ASCEND ELIGIBILITY

The following criteria are used to determine student eligibility for participation in the program:

- Current PISD GT student
- Educational need for the learning environment provided by the program
- Evidence that the student is functioning in the top 1% of the district’s population when compared to peers
- Ability to function in an environment which requires students to work at an accelerated pace on a complex and rigorous curriculum, while exhibiting self motivation and independence
- At least one abilities test score at or above 140 on a district-approved assessment
- Achievement test scores at or above grade level in all core areas
- Classroom performance indicating highly gifted level
- Teacher inventory indicating highly gifted level
- Expressed desire to participate in the program
- Student interview (optional)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the main entry points into ASCEND?
Fourth and sixth grade (as space is available)

How is ASCEND different from the regular classroom?
The ASCEND curriculum stems from the goals and objectives set by the district. Students must master the Texas essential knowledge requirements for the grade level. Additionally, the curriculum offers greater depth and complexity with student needs and interests in mind. The classroom teacher focuses on teaching the whole child through an interdisciplinary approach.

What does a student in this program look like?
ASCEND students, as all students, come in many packages, with individual strengths, weaknesses, and interests. These students have a thirst for knowledge and a desire to accelerate their academics.

What can I do as a parent?
Be sensitive to your child’s needs. Listen to his/her ideas and encourage his/her passions. Be open and accepting of his/her individuality.

What can I do if I have a concern?
Contact the teacher during school hours by email, note or phone.

What can I do if I have a campus concern (bus issue, school incident, etc)?
Contact the campus administrators.

What can I do if I have a program or GT concern?
Gifted & Talented Coordinator
Shirley Bachus, shirley.bachus@pfisd.net
(512) 594-0111

ASCEND Schools:
Windermere Elementary School
1101 Picadilly
Pflugerville, Texas 78660

Pflugerville Middle School
1600 W. Settlers Valley Drive
Pflugerville, Texas 78660

1401 West Pecan Street
Pflugerville, TX 78660

Telephone: 512.594.0000
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**Accelerated Student Curriculum to Engage and Nurture Development**

ASCEND is a full-time program for GT students in grades 4-8 designed to accelerate math and science instruction while adding depth and complexity to English and social studies curriculum. It offers students an opportunity to engage in learning activities at an accelerated pace, depth, and complexity while among intellectual peers. ASCEND teachers strive to support the educational needs of exceptionally gifted learners socially, emotionally, and academically.

ASCEND students typically function significantly above their same-age peers. This need requires instruction planned at both a vertical and horizontal depth and acceleration. Cooperative learning, individualized instruction and challenging opportunities for self-directed learning are all instructional expectations for the ASCEND classrooms.

Challenges from the curriculum may occasionally produce feelings of discomfort, frustration, or inadequacy. Anticipate these reactions and allow students to experience how to meet challenges while offering support and guidance.

ASCEND is an educational opportunity for highly gifted learners who desire accelerated curriculum. The success of each student is based upon his/her individual motivation.

ASCEND teachers are trained to support students’ intellectual and emotional needs and are prepared to work with parents as questions arise.

**Elementary:**

ASCEND students in grades 4 and 5 are placed in a departmentalized setting for all core subjects at the Windermere Elementary campus. Students have one teacher for ELA & Social Studies and one teacher for Math & Science. The program serves nominated students from the district’s gifted population. Transportation from a school/community stop near the student’s home campus is provided by the district.

**Middle:**

ASCEND students have the option to continue to grow the elementary foundation through the following courses: ASCEND ELA, ASCEND Science, and math courses with an ASCEND cluster at the Pflugerville Middle campus. The program serves nominated students from the district GT population. Transportation from a school/community stop near the student’s home campus is provided by the district.

**DAR Committee:**

The District Admission and Review Committee evaluates students for admission into the program, which is offered to eligible GT students in grades 4 - 5. Admission includes an invitation to transfer to the campus that offers the program. The Committee consists of administrators, counselors, and specialists trained in gifted education who are responsible for reviewing data, making placement decisions and evaluating student progress.

**ASCEND Program at a Glance:**

**Grade 4:** depth and complexity in language arts, social studies, science; depth, complexity and acceleration in math

**Grade 5:** depth and complexity in language arts, social studies, science; depth, complexity and acceleration in math

**Grade 6:** cluster grouped in social studies (World Cultures) and math (Pre-AP Math 7 or Pre-AP Math 6); depth and complexity in ASCEND ELA 6; depth, complexity and compacting in ASCEND Science 6

**Grade 7:** cluster grouped in social studies (TX History) and math (Pre-AP Math 7 or Algebra I); depth and complexity in ASCEND ELA 7; depth, complexity and compacting in ASCEND Science 7

**Grade 8:** cluster grouped in social studies (US History) and math (Algebra I or Geometry); depth and complexity in ASCEND ELA 8; depth and complexity in ASCEND Pre-AP Biology