



Austin ISD  
Gifted & Talented Services  
Parent/Caregiver Handbook

Updated: 01/30/2026

This document is provided as a linear overview of the Gifted & Talented services provided by Austin ISD, and is in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794d), as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220), August 7, 1998, a federal law mandating that all electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained, or used to be accessible to people with disabilities. All of the content is available online at [www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics](http://www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics). Updates to this document are made annually. Updates to the online content is made in real-time.

Developed in compliance with TSP 1.10: Develop a comprehensive manual or program guide describing all gifted/ talented programs, services, assessments, and communication, which is accessible to parents, community and students and includes district GT contact information.

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# General Information

# Gifted & Talented Contacts

## Campus Support for Gifted & Talented:

### Classroom Teachers:

- Classroom teachers are the first point of contact for questions regarding services and supports for your child.
- When appropriate, classroom teachers are responsible for providing differentiation through enrichment and extension activities, projects, flexible pacing, and flexible grouping.

### Campus GT Advocates:

- Principals at each campus designate at least one GT Advocate who acts as a liaison between the campus and district.
- The GT Advocate helps to communicate with families about GT testing, services, events, and updates.
- They support campus GT accountability in a number of ways. They are the second point of contact if families have GT-related questions.
- Campus GT Advocates are also the first point of contact if a parent/caregiver has questions about appealing a GT identification decision (p. 12) or for furloughing or exiting from GT services (p. 13).
- **To find your Campus GT Advocate, please visit: [www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/contact](http://www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/contact)**

**Campus Counselor/Principal:** After reaching out to the campus GT Advocate(s), it may be appropriate to reach out to a campus counselor or administrator for questions. Note: The Counselor/Principal may *be* the GT Advocate.

## District Support for Gifted & Talented:

### Advanced Academics Department

- [advancedacademics@austinisd.org](mailto:advancedacademics@austinisd.org)

### Advanced Academics Coordinator, K-12 Gifted & Talented

Blake Haygood

- [blake.haygood@austinisd.org](mailto:blake.haygood@austinisd.org)
- 512-414-1700, x57958

### Advanced Academics Administrative Assistant

Viviana Alvarado

- [viviana.alvarado2@austinisd.org](mailto:viviana.alvarado2@austinisd.org)
- 512-414-9986

### Director of Advanced Academics

Dr. Elizabeth Severance

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- 512-414-9607

## District Gifted & Talented Philosophy

Every student has the right to optimal development. We recognize the unique needs and potential of each individual student--understanding that giftedness is a spectrum that can be compounded by other learning needs. We are committed to providing a continuum of enriching and challenging learning experiences for gifted students. We will foster the development of advanced-level products and performances, cultivate self-directed learning, and nurture essential skills such as effective communication, critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and interpersonal awareness. By providing differentiated instruction (modifying the content, process, product and learning environment) and targeted skill development, we aim to empower gifted learners to fully realize their potential and become self-actualized, contributing members of society, prepared with the knowledge and skills to thrive in college, career, and life.

## District Mission and Goals for Gifted & Talented Students

It is the mission of Austin ISD's Gifted and Talented Program to implement best practices by which we identify, teach, support and nurture gifted and talented students to be lifelong scholars, critical thinkers, innovators, leaders, and global contributors.

- Goal 1:** Establish an accessible and effective identification process for gifted & talented students.
- Goal 2:** Increase professional learning, resources, and supports for educators to support gifted and high-ability learners districtwide.
- Goal 3:** Increase and vary enrichment resources and opportunities for gifted & talented students.
- Goal 4:** Engage and provide parents, caregivers, and the community with the tools and resources they need to gain knowledge and support gifted & talented students.

## State Goal for Gifted Students

“Students who participate in services designed for gifted 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 participated in services for gifted students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.”

From: The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, revised September 2024, Texas Education Agency (TEA)

## Gifted & Talented Definitions

### The Texas Education Agency defines Gifted & Talented as follows

“§29.121. Definition. In this subchapter, ‘Gifted & Talented students’ means 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, creative, or artistic area;
- (2) possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or
- (3) excels in a specific academic field.”

### Twice-Exceptional (2E)

A student is considered ‘Twice-Exceptional,’ or ‘2E,’ if they meet the above definition of Gifted & Talented, and “also gives evidence of one or more disabilities as defined by federal or state eligibility criteria” (IDEA, 2004) (300.8) (Section 504) such as:

- learning disabilities;
- speech and language disorders;
- emotional/behavioral disorders;
- physical disabilities;
- traumatic brain injury;
- autism spectrum disorder; or
- other health impairments such as ADHD.”

## Talent Explore

Talent Explore (TE) is a unique-to-Austin ISD talent development program. The TE program was designed to support students who have demonstrated higher than average ability in one or more content areas, but who did not demonstrate a strong enough need to qualify for GT services. Some students may be identified to participate in both GT and TE services.

The goal of Talent Explore is to continue to grow students in their area(s) of strength to potentially test again for GT services.

Talent Explore is unique to Austin ISD, while GT services are required by the TEA and must meet strict accountability measures. Campuses should support students identified for GT services and the Talent Explore Program the same way, and to the extent that is appropriate for each individual child.

**Throughout this Parent/Caregiver Handbook, any references to services or supports for GT students should also apply to students in Talent Explore.**

# Identification & Assessment

# Identification & Assessment Process in Austin ISD

## Referrals

All campuses in Austin ISD offer GT testing in grades K-12 based on referrals submitted during the Fall GT Referral Window. A parent, caregiver, relative, community member, teacher, counselor, administrator--*anyone* can submit a referral for *any* student. The Referral Window opens when school starts and goes through the beginning of October. Submitting a referral starts the Identification and Assessment Process for any K-12 student.

The district will share information, and campuses are expected to share the link to a referral form in the Fall. When a referral is submitted for a child, their parent or caregiver will be prompted to complete a Parent/Caregiver GT Observation Form.

Referrals are received by the campus GT Advocate, who supports GT assessment and communication at the campus level. For questions about the GT identification process or services at your campus, please reach out to your Campus GT Advocate.

## 2nd Grade GT Screener

Starting in the Fall of 2023, Austin ISD began screening *all* 2nd graders for high-ability needs, using a nonverbal, language and culturally neutral, ability test. This means students do not have to depend solely on a referral to be assessed for their abilities. Students who are already identified as GT are also screened (1) To provide updated information about the students' strengths, and (2) Support accurate norming of scores. *The screener will not impact GT students' prior identification.*

Once the screening has occurred, scores are normalized by percentile at the campus level (local norming). Parents/caregivers are then notified if their child will participate in further testing. Screening students in this way ensures that all students have an opportunity to access testing that can lead to appropriate supports.

## Data Collected to Make Placement Decisions

The TEA requires that districts use at least three measures to identify students for GT services. At least one of the three must be quantitative, like a paper-pencil test. At least one of the three must be qualitative, like an observation, a portfolio, or a student work sample. For the identification process, a Campus GT Committee will use the following:

- An ability test (Quantitative)
- Teacher Observation(s) (Qualitative)
- Parent/Caregiver Observations (Qualitative)
- Other optional data, including NWEA MAP scores, student work samples, projects, etc.

## Identification & Assessment Process in Austin ISD (Continued)

### Campus GT Committee

Once all of the data is collected, a GT Committee will meet to make placement decisions.

- The GT Committee will have an odd number of members: 3, 5, or 7 educators.
- A Campus GT Advocate will lead the Committee.
- There must be at least one teacher and one administrator or counselor.
- All members must be up to date with their required GT training (19 TAC §89.2).

