

# FACT SHEET: HISD VANGUARD (G/T) PROGRAMS

## BACKGROUND

HISD has offered Vanguard programs, also known as programs for gifted and talented (G/T) students, since 1974. As with other state-required programs, Vanguard (G/T) programs are evaluated annually to determine their effectiveness and analyze students' academic achievement. Following a PEER (Peer Examination, Evaluation, and Redesign) Committee review in the fall of 2005, HISD developed Vanguard (G/T) program standards, and the Board of Education approved them in March 2007. These standards focus on establishing consistency in implementation of Vanguard (G/T) programs district-wide, strengthening the programs' academic rigor, and increasing campus/district accountability for the success of G/T students. The Vanguard (G/T) standards may be viewed at [www.houstonisd.org/portal/site/giftedtalented](http://www.houstonisd.org/portal/site/giftedtalented)

## SCHOOLS & STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Every HISD school offers a Vanguard program for G/T students. There are two types of program designs: Vanguard Neighborhood and Vanguard Magnet. Vanguard Neighborhood schools offer G/T services to students who live in the neighborhood, also known as zoned students, and to any nonzoned students who transfer for programs other than G/T; Vanguard Magnet schools provide G/T services to their zoned students and students on a Vanguard (G/T) Magnet transfer. There are 20 Vanguard Magnet schools in the district. Currently, HISD has 26,300 G/T students, which is 14.6 percent of the district's total enrollment. Grade-level, ethnicity, and five-year growth data is available upon request through the Advanced Academics Department.

## PROGRAM GOALS/FEATURES

HISD Vanguard (G/T) programs are designed for students who perform at, or show the potential for performing at, a high level of accomplishment compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment. These students require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. All HISD Vanguard programs share these characteristics:

- Vanguard programs use the same G/T identification criteria.

- Vanguard programs have a G/T admission committee.

- Vanguard programs implement the HISD G/T curriculum framework K–12, which provides for differentiation through increased depth and complexity, higher-level thinking skills, and

- developing independent research skills focusing on advanced-level products.

- G/T students receive daily G/T instruction from a specially trained G/T teacher in four core

- content areas in grades K–8 and in at least two advanced-level courses in grades 9–12.

- Vanguard programs deliver their instruction in a self-contained classroom setting, either in

- homogeneous or heterogeneous group settings, depending on the total number of identified G/T students.

- Vanguard programs mix zoned and non-zoned G/T students for program services.

- Vanguard programs actively encourage parent and community involvement.

## STATUTE/LAW/POLICY

The Texas Education Code, section 29.121, requires all schools to provide G/T services for eligible students. School districts are charged with establishing their own criteria for identifying G/T students, but must measure giftedness with both qualitative and quantitative measures.

## **TESTING FOR G/T ELIGIBILITY**

G/T identification is required for participation in all Vanguard programs, whether it is at a Vanguard Neighborhood (zoned) school or in a Vanguard Magnet school. In HISD, students can apply for identification as G/T as early as age 4, prior to entering kindergarten. All students who are identified as G/T in the elementary grades maintain their eligibility through the end of fifth grade, but they must re-qualify prior to entering sixth grade. No further re-qualification is needed thereafter. There are a variety of ways in which students are nominated for G/T eligibility. A student in any grade can be tested based on teacher recommendation, parent application and/or the student nominating his/her self. Additionally, there are testing times when ALL HISD students in kindergarten or fifth grade are assessed to ensure program access to all.

The tests to be used for testing starting in November 2008 are:

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

## **APPLICATION PROCESS/TIMELINE**

Students in all grades (or those new to the district) can apply for Vanguard 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 by calling 713-556-6954 or visiting [www.houstonisd.org/portal/site/giftedtalented](http://www.houstonisd.org/portal/site/giftedtalented)

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

Parents submit the application form to their Neighborhood (zoned) school. G/T testing is scheduled if needed. Testing is conducted during the district established testing windows.

Students applying for acceptance to a Vanguard Magnet school can apply using the Vanguard Magnet application and following the Magnet timelines. Unlike the standard Magnet application, only one Vanguard Magnet application can be submitted, indicating only 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 in a lottery.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

Identification as G/T is determined by points obtained on various criteria: achievement test, abilities test, grades, teacher recommendation, obstacles, and (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](http://www.houstonisd.org/portal/site/giftedtalented)

## **WEB SITE**

The Advanced Academics Department Web site, [www.houstonisd.org/portal/site/giftedtalented](http://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.

## **CONTACTS**

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