



# Gifted Education



# Parent Guidebook

# U-46 Innovation

In the absence of funding and mandated programming in Illinois, School District U-46 continues to provide programming aimed at meeting the unique academic and social and emotional needs of high ability learners. The District commitment to programming is a sustained effort made possible through the use of general education funds; the District does not receive funding for gifted education.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of gifted education is to recognize and provide for the unique academic and affective needs of high ability learners, allowing them to become innovative, creative producers in the global society as well as their personal pursuits. Gifted learners are represented in all populations.

## Definition

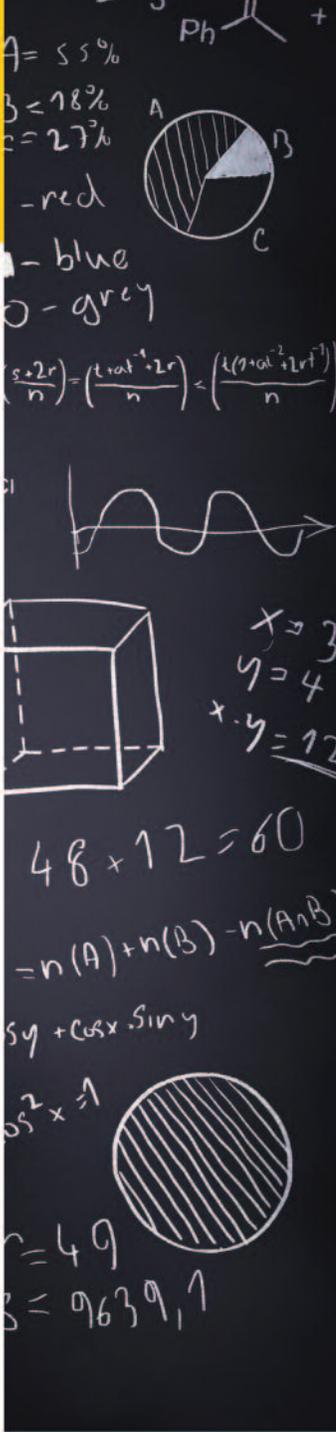
The District defines gifted students as those who perform, or who show the potential to perform, at significantly advanced levels of accomplishment when compared with students their comparable age and background. These students exhibit high performance capacity in intellectual ability, and/or a specific academic field. Gifted students are represented in all racial, ethnic, disability groups and across all socioeconomic strata. They require specialized instruction, services, and/or activities not ordinarily provided by the general education program in order to maximize the academic and social and emotional pursuits. (Aligned to the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) definition)

## The District Gifted Programming is developed on the following beliefs:

- High ability learners require differentiated curriculum and instructional approaches, resources, and enriched experiences in order to maximize their potential.
- Students should be able to engage in experiences that emphasize the development of intellectual innovation.
- All learners are entitled to an education corresponding with their particular needs and one that will extend their academic path.

## Table of Contents

Gifted Philosophy .....	
Core Beliefs .....	
Gifted Identification Procedures .....	
Universal Screening	
Gifted Curriculum .....	
Policies and Procedures .....	
Identification Process	
Appeals Process	
Exit Procedure	



# Core beliefs about gifted children

*Gifted children are unique and are as different from one another as they are from the population as a whole.*

*Gifted children exist in all cultural groups, within all economic levels, among populations with other special needs, and in all areas of human endeavor.*

*Gifted children learn differently and require special educational experiences in order to grow academically and achieve their highest potential.*

*Gifted children, because of heightened intellectual and social-emotional intensities, need support and encouragement from individuals who recognize, validate, and nurture their giftedness.*

## Gifted Identification Procedures

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### Universal Screening

For the elementary program, screening begins with the administration of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) in the Spring of second grade with the identification process concluding in the fall of third grade. Identified students begin the program in the fourth grade. Sixth graders are administered the CogAT test in the fall for consideration to enter the middle school program in 7th grade. Please note that students who are new to School District U-46 are eligible to go through the screening process if their current grade level does not fall within universal screening. Students who move into the district and have met all of our program's identification criteria, will be eligible to enter the program.

