Top Ten Things You Should Know about the New State Plan

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Brief History

Initial legislation for gifted education in Texas was passed in 1977.
  • Encouraged identification and services
  • Optional

In 1979, State funds were made available to support schools identifying and serving gifted students.
  • Still optional
Brief History

In 1987, the Texas Legislature mandated that all schools must identify and provide services for gifted students in all grades K-12.

In 1990, the first version of the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students was adopted by the Texas State Board of Education.
Brief History

The Texas State Plan was revised in 1999, 2009, and 2019.

2019 was a more substantial revision in two ways in particular.

- The State Plan shifted from five sections to six sections. The new section that was added is called, Fidelity of Services

- The State Plan shifted from three columns to two columns. The new plan includes Accountability and Exemplary Standards. The old plan included Compliance, Recommended, and Exemplary.
Accountability

Texas Education Code 29.123 establishes that the Texas State Plan for the Education of the Gifted/Talented forms the basis of GT standards of service.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) organized District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) visits to ensure compliance in all special programs including gifted and talented education.
Accountability Shift

Today, Texas Administrative Code (Title 19, Part II, Chapter 89, Subchapter A – Gifted/Talented Education describes accountability:

*School districts shall ensure that 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.*

§89.5 Program Accountability
House Bill 3 Impact

Funding (The GT Allotment)

• Technically, districts did not lose the GT money.

• The funds were rolled into the District’s general allotment.

• Districts have more freedom on how to spend the money.
House Bill 3 Impact

Accountability

- The local Board of Trustees is responsible for certifying whether the District complies with all elements of the State Plan. (not new)

- TEA will specifically ask each district for a report of their compliance status each year. (new)

- TEA may require a District to pay back to the state up to the amount of money equivalent to their GT allotment if the District is not in compliance. (new)
House Bill 3 Impact

Summary

• The money for GT is still being sent to your District.

• The administration has more freedom in how they spend it, and it may be spent on programs other than gifted education.

• Accountability is more specific and serious under HB3—including the potential of the district losing their GT money.
House Bill 3 Impact

Good Questions to Think About

• If your District spends less money on gifted education due to HB3, who will be responsible for that decision?

• What is the public process by which the Board of Trustees evaluates whether the District complies with the State Plan?
Key Features of Gifted Education in the Texas State Plan

Gifted Education in Texas
Goal for Gifted Students

Students who participate in services designed for gifted/talented students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment.
Goal for Gifted Students

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High school graduates who have participated in services for gifted/talented students will have produced **products and performances of professional quality** as part of their program services.

- In what ways does the curriculum lead to products and performances of professional quality?

- How are you locally defining professional quality? In science? Math? Writing? Economics?
Top 10 Things You Should Know about the New State Plan

Gifted Education in Texas
The revised State Plan specifically requires educators to adapt or to modify the curriculum for gifted students and gifted students with special needs.
NUMBER 10

Special Populations

4.9 Educators adapt and/or modify the core or standard curriculum to meet the needs of gifted/talented students and those with special needs such as twice-exceptional, highly gifted, and English learners.
Acceleration has always been in the State Plan, and it remains a prominent focus for gifted education program design in the Revised State Plan.
3.7 Local board policies are developed that are consistent with State Board of Education rules on credit by examination (19 TAC §74.24) and early high school graduation opportunities (TEC §56.203).

3.8 Acceleration and flexible pacing are employed, allowing students to learn at the pace and level appropriate for their abilities and skills, and are actively facilitated by district administrators, counselors, and teachers.
3.9 Local board policies are developed that enable students to participate in dual/concurrent enrollment, distance learning opportunities, and accelerated summer programs if available.

4.5 Opportunities are provided to accelerate in areas of student strengths (19 TAC §89.3(4)).
NUMBER 9

Acceleration

4.6 Flexible pacing is employed, allowing students to learn at the pace and level appropriate to their abilities and skills.

