

Sanger ISD Gifted and Talented Handbook



Sanger, TX 76266
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**Sanger ISD does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, national origin, race, gender, socioeconomic status or English proficiency in its educational programs and activities.*

Sanger Independent School District Gifted and Talented Handbook

Philosophy

Sanger ISD seeks to identify those students who excel consistently and show talent in general intellectual ability, specific subject matter aptitude and/or creative productive thinking. We are committed to providing materials, activities, and instruction for these students of varying abilities, interests, needs and environmental backgrounds so they may experience success in the development of their potential. The district recognizes that these students can come from all races, geographical locales, and socioeconomic groups.

Goals and Objectives

Gifted students placed into Sanger ISD's gifted program will obtain lifelong skills through the development of advanced research and study skills, critical and creative thinking and application of these skills to problem solving. They will be able to possess an understanding of group dynamics that will make them effective leaders in the future and be able to recognize the likenesses and differences between themselves and others.

This does not mean that research and personal study skills, critical and creative thinking ability, and leadership skills are the exclusive domain of gifted students. Gifted students, however, tend to master the essential knowledge and skills more quickly than most students. Because of this, they should be permitted to extend their education as far and as completely as they can in areas that are of importance to their development. Sanger's gifted program will provide space, time, encouragement, and opportunities for gifted students to achieve these goals and to explore areas of their own interests and abilities.

Gifted Program Design

The gifted program at Sanger ISD was implemented in 1979 to serve students identified as gifted in grades 4-12. The program was expanded in 1980 to include 3rd grade. The GT Program has since been expanded and improved to serve students in all grades. Grades K-6 meet with a gifted specialist and participate in a pull-out program on their own campus. Students meet approximately one-half day per week to focus on district goals for its gifted students. Regular classroom teachers work with gifted facilitators to differentiate classroom assignments for their gifted students. Students at the middle school level, grades 7-8, are required to enroll in honors classes that will prepare them for Advanced Placement classes at the high school level. Electives geared towards gifted students may be offered as a part of gifted services. Middle school honors teachers have the required gt training and maintain six hour gt updates each year in order to effectively differentiate curriculum for their gt students.

Gifted facilitators are also available to assist classroom teachers with enrichment ideas for gifted students.

High school students, grades 9-12, are served through Pre-Advanced Placement, Advanced Placement, and Dual Credit courses. High school PAP/AP teachers have the required gt training and maintain six hour gt updates each year in order to effectively differentiate curriculum for their gt students. Gifted specialists are also available to assist classroom teachers with enrichment ideas for gifted students.

The gt program at Sanger ISD offers instruction and opportunities for identified students in intellectual/specific academics, creativity and leadership. Gifted students at every level have the opportunity to work together as a group, with other students, and to work independently. Services are available during the school day and throughout the school year. Out of school options are also available to gt students. Some of these extracurricular activities are: Duke Talent Search, University Interscholastic League Academic Contests, Math/Science, Junior National Honor Society, National Honor Society and various specialized organizations.

All gt specialists are trained to provide instruction that will lead to completion of projects that require complex thinking, problem solving, and advanced learning. All specialists have training that includes information on the nature and needs of gifted students, curriculum, and identification and assessment. These specialists maintain at least six hours of annual training. Pre-AP and AP teachers have completed College Board Advanced Placement training and gt training. At least one gt specialist in the district maintains formal Texas Gifted and Talented Certification through a major university.

Gifted Committees

The Gifted Selection Committee on each campus will be composed of the school counselor, building principal/assistant principal, and a gifted specialist. This committee will be responsible for the final selection of students for gt program placement, furloughs, and the exiting of students from the gt program.

The Gifted Advisory Committee will meet as needed to provide support and assistance to the Gifted Program regarding program planning and improvement. Membership shall include, but not limited to, all gt specialists, at least one parent of a gt student, high school representatives, a counselor and the district's director of Teaching and Learning..

Nomination Source

Students may be nominated at any time for screening. Nominations may come from faculty, parents, a community member, or by self-nomination.

Referrals

Parents and teachers can nominate students for the Gifted and Talented Program at the following times during the year:

Grades 1-12 Teacher and Parent Referral Window	Opens the 1st Monday in October, Closes the 3rd Thursday in October	Parents are notified of the results in late December. Students will begin services by the start of the 2nd semester.
Kindergarten Teacher and Parent Referral Window	Opens the 1st Monday in January, Closes the last Thursday in January	Parents are notified of the results in April. Students will begin services at the start of their 1st grade school year.
Grades 1-12 Teacher Referral Window	Open the 1st Monday in February, Closes the 3rd Thursday in February	Parents are notified of the results in April. Students will begin services at the start of the following school year.

Screening Criteria

Kindergarten Screening:

Kindergarten students will undergo screening annually in January. The screening will predominantly utilize a Creative Thinking Assessment designed to assess creativity, problem-solving skills, and the potential for innovative thought processes. Students meeting the criteria on the screener will be recommended for Gifted and Talented testing and consideration for the program. The assessment will be completed by the end of January.

First and Second Grade Screening:

Students in first and second grade will be screened based on their performance in the top 15% of beginning-of-the-year district assessments. Screening for these grades will involve the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), a nationally recognized assessment tool crafted to measure cognitive development. Students meeting the criteria on the screener will be recommended for Gifted and Talented testing and consideration for the program. Gifted and Talented testing will be conducted in October for students identified through the screening process.

