



**FORT BEND ISD**  
**GIFTED & TALENTED**  
**MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMY**  
**Program Handbook**



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# Service Design

## Program Mission

The Fort Bend ISD Gifted and Talented Academy will engage students in evidence-based curriculum and rich instructional strategies to differentiate for the academically gifted. The focus of the Academy is to provide challenging learning opportunities and special curricula that modify learning environments to enhance self-awareness, self-efficacy, problem-solving, and the learning of critical/creative thinking skills. The instructional program will emphasize the development, practice, and transfer of advanced knowledge and skills to assist students in preparing for creative and productive careers.

## Program Alignment with FBISD's Core Beliefs and Commitments

1. FBISD Core Belief: All students can reach their full potential.

Commitment: FBISD will provide an educational system that will enable all students to reach their full potential.

*Gifted students have an unlimited and exceptional ability to learn which is enhanced by the quality of curriculum, personal motivation, and supportive educational and home environments. We must develop critically thinking minds through rigor and authenticity of conceptual ideas and encourage students to take ownership of their inherent intellectual abilities and tendencies for leadership.*

2. FBISD Core Belief: We believe student success is best achieved...

A. ...through effective teachers that inspire learning.

Commitment: FBISD will recruit, develop, and retain effective teachers.

*GTA teachers themselves should be lifelong learners to constantly provide an optimal educational experience for all students. Each teacher is instrumental as a facilitator and developer of meaningful, relevant, and integrated curriculum which engages each learner.*

B. ...in a supportive climate and safe environment.

Commitment: FBISD will provide a supportive climate and a safe learning/ working environment.

*We believe it is essential to create an engaging, safe and challenging environment that nurtures the social, emotional, and academic needs of our students.*

C. ...by empowered and effective leaders throughout the system.

Commitment: FBISD will provide and promote leadership development at all levels.

*GTA students need to be prepared for leadership roles in an increasingly complex and technological global society based on teamwork, contributions, and excellence.*

D. ...in a well-functioning, high-performing community of learners.

Commitment: FBISD will be a collaborative, efficient and effective learning community.

*Parents, teachers, and the community are active partners in education to provide accountability, support and guidance to students.*

## Program Alignment with FBISD's Profile of a Graduate

A Fort Bend ISD Graduate has a rigorous academic foundation, strong character, and is...

...equipped with skills for life.

*In the GTA, a cross-curricular and concept-based approach to learning gives students the opportunity to develop and apply a variety of meaningful skills that will optimize current and future success.*

...a servant leader.

*In the GTA, students are encouraged to analyze the role of self in society and to be student leaders. Service learning connects students to their community through exploration of passions and interests and through organized or individual community service projects.*

...an effective communicator.

*Communication and positive interaction through project/problem-based learning are essential to the development of mutual trust.*

...a critical thinker.

*Curricula designed to foster thinking critically across contexts helps students adopt the skills, habits and mindsets to challenge the status quo.*

...a compassionate citizen.

*Students are a valuable member of the school community such that how they treat one another is paramount to the overall success of the program and their futures.*

...a collaborative team member.

*The hands-on and relevant experiences students engage in encourage original thought as well as valuing the thoughts and ideas of others.*

...a life-long learner.

*The education of our students is not limited to the school day. Students are engaged in a myriad of enrichment and co-curricular activities that are engaging and rewarding, allowing students to enhance their creativity, leadership ability, and overall connection to the school community.*

### Program Alignment with District Policy

Board Policy EHB (LEGAL) states “A District may operate a magnet program, academy, or other innovation program to serve student populations with specialized interests and aptitudes. 19.TAC 74.22(b).”

FBISD Administrative Regulations: *EGA-R-Academy Programs* provides overview for the GT Academy program structure, selection procedures, courses, and participation as well as probation and dismissal.

### Program Alignment with FBISD’s Gifted Program

The Fort Bend ISD Gifted and Talented Middle School Academy is designed to enhance self-awareness, self-efficacy, problem solving, and the learning of critical and creative thinking skills to empower gifted students in the program.

### Program Groupings

The Fort Bend ISD Gifted and Talented Middle School Academy (GTA) is housed at Quail Valley Middle School. It is a school-within-a-school program that provides specialized gifted programming through homogeneous core GTA classes and opportunities to interact with the greater school population in ways that are mutually enriching in electives and PE.

### Program Social and Emotional Supports

To meet the academic and social-emotional learning needs of GTA students, the following are provided to students during their three year tenure at the QVMS GTA: learning situated within multiple contexts; differentiated educational experiences, including diverse grouping and interconnected social experiences; adjustment in the level, depth and pacing of curriculum; experienced teaching staff, counselors, and support staff; and extra-curricular programs and clubs hosted on campus.

The GTA Program also strives to:

- Educate students on gifted traits to reduce stress and anxiety that arise from misconceptions and myths
- Provide fun yet challenging talent/leadership development opportunities in and outside of school-day.
- Deliver meaningful lessons, projects and field experiences that give students opportunity to laugh, play and enjoy the learning process.
- Support students’ cultural strengths and encourage them to share their strengths with others.
- Embed lessons on positive character traits into the curriculum designed to help students see their role in society and understand that having a positive impact is not reserved for adulthood.
- Make decisions with a sense of the uniqueness of individual student needs in mind.
- Establish connections with families to enhance understanding of students’ cultural experiences and facilitate shared understandings about learning.
- Model lifelong learning as educators by staying up to date on the latest trends and strategies on social and emotional learning for gifted students.

GTA Coordinator, Counselors, Teachers, and Administrators are trained annually on the social and emotional needs for gifted students as well as gifted traits.

**Program Progress Monitoring**

In January 2020, the GT Academy was evaluated through a process that included multiple stakeholders. The goal of the evaluation was to identify strengths and areas of growth for the GT Academy as well as determine recommendations to support forward progress.

Strengths	Areas of Growth
Academic Challenge Project Based Learning Cross Curricular Focus and Concept-Based Approach Varied Instructional Activities and Student Engagement Field Experiences Community of Peers Supports for Social and Emotional Needs Teachers Specializing in Gifted Education	Workload High Student Stress Limited Project Coordination Lack of Teaming Time for Extracurricular Activities Needed Instruction in Executive Function Skills District Administrative Support Differentiation in Mathematics
Recommendations	
Implement True Teams Increase Cross-Curricular Projects Coordinate Projects, Homework, and Tests Formalize GT Academy Curriculum and Assessment Develop Students' Executive Function Skills Differentiate for Struggling Math Students Hire and Develop Expert Teachers Increase Access to Technology Promote the GT Academy	

As a result of the GT Academy evaluation, a GTA Evaluation Review Committee was formed to develop a response to the findings and recommendations. Annually, a parent survey is sent to parents at the end of every school year to learn more about strengths and areas of improvement.

## Student Scheduling

Students are automatically enrolled in five grade-level appropriate homogeneous GTA core courses while in the program (see exceptions below). Core subjects at the GT Academy are Math, Science, Social Studies, English Language Arts, and Spanish. Students can select one (1) elective every year. During the 6<sup>th</sup> grade year, this elective must be a Fine Art.

The following courses are for GTA students only (as of June 2022):

Math	Science	Social Studies	English	Spanish
Math 6 GTA Math 7 GTA	Science 6 GTA Science 7 GTA Science 8 GTA	SS 6 GTA Texas History GTA US History GTA	ELA 6 GTA ELA 7 GTA ELA 8 GTA	Disc Span GTA Spanish II**

The following courses are open to all students on the campus (as of June 2022):

Core Courses	PE	Fine Arts	Electives	Spanish
Math 8* Algebra 1 AAC Geometry AAC Biology I AAC*** English I AAC*** AP Hum Geo*** Algebra II AAC***	Boys PE Girls PE Kickstart	Art Band Choir Orchestra Theatre	AVID Broadcasting Computer Science Dollars and Cents Journalism Office Worker Robotics	Spanish I

\* GT Academy students who select Math 8 will be placed in a section of Math 8 designed for advanced learners at QVMS.