At the Elementary level, the district recommends having at least one primary (grades K-2) teacher and one intermediate (grades 3-5) teacher on the Committee.

At the Secondary level, the district recommends having at least one Humanities teacher and one STEM teacher on the Committee.

### Areas of Identification

In Austin ISD, students can qualify for GT, TE, or both. For GT services and the TE program, students can be identified in one or more of the four core subjects. For example, a student can be identified for GT services in Mathematics and TE in Science, but they **cannot** be identified as both GT **and** TE in Mathematics. The GT identifier would overwrite the TE identifier in that case.

GT or TE Humanities: Students identified in Reading Language Arts and/or Social Studies areas.

GT or TE STEM: Students identified in Math and/or Science areas.

### Considerations from the Texas State Plan for GT Students

The TEA requires the following:

- 2.17 - Data collected from multiple sources for each area of giftedness served by the district are included in the assessment process for GT services (19 TAC §89.1(2)). The assessment process allows for student exceptionalities to the extent possible.
- 2.24 - Access to assessment for identification and, if needed, GT services is available to all populations of the district (19 TAC §89.1(3)).
- 2.25 - The population of the GT services program is closely reflective of the population of the total district and/or campus.

# Interdistrict and Out-of-District Transfer of GT Services

## Interdistrict GT Transfers

- Austin ISD students identified as GT or Talent Explore will continue to receive these supports if they change schools within the district.
- Interdistrict GT Transfers are automatic. No additional documentation or action is needed.

## Returning to Austin ISD after leaving the district

- The parent/caregiver must contact the front office of the school to request the contact information for the campus GT Advocate to have the student reinstated by the district: [www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/contact](http://www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/contact).
- After confirming that the student had previously received services in Austin ISD, services are reinstated and the campus and family is informed of the decision.
- Additional documentation may be required by the district before a decision can be made.

## Out-of-District Transfer of GT Identification

- Students must be enrolled in Austin ISD.
- This process is only available to students who were identified as and received services for GT in a school district outside of Austin ISD.
- A Parent/Caregiver will complete the Out-of-District Transfer Review Form: [www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/gifted/transfers](http://www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/gifted/transfers).
- The district will request the required student records that document previous GT identification before the review can begin.
- The student's GT placement decision will be sent to the parent/caregiver and campus GT Advocate via email after the review of student records is completed.
- The GT Transfer Request and potential identification has no bearing on campus placement, as all AISD campuses offer GT services.

## Appealing GT Placement Decisions

Austin ISD encourages students and parents/caregivers to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the campus GT Advocate, Principal, and/or Campus GT Committee. For a timely resolution, please share any concerns as quickly as possible. Most concerns can be resolved without the completion of a Level 1 Appeal.

### Informal Process

Please reach out to the campus GT Advocate ([www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/contact](http://www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/contact)) with the concern and a proposed solution. Be as detailed as possible. The Campus GT Advocate will counsel with the Principal and/or the Campus GT Committee to try to resolve your concern. Potential concerns may include:

1. Your child is receiving 504 or Special Education services and you are concerned their modifications or accommodations were not met during the identification process.
2. Your child is receiving Emergent Bilingual supports and was tested in a language that is not their home language.
3. Your child was in the 9th stanine (96th percentile or higher) on their ability test, but they did not qualify for Talent Explore or GT.
4. Your child was ill or experiencing distress during testing and/or during a large part of the identification process.

### Formal Process

After working with your campus GT Advocate, if you still feel your concern is unresolved, the next step is to file a formal appeal (Level 1 Grievance). Before submitting a formal appeal, please see Appendix C and D in this Handbook to review FNG--Student Rights and Responsibilities: Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances ([or read it online](#)). A formal appeal is considered a Level 1 Grievance. A Grievance must be submitted within 30 school days of a placement decision. All Grievances must be sent to [grievances@austinisd.org](mailto:grievances@austinisd.org). The Grievance Form for parents/caregivers can be found on the district website.

The principal, GT Advocate, and GT Committee will review the Grievance. They have ten school days to hold a formal hearing with the parent/caregiver to listen to the formal complaint. Within ten days of the parent/caregiver meeting, the campus will make a decision and notify the parent/caregiver of the decision in writing. If the campus does not agree with the parent/caregiver Level 1 Grievance, they will include a Level 2 Grievance Form with the letter. The parent/caregiver has twenty school days to submit the Level 2 Grievance to the Advanced Academics Department: [advancedacademics@austinisd.org](mailto:advancedacademics@austinisd.org).

# Furlough and Exit from Services

Identified GT students and/or their parent/caregiver may furlough services and/or request an exit from GT services. See Appendix B: Special Programs in this Parent H to review policy on Exit Provisions ([or read it online](#)).

## Furloughs

A furlough is a temporary pause of GT services. Furloughs from GT services are intended to help students who need a temporary break from GT supports, not to remove non-performing students.

## Furlough Process

- Initiated by the District, a parent/caregiver, or the student
- Request a Temporary Furlough from GT Services/Exit from Services Form from the campus GT Advocate to start the process
- A student can furlough from one or more GT-identified areas
- A furlough cannot be shorter than one grading period or longer than one school year
- After one school year, GT services are reinstated unless the student exits services
- Continued denial of services by a parent/caregiver or student will result in an exit.

## Denial of Services/Exit

A GT Exit is a permanent removal of GT services. This process is as follows:

- Request a Temporary Furlough from GT Services/Exit from Services Form from the campus GT Advocate to start the process
- Parents of elementary students can refuse GT services that will result from student placement in a clustered classroom
- Parents of secondary students can refuse GT services that will result from enrollment in advanced academics courses (Advanced, AP, Accelerated, Magnet, IB, Dual Credit, Early College, or approved CTE course) in their identified area(s) of giftedness
- Parents and/or students can request to be exited from the GT program--it is always better to start with a Furlough
- Documentation of denial of GT services and/or exit from the GT program will be required and forwarded to the district GT Coordinator
- Exited students who wish to renew GT services will need to participate in the full GT screening, assessment and identification process at the school.

# Service Design

# Gifted & Talented Service Design in Austin ISD

## Elementary GT Service Model (Grades K-5/6)

Elementary GT services include:

- Instruction by a teacher who has maintained their required GT professional development
- A cluster grouping model (group of at least 4 identified GT students within the general education classroom)
- Opportunities for curricular tasks that include greater depth, complexity, and pacing while working independently, with other GT students, and with students not identified
- Access to curriculum resources in the four core areas (Reading/Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, and Science) that include choice, extension and enrichment activities, and projects in areas of interest or passion.
- Parents/caretakers of identified GT students at the elementary level will receive either a GT Student Services Summary each semester completed by the teacher or another form of documentation of the academic options provided
- Elementary GT students have the opportunity to participate in a campus or district GT Showcase in the spring of each school year.

## Secondary GT Service Model (Grades 6-12)

Secondary GT services include instruction by a teacher with the appropriate GT Foundations training and annual required specialized training in the following options:

- Advanced Courses
- Advanced Placement (AP)
- Magnet (requires admission to a magnet campus)
- International Baccalaureate (requires admission to an IB campus)
- Dual Credit (requires a passing TSI score)
- UT OnRamps (requires a passing TSI score)
- Advanced-level CTE courses

These courses and programs provide GT students with opportunities to concentrate on areas of strength or interest with the expectation that they take at least one course in the GT interdisciplinary strands of STEM and/or Humanities for which they are identified each school year. Academic options provided may vary by campus based on campus decisions.