4.7 Scheduling modifications are implemented in order to meet the identified needs of individual students.
NUMBER 8

Texas Performance Standards Projects

The curriculum should lead students to advanced level products and performances, and the primary example of that from the state is the Texas Performance Standards Projects.
NUMBER 8

Texas Performance Standards Projects

4.4 Participation in the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP), or other experiences that result in the development of sophisticated products and/or performances that are targeted to an audience outside the classroom, is available through gifted/talented curricula.
4.2 Opportunities are provided for students to pursue areas of interest in selected disciplines through guided and independent research.

4.3 A continuum of learning experiences is provided that leads to the development of advanced-level products and/or performances such as those provided through the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) (19 TAC §89.3(2)).
NUMBER 8

Texas Performance Standards Projects

6.6 Products and achievements of gifted/talented students are shared with the community.

The State Plan is not vague on this point. Examples of advanced products and performances should exist for all students participating in the gifted education program.
NUMBER 7

Pay attention to the overarching standards.

FIDELITY OF SERVICES

School districts comply with gifted/talented accountability standards and monitor the effectiveness of assessment and services for gifted/talented students.
NUMBER 7

Pay attention to the overarching standards.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Gifted/talented identification procedures and progress monitoring allow students to demonstrate and develop their diverse talents and abilities.
NUMBER 7

Pay attention to the overarching standards.

SERVICE DESIGN

A flexible system of viable service options provides a research-based learning continuum that is developed and consistently implemented throughout the district to meet the needs and reinforce the strengths and interests of gifted/talented students.
NUMBER 7

Pay attention to the overarching standards.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Districts meet the needs of gifted/talented students by modifying the depth, complexity, and pacing of the curriculum and instruction ordinarily provided by the school.
NUMBER 7

Pay attention to the overarching standards.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

All personnel involved in the planning, creation, delivery and administration of services to gifted/talented students possess the knowledge required to develop and provide differentiated programs and services.
NUMBER 7

Pay attention to the overarching standards.

FAMILY/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The district involves family and community members in services designed for gifted/talented students throughout the school year.
Each district should establish a gifted and talented advisory council that meets regularly.

- Community members
- Parents of GT students
- GT education staff
- School staff
Gifted & Talented Advisory Council

The council has two primary purposes but is not limited to those two.

1. Review policies and procedures
2. Make recommendations for improvement
Gifted & Talented Advisory Council

1.2 Gifted/talented education policies and procedures are reviewed and recommendations for improvement are made by an advisory group of community members, parents of gifted/talented students, school staff, and gifted/talented education staff, who meet regularly for that purpose.
The revised State Plan emphasizes a more active role in providing and encouraging continuing education in gifted and talented education and content expertise.

The standard includes “all personnel involved in the planning, creation, delivery, and administration of services...”
5.3 Teachers are encouraged to obtain additional professional learning in their teaching discipline and/or in gifted/talented education.

5.4 A written plan for professional learning in the area of gifted/talented education that is based on identified needs is implemented and updated annually.
5.5 Opportunities for professional learning in the area of gifted/talented education are provided on a regular basis, and information on them is disseminated to professionals in the district.

5.7 Annually, each teacher new to the district receives an orientation to the district’s gifted/talented identification processes and the district’s services for gifted/talented students.
NUMBER 4

Equitable Access to Gifted Education

The revised State Plan strengthened the requirement for equity in gifted education as demonstrated by proportional representation.
NUMBER 4

Equitable Access to Gifted Education

2.24 Access to assessment and, if needed, gifted/talented services is available to all populations of the district (19 TAC §89.1(3)).

2.25 The population of the gifted/talented services program is closely reflective of the population of the total district and/or campus.
NUMBER 3

Program Evaluation and Use of Data

The revised State Plan maintains and strengthens the expectation of systematic, annual program evaluation and the corresponding use of that data to improve programs and services.
1.5 Annual evaluation activities are conducted for the purpose of continued service development.

1.5.1 Ongoing formative and summative evaluation strategies, based on quantitative and qualitative data, are reviewed by the school board and used for substantive program improvement and development.
NUMBER 3

Program Evaluation and Use of Data

1.6 Long-range evaluation of services is based on evidence obtained through gifted/talented-appropriate performance measures such as those provided through the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP).