\*\*There are circumstances in which a student who is not in the GT Academy will be eligible for Spanish II.

\*\*\* Some GTA students accelerate using the District’s Credit by Exam program. GTA students who elect to take courses not offered at QVMS are assigned to either Dulles, Elkins, or Clements to take them. Transportation is not provided *to* the High School but will be provided *from* the High School to QVMS after the second period at the High School.

## Student Coding

In April of every year, a final list of incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders is sent to all ES counselors and registrars.

Step 1: Elementary Data Entry Clerks code the students on the list to be “pushed” to the GT Academy at QVMS (044). This is done in Skyward by going to *Next Year School* under *School Path* and entering the campus code (044) into *Next Year School*.

Step 2: QVMS Registrars uses Skyward to accept the students using the following process:

Students / Student Profile / Custom Forms / Approvals / **Add New Record**

- School Year = **Fall Year of upcoming school year**
- Start Date = **First Day of School** End Date = **(leave blank)**
- Approval Reason = **Academy Program (or other appropriate Academy Reason)**
- ACA/Prog = **Academy**
- Course = **QVMS G & T Academy**
- Home Campus = **(select appropriate entity)**

The registrar must also re-code each incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grader as GT and apply the District Category Code of “Q” = QVMS Academy to all students.

## Master Scheduling

The GT Academy is not a series of classes/sections such as AAC or H/GT. Teaching in the GT Academy program requires expertise, understanding of programming components, and intentional planning to provide rigor and challenge for the students.

### Master Schedule Template

Teacher (team)	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Section 5	Section 6
Science - 6.1	6 GTA Sci	6 GTA Sci	6 GTA Sci	6 GTA Sci	6 GTA Sci	6 GTA Sci
Math - 6.1	6 GTA Math	6 GTA Math	6 GTA Math	6 GTA Math	6 GTA Math	6 GTA Math
Soc Stu - 6.1	6 GTA SS	6 GTA SS	6 GTA SS	6 GTA SS	6 GTA SS	6 GTA SS
Spanish - 6.1	6 Span Disc	6 Span Disc	6 Span Disc	6 Span Disc	6 Span Disc	6 Span Disc
ELA - 6.1	6 GTA ELA	6 GTA ELA	6 GTA ELA	6 GTA ELA	6 GTA ELA	6 GTA ELA
Science - 6.2/7.1	7 GTA Sci	7 GTA Sci	7 GTA Sci	7 GTA Sci	6 GTA Sci	6 GTA Sci
Math - 6.2/7.1	7 GTA Math	7 GTA Math	7 GTA Math	7 GTA Math	7 GTA Math	7 GTA Math
Soc Stu - 6.2/7.1	7 GTA Hist	7 GTA Hist	7 GTA Hist	7 GTA Hist	6 GTA SS	6 GTA SS
Spanish - 6.2/7.1	7 Span GTA 1B8	6 Span Disc	6 Span Disc			
ELA - 6.2/7.1	7 GTA ELA	7 GTA ELA	7 GTA ELA	7 GTA ELA	6 GTA ELA	6 GTA ELA
Science 7.2/8.2	7 GTA Sci	7 GTA Sci	7 GTA Sci	7 GTA Sci	8 GTA Sci	8 GTA Sci
Math - 7.2/8.2	7 GTA Math	7 GTA Math	8 Alg 1	8 Alg 1	Alg 1	Alg 1
Soc Stu - 7.2/8.2	7 GTA Hist	7 GTA Hist	7 GTA Hist	7 GTA Hist	8 GTA SS	8 GTA SS
Spanish - 7.2/8.2	7 Span GTA 1B8	8 Span 2 GTA	8 Span 2 GTA			
ELA - 7.2/8.2	7 GTA ELA	7 GTA ELA	7 GTA ELA	7 GTA ELA	8 GTA ELA	8 GTA ELA
Science - 8.1	8 GTA Sci	8 GTA Sci	8 GTA Sci	8 GTA Sci	8 GTA Sci	8 GTA Sci
Math - 8.1	8 Alg. 1	8 Alg. 1	8 Alg. 1	Contest Math	Geometry	Geometry
Social Studies - 8.1	8 GTA SS	8 GTA SS	8 GTA SS	8 GTA SS	8 GTA SS	8 GTA SS
Spanish - 8.1	8 Span 2 GTA	8 Span 2 GTA	8 Span 2 GTA			
ELA - 8.1	8 ELA	8 ELA	8 ELA	8 ELA	8 ELA	8 ELA

## Measuring the Success of the GT Academy Program

Although the GTA Program is not intentionally designed to improve test scores such as STAAR, PSAT, or Ren 360, data show that GTA Programming:

- Reduces performance gaps between racial and socio-economic groups
- Provides students with learning growth opportunities as exhibited in the Ren360 and STAAR growth measures

Additionally, the GTA Program:

- Has a 87% retention rate of students who matriculate from 6<sup>th</sup> grade to 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- Continually maintains a full roster of students hoping to attend based on recruitment and student experiences

### Future Planning

Beginning in 2022-2023 school year, graduating seniors who attended the GT Academy will be surveyed to help determine the long range impact of the GT Academy program on their high school years and potentially beyond.

There is a community of GT Academy Alumni that is readily available to provide anecdotal data on the long-range benefits and drawbacks of the GTA Program.

# Student Assessment (Selection)

## Recruitment

Parents of all eligible GT-Identified 5<sup>th</sup> graders in FBISD will receive direct communication via email and mail regarding recruitment dates and the application timeline in November/December annually.

Recruitment events are posted publicly on the GT Academy website and open to all.

## Recruitment Timeline of Events

- September: Information about GTA provided at elementary school open houses
- First three weeks of January: GTA Coordinator visits 5<sup>th</sup> grade GT students at elementary campuses
- Fourth Week of January: Virtual GTA Information Night for prospective students
- February/early March: GTA In-person tours and in-person recruitment event. Parents sign-up for a time and provide transportation for their students. GTA Ambassadors serve as tour guides.

## Application and Selection Timeline

- February – Mid-March: Online application window opens. Students must use Skyward login to apply.
  - Application Link: <https://academy.fortbendisd.com/>
- Fourth Friday in March: Acceptance or waitlist notification emailed to applicants
  - The GTA Coordinator reviews every application for eligibility prior to this date.
- Ten Days after notification: Final Commitment date for applicants accepted on March 25<sup>th</sup>
- Ten Days after notification: Non-committed seats released to waitlisted applicants
- Ten Days after commitment date: Final commitment date for applicants accepted on April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Ten Days after waitlist commitment date: Final roster sent to QVMS Administration, Counselors, ES/MS Counselors, ES Registrars

## Selection Criteria

If the number of applicants exceeds the capacity of the incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade class (180 students), a computer generated two-tiered lottery system will commence.

- Tier 1: Eligible GT applicants who have a CoGAT SAS score at or above 130 (97<sup>th</sup> percentile) on at least one subtest (verbal, quantitative, or non-verbal) randomly selected for the first 180 seats.
- Tier 2: If there are more than 180 students with a CoGAT score above 130, then there will be students with that score that move to Tier 2. The second computer generated lottery will automatically and randomly fill open seats from the remaining pool of applicants.

The system is computer randomized and does not favor students by any other factor than their CoGAT SAS score.

## Private/Charter/Home School Students

Interested fifth grade students who attend private/charter/home schools AND live in the FBISD zone are eligible to be evaluated for gifted services in time to apply for the GT Academy.

To do so, they must complete the following:

- Complete an application to be evaluated. The application is updated and posted on the GT Academy website beginning in the Fall of every year.
- Upload proof of residency documents and grade to the<sup>10</sup> application.

- Bring their child to the GT Test session. The Private School GT Session is hosted by the FBISD Testing Department and typically done on the same day as the SS/Science/Spanish CBE in Session 2.
- Wait for results to be reviewed. The GT test results are reviewed by the QVMS Campus Selection Committee. If a student scores in the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile (130 SAS) in one or more subtests and a 92nd percentile and above in another (SIGS will be requested).
- Apply to the GT Academy if eligible during application window. Eligible students will be entered into the tiered lottery alongside other FBISD applicants.

