure diverse abilities and intelligences and provide students an opportunity to demonstrate their talents and strengths.

Nomination Phase

Nominations for the Gifted/Talented program for Grades K-11 are solicited from parent, teachers, community members, and students. Parents and community members may pick up nomination forms from any of the school counselors. Nomination phases are announced in the local newspaper, through campus and district newsletters, and through the PISD website www.palestineschools.org. Parents of nominated students must sign a "Permission to Test" form before further considerations are made. All forms and letters used in the G/T program are provided in both English and Spanish and are district specific.

Screening Phase

Once the Nomination Phase ends, campus counselors begin the Screening Phase by collecting data as outlined below. Parents are notified prior to each test administration and/or screening process. Screening assessments, which have been suggested for use by the "Texas Association of Gifted and Talented", are available for students with linguistic or cultural differences.

Kindergarten Waiver

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The Palestine Independent School District has been granted a waiver from the Texas Education Agency. The purpose of the waiver is to delay identification to provide the district with opportunities to assess student potential and to give students more time and greater opportunities to display their abilities. Formal identification of gifted students takes place at the end of Kindergarten.

Grades 1 - 11

Students nominated for the G/T program are screened during the fall of the year. The screening instruments consist of the following objective and subjective instruments:

- Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) - Achievement Test
- Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) - Intellectual Abilities Test
- Portfolio of Student Work
- Additional Test Ravens Progressive Matrices

The campus counselor is responsible for collecting data as outlined in a district-wide screening calendar. Once the tests are administered and scored, the counselor transfers the data to blind matrices. The blind matrices (matrices without student names) are submitted to the District Screening Committee that is comprised of teachers, counselors, and administrators who have received training in the area of gifted education. The campus counselor has the responsibility to recommend that individual tests be administered in cases where data seems to indicate that a child's scores are not indicative of his/her true potential because of physical or academic impairments or linguistic or cultural differences. In such a case, the counselor selects the measure that most clearly meets the needs of the child and scores from that measure are added to the matrix prior to final consideration. Alternative testing recommended by the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented that specifically addresses linguistic and cultural differences, such as the Ravens and the Creativity Assessment Packet by Pro-Ed are used in the district.

Selection Phase

Once all blind matrices are completed, they are given to the District Screening Committee for review. This committee determines the cut-off score for placement into the district's G/T program. A district-wide cut-off score is determined by compiling all matrix score totals in ranked-order. The committee identifies the cut-off score based on the "natural break" of scores as reflected in the matrix scores of students in grades K-5. These grades are used for the determination because of the large number of students screened. The determination of a district-wide matrix score is conducted each year. As determined by

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the PISD board, the District Screening Committee has the final decision making authority for the placement of students.

Placement Phase

Campus counselors will notify the parents of those students meeting program criteria. Parents are asked to sign a "Placement Form" stating that they agree to have their child placed in the G/T program.

Transfers

Palestine ISD accepts data submitted from students who have been identified in the gifted/talented programs in other public schools in Texas. Data that is comparable to the assessments used by PISD and is less than two years old is accepted automatically. The district reserves the right to require tests when scores are not comparable or when tests are more than two years old. Additionally, PISD G/T facilitator(s) are afforded the opportunity to correspond with the sending school district regarding transfer student information. In all instances, PISD strives to consider a previously identified transfer student within six weeks of his/her admission to the district. Students are admitted to the program at six weeks or semester openings to facilitate their transition into the course or program design.

Furloughs

Once students are identified as Gifted and Talented, they remain in the program through the twelfth grade unless parents' request, in writing, that their child be exited from the program. Identified students are also allowed to request furloughs. Students may have a leave of absence from the G/T program for a specified period of time. If the student's parents decide they want their child to re-enter the G/T program, they may do so at the first appropriate time such as at the beginning of a six weeks or semester period.

Appeals

Parents may appeal the decision of the District Screening Committee by submitting a letter to their child's campus principal within five (5) working days of the date of receiving the committee's written decision. Parents are given an opportunity to first visit with the campus principal and counselor to discuss their child's assessment results. If parents then want to meet with the District Screening Committee, a conference is scheduled. At that time, parents may present additional data for consideration by the screening committee. The decision of the committee is communicated in writing to the parents within five (5) working days. As directed by the PISD Board of Trustees, the District Selection Committee has the final decision about program placement.

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Exits

Some students may not be adequately served nor appropriately identified through the PISD Gifted/Talented program. Discipline and poor performance are not grounds for automatic dismissal. If a child consistently has difficulty in the program, the teacher, student, parent, or campus counselor or administrator may request that a conference be held to discuss the problems in an effort to provide intervention strategies and to determine the nature of the problems. The recommendations and outcomes from each conference will be recorded with specific attention given to the nature of the problem and the methods of intervention to be attempted. Three interventions must be made which will incorporate modification of the curriculum and program along with modifications in the student's efforts in relation to the problem before a student will be dismissed from a program. Students who are exited are eligible for future G/T programs in subsequent grades. Such instances will require students to be reassessed according to the standard expectations for entrance into the G/T program. Parents may withdraw students from the program at any time by contacting the campus principal and submitting written notification.