# Other Supports for Gifted Learners in Austin ISD

## Campus Supports for Gifted Learners

Beyond the foundational district services listed above, each campus offers its own systems of supports for gifted learners and all learners. These supports may include:

- Academic Acceleration
- Clubs & Organizations
- Competitions (like UIL and A+ Academics at the elementary level )
- Mentoring
- Multiage Classrooms
- AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination): teaches college-readiness strategies and supports executive functioning skills
- CLI (Creative Learning Initiative): embeds the arts and creative learning across core curriculum subjects, during and outside the school day.

Learn more at [www.austinisd.org/programs](http://www.austinisd.org/programs).

## GT Classroom Services Reports (K-5/6)

- Elementary GT teachers will share a copy of the Austin ISD Classroom GT Services Report with parents/caregivers each semester to highlight the GT activities gifted students completed in the classroom.
- Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's progress in the classroom with teachers during parent conferences during the fall and spring semesters.
- These reports are required for GT students and optional for TE students.

## District GT Student Showcase (K-12)

- In the spring semester, GT and TE students will have the opportunity to submit a student project for consideration in the Austin ISD GT Student Showcase.
- The goal is to highlight exemplary work that GT and TE students are completing at school each school year.
- All student projects will be showcased in a digital format on the Austin ISD website.
- It is a district expectation for GT students to be given the opportunity to take part in a campus or district showcase as part of GT services.
- The school will share details, including deadlines, project requirements, and submission guidelines with families.
- Student presentations will be published on the district webpage: [www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/gifted/virtual-student-showcase](http://www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/gifted/virtual-student-showcase).

# Academic Acceleration

## What is Acceleration?

Academic acceleration is an educational intervention that allows a student to access higher-level content at a younger than typical age or to move through the curriculum at a faster than usual rate. There are 20 different types of acceleration that can help an advanced student move closer to their level of academic and intellectual ability (source: [www.accelerationinstitute.org](http://www.accelerationinstitute.org)).

## Acceleration in the Texas State Plan for GT

- Acceleration is a recommended service option for gifted students, and especially for highly to profoundly gifted learners with with more extreme abilities and needs.
- Districts must provide “opportunities to accelerate in areas of strength.”
- Districts should develop a process for identifying GT students as candidates for single-subject acceleration in grades K-5 and facilitating acceleration in “areas of strength” (source: Guidance for Interpreting the Expectations of the Texas State Plan for the Education of GT Students).

## Who Might Benefit from Acceleration?

Not all GT students will benefit from acceleration, and acceleration is not only for GT students. When appropriate, grade skipping is one option for students with advanced learning needs. For more information, visit: [www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/gifted/acceleration](http://www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/gifted/acceleration).

## Types of Acceleration in Austin ISD

In Austin ISD, we offer the following forms of acceleration:

- Advanced courses like Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), OnRamps, Dual Credit, and Dual Enrollment that expose students to college-level content and rigor.
- Credit-By-Exam for Content-Area or Whole Grade Level Acceleration (Grade-Skipping)
- In-class differentiation from teachers may also involve forms of acceleration such as:
  - Exposing students to content closer to their level of ability and mastery
  - Exposure to more advanced or abstract processes than their peers
  - Advanced product, presentation, or performance expectations as a result of projects.

## Academic Acceleration (Continued)

### Austin ISD Credit-By-Examination Process

- If you feel grade-level acceleration may be a good fit for your child, please request information about Credit-by-Exams (CBEs) from your campus administration as early as possible.
- The principal will reach out to the Assessment Specialist in [Systemwide Testing](#) for next steps.
- Testing takes place at specific times throughout the year, according to the [District Testing Calendar](#).
- Students test in the four core areas for the grade they are attempting to skip. For example, a student skipping from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade would take the 4th grade Math, Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts CBEs. Those tests would involve the state standards for those content areas in grade 4.
- Study guides for the exams may be found here: [University of Texas Credit-By-Exams Study Guides](#).
- Students must score at least an 80% on *each* of the four CBEs to qualify for grade acceleration.

For more information, please contact [Systemwide Testing](#) at [www.austinisd.org/accountability/systemwide-testing](http://www.austinisd.org/accountability/systemwide-testing).

## Affective Needs of Gifted Learners

Every Austin ISD teacher, counselor, and administrator who works with gifted learners or who is responsible for service decisions maintains required GT professional development that include the affective needs of gifted learners.

Because GT students often have a mismatch between their intellectual, emotional, social, and physical development, they may encounter common behavioral and psychological struggles at an earlier age than their peers. This is called “asynchronous development,” and it can be compounded even more by emotional intensity. Some vulnerabilities include:

- Trouble with organization, processing speed, motivation, prioritization and other executive functioning issues
- Social struggles including regulating emotions and behaviors, connecting with age-peers, finding shared interests, feelings of isolation
- Issues with perfectionism, self-concept, self-doubt, self-esteem, and existential questions
- Challenges from intellectual, emotional, sensory, imaginal, or psychomotor intensities
- Expectations from others may lead to stress, anxiety, demotivation, boredom, and more

Gifted learners may also have:

- Learning differences like dyslexia or ADHD
- Disabilities requiring Special Education services
- Language barriers
- Socio-economic barriers
- Cultural differences

The above differences can further complicate how an individual gifted learner’s affective needs present themselves and may add nuance to what services or supports are most appropriate.

The TEA requires that:

- Districts “develop and implement services to address the social and emotional needs of GT students and their impact on student learning” ([TSP 3.11](#)).
- Admin, counselors, and anyone making GT placement decisions must have “training in the nature and needs of gifted/talented students” ([TSP 5.8](#) and [5.9](#)).

# GT-Approved Advanced Courses for Secondary Scheduling

## Expectations for GT and Talent Explore Students

Students can be identified as GT or TE in Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, and/or Science and are required to enroll in advanced-level courses based on their area(s) of strength.

Advanced-level courses consist of two levels:

1. Core content area courses required for graduation for which the GT/TE students are assigned to a teacher with the appropriate GT training and
2. Elective and enrichment courses that are not required for graduation for which GT/TE students opt into based on their interests taught by teachers with industry credentials.

Middle School			
GT Humanities		GT STEM	
GT students identified for Language Arts and/or Social Studies will enroll in at least one GT Humanities course each school year. When a course is available for unweighted and weighted credit, GT students must be enrolled in the weighted section.		GT students identified for Mathematics and/or Science will enroll in at least one GT STEM course each school year. When a course is available for unweighted and weighted credit, GT students must be enrolled in the weighted section.	
English Language Arts	Social Studies	Mathematics	Science
Advanced ELAR 6 Advanced ELAR 7 Advanced ELAR 8	Advanced World Cultures 6 Advanced Texas History 7 Advanced U.S. History 8	Accelerated Mathematics 6 Accelerated Mathematics 7  Algebra I, Advanced Algebra I, Advanced Algebra I Geometry, Advanced Geometry, Advanced Geometry Algebra II, Advanced Algebra II, Advanced Algebra II	Advanced Science 6 Advanced Science 7 Advanced Science 8
Any ELA magnet, IB, or GT	Any SS magnet, IB, or GT	Any Math magnet, IB, or GT	Any Science magnet, IB, or GT
Any ELA HS course taken in MS	Any SS HS course taken in MS	Any Math HS course taken in MS	Any Science HS course taken in MS
Dual Language Spanish for high school credit or AP Spanish Language & Culture			

