



Gifted/Talented Parent Handbook 2018-2019

Spring ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, economic status, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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TEXAS STATE PLAN FOR THE EDUCATION OF GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS

According to Section 29.123 of the Texas Education Code, the Texas State Plan forms the basis of G/T services and accountability. The plan offers an outline for services without prohibitive regulation. Districts are accountable for services as described in the "In Compliance" column of the State Plan where performance measures are included for five aspects of G/T service design. These standards reflect actions required in state law and/or State Board of Education rule.

STATE GOAL FOR SERVICES FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

According to the Texas State Plan, students who participate in services designed for gifted students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, research, and communication as evidence by the development of innovative products and performances that are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment and reflect individuality and creativity. 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.

SPRING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT VISION

Spring Independent School District will be a district of choice known for high quality academics with innovative and specialized programs that meet the needs of all students in a positive learning environment.

GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAM GOAL

Spring Independent School District will provide Gifted/Talented students the opportunity to receive customized instruction through differentiation based on unique learning styles, interests, and areas of giftedness.

REFERRAL/IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

A student may be referred for Gifted/Talented screening by a teacher, counselor, parent, or administrator. A referral for gifted/talented screening may be initiated by contacting the school counselor and requesting a *Gifted/Talented Student Referral Form*, which must be completed and submitted to the counselor. The screening/assessment process is offered once per semester and consists of three phases (see Appendix). Phase I, the screening phase, Phase II, the assessment phase, and Phase III, the identification phase. Specific requirements must be met in order to advance to Phase II, the assessment phase. Please note students can only be screened/assessed once per school year.

Screening and Ability Assessment Instruments

Cognitive Abilities Screening Form (CogAT)

The Cognitive Abilities Test Screening Form is the assessment given for screening. It is the short form of CogAT and measures students' learned reasoning abilities developed through in-school and out-of-school experiences. Stanine scores range from a 1 (lowest) to 9 (highest).

Cognitive Abilities Test Form 7 (CogAT)

The Cognitive Abilities Test Form 7 is designed to assess specific reasoning skills that correlate strongly to academic success. More specifically, the CogAT measures cognitive development, the ability to learn new tasks, and problem solving abilities. Because much of its content is nonverbal, the CogAT is also very useful for testing students who are not native English speakers.

See Appendix: *Understanding Your Child's CogAT Score*

Phase I: Screening

- All students in Kindergarten and 5th grade, who are not identified as gifted/talented, are screened using the Cognitive Abilities Test Screening Form (CogAT) **[Fall Semester]**.
- Students new to the district referred by campus/parent are screened using the Cognitive Abilities Test Screening Form (CogAT) **[Fall/Spring Semester]**.
- Students scoring Masters Grade Level on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) assessment in both math and reading, and are not already identified as gifted/talented, are assessed with the Cognitive Abilities Test Screening Form (CogAT) **[Fall Semester]**.
- Campus/Parent referrals for students in grades K-12 are screened using the Cognitive Abilities Test Screening Form (CogAT) **[Spring Semester Only]**.
- Campus will send home CogAT screening results and letter home with students **[Fall/Spring Semester]**.

Phase II: Assessment

- Students scoring a grade stanine of 6 or higher on the CogAT Screening Form are further assessed using the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) Form 7.
- Campus will complete a student G/T matrix and collect data to send to the district's advanced academics team.

Phase III: Identification

- Student data from the screening phase will be sent to the district committee for the identification process.
- Quantitative and qualitative data is collected.
- District Identification/Selection Committee meets to discuss student data.
- Notice of assessment results for students will be mailed to home/campus.
- Students qualifying for the gifted/talented program will be coded in eSchool
- Notification of Change will be sent to campus

PARENTAL CONSENT

Written parental consent shall be obtained before any special testing or individual assessment is conducted as part of the screening and identification process. All student information collected during the screening and identification process shall be an educational record, subject to the protections set out in policies.

NOTIFICATION

Written notification of Phases I, II, and III of the assessment process will be mailed home to parents. Participation in any program or services provided for gifted students is voluntary. The District shall obtain written permission of the student and the parents before a student is placed in a gifted program. Students identified as G/T are coded in eSchool by the G/T Specialists. Campus counselors receive a *Notification of Change* form which is filed in the students' cumulative record.

