

The Small Schools Guide for Quality Gifted Services

Quick Facts

What is it? A valuable resource full of solutions to the challenges of providing quality gifted services in compliance with the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*. Includes ideas, documents, forms, and more!

Where can I get it? A downloadable version is available on the Region IX website: http://www2.esc9.net/specialpops/Small_Schools_Project/index.htm. A CD version has already been sent to each school district in Texas. To find out more about the delivery of this product, contact your regional ESC gifted specialist. You can find your gifted specialist by visiting <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/ESC>.

Introduction

This guide is a result of efforts by the Texas Education Agency, Region 14 Education Service Center, and an array of small school districts in Texas. Many districts with ADA of less than 1500 have expressed the numerous problems associated with development of quality services for their gifted learners. Citing a lack of funds, minimal personnel, and small numbers of gifted learners within their district, they protest that quality services are difficult, if not impossible, to provide. As the authors of this guide began to approach this situation, they found a variety of quality gifted services throughout the state. Their goal was to find districts whose services were systemic rather than person-driven. This guide is the result of their work with educators who have found solutions to the problems faced by small school districts.

The *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* has five components: student assessment, program design, curriculum, professional development, and family and community involvement. Each component presents standards to best meet the needs of gifted students. This guide presents details on the successful efforts of participating school districts in defining problems associated with standards, making decisions related to each component, and creating solutions to challenges.

Student Essay

Here's what one gifted student from a Small Schools Project district says about gifted services in her school. Her essay establishes the vision for the Small School Project:

Our G/T program allows us to focus individually on what career we wish to pursue in the future. It also challenges us, because since we are all working on different TEKS, we have to be focused and able to work on our own. You have to have self-discipline and self-motivation. This program gets us ready for the college workload and beyond.

This class allows us to get a chance to do what we want to do instead of what we are told to do. You come in every day and do what you feel like doing. You have to be able to pace yourself while still getting something accomplished. The way this course is designed, we have the freedom to pursue what interests us, but we also have the responsibility of making sure our projects get done. This class truly is an independent study, and it challenges us unlike any other class. Instead of

doing the same generic work, we get to be individual thinkers. We don't do all the work because we have to; we do it because we want to.

Sara Manning
G/T student
Colorado High School

Participating Districts

Anderson-Shiro CISD
Blue Ridge ISD
Coahoma ISD
Colorado ISD
Cotton Center ISD
Goliad ISD
Graham ISD
Lackland ISD
Mathis ISD

Muenster ISD
Perrin-Whitt CISD
Randolph Field ISD
Sabine ISD
Sundown ISD
Tidehaven ISD
Wimberley ISD
Yoakum ISD

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