



2025-2026

Gifted & Talented

Advanced Academics

Procedures and Guidelines

Dickinson Independent School District



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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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 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.

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

DISD Mission & Vision

The mission of the Dickinson ISD Advanced Academics Program is to deliver differentiated instruction that challenges and engages advanced learners. Through specialized programs led by trained educators, students will collaborate in an intellectually stimulating environment that cultivates critical thinking, creativity, and academic excellence.

Dickinson ISD envisions a learning community where advanced learners are inspired to reach their fullest potential through innovative, rigorous, and creative academic experiences that nurture their unique abilities and talents.

Identification & Assessment

G/T Identification and Assessment practices ensure that gifted/talented students are carefully identified through multiple measures of achievement and ability in areas that are aligned to our Service Design. All students have multiple opportunities to be considered for G/T identification through a comprehensive nomination in all grades that is designed to consider students from all backgrounds. A comprehensive screening process is also conducted for all students in Kindergarten and 2nd grade.

Service Design

G/T/Advanced Academics services in DISD are aligned to the individual gifts and talents of our students through a comprehensive, structured, sequenced, and challenging service design in the four core academic subjects. Students are provided the opportunity to learn, explore, and create based upon their individual interests in collaboration with our community partners.

Curriculum & Instruction

Through accelerated and enriched instruction, G/T/Advanced Academics curriculum will encourage students to learn, explore, create and lead at a rigorous level. Students will have opportunities to explore topics of their own choosing, develop and apply research skills, and produce quality products through:

- ◇ a vertically aligned curriculum,
- ◇ learning experiences that are clearly differentiated to focus on higher-order thinking, and
- ◇ use of technology for creating and communicating their learning
- ◇ Project-based learning centered in research and problem-solving
- ◇ Working collaboratively with other G/T students

Professional Development

The foundation of effective G/T/Advanced Academic services is a well-trained cadre of educators and parents who actively seek, attend, lead and implement professional learning focused on best practices in gifted education. Teachers and administrators strive to acquire and maintain high-quality professional learning to meet the needs of advanced learners.

Family & Community Involvement

Gifted education is a collaborative effort between schools, families, and the community that includes decision-making and program evaluation. Strategic partnerships with community leaders and mentors ensure the unique development of student interests and talents. Careful attention is paid to cultivating these relationships through ongoing communication and collaboration.

G/T AND ADVANCED ACADEMICS PROGRAM DESIGN

Elementary & Middle School (K-5)

The Gifted/Talented program in Kindergarten through fourth grade is designed to provide differentiated instruction for identified Gifted/Talented students through a Cluster Grouping Model (G/TCGM). This model ensures students with exceptional learning needs are integrated into a classroom ensuring gifted students are served in a full-time program that delivers consistent curriculum compacting and differentiation opportunities. Teachers of G/T students are highly trained in the needs of gifted/talented students, and provide curriculum that provides opportunity for research, self-directed learning, thinking, and communication through innovative products at an advanced academic level. Beginning in fifth grade, this cluster group may become part of the STEAM Academy.

Junior High (6-8)

Students will continue the cluster grouping within classes or within an entire team, and like the elementary model, students with exceptional learning needs are served in a full-time program that delivers consistent curriculum compacting and differentiation opportunities from teachers who have over 30 hours of training in working with G/T students. Curriculum will provide opportunity for research, self-directed learning, thinking, and communication through innovative products at an advanced academic level. Students may also participate in the Texas Performance Standards Project as part of the STEAM curriculum.

In grades 6-8, gifted/talented students may receive services through advanced or Honors classes in the four core areas (language arts, mathematics, science and social studies). Students may choose to take any or all of the advanced-level classes offered for which they qualify. In 8th grade, students may take Honors Algebra I and IPC (Integrated Physics & Chemistry) for high school credit. Curriculum in advanced/Honors courses are aligned with the college-level capstone courses in the high school and are designed as a sequence preparing students to earn college credit in high school through success on the Advanced Placement exams within the subjects.

In addition, Dickinson ISD offers students in grades 5-8 an opportunity to participate in the STEAM Academy allowing students to use their knowledge of science, technology, engineering, or math to learn about how the world works and to solve problems. Students in the STEAM Academy will experience project-based learning including the Texas Performance Standards Project, independent research, collaborative learning, engineering and robotics development, and increased use of technology. Science and math courses in the STEAM Academy are accelerated and students taking Honors Algebra I will also be enrolled in Integrated Physics & Chemistry for high school science credit. Students must apply to be accepted to the STEAM program. Students do not have to be identified as gifted/talented to qualify for STEAM.

High School (9-12)

In grades 9-12, teachers with the required training provide services to gifted/talented students in Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. The Honors/AP Program allows students to earn college credit while in high school for their work within these rigorous, college-level courses. These courses offer challenging learning experiences and maintain national standards set by the College Board. Students who meet specific criteria set by each college or university on an AP Exam receive credit for specific college courses.

Dickinson ISD offers AP courses in all core areas as well as several elective areas. Additional opportunities for advancement include concurrent enrollment, dual credit courses, credit by exam, correspondence courses, and enrollment in Collegiate

High School, a college-based dual-credit program. Students in AP courses are required to take the College Board AP Examination. Acceleration opportunities are also available for students who meet criteria. For a full listing of courses and opportunities offered, please refer to the *DISD Academic Handbook, grade 9-12*.

THE INVESTIGATORS PROGRAM (4)

The InvestiGATORS Program is open to any student in grade 4 who is identified as GT. Through a partnership with the University of Houston—Clear Lake, students explore mini-courses in areas of their interest through a series of university visits throughout the year (five days per semester). Students can select courses in a wide range of subjects. Learning in the mini-courses is project-based, allowing students to develop skills in collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and creativity in areas of personal interest.

G/T IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Step 1: Referrals

- Members of Dickinson ISD professional staff, teachers and/or parents may nominate students for assessment and identification during the referral window.
- Referrals are accepted at a designated time during the school year; specific assessment and identification timelines are completed according to the published district timeline.
- Students in grades 1-12 may be assessed once during any academic year.
- All Kindergarten students are automatically considered for gifted/talented services and are screened/assessed according to the published district timeline ([Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students 1.5.2R.](#))
- All students in grade 2 are also automatically considered for gifted/talented service and are screened according to the published district timeline.