The document can be accessed online at <https://bit.ly/GTAdvancedCourseOptions>

Updated: 04/17/2024

# GT-Approved Advanced Courses for Secondary Scheduling (Continued)

High School			
GT Humanities		GT STEM	
GT students identified for Language Arts and/or Social Studies will enroll in at least one GT Humanities course each school year. When a course is available for unweighted and weighted credit, GT students must be enrolled in the weighted section.		GT students identified for Mathematics and/or Science will enroll in at least one GT STEM course each school year. When a course is available for unweighted and weighted credit, GT students must be enrolled in the weighted section.	
English Language Arts	Social Studies	Mathematics	Science
Advanced English I Advanced English II  AP English Language & Composition AP English Literature & Composition  AP Seminar AP Research	Advanced World Geography Advanced World History  AP World History AP U.S. History AP US Government AP Comp. Government AP Macroeconomics AP Microeconomics AP Human Geography AP Psychology AP African American Studies  AP Seminar AP Research	Advanced Algebra I Advanced Geometry Advanced Algebra II AP Precalculus  AP Calculus AB AP Calculus BC AP Statistics	Advanced Biology Advanced Chemistry Advanced Physics  AP Biology AP Chemistry AP Physics 1 AP Physics 2 AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism AP Physics C: Mechanics AP Environmental Science
Creative Writing Research and Technical Writing Oral Interpretation I-III Public Speaking I-III Advanced Broadcast Journalism Advanced Journalism: Literary Magazine I-III Newspaper I-III Yearbook I-III	Social Studies: Advanced Studies Social Studies Research Methods	AP Computer Science Principles AP Computer Science A Introduction to Engineering Design Computer Integrated Manufacturing Digital Electronics Computer Science Essentials Cybersecurity	Aerospace Engineering Civil Engineering Architecture Environmental Sustainability Principles of Biomedical Science Human Body Systems Medical Interventions Modern Physics Organic Chemistry Scientific Research and Design
The following courses can be taken for <u>no more than 2 credits total</u> : Independent Study English Speech Journalism	The following courses can be taken for <u>no more than 2 credits total</u> : Special Topics Contemporary Issues A Constitutional Law A World Belief Systems A Ethnic Studies	Discrete Mathematics for Computer Science Independent Study in Technology Applications Advanced Quantitative Reasoning Multivariable Calculus Number Theory Independent Study in Evolving/ Emerging Technologies	Advanced Plant and Soil Science Advanced Biotechnology Medical Microbiology Anatomy and Physiology Pathophysiology Principles of Engineering Engineering Design and Problem Solving
Humanities AP Art History	Humanities AP Art History	AP Music Theory	AP Music Theory
GT Independent Study Mentorship	GT Independent Study Mentorship	GT Independent Study Mentorship	GT Independent Study Mentorship
Any ELA Dual Credit or OnRamps	Any SS Dual Credit or OnRamps	Any Math Dual Credit or OnRamps	Any Science Dual Credit or OnRamps
Select Advanced-Level CTE Courses aligned with area of identification			

The document can be accessed online at <https://bit.ly/GTAdvancedCourseOptions>

Updated: 11/06/2025

# Appendices

# Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions

## GT Identification

- **What are the benefits of GT Identification?**

GT identification ensures that students' unique learning needs are met as teachers adjust classroom content, pacing, grouping, and instruction for GT students. Teachers receive special training on the needs of GT students, including how to modify lessons and support unique social-emotional needs.

- **What specific assessments are used in the GT Identification process?**

Kindergarten and first grade students take the NNAT3 and beginning-of-year MAP scores are reviewed. Second through twelfth grade students take the CogAT. Prior to testing, the campus shares sample problems with students to familiarize them with the question types and test layout. Learn more at: [www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/gifted/screening](http://www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/gifted/screening).

- **How can I learn more about these assessments and how my child did?**

To request a copy of your student's score report, please contact the campus GT Advocate: <https://www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/contact>. Score reports includes the final score and narrative-style information but does not list missed questions or specific items.

- **My child has been identified as GT and/or TE. Will they need to retest every year?**

Students do not need to retest every year and GT/TE Identification will remain with the student while enrolled in Austin ISD. Students not already identified as GT in all areas may retest every year.

- **Can a student lose their GT/TE Identification?**

No, GT is a service like Special Education or 504. GT identification is not removed unless the family furloughs or withdraws the student from services. GT/TE students have unique learning, behavioral, and developmental needs that require support through graduation.

## Gifted & Talented (GT) and Talent Explore (TE)

- **What is the difference between GT Services and the Austin ISD Talent Explore (TE) program?**

GT Services serve students who perform or have the potential to perform at a remarkably high level compared to peers. The TE Program is for students who may not currently meet the criteria for GT Services, but show high ability or potential in specific subject areas. TE is unique to Austin ISD, while GT Services are required by the Texas Education Agency. Both identifications provide similar classroom support.

- **Are GT and TE students clustered together?**

GT and TE students are typically clustered together. It is recommended that campuses provide TE students with the same services as GT students. For specific information on how your campus clusters GT and TE students, please contact your campus GT Advocate.

## In the Classroom

- **Are GT students placed with GT-trained teachers?**

GT students will be placed with teachers who have completed annual GT training. If you have any questions about your GT child's classroom experience, contact your Campus GT Advocate and your child's teacher for campus-specific support.

- **Why are elementary students in GT clusters?**

Clustering is the Austin ISD districtwide service for elementary GT students. In this inclusive model, GT students are grouped within their grade and general education class. This model ensures that GT learners have access to support throughout the entire school day.

- **How can I confirm my elementary student is receiving GT Services?**

For classroom-specific questions, please contact your child's teacher, as students may not be aware of how instruction is adapted for their needs. Elementary families will receive a GT Service Report at the end of each semester.

- **Can my student skip a grade?**

Grade skipping is available for all students in Austin ISD. For information on grade acceleration: [www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/gifted/acceleration](http://www.austinisd.org/advanced-academics/gifted/acceleration).

- **How are GT Services provided at the secondary level?**

GT Services are provided through advanced courses at the secondary level, which puts students on a pathway to earn advanced credit. Teachers of GT students modify the depth, complexity, and pacing of lessons. Advanced courses focus on higher-level skills like creating, evaluating, and analyzing concepts, aligning with college readiness and success in AP, OnRamps, and ACC courses.

- **Are there designated GT Middle and/or High Schools?**

All Austin ISD middle and high schools have advanced courses to provide GT services. Campus-specific programs and enrichment opportunities can be found here: [www.austinisd.org/programs](http://www.austinisd.org/programs)

## Ensuring High Quality Services

- **How are GT Services monitored for quality of services?**

Austin ISD is held accountable by the Texas State Plan for GT (<https://bit.ly/GTStatePlanUpdate>), with progress monitoring implemented districtwide. Evaluation support is provided through the Javits Grant, and evaluation reports are published online.

## Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

*The following terms may be found in this Parent H, in the State Plan for GT, and/or in conversations with campus or district personnel. For consistency, we will use the State Plan definitions for these terms.*

Term	Definition
Acceleration	Acceleration is an academic intervention that matches the level, complexity, and pace of the curriculum with the readiness and motivation of the student. It involves mastering knowledge and skills at a rate faster or at an age earlier than the norm.
Area of Student Strength	Specific levels of achievement in the foundation curricular areas to include single subject acceleration in grades K-12.
Cluster Group	<p>To ensure successful delivery of differentiated instruction, modification of curricula (State Plan 4.9), access to the opportunities required in State Plan 3.1 and 3.4, and gifted programming consistent with the State Plan, the Commissioner’s Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted Students provided input on guidelines for defining a group when G/T students are provided services in the regular classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A group is defined as a minimum of four.</li> <li>• To be consistent with the State Plan, a group is composed of gifted students assigned to a classroom where a minimum of 33% or more of the classroom roster is made up of their G/T peers.</li> <li>• Alternatively, if fewer students than 33% of a classroom roster are G/T identified in the campus grade level, to be consistent with the State Plan:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The G/T-identified students in a campus grade level are placed in one group during core subject instruction.</li> <li>◦ An LEA may make alternative grouping assignments with parent permission or when necessary to meet a G/T student’s documented instructional needs. G/T services must be delivered in the alternative grouping assignment unless the furlough or exit process has been completed for the student. The rationale for alternative grouping assignments should be described in LEA certification submitted under TEC §29.124.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Differentiation	Modification of curriculum and instruction according to content, pacing, process, and/or product to meet unique student needs in the classroom.
Exit	The cessation of gifted/talented services. The identification committee will make the final decision. A parent, student, or gifted/talented educator may submit the request.
Flexible Pacing	Flexible pacing is defined as placing students at an appropriate instructional level and allowing them to move forward in the curriculum as they master content and skills. Flexible pacing is achieved by such methods as continuous progress, compacted course, advanced level courses, grade skipping, early entrance, concurrent or dual enrollment, and credit by examination.
Furlough	A leave of absence from program services.