A student's gifted participation in another school district does not automatically qualify the student for gifted services in SD U-46. This is because gifted screening varies from district to district and state to state. Students transferring in from another state or school district must qualify using SD U-46 criteria.

In short, Universal Screening means:

- **The systematic assessment of all students within a grade level for identifying exceptional ability or potential, making sure underrepresented populations equitably assessed.**
- **Universal screening measures students' abilities and potential as opposed to traditional assessments which measure achievement.**

### Testing timeline

Students may test once for participation in Elementary gifted programming and once for participation in Middle School gifted education. Once identified for elementary gifted services, students automatically continue gifted participation through middle school.

- **Students test in 3rd grade for inclusion in gifted programming in grades 4-6.**
- **Students test in 6th grade for gifted education at the Middle school.**

# Identification Process

The gifted identification process includes review of assessment data and qualitative data on students. Identification committee members review student data endeavoring to appropriately place students where their needs and skill readiness will be met. The identification committee is comprised of district administrators (Special Education, English Language Learners, etc.), building administrators, teachers- gifted education, dual language, general education and a school psychologist.

The District examines outside assessment data that aligns with our screening instruments. Placement decisions are made based on a student's performance within U-46 local norms.

## Transfer Students

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Students who transfer from another district will be considered for placement according to the District U-46 gifted program criteria.

## Appeals Process

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Parents have the option of submitting an appeal when they disagree with the identification committee decision. Information on the appeals process is included with score notification provided to all parents. The appeals committee is a distinct group from the identification process. The committee is comprised of district administrators (Special Education, English Language Learners, etc.), building administrators, and teachers – gifted education, dual language, general education and a school psychologist.

The appeals process timeline is strictly enforced to allow for the timely placement of students; late applications are not accepted. The appeals committee reviews the identification data to ensure that the identification process was properly conducted; the appeals committee does not overturn a properly facilitated identification decision. The decision of the appeals committee is final.

## Gifted Education Notification

The results from gifted screening (CogAT testing) will be sent to parents/guardians in the mail. For those who qualify, this mailing will include an acceptance form, which must be returned by the acceptance due date, as well as information specific to your child's programming. Students who qualify for gifted services will be placed in the program in the fall of the coming school year. Students who do not meet the qualifications for gifted programming will receive notice of student performance and the directions for submitting an appeal if the parents/guardians choose to do so.

Elementary students qualifying for gifted education services will attend classes daily with a teacher trained to work with gifted students. Students are integrated with their age peers for P.E., art, music, lunch and clubs/extracurricular activities. Gifted education services are provided to qualifying students in grades 4-6 at designated cluster sites with specific schools being assigned to each location. Transportation is provided per the District transportation guidelines.

## DL IGNITE

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Dual Language IGNITE (Inquiry and Gifted Network for Ingenuity Talent and Exploration) is a school-within-a-school program for bilingual, biliterate and bicultural students who demonstrate achievement or specific academic aptitude in the academic areas of Mathematics and English Language Arts and performing beyond the norm for their reference group. Students from one-way and two-way Dual Language programming are considered for Dual Language IGNITE.

## **Elementary School- IGNITE (Inquiry and Gifted Network for Ingenuity Talent and Exploration) and Dual Language IGNITE**

# Identification Process

## Assignment to Gifted Sites

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Identified students are assigned to a gifted site based on their home address, class sizes, and transportation. Students who relocate within the district after beginning the program can remain at their gifted site without district provided transportation. Those exiting the program return to their home school.

## Middle School Gifted Education

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Middle school gifted students receive gifted services in Language Arts, Science and Social Studies daily. Gifted programming is an interdisciplinary model whenever possible. An interdisciplinary curriculum combines several school subjects into one active project or is organized to cut across subject-matter lines, bringing together various aspects of the curriculum into meaningful association. Math placement is determined by district placement criteria and is not part of gifted education at the middle school. Transportation is provided per the District transportation guidelines.

