



GATE

(Gifted & Talented Education)

Department Handbook



COLLEGE, CAREER & MILITARY READINESS
GIFTED *and* TALENTED
EDUCATION
SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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FOREWARD

The San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Department strives to develop services that transform potential in youth into outstanding achievement in adulthood. We believe that the potential to perform at remarkably high levels of accomplishment occurs across all populations.

Based on guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) through the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*, the District has developed a plan for identifying and serving those students who demonstrate an educational need beyond the regular classroom. The purpose of this document is to outline that plan, including information about identification, service design, professional development, and family involvement.

TEXAS STATE GOAL FOR SERVICES FOR GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS

Students who participate in services designed for gifted/talented 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 are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment. High school graduates who have participated in services for gifted/talented students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.

[-Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, 2019](#)

TEXAS STATE DEFINITION OF GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENT

[TEC §29.121](#) DEFINITION: In this subchapter, "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 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.

-Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT'S DEFINITION OF GIFTED

San Antonio ISD has adopted the Texas State definition of giftedness and defines a gifted/talented student as:

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](#)

**SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT'S
GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION (GATE) DEPARTMENT'S
MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the San Antonio Independent School District's Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Department is to transform potential in youth into outstanding achievement in adulthood. The district is committed to identifying and nurturing individual strengths in order to cultivate the unique intellectual and academic gifts and talents of our students.

Through the use of 21st century learning tools, collaboration with classroom teachers, and student and parent involvement, we will foster the development of engaged, self-motivated, learners and leaders who will be college and career ready while demonstrating skills in self-directed learning, critical thinking, research, and communication. GATE students will develop innovative products and performances that will reflect individuality and creativity and be presented to an audience outside the classroom.

IDENTIFICATION & ELIGIBILITY PROCESSES K-12

The San Antonio Independent School District has board approval on the process for identifying K-12 students for eligibility for Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) services. These procedures meet state requirements ([TEC §29.121](#) & [TAC §89.1](#)) and have been designed to ensure the identification of any student who demonstrates an educational need for the services of the program under the established guidelines.

School districts shall develop written policies on student identification that are approved by the local board of trustees and disseminated to parents. The policies must:

- 1) Include provisions for ongoing screening and selection of students who perform, or show potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment in the areas defined in the [Texas Education Code, §29.121](#);
- 2) Include assessment measures collected from multiple sources according to each area defined in the [Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students](#);
- 3) Include data and procedures designed to ensure that students from all populations in the district have access to assessment and, if identified, services for the gifted/talented program;
- 4) Provide for final selection of students to be made by a committee of at least three local district educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted students; and
- 5) Include provisions regarding furloughs, reassessment, exiting of students from program services, transfer students, and appeals of district decisions regarding program placement.

[-Texas Administrative Code §89.1: Student Assessment](#)

IDENTIFICATION TIMELINE

IDENTIFICATION TIMELINE	
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral processes published & advertised
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referrals (including parent permission to test) accepted for current year testing from parents, teachers, community members** Opt out of universal screening letters distributed by campuses to families of 5th grade students
October - December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal screening of 5th grade and referral assessments conducted by campus staff and supported by the GATE Instructional Specialist
January - February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make-up testing window for students not enrolled during the original testing window
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opt out of universal screening letters distributed by campuses to families of 1st grade students Universal screening of 1st grade conducted by campus staff and supported by the GATE Instructional Specialist
Spring Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Identification Committee meets to review assessments and determine eligibility Eligibility letters distributed to universally screened students who are found eligible for services Notification letters distributed to all referred students Written parental permission for services collected for newly eligible students Eligible students with parent permission are PEIMS coded
August (following school year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services begin for identified students

**Referrals received after October may be assessed the following school year.

DISSEMINATING INFORMATION

Anyone may refer a student for consideration for GATE services. Referral Forms/Links are available through GATE Campus Coordinators and [GATE Instructional Specialists](#). Referral forms may be submitted to the GATE Campus Coordinator at any time; however, testing will only occur in the window outlined above. Referrals received after the testing window begins, may be held for testing in the following school year.

Parents are informed of the referral period, identification timelines and procedures through the GATE Handbook, the GATE Department website, individual campus announcements, and/or through parent awareness meetings to be held at individual campuses.

REFERRAL PROCESS

Referrals may originate from teachers, campus staff, parents, community members, or students themselves. Students are referred using a formal Referral Form/Link to be submitted to the GATE Campus Coordinator or Instructional Specialist. The GATE Campus Coordinator and Instructional Specialist will work together to collect both a Parent/Guardian Checklist (completed by the parent/guardian) and a Teacher Checklist (completed by a teacher). The purpose of these checklists is to gather information about a student's academic needs. The information is used to help determine eligibility during the identification process. Written parent/guardian permission is required to assess a referred student. If a parent does not want his/her child to be assessed, this information will be documented. A completed referral packet consists of the following: Referral Form, Teacher Checklist, Parent Checklist. Assessment should not occur until the completed referral packet is received.