Step 2: Assessment and Screening

- Parent/guardian permission must be secured for any testing given to referred students and not given to the entire grade level.
- Each student in grades 1 – 12 who is referred is assessed using instruments determined by the G/T Selection & Review Committee. Assessment data includes both qualitative and quantitative data collected through three (3) or more measures to determine if students need gifted/talented services (1.5.4C).
- The child's teacher or other campus/district professional who is knowledgeable in the field of gifted education administers any specialized assessment. Assessments may also be given online.
- Students who miss G/T assessments due to excused absences may attend a make-up assessment or complete assessments during the next G/T assessment window according to the published district timeline.

Step 3: Selection

The G/T Selection & Review Committee will review all student assessment data and make recommendations for qualification for the Gifted and Talented Program. In addition to the formal assessment data, the committee may also use other information or data regarding student achievement or performance to make a determination about qualification. The committee will strive for consensus; however, a majority vote is required.

Step 4: Participation

- Parent/guardian permission must be secured for students to participate in the Gifted and Talented Program in DISD. (*See Appendix C: Consent to Participate in the G/T Program*)
- Student participation in kindergarten is immediate after the G/T designation is established. All other grades receive G/T services beginning the next school year.

- Student participation is ongoing, and re-evaluation is based on student performance in the program for the purpose of appropriate student placement and services.
- Based on performance concerns, students may be placed on furlough or probation to improve performance. Students may also be recommended for program exit.

STUDENT TRANSFERS AND G/T PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION

Transfers within Dickinson ISD

If an identified Gifted/Talented student transfers within Dickinson ISD, the student continues services in the receiving school.

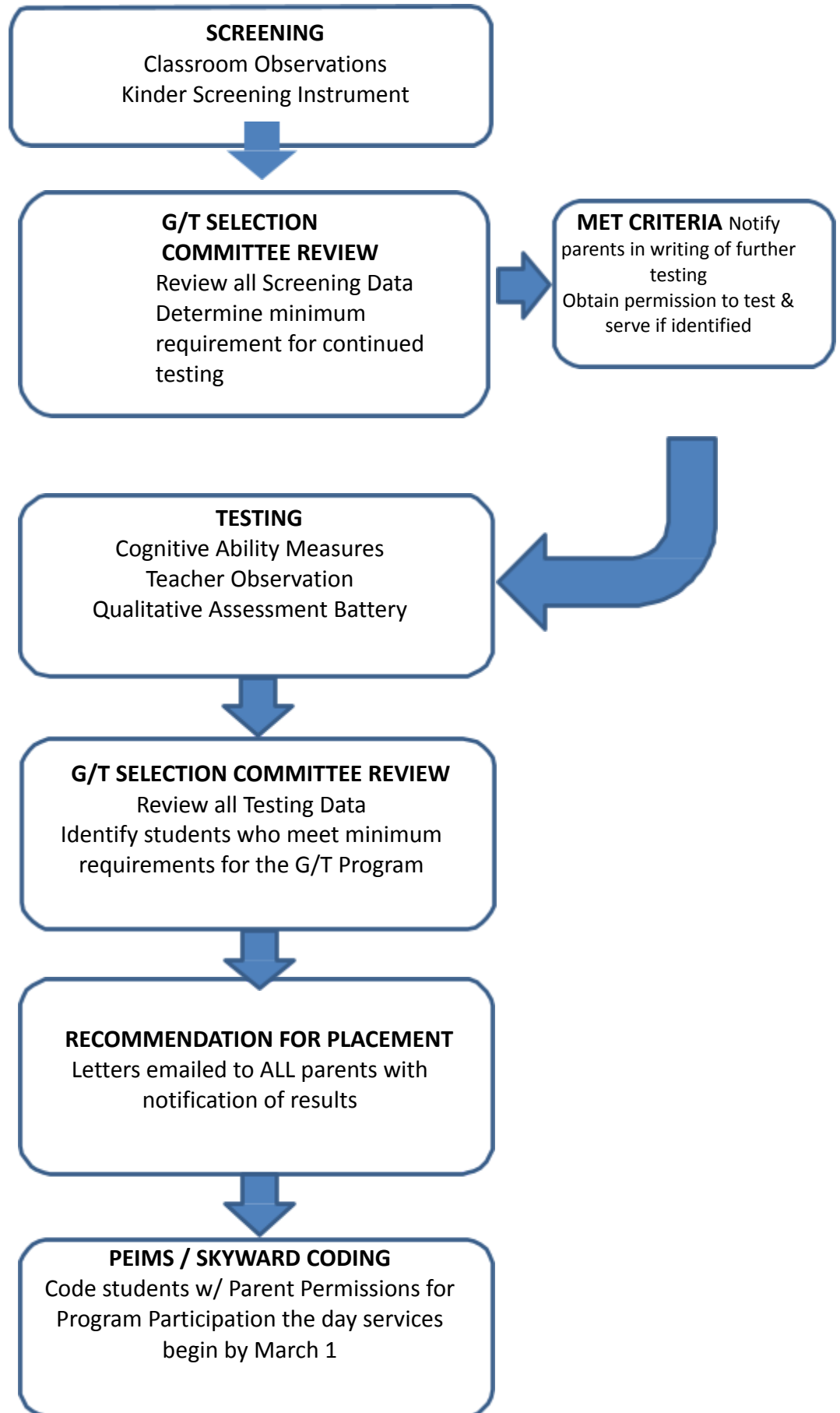
Students New to Dickinson ISD:

- Students new to Dickinson ISD who were identified as Gifted/Talented by another school district, may be placed in a class taught by a G/T certified teacher and observed for a 4-6 week period.
- Counselors at each school will gather all assessment data from the previous school district and submit it to the Director of Advanced Academics.
- The G/T Selection & Review Committee will review transfer data from the previous district. If the transfer data meets Dickinson ISD's standards, the child will be identified for placement in the Dickinson ISD G/T program.
- If the student does not meet district standards, the student will be assessed for identification in DISD.
- Parent permission to test is required.
- On or before the end of the nine week period, the G/T Selection & Review Committee makes recommendations for qualification for the Gifted and Talented Program. In addition to the formal assessment data collected in DISD, the committee may also use other information or data regarding prior student achievement or performance to make a determination about qualification. The committee will strive for consensus; however, a majority vote is required.
- Students who were identified in their previous school district who have one or more parent(s) actively serving in the U.S. military will receive G/T services when documentation of G/T identification is received by the Educational Services Department.
- Students new to the district **who have not been previously identified as G/T by another district** may be referred for G/T assessment based on the published district timelines for assessment and identification.
- **Students must be enrolled in Dickinson ISD in order to be eligible for G/T assessment, services, or data review.**