APPEALS

Parents have the right to appeal. Procedures are outlined in district policy.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Out of District

Students entering Spring ISD identified as gifted/talented from a previous district shall receive services, if appropriate documentation is provided. (i.e. an official acceptance letter from a school district and assessment score report). Counselors must complete the *Notification of Students New to the District or Campus* form and submit to the G/T Specialist for coding. In addition, a student not identified as G/T entering Spring ISD after the initial screening has taken place will be assessed upon recommendation of campus personnel.

In District

Gifted/Talented students who transfer within the district will be immediately placed in the Gifted/Talented program at the receiving school. Counselors must complete the *Notification of Students New to the District or Campus* form and submit to the G/T Specialist for coding.

GIFTED/TALENTED ANNUAL REVIEW POLICY

District-level Gifted/Talented Specialists will monitor gifted/talented student progress at least annually. In addition, the Advanced Academics Department will monitor student progress every grading cycle. During the annual review, the department and campus Gifted/Talented Coordinator will evaluate student performance and may include: progress reports, report cards, state assessment data, local assessment data, and teacher feedback.

PROBATION

Probation is for any gifted/talented scholar receiving a grade average below a 70 at the end of a grading period in one or more core courses (English/Language Arts, Science, Math, and Social Studies). Probation can be requested by a classroom teacher, counselor, administrator, or parent. The probationary period is for one grading period (9 weeks elementary, 6 weeks secondary). After the completion of probation, the scholar's progress will be re-evaluated by the campus gifted/talented committee. If the scholar is passing all core courses, the scholar will be removed from probation; if not, the committee will re-evaluate. A scholar can be placed on probation for a maximum of two grading periods. If the scholar is still failing after two grading periods, an exit will take place.

FURLOUGH

A furlough is a temporary "leave of absence" from the Gifted/Talented Program designed to meet the individual needs of an identified student. A leave of absence from the program of services for a maximum of one semester can be initiated by the campus committee or parent/guardian for academic or social/emotional reasons. Campus committee will refer all furlough requests to the district committee for approval.

EXIT PROVISIONS

Student performance in the program shall be monitored. A student shall be removed from the program at any time the Gifted/Talented committee determines it is in the student's best interest **and** a furlough has been ineffective, **or** requirements of probation were not met. Following a furlough, the campus committee shall make a recommendation to the district committee for exit. The district committee shall make a determination on the exit or requests additional assessment prior to determination. Appropriate intervention strategies must accompany the Exit Form.

SERVICE DESIGN

The district will provide an array of learning opportunities for gifted/talented students in kindergarten through grades 12. Schools can select from the following service design options listed below.

Elementary

Option 1

G/T Homogeneous Classroom

Identified gifted/talented students are grouped together and receive differentiated instruction to meet their learning needs. A minimum of 18 identified gifted/talented students are required for a homogenous grouped classroom.

Option 2

G/T Cluster Grouped in the General Education Classroom

Identified gifted/talented students are clustered or grouped with students not identified as gifted /talented within the general education classroom and receive differentiated instruction to meet their learning needs.

Option 3

Combination G/T Homogenous and G/T Cluster Grouped

This model is appropriate in schools with varying number of G/T students at each grade level. Placement of students will be according to the descriptions listed in Option 1 and Option 2. Students will receive differentiated instruction to meet their learning needs.

Instructional Expectations

Expectations include completion of one advanced level research project/product per semester and use of district curriculum documents. Students are expected to participate in a campus and/or district gifted/talented expo each semester showcasing their research completed within the semester/year.

Renzulli Learning™ is an online teaching tool that provides personalized learning. The system helps teachers to save time and instruct students more effectively. Renzulli Learning enables educators to easily differentiate instruction and leverages student motivation to achieve enhanced academic performance. Gifted/talented scholars will complete a student inventory and, at minimum, two Renzulli Learning independent study projects (one per semester).

Odyssey of the Mind is an international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Team members apply their creativity to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics.

Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) is a resource for providing differentiated instruction to gifted/talented (G/T) students (and can be used for providing enhanced academic opportunities for all students). The TPSP provides a coherent package of standards, curriculum, and assessments for use in G/T programs from kindergarten through high school. TPSP provides guidelines for independent learning experiences and research projects. Students who participate in services designed 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, or environment. Gifted/talented scholars will complete two TPSP projects (one per semester) to present at the G/T Expo.

Field Experiences will be planned specifically for students identified as G/T. This will allow G/T students to engage with content in a variety of ways outside of the classroom. The goal is to bring one dimensional lessons to life and allow our G/T students to develop an enthusiasm for a subject/topic.