### Out-Of-District Public School GT Transfer Students

Incoming 6th grade GT students transferring into FBISD from a GT program in a public school district are eligible to have their data reviewed for admission into the Academy.

Upon enrollment in Fort Bend ISD at the HOME middle school campus, the parent should make a request to the registrar and school counselor to have the child evaluated for gifted services in FBISD AND communicate interest in applying for the GT Academy .

- 1) The counselor will then request data from the sending District regarding the student's GT eligibility.\*
- 2) This data must be received by the District's GT Department by August 1 annually.
- 3) Upon confirmation of eligibility for gifted services in Fort Bend ISD, the parent should notify the GTA Coordinator to request information on the seat availability at the GT Academy.
- 4) Admission into the academy for eligible GT out of district transfer students will be handled on a case-by-case basis (based on availability).\

\*eligibility in another public school district does not guarantee GT-identification by FBISD

### Discontinuation/“Opting Out” of Program

At any time, parents can initiate the “Indication to Withdraw” process for their child to return to their HOME campus. The parents will be asked to complete a form as well as provide a copy of the Driver's License to the QVMS Registrar. The registrar will communicate with the receiving campus when the student is deactivated. The parent is responsible for communicating with the receiving school's counselor for scheduling. It is recommended that students do not withdraw during the final week any term.

The GT Academy is a program of choice. Therefore, students enrolled in the program are held to high standards for character, behavior, and academic performance. There are program expectations, which are FBISD board policy and indicated in the GT Academy Expectations, Probation, and Dismissal Procedures document (see Appendix).

# Curriculum and Instruction

## Concept-Based Teaching and Learning

The GTA curriculum teaches the FBISD curriculum and state-mandated TEKS within a conceptual framework to offer curricular alternatives unique to the school-of-choice program. Whenever possible, both horizontal and vertical conceptual themes are highlighted and posed to GTA students to foster cross-curricular connections and real-world applications.

### Conceptual Teaching and Learning in the GTA

- Educators who have specialized training in gifted education facilitate GTA courses in Math, Science, Social Studies, English, and Spanish.
- GTA grade level instruction is framed around generalizations and guided by essential questions to engage learners in critical thinking and problem solving.
- GTA students ponder these macro concepts, which are trans-disciplinary, and work independently and collaboratively to acquire discipline-specific micro concepts from the TEKS and FBISD curriculum.
- Conceptual learning focuses on the big picture as well as the classical questions in each discipline.

### GTA Universal Concepts

	<b>GTA 6 (Explorers)</b> Discovering the Greatness Within	<b>GTA 7 (Magnetix)</b> Making Lifelong Connections	<b>GTA 8 (Dynamix)</b> A Force of Greatness
Term 1	Foundations and Patterns	Influence and Motivation	Innovation and Change
Term 2	Interdependence and Identity	Power and Relationships	Mindfulness and Connections
Term 3	Perspectives and Interactions	Structure, Order and Chaos	Transformation and Balance
Term 4	Creativity and Exploration	Progress	Reflection

Concept-Based Learning approaches content area standards from the perspective of an over-arching concept.



## Experiential Education through Project-Based Learning

At the GT Academy, teachers are encouraged to use methods that enhance the critical thinking ability of students, not simply performance outcomes. As students are taught content, they are also encouraged to make broad conceptual connections across content areas and beyond.

Experiential learning through tailored and unique experiences is a key factor in learning. The core idea of Project Based Learning is that real-world problem solving connects the student's life experiences with school standards, provoking critical thinking as students acquire new knowledge.

At the GT Academy, students learn through reflection, observation, experiments, discoveries, and interaction, while at the same time examining real world solutions based upon personal and/or other classmates' fields of interest.

GTA teachers ensure that the teaching of basic knowledge and skills is ongoing to ensure proper progression of learning. Simultaneously, they challenge students to analyze, synthesize, and apply that knowledge to hypothetical and real-world scenarios to create new ideas and applications of that knowledge.

## Field Experiences

Field experiences are authentic learning activities (outside of the normal classroom setting) that correlate to and supplement the content and/or universal concept being taught in the GTA core classrooms. Some field experiences are tailored to meet specific cross-curricular learning objectives while others have a primary focus of providing students with an opportunity for deeper investigation of a particular topic and/or learning based on the universal concept of the term.

Typically, each grade level takes four field experiences per year (at least two off-campus).

The curriculum and learning priorities of field experiences are planned by the grade level GTA teachers. The alignment and coordination of these experiences is the responsibility of the GTA Coordinator.

Due to limited funds allocated to GTA programming, the expense of these field experiences are the responsibility of the GTA community, constituting a majority of the annual dues for each grade level.

### Historical Examples of Off-Campus Experiences:

Transformation and Balance – Holocaust Museum (grade 8)

Texas Journeys Trip - San Antonio/Austin (grade 7)

Cultural Anthropology Tour – Five Religious Sites (grade 6)

### Historical Examples of On-Campus Experiences:

Mindfulness Experience (grade 8)

Ed-Camp Student-Led Conferences (grade 7)

Explorer World Market (grade 6)

# Program Job Roles

## **Campus Team**

### QVMS Principal

Responsibilities: Ensure the GTA remains in alignment with the overall campus mission, vision, and goals. Provide support to GTA program through professional development opportunities, logistical supports, and overall leadership guidance.

Communication: Regular communication with all QVMS parents, students, and teachers.

### GT Academy Coordinator

Responsibilities: Ensure the GTA remains in alignment with the overall campus mission, vision, and goals as well as ensuring programming goals and implementation plans are met.

Communication: Daily, weekly, and/or bi-weekly communication with GTA students, teachers, and parents.

### QVMS Administration Team

Responsibilities: Support the GTA coordinator, teachers, and students in the successful implementation of programming components.

Communication: Regular communication with GTA parents, students, and teachers.

### QVMS Counseling Team

Responsibilities Support the GTA coordinator, teachers, and students in the successful implementation of programming components. QVMS Counselors have a unique role is supporting the social and emotional well-being of GTA students on campus.

Communication: Regular communication with GTA parents, students, and teachers.

### Teacher Leadership Team

#### Grade Level Academy Sponsors (Team Leaders)

Responsibilities: Lead their assigned grade level teams in the weekly grade level meetings focuses on conceptual learning, coordination of assignments, student supports, and field experiences.

Communication: Regular communicate with grade level team. Communicate with parents and students as related to grade level information.

### Champion of Gifted Services (COGS)

Responsibilities: Serve as District GT Liaison supporting TPSP and GT professional development.

Communication: Regular communication with GTA teachers and campus administration (as needed).

## Community

### Parents

Parents are a vital component of the GT Academy. They serve as field experience chaperones, volunteer for on-campus events, provide support to teachers when requested, and more. But, most importantly, GTA parents help their children succeed by being attentive to them at home. According to NAGC “Helping Gifted Children Succeed,” here are tools for parents to use at-home with their GTA student.

- Be attentive to your child’s comments and observations.
- Create an environment that promotes self-expression.
- Help her or him to develop skills and interests, for example, in plant science, animal care, electronics, carpentry, mechanics, law, design, and crafts.
- Encourage her or him to explore the beauty of diverse cultures—through language, poetry, story, song, dance, puppetry, cooking, and crafts.
- Promote exploration and discovery.
- Emphasize effort and progress rather than perfection.
- Show your child how errors can be opportunities to discover and learn.
- Model positive ways to address setbacks and solve problems.
- Instill ways to help your child understand and regulate emotional reactions.
- Promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Demonstrate how to serve your community.