UNIVERSAL SCREENING

All students in the 1st and 5th grades automatically participate in universal screening for GATE services. Parents may decline the screening assessment for their child by completing and returning the Opt Out Letter that is sent home with students prior to the administration of the screener. Based on the results of screening, the GATE Department will collect further information as needed to conduct a full assessment and determine if GATE services are appropriate. Parents will be notified of results only if their student moves on to the full assessment process. Students in the universal screening grades may also be referred. A referral in these grades ensures that the identification committee will consider a complete picture of the student's data when making an eligibility decision.

ASSESSMENT/ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

Using the collected data, a Student Identification Profile is developed for each student who was referred or who demonstrated a potential need for services during universal screening. This profile reflects a minimum of three data points, to include both quantitative and qualitative measures. These assessments *may include, but are not limited to:*

- Achievement tests
- Aptitude/Abilities tests
- Observational checklists
- Student work products
- Student self-assessments
- Student interviews

The student identification profile is used to record and display student data points. Each student's profile is individually evaluated by a district identification committee, which is composed of at least three district educators who are trained in the nature and needs of gifted students. A student qualifies for GATE services if the majority of evidence falls within the excellent to superior ranges on the profile and/or based on the committee's observation of the preponderance of evidence demonstrating how the student performs, or shows the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment relative to their age, peers, experience, or environment. Local district and campus norming is used when considering student data in the eligibility process.

Final determination of a student's need for GATE services is made by an identification committee of at least 3 local district or campus educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted/talented students and who have met and reviewed the individual student's data. As the committee evaluates each student's identification profile, students are sorted into three categories:

1. The preponderance of evidence indicates that the student exhibits an educational need and would benefit from gifted services. These students are eligible for GATE services.
2. The preponderance of evidence indicates that the student does not have an educational need for gifted services at this time. His/her educational needs can be met in the general education classroom. These students are not eligible for GATE services.
3. Further information is needed for the committee to make an eligibility decision. The committee will collect further information and re-review.

Based on the review of information gathered during the assessment process, students whose data reflect that gifted/talented services will be the most effective way to meet their identified educational needs are recommended by the identification committee for GATE services.

NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Once the identification process is complete, parents/guardians are notified of the District Identification Committee's decision during the spring semester. Eligibility letters are distributed to families. Parents may request a conference to examine their child's assessment results. Requests should be made through the GATE Instructional Specialist at the student's home campus.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

All students who were identified and have participated in gifted and talented programs/services prior to coming to San Antonio ISD may be considered for immediate eligibility for GATE services. Identification and participation records should be submitted to the District's GATE Department for review and eligibility determination. A decision will be determined regarding eligibility within 30 school days of the receipt of the student's Gifted/Talented records from the previous district. If transfer data is insufficient, San Antonio ISD may assess the student according to the established district testing timeline to determine if GATE services are the best way to meet his/her educational needs.

Gifted/Talented records of military children transferring into SAISD will be reviewed according to the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, which states, a receiving school district in a member state agrees to "initially honor placement of a student based on the student's enrollment in the sending state as long as that school has a similar or equivalent program." ([Texas Education Code §162.002](#))

FORMER SAISD GATE ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

Students in good standing who are eligible for GATE services in the San Antonio ISD and leave the District are eligible to re-enter services upon confirmation of records when returning to the San Antonio ISD.

APPEALS PROCESS

A parent or student may appeal any final decision of the District Identification Committee regarding eligibility for or removal from gifted services within 30 days of receiving notification of that decision. Appeals should be made first to the District Appeals Committee in writing using the GATE Eligibility Appeal Form, which is available from the [GATE Instructional Specialist](#). The committee will review the written appeal and any new data that is submitted to the GATE Department within 30 days of receipt. Parents and/or guardians will be notified of the District Appeals Committee's decision in writing. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with [FNG \(LOCAL\)](#) beginning at Level Two.

FURLOUGH PROCESS

A furlough is a temporary "leave of absence" from GATE services designed to meet the individual needs of an identified student. Anyone may request a furlough: parent, student, teacher, or administrator. Requests for a furlough will be reviewed by a committee composed of the campus administrator, GATE Campus Coordinator, and GATE Instructional Specialist for consideration. A student who is unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the gifted and talented program may be placed on furlough by this committee. The purpose of such a furlough is to provide the student an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the committee. A furlough may also be granted at the request of the student and/or parent. A student may be furloughed for a period of time deemed appropriate by the committee. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed, and the student may reenter gifted services, be exited from services, or be placed on another furlough. All committee decisions/actions and furloughs should be documented using the GATE Furlough Request Form.