Secondary

1. Middle School students identified as Gifted/Talented are required to enroll in all Pre-AP core content courses (Math, Science, Social Studies, English/Language Arts).
2. High School students identified as Gifted/Talented are required to enroll in at least one Pre-AP, AP, or Dual Credit course. Students enrolled in AP courses are expected to take the Advanced Placement exam for the AP course in which the student is enrolled.
3. Students identified as G/T should participate in academic competitions which allow students to deepen their knowledge about a topic/subject, and challenge the students to research and create.

Instructional Expectations

Gifted/Talented instructional activities are located within district curriculum documents. In addition, students are expected to complete an advanced level research project/product (one project per semester). Students are expected to participate in a campus and/or district gifted/talented expo each semester showcasing their research completed within the semester/year.

Vertical Alignment Strategies is an initiative that will help to vertically align Pre-AP instructional expectations to AP expectations. Students will develop a toolkit of instructional strategies to support AP Exam performance.

Renzulli Learning™ is an online teaching tool that provides personalized learning. The system helps teachers to save time and to instruct students more effectively. Renzulli Learning enables educators to easily differentiate instruction and leverages student motivation to achieve enhanced academic performance. Gifted/talented 6th grade scholars will complete a student inventory and, at minimum, two Renzulli Learning independent study projects (one per semester).

Odyssey of the Mind is an international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Team members apply their creativity to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics.

Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) is a resource for providing differentiated instruction to gifted/talented (G/T) students (and can be used for providing enhanced academic opportunities for all students). The TPSP provides a coherent package of standards, curriculum, and assessments for use in G/T programs from kindergarten through high school. TPSP provides guidelines for independent learning experiences and research projects. Students who participate in services designed 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, or environment. Gifted/talented scholars will complete two TPSP projects (one per semester) to present at the G/T Expo.

Field Experiences will be planned specifically for students identified as G/T. This will allow G/T students to engage with content in a variety of ways outside of the classroom. The goal is to bring one dimensional lessons to life and allow our G/T students to develop an enthusiasm for a subject/topic.

Academic Decathlon is a program that provides high school students an opportunity to experience the challenges of rigorous academic competition through participation in team activities. Teams consists of 9 members (3 “A” students, 3 “B” students, and 3 “C” students). Competitions include: Super Quiz, Essay, Speech, Interview, Tests of Knowledge

APPENDIX

High Achiever vs Gifted Learner Adapted from Janice Szabos

High Achiever

Knows the answers
Is interested
Is attentive
Has good ideas
Works Hard
Answers the Questions
Top group
Listens with interest
Learns with ease
6-8 repetitions for mastery
Understands ideas
Enjoys peers
Grasps the meaning
Completes assignments
Is receptive
Copies accurately
Enjoys school
Absorbs school
Technician
Good memorizer
Enjoys straightforward, sequential presentation
Is alert
Is pleased with own learning

Gifted Learner

Asks the questions
Is highly curious
Is mentally and physically involved
Has wild, silly ideas
Plays around, yet tests well
Discusses in detail, elaborates
Beyond the group
Shows strong feelings and opinions
Already knows
1-2 repetitions for mastery
Constructs abstractions
Prefers adults
Draws inferences
Initiates projects
Is intense
Creates a new design
Enjoys learning
Manipulates information
Inventor
Good guesser
Thrives on complexity
Is keenly observant
Is highly self-critical

Eleven Clusters of Identifying English Language Learners as G/T Scholars
Adapted from Joy Esquierdo

Motivation for Learning	Persistence Sustained motivation to succeed but not at the expense of others Do not seek recognition
Social and Academic Language	Likes to complete work in native language Expressive Elaborate Fluent in verbal behaviors They tend to be the translators Pick up English quickly
Cultural Sensitivity	Curious about other countries Pride in language and culture Understanding/empathy of other cultures is sought Family traditions are important
Familial	Caretaker Teacher pleaser Wants to help others even without permission Reflection of family in classroom Conforms vs. Challenges
Collaboration	Sets goals Ability to lead Advocates and defends others Socially able to adjust easily
Imagery	Great story tellers
Achievement	Problem solvers Ability to do well in school
Creative Performance	Art Dance Music Better at non-standardized tests
Support	Need library visits Experts and research is vital
Problem Solving	Solves community problems Real world problem solving Loves big challenges
Locus of Control	Internal: Goal oriented, self-directed External: Eager to meet expectations
Other	Learn better through social interaction Tend to be more cooperative than competitive Linear in thinking

The following list should be viewed as characteristics which are typical of many children who are gifted and who also have a disability rather than characteristics which all such children possess. These twice-exceptional children do not form a simple, homogeneous group; they are a highly diverse group of learners.