### Students

Middle School is universally recognized as a unique time in the life of a young learner. The GTA exists to teach GT-identified learners and facilitate their growth. We encourage our GTA students to:

- Attend school regularly and be on time to class.
- Set reasonable but challenging goals and regularly check on their academic progress via Skyward.
- Stay organized, write down all assignments, complete all homework, AND turn homework in on time.
- Listen carefully, follow directions, and come to class with all the needed materials.
- Schedule time each evening to prepare for the next school day.
- Choose friends and collaborators wisely.
- Seek help from teachers and counselors proactively before becoming overwhelmed.
- Involve their parents/guardians with schoolwork and school activities.
- Participate in extracurricular activities.
- Improve and develop computer and technology skills while practicing responsible digital citizenship.

## GT Parent Advisory Committee

GTA parents will represent QVMS as part of the GT Parent Advisory Committee in the same way as any other middle school.

# Professional Learning

## GT Academy Coordinator

The GT Academy Coordinator must have the initial 30 hours of GT Training and complete at least 12 hours annually of GT training in any of the five domains. The GT Academy coordinator must have passed the GT Supplemental Exam. The GT Academy Coordinator is responsible for the proper training of QVMS GTA administration, counselors, and teachers during professional development days and grade level meetings.

## Campus Administrators

QVMS Campus administrators should have the 6 hours Nature and Needs Training and should complete at least 6 hours of GT update training every two years.

## Counselors

QVMS Campus administrators should have the 6 hours Nature and Needs Training and should complete at least 6 hours of GT update training every two years.

## Champions of Gifted Services (COGS)

The Champion of Gifted Services (COGS) must have the initial 30 hours of GT Training and complete at least 6 hours annually of GT training in any of the five domains. The COGS is encouraged to pass the GT Supplemental Exam.

## Teachers

GT Academy teachers must have the initial 30 hours of GT training and complete at least 6 hours annually of GT training in as aligned with State/District requirements. GT Academy teachers are encouraged to earn their GT Supplemental Endorsement. In addition to state required training, teachers new to the GT Academy must complete a series of learning sessions on the topics on Concept-Based Learning, Project-Based Learning, servicing GTA students who have Opportunity Gaps, and Social and Emotional Supports for GTA students. Additionally, GT Academy teachers will engage in ongoing PD during professional development days and during grade level meetings.

# Support for Special Populations

## "Lunch Bunch" Support Plan

Starting in the 2024-25 school year, the GT Academy Coordinator will coordinate a "lunch bunch" social and academic support group targeting traditionally under-represented, twice exceptional, and struggling GTA students. This group will focus on grade 6 GTA students and meet during their designated lunch time once a week. Prior to the start of the school year, the GTA coordinator will assemble a list of incoming students whose elementary campuses are noted as normed campuses. This list will be used along with teacher recommendations and consideration of grades as the school year progresses to designate which students will be part of the lunch bunch. The aim of the lunch bunch is to provide the designated students with a personal connection to the GTA coordinator, GTA teachers, peers, and GTA student mentors in order to support their personal, social, and academic success. The program will include team-building cooperative activities as well as strategies, intervention, and accountability to support overall student success—socially, emotionally, and academically. In ensuing years, former grade 6 lunch bunch alumni will be utilized to provide guidance (as 7th and 8th graders) based on their own experiences to further develop the fidelity of this support program. Additionally, the program will be reiterated and revised as needed each year—based on lessons learned in implementation—to maximize its effectiveness.

# Parent and Community Involvement

## Parent Involvement and Education

The GT Academy encourages parents to be continually involved in programming. In addition to volunteer opportunities, the GT Academy shall provide educational and networking opportunities for parents throughout each school year.

## Community Engagement

GT Academy students and teachers engage with the community in ways that are authentic and organic such as volunteering, competitions, and special programming and field experiences.

# Communications

## Communication Plan

### Regular Updates

THE GT Academy Coordinator will send digital newsletters to stakeholders with information on upcoming events, program information, requested parent actions, GT education articles and links, information from teachers, and Team Up Calendars (calendars where teachers post and monitor major assignments and projects). These letters will be archived and available on the FBISD Gifted & Talented website found at [www.fortbendisd.com/gtacademy](http://www.fortbendisd.com/gtacademy).

### GTA Twitter

The GT Academy Coordinator and/or select Academy Sponsors will utilize Twitter to highlight individual and group successes and achievements. It will also be a space to showcase the daily happenings on campus throughout a normal day as well as special occasions and events. Parents can utilize the GTA Spotlight Form to submit accomplishments for Twitter.

### GTA Website

The GT Academy website is managed by the GT Academy Coordinator. Its primary use is communicating to potential students and others wanting to learn more about the program.

### Public Relations Team

The GT Academy coordinator will develop a team of teachers and parent volunteers who are interested in networking with local news outlets and FBISD communications team to ensure proper highlighting of some of the most amazing successes and accomplishments of the program.

### Teacher Emails

GTA Teachers will use Skyward messenger and/or Outlook to send regular communications to parents regarding needs of their classrooms as well as ways parents can support their students.

### Schoology

Each grade level will have a Schoology "team" course for which all teachers as well as the GT Academy Coordinator have admin permissions. This course is used to communicate upcoming dates, ongoing projects, and events. It is also used to share enrichment opportunities to students.

## **Appendix A: Program Forms**



## GT Academy Shared Beliefs

- We believe it is essential to create an engaging, safe and challenging environment that nurtures the social, emotional, and academic needs of our students.
- We must develop critically-thinking minds through rigor and authenticity of conceptual ideas and encourage students to take ownership of their inherent intellectual abilities and tendencies for leadership.
- Each teacher is instrumental as a facilitator and developer of meaningful, relevant, and integrated curriculum.
- It is our responsibility to provide abundant opportunities to foster a gifted and talented student's ability and to promote growth.
- Our obligation to struggling students is to quickly identify the underlying causes and intervene with support. Likewise, mistakes and struggles are opportunities for students to grow, not final measures.
- Parents, teachers, and the community must be active partners to provide accountability, support, and guidance to students.
- Communication and positive interaction are essential to the development of mutual trust among stakeholders.
- To be successful in a constantly evolving society, students need interpersonal skills to work in teams in multi-cultural, multi-lingual environments.
- Students need to be prepared for leadership roles in an increasingly complex and technological global society based on teamwork, contributions, creativity, and excellence.

## GTA Website

- [www.fortbendisd.com/gtacademy](http://www.fortbendisd.com/gtacademy)

## GTA Twitter

- [www.twitter.com/FBISD\\_GTA](http://www.twitter.com/FBISD_GTA)

## GTA Leadership Team

Audra Ude, *QVMS Principal*

Joseph Bernhart, *GT Academy Coordinator*

Rachelle Wooten, *6<sup>th</sup> Grade Assistant Principal*

Suni Walter, *7<sup>th</sup> Grade Associate Principal*

Joe Schulz, *8<sup>th</sup> grade Assistant Principal*

Ed Connolly, *GTA 6 Team Leader*

TBD, *GTA 7/8 Team Leader*

Kafi Downs, *6<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor (LEAD)*

Danielle Henry, *7<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor*

Zorya Briggs, *8<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor*

Doreen Lee, *GTA 7 Team Leader*

Jeanette Morales, *GTA 8 Team Leader*

Doreen Lee & Nasreen Momin, *Champion(s) of Gifted Services*

## GT Academy Expectations, Probation, and Dismissal Procedures

### Academy Expectations:

The GT Academy is a program of choice. Therefore, students enrolled in the program are held to higher standards. It is expected that students in the GT Academy represent QVMS and the academy in a positive and respectful manner.

#### I. Character and Community Interactions:

To establish a physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe environment, GTA students must uphold the highest standard for how they interact with one another. Behaviors that disrupt the learning and/or positive experience for other academy students will not be tolerated. Bullying, teasing, laughing at answers/ideas, excluding, dismissing, threatening, cyberbullying, and other hurtful behaviors will be investigated and handled on a case-by-case basis.

If a GT Academy student shows a pattern of negative character behaviors, interventions will be put in place to support this student's growth. However, should the pattern of behavior remain unchanged, the Academy Review Committee shall determine whether probation or dismissal will be recommended.

