DISCOVERY Program

Gifted & Talented Parent Handbook 2019

VISIT LFCISD.NET FOR MORE INFORMATION

"What We Do Here Shapes The World"
# Table of Contents

I. Program Goals
   a. Position Statement .....................................................................................3
   b. Definition of Gifted/Talented ....................................................................3
   c. Texas State Goal ..........................................................................................3

II. Program Service Options ...............................................................................4
   a. Description of services ..............................................................................4
   b. Description of extra-curricular options ......................................................5

III. Identification Process & Procedures ..........................................................5
   a. Referral Process .........................................................................................5
   b. Assessment .................................................................................................5
   c. Review of Measures and Determination of Placement/Admissions ..........6
   d. Appeal Process for Identification ...............................................................7
   e. Reassessment ..............................................................................................7
   f. Transfers ......................................................................................................7
   g. Furlough ......................................................................................................7
   h. Exiting ..........................................................................................................8

IV. Curriculum and Instruction ..........................................................................10
   a. Learning Experiences ................................................................................10
   b. Acceleration .................................................................................................10
   c. Curriculum Alignments ..............................................................................11
   d. Modifications/Accommodations .................................................................11
   e. Student Progress Reports ..........................................................................11

V. Professional Learning ...................................................................................11

VI. Family and Community Involvement .........................................................15
   a. Gifted/Talented Advisory Group ...............................................................15
   b. Parent Groups/Associations ......................................................................16
   c. Volunteers/ Mentorships ..........................................................................16
Position Statement

The Los Fresnos Consolidated Independent School District recognizes that outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.

Los Fresnos CISD identifies and serves elementary students in the area of general intellectual ability through differentiated curriculum and instruction in the four (4) core areas, ELAR, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Secondary students are identified and served in one or more Honors, AP and/or Dual Enrollment courses in the four (4) core content areas.

Definition of Gifted/Talented Students

Los Fresnos CISD accepts the definition for gifted/talented students as defined by Section 29.121 of the Texas Education Code:

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 area; or
2. excels in a specific academic field.

In the elementary school program (grades K-5) the emphasis will be on general intellectual ability and at the secondary level (grades 6-12) the emphasis will be on specific subject matter aptitude.

Texas 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 that are advanced in relation to
students of similar age, experience, or environment and reflect individuality and creativity. High School graduates who have participated in the services for gifted/talented students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.

-Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students

Program Service Options

Description of Services

Los Fresnos CISD provides an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with the abilities of gifted/talented students in kindergarten through grade 12 that includes opportunities for identified students to work together as a group, to work with other students, and to work independently. The learning experiences for gifted/talented students will lead to the development of advanced-level products and performances and will provide opportunities for students to accelerate in their areas of strength.

Elementary K-5
Los Fresnos CISD Gifted/Talented Program serves K-5 students through both an inclusive classroom model and a “pullout” program in the area of general intellectual ability. The inclusion model cluster groups gifted/talented students in a regular classroom with a teacher who has a minimum of 30 hours of professional learning in gifted education. The classroom teacher is responsible for providing differentiated instruction in the four core areas as needed. Identified gifted/talented students are then pulled out of regular classes for a specified period of time each week. This provides an opportunity for gifted/talented students to work with other students who have similar characteristics and needs while being exposed to a differentiated curriculum. Students are served by a G/T facilitator who has also received a minimum of 30 hours of professional learning in gifted services.

Secondary 6-12
Gifted/talented students in grades 6-12 are served in the area of general intellectual ability through subject specific advanced classes including Honors, AP, and/or Dual Credit for Math, Science, ELAR, and/or Social Studies. Students are placed in the appropriate courses with teachers who have received specialized training in delivering the content at a higher level as well as 30 hours of professional learning in gifted services. It is not necessary to qualify for the G/T Program in order to participate in Honors, AP, or Dual Credit courses.

In all of these settings, students are encouraged to think critically in order to solve problems and make decisions. Students are taught in an atmosphere that fosters
creativity and productivity, thus developing and challenging each student’s unique abilities.