Indicators of Cognitive/Affective Strengths

- Have a wide range of interests that are not related to school topics or learning.
- Have a specific talent or consuming interest area for which they have an exceptional memory and knowledge.
- Are interested in the “big picture” rather than small details.
- Are extremely curious and questioning.
- Possess high levels of problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- Have penetrating insights.
- Are capable of setting up situations to their own advantage often as a coping method.
- Are extremely creative in their approach to tasks and as a technique to compensate for their disability.
- Have an unusual imagination.
- Are humorous often in “bizarre” ways.
- Have advanced ideas and opinions which they are uninhibited in expressing.
- Have a superior vocabulary.
- Have very high energy levels.

Indicators of Cognitive/Affective Challenges

- Have discrepant verbal and performance abilities.
- Have deficient or extremely uneven academic skills which cause them to lack academic initiative, appear academically unmotivated, avoid school tasks, and frequently fail to complete assignments.
- Are extremely frustrated by school.
- Have auditory and/or visual processing problems which may cause them to respond slowly, to work slowly, and to appear to think slowly.
- Have problems with long-term and/or short-term memory.
- Have motorial difficulties exhibited by clumsiness, poor handwriting, or problems completing paper-and-pencil tasks.
- Lack organizational skills and study skills; often appearing to be extremely “messy.”
- Are unable to think in a linear fashion; have difficulty following directions.
- Are easily frustrated; give up quickly on tasks; are afraid to risk being wrong or making mistakes.
- Have difficulty explaining or expressing ideas, “getting-to-the-point,” and/or expressing feelings.
- Blame others for their problems while believing that their successes are only due to “luck.”
- Are distractible; unable to maintain attention for long periods of time.
- Are unable to control impulses.
- Have poor social skills; demonstrate antisocial behaviors.

Indicators of Low Self-Esteem

One of the most common characteristics of these children is low self-esteem. They frequently “disguise” this low self-esteem through the use of any or all of the following behaviors:

- Anger
- Self-criticism
- Crying
- Disruptive behaviors
- Clowning behaviors
- Denial of problems
- Withdrawal
- Daydreaming and fantasy
- Apathetic behaviors



Gifted/Talented Program

Phase I: Gifted/Talented Student Referral Form

To refer a student for screening for the gifted/talented program, please complete the following information and submit this form to your child's school counselor by _____. Screening will take place the week of _____.

Student Information	
Name of Student: _____	Grade: _____
(Please print first & last name.)	
School Currently Attending: _____	Date: _____
Referral Made By (Please check the appropriate box, print first and last name on the space provided, and sign below):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Universal Screener _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> STAAR Test Scores _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____
Phone: _____	
Has this student participated in Spring ISD's gifted/talented assessment process previously?	
YES NO	If yes, please indicate the school year: _____
Is this student new to Spring ISD this school year? YES NO	
If yes, please provide the name of the previous school and district: _____	
Was this student identified as gifted/talented in the previous school/school district? YES NO	
If yes, please submit documentation to the school counselor.	

Phase I (Screening)

Cognitive Abilities Test Screening Form (CogAT) is the assessment given for screening. It is the short form of CogAT and measures students' learned reasoning abilities developed through in-school and out-of-school experiences. Students who score a grade stanine of 6 or higher will move onto Phase II for further assessment. Stanine scores range from a 1 (lowest) to 9 (highest). Notification of the screening results will be sent home.

Submit this form to your child's school counselor.

Understanding Your Child's CogAT Scores

Abilities	National Age Scores			National Age Percentile Ranks				
	Standard Age Score	Stanine	Percentile Rank	Low	25	50	75	High 99
Verbal	121	8	91					█
Quantitative	95	4	38		█	█		
Nonverbal	100	5	50		█	█		
COMPOSITE	105	6	62		█	█		

Ability Profile 5E (V+): The number in the prime is the age stanine for the middle score on the three batteries. The score on the Verbal Battery is significantly higher than the scores on the Quantitative and Nonverbal Batteries. For more information, visit www.cogat.com.