#### II. Behavior and Conduct:

Discipline referrals (notification that a student is not following the FBISD Code of Conduct) are not acceptable for GT Academy students because they do not reflect the values and behavior expected of students in the Academy. It is recognized that students sometimes make mistakes. However, a pattern of behaviors that breach the code of conduct may result in probation or dismissal from the GT Academy.

Discipline referrals resulting in **In-School Suspension (ISS)** will be handled in the following manner:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense = official warning signed in student conference with Campus Administrator and GTA Coordinator.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense = probation to remain in place for one academic year. Parent/Guardian and student required to sign an acknowledgment of consequences for further ISS referrals. Behavior action plan also issued by Academy Coordinator.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense = discretionary removal from the academy at end of semester if so determined by Academy Dismissal Committee.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Offense = mandatory removal from the academy immediately.

Discipline referrals resulting in **Out of School Suspension (OSS)** will be handled in the following manner:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense = student placed on probation, signed in parent conference with Campus Administrator and GTA Coordinator.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense = discretionary removal possible from the academy if so determined by Academy Dismissal Committee.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense = mandatory removal from the academy immediately.

Referrals resulting in placement in the District Alternative Education Program (DAEP) will result in immediate removal from the academy and return to the zoned campus upon completion of the DAEP assignment.

Appeals to dismissal by the Academy Dismissal Committee must comply with Policy FNG (Local).

**Note:** *Campus Administration reserves the right to dismiss any student from the Academy at any time based on the severity of an infraction or pattern of infractions.*

### III. Class Performance:

For a multitude of possible reasons, students sometimes struggle to maintain acceptable grades. However, as a school of choice program, in alignment with Policy EGA-R, Academy students maintain certain standards for grades. Therefore, grade expectations have been put in place ensure student success and appropriate supports are provided.

**Academy students must maintain a 70 or higher in all courses.** If a student's grades fall below a 70 at a progress report, the student will be required to attend tutorials as outlined by the classroom teacher. In the event that a student fails to meet expectations at the end of a semester, he/she will be placed on probation for one semester and receive an academic plan of action. During the academic plan of action period, the Academy Coordinator will initiate supports designed to help improve the student's performance.

Two consecutive semesters below the standard will result in dismissal from the Academy and return to the zoned campus at the end of the semester in which the second violation occurs.

Failure to pass any course at the end of the academic year will result in a review by the Academy Review Committee to determine **probation** or **dismissal**.

**Probation** in the GT Academy is defined as notification and required interventions as outlined by the district administration. All probationary requirements will be implemented to improve student success in needed areas. The goal is to retain students, but, in the end, the onus to improve is on the student.

**Dismissal** is defined as removal from the academy program and return to the zoned campus. All dismissals will be approved by the Academy Review Committee. Appeals to dismissals decided by the Academy Review Committee must adhere to Policy FNG (Local).

### IV. GT Academy Honor Code

As a GT Academy student, you join a community of learners who are committed to academic excellence. The faculty of the GT Academy at Quail Valley Middle School expect students to pursue their studies with integrity and honesty; therefore, all students should know that incidents of academy dishonesty are taken very seriously.

Interpretations of academic dishonesty may differ among individuals and groups. Therefore, the determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgement of the classroom teacher or another supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observations, information from students, or other evidence.

Cheating and plagiarizing are not only Honor Code violations, but are unacceptable behaviors that have moral and legal implications.

The following list identifies some infractions defined as academic dishonesty:

#### *Cheating*

- Copying, in part, or in whole, from someone else's test, homework, project;
- Altering or interfering with grading;
- Using, during a test or examination, any unauthorized source or digital device; using material not authorized by the teacher; accessing shared answers; or consulting others secretly or without permission .

#### *Plagiarism*

- Incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts of another person's writing, without giving appropriate credit, and presenting the product as your own;
- Submitting a paper that was purchased from a research or term paper service, including the Internet; or undocumented web source usage.

### Other Examples

- Allowing another student to copy your homework, or from your paper during a test, or examination;
- Giving your homework, essay, project, or other work to another student to copy;
- Altering a graded assignment or test after it has been returned, then submitting the work for re-grading;
- Collaboration without permission from the teacher.
- Turning in work that is not your own, including work written by AI, not you.

### Following Each Infraction:

- Student-teacher conference to complete the Academic Dishonesty Infraction Form (which includes parent signature). The student **must** re-do the assignment and will receive a grade reduction depending on the severity of the infraction. The student cannot earn greater than a 50 on any redone assignment on which the child was academically dishonest (daily or major).
- A completed copy of the Academic Dishonesty Form is provided to the student/parent, teacher, and GTA Coordinator.
- Every infraction after the first follows the same process. **However, each subsequent offense will result in a disciplinary referral, and the student will now be subject to the procedures in place for Behavior & Conduct infractions** (see Section II above).

### V. Field Experiences:

Field Experiences (in-house or off-campus) are a required part of the GTA Curriculum. Students who have earned a discipline referral may not be allowed to attend a field experience following such a referral. **Refunds will not be provided should a student miss a Field Experience due to a discipline referral.**

# Academic Dishonesty Infraction Form

## QVMS Gifted and Talented Academy

### GT Academy Honor Code

As a GT Academy student, you join a community of learners who are committed to academic excellence. The faculty of the GT Academy at Quail Valley Middle School expects students to pursue their studies with integrity and honesty; thus, incidents of academy dishonesty are taken very seriously.

### Following Each Infraction:

- Student-teacher conference to complete the Academic Dishonesty Infraction Form
- The student will re-do the assignment (grade up to 50)
- *Every infraction after the first will follow the same process. However, each subsequent offense will result in a disciplinary referral and the student will now be subject to the procedures in place for behavioral violations (see Section II).*

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Infraction \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Assignment(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Description of Consequence:

Student must re-do the assignment and turn it into the teacher. The teacher will then assign a grade to the redone assignment (daily or major). The grade (up to 50) will be entered into the gradebook with comment (Academic Dishonesty Infraction).

Parents, please sign and return this form to the issuing teacher. This form will be kept on hand if infractions accumulate within the school year. Hopefully, they will not. Feel free to keep a copy for your records. A signed copy must be submitted to the GTA Coordinator.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# GTA HANDBOOK 2024-25 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & PHOTO RELEASE FORM

Student's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_

Spanish Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

## EXPECTATIONS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Our signatures acknowledge our understanding of the Academy-specific requirements outlined in the 2024-2025 GT Academy Handbook section titled "**Expectations, Supports, Probation and Dismissal Procedures.**"

Student's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## PHOTO RELEASE FORM

The GT Academy and Quail Valley Middle School (check one below)

\_\_\_\_\_ has

\_\_\_\_\_ does **not** have

permission to use my child's photograph publicly to promote the Academy. I understand that the images may be used in print publications, on-line publications, bulletin boards, presentations, websites, and social media. I also understand that no royalty, fee or other compensation shall become payable to me by reason of such use.

Parent/Guardian's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Academic Plan of Action

An expectation of a grade of 70 or above in all courses is required as put forth in the FBISD Academy Programs Overview (EGA-R) and as clarified in the GTA Handbook. However, we are aware that grades do not come easy for all students in all circumstances. Thus, this Academic Plan of Action exists to help students who are struggling achieve their potential.

According to policy, a student who earns below a 70 in any class will be placed on an academic plan of action. During this period, additional supports will be in place to support student success. The plan of action period will be one grading period. Upon completion of the plan of action period, the student will be released from this academic plan of action if passing all classes (with support as needed) **or continue on academic probation if still failing the class.**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Plan of Action:

I understand that I am on a Plan of Action until the end of this grading period. The terms of this plan of action include:

- **Beginning:** Meet with GTA Coordinator.
  - Discuss and note plan for academic success; set final meeting date.
- **During:** Attend tutorials once per week for any class that I did not earn a 70 or am at risk of not earning a 70.
  - Complete "Tutorial Log" on Academic Probation Form. *Teacher signatures required.*
- **During:** Complete grade check using Skyward for all Academy Classes.
  - Complete "Grade Check" on Academic Probation Form. *Teacher signatures required.*
- **End:** Attend a FINAL appointment with the GTA Coordinator. *Coordinator signature required.*
  - At this appointment, it will be determined if the plan has successfully intervened or if further action is needed. *Further action may include probation and/or consideration for dismissal from the program.*

Two consecutive semesters below standard will result in dismissal from the Academy. Failure to pass any course at the end of the academic year will result in a review by the Academy Review Committee to determine probation or dismissal.