GT Testing

The following qualitative and quantitative instruments may be used in the process:

- Teacher Checklist
- Parent Rating Scale
- Achievement Test
- Intelligence/Abilities Test
- Torrance Creativity Test
- DRA Reading Levels

All students are assessed in languages they understand or with non-verbal based tests. All populations of the district have access to assessment, and if identified, services offered as a part of the program for gifted students. A modified LEP/ESL matrix and parent rating scale will be found in this handbook. All materials disseminated to parents will be translated in a language that will be understood

Selection

After the above instruments have been administered and scored, each student's scores will be recorded on an appropriate GT Program Student Identification Matrix. The criteria for placement are five of eight strengths on or beyond the set district line in numbers one through three below; and two of three from numbers four through six below:

Qualitative Assessments:	Grades K-12
1. Parent Rating Scales:	
Learning Characteristics	4
Leadership Characteristics	2
Creativity Characteristics	2
2. Teacher Checklist	
Learning Characteristics	35+
Leadership Characteristics	14+
Creativity Characteristics	21+
Quantitative Assessments:	
4. Intelligence Test	130+
5. Achievement Test	95%
6. Torrance Creativity	130+

The Gifted and Talented Placement Committee will have the option of reviewing any student's profile for special consideration for program placement. Parents will be informed of student placement by letter. Students will begin services as soon as a parent permission letter is on file.

Furloughs

The GT Selection Committee may place students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the gifted and talented program, or in any academic work, on furlough. The purpose of a furlough is to provide the student an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the selection committee and that student's regular education teacher. During the period of the furlough, as determined by the selection committee, the student's progress towards set goals will be monitored. At the end of the given period of time for the furlough, the selection committee, the student's teacher, the student and the student's parents will evaluate progress. At that time, a decision will be made for the student to re-enter the gifted program, or to be exited from the program.

A student may request a furlough from the gifted program for up to one school year for personal reasons. After meeting with the GT Selection Committee, parental permission is required for the furlough to be in effect. The student will automatically re-enroll in the program when the time of the furlough has elapsed. A student may have only one furlough throughout their school career.

Proper documentation that the student has been furloughed should be placed in the student's file.

Exiting

Exiting from the gifted program will only occur when continued placement would not be the most appropriate educational setting for a student. If the gifted specialists believe that participation in the gt program is not meeting a student's needs, the student will be placed on furlough for a set period of time. If at the end of the furlough the student is still not making the appropriate gains, a meeting will be held to discuss exiting that student. A parent of a student may also request exiting from the program. A student shall not be exited from the program unless the GT Selection Committee has been satisfied that the student would not benefit by continuing in the program. Educational, psychological, and personal reasons will be considered. An exited student may not reapply for admission until one full year has elapsed. At that time, the student will be required to requalify for the program.

Proper documentation that the student has been exited should be placed in the student's file.

Transfer of Students from Another District

All students who have participated in gifted and talented programs prior to coming to Sanger ISD will be nominated for the Gifted and Talented Program. A student who registers at Sanger ISD with documentation that meets the criteria and is a direct match to the district's qualifications for GT placement will be admitted immediately to the program after the campus Gifted and Talented Placement Committee meets to review information on the student. Written parent permission will be obtained before students may begin gifted services in Sanger.

If the student's transferred GT records do not meet the criteria and/or are not a direct match to

Sanger ISD Gifted Qualifications, then further evaluation will be needed. The decision will be made based upon the transferred records, observation reports of district teachers who instruct the students, and assessment tools as were used in the identification of current district students. A student who has been identified as gifted and talented at his/her prior school but does not have sufficient documentation must obtain one of the following: appropriate test scores from his/her prior school; and/or a matrix or profile from the prior school; or new and/or additional testing administered at Sanger. The data that comes with the new student must match the Sanger ISD criteria for the specific services for which the student is nominated.

As different districts have different gifted program services, the selection criteria will vary. Sanger makes every attempt to use information from prior schools rather than to reassess a new student. However, if the data is not compatible, new testing is required to match the services of our program. The Campus Gifted Placement Committee will make a determination within six weeks of the student's enrollment in the district. Sanger will make every effort to contact previous schools and request information regarding the student's placement in the prior program and request that this information be sent to the school. Since the types of gifted services differ from district-to-district and school-to-school, it is essential to have current and appropriate data to match the Sanger Gifted and Talented Program's criteria and services so that the best placement for the student occurs.

Appeals Procedure

Parents of students may appeal any final decision of the GT Selection Committee regarding selection for or removal from the gifted program. All parents of students not placed into the program should be made aware of the following appeals procedures:

1. Parents of students not selected for placement into the gifted program may register a written appeal to the GT Selection Committee within ten days of notification.
2. The GT Selection Committee shall review the criteria within ten days of the appeal request and make a decision.
3. A unanimous vote of the GT Selection Committee is required to admit that student on a one-year probationary status to the program.
4. Parents will be notified of the placement committee's decision by letter.
5. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with Sanger ISD's FNG local policy. Information on appeals procedures at this level may be obtained through the administration office.