## Glossary of Terms (Continued)

Term	Definition
Gifted	<p>§29.121. Definition: In this subchapter, “gifted and talented students” means 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:</p> <p>(1) exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area;</p> <p>(2) possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or</p> <p>(3) excels in a specific academic field.</p>
Gifted in Specific Academic Fields	<p>Possessing superior ability or potential in a specific course of study such as English language arts/reading, mathematics, science, or social studies.</p>
Gifted/ Talented Services	<p>Services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school that are specifically designed to fully develop the capabilities of students who give evidence of high achievement or capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity.</p>
Highly Gifted	<p>A “highly gifted” student is defined as a student who has:</p> <p>(1) scores at or above the 99th percentile in either the overall score or in a verbal (reading) or quantitative (math) subscore of a nationally normed aptitude or ability test; or (2) academic achievement scores at or above the 99th percentile in one or more subject areas as measured using a nationally normed test.</p>
Independent Study	<p>Self-directed learning strategy where the teacher acts as guide or facilitator, and the student plays a more active role in designing and managing his or her own learning.</p>
Mentor	<p>An individual who shares his or her expertise with a student of similar career or field-of-study aspirations.</p>
Qualitative Measures	<p>Performance indicators that cannot be recorded numerically and that include observations, anecdotal records, checklists, interviews, student products, performances, etc.</p>
Quantitative Measures	<p>Performance indicators that can be expressed in terms of definite numbers or amounts such as scores on achievement tests.</p>
-Exceptional	<p>A “twice-exceptional learner” is 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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area;</li> <li>2. possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or</li> <li>3. excels in a specific academic field (TEC §29.121)</li> </ol> <p>And who also gives evidence of one or more disabilities as defined by federal or state eligibility criteria.</p>

# Appendix C: Austin ISD School Board Policy (Legal)

## Special Programs: Gifted & Talented

Austin ISD 227901  
SPECIAL PROGRAMS  
Gifted & Talented STUDENTS

EHBB  
(LEGAL)

Using criteria established by the State Board of Education, a district shall adopt a process for identifying and serving gifted and talented students in the district and shall establish a program for those students in each grade level. Under this provision, a district may establish a shared services arrangement with other districts.

A district shall adopt a policy regarding the use of funds to support the district's program for gifted and talented students.

### ***Education Code 29.122***

#### **Definition**

“Gifted & Talented student” means 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, creative, or artistic area;
2. Possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or
3. Excels in a specific academic field.

### ***Education Code 29.121***

#### **Identification Policies**

A district shall develop written policies on student identification that are approved by the board and disseminated to parents. The policies must include:

1. Provisions for ongoing screening and selection of students who perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment in the areas defined in Education Code 29.121.
2. Assessment measures collected from multiple sources according to each area defined in the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students.
3. Data and procedures designed to ensure that students from all populations in a district have access to assessment and, if identified, to services provided for the gifted/talented program.
4. Provisions for final selection of students to be made by a committee of at least three local district educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted students.
5. Provisions regarding furloughs, reassessment, exiting of students from program services, transfer students, and appeals of district decisions regarding program placement.

### ***19 TAC 89.1***

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UPDATE 124  
EHBB(LEGAL)-P

**Fiscal Policy**

A district shall adopt a policy regarding the use of funds to support the district's program for gifted and talented students.

The policy must:

1. Ensure that 100 percent of state funds allocated for gifted/talented education are spent on providing gifted/talented services or enhancing the district's gifted and talented program; and
2. Establish a method to account for the expenditure of the gifted and talented allotment in alignment with the Texas Education Agency's financial compliance guidance.

**19 TAC 89.4**

**Program  
Accountability**

A district shall ensure that:

1. Student assessment and services for gifted/talented students comply with accountability standards defined in the Texas State Plan for the Education of the Gifted/Talented (State Plan);
2. Gifted/Talented (State Plan);  
It annually certifies to the commissioner of education that the district's program for gifted/talented students is consistent with the State Plan and that the district's use of funds complies with 19 Administrative Code 89.4 [see Fiscal Policy, above]; and
3. The board annually measures the performance of the district in providing gifted/talented services in alignment with the State Plan.

**19 TAC 89.5**

**Learning  
Opportunities**

A district shall provide an array of learning opportunities for gifted/talented students in kindergarten through grade 12 and shall inform parents of the opportunities. Options shall include:

1. Instructional and organizational patterns that enable identified students to work together as a group, to work with other students, and to work independently.
2. A continuum of learning experiences that leads to the development of advanced-level products and performances.
3. In-school, and when possible, out-of-school options relevant to the student's area of strength that are available during the entire school year.
4. Opportunities to accelerate in areas of strength.

**19 TAC 89.3**

**Note:** See DMA(LEGAL) for training requirements for teachers of Gifted & Talented education.

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# Appendix D: Austin ISD School Board Policy (Local)

## Special Programs: Gifted & Talented

Austin ISD 227901  
SPECIAL PROGRAMS  
Gifted & Talented STUDENTS

EHBB  
(LOCAL)

<b>Referral</b>	Students may be referred for the Gifted & Talented program at any time by teachers, school counselors, parents, or other interested persons.
<b>Screening and Identification Process</b>	<p>The District shall provide assessment opportunities to complete the screening and identification process for referred students at least once per school year.</p> <p>The District shall schedule a Gifted &amp; Talented program awareness session for parents that provides an overview of the identification procedures and services for the program prior to beginning the screening and identification process.</p>
<b>Parental Consent</b>	The District shall obtain written parental consent before any special testing or individual assessment is conducted as part of the screening and identification process. All student information collected during the screening and identification process shall be an educational record, subject to the protections set out in policies at FL.
<b>Identification Criteria</b>	The Board-approved program for the Gifted & Talented shall establish criteria to identify Gifted & Talented students. The criteria shall be specific to the state definition of Gifted & Talented and shall ensure the fair assessment of students with special needs, such as the culturally different, the economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities.
<b>Assessments</b>	Data collected through both objective and subjective assessments shall be measured against the criteria approved by the Board to determine individual eligibility for the program. Assessment tools may include, but are not limited to, the following: achievement tests, intelligence tests, creativity tests, behavioral checklists completed by teachers and parents, student/parent conferences, and available student work products.
<b>Selection</b>	A placement committee shall evaluate each referred student according to the established criteria and shall identify those students for whom placement in the Gifted & Talented program is the most appropriate educational setting. The committee shall be composed of at least three professional educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted students, as required by law.
<b>Notification</b>	The District shall provide written notification to parents of students who qualify for services through the District's Gifted & Talented program. Participation in any program or services provided for gifted students shall be voluntary, and the District shall obtain written permission from the parents before placing a student in a Gifted & Talented program.