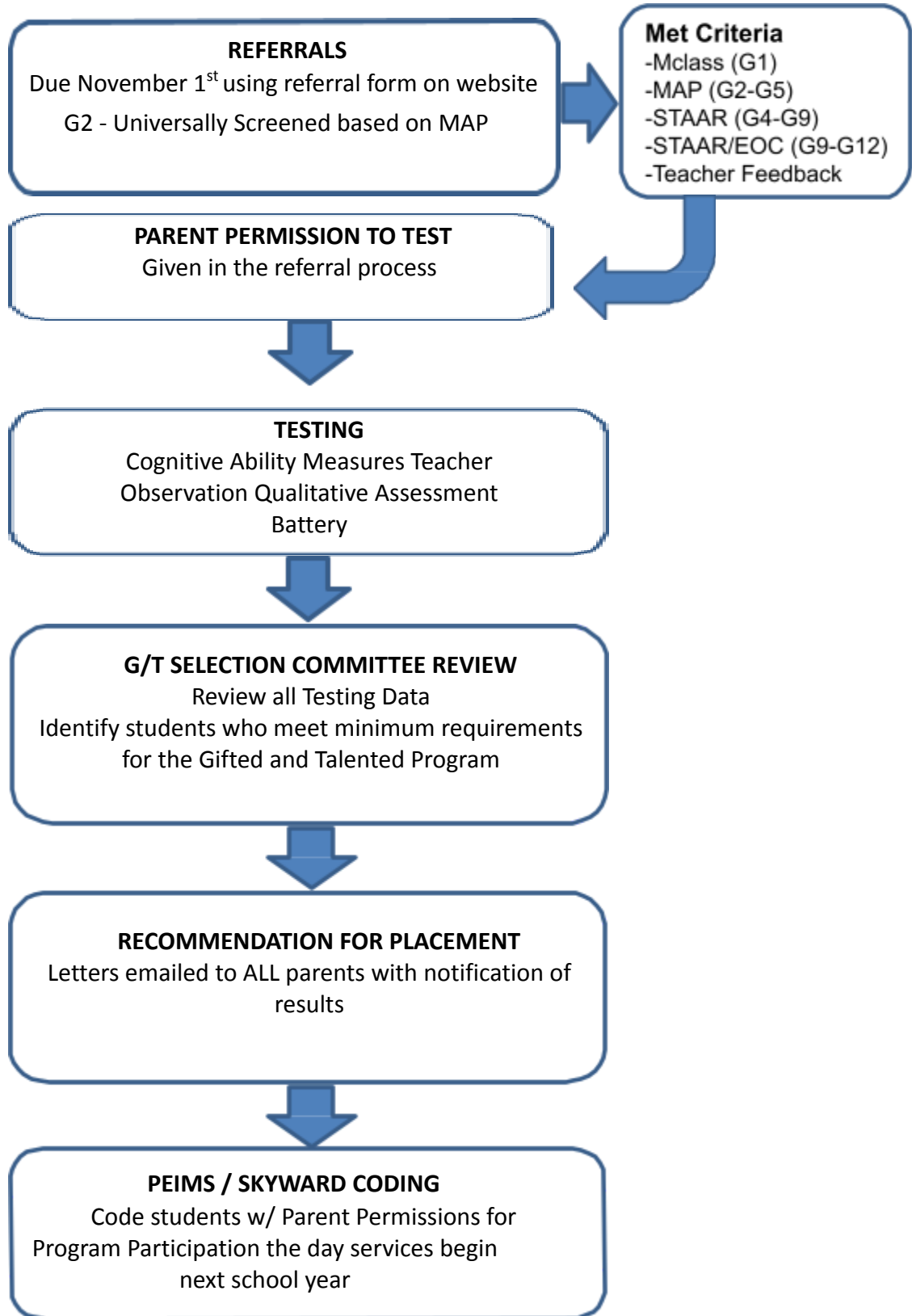
Private and Home Schooled Students

- Private and homeschool students entering Dickinson ISD for the first time may be referred for G/T screening and will follow the district assessment guidelines and timelines for their grade level.
- Dickinson ISD does not offer an assessment program at public expense for non-enrolled students.
- **Students must be enrolled and in actual attendance prior to consideration for Gifted/Talented assessment.**

G/T IDENTIFICATION PROCESS: KINDERGARTEN



G/T IDENTIFICATION PROCESS: GRADES 1-12



PROBATION AND EXIT FOR GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS

Educational needs, lack of interest and/or motivation are possible indicators for a student's need for probation, furlough and/or exit from the G/T program. A request for a student to be placed on probation or furlough, or to be exited may be initiated by a school administrator, teachers, the school counselor, parents or the student him/herself. **Prior to exiting the Gifted/Talented program, students may be placed on probation or furlough and be given a predetermined amount of time to improve their performance.**

Probation Procedures

1. Students who are identified as gifted/talented must be monitored each progress reporting time to ensure their academic success and their learning needs are being met.
2. When a G/T student is not being successful, the campus must identify problem areas for the student and contact the Director of Advanced Academic Programs.
3. Teacher conferences with parent/guardian and student and determines targeted intervention plan.
4. If an intervention plan is not successful, the campus refers the student to a Gifted/Talented Probation Committee consisting of at least three professionals including the teacher, a campus administrator, and a school counselor.
5. Committee recommends a probationary period (up to one semester) and includes recommendations for program support and improvement. *(See Appendix C: Probation Improvement Plan for G/T Students)*
6. The student continues participation in Gifted/Talented services during the probationary period.
7. At the end of the probationary period, the G/T Selection & Review Committee will review the student's performance record.
8. The committee will recommend reinstatement, continued probation, furlough, or exit. Students may not be exited during the last nine weeks of the school year.
9. When a student is exited, application to return to the G/T program may be initiated the following academic year through the regularly scheduled identification process. In order to be identified as G/T, the student must meet current Dickinson ISD identification criteria.
10. If a parent/guardian disagrees with exiting his/her student from the program, the parent/guardian may appeal to the Director of Advanced Academics for review

Furloughs

The District may place on a furlough any student who is unable to maintain satisfactory performance or whose educational needs are not being met within the structure of the gifted and talented program. A furlough may be initiated by the District, the parent, or the student. In accordance with administrative regulations, a furlough shall be granted for specified reasons and for a specified period of time (from 6 weeks to the remainder of the year). At the end of a furlough, the student may reenter the gifted program, be placed on another furlough, or be exited from the program. EHBB (LOCAL)

The furlough process is as follows:

1. A district employee, parent/guardian or student (with parent/guardian signature) completes the
2. Furlough Request Form. *(See Appendix D: Request for Student Furlough from G/T Program)*
3. The teacher(s), principal or designee, and the Director of Advanced Academic Programs review the information. A letter is sent to the requesting parent/guardian and/or student with the decision.
4. Students receiving homebound services will automatically be placed on furlough. This includes all students enrolled in Honors/AP classes.