Extra-Curricular Enrichment Options

In addition to the state curriculum and appropriate differentiated instruction provided during the school day, campuses provide a variety of extra-curricular enrichment programs to students. Options may include, but are not limited to those listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Enrichment Opportunities</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Mathematics Competition 8, 10, 12</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>National Technical Honor Society</td>
<td>11-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding/ Technology Clubs</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>Robotics</td>
<td>3-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Academic Events</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>Science Bowl</td>
<td>9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu Alpha Theta</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>Summer Enrichment</td>
<td>K-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Honor Society</td>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>Spelling Bee</td>
<td>1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Junior Honor Society</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>UIL Academics</td>
<td>6-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identification Process & Procedures

Referral

Students in Los Fresnos CISD are qualified to participate in the identification process if he/she:

- Is a student in kindergarten (universal screening)

or receives one of the following:

- Teacher/Parent/Community Referral (1st – 12th) (Form A)
- A self-referral (6th – 12th) (Form B)

Grades 1st – 5th - Referrals are due prior to March 1st of each year.
Grades 6th – 12th - Referrals are due by the end of the fall semester.

Referral Period

Each year prior to the referral period in February a parent/ community information meeting will be held. Flyers will be sent home with students and information regarding the meeting will be placed on the website.

Assessment

Student assessment practices are in compliance with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students (19 TAC 89.5) and Los Fresnos CISD Board Policy EHBB (Local).
**Kindergarten**

**Screening:** All students will be administered the CoGAT Screening, which includes a verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative assessment. The screening will take place in January.

**Assessment:** All students who exceed the minimum required score on the screening or are in the top 25% of scores, whichever is greater, will continue with the identification process, pending parental permission. The Kindergarten assessment process will be completed prior to the end of February.

**Identification:** The Campus Discovery Committee (CDC) will meet to review data and identify students who qualify for Gifted/Talented Services to begin no later than March 1. Identified students will be eligible to attend the G/T Summer Program.

**First – Fifth Grades**

**Screening:** All students who receive a referral and parent permission, will be administered the CoGAT Screening, which includes a verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative assessment. The screening will take place in March/April.

**Assessment:** All students who exceed the minimum required score on the screening will continue with the identification process. The assessment process will be completed prior to the end of the year.

**Identification:** The CDC will meet to review data and identify students who qualify for Gifted/Talented Services. Identified students will be eligible to attend the G/T Summer Program and will begin G/T services the start of the following school year.

**Sixth – Twelfth Grades**

**Screening:** All students who receive a referral (Teacher/Parent/Community or Self) and parent permission, will be administered the CoGAT Screening, which includes a verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative assessment. The screening will take place in January.

**Assessment:** All students who exceed the minimum required score on the screening will continue with the identification process. The assessment process will be completed prior to the end of the school year.

**Identification:** The CDC will meet to review data and identify students who qualify for Gifted/Talented Services. Identified students in grades 6-8 will be eligible for the G/T Summer Program.

---

**Review of Measures and Determination of Placement/Admissions**

The Campus Discovery Committee has the responsibility to review all of the information gathered during the assessment process and to recommend placement for students whose data meets the established criteria. At no time during the identification process will students’ names be used. Student ID numbers will be assigned to each student. The code name list will be used only by the principal/designee in order to complete the identification process.
Parents will be notified whether or not the student has qualified for the program.

Parental consent for placement in the G/T Discovery Program is **required** prior to students being coded in PEIMS or receiving services. Students, once identified, may remain in the program as long as their educational needs are being met.

**Orientation**

Parents of newly identified G/T students will be invited to an orientation meeting at the beginning of each school year. Notices will be sent home by the campus counselor.

**Appeal Process for Identification**

Any parent who questions a decision regarding a student’s status in the program may request a conference with the CDC. If a mutual understanding is not reached, the parent may appeal the committee’s decision in accordance with school board policy EHBB (local)/ FNG (local).

**Reassessment**

Students who are identified for the G/T Discovery Program, according to the District’s identification criteria, will continue placement in the program throughout their enrollment in Los Fresnos CISD without reassessment.

**Transfers**

Students entering the district who have been in a Gifted/Talented academic based program in a previous district, will be placed in the Discovery Program upon the following:

- Verification of documents from the previous district.
- Parent permission for placement form (Form ?) signed and filed in Student’s Permanent Record Card (PRC) file.

Students new to the district, not previously enrolled in a gifted program, may be nominated in the same manner as students presently enrolled.