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<b>Reassessment</b>	If the District reassesses students in the Gifted & Talented program, the reassessment shall be based on a student's performance in response to services and shall occur no more than once in elementary grades, once in middle school grades, and once in high school grades.
<b>Transfer Students</b>	When a student identified as gifted by a previous school district enrolls in the District, the placement committee shall review the student's records and conduct assessment procedures when necessary to determine if placement in the District's program for Gifted & Talented students is appropriate. [See FDD(LEGAL) for information regarding transfer students and the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children]
Interdistrict	
Intradistrict	A student who transfers from one campus in the District to the same grade level at another District campus shall continue to receive services in the District's Gifted & Talented program.
<b>Furloughs</b>	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 & Talented program. A furlough may be initiated by the District, the parent, or the student.  In accordance with the Board-approved program, a furlough shall be granted for specified reasons and for a specified period of time. At the end of a furlough, the student may reenter the Gifted & Talented program, be placed on another furlough, or be exited from the program.
<b>Exit Provisions</b>	The District shall monitor student performance in response to Gifted & Talented program services. If at any time the placement committee or a parent determines the program is not meeting the student's educational needs, the committee shall meet with the parent and student before finalizing an exit decision. A student not participating in Gifted & Talented services may be furloughed to meet PEIMS reporting.
<b>Appeals</b>	A parent, student, or educator may appeal any final decision of the placement committee regarding services in the Gifted & Talented program. Appeals shall be made first to the placement committee. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with FNG(LOCAL) beginning at Level Two.
<b>Program Evaluation</b>	The District shall annually evaluate the effectiveness of the District's Gifted & Talented program, and the results of the evaluation shall be used to modify and update the District and campus improvement plans. The District shall include parents in the evaluation process and shall share the information with Board members, administrators, teachers, school counselors, students in the Gifted & Talented program, and the community.

**Funding**

The Superintendent shall develop administrative procedures to ensure that 100 percent of the state funds allocated for the gifted and talented program are spent providing and enhancing the District's program and that a method accounting for expenditures related to the gifted and talented program is established and aligns with the Texas Education Agency's financial compliance guidance.

**Community Awareness**

The District shall ensure that information about the District's Gifted & Talented program is available to parents and community members and that they have an opportunity to develop an understanding of and support for the program.

# Appendix E: Austin ISD School Board Policy (Legal)

## Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances (Appeals)

Austin ISD 227901  
 STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
 STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG  
 (LEGAL)

<b>United States Constitution</b>	<p>A district shall take no action abridging the freedom of speech or the right of the people to petition the board for redress of grievances. <i>U.S. Const. Amend. I, XIV</i> [See FNA]</p> <p>A board may confine its meetings to specified subject matter and may hold nonpublic sessions to transact business. But when a board sits in public meetings to conduct public business and hear the views of citizens, it may not discriminate between speakers on the basis of the content of their speech or the message it conveys. <i>Rosenberger v. Rector &amp; Visitors of Univ. of Virginia</i>, 515 U.S. 819, 828 (1995); <i>City of Madison v. Wis. Emp. Rel. Comm'n</i>, 429 U.S. 167, 174 (1976); <i>Pickering v. Bd. of Educ.</i>, 391 U.S. 563, 568 (1968)</p>
<b>Texas Constitution</b>	<p>Citizens shall have the right, in a peaceable manner, to assemble together for their common good and to apply to those invested with the powers of government for redress of grievances or other purposes, by petition, address, or remonstrance. <i>Tex. Const. Art. I, Sec. 27</i></p> <p>There is no requirement that a board negotiate or even respond to complaints. However, a board must stop, look, and listen and must consider the petition, address, or remonstrance. <i>Prof'l Ass'n of College Educators v. El Paso County Cmty. [College] Dist.</i>, 678 S.W.2d 94 (Tex. App.—El Paso 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.)</p>
<b>Federal Laws</b> Section 504	<p>A district that receives federal financial assistance, directly or indirectly, and that employs 15 or more persons shall adopt grievance procedures that incorporate appropriate due process standards and that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. <i>34 C.F.R. 104.7(b)</i></p>
Americans with Disabilities Act	<p>A district that employs 50 or more persons shall adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 28, Part 35 (Americans with Disabilities Act regulations). <i>28 C.F.R. 35.107</i></p>
Title IX	<p>A district that receives federal financial assistance, directly or indirectly, must adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of student complaints alleging any action prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. <i>34 C.F.R. 106.8(c)</i> [See FB and FFH]</p>

**Grievances** A board shall provide for procedures to consider complaints that a parent’s right has been denied. *Education Code 26.001(d)*

A board shall adopt a grievance procedure that complies with Education Code Chapter 26A under which the board shall address each grievance that it receives concerning a violation of a right guaranteed by Education Code 26 (Parental Rights), of a board policy, or of a provision of Education Code Title II.

**Exceptions** The board is not required by the provision above or Education Code 11.1511(b)(13) (requiring adoption of a process to hear complaints) to address a complaint concerning a student’s participation in an extracurricular activity that does not involve a violation of a right guaranteed by Education Code Chapter 26, of a board policy, or of a provision of Education Code Title II. This provision does not affect a claim brought by a parent under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Section 1400 et seq.) or a successor federal statute addressing special education services for a child with a disability.

**Notice to Teacher or Employee** The grievance procedure must require that, for a complaint filed against a teacher or other employee, the school district provide notice of the complaint to the teacher or employee against whom the complaint was filed and sufficient opportunity for the teacher or employee against whom the complaint was filed to submit a written response to the complaint to be included in the record.

*Education Code 26.011*

**Grievance Policy** The board shall adopt a grievance policy to address grievances received by the district. *Education Code 26A.001(a)*

*Levels of Review* The policy must provide for the following levels of review, except as provided below:

1. Review by the principal of the district campus at which the grievance is filed or the principal’s designee or, for a grievance that arises from subject matter unrelated to the campus, an administrator at the school district’s central office;
2. If established by the policy, an appeal to an administrator at the school district’s central office;
3. An appeal to the superintendent of the school district or the superintendent’s designee; and
4. An appeal to the board of trustees of the school district.

A review or appeal on a grievance must be conducted by a person with the authority to address the grievance unless a preliminary hearing is necessary to develop a record or a recommendation for the board of trustees of the school district.

*General  
Requirements*

The policy must:

1. Prohibit the board or a district employee from retaliating against a student or parent of a student who files a grievance in accordance with the policy;
2. Require a person involved in reviewing a grievance under the policy to recuse himself or herself from reviewing the grievance if the person is the subject of the grievance;
3. Provide for a higher level of review if the person who would otherwise review the grievance is required to recuse himself or herself;
4. Provide for the creation and retention of a record of each hearing on the grievance, including documents submitted by the person who filed the grievance or determined relevant by school district personnel and a written record of the decision, including an explanation of the basis for the decision and an indication of each document that supports the decision;
5. Allow the person who filed the grievance to supplement the record with additional documents or add additional claims;
6. Allow for a member of the board to file a grievance with the district, but prohibit the member from voting on matters related to that grievance;
7. Allow for a remand to a lower level of review to develop a record at any time, including at the board level of review;
8. Require the district to direct a grievance that is filed with the incorrect administrator to the appropriate administrator and consider the grievance filed on the date on which the grievance was initially filed;
9. Require the district to issue a decision on the merits of the concern raised in the grievance, notwithstanding procedural errors or the type of relief requested;
10. Unless otherwise required by law, allow for a hearing or meeting at which the grievance will be discussed to be open or closed at the request of the person who filed the grievance; and
11. For a grievance before the board, require that the person who filed the grievance be provided at least 5 business days before the date on which the meeting to discuss the grievance will be held a description of any information the board of trustees intends to rely on that is not contained in the record; and
12. For a grievance before the board, require the meeting at which the grievance is discussed be recorded by video or audio recording or by transcript created by a certified court reporter.