Exit from G/T Services

The district will exit from G/T Services any student who has been placed on probation or furlough and has been unsuccessful in regaining successful G/T status. Students may also exit upon parent or student request. The Campus G/T Selection and Review Committee will review student information and, in collaboration with parents, make final recommendation for exit. *(See Appendix E: Request for Student Exit from G/T Program)*

APPEAL PROCESS

1. If a parent or guardian disagrees with the G/T Selection & Review Committee's decision for selection, probation, furlough or exit, they have the right to appeal according to EHBB (LOCAL) policy [EHBB](#) . Appeals shall be made first to the selection committee.
2. Parents must send written request for an appeal to the selection committee and to the Director of Advanced Academics within 15 days of the date that the notification letter was sent to families.
3. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with FNG (LOCAL) [FNG](#) beginning at level two.

ADVANCED ACADEMICS IN HIGH SCHOOL

Equity and Access to Honors, AP, Credit by Exam, On Ramps and Dual Credit Courses

Dickinson ISD has a genuine commitment to preparing ALL students for challenging high school coursework and post high school success in college, in the workplace, and/or in the military. Opportunities for enrollment in Honors (formerly Pre-AP Courses) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses are open and made available to ALL Dickinson High School students. Because Honors and AP courses are designed as college preparation and/or college level courses, students must have demonstrated their academic preparedness and their willingness to invest the time and effort required for success in rigorous courses. College Board research clearly shows that students who participate in the challenging work within Honors and AP courses have considerably higher success in college.

Honors Courses (9-12)

A Different Kind of Class:

Through increased rigor, Honors courses help students acquire the skills and academic habits needed for success in high school and beyond. Students will improve critical reading, writing, and problem- solving skills as a result of successful completion of these courses. In addition, students' time management, note-taking, and study skills will be greatly enhanced.

An Honors classroom is different from an academic class. Instruction in the Honors classroom focuses on intense discussions, rigorous real-world applications, analytical thinking, critical reading, and persuasive/expository writing. Students are held to a high standard of academic engagement. The learning pace in Honors courses is demanding and requires outside preparation.

Honors students are expected to complete reading and writing assignments outside of the regular school day in preparation for classroom instruction.

Honors courses provide preparation for success in the subsequent AP course and toward earning a qualifying score on the corresponding College Board AP Exam.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses (9-12)

A Different Kind of Class:

AP courses are highly rigorous courses for which college credit may be earned. The course syllabus is approved by College Board.

Teachers are highly trained through College Board workshops and institutes. AP courses conclude with a final examination written and scored by College Board. AP courses require a high level of student commitment and academic engagement.

Admission Criteria

In an effort to place students in appropriate level classes, admission criteria have been established for Honors, AP, and Honors courses. The academic records for all students who register for a Honors, AP and/or Honors course will be evaluated against the following criteria when students complete their course selections for following school year:

Personal Characteristics

- Prioritize time and interests
- Commit a minimum of 2-3 hours of out-of-class time per week for each course
- Approach challenging coursework with a positive attitude
- Complete outside reading and writing assignments
- Maintain a strong work ethic & independent study habits
- Critically question and discuss complex concepts
- Monitor and evaluate progress
- Meet expectations on state assessments
- Adhere to the district's class exit procedures and timelines (*See Exit from an Honors/AP Course at the High School Level*)

Previous Academic Performance. Students shall have a yearly average of 80 (B) or higher in an Academic course or 75 (C) or higher in an Honors or an AP course immediately preceding the Honors/AP course.

STAAR and End of Course (EOC) Assessment. It is highly recommended that students meet or exceed the STAAR and End of Course score for entry into each Honors, AP, or Honors course. Demonstrated academic achievement on the state assessments indicates that the student has the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the rigorous college preparatory (Honors), and college level (AP) courses. There is a minimum STAAR/ EOC score recommended for entry into Honors/AP courses. The scores are based on passing approximately 70% of the previous STAAR. Raw scores are typically consistent from test to test whereas scale scores may fluctuate based on test date and format (computer/ paper). The raw score will be used to determine eligibility. (*See Dickinson High School Academic Handbook*)

Appeal of Criteria. Students and parents may appeal to the campus review committee which may consist of the course teacher, the department chairperson, the AVID teacher, the student's counselor, a campus administrator, the student's parent and/or primary caretaker, and the student.

Commitment Statement. Students and parents should review the information together to have a clear understanding of advanced coursework. (*See Appendix F: Commitment Statement*)

Exit from a Honors/AP/Advanced Class (9-12)

College and university admissions officers have repeatedly indicated that high school students who successfully complete an Honors/AP/Advanced course are given greater consideration when all other college admissions indicators are equal. For this reason, DHS counselors, administrators, and teachers strongly advise Honors/AP/Advanced students to stay in the course working through difficulties by attending tutorials, doing extra reading/work at home, joining a student study group, and taking copious notes in class. If a student indicates that he/she wants out of the class and scheduled into the corresponding academic class, the following timeline and procedure(s) must be followed. Exit points are built into our registration and master scheduling process and may be found in the Dickinson High School Academic Handbook.

On Ramps Courses (10-12)

On Ramps courses are a dual enrollment opportunity in partnership with the University of Texas at Austin. Student have the opportunity to earn both high school and separate college credit for their successful work in the course. Students in

these courses pay a reduced rate for the college tuition. Students must meet registration deadlines and will earn grade points based on the AP scale.

Dual Credit Courses (10-12)

Dual Credit courses allow students to earn college hours and high school credit from the same course beginning their sophomore year. Students in these courses pay college tuition at a reduced rate. Counselor approval is required prior to enrollment. Students must meet the registration deadline and will earn grade points based on the AP scale.

