

UTILIZING GIFTED SPECIALISTS IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

1. Identification of Students for G/T Services:

Gifted specialists are a valuable resource to work with teachers and administrators to provide guidance in recognizing the varied characteristics of giftedness across populations.

- Even in a virtual learning environment, students with gifts and talents must be identified and served.
- Gifted specialists can provide guidance in recognizing the varied characteristics of giftedness in all populations to include students from low-income families, students who are culturally and linguistically diverse, or are twice-exceptional.
- Tools like The Varied Face of Gifted/Talented Students can be useful when identifying across populations.
- Specialists will excel at remote differentiation for gifted and talented students using best practices for gifted learners.
- Specialists know how to use assessment data to modify instructional methods or content including multiple means of representation of a topic, theme, or action and expression of engagement.
- A specialist can support differentiation for gifted learners while meeting the needs of the whole child suggested by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC).

2. Programming and Differentiation: Gifted specialists can be a powerful resource as teachers work to ensure that differentiation continues in a virtual learning environment.

- Gifted specialists are familiar with and should continue the use of resources such as the
- Gifted specialists are familiar with and should continue the use of resources such as the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, the Texas Education Agency, and Equity in Gifted and Talented Education.
- Gifted specialists can support the current curriculum and students by finding, facilitating, or featuring authentic opportunities for students to connect with the community. These efforts will maintain equity and culturally responsive practices.
- Project-Based Learning (PBL) identify learning objectives, the learning processes, and assessments.
- Two examples of free, TEKS-aligned, elementary and secondary curriculum-based PBLs are the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) and Speak Up, Speak Out! (SUSO).

4. Professional Learning: Gifted specialists have a deep understanding of G/T students, instruction, and differentiation. As such, they can support the adult learning environment on your campus(es) to ensure all educators who interact with G/T students can facilitate their learning needs.

- Sustained professional learning is necessary to increase awareness of the needs of gifted children.
- Gifted specialists can facilitate growth experiences through a systematic, job-embedded process facilitated in person or virtually.
- Training should allow participants to select and implement a variety of strategies in the learning environment and then come together to reflect on and analyze their effectiveness with a focus on how to best adjust these strategies to effectively meet the needs of the students in their classroom.

5. Family and Community: Gifted specialists can support the families in their school communities who may wonder how to support their gifted students as they attempt to handle the stressors of our current reality.

- The National Association for Gifted Children created a resource that helps parents understand how they can support their child.
- A specialist can facilitate engagement with experts in the community as a way to expand students' background knowledge and specific skills
- Technology use will allow specialists to reach families and the community to aid teachers and students when interacting with authentic audiences.