I understand the terms of my plan of action are important and designed to help me succeed!

The plan of action review date will be: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Content Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**GTA Behavior Plan of Action (Probation)**

In accordance with the G/T Academy expectations for behavior, the following student has been placed on behavioral probation at the G/T Academy.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Behavior Plan of Action/Probation (attach documentation as needed):

I understand that I am considered to be on a behavioral plan of action at the GT Academy until \_\_\_\_\_ . The expectations will remain thereafter, but the terms of this plan will be adjusted at this time as needed.

As part of this plan of action, I will participate in the following:

The following actions will indicate a violation of this plan of action:

- Any discipline referral during this time frame.
- Failure to improve behavior in targeted area.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*CC: Director of Gifted and Talented and QVMS Principal*



Gifted and Talented Academy Quail Valley Middle School  
Fort Bend Independent School District  
3019 FM 1092  
Missouri City, TX 77459  
281.634.3600

**Indication of Return to Home Campus**

I have chosen to withdraw my child from the FBISD G/T Academy. I understand that by completing and returning this form, I have indicated that my child relinquishes his/her place at the G/T Academy and will attend his/her zoned middle school campus beginning as soon as possible. **I understand that this process is final and cannot be reversed.** Furthermore, I understand my child may not be able to complete the high school Spanish I credit until 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and/or I understand that Spanish II is not available at my zoned campus. I give permission for Quail Valley Middle School to notify my child’s home campus of the transfer and request that all records be transferred to his/her zoned middle school campus as soon as possible.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian’s Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student’s Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zoned Middle School Campus

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student’s ID Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of request

As the G/T Academy continues to grow and strives to meet the needs of its students, please provide a reason for leaving the academy program:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please submit this form via email or in person to:

*Joseph Bernhart*  
G/T Academy Coordinator  
[joseph.bernhart@fortbendisd.com](mailto:joseph.bernhart@fortbendisd.com)

## **Appendix B: Sample Communications**

# Sample GTA Newsletters

## You Did It! On to the Next Grade!

On to Grade 7 or Grade 8 in the Gifted & Talented Academy!

### Look for Information to Be Sent Throughout the Summer!

Throughout the summer, I will send messages with information about the the upcoming school year, transportation, and all things GTA. Keep your eyes open, and--as always--reach out to me any time you have questions.

Joseph Bernhart  
Academy Coordinator  
[joseph.bernhart@fortbendisd.com](mailto:joseph.bernhart@fortbendisd.com)  
(281) 634-6687



---

### DON'T FORGET: T-shirt Design Contest!

Submit your t-shirt design for next year's class t-shirt asap!

# T-SHIRT | DESIGN CONTEST

## Calling all GTA Students!

Be a part of GTAcademy history by designing the 2024-25 GTA T-shirt.

**Submission deadline is May 23, 2024.**

- Submissions must be turned in via Microsoft Forms using your FBISD network credentials.
- [UPLOAD SUBMISSIONS HERE](#)
- GTA Teacher leaders will select the top designs based on creativity, theme and attention to detail. The GTA Students will vote on the winning design!
- **Winner receives a free t-shirt for him/herself and for one family member!**

### Guidelines\*\*

- Must include the words "FBISD GT Academy" in any form.
- Must include grade level Team name; you can only design for **your grade level next year (2024-25)**.
- Must include the school year "2024-25."
- Final T-shirt should be limited to 6 colors or less including black.
- Digital and hand-drawn accepted.
- Design for one side of t-shirt only.
- Design must have a concept that expresses and connects to the TEAM theme:
  - Grade 6 = **EXPLORERS** (exploring, discovering...)
  - Grade 7 = **MAGNETIX** (bonding, connections...)
  - Grade 8 = **DYNAMIX** (understanding complexities, reflecting...)
- Be creative and original in your interpretation and artistic representation of the grade level theme.

\*\* By submitting an entry, the artist consents that it is his/her own original work and that he/she has all necessary rights and permissions to use included elements. The t-shirt contest team reserves the right to make adjustments and alterations to the winning entry to ensure that the reproduction of the image is of the best quality. The winning artist releases to QVMS the exclusive right to artwork to be used for school promotional material. No submissions will be returned.



GTA T-shirt Design Contest.pdf

[Download](#)  
739.3 KB

**The submission deadline will be extended through the end of next week, 5/31/24.**

**[Click Me! Submit your design here!](#)**

## In Other News: GTA Students Excel!



### GTA Students Competed at the Academic Pentathlon NATIONALS!

**Congratulations to the GTA Academic Pentathlon Team!**

The team had a successful run at Nationals in Phoenix, AZ on May 16-18th. *Joseph Cabanas medaled individually in Mathematics,*

earning a sliver. And the team placed 5th overall even though they had just 7 team members while other teams had 9. It was a fantastic performance and a fantastic weekend in sunny AZ!

[Read about it on FBISD's website by clicking here.](#)

## Congratulations to NCTE Promising Young Writers Contest Winners!

We are proud to recognize grade 8 GTA students Eloisa Molina, Aurshai Kankanala, and Chinhitha Pampulapati for being selected by the National Council of Teachers of English for the following honors.



**Eloisa: First Class; Aurshai: Excellent; Chinhitha: Excellent**

NCTE is the nation's most comprehensive literacy organization, supporting more than 25,000 teachers of English Language Arts across the educational spectrum, so this is quite an honor!

## The Expo of Excellence Was a SMASHING SUCCESS!

Over 150 6th, 7th, and 8th grade GTA students rose up as Student Leaders and presented at the first annual Expo of Excellence. Incoming 6th graders and their families witnessed first hand just what the academy is all about. Our GTA Presenters were masterfully prepared and wowed their audience. Many thanks to those students who took the time to share their knowledge and expertise on a multitude of topics. Each GTA presenter was gratefully awarded an Expo of Excellence certificate acknowledging his/her role as a Student Leader who made the Expo a success!



**Mixtape Presentations**



**Mixtape and TED Talk Presentations**



**Science Olympiad Presentations + More**



**Science Fair Presentation**



**Science Bowl**



**Mixtape Presentation**



**Robotics**



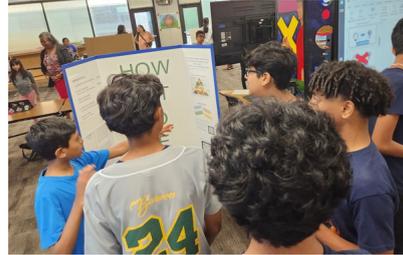
**Science Fair**



**Be the Change  
Presentation**



**Science Fair**



**Mixtape Presentation**



**Mixtape Presentation**

😊 **Have a Great Summer! You'll Hear From Me Again Soon!** 😊



**GT Academy at QVMS**

GT is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters



# GTA Summer Update #2 (Grade 6)

Grade 6- June 2024

Raider Camp Orientation, VOTE for T-shirt Design, and More

---

Grade 6 GTA Orientation and Voluntary Parent Meeting  
Thursday, July 25, 2024

Student Orientation 10:00 am-3:00 pm/Parent Meeting  
2:30-3:00 pm\*\*\*

\*\*\*NOTE: The GTA Grade 6 Orientation is EXTENDED until 3:00pm (it does NOT end at 1:00 pm).

On July 25, 2024, Quail Valley Middle School is hosting a Grade 6 Orientation called Raider Camp for **ALL incoming 6th grade students from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm.** Then, **from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm,** **ONLY GTA incoming 6th graders will stay on campus** for some extra time to get to know one another and learn about the GTA. Since GTA students come from all over the district, it's important to create some extra time for them to get to know each other before the first day of school.