Collegiate High School (10-12)

College of the Mainland offers a program for high school students planning to enter a variety of career fields. This program is designed to give eligible students the opportunity to complete high school and most associate degree requirements simultaneously. The college hours accumulated may transfer to a four-year university to be applied toward a degree. Participants will pay a portion of the college tuition fees. Students must adhere to application and registration deadlines, and must also have transportation to and from College of the Mainland. CHS students are not eligible to be recognized for Valedictorian or Salutatorian.

Additionally, it is rare for a DHS Collegiate High School student to fail a College of the Mainland course. Because CHS students are also dual-credit students and high school graduation is the top priority, any collegiate student who fails any of the college courses required for high school graduation will be withdrawn from the Collegiate High School program at the end of the semester and will be required to complete his/her high school education at Dickinson High School.

Credit by Exam

There are some courses eligible for credit by exam meaning a student could take a test for a course they've received no class time (initial instruction). Details should be addressed to high school campus counselors.

ADVANCED ACADEMICS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL & JUNIOR HIGH

Equity and Access to Honors/Advanced Courses

Opportunities for enrollment in Honors are open and made available to ALL junior high school students. Because Honors courses are designed as college preparation, students must have demonstrated their academic preparedness and their willingness to invest the time and effort required for success in rigorous courses. College Board research clearly shows that students who participate in challenging coursework, including Honors, have considerably higher success in college.

Benefits of Honors/Advanced Courses

A Different Kind of Class:

Through increased rigor, Honors/Advanced courses help students acquire the skills and academic habits needed for success in high school and beyond. Students will improve critical reading, writing, and problem-solving skills as a result of successful completion of these courses. In addition, students' time management, note-taking, and study skills will be greatly enhanced.

An Honors/Advanced classroom is different from an on-level class/course. Instruction in these classrooms focuses on intense discussions, rigorous real-world applications, analytical thinking, critical reading, and persuasive/expository writing. Students are held to a high standard of academic engagement.

Honors/Advanced courses provide preparation for success in high school AP courses and the corresponding College Board AP Exams through which students may earn college credits.

Honors/Advanced Course Admission Recommendations (6-8)

In an effort to place students in appropriate level classes, recommended admission recommendations have been established for Honors courses. The academic records for all students who register for an Honors course will be evaluated considering the following:

1. **Previous Academic Performance.** Students would have a yearly average of 90 (A) or higher in an on-level class/course or 80 (B) or higher in an Honors or Advanced course immediately preceding the next-level Honors course.
2. **STAAR Assessment.** It is highly recommended that students achieve a “Masters Grade Level” or “Meets Grade Level” STAAR score for entry into each Honors course. Demonstrated academic achievement on the state assessment indicates that the student has the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the rigorous Honors or Advanced course. At minimum, however, students must achieve a “Approaches Grade Level” score on the exam required for entry into an Honors or advanced course.

Appeal of Placement Decision

Students and parents may appeal to the campus administration for consideration to enroll into an Honors course if a student does not meet initial admission recommendations. A committee may consist of the course teacher, the department chairperson, the student’s counselor, a campus and/or district administrator, the student’s parents and/or primary caretaker, and the student.

Exit from an Honors or Advanced Course (5-8)

College and university admissions officers have repeatedly indicated that students who successfully complete Honors courses are given greater consideration when all other college admissions indicators are equal. Because junior high school Honors courses are designed to prepare students for high school and, ultimately, college success, we strongly advise Honors students to stay in these courses working through difficulties by attending tutorials, doing extra reading/work at home, joining a student study group, and using effective note-taking strategies in class. If a student indicates that he/she wants out of the class and scheduled into the corresponding on-level course, the following timeline and procedure(s) must be followed:

Exit Point #1: Prior to Start of School

Students are registered for courses during the spring of the previous school year. It is important that students carefully select their coursework making wise decisions based on their time commitments, their interests, and their demonstrated academic achievement. The first exit point after initial registration will be made available to all students in May. All students will review their course selections during the last two weeks of the school year prior. Students may request a schedule change during this time or during the first week prior to the start of school in the fall. A parent/primary caregiver signature is required for the schedule change.

Exit Point #2: End of the First Nine Weeks

Students who are failing the Honors course at the end of the first grading period are in danger of failing for the semester. Serious consideration must be given to the student’s willingness to complete the rigorous coursework and to his/her time commitments in order for him/her to be success and pass the first semester. Students who are failing an Honors course at the end of the first 9 weeks may be moved to the respective on- level class/course. Students with a 65-69 may remain in the course as long as the student, parent, and teacher agree the student has the ability to pass for the semester. The student’s parent or primary caregiver will be notified by the Honors teacher about the failing grade and course or action at the end of the first nine weeks.

Exit Point #3: End of the First Semester.

Any student who fails an Honors course with a grade below 70 for the first semester will be removed from the course at the end of the first semester. The student's parent or primary caregiver will be notified by the Honors/Advanced course teacher of the failing grade which will result in a schedule change. The Parent or primary caregiver may also request to remove the student from the course for the second semester. Written notification must be given to the school counselor before the first business day in December.

THE STEAM ACADEMY

The DISD STEAM Academy is designed as a rigorous academic cohort model for students in grades 5 – 8 who enjoy challenges and investigating the world around them. Students explore STEAM concepts through hands-on learning experiences, research, and exploration in every content. Teacher collaboration within team planning produces the cross-curricular lessons that allow students to focus on content through the lens of STEAM. All courses in the STEAM Academy are taught as advanced or Honors level courses, while math and science courses also have an accelerated curriculum.

In addition to core advanced academic study, students also explore STEAM concepts through Brainiac Experiences. Students also participate in field experiences, guest lectures, and more. Details about the STEAM Academy can be found on the district website and in the STEAM Handbook.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to Advanced Academic Courses in grades 5-12, DISD also provides several other advanced academic opportunities for students to pursue their interests and extend their learning.

UIL A+ (2-8) / UIL Academic Competition (9-12)

The University Interscholastic League (UIL) offers the most comprehensive program of academic competition in the nation. UIL Academics offers contests (UIL Academic Meet) at the high school level and contests (UIL A+ Meet) for grades 2-8. These activities, which exist to complement the academic curriculum, are designed to motivate students as they acquire higher levels of knowledge, to challenge students to confront issues of importance, and to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of specific skills.