**Furlough**

Students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the G/T Program may be placed on furlough by the CDC. Parents or campus staff may initiate a meeting to review student performance and discuss a furlough. The purpose of such a furlough is to provide the student an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the committee.
A student may be furloughed for a period of time deemed appropriate by the CDC. At the end of the furlough, the student’s progress shall be reviewed, and the student may re-enter the G/T Program, be placed on another furlough, or be exited from the program. The student accountability sheet must reflect current status (GT-1, Furlough/Exit-0) and be reported to PEIMS.

Kindergarten – Eighth Grades
Requests for a furlough for an identified G/T student that exceeds 18 consecutive weeks must be approved by the Director of Advanced Academics.

High School (Ninth - Twelfth Grades)
If an identified G/T High School student is not scheduled in at least 1 Honors, AP or Dual Enrollment course in a semester, the student shall be placed on a furlough for that term. The student may receive a furlough for a maximum 2 consecutive semesters only. If a student exceeds the 2 consecutive semester limit, he/she must exit the G/T program.

Exiting
Identified G/T students who have participated in the district Discovery Program will automatically continue in the program unless academic performance is not commensurate with expected abilities of gifted/talented students. At any time, a student’s parent or campus staff may request a meeting for the purpose of reviewing a student’s academic progress in the program. The CDC will convene and make recommendations based on gathered data.

The Committee may decide to:
Place the student on probation for a period of time (6/9 weeks) if the majority concludes that the academic needs of the student are not being met. At the end of the probationary period (code 1) or the furlough period (code 0), the committee either recommends that the student “remain in the Discovery Program” or that the “student be exited (code 0) from the Discovery Program”.

- In grades K-5, if a student has been exited, he/she may not re-enter the program during the remainder of the school year. Students who have been exited will be eligible for nomination for the program at the scheduled time. If identified, the student may begin the program the following year.
- In grades 6-12, a student who exited all Honors, AP and/or Dual Enrollment classes will be eligible for nomination and identification the following year.
Identification Flow Chart

Kindergarten Student → Universal Screening

Parent/Teacher/Community Referral (1st-12th) → Parent Permission to Screen/Test

Self-Referral (6th – 12th) → Parents may decline

SCREENING

Assess and Complete Discovery Program Matrix

SELECTION (CDC)

Campus Discovery Committee makes decisions for placement

Not Accepted at this time → Appeals

Accepted to program → Parent permission to participate

PARTICIPATION

Continue → Probation → Furlough → Exit

Parents may decline
Curriculum and Instruction of Gifted/Talented Students

Learning Experiences

A continuum of appropriately challenging learning experiences in each of the four core curriculum areas are provided to gifted/talented students including opportunities for students to pursue areas of interest in select disciplines through guided and independent research. Campus administrators who have been trained in gifted/talented education are responsible for monitoring the delivery of differentiated curriculum and instruction to gifted/talented students.

Acceleration

Gifted/talented students are provided various opportunities to accelerate instruction in their particular area of strength throughout their K-12 experience (19 TAC 89.3.4). Flexible pacing within the classroom allows students to learn at the pace and level appropriate to their abilities and skills. Scheduling modifications are implemented in order to meet the identified needs of gifted/talented students.

Accelerated Courses

In middle school, students have the opportunity to take high school courses in mathematics and world languages. Students in high school have the opportunity to take Advanced Placement courses or Dual Credit courses (EHDD Legal / Local). These courses provide the opportunity to earn college credits, which may be applied to a degree plan once enrolled in college.

Early High School Graduation

Students also have the opportunity to graduate in 3 or 3.5 years. (TEC 56.203) A parent is entitled to request that their child be permitted to graduate from high school earlier than the child would normally graduate, if the child completes each course required for graduation (EIF LEGAL).

Exam for Acceleration/ Credit by Exam (CBE)

Students have the opportunity to accelerate instruction by participating in an Exam for Acceleration when there has been no prior instruction. Policy EHDC (Legal / Local) (19 TAC 74.24).