*Education Code 26A.001(e)*

**Deadlines**

*Parental  
Grievances*

For a grievance filed by a parent of a student enrolled in the school district, the policy must provide:

1. Sixty days to file a grievance from the date on which the parent knew or had reason to know of the facts giving rise to the grievance; or
2. If the parent or person engaged in informal attempts to resolve the grievance, the later of 90 days to file a grievance from the date determined above or 30 days to file a grievance from the date on which the district provided information to the parent or person regarding how to file the grievance.

<b>Appeal</b>	The policy must provide at least 20 days to file an appeal after the date on which a decision on the grievance was made.
<b>Hearings</b>	<p>For a hearing that is not before the board of trustees of the school district, the policy must require:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The district to hold a hearing not later than the 10th day after the date on which the grievance or appeal was filed; and</li><li>2. A written decision to be made not later than the 20th day after the date on which the hearing was held that includes any relief or redress to be provided and information regarding filing an appeal, including the timeline to appeal under this provision and Education Code 7.057, if applicable.</li></ol> <p>For a hearing before the board, the policy must require the board to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Hold a meeting to discuss the grievance not later than the 60th day after the date on which the previous decision on the grievance was made; and</li><li>2. Make a decision on the grievance not later than the 30th day after the date on which the meeting is held.</li></ol> <p><i>Education Code 26A.002</i></p>
<b>Board Committee</b>	<p>The board may delegate the authority to hear and decide a grievance to a committee of at least three members composed only of members of the board. For purposes of an appeal to the commissioner under Education Code 7.057, a decision by the committee is a decision of the board of trustees. The policy requirements above apply to the committee in the same manner as those requirements apply to the board. <i>Education Code 29A.001(e)</i></p> <p>A district shall annually submit to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) a report on grievances filed in the district during the preceding year. The report must include for each grievance the resolution of the grievance and any corrective action taken. <i>Education Code 26A.001(g)</i></p> <p>Not later than December 1 of each year, TEA shall post on the agency's website a report on grievances filed in school districts during the preceding year. The report must aggregate the data statewide and state the number of grievances filed, the number of grievances resolved and the resolution of those grievances, and any corrective actions taken. <i>Education Code 26A.001(h)</i></p>
<b>Filing Procedures and Forms</b>	The board shall develop, make publicly available in a prominent location on the district's website, and include in the district's student handbook the procedures for resolving grievances; standardized forms for filing a grievance, a notice of appeal, or a request for a hearing under this chapter; and the method by which a grievance may be filed electronically.
<i>Electronic Filing</i>	A district shall ensure that a grievance may be submitted electronically at the location on the district's website at which the information described above is available.

<i>TEA Notification</i>	A district shall submit and make accessible to TEA the location on the district's website at which the information described is available.  <i>Education Code 26A.003</i>
<b>Commissioner Enforcement</b>	If a grievance is appealed to the commissioner under Education Code 7.057, the commissioner of education may:
<i>On Appeal</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investigate an alleged violation of state or federal law regarding the confidentiality of student information, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. Section 1232g), relating to the grievance and collaborate with relevant federal agencies in such an investigation; and</li> <li>2. Make a decision on the grievance not later than the 30th day after the date on which the meeting is held.</li> </ol> <p><i>Education Code 26A.001(f)</i></p>
<i>Determination of Retaliation</i>	If the commissioner determines that a school district educator has retaliated against a student or parent of or person standing in parental relation to a student in violation of the policy requirement, above, the commissioner of education may report the educator to the State Board for Educator Certification for investigation. <i>Education Code 26A.001(i)</i>
<i>Superintendent Testimony</i>	If the commissioner of education finds against a school district under Education Code 7.057 in at least five grievances to which that provision applies involving the district during a school year, the superintendent of the school district must appear before the State Board of Education to testify regarding the commissioner's findings and the frequency of grievances against the district. <i>Education Code 26A.004</i>
<b>Denial of Class Credit or Final Grade</b>	If a student is denied credit or a final grade for a class by an attendance committee, the student may appeal the decision to the board. <i>Education Code 25.092(d) [See FEC]</i>
<b>Complaints Against Professional Employees</b>	A person may not file suit against a professional employee of a district unless the person has exhausted the district's remedies for resolving the complaint. Education Code 22.0514
<i>Electronic Filing</i>	<p>"Professional employee of a district" includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A superintendent, principal, teacher, including a substitute teacher, supervisor, social worker, school counselor, nurse, and teacher's aide employed by a district;</li> <li>2. A teacher employed by a company that contracts with a district to provide the teacher's services to the district;</li> <li>3. A student in an education preparation program participating in a field experience or internship;</li> <li>4. A DPS-certified school bus driver;</li> <li>5. A member of the board; and</li> <li>6. Any other person whose employment by a district requires certification and the exercise of discretion.</li> </ol> <p><i>Education Code 22.051(a)</i></p>

**Finality of Grades** An examination or course grade issued by a classroom teacher is final and may not be changed unless the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or not consistent with a district's grading policy applicable to the grade, as determined by the board.

A board's determination is not subject to appeal. This provision does not prohibit an appeal related to a student's eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities under Education Code 33.081. [See FM]

***Education Code 28.0214***

**Closed Meeting** A board may conduct a closed meeting on a parent or student complaint to the extent required or provided by law. *Gov't Code Ch. 551, Subch. D* [See BEC]

An appeal of a board's decision to the commissioner of education shall be decided based on a review of the record developed at the district level. "Record" includes, at a minimum, an audible electronic recording or written transcript of all oral testimony or argument.

***Education Code 7.057(c), (f)***

**Record of Proceedings**

It is a district's responsibility to make and preserve the records of the proceedings before the board. If a district fails to create and preserve the record without good cause, all substantial evidence issues that require missing portions of the record for resolution shall be deemed against the district. The record shall include:

1. A tape recording or a transcript of the hearing at the local level. If a tape recording is used:
  - a. The tape recording must be complete, audible, and clear; and
  - b. Each speaker must be clearly identified.
2. All evidence admitted;
3. All offers of proof;
4. All written pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;
5. A description of matters officially noticed;
6. If applicable, the decision of the hearing examiner;
7. A tape recording or transcript of the oral argument before the board; and
8. The decision of the board.