You should have already received a "QVMS Raider Camp 24-25" email with a survey to complete. This was sent by the QVMS leadership team. If you did NOT receive this email or have NOT yet completed that registration form, you may do so at this link: [QVMS Raider Camp 24-25 Schoolwide Registration](#) If you already completed this form, please do NOT do so again.

**Below, you will find a DIFFERENT signup for the GTA records.** It will simply ask you to verify that your child is attending the orientation and **STAYING until 3:00 pm** for the special GTA session. It will ALSO ask you to verify if a parent plans on coming to the Parent Information Meeting from 2:30-3:00 pm that afternoon. This will be a brief session to share some beginning of the year

information with parents before the start of school. **If you already completed this form, please do NOT do so again.** [GTA6 Orientation Camp Signup](#)

---

## Grade 6 T-shirt: It's Time To VOTE!



First of all, thank you to the students who submitted t-shirt designs. Although it was a tough decision, GTA teachers met last week and selected the top 3 designs. So now, it's time to VOTE for your favorite design.

You may only vote for 1 of the 3 designs. The t-shirt that receives the most votes will be the Grade 6 GTA Explorers class t-shirt. VERY EXCITING! **You will have to use your FBISD Outlook student credentials to vote.** Vote using the link below.

[GRADE 6 GTA T-SHIRT DESIGN VOTING](#)

---

## FBISD Transportation Survey (Mandatory)

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SURVEY IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY!**

*Thank you to those who've already done so.*



**Whether your child will ride the bus or not, the FBISD Transportation Department is asking you to complete the survey linked below.** This will help them in planning the bus routes for the 2024-25 school year.

In general, the pick up and drop off points will be at the FBISD elementary school to which your child is zoned. This will make pick up and drop off a familiar location and, hopefully, convenient. Please complete the transportation survey linked below.

[FBISD GTA Transportation Survey for 2024-25](#)

---

## Grade 6 WhatsApp Group



**Join the Grade 6 GTA WhatsApp Group to Communicate with Other Parents**

This group is for parents of Grade 6 GTA students for the 2024-25 school year. Connect with and communicate with the parents of your child's soon-to-be classmates. This group is administrated by parents, not the GTA.

If you're interested, join by clicking this link: [QVMS 6th Grade WhatsApp 2024-25](#)

---

## Quail Valley Middle School PTO

Please read the letter below from the QVMS PTO. Our PTO is very strong and extremely supportive of the GTA as well as QVMS as a whole. ***Please consider joining our PTO and serving in a leadership capacity.*** Our goal is to get 100% membership from GTA Parents! *Information about how to join will be shared in future newsletters.*



**QVMS PTO--Letter for Incoming Parents.pdf**

[Download](#)  
167.7 KB

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## The President's Volunteer Service Award 2024-25



### **Summertime is a Great Time to Volunteer to Make Your Community a Better Place**

The Gifted & Talented Academy is a sanctioning entity for the President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) for current QVMS students and QVMS Alumni. Learn about the President's Volunteer Service Award and how to participate (which is OPTIONAL) on the QVMS PVSA webpage. Click the link below if interested in investigating PVSA.

[QVMS President's Volunteer Service Award Webpage](#)

---

## Questions?

Joseph Bernhart  
*Gifted & Talented Academy Coordinator*

**Summer Hours:** Monday-Thursday 7:30am-5:30pm  
FBISD Closed Week of July 1-5

[joseph.bernhart@fortbendisd.com](mailto:joseph.bernhart@fortbendisd.com)

(281) 634-6687



## GT Academy at QVMS

GT is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

# GTA Field Experiences 2024-25

GTA6 = Red  
 GTA7 = Green  
 GTA8 = Blue

## September

20: **GTA7** - Texian Time Machine FE (On Campus)  
 23, 24, & 25: **GTA6** - Cultural Anthropology Tours (Off Campus)

## October

2 & 3: **GTA8** - Interest-Based FE (Off Campus)  
 24: **GTA7** - EdCamp Student-led Conference (On Campus)  
 31: **GTA8** - Dia De Los Muertos FE (Off Campus)

## November

14: **GTA6** - Imagining the Change (On Campus)

## December

5: **GTA8** - Transcendentalism/Mindfulness FE (Off Campus & On Campus)  
 12: **GTA7** - BioTech Presentations & Assembly (On Campus)

## January

24: **GTA7** - Be the Change Expo (On Campus)

## February

11 & 12: **GTA6** - La Comida Discovering Spanish FE (Off Campus)  
 18 & 19: **GTA8** - Holocaust Museum FE (Off Campus & On Campus)  
 20 & 21: **GTA7** - Texas Journeys Overnight FE (Off Campus)

## March

17 & 18: **GTA6** - Perspectives FE (Off Campus & On Campus)

## April

30: **GTA6** - Imagining the Change Presentations (On Campus)

## May

1: **GTA7** - Galveston Erosion Experiment FE (Off Campus)  
 8 & 9: **GTA8** - Camp Olympia Overnight (Off Campus)

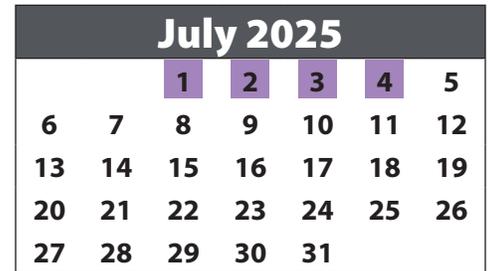
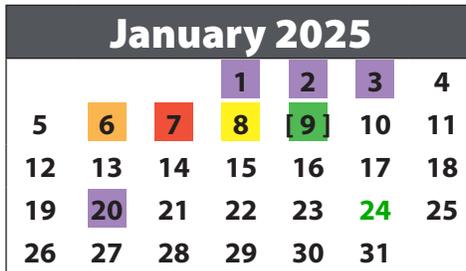
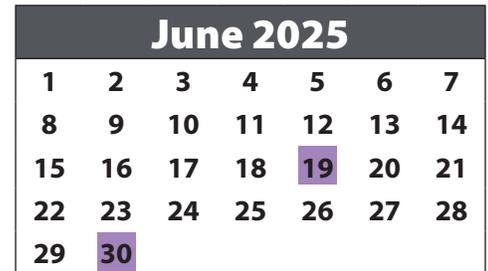
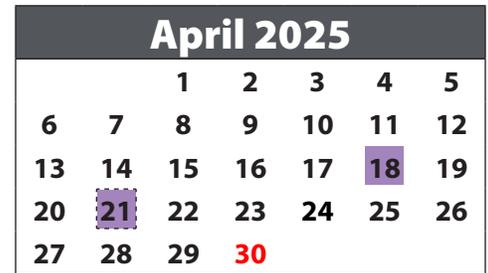
12: **GTA6** - Houston Museum of Natural Science Interest-based FE (Off Campus)  
 19: **GTA6** - Explorer World Market (On Campus)

### KEY

- Teacher Work Day
- Professional Learning
- Teacher Planning
- First Day of Semester
- District Professional Learning Day
- Student/Teacher Holiday
- Beginning/End of Nine Weeks
- Exams
- Early Release ES
- Early Release HS/MS
- Early Release HS/MS/ES
- Inclement Weather Make-up Day

This Calendar Reflects the Following	ES	MS	HS
Total Days of Instruction	171	171	171
Total Teacher Contract Days	187	187	187
Operational Minutes per Full Day	440	440	440
Operational Minutes per Early Release Days	240	270	245
Total Operational Minutes Pre-Waiver	74,440	74,560	74,460
Waiver Minutes for Professional Learning	2,100	2,100	2,100
Total Operational Min. w/ Approved Waivers	76,540	76,660	76,560
Bank of Operational Minutes	940	1,060	960

## Sample Field Experiences Calendar



1st Semester Grading Period	83 Days
1st Nine Weeks	8/8 - 10/9 42
2nd Nine Weeks	10/16 - 12/20 41

2nd Semester Grading Period	88 Days
3rd Nine Weeks	1/9 - 3/7 38
4th Nine Weeks	3/17 - 5/29 50

## **Appendix C: Parent Guide**

## GTA Frequently Asked Questions



# GT Academy 5th Grade Information

### **Where is the GT Academy located?**

The FBISD GT Academy is located in Quail Valley Middle School – 3019 FM 1029 Rd Missouri City, TX

### **What is the start and end time at QVMS?**

The school day at QVMS is 8:50 AM – 4:10 PM.

