

HORIZONS Program in CFISD

Quick Questions and Answers

New Students and Transfers

Q: What is the HORIZONS Program?

A: HORIZONS refers to Cypress-Fairbanks ISD's gifted and talented program. We recognize that children who qualify for this program have certain educational needs requiring significant intellectual challenge beyond what is offered by the scope of the on-level curriculum. The purpose of the program is to recognize the special needs of these students and provide services that require something more from the curriculum.

Q: My child was GT in our previous district. Would he/she qualify for the HORIZONS program in CFISD?

A: Parents must notify the registrar during the registration process regarding the GT placement in the previous school. There is no automatic placement of GT students from one district to another. Students would have to qualify for the program based on the District criteria for placement. You must provide evidence (testing scores) of previous GT placement to the elementary counselor or secondary director of instruction. That data will be reviewed and determination of placement or additional testing will be made within a six week period of entry into CFISD. If additional testing is required, you will be notified.

Q: My child has no previous test scores but I'd like him/her to be considered for your gifted and talented program (HORIZONS). What should I do? When is the testing deadline?

A: You may begin by visiting the HORIZONS website at <http://www.cfisd.net/dept2/curricu/gifted/gifted.htm>. From there, review information posted under Parent Resources. Specifically, read through the "Should I Refer My Child" PowerPoint for valuable information. You may also wish to discuss options with your child's teacher(s) and administration at his/her new campus. If you believe the HORIZONS Program is appropriate for your child, and you wish to have him/her tested, please request a *Parent Survey and Permission To Test Form* through either your school counselor (elementary) or the director of instruction (secondary). All forms for new student testing must be returned to your child's campus **no later than November 30, 2009**. If you move in after the fall deadline then notify your counselor or director of instruction within one week of entry to request the *Parent Survey and Permission to Test form*.

Q: What testing does CFISD administer as part of their qualification process?

A: CFISD uses both an abilities test and an achievement test as part of our identification process. We also incorporate data from the Parent Survey and Permission to Test form. Scores are reported on our HORIZONS Identification Matrix and certain point values are given to score ranges on these instruments. Specific point values determine placement into the HORIZONS program.

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Q: I have tested my child for a few years now and he/she still has not qualified. Should I continue to test?

A: If your child's scores are consistent from year to year, and below the superior range on either the abilities tests or the achievement tests, you may wish to refrain from additional testing. Our concern lies with the self-esteem of the student that continues to test and feels as though they have "failed" by not qualifying for the program. We would advise you to speak with your child's teacher and school staff to get additional information on how your child is learning at their current level and if additional testing is recommended.

Q: How does the HORIZONS Program work?

A: A student may be identified in the reading/language arts/social studies area, the math/science area, or both. In elementary school, identified GT students typically work together regardless of their area of identification. In middle school, students take HORIZONS classes that correspond to their area of identification.

Q: In middle school, what is the difference between Level 1 classes and HORIZONS Classes?

A: Children qualify for Level 1 classes based on academic performance in on-level classes. To qualify for HORIZONS classes, a student must be tested and formally identified as a gifted student. Level 1 classes have advanced curriculum that high performing students should be able to master. HORIZONS coursework involves greater depth and complexity and moves at a faster pace, since these students typically do not need multiple repetitions to master concepts.

Q: If I choose not to have my child tested at this time, what are my options for future testing?

A: Each student in CFISD has the opportunity to be referred for testing each Open Referral Period, which runs from October 1st until the last school day in November each year. To refer your child for testing, simply request a **Parent Survey and Permission to Test** form from your campus. Completed forms must be turned in to your child's elementary counselor or secondary director of instruction by the last school day in November. Late referrals cannot be honored due to the amount of planning, ordering of materials, and coordination of testing that must be accomplished. Testing will then occur in January and/or February. Your campus will inform you of the specific dates for testing in January.

Q: How do I learn more about the Referral Process?

A: The HORIZONS Department holds four Parent Information Meetings each fall. You may find information on these meetings on your campus website, in your campus newsletter, or on www.cfisd.net home page. We will also be posting information on CFTV's Channel 16 this fall. More information can also be obtained by speaking with various personnel at your child's campus (teacher, elementary counselor, secondary director of instruction).