

A Parent's Guide to Vanguard (G/T) Programs for the 2009-2010 School Year

What does "Vanguard" mean?

In accordance with the Vanguard (G/T) Standards the term "Vanguard" is used in HISD synonymously with "gifted and talented". HISD has offered Vanguard (G/T) programs since 1974.

What is giftedness?

The state of Texas defines gifted and talented students as those identified by professionally qualified persons, who perform at, or show the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment. These are students who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society. Students capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas:

- Exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area;
- Possesses an unusual capacity for leadership;
- Excels in a specific academic field.

How do I know if my child is gifted?

It is important to note that there are not one or two characteristics that an educator can point to in order to say that a child is gifted. It is a combination of characteristics. Some signs that a child might be gifted include, but are not limited to:

- Extraordinary memory compared peers
- Highly curious
- Highly creative
- Exhibits abstract reasoning and problem solving skills
- Draws inferences, grasp underlying principles
- Initiates projects
- Discusses things in detail, elaborates

What is the Vanguard (G/T) Program?

The Vanguard (G/T) program is designed for G/T students in grades K-12 who excel in general intellectual ability in combination with creative/productive thinking and/or leadership ability. Vanguard (G/T) programs provide services that are comprehensive, structured, sequenced, and appropriately challenging. HISD curriculum is differentiated by modifying the depth, complexity, and pacing of the general school program, utilizing higher-level thinking skills, and developing independent research skills focusing on advanced-level products.

Where are Vanguard (G/T) Programs located?

All HISD schools offer Vanguard (G/T) programs.

What is the difference between Vanguard (G/T) Neighborhood and Vanguard (G/T) Magnet?

Vanguard (G/T) Neighborhood Programs are designed to meet the needs of the G/T students at their neighborhood or zoned school. Programs are designed to provide G/T services on a campus, for all G/T students who are zoned to that campus and for any non-zoned G/T students on a valid transfer (other than Vanguard (G/T) Magnet transfers).

Vanguard (G/T) Magnet Programs are designed to meet the needs of G/T students in pre-selected Magnet schools in accordance with the district and Magnet Guidelines. Vanguard (G/T) Magnet schools provide services to their zoned G/T students and students on a Vanguard (G/T) Magnet Transfer. There are eleven elementary Vanguard (G/T)

Magnet locations, eight middle school locations, and one high school location.

How is G/T identification for students initiated?

The G/T identification of a student can be initiated in four ways:
parent nomination that leads to a Vanguard (G/T) application

teacher nomination that leads to parent completion of a Vanguard (G/T) application
student nomination (age appropriate) that leads to parent completion of a Vanguard (G/T) application
district-generated rosters of G/T eligible students (Kindergarten and 6th grade)

How do I apply to a Vanguard (G/T) Neighborhood program?

Students in all grades can apply for Vanguard (G/T) services in their neighborhood (zoned) school through the

Vanguard (G/T) application. The application process for identification as G/T involves the following:

Parents get a Vanguard (G/T) application from their current school, visiting

www.houstonisd.org/portal/site/giftedtalented, or calling the Advanced Academics Department at 713-556-6954

Parents collect required records from their child's current school (see application for specifics).

Parents submit the application form to their neighborhood (zoned) school.

School schedules G/T testing if needed. Testing is conducted during the district established testing windows.

How do I apply to a Vanguard (G/T) Magnet program?

Students applying for acceptance to a Vanguard (G/T) Magnet school can apply using the Vanguard (G/T) Magnet

application and following the Magnet timelines. Unlike the standard Magnet application, only one Vanguard (G/T)

Magnet application can be submitted, indicating three school preferences. Acceptance into a Vanguard Magnet

school is based on spaces available for non-zoned G/T students. If there are more qualified applicants than spaces,

then all non-zoned G/T students are selected through a lottery. The application process for identification as G/T

involves the following:

Parents get a Vanguard (G/T) Magnet application from a Vanguard (G/T) Magnet school, visiting

www.houstonisd.org/portal/site/giftedtalented, or calling the Advanced Academics Department at 713-556-6954

Parents collect required records from their child's current school (see application for specifics).

Parents submit the application form to their first choice Vanguard (G/T) Magnet school by the Magnet deadline of January 9, 2009.

School schedules G/T testing if needed. Testing is conducted during the district established testing windows. Parents will be notified by the school of the specific testing date, time, and location.

Acceptance letters will be mailed to parents on March 27, 2009

How are assessments conducted?

All assessments are administered during pre-established testing schedules/timelines by specially trained HISD staff

at the student's school. Those students applying to Vanguard (G/T) Magnet programs are assessed at the school to

which they are applying. Students who are applying for Kindergarten Vanguard (G/T) Magnet program are assessed

in centralized locations.

Which assessments are administered for G/T identification?

Entering kindergarteners (individually administered): the Woodcock-Johnson III test of achievement (English)/Bateria III pruebas de habilidades aprovechamiento (Spanish) and the Wechsler Nonverbal Scale of Ability (English and Spanish)

All students K-12: Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test-2 (NNAT-2) and the Stanford/Aprenda Achievement Test

How do students qualify for the Vanguard (G/T) Program?

Identification as G/T is determined by points obtained on various criteria: achievement test, abilities test, grades,

obstacles, and teacher recommendation or in the case of the very young, parent recommendation. Points are entered

into a G/T Identification Matrix, which can be viewed at www.houstonisd.org/portal/site/giftedtalented

What are the important dates for the Vanguard (G/T) application process?

Date Event Participants

On-going Vanguard (G/T) Neighborhood applications accepted

Students can apply to the Vanguard (G/T)

Neighborhood program at any time during the year.

Applications are processed during the next

scheduled testing window

November 3-7, 2008 Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test –
NNAT 2

All students in Kindergarten and 5th grade

December 6, 2008 Magnet Open House Parents and families interested in the Magnet
program

December 8-12, 2008 Magnet Awareness Week Parents and students interested in touring Magnet
schools

January 9, 2009 Magnet Application Deadline All students interested in attending a Magnet
program for the 2009-2010 school year

January 12-29, 2009 G/T Testing Window #2 All applicants to the Vanguard (G/T) program.

March 27, 2009 Magnet Notification Letters Mailed All Magnet schools mail their parent notification
letters for the 2009-2010 school year

April 7, 2009 Magnet Parent Response Deadline Deadline for parents to accept or decline invitation
to attend a Magnet program

May 4-8, 2009 G/T Testing Window #3 All applicants to the Vanguard (G/T) program.

Where can I find more information?

The Advanced Academics Department Web site, www.houstonisd.org/portal/site/giftedtalented contains
general

information about Vanguard (G/T) programs, the application process, the G/T Identification criteria and
matrices,

applications, and links to related Web sites.

Who can I contact?

The G/T coordinator at each campus

The Advanced Academics Department @ 713-556-6954 or www.houstonisd.org

Tracye Wear, Director- twear@houstonisd.org

Anne White, Coordinator- awhite8@houstonisd.org

Shelley Bodie, Coordinator- sbodie1@houstonisd.org