### **Is there transportation provided to QVMS GTA?**

The District provides transportation from the common locations such as elementary schools and community centers to QVMS. There is no transportation for before or after school activities.

### **How do I handle course selection if I do not know whether my child is attending QVMS GTA or their zoned middle school?**

When doing course selection, continue as if your child will be enrolling at his/her **home campus**. Follow all timelines provided by your elementary counselor. Upon acceptance to the GT Academy, we will share the GTA course selection process. The only course decision that incoming GTA students will have is Fine Arts (Band, Orchestra, Theatre, Choir, or Art).

### **Can my child play sports at QVMS GTA?**

Students at QVMS can participate in volleyball, football, basketball, tennis, track and field, cheer-leading, and/or soccer beginning in their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year. This is standard across FBISD.

### **What kind of clubs are available at QVMS GTA?**

Clubs change from year to year. To see this year's offerings of clubs visit the QVMS Clubs Directory at this link: [https://www.fortbendisd.com/site/Default.aspx?](https://www.fortbendisd.com/site/Default.aspx?PageType=1&SiteID=2470&ChannelID=2838&DirectoryType=6)

[PageType=1&SiteID=2470&ChannelID=2838&DirectoryType=6](https://www.fortbendisd.com/site/Default.aspx?PageType=1&SiteID=2470&ChannelID=2838&DirectoryType=6)

### **What classes do students take at the QVMS GTA?**

Students have 7 periods every day. GTA students are enrolled in 5 core classes: GTA Math, GTA Science, GTA Social Studies, GTA ELA, and GTA Spanish. Upon completing the three-year GTA course pathway, students will have *at least three* high school credits (2 Spanish and 1 Algebra 1). They also take PE or Kickstart and a Fine Art/Elective.

**What electives are available at the QVMS GTA?**

Students can choose between PE and KickStart. In 6th grade, they can also choose band, orchestra, choir, theater, or art. In 7th and 8th grade, students may opt to take an alternative elective (not a fine arts elective) if they do not want to continue in band, orchestra, choir, theater, or art.

**Is acceleration a part of the GT Academy program?**

Yes, the GTA offers Spanish II on campus (the only middle school to do so in FBISD). Algebra 1 is also a core class for GTA students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. If students would like to take other advanced level courses such as Geometry (offered on campus), Biology (offered on campus), Algebra II, etc., they have to take a Credit By Exam to accelerate. The majority of students at the GTA do not accelerate via CBE and follow the standard course pathway. Some, however, do take advanced courses via CBE. Visit <https://www.fortbendisd.com/Page/296> for more information about CBE.

	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Math	GTA Math 6 (6 <sup>th</sup> grade math standards) (must pass Math 6 CBE to skip)	GTA Math 7 (7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grade math standards) (must pass Math 7 and Math 8 CBE)	Algebra 1 Pre-AP/GT OR Math 8 GTA
ELA	GTA ELA 6	GTA ELA 7	GTA ELA 8
Science	GTA Science 6	GTA Science 7	GTA Science 8
Social Studies	GTA World Cultures	GTA Texas History	GTA US History
World Language	Discovering Span Language	Spanish I (HS Credit)	Spanish II (HS Credit)
Physical Education	PE/Kickstart	PE/Kickstart and Health	PE/Kickstart
Fine Art/Electives	Fine Art	Fine Art/Elective	Fine Art/Elective

**Will my child take classes only with students from the GT Academy?**

Five out of seven of your child’s classes will homogeneous GTA students. The other two, Fine Arts and PE/Kickstart, are shared classes between GTA and students zoned to QVMS.

**What systems are in place to help my child should he/she need it?**

Teachers in the academy are attuned to the needs of GT-identified learners, which creates a supportive classroom environment. They offer tutorials before school, after school, and during lunches for struggling learners. For social and emotional supports, students have access to their GT trained grade level counselors. The GT Academy coordinator provides overarching supports as well.

**How are parents kept informed?**

QVMS teachers, administrators, and counselors use Schoology, Skyward, and email to keep parents informed. There is also a GTA Website [www.fortbendisd.com/gtacademy](http://www.fortbendisd.com/gtacademy) and bi-weekly GTA Newsletters published and emailed via smore.com.

**What opportunities are there for parents to volunteer?**

The QVMS PTO is a strong parent organization that depends on parent volunteers. Visit [www.qvmspto.org](http://www.qvmspto.org)

**How many students attend QVMS and the GT Academy?**

For the 2024-25 school year, it is projected that there will be 1,050 students enrolled at QVMS. Approximately 525 of these students will be enrolled as GTA students.

**Can my child return to their zoned campus at any time?**

Students can return to their campus at any time. However, it is recommended that students commit to at least one full year to the program as 6<sup>th</sup> graders sometimes struggle with transitioning to middle school regardless of being in a special program.

**Can my child enroll in the GT Academy during 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade?**

At this time, policy does not allow for enrollment during the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade year.

**If my child is accepted into the GT Academy for 6<sup>th</sup> grade, do we re-apply every year?**

Once accepted as a GTA student, the transfer does not expire as long as the student remains a resident of Fort Bend ISD.

**How do I find the CogAT qualifying score for the GT Academy lottery?**

The CogAT scores that are used to determine lottery placement can be found on your child’s initial GT Identification Profile. The score of 130 (97<sup>th</sup> percentile) is the standard baseline for GT Identification. Please do not contact your child’s counselor for access to your child’s profile scores.

FORT BEND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Gifted and Talented Program Identification Profile

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Campus: \_\_\_\_\_ Grad Year: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First

ID#: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: ● Grade: ● Date Tested: \_\_\_\_\_

Currently identified as GT in FBISD:  ELA/Social Studies  Math/Science Ability Profile: \_\_\_\_\_

Measure	Student's Percentile Score	GT Standard	*SEM	ELA/ Social Studies	Math/ Science
CogAT Verbal - Language/Social Studies Score	95	97	2	1	
CogAT Quantitative - Math/Science Score	99	97	2		1
CogAT Non Verbal Mental Ability Score	92	97	2	0	0
<b>Total Tests Meeting GT Standard</b>					
Teacher Inventory Language/Social Studies	90	83	4	1	
Teacher Inventory Math/Science	95	83	5		1
Parent Inventory Language/Social Studies	88	82	4	1	
Parent Inventory Math/Science	54	79	4		0
<b>Total Inventories Meeting GT Standard</b>					

\*Standard Error of Measurement

**How are the GTA courses different from AAC Courses?**

GTA courses are different in many ways. Many of the most poignant differences are difficult to measure.

- Core classes are composed of supportive and like-minded GTA students.
- Teachers are trained and experienced with the needs of gifted learners.
- Core classes feature specialized units and accelerated learning.

- Collaborative and independent opportunities for student choice and project-based learning.
- Conceptual teaching is employed to horizontally connect learning across content areas and with the real world.
- Unique and consistent field experiences related to conceptual units and class content.

**What is the best way to decide if the GTA is right for my child?**

The GTA provides opportunity and challenge. Attendance may require certain sacrifices (time devoted to classwork, travel, etc.). You meet new friends, but miss old ones. The lessons are flexible and engaging, but require good time and priority management. The GTA is not a good fit for every child and family. However, students who have an internal desire and commitment to learning find a challenging, engaging, and supportive school where they will be valued, grow as people, and experience success. Academy alumni often report that the GTA was a formative educational experience in their lives, preparing them for success in high school, in college, and beyond.