

SULPHUR SPRINGS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Gifted & Talented Program

GT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Introduction

In the United States there has been a call for America's students to master more complex skills and understand more sophisticated content. States throughout the country have increased their expectations for student performance. However, while competencies are being raised, often there is little done to enhance services for gifted learners. To assure that this trend is reversed in Texas, the State Board of Education has adopted numerous incentives that encourage districts to support services that go beyond minimum and meet the needs of gifted learners. In order to express its commitment to high level learning opportunities for all students, the Texas State Board of Education adopted the following goal for serving gifted learners.

State Goal for Services for Gifted Students

Students who participate in services for gifted students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience and environment. High school graduates who have participated in services for gifted students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.

Sulphur Springs School Board Definition EEHB

"Gifted and talented student" means a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to the others the same age, experience or environment and who exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area, possesses an unusual capacity for leadership, or excels in a specific academic field. Education Code 29.121

Philosophy

The Sulphur Springs Independent School District recognizes that in a democratic society that seeks to offer educational opportunities appropriate to each child's ability, it is incumbent to provide for the unique needs of gifted and talented children. These students, found in all races, socio-economic groups, geographic locales and environments, have abilities, talents and potential for accomplishment so outstanding that a variety of special provisions are required to meet their educational needs. Special opportunities beyond the regular classroom and curriculum provide gifted and talented students experiences of working with and relating to their intellectual peer group in addition to their chronological age group. Some areas of subject matter, materials, instructional techniques, and learning objectives should be qualitatively different and designed especially for gifted and talented students.

The Sulphur Springs Independent School District is committed to a program for gifted and talented students that will aim at identifying those students and developing their potential to the highest degree possible.

Goals

In developing and implementing a program that reflects the philosophy of the district, the following goals have been adopted.

- To plan, implement and provide a qualitatively differentiated program which will enable gifted and talented students to develop their exceptional abilities and potential and which comprehensively incorporates the development of higher level thinking skills, in an environment with other gifted students.
- To provide a curriculum designed specifically for gifted students.
- To develop a procedure using multiple and specific criteria for identifying academically gifted and talented students who will be served by the program.
- To ensure teachers of the program are certified in Gifted Education or will receive certification within 1 year and provide ongoing training in the development and implementation of the gifted program.
- To design a plan for identifying, selecting and training personnel to work in the program.
- To facilitate partnerships among parents, community, institutions of higher education and school districts to design comprehensive advanced level services.

District GT Program Guidelines / Expectations

About the Program

Elementary

The Elementary program is a pull-out program that serves the needs of gifted students. The elementary GT program allows our identified gifted students the opportunity to work together with other gifted students on specifically designed curriculum on the following time scale:

- Kindergarten – after March 1
- Grades 1-5 160 minutes per week

SSISD's elementary GT curriculum is a skills-based curriculum. A variety of activities and thematic units are used to address learning objectives. The objectives in each unit are researched based thinking skills which cover a number of aptitudes in 5 broad areas: critical thinking, creative productive thinking, metacognition, affective development and research. The structure and rigor of the curriculum ensures SSISD provides a consistent pull out program.

Middle School

SSISD's Middle School GT program is a skills based curriculum that challenges students to reach their academic potential and broaden their skill set.

- 6th Grade – Students are placed in a double blocked GT ELAR classroom
- 7th Grade – Students are in a double blocked GT ELAR class where they will be taught by an ELAR teacher and a GT Teacher.
- 8th Grade – Students have a separate GT class.

A variety of activities and thematic units are used to address learning objectives based on ELAR TEKS with added critical thinking skills. The objectives in each unit are researched based thinking skills which cover a number of aptitudes in 5 broad areas: critical thinking, creative productive thinking, metacognition, affective development and research. The structure and rigor of the curriculum ensures SSISD provides a consistent pull out program.

High School

- Students are served through College Preparatory classes, AP, and dual credit coursework.

GT Program Policies—Grades K-12

Identification

The identification of students for the GT Program will consist of nomination, screening and selection. Multiple and specific criteria, including both objective and subjective data, as outlined by state guidelines, will be used to select program participants. The criteria are consistent with the areas of giftedness addressed by the planned program, general intellectual ability and creative/productive thinking ability. Specific identification/selection procedures and entry, transfer and exit policies are listed below.

