The Gifted and Talented (G/T) program is designed to provide curricular services that meet the needs of advanced and gifted learners. The program consists of three components: (1) A G/T program for students in grades kindergarten through six; (2) A G/T seminar for students in grades seven through eight, and a G/T elective class for middle school sixth grade students; and (3) Advanced academic courses for students in grades seven through 12. Although all components serve gifted learners, they are quite different. G/T instruction is typically interdisciplinary, while Advanced Placement instruction is content specific. An additional aspect of the program includes parent/community participation.

Student Enrollment and Demographics

G/T program services were provided at 156 schools. At grades KN through six, a total of 8,800 (8.7%) students received program services and at grades seven through 12, 10,766 (18.3%) students received program services. Figures 1 and 2 compare the ethnic proportions of G/T students in the program to total district proportions at grades K-6 and 7-12, respectively.

There was an inequity in the representation of African Americans, Asians, and Whites in the program when compared to district proportions. African Americans were under represented, while Whites and Asians were over represented (approximately twice that of district proportions).

Figures 3 and 4 compare the proportions of Never LEP, Non-LEP, Exited LEP and Current LEP students in the G/T program to total district proportions at grades K-6 and 7-12, respectively.
There was also an inequity in the proportions of Non-LEP, Exited LEP and Current LEP students in the G/T program when compared to total district proportions. Non-LEP and Exited LEP students were over represented, while Current LEP students were under represented.

Budget
A budget of $684,210 was appropriated for program services. Twenty percent ($137,375) was used to support two staff positions. No additional information was provided.

Parent/Community Participation
Activities used to encourage parent/community participation included parent/community training sessions, PTA meetings, advertising in local newspapers and parent-teacher conferences. Approximately 250 parent/community training sessions were held. Advertisements in local newspapers were handled by the district’s Publication Department twice yearly. Each school conducted parent-teacher conferences twice yearly. PTA meetings, a more traditional means of communicating program information, were held on all campuses, however, the frequency of meetings varied by campus. On average, attendance ranged from 50 to 100 participants. Based on State Criteria (informing parents about K-12 learning opportunities for gifted students, and providing written information to parents on student identification for the G/T program), the G/T program was rated as Acceptable.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Results
G/T students had higher passing and commended passing rates than other district students. G/T Commended performance ranged from 29.6% at grade 10 to 75.6% at grade eight, while district Commended passing rates ranged from 11.8% at grade 10 to 37.5% at grade eight.

More than 90% of G/T students passed the TAKS Mathematics test, while district passing rates ranged from 57% at grade 10 to 79.6% at grade four. G/T Commended performance rates ranged from 27.7% at grade 10 to 74.6% at grade five, while district Commended passing rates ranged from 9.3% at grade 10 to 37.9% at grade five.

G/T students had higher passing and Commended passing rates on the TAKS Writing test. More than 98% of G/T students passed the TAKS Writing test at each grade level, while district passing rates were about 78%. G/T Commended passing rates (70% at grade four and 70.7% at grade seven) were more than twice that of other district students at the same grade level (29.1% at grade four and 31.9% at grade seven).

G/T students also outperformed district students on the TAKS science and social studies tests. More than 91% of G/T students passed the TAKS Science test, while the passing rate for district students was about 61%. The G/T passing rate on the Social Studies test was 99%, compared to about 88% for district students. G/T students also had a higher Commended passing rate in Science (35.7% for G/T students and 10.5% for district students) and Social Studies (63.5% for G/T students and 24.3% for district students).

Texas Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)
G/T students outperformed other district students in both reading comprehension/vocabulary and mathematics. Reading mean NCE results for 2008-09 ranged from 58 at KN to 69 at grade one, while district results ranged from 43 at KN to 46 at grade two. Math results ranged from 68 at grade one to 71 at KN, while district results ranged from 43 at grade two to 49 at grade KN. G/T students showed a greater decline in performance from 2007-08 to 2008-09 than other district students.