Program Design

State Goal: A flexible system of viable program options that provide a learning continuum is developed throughout the district and reinforces the strengths, needs and interests of gifted/talented students.

PISD strives to provide program organizational patterns in grades K-12, which are compatible with the district's philosophy, goals, and objectives, and which promote differentiated learning experiences for its gifted and talented population. As described in 19 TAC 74.24, PISD has approved policies that allow students to advance through Credit by Exams and through Early High School Graduation Program.

The district's G/T program is divided into two (2) program prototypes:

- Grades K-5: Inclusion through LAUNCH Classroom
- Grades 6-12: Enrollment in Pre-Advanced and Advanced Placement Courses

Grades K - 5

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The Gifted and Talented program for grades K-5 is designed to challenge students, address unique learning needs, and to help students fulfill their potential. There is an array of learning opportunities that emphasize content in four core academic areas and are commensurate with the abilities of gifted and talented students. The curriculum is differentiated through content, process, and product. Concepts, units, themes, and skill are explored in greater depth and complexity. This program, promotes engaging curriculum that allows students to perform, lead, create, accelerate, research, share interest, and develop products. Two specific forms of learning opportunities will be provided to ensure that students are engaged in rigorous exposure to curriculum.

Grades 6 – 12

Identified G/T students in grades 6-12 are served through the Pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement courses. Students are given the opportunity to take Pre-AP and AP courses in the areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies. This program allows students to take college-level preparatory (grades 6-10) and college-level (grades 11-12) courses and offers them the opportunity to show they have mastered the advanced material by taking AP Exams.

Additionally, all teachers within each of the four core content areas will offer all students an extension activity once per six weeks to be evaluated within a rubric-based format. The extension activity can be an interdisciplinary combination of such activities across content areas.

Curriculum and Development

State Goal: Curriculum and instruction meets the needs of gifted students by modifying the depth, complexity, and pacing of the general school program.

Curriculum development for gifted and talented students centers upon the importance of recognizing the skills that these students must acquire in order to become life-long learners. This curriculum incorporates both cognitive as well as affective skills that recognize unique learning styles of G/T students. Appropriately modified programs for G/T students are built on standard differentiation such as those offered by the National/State Leadership Training Institute for the Gifted and Talented.

The district's annual improvement plan and the campus plans emphasize G/T instruction content from the four (4) core areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies.

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The differentiated programs are developed around learner objectives and a scope and sequence of skills in the core areas emphasized by critical, creative, and productive thinking, independent research, and affective growth that include leadership skills. Thematic instruction is used to present the developmentally appropriate skill for students at each grade level. The curriculum can be modified in its pace, sequence, content, process, and products. Additionally, the curriculum includes methods for ensuring basic skills are acquired and that individual interests and talents are explored and nurtured.

Staff development opportunities provide training for teachers in the writing and designing of curriculum, the selection of instructional resources, and the acquisition of teaching strategies and methods. Working within these tenets, PISD provides appropriate curriculum, which enables gifted and talented students to develop their fullest potential to become intellectually, and creatively productive individuals.

Professional Development

State Goal: All personnel involved in the planning, development, and delivery of services to gifted students have knowledge to enable them to offer appropriate options and curricula for gifted/talented students.

Under the state rules and the state plan and guidelines, administrative and supervisory staff support for gifted/talented education should be undertaken by the district by providing leadership and effective resources for, both, the designated G/T teachers as well as the regular education teachers and support personnel. Additionally, ongoing coordinated staff development should be planned for all district personnel based on the data collected from needs assessments, program evaluation, and appraisals of the gifted.

To support these state directives, PISD administrators, teachers, and counselors who provide instruction and services to students in the gifted/talented program are trained with thirty (30) initial clock hours of staff development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted talented students. These teachers are also provided with a minimum of six hours annually of professional development in gifted education.

Teachers who provide instruction and services to gifted/talented students in the Pre-AP at the secondary level are trained in twenty-four (24) initial clock hours of AP training and teachers providing instruction in the AP courses receive forty (40) initial clock hours of

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AP training (30 hours of G/T professional development can be substituted). These teachers are provided staff development that includes nature and needs and assessment needs of the gifted/talented students. These teachers also receive six (6) hours annually of G/T professional development in their content area.

All instructional staff who works with gifted and talented students must complete G/T or Pre-AP/AP certification and update requirements prior to the school year in question. Necessary certification and updates to the G/T or Pre-AP/AP certifications constitute the staff member's performance in PDAS Domain VI to be "Proficient." In order to be considered for "Exceeds Expectations" all G/T and/or Pre-AP/AP staff must complete a minimum of six (6) additional hours of professional development to better serve these students.