Nomination

- Students may be nominated by any Sulphur Springs ISD professional staff member.
- Parents will be notified of the nomination procedure and may nominate their child by contacting the school principal to obtain a nomination form.
- Written permission to test will be elicited from parents of all nominated students.
- Secondary students may nominate themselves by contacting the counselor to obtain a nomination form.

Screening

Identification of students for GT will begin in January and students will be nominated by the end of January and tested by the end of the academic year. The counselors on each campus will perform the screening. A Student Summary Profile will be utilized in the screening process to compile information on each student. The areas to be considered are: Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT), Cognitive Ability Test (CogAT) – Verbal, Non-verbal and Qualitative Batteries, and the Renzulli Student Profile.

- The student must score a minimum of 124 on the NNAT.
- The student may qualify in each of 3 batteries or on the composite score with a minimum of 126 on the CogAT.

- The student may score a 28 in any one profile area or a 110 composite on the Renzulli Student Profile.
- The Identification Selection Committee will review each nominated student's profile.

Selection

- A selection committee will review the student profiles and determine student eligibility for program services. Students scoring at or above the district line on a minimum of three categories will be eligible for program participation.
- Written parental permission will be obtained for students to participate in the GT program.
- Parental questions regarding identification/screening procedures are directed to the Director of Special Programs, the G/T coordinator, or campus counselor.
- Students may be reviewed annually by GT personnel and/or committee to determine their success in the program.

Entry

- In the spring of each school year, all students who are nominated for program participation are screened using multiple and specific criteria. Student selections are made based on the information on the Student Summary Profile. Students who are selected enter the program the next school year.
- In the fall of each school year, students who are **new** to the Sulphur Springs Independent School District may be nominated and screened for program participation.
- Students who are successful program participants at the end of the school year are automatically selected for continued program participation. No new nomination, screening or selection procedures are necessary for these students.
- If the parent/guardian of the student selected denies program participation, his/her child cannot enter the GT Program at any time during the current school year. The student may be re-nominated in the spring for the following year's program; in which case, all new screening data and selection procedures will be used.

Transfers

When a student identified as gifted by a previous school district transfers into the Sulphur Springs Independent School District (SSISD), the student's records will be reviewed by the selection committee to determine if placement in the district's program for gifted and talented students is appropriate.

The committee shall make its determination within 30 days of the student's enrollment in the district and shall base its decision on the transferred records, observation reports of district teachers who instruct the student and student and parent conferences. Reassessment may be necessary when transfer records indicate assessment criteria different from those of SSISD.

A student may be furloughed for a period of time deemed appropriate by the selection committee. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed and the student may re-enter the gifted program or be placed on another furlough.

A student or parent of student desiring a furlough should obtain a furlough from the campus counselor, fill it out and return it to the counselor for the selection committee's review.

Appeals

Parents or students may appeal any final decision of the selection committee regarding selection for or removal from the program. Appeals shall be made first to the selection committee. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with board policy (available at each campus) and at the Administration Building, 631 Connally Street.

Exit

Student performance in the program will be monitored. A student can be removed from the program at any time the selection committee determines it is in the student's best interest (using multiple criteria). If a student or parent requests removal from the program, the selection committee will meet with the parent and student before honoring the request.

- If a student is exited from the GT Program for any reason other than moving out of the district, the student may not re-enter the program during the same school year. The student may be re-nominated for screening for the following year's program, in which case, all new screening data and selection procedures are used.
- A meeting to review a student's progress in GT may be requested at any time by the student's parent, classroom teacher, GT teacher or principal. A meeting to discuss the student's performance will be held and will include the appropriate school administrator(s), the student's teacher and parent. If a majority of the committee concludes that the program is not meeting the education needs of the

student, the student in question may be placed on a three-week probation or exited from the program.

- If the student is placed on probation, another conference is held at the end of the three weeks to assess his/her progress. The results of the committee are documented on appropriate forms and the students are informed by the GT teacher and/or parent of the decision.
- All review requests will be made through the building principal.

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