## Deferred entrance

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Once identified for gifted programming, a student may defer entrance once during the elementary career and join the cohort in a subsequent year. The same applies for students who decline gifted services and choose to enter at a later time. If a student declines acceptance, he/she may only enter the following year. After that time, the student would have to wait, test in 6th grade, and qualify for middle school gifted placement.

## Re-entry

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In the event a student leaves the gifted program, re-entry will be considered on a case by case basis.

## Gifted Curriculum

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Curriculum in SD U-46 gifted programming is developed to meet the specific learning needs of high ability learners. These needs vary from student to student but generally include the ability to learn quickly and with fewer repetitions.

Gifted programming is a responsive extension from the core District curriculum. Instruction starts with the grade level Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for IGNITE and CCSS, Spanish Language Arts, Spanish Language Development and English Language Development Standards for DL IGNITE as the benchmark and extend in depth and complexity per student readiness. To this effect, gifted resources differ from the core resources in English Language Arts and Math in the elementary program. Gifted programming uses the same instructional resources as general education for Science and Social Studies.

## Gifted and Academies Parent Advisory Group

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The Gifted & Academies Parent Advisory group's purpose is to strengthen the programs it serves. The group exists to advise, assist, support and advocate for gifted children and gifted programming. It has no legislative, administrative or programmatic authority and its role is advisory only. The Gifted & Academies Parent Advisory group will work cooperatively with the gifted department and other school officials in planning and carrying out committee work.

Members are volunteers who share a passion for meeting the social, emotional and academic needs of gifted students, including high potential and culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

Membership consideration is aimed at engaging parents of children in gifted or academy programming, varied input across the district, diverse representation by race/ethnicity, age/level of students involved in programming. The membership commitment is a two-year term.

# Gifted Office

## May students be removed from Gifted Programs?

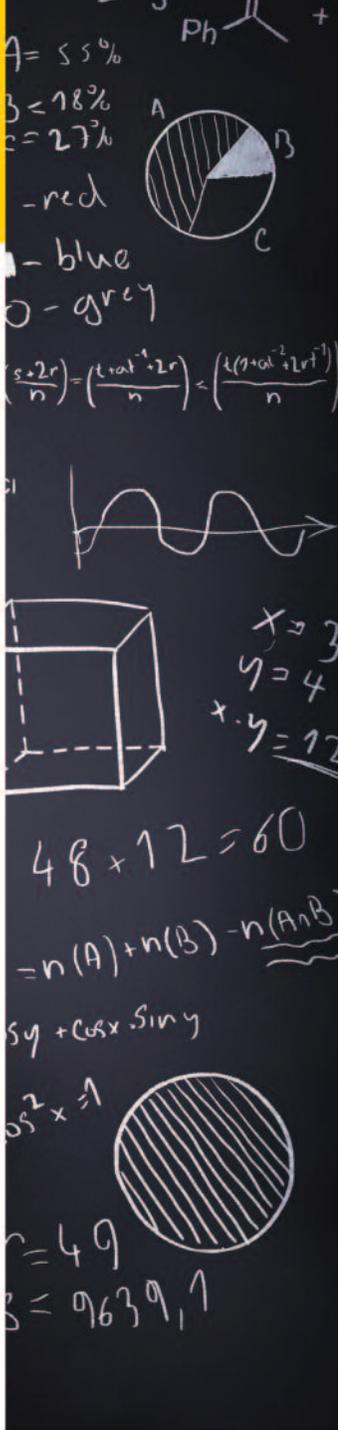
**Yes.** Although it is rare, it is sometimes necessary for a student to be reassigned to a different academic placement.

The process used to reconsider that choice should be careful and deliberate by all parties, as was the decision to enter. Before a child is reassigned at the request of a parent, or at the instigation of the school, the following steps should be taken, and the student service team, or MTSS should be involved in these steps, as appropriate.