***19 TAC 157.1073(d)***

# Appendix F: Austin ISD School Board Policy (Local)

## Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances

Austin ISD 227901 STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG  
(LOCAL)

<b>Complaints</b>	In this policy, the terms “complaint” and “grievance” shall have the same meaning.
Informal Resolution	The Board encourages individuals to try to informally resolve concerns at the lowest possible level by discussing such concerns with the appropriate teacher, principal, or staff member. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level. If the concern cannot be resolved informally, a student or parent may file a formal complaint in accordance with this policy.
Other Complaint Processes	<p>Student or parent complaints shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as required by the policies listed below. Some of these policies require appeals to be submitted in accordance with FNG after the relevant complaint process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, or other protected characteristics [see the FFH series, Student Welfare] shall be submitted in accordance with the FFH series.</li><li>2. Complaints concerning dating violence shall be submitted in accordance with the FFH series.</li><li>3. Complaints concerning retaliation related to discrimination and harassment shall be submitted in accordance with the FFH series.</li><li>4. Complaints concerning bullying or retaliation related to bullying shall be submitted in accordance with FFI, Student Welfare: Freedom from Bullying.</li><li>5. Complaints concerning failure to award credit or a final grade on the basis of attendance shall be submitted in accordance with FEC, Attendance: Attendance for Credit.</li><li>6. Complaints concerning expulsion shall be submitted in accordance with FOD, Student Discipline: Expulsion, and the Student Code of Conduct.</li><li>7. Complaints concerning any final decisions of the gifted and talented selection committee regarding selection for or exit from the gifted program shall be submitted in accordance with EHBB, Special Programs: Gifted and Talented Students.</li><li>8. Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504 shall be submitted in accordance with FB, Equal Educational Opportunity, and the procedural safeguards handbook.</li><li>9. Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act shall be submitted in accordance with EHBAE, Special Education: Procedural Requirements, FOF, Special Education: Students with Disabilities, and the procedural safeguards handbook provided to parents of all students referred to special education.</li><li>10. Complaints concerning instructional resources shall be submitted in accordance with EFA, Instructional Materials.</li><li>11. Complaints concerning library materials shall be submitted in accordance with EFB, Library Materials.</li></ol>

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- 12. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District shall be submitted in accordance with the CKE series, Security Personnel.
- 13. Complaints concerning intradistrict transfers or campus assignment shall be submitted in accordance with FDB, Admissions: Intradistrict Transfers and Classroom Assignments.
- 14. Complaints concerning admission, placement, or services provided for a homeless student shall be submitted in accordance with FDC, Admissions: Homeless Students.

Complaints regarding refusal of entry to or ejection from District property based on Education Code 37.105 shall be filed in accordance with this policy. However, the timelines shall be adjusted as necessary to permit the complainant to address the Board in person within 90 calendar days of filing the initial complaint, unless the complaint is resolved before the Board considers it. [See GKA(LEGAL), Community Relations: Conduct on School Premises]

**Notice to Students and Parents**

The District shall inform students and parents of this policy through appropriate District publications.

**Guiding Principles**

Informal Process

The Board encourages students and parents to discuss their concerns with the appropriate teacher, principal, or other campus administrator who has the authority to address the concerns. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Informal resolution shall be encouraged but shall not extend any deadlines in this policy, except by mutual written consent. In the event informal resolution has been attempted, but not resolved, the 0-day deadline referred to in this policy at “Level One” begins to run when the student or parent first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance.

Formal Process

A student or parent may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.

Even after initiating the formal complaint process, students and parents are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. A student or parent whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or “mini-trial” at any level.

**Freedom from Retaliation**

Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against any student or parent for bringing a concern or complaint.

<b>General Provisions</b>	
Filing	Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, by electronic communication, including email and fax, or by U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Filings submitted by electronic communication shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the electronic communication. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.
Formal Process	The District shall make reasonable attempts to schedule conferences at a mutually agreeable time. If a student or parent fails to appear at a scheduled conference, the District may hold the conference and issue a decision in the student's or parent's absence.
Response	At Levels One and Two, "response" shall mean a written communication to the student or parent from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered, sent by electronic communication to the student's or parent's email address of record, or sent by U.S. Mail to the student's or parent's mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.
Days	Unless otherwise noted, "days" shall mean District business days on which school administrators are scheduled to report to work. In calculating timelines under this policy, the day a document is filed is "day zero." The following business day is "day one."

Representative	<p>Representative” shall mean any person who or organization that is designated by the student or parent to represent the student or parent in the complaint process. A student may be represented by an adult at any level of the complaint.</p> <p>The student or parent may designate a representative through written notice to the District at any level of this process. If the student or parent designates a representative with fewer than three days’ notice to the District before a scheduled conference or hearing, the District may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the District’s counsel. The District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.</p>
Consolidating Complaints	<p>Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. A student or parent shall not file separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.</p>
Untimely Filings	<p>All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent.</p> <p>If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the student or parent, at any point during the complaint process. The student or parent may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within 10 days from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.</p>
Costs Incurred	<p>Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.</p>
Complaint and Appeal Forms	<p>Complaints and appeals under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District.</p> <p>Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. The complaint form should state the solution sought. If the student or parent does not have copies of supporting documents, copies may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the student, the parent, or the administration unless the student, the parent, or the administration did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.</p> <p>A complaint or appeal form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be refiled with all the required information if the refileing is within the designated time for filing.</p>
<b>Level One</b>	<p>Complaint forms must be filed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Within 30 days of the date the student or parent first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and</li><li>2. With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem.</li></ol>

A student or parent shall file a Level One complaint with the campus principal. If documented attempts to resolve the issue with the principal have been unsuccessful, the student or parent may file a Level One complaint with the campus principal's direct supervisor. If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the

Superintendent or designee, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint form was received and immediately forward the complaint form to the appropriate administrator.

The appropriate administrator shall investigate as necessary and schedule a conference with the student or parent within 10 days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

Absent extenuating circumstances, the administrator shall provide the student or parent a written response within 10 days following the conference. The written response shall include a recitation of the facts as determined by the administrator at that time and shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the administrator may consider information provided at the Level One conference and any other relevant documents or information the administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

With the written response, the administrator shall provide the student or parent a copy of this policy as an attachment, highlighting the Level Two procedure in the event the student or parent chooses to appeal the decision.

## **Level Two**

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within 10 days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within 10 days of the Level One response deadline.

After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One complaint to the Level Two administrator. The student or parent may request a copy of the Level One record.

The Level One record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the student or parent at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level One administrator in reaching the Level One decision.

The Superintendent or designee shall schedule a conference within 10 days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level One. At the conference, the student or parent may provide information concerning any documents or information relied upon by the administration for the Level One decision.

The Superintendent or designee may set reasonable time limits for the conference. The Superintendent or designee shall provide the student or parent a written response within 10 days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the Superintendent or designee may consider the Level One record, information provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the Superintendent or designee believes will help resolve the complaint.

Recordings of the Level One and Level Two conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the Level One and Level Two records.

### **Level Three**

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may appeal the decision to the Board.

The Level Three appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within 10 District business days (counting from the day after the date on the Level Two response) of the date of the written Level Two response; or, if no response was received, the appeal notice must be filed within 10 District business days of the administrative deadline for responding to the Level Two complaint.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for presentation to the Board. The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board the record of the Level Two appeal. The student or parent may request a copy of the Level Two record. The Level Two record shall include:

1. The Level One record.
2. The notice of appeal from Level One to Level Two.
3. The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the administration in reaching the Level Two decision.

The appeal shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level Two, except that if at the Level Three hearing either the student, the parent, or the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, notice of the nature of the evidence shall be provided by that party (the parent, the student, or the administration) to the other party and to the Board's General Counsel at least three days before the hearing.

The District shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law. [See BE]

The Board shall consider grievances that relate to an appeal of a transfer denial upon written submissions. All other appeals shall be afforded oral argument. The party appealing may forego the oral argument and request submission of its appeal to the Board in writing. The presiding officer shall set reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation including an opportunity for the student or parent and the administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board. The Board shall hear the complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

In addition to any other record of the Board meeting required by law, the Board shall prepare a separate record of the Level Three presentation. The Level Three presentation, including the presentation by the student or parent or the student's representative, any presentation from the administration, and questions from the Board with responses, shall be recorded by audio recording, video/audio recording, or court reporter.

The Board shall then consider the complaint. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the Board does not make a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.

If the complaint is presented on written submissions, the Board shall hear the complaint based on written submissions and shall then make and communicate its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The written submissions shall serve as the record of the Level Three proceeding before the Board.