Family and Community Involvement

State Goal: The district regularly encourages community and family participation in services designed for gifted/talented students.

Extensive and positive parent and community involvement distinguishes successful gifted and talented programs from those that fail. Parents need to be involved in the evaluation and planning of the G/T program, as well as, in providing support for the programs by serving as community resource people. PISD takes every opportunity to encourage parental involvement in gifted education. The district fosters opportunities for parents and the community to support the district's gifted and talented program through involvement in the planning, implementing, and evaluating of the gifted and talented program.

The Strategic Planning Committee, which is a parent/teacher/community advisory committee, offers support and assistance to the district in program planning, improvement, and evaluation. The district holds annual meetings and provides information pertaining to the Gifted/Talented program.

The district uses both formative and summative measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and to modify and update district and campus improvement plans. Parents are provided with awareness information about the identification of G/T students and the educational needs of these students. The district holds parent orientation sessions to present an overview of the G/T program and to address the specific needs of parenting

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G/T children. The district works with parent support groups to offer awareness opportunities.

Evaluation

Ongoing evaluation is an important component of a program that continues to meet the needs of the changing population and times. Successful programs seek to evaluate growth of the program based on information from numerous sources. Administrators, parents, regular education teachers do the annual evaluation, and G/T students on the effectiveness of the Gifted/Talented Program. This evaluation helps to guarantee that the program options continue to meet the expressed goals of G/T education. The information attained is incorporated in the PISD district plan and individual campus plans to make needed modifications in the program options. PISD will improve programs for gifted and talented students through the use of a continuous and ongoing evaluation process.

It is the expectation of Palestine Independent School District that a minimum of 90% of G/T and/or Pre-AP/AP classes will earn a score greater than Level II Satisfactory on all areas of STAAR/EOC testing.

Recommendations for Future Program Development

It is recommended that the Palestine Independent School District consider the utilization of the Texas Performance Standards Project to further determine the extent in which instruction for students participating in gifted/talented programs successfully correlates to the primary core subject areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies. The Texas Legislature and Texas Education Agency recommend this program as a viable series of standards for which districts may evaluate program effectiveness.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

TIMELINE FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM (Grades 1-12)

Nomination	September 2, 2017	Nomination notice published in newspaper
	September 5, 2017	Nomination surveys available from school counselor Nomination Phase begins: Secure Nomination Surveys (all forms are to be stamped in with date of receipt)
	September 22, 2017	Nomination Phase ends Parent Permission for Testing due to campus counselors Send list of names and IDs of nominated students to Instructional Services
Screening	October 2-13, 2017	Administration of ITBS & CogAT Test Train teacher on collection of portfolio data *only required for teachers of nominated students
	October 26, 2017	ITBS & CogAT tests (along with appropriate cover pages) due to Instructional Services Office
	October 2-November 10, 2017	Portfolios done and assessed
	November 30, 2017	Completion of screening phase: blind matrices and ranked ordering to be sent to the Instructional Services Office
	December 4, 2017	District Screening/Selection Committee Meeting to Determine eligibility/non-eligibility for G/T Program
Selection	December 8, 2017	Parents notified of eligibility/non-eligibility to G/T program (includes a copy of the matrix) Return Identified Data page and Evaluations to the Instructional Services Office
	December 15, 2017	Last day to request appeal of non-placement
	January 8, 2018	Classes Begin

Christmas Break is December 22, 2017 – January 8, 2018

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TIMELINE FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM (Kindergarten)

Nomination	January 6, 2018	Nomination notice published in newspaper
	January 8, 2018	Nomination surveys available from school counselor Nomination Phase begins: Secure Nomination Surveys (all forms are to be stamped in with date of receipt)
	January 26, 2018	Nomination Phase ends – Send Parent Permission for Testing home
	January 26, 2018	Parent Permission for Testing due to campus counselors Send list of names and IDs of nominated students to Instructional Services
Screening	February 5-23, 2018	Administration of ITBS & CogAT Test Train teacher on collection of portfolio data *only required for teachers of nominated students
	February 23, 2018	ITBS & CogAT tests (along with appropriate cover pages) due to Instructional Services Office
	February 23- March 9, 2018	Portfolios done and assessed
	March 29, 2018	Completion of screening phase: blind matrices and ranked ordering to be sent to the Instructional Services Office
	April 2, 2018	District Screening/Selection Committee Meeting to Determine eligibility/non-eligibility for G/T Program
Selection	April 6, 2018	Parents notified of eligibility/non-eligibility to G/T program (includes a copy of the matrix) Return Identified Data page and Evaluations to the Instructional Services Office
	April 13, 2018	Last day to request appeal of non-placement
	April 16, 2018	Classes Begin

Spring Break is March 12-16, 2018