Abilities	Raw Scores			Grade Scores	
	Number of Items	Number Att.	Number Correct	National Stanine	National Percentile Rank
Verbal	65	65	55	8	89
Quantitative	60	34	27	4	32
Nonverbal	65	55	36	5	47
COMPOSITE				5	57

3 Areas Assessed on the CogAT:

- Verbal:** Typically linked to reading and writing abilities
- Quantitative:** Typically linked to math and problem solving abilities
- Nonverbal:** Typically linked to spatial and creative abilities not using words or numbers; indicative of a strong command in general or fluid reasoning and the ability to conceptualize at an advanced level using the format of pictures and images
- Composite:** Overall score of the test

National Age Percentile Rank

This score tells how the child scored compared to students his/her same **AGE**. Looking at the example, compared to all other students in the nation, this student scored better than 91% of the other students his age in the Verbal area. Only 8% of the students scored higher.

A 50th percentile rank is considered **Average**. It is **NOT** like a school or class score where 50% would be considered failing.

National Grade Percentile Rank

Your child's Percentile Rank compared to other students in the same **GRADE**.

Standard Age Score

This score compares an individual's performance with that of other individuals the same age. The average score is 100.

Stanine Scores

Stanines range from 1—9 and may be regarded as broad groupings of percentile ranks.

For more information on scores: www.cogat.com

Glossary of Terms

1. **Ability Assessment:** Cognitive ability tests assess abilities involved in thinking (e.g., reasoning, perception, memory, verbal and mathematical ability, and problem solving). Traditionally, the general trait measured by cognitive ability tests is called "intelligence" or "general mental ability." However, an intelligence test often includes various item types which measure different and more specific mental factors often referred to as "specific mental abilities." Examples of such items include arithmetic computations, verbal analogies, reading comprehension, number series completion, and spatial relations (i.e., visualizing objects in three-dimensional space).
2. **Academic/Enrichment Competitions:** competitions which might include, but not limited to, Odyssey of the Mind (OotM), Academic Decathlon, Science Olympiad, Duke Talent Search.
3. **Achievement Tests:** is a test of developed skill or knowledge. The most common type of achievement test is a standardized test developed to measure skills and knowledge learned in a given grade level, usually through planned instruction, such as training or classroom instruction.
4. **Advanced Placement (AP):** a program created by the College Board which offers college-level curricula and examinations to high school students. Colleges and universities may grant placement and course credit to students who obtain high scores on the examinations.
5. **Areas of Giftedness:** where a child or youth 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: (1) exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area; (2) possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or (3) excels in a specific academic field. (Texas Education Code 29.121)
6. **Array of Learning:** A large group or number of things being taught within the classroom.
7. **Customized Instruction:** seeks to gear classroom content, instruction, and other aspects of learning towards individual students, their unique interests, and past learning experiences (Hattie, 2009).
8. **Differentiation:** modification of curriculum and instruction according to content, pacing, and/or product to meet unique student needs in the classroom
9. **Furlough:** a leave of absence from program services
10. **Gifted/Talented Services:** services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school that are specifically designed to fully develop the capabilities of students who give evidence of high achievement or capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity
11. **Innovative Products:** products designed to assess each student's development in the following dimensions, content knowledge and skills, analysis and synthesis, multiple perspectives, research, communication, and presentation of learning.
12. **Learning Styles:** speaks to the understanding that every student learns differently. Technically, an individual's learning style refers to the preferential way in which the student absorbs, processes, comprehends and retains information. (ie; visual, auditory, hands-on, tactile, etc.)

13. **Masters Grade Level:** reaching an advanced academic level on a particular assessment. Students at Masters Grade Level are expected to succeed in the next grade or course with little or no academic intervention.
14. **Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) Courses:** Pre-AP offers schools instructional frameworks and resources, student practice, and formative assessments in motivating, engaging courses that give all students the chance to become AP and collegeready.
15. **Qualitative Measures:** performance indicators that cannot be recorded numerically and that include observations, anecdotal records, checklists, interviews, student products, performances, etc.
16. **Quantitative Measures:** performance indicators that can be expressed in terms of definite numbers or amounts such as scores on achievement tests
17. **State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Assessment:** a series of state-mandated standardized tests used in Texas public primary and secondary schools to assess a student's achievements and knowledge learned in the grade level.
18. **Twice-Exceptional:** a child who, alongside being considered gifted in comparison to same age-peers, is formally diagnosed with one or more disabilities.

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