Academic Decathlon (9-12)

Academic Decathlon is an individual and team competition that is centered on a thematic content each year. High School students in Texas and in the nation compete together in five (5) different types of events— speeches, essay, interviews, exams, and Super Quiz—each designed to allow competitors to explore new themes and stretch their learning in seven (7) subjects connected to that theme: art, science, math, economics, literature, music and social science. Students who participate in Academic Decathlon will learn to work as a team, share a single goal, and study harder than they ever have before.

Quiz Bowl Competition (6-8)

This competition encourages students to explore a wide range of study areas from traditional and classic academic and cultural topics through modern, current topics. Through research of primary and secondary sources, students prepare for a trivia-style competition. In addition to in-district competition, the teams may compete outside of DISD as well.

Texas Performance Standards Project (K-12)

The Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) is a resource for providing differentiated instruction to gifted/talented students through the creation of professional quality work that is in alignment with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students. All G/T students in grades 1 through 8 will participate in at least one independent learning project per year. In Dickinson ISD, students may complete a science fair project, history fair project or other independent learning project as outlined through the TPSP. Project topics should be student-driven, but should circumstances require that all students complete the same task, the task should be chosen based on student interests, background knowledge and needs.

VEX Robotics (4-12)

Students have the opportunity to participate in VEX Robotics teams and competitions each year as part of the district's focus on STEAM education for all students. By familiarizing students with programming, sensors, and automation, students

hone critical thinking skills needed to succeed in both the 21st century's workforce and in everyday life. Middle school and junior high campus teams have the opportunity to compete in two (2) district tournaments. High school programs also compete in VEX-sponsored events.

Chess Clubs (4-8)

Students have the opportunity to participate in Chess Club each year. Chess offers students a fun and challenging environment to develop critical thinking, strategy, and sportsmanship. Members learn chess fundamentals, compete in friendly matches, and build confidence through problem-solving. Whether beginners or experienced players, all students are welcome to join and grow their skills. DISD hosts two tournaments per school year as well as participates in outside tournaments. Each campus will also select three representatives from each grade level to participate in UIL A+ chess competition.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR G/T TEACHERS

In Dickinson ISD, we aim to provide quality services for all students by ensuring teachers are highly qualified and highly trained to meet the needs of each of their students. For teachers of the gifted, there is specific training that is required by the district and the state to ensure this special population of students and their particular needs are well-met. These qualifications are a prerequisite to teaching gifted children.

In accordance with state law §89.2, Section 4 of the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, and **DISD board policy DMA (LEGAL)**, Dickinson ISD shall ensure that:

- 1) *prior to assignment in the program, 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;*
- 2) *teachers without training required in paragraph (1) of this section who provide instruction and services that are part of the gifted/talented program must complete the 30-hour training requirement within one semester;*
- 3) *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; and*
- 4) *administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions have a minimum of six hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students and program options.*

Gifted and Talented Teacher Qualifications

Recognizing the Teacher Knowledge & Skill Standards for Gifted and Talented Education published by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), Dickinson ISD provides learning opportunities for G/T professionals focusing on the five subject strands of gifted education, or the G/T 30 Foundational Hours:

1. Nature and Needs of Gifted Children (NN)
2. Identification/Assessment of Gifted Students (ID)
3. The Social and Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SE) OR Depth & Complexity (DC)
4. Differentiated Curriculum (DC)
5. Creativity/Instructional Strategies for Gifted Children (CI)

Teachers in Dickinson ISD are qualified to teach gifted students by demonstrating they have met one of the following criteria:

- (1) **G/T Training:** Teachers who have successfully completed the initial 30 foundational hours in gifted education are considered G/T Trained only, and eligible to teach gifted students. Teachers who are trained are also encouraged to

take the TExES G/T Supplemental Exam for certification. To maintain this eligibility, teacher must complete 6 hours of G/T training each year between June 1 and December 31 of each school year.

- (2) **G/T Endorsement:** Teachers who have obtained a G/T Endorsement through extensive hours of graduate/post-baccalaureate study in gifted education have received an “Endorsement in Gifted/Talented” through a college or university and such recognition is reflected on his/her state teaching certificate. (As of 2005, the G/T Endorsement is no longer offered.) Graduate courses in gifted can be considered in lieu of G/T sessions, provided teacher submits graduate transcripts of study to Educational Services Department for review and approval. Teachers possessing a G/T Endorsement are eligible to teach gifted students. To maintain this eligibility, teacher must complete 6 hours of G/T training each year between June 1 and December 31 of each school year he/she is to teach G/T students.
- (3) **G/T Certification:** Teachers who have taken and mastered the TExES G/T Supplemental exam are “G/T Certified” and such recognition is reflected on his/her state teaching certificate. G/T Certified teachers are eligible to teach gifted students. To maintain this eligibility, teachers must complete 6 hours of G/T training each year between June 1 and December 31 of each school year he/she is to teach G/T students. Teachers are expected to keep all original G/T Professional Learning certificates as proof of eligibility. It is also important for campus administrative staff to monitor compliance. Accurate professional development records in gifted education must be maintained for each campus teacher of the gifted in Eduphoria. Teachers must have a documented record of sessions attended, the subject strand of each, and the number of clock hours earned. All professional development records with Certificates of Completion for courses/sessions taken outside of DISD must be electronically entered and uploaded to your portfolio in Eduphoria(Strive) for credit approval.

G/T Professional Learning Options

- Professional Learning sessions/courses offered by the Dickinson ISD, Region 4 (Gifted education/advanced placement-curriculum), and Houston Area Cooperative meet the core criteria for professional learning in gifted education.
- All session/course certificates that are endorsed by the Texas Association for the Gifted & Talented (TAGT) will be accepted.
- Sessions/Courses outside the field of gifted education that are not endorsed by the Texas Association for the Gifted & Talented (TAGT) must be reviewed by the Director of Advanced Academics prior to attendance or publication to ascertain the session's discussion of the core competencies of gifted education for the appropriate clock hours. The questions that follow will be used during the review process:
 - Does the session description tell how this training relates to the core competencies of gifted education? Does the content of the session relate to at least one of the core areas required by the state? (Nature & Needs, Identification/Assessment or Curriculum for the Gifted)
 - Has the presenter obtained the required 30 hours of G/T training? Has the presenter worked with gifted students? Will the presenter be able to relate this training to the G/T classroom?
 - Is there proof that the content of the training is supported by research in gifted education?
 - How do the strategies help the gifted student? Are there concrete examples presented in this training on how the strategies can be used with gifted students?
 - Does this training meet the criteria of the Gifted Core Knowledge Areas and Teacher Competencies? (*See Appendix G: Core Knowledge and Teacher Competencies*)

All sessions offered in DISD can be found in Eduphoria under the G/T Core or Update under "Credit Type". Sessions/courses not appearing in Eduphoria can be submitted to the Educational Services Department for G/T credit consideration. Sessions must demonstrate a continued training focus in the "Core Knowledge Areas and Teacher Competencies" Guidelines (*See Appendix G: Core Knowledge and Teacher Competencies*).