1. A conference should be held between the parents, student and the classroom teacher. The problems or issues should be identified and focused and each of the parties, parent(s), student, and teacher should agree to what each will do to remedy the problem. A short time frame should be set for each to use these strategies and a date set to meet and reassess.
2. If the parties feel the matter has not been resolved by the second meeting, they would re-evaluate and again establish objectives for each party and arrange a third meeting. The school principal and the Coordinator of Gifted Programs should be notified of the results of this second meeting and invited to attend the third meeting.
3. At the third meeting, the progress to date should be reviewed and the steps of setting objectives for each party should be repeated. If all are not satisfied that sufficient progress has been made and the parties agree reassignment would be in the child's best interest, arrangements should be made for that transition. If progress is being made, the process can be repeated with lengthier periods of time separating meetings.

Attention is called to the expectation that both parents and staff will follow these steps if they think a child needs to be reassigned to the home school. If the student may be returning to the home school, the Gifted Program building principal/office should notify the home school of this possibility.

Most students will struggle at some point with the challenge presented by Gifted Programs. Most will successfully meet it. In rare cases, a student may experience continuing and increasing difficulty. If this is very different from the norm, in its severity and duration, teachers will be in contact with parents and work with them and the student to resolve it positively. If problems persist and are severe, building staff or the student and his/her family may think the choice of the Gifted Program assignment was not a wise one or is not working as expected. If so, the steps outlined above will guide reassignment.



# Gifted Office

## ¿Los estudiantes pueden ser removidos del Programa de niños sobresalientes?

**Si.** Aunque es raro, algunas veces es necesario que el estudiante sea reasignado a una colocación académica diferente.

El proceso es usado para reconsiderar que la opción sea cuidadosa y deliberada por todas las partes de igual forma como la decisión de entrar. Antes que un niño/a sea reasignado por petición de los padres, o por recomendación de la escuela, los siguientes pasos deberán tomarse, y el equipo de servicio, o equipo de RtI/PBIS deberá estar envuelto en estos pasos, si es apropiado.

1. Una conferencia deberá llevarse a cabo entre los padres, el estudiante y el maestro del salón. Los problemas deberán ser identificados y enfocados y cada una de las partes, padres, estudiantes y demás involucrados deberán estar de acuerdo en lo que cada quien hará para remediar el problema. Un período corto de tiempo deberá ser considerado para cada una de las estrategias y se fijara una fecha para reunirse y evaluar.
2. Si los involucrados sienten que el problema no ha sido resuelto para la segunda junta ellos deberán re-evaluar y otra vez establecer objetivos para cada parte y hacer arreglos para una tercera junta. El director de la escuela y el director del programa de alumnos dotados, deberán ser notificados de los resultados de la segunda junta e invitados a atender la tercera junta.
3. En la tercera junta, el progreso deberá ser revisado y los pasos de poner objetivos para cada parte deberán repetirse. Si todos no están satisfechos que se ha hecho progreso suficiente y las partes acuerdan que una reasignación se haría en el mejor interés de estudiante, arreglos deberán hacerse para la transición. Si se ha hecho un progreso, el proceso puede repetirse en periodos de tiempo más largos entre las juntas.

Hay una expectativa que ambos padres y el personal seguirán los pasos que crean necesarios para que el/la niño/a pueda ser reasignado a su escuela hogar. Si el estudiante regresase a su escuela hogar, el director del edificio donde está la academia deberá notificar a la escuela hogar de esta posibilidad.

Muchos estudiantes batallan alguna vez con el reto presentado por el programa de Niños sobresalientes. Muchos alcanzaran exitosamente cumplir con el reto. En raros casos, un estudiante experimentara una continua y creciente dificultad. Si esto es muy diferente de lo normal, en severidad y duración, la escuela contactara a los padres y trabajara con ellos y el estudiante para resolverla positivamente. Si los problemas persisten y son severos, el personal del edificio o el estudiante y su familia podrán pensar que la asignación a el programa de niños sobresalientes no fue sabia o no resultó como esperaban. Si es así, los pasos mencionados arriba guiaran la reasignación.