American College Test (ACT) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)
Data on various magnet schools were included to compare the performance of district G/T students to that of students in the magnet program. This comparison allowed for the determination of the effectiveness of the district’s G/T program which is available to all students.
A number of non-magnet schools had G/T students that performed comparably to that of magnet students on the verbal and mathematics sections of both the ACT and SAT. District G/T students had SAT Verbal mean scale scores that ranged from 345 at South Oak Cliff (SOC) to 514 at Middle College, while magnet students’ scores ranged from 443 at Education and Social Services Magnet (ESSM) to 636 at TAG.

On the math section, district G/T students scores ranged from 383 at Madison to 512 at Hillcrest, while magnet scores ranged from 452 at ESSM to 630 at Science and Engineering.

ACT verbal results indicated that district G/T students’ scores ranged from 14 at Lincoln, Conrad, SOC, Spruce and Carter to 22 at Wilson, while magnet scores ranged from 18 at ESSM to 25 at Science and Engineering. On the math section, district G/T students’ scores ranged from 15 at SOC to 22 at Hillcrest, while magnet students’ scores ranged from 18 at ESSM to 29 at TAG.

Advanced Placement (AP) Examination

G/T high school students took 6,807 tests with a passing rate of 31.5%, while district high school students took 6,064 tests with a passing rate of 19.8%. Of the non-magnet high schools, G/T students’ passing rates ranged from 0.0% at Spruce, Smith and Atwell to 46.3% at Hillcrest. Magnet G/T high school students’ passing rates ranged from 23.3% at Irma Rangel to 43.3% at Townview.

District students’ passing rates at non-magnet high schools ranged from 0.0% at Atwell, Roosevelt, and Pinkston to 43.8% at Hillcrest, while magnet high school passing rates ranged from 24.2% at Irma Rangel to 52.4% at Booker T Washington (Arts). Generally, G/T high school students outperformed other district high school students, except at magnet high schools. Overall, the data indicated that G/T (31.5%) and district (19.5%) students showed low passing rates on AP exams.

Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)

G/T students’ PSAT mean composite scores at each high school were generally higher than that of other district students across the two years studied. Overall, there was a slight decline in performance by both G/T and district students from 2006-07 to 2007-08. G/T students had mean composite score of 45 in 2006-07 and 44 in 2007-08. District students had a mean composite score of 35 in 2006-07 and 34 in 2007-08.

Recommendations

1. There was an inequity in ethnic proportions in the program. African Americans were under represented, while Whites and Asians were over represented (approximately twice that of district proportions). It is recommended that special efforts should be undertaken to recommend, recruit/encourage or select a higher proportion of these students for admission to the program.

2. There was also an inequity in the proportions of Non-LEP, Exited LEP and Current LEP students in the program. Non-LEP and Exited LEP students were over represented, while Current LEP students were under represented. It is recommended that special efforts should be made to distribute information about the program to the parents of LEP students. This information should be distributed at parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings, and parent/community training. Assessment measures in Spanish will offer an alternative to English dominated measures as a selection tool when identifying LEP students’ for inclusion into the program. It is also recommended that classroom teachers should be solicited about the performance of LEP students in order to identify a higher proportion of these students for inclusion into the program.

3. Although the program implemented a number of activities necessary to acquire a Recognized status, a few formative changes must be made to achieve this recognition. It is recommended that the following formative changes should be implemented: (a) schedule conferences with parents and students to discuss assessment data in addition to parent-teacher conferences; (b) hold meetings with parents to solicit nominations to the G/T program, (c) hold an on-campus orientation for parents of G/T students; and (d) share products of G/T students, such as displays of student work or performances, with parents and other community members.

4. Overall, both G/T and district students showed low passing rates on the AP exams. It is recommended that the district investigate the relationship between the objectives taught and that which is assessed on the exams.

For additional information, see Final Evaluation Report on the Gifted and Talented program (EA09-156-2) at: www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/