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Dickinson ISD is committed to partnering with parents and community to ensure the success of our gifted and talented students. Effective communication is a key component to the success of any organization. Dickinson ISD campus-based family and community involvement initiatives include: parent communication through various outlets (i.e. written and electronic), parent meetings/orientations, newsletters, parent/teacher conferences, and webpages. In addition to campus activities, the Educational Services Department provides additional layers of communication through their website.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

As needed, the G/T and Advanced Academic Advisory Committee will review and revise the program to best address the needs of the students and district. Parent, teacher, and student surveys will be included as part of the evaluation of the Dickinson ISD G/T and Advanced Academic Program. Data gleaned from the evaluation process will be used to modify and update district and campus improvement plans as well as to ensure continuous improvement of the Dickinson ISD G/T and Advanced Academic Programs.

APPENDICES

DICKINSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Appendix A: Parent Referral Questionnaire for G/T Identification

Child's Name _____ School and Grade _____
 Teacher _____ Parent Name _____
 Address _____ City _____ Zip _____ Date of Birth _____

Please take a few minutes to share information about your child to help us know him/her better. For each item, place an X in the box which best describes your child.

My child...	Very Little	Some	Often	My child...	Very Little	Some	Often
Has unusually advanced vocabulary for age or grade level.				Prefers activities other than TV such as research on computers, calculators, reading, puzzles, etc.			
Is curious and asks many questions.				Began talking earlier than other children his/her age.			
Learns quickly.				Likes to figure things out by himself/herself.			
Prefers to be with older children or adults.				Has a good memory.			
Reads a lot.				Displays a keen or unique sense of humor.			
Offers unusual (out of the ordinary), unique, clever answers or creations.				Has a great imagination and makes up stories.			
Learned to read prior to beginning school.				Pursues a topic or project that interests him or her.			
Is very good at art, music, dancing, or athletics.				Is very sensitive to the feelings of others.			
Has many different interests.				Likes to have his or her own way.			
Is a perfectionist.				Has advanced mathematical knowledge and concepts.			
Demonstrates leadership qualities.				Is easily bored with routine tasks.			
Finds many different ways of solving problems.				Has a strong sense of justice/fairness.			
Is observant about changes.							

What other information about your child or family would you like us to know?

By signing this form, I agree that my child may participate in the DISD G/T testing process. If identified, I also agree to allow my child to participate in G/T Services.

Parent Signature

Date



DICKINSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Appendix B: Consent to Participate in the G/T Program for Transfer Students

We are pleased to inform you that your child met the criteria for gifted identification and is qualified to participate in Dickinson ISD's Gifted and Talented Program. Dickinson ISD encourages your involvement by:

- Communicating with teachers about questions and concerns regarding your child and his/her assignments
- Understanding that your child may have coursework including projects and readings requiring time outside of the school day
- Supporting Gifted and Talented Education through parent volunteerism on the campus and within the district

In order for your student to be formally accepted into the DISD Gifted and Talented Program, your permission is required. Please complete the following:

I, _____, give permission for my child, _____ to participate in the Gifted and Talented Program in Dickinson Independent School District. I understand that gifted and talented classes, Honors/G/T and AP/G/T classes are rigorous and will require commitment, self- direction, and academic discipline on behalf of my child.

I also acknowledge that I have read and agree to abide by the DISD Probation, Furlough and Exit

Procedures as outlined in EHBB Regulation.
(Attached).

Parent Signature

Date

Address:

City, State, Zip

Email Address

Phone Number

Please return to the Director of Advanced Academics at the ESC



DICKINSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Appendix C: Probation Improvement Plan for G/T Students

Student's Name: _____

Date of Request: _____

School/Grade: _____

Student ID#: _____

Reason for Probation Request:

_____ Student's overall performance does not meet the expectations of the program, i.e. grade below 70,

_____ Other _____

Activities to address the reason for the probation:

Evidence that will be used to determine completion of the above listed activities:

Date for completion of probation activities listed above: _____

I, _____ (printed name of parent/guardian), understand that in order for my student to remain eligible for the Gifted and Talented program in Dickinson ISD, my son/daughter must complete the above activities by the designated date. Should my child be unable to complete the activities, I understand that the G/T Advisory Committee will meet to consider exiting my child from the program.

Parent Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date

G/T Advisory Committee Signatures (minimum of 3):

Committee Member #1

Date

Committee Member #2

Date

Committee Member #3

Date

Committee Member #4

Date

Please return to the Director of Advanced Academics at the ESC

DICKINSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Appendix D: Request for Student Furlough from G/T Program

Furloughs are a temporary "leave of absence" (from 6 weeks to the remainder of the year) from the Gifted and Talented Program designed to meet the individual needs of an identified G/T student. Furloughs may be requested for any G/T student who is unable to maintain satisfactory performance or whose educational needs are not being met within the structure of the gifted and talented program.

The District employee, parent/guardian, or student completes the Request for Student Furlough form and returns it to the campus counselor. The student's teacher(s), the principal (or designee) and the Director of Elementary or Secondary Programs meet to consider the request. Written parent notification of the committee meeting date and time to consider the furlough will be sent to the parent/guardian. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed, and the student may re-enter the gifted program, be removed from the program, or be placed on another furlough.

A furlough may not exclude all services for which the student qualifies. It may be for a part or parts of the services or for all of the services. A furlough is arranged to meet the individual needs of the student.

