



SUNNYVALE ISD

GIFTED AND TALENTED

PROGRAM GUIDE



2025-2026

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Definition of a Gifted Child

A gifted/talented student is a child who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of 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. (Texas Education Code [§29.121](#))

GT Program Contact Information

Sunnyvale Elementary School, K-2	Courtney Bryan courtney.bryan@sunnyvaleisd.com
Sunnyvale Intermediate School, 3-5	Katharine Underwood katharine.underwood@sunnyvaleisd.com
Sunnyvale Middle School, 6-8	Julie Penisten julie.penisten@sunnyvaleisd.com
Sunnyvale High School, 9-12	Sara Staley sara.staley@sunnyvaledisd.com
Director of Advanced Academics, CTE, and Accountability	Sara Staley sara.staley@sunnyvaleisd.com

GT Referrals

Referrals for evaluation for gifted education programs may originate from any source. The GT Coordinator disseminates information to all teachers and parents regarding procedures for referrals and testing of students. Teachers and staff can use any student learning results as an indicator to refer a student for gifted education programs. All students referred for evaluation must have a Permission to Evaluate form signed by the parent/guardian on file with the GT coordinator prior to evaluation. All referrals must be received by the set referral deadline for each semester in order to be considered for each respective testing window.

[GT Identification Referral Form](#)

If you are unsure of whether or not to refer your child for testing, talk to your child's campus GT teacher for any questions you may have. There are many differing opinions and points of research concerning the characteristics of gifted learners. This characteristic breakdown, [General Characteristics of Gifted Learners](#), is meant to provide insight, but does not represent a checklist for identifying gifted. (Differentiation of Gifted Learners: Going Beyond the Basics, Diane Huacox, 2014). This checklist might be helpful as well: [Should I Refer My Child for GT Testing?](#)

GT Identification Timeline

GT testing and enrollment take place during two windows every academic school year. The first testing window occurs from October to December and the second testing window occurs from March to May for all students except kindergartners. Kindergarten students have one GT testing and enrollment window and that occurs from January to March.

First Semester	
October	- Fall GT Testing Window Opens
December	- Fall GT Testing Window Closes - Fall GT Letters Regarding Placement Go Out
Second Semester	
January	- GT Placement Appeals Process Window Opens - GT Services Begin for New GT Students - Kindergarten GT Testing Begins
February	- Kindergarten GT Testing Window Closes
March	- Kindergarten GT Letters Regarding Placement Go Out - Kindergarten GT Appeals Process Window Opens - Kindergarten GT Services Begin - Spring GT Testing Window Opens
May	- Spring GT Testing Window Closes - Spring GT Testing Letters Regarding Placement Go Out - Spring GT Appeals Process Window Opens

Gifted and Talented Annual Referral Windows

GT Testing/Screening

Once referrals are received, designated GT staff begin testing potential GT students and seeking staff feedback during the testing window. Test accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. Parents or staff should contact the GT Coordinator prior to testing so accommodations can be arranged. Data from multiple sources are included in the assessment process. Multiple assessments are used that gather both quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative Measures:

- ability and academic achievement

Qualitative Measures:

- classroom observations/screeners from teachers

GT Qualification

Once all screening measures have been completed for a student, the GT Coordinator completes a Qualification Rubric and meets with a committee to determine the final GT placement decision. The committee should be composed of no less than three staff members and all members must have completed the required 30-hour GT foundations training, as well as the annual 6-hour GT update training. A student will be admitted into the Sunnyvale Gifted and Talented Program if the student successfully meets the designated criteria on 3 out of the 5 rubric measures. If a student does not meet 3 out of the 5 measures, the committee does have the ability to make a committee decision for continuing with GT placement.

Appeals

After placement letters are sent home, parents/guardians have 15 days from the postmark date on the notification letter to file a Level One Appeal. A committee on the campus level will convene to review the appeal. The committee will include a minimum of three staff members. All committee members should be trained in gifted and talented education. The committee will review campus data along with new information and/or data provided in the appeal documents before making a final decision. The committee will notify the parent/guardian of the decision in writing.