Furloughs are designed to be short-term and temporary and should not be used for an entire school year. A furlough does not indicate a permanent exiting of the program. Furloughs could be utilized for a variety of extenuating circumstances such as over commitment, family concerns, serious illness, or any other circumstances which would inhibit or curtail the student's performance in the program. The furlough may also be used prior to a formal exit from the program for those students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the learning opportunities of the Gifted/Talented program.

EXIT PROCESS

Student performance in the program shall be monitored by the GATE Instructional Specialist. A student may be removed from services at any time the furlough committee determines it is in the student's best interest and after a furlough has been ineffective. A parent conference will be held before the exit process is completed. If a student or parent requests removal from the program, the District shall honor the request after a parent conference with the furlough committee or its representative. Once a student is exited from the program he/she must adhere to the identification procedures and exhibit educational need to be readmitted.

PROVISION OF STUDENT SERVICES

The San Antonio Independent School District offers a variety of learning experiences and opportunities for GATE eligible students in grades K-12 that meet the mandates of the Texas Administrative Code. These services may include, but are not limited to, differentiation in the general education classroom, cluster grouping, requiring/supporting advanced level products and performances that meet the requirements of the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*, access to advanced level coursework at the secondary level, extracurricular enrichment opportunities, and allowing identified GATE students the opportunity to work with other identified students in clustered classrooms and/or pullout enrichment settings.

TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE §89.3 - STUDENT SERVICES

School districts shall provide an array of learning opportunities for gifted/talented students in kindergarten through Grade 12 and shall inform parents of the opportunities. Options must include:

1. Instructional and organizational patterns that enable identified students to work together as a group, to work with other students, and to work independently;
2. A continuum of learning experiences that leads to the development of advanced-level products and performances;
3. In-school and, when possible, out-of-school options relevant to the student's area of strength that are available during the entire school year; and
4. Opportunities to accelerate in areas of strength.

SAISD SERVICE MODEL GRADES K-12 GATE Students are eligible to receive services which may include:		
Service Option	Definition	Examples
Pullout Services	Students leave the general education classroom to work with a gifted education specialist on specific projects or activities that are different from work in the regular classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly pullout • Monthly pullout • Special topics seminars • One on one conferencing
Push In Services	Gifted education specialist goes into the regular classroom to provide services to students and/or teachers – students do not leave the regular classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-teaching • Teacher coaching • Co-planning
Advanced Level Coursework and In Class Differentiation	Regular classroom teacher is trained to work with gifted students and provides differentiated instruction in the regular classroom in the most appropriately rigorous environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum compacting • Choice menus • Independent research projects • AP, Dual Credit, IB
Extra-curricular Enrichment	Students engage in interest activities outside the regular school day/curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UIL • Chess & Scrabble club • 90 Second Newbery • Duke TIP
Virtual Services Student Focus	Students interact with a gifted education specialist and/or other students in an online environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online discussion boards • Byrdseed TV • Independent research • Enrichment clusters • one on one conferencing
Virtual Services Teacher Focus	Gifted education specialist provides push in services via an online platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online GATE Centers • Virtual PLNs • Online professional learning • Online co-planning, co-teaching

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND ONGOING TRAINING IN GIFTED EDUCATION**

San Antonio Independent School District is committed to providing its staff with appropriate and meaningful professional development which enables the staff to meet the unique and individual educational needs of all students including services for gifted/talented students. It is important that all staff who are responsible for formally servicing these students obtain appropriate training for educating the gifted child. The district will require at least the minimum hours of training as mandated by the state:

[TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE §89.2 - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT](#)

1. Prior to assignment in the program, teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students have a minimum of 30 hours of staff development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students;
2. Teachers without training required in paragraph (1) of this section who provide instruction and services that are part of the gifted/talented program must complete the 30-hour training requirement within one semester;
3. Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students receive a minimum of six hours annually of professional development in gifted education; and
4. Administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions have a minimum of six hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students and program options.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

SAN ANTONIO ISD will conduct annual evaluation activities for the purposes of service development and program improvement.

Such evaluation activities may include:

- Annual data review
- Annual compliance review to determine alignment with the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*
- Annual review and revision of GATE enrichment curriculum
- Annual review and revision of GATE enrichment services
- Parent and student feedback forms
- Parent informational meetings that include opportunities to provide feedback

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SAISD is committed to involving families and community members in the development and implementation of its GATE services. Throughout the year, the district hosts opportunities to gather information, provide feedback that is used to impact services, and engage in and celebrate learning.

Family and community engagement opportunities may include:

Information Gathering	Learning & Celebration	Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● orientation to gifted services● district informational meetings regarding identification● campus based informational meetings● access to GATE Department webpage● GATE newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● learning & advocacy group meetings● annual showcase● family game nights● family learning nights● parent conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● learning & advocacy group meetings● advisory committee meetings● completing feedback forms