1.7 The development and delivery of curriculum for gifted/talented students is monitored regularly by trained administrators.
NUMBER 3

Program Evaluation and Use of Data

1.8 District guidelines for evaluation of resources used to serve gifted/talented students are established and used in selecting materials that are appropriate for differentiated learning.

1.9 Curriculum for gifted/talented students is modified based on annual evaluations.
NUMBER 3

Program Evaluation and Use of Data

4.8 Provisions to improve services to gifted/talented students are included in district and campus improvement plans (TEC §§11.251-11.253).

• This standard typically requires the lead GT administrator to work with the administrative team that oversees DIP and CIP development and confirmation.
Program Evaluation and Use of Data

5.11 Evaluation of professional learning activities for gifted/talented education is ongoing and related to state teacher gifted/talented education standards, and the results of the evaluation are used in making decisions regarding future staff development plans (19 TAC §89.5 and TAC §233.1).
NUMBER 3

Program Evaluation and Use of Data

6.8 The effectiveness of gifted/talented services is evaluated annually, shared with the board of trustees, and the data is used to modify and update district and campus improvement plans. Parents are included in the evaluation process, and the outcomes and findings of the evaluation are shared with parents (TEC §§11.251–11.253).
NUMBER 2

Increased Accountability

School districts are expected to comply with gifted/talented accountability standards and monitor the effectiveness of assessment and services for gifted/talented students.
NUMBER 2

Increased Accountability

1.11 For any standard of service for which the district is out of compliance, develop a written plan specifying actions and timelines for achieving compliance.

1.12 Funds used for programs and services must be determined effective and consistent with the standards set forth in this document.
Increased Accountability

5.10 Local district boards of trustees are trained to ensure program accountability based on the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students (19 TAC §89.5).

• Since the BOT of each district is the body that determines compliance with the State Plan, the BOT must be trained to ensure accountability.
Each district is expected to develop a comprehensive program guide that is publicly available.

• Hint: Your program guide should absolutely describe a program that meets all the standards expected under the State Plan.

• The program guide should be easy to find and publicly available.
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 G/T contact information.
3.1 Identified gifted/talented students are assured an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with their abilities and that emphasize content in the four (4) foundation curricular areas. Services are available during the school day as well as the entire school year. Parents are informed of these options (19 TAC §89.3(3)).
3.3 Services for gifted/talented students are comprehensive, structured, sequenced, and appropriately challenging, including options in the four (4) foundation curricular areas.

3.4 Gifted/talented students are ensured opportunities to work together as a group, work with other students, and work independently during the school day as well as the entire school year as a direct result of gifted/talented service options (19 TAC §89.3(1)).
3.2 Information concerning special opportunities (i.e. contests, academic recognition, summer camps, community programs, volunteer opportunities, etc.) is available and disseminated to parents and community members.

3.6 Out-of-school options relevant to the students’ areas of strength are provided by school districts whenever possible (19 TAC §89.3(3)).
Comprehensive Program Guide

3.5 Flexible grouping patterns and independent investigations are provided throughout the program design/services.

3.11 Develop and implement services to address the social and emotional needs of gifted/talented students and their impact on student learning.
6.5 An array of learning opportunities is provided for gifted/talented students in grades K–12, and parents are informed of all gifted/talented services and opportunities (19 TAC §89.3).
Summary and Recommendations

Gifted Education in Texas
Accountability is Local

• Technically, gifted education did not lose any money in Texas with HB3; however, districts may choose to spend it on something other than gifted education.

• Parents and community members are encouraged to advocate that the District at least maintain previous levels of GT spending.
Accountability is Local

• Even before HB3, the Board of Trustees and Superintendent were responsible for certifying that the District is in full compliance with the state plan.

• HB3 makes that process slightly more formal.

• HB3 introduced the possibility of losing money if the District is not in compliance with the State Plan.
Two Big Recommendations

1. **Comprehensive Program Guide**

   Use this to (a) describe all required elements and (b) establish a vision for excellence in gifted education.

2. **GT Advisory Council**

   This can be a great resource for building broad and deep support for excellence in gifted education.
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