[Level 1 Appeal Form](#)

Reassessments

A student can go through the GT testing/screening process more than once, but must wait one year between screenings. Example: If a student goes through the testing/screening process in the fall, and is not admitted for GT programming, that student must wait until fall of the following school year to go through testing/screening again.

Transfers

Students who were part of a GT program in another district who are transferring to Sunnyvale will need to send over their previous testing paperwork. If they were tested and qualified using the same criteria and standards, the student will be notified and will be allowed to transfer into the Sunnyvale GT program without further testing. If the previous district did not use the same criteria and standards as though used in SISD, the student will be re-tested. Once the previous district's GT qualification paperwork is received and if it is decided that further testing needs to take place, Sunnyvale will complete GT testing within 30 school days of this decision. Students will not receive GT services until testing has been completed and the student has qualified for GT.

Furlough

A temporary withdrawal from GT services is considered a furlough. The District may place on a furlough any student who is unable to maintain satisfactory performance or whose educational needs are not being met within the structure of the gifted and talented program. A furlough may be initiated by the District, the parent, or the student. A furlough shall be granted for specified reasons and for a specified period of time. At the end of a furlough, the student may reenter the gifted and talented program, be placed on another furlough, or be exited from the program.

Exiting

A withdrawal from all GT services is considered an exit. The District shall monitor student performance in response to gifted and talented program services. If at any time the selection committee or a parent determines it is in the best interest of the student to exit the program, the committee shall meet with the parent and student before finalizing an exit decision. Once a student has been withdrawn from GT services per an exit, a complete reassessment and GT committee review for appropriate placement would need to take place should services be requested in the future.

[GT Change of Status Request Form](#)

Gifted and Talented Services

Level	Model
Elementary	-Kinder participate in a pull-out once a week for 30 minutes during class intervention time -1st-2nd are pulled for 45 minutes 2x a week
Intermediate	-Occurs during RISE time -45 minutes 2x a week
Middle	-Students are scheduled for GT English Language Arts
High	-Students can take advanced coursework: including DC English 1301, 1302, and 2321; AP Literature; DC Math 1314, 1316, 1342, 2412, and 2413; DC Biology 1406, 1407; AP Physics 1 & 2; DC History 1301 and 1302; DC Government 2305; AP Economics; AP Human Geography -Students can take CTE coursework in the following endorsement areas: Business and Industry, Education, Health Sciences, Public Services, S.T.E.M, and Multidisciplinary

Curriculum Goals

The student will develop:

- An understanding of broad-based issues, themes, or problems within interdisciplinary and multicultural contexts.
- The independence, self-direction, and skills in-group processes that lead to creative and productive thinking.
- Critical and higher level thinking skills in both cognitive and affective areas.
- Affective behaviors involved in creative process, including risk-taking, curiosity, imagination, and enjoyment of complex challenges.
- The convergent and divergent cognitive abilities necessary for creative productivity and an understanding of the role and characteristics of creative and productive individuals in the evolution of significant change.
- Products that refine or challenge existing ideas, incorporate concepts, use techniques, materials, forms, and knowledge in innovative ways.
- Acceptance and valuing of human differences; respect for the needs, cultures and rights of others; and recognition of the contributions of others.

Parent Resources

[Sunnyvale Local GT Policy](#)

[Texas Education Agency Gifted and Talented State Plan](#)

[The Gifted Child Society](#) aims to encourage and further the overall well-being of gifted children, through each stage of their development, and to provide them with the inspiration and means by which they will achieve their full potential.

[Twice Exceptional/SENG](#) membership gives you access to a community of GT/2E people, those who support someone who is GT/2E, and information on programs, resources, and so much more.

[The Texas Association for the Gifted & Talented](#) (TAGT) connects and empowers educators and parents to meet the unique needs of gifted and talented students from every cultural background who see the world in unique ways and are developing minds that just might discover innovative answers to the most challenging questions of their generation.

[The National Association for Gifted Children](#) is one of the best places for parents of gifted children to find resources, reading, help, and advice on raising an exceptional child.