It is requested that the following student be furloughed from the Gifted and Talented Program:

Student Name : _____ **Campus:** _____

Reason for requesting the furlough:

Requestor's Name

Date

Requestor's Signature

Please return to the Director of Advanced Academics at the ESC



DICKINSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Appendix E: Request for Student Exit from G/T Program

A request for exit may be submitted at any time. A student shall be removed from the program at any time the Campus G/T Placement Review Committee determines it is in the student's best interest. Written parent notification including the date and time of the Campus G/T Placement Review Committee meeting to review the request will be sent. If a student or parent requests removal from the program, the G/T Placement Review Committee shall meet with the parent and student before honoring the request.

A student may be exited from the Gifted and Talented program based on criteria set by the district. The criteria include instances where...

- the student's overall performance does not meet the expectations of the program, i.e. grade below 70;
- the student, parent, campus principal (or designee) does not view the placement as appropriate to meet the needs of the student.

When a parent, guardian, student, or teacher requests that a student exit from the Gifted and Talented program, a conference with the parent, counselor, and members of the Campus G/T Selection & Review Committee will be held. At this conference, the most appropriate educational placement for the student will be determined. Once a student is exited from the program, he/she must adhere to the identification procedures to be readmitted.

A student may be exited from a part or parts of the services or from all of the services for which the student qualifies. The exit will vary depending upon the needs of the individual student.

It is requested that the following student be exited from the Gifted and Talented Program:

Student _____ **Campus:** _____

Reason for requesting the exit:

Requestor's Name

Date

Requestor's Signature

Please return to Director of Advanced Academics at the ESC

Appendix F: Honors/AP/Advanced Course Commitment

Dickinson ISD's goal is for students to be successful at the highest possible level. Honors, and Advanced Placement (AP) classes in Dickinson ISD stimulate and challenge students to perform at an advanced academic level. We are pleased you are accepting the challenge of Honors/AP work. Honors classes allow students to experience the expectations and activities provided by the program and are designed to prepare highly motivated students for the rigorous and fast-paced AP classes. AP classes provide students the opportunity to take college level classes, and upon successfully completing the College Board Advanced Placement exams, earn college credit while still in high school.

Parental support is the key for success of Honors/AP/Advanced students; therefore, please read and discuss the following points:

- Honors/AP/Advanced courses require more individual study time per week than a regular class. Students will need to read and prepare outside of class to participate effectively in classroom discussions and activities.
- Tutoring will be available for all students and required before dropping an Honors/AP/Advanced course.
- Review the attached Academic Integrity Guidelines. Breach of the Academic Integrity Guidelines may result in disciplinary consequences and removal from Honors/AP/Advanced classes.

Expectations:

- Students who are failing an Honors/AP/Advanced course at the end of the first 9 weeks may be moved to the respective on-level course, if available. Students with a 65-69 may remain in the course as long as the student, parent, and teacher agree the student has the ability to pass for the semester.
- Any student who fails an Honors/AP/Advanced course with a grade below 70 for the first semester will be moved to the respective on-level course, if available, at the end of the first semester. The student's parent or primary caregiver will be notified by the Honors/AP/Advanced teacher of the failing grade which will result in a schedule change. Parents may also request to remove the student from the course for the second semester. Parent or primary caregiver must notify the counselor before the first business day in December.
- It is an expectation that the student will take the AP test at the end of the AP course (high school students only).
- In addition to the above guidelines, each Honors/AP/Advanced course may have additional specific requirements. All course requirements will be communicated in writing at the beginning of the course.

Appendix G: Core Knowledge Areas and Teacher Competencies

These competencies and time requirements were developed by a panel of professionals in the field of gifted education. Participants included Texas teachers, administrators, state and regional consultants, university faculty and parents.

1.0 Nature and Needs (6 clock-hours)

- 1.1 Knows basic terminology, current definitions, theories, and models of giftedness.
- 1.2 Identifies characteristics and their effects on academic and social settings.
- 1.3 Identifies characteristics of under-represented groups of gifted and talented students, such as lower socio-economic status, physically challenged, African-American, Hispanic, and limited-English proficient and/or learning disabled. Understands the implications of these groups' characteristics on programs for the gifted and talented.
- 1.4 Creates an environment in which gifted and talented students feel challenged and safe to explore and express their uniqueness.

2.0 Identification and Assessment (6 clock-hours)

- 2.1 Uses broad-based, multifaceted identification procedures, including varied sources of information and qualitative and quantitative measures that match specific areas of ability.
- 2.2 Interprets assessment results from both qualitative and quantitative measures to other professionals and parents for their use in determining placement and in planning specific program activities for each gifted and talented student.
- 2.3 Understands the characteristics of under-represented groups of gifted and talented students, such as lower socio-economic status, physically challenged, African-American, Hispanic, and limited-English proficient and/or learning disabled. Understands how to provide equal access to programs for gifted and talented students.

3.0 Social and Emotional Needs (6 clock-hours)

- 3.1 Identifies individuals (family members, teachers, peers, and others) and environments (school, home, and community) that influence the social and emotional development of gifted and talented students.
- 3.2 Identifies how characteristics of under-represented groups of gifted and talented students influence their social and emotional development.
- 3.3 Uses strategies for nurturing the social and emotional development of gifted and talented students at home and in school.
- 3.4 Understands approaches for educating and involving parents, the community, and other professionals in supporting gifted and talented children.

4.0 Creativity and Instructional Strategies (6 clock-hours)

- 4.1 Understands the characteristics of gifted and talented students and the influence of these characteristics on instructional strategies used in classrooms for the gifted and talented.
- 4.2 Designs lessons within and across disciplines that teach strategies for nurturing creative and critical thinking in the gifted and talented students.
- 4.3 Locates and develops resources for assisting gifted and talented students in the fulfillment of their creative potential.
- 4.4 Adapts the classroom to the learning differences of each gifted and talented learner including the management of large and small groups and independent learning.
- 4.5 Identifies strategies from gifted education that can be used in the regular classroom.

5.0 Differentiated Curriculum (6 clock-hours)

- 5.1 Applies the basic principles of a differentiated curriculum to the cognitive, affective, and physical development of each gifted and talented student.
- 5.2 Demonstrates knowledge of cognitive and affective content as related to each academic discipline, to multiple disciplines, and to broad-based themes, issues, and problems.
- 5.3 Develops activities to encourage original research, independent study, and problem solving that are authentic to each discipline.
- 5.4 Includes meaningful products in the curriculum that engage the gifted and talented student in real life experiences and promote lifelong learning.
- 5.5 Collaborates with general education professionals in the development and coordination of programs for gifted and talented students.