- To earn credit for an elementary grade level (K-5), students must score 80% or higher on each subject area for the grade level. (Exam for Acceleration)
- To earn credit for a middle school course, students must score 80% or higher on the exam to receive course credit.
• To earn credit for a high school course, students may test with the following exams: (credit for all courses earned with CBE, including AP exams, will receive regular/non-weighted course credit)
  o CBE: Passing score of 80% or higher
  o AP Exam: Passing score of 3 or higher

Credit by Exam 2019 - 2020 Schedule

Credit by Exam: 6th – 12th Grades (without prior instruction)

FALL 2019  
(all dates subject to change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Deadline</th>
<th>Test Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 6, 2019 (12:00 noon)</td>
<td>October 7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>4:30 pm</td>
<td>LF High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 27, 2020 (12:00 noon)</td>
<td>April 27 &amp; 28</td>
<td>4:30 pm</td>
<td>LF High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exam for Acceleration: K – 5th Grades (without prior instruction)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Deadline</th>
<th>Test Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 5, 2019 (12:00 noon)</td>
<td>Campus discretion- Must be completed by August 2, 2019.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 3, 2020 (12:00 noon)</td>
<td>Campus discretion- Must be completed by May 22, 2020.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Curriculum Alignments

**Kindergarten - Fifth Grades**
The Gifted/Talented Pullout Program Curriculum is designed around a multiage differentiated curriculum for gifted learners. The curriculum provides hands-on, discovery-based, research-oriented activities that are cross-curricular. Lessons are based on conceptual themes. Topics are broad, universal, and timeless.

**Sixth – Twelfth Grades**
Curriculum provided through Honors, AP and/or Dual Credit courses are differentiated and advanced for the students chronological age and grade. The curriculum demands strong foundational knowledge and the ability to think critically, complete research independently, and produce high quality products.

**Modifications/Accommodations**

Educators adapt and/or modify the district curriculum to meet the needs of gifted/talented students and those with special needs such as twice exceptional, highly gifted, and English Learners.

**Student Progress Reports**

Student progress/performance in response to gifted/talented services is assessed using standards in the areas served and the results are communicated on a regular basis to parents or guardians.

**Professional Learning**

**Professional Learning**

Los Fresnos CISD is committed to providing its staff with appropriate and meaningful professional learning opportunities which enables the staff to meet the unique and individual educational needs of all students, including services for the gifted/talented. Teachers are encouraged to obtain additional professional learning in their teaching discipline as well as in gifted/talented education. It is important that all parties who are responsible for servicing and making program decisions for gifted/talented students obtain appropriate training as mandated by the state.
Family and Community Involvement

The district recognizes the vital importance of parent/guardian support and community involvement to the success and growth of the Gifted/Talented Program. Input from family and community representatives on gifted/talented services is welcome.

Gifted/Talented Advisory Group

Support and assistance in the Gifted/Talented Program planning and improvement is encouraged through the GT Discovery Program Advisory Committee (GTPAC). This committee is comprised of community members, parents of gifted/talented students, school staff, and gifted/talented education staff who meet annually to review and recommend program policies and procedures to the district. Parents interested in participating in the GTPAC should contact their child’s campus administrator or counselor.

Program Evaluation

The District shall annually evaluate the effectiveness of the gifted/talented services, and the results of the evaluation shall be used to modify and update the District and Campus Improvement Plans. The annual program evaluation will be conducted for the purpose of continued program development and will be shared with Board Members, as well as district staff and the community.

Parent Groups/Associations

Information regarding G/T parent support and advocacy groups is available on the district’s G/T website.

Volunteers/ Mentorships

Parents and Community volunteers are encouraged to share their expertise by presenting lectures/demonstrations on various topics related to the themes studied in each grade level or as mentors to students who are involved in independent study in an area of special interest.

District Policy for Volunteers/ Mentor/ Mentee Guidelines

Refer to District Student Handbooks for information regarding the volunteer process or call the District Service Center and request to speak with the Human Resources Department.
2019-2020 Los Fresnos CISD Gifted/Talented Contacts

Campus Counselors & GT Administrators

Sandra Ruiz
Advanced Academics Director
956-254-5095

Valarie Londrie
Executive Director for Academics
956-254-5021

2019-2020 Gifted/Talented Advisory Committee

Alma Navarro, Dora Romero Elementary Counselor
Amanda Martinez, Palmer-Laakso Elementary School Assistant Principal
Brenda Rebollosso, Palmer-Laakso Elementary Teacher
Elaine Rodriguez, Los Fresnos Elementary Teacher
Graciela San Roman, Lopez-Riggins Elementary Teacher
Georgina M. Garcia, Resaca Middle School Counselor
Jennifer Salinas, Villareal Elementary Counselor
Rachel Garcia, Villareal Elementary Instructional Officer
Thelma Reyna, Los Cuates Middle School Dean
Sandra Ruiz, Director of Advanced Academics
Valarie Londrie, Executive Director for Academics