



Alvin ISD

**Advanced Academics/
Gifted and Talented**

**Parent
Handbook**

Alvin Independent School District

Vision

Alvin ISD is a dynamic learning organization committed to excellence for each student and every program.

Core Beliefs

- We believe students achieve their maximum potential when provided engaging learning opportunities.
- We believe parents expect excellence in educational experiences that will make each child's goals become achievable.
- We believe teachers create a safe and engaging learning environment that fosters the success of each student.
- We believe campus leaders establish a climate where everyone matters by creating a culture of pride and ownership in their schools.
- We believe the central office provides the foundation to equip staff with resources in a supportive environment so that each student has the opportunity to thrive.
- We believe the Board of Trustees engages the community to create an environment where excellence is prioritized to ensure each student reaches his or her maximum potential.

Advanced Academics Mission Statement

The mission of the Alvin ISD Advanced Academics Program is to support each Gifted and Talented student and Advanced Learner in order to foster the academic and social/emotional needs of these students in the following ways:

- Cultivating relationships
- Strengthening critical thinking skills
- Providing greater depth and complexity
- Differentiating learning experiences to encourage life-long learning

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 and 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 Handbook

Alvin ISD

The Alvin Independent School District recognizes that gifted students have special needs and abilities. The gifted program will provide identified students with opportunities beyond the regular curriculum to broaden their knowledge, skills, and experiences. Emphasis will be on developing, independent, self-directed learners by encouraging and supporting in-depth learning and divergent and creative thinking. Gifted students will be expected to and will be given opportunities to perform well beyond what would be expected of a child of similar age and experience.

A “Gifted and Talented” student is 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 one who exhibits high performance capability in intellectual ability and higher level thinking skills.

Program Design

Elementary Level: Grades K-5

Identified students are served at their individual campus within a cluster setting by teachers who have the required GT training and who differentiate the curriculum in the four core content areas with learning components implemented by Advanced Academics Specialists on each campus.

The program is designed to develop students as life-long learners who apply, synthesize, and evaluate information, ideas, skills, and processes. As a result, our GT students will obtain necessary knowledge and skills to become productive contributors to their community.

Acceleration of learning is encouraged, and students are provided an array of learning experiences participating in a wide choice of Texas Performance Standards Projects. Students are introduced to and use the district-adopted *Independent Investigation Method or IIM*, a research process which involves seven user-friendly steps to accomplish K-5 research tasks. Student products and performances are spotlighted and shared with the community.

Affective needs of GT students are met through a multitude of activities, such as understanding giftedness, perfectionism, and emotional stress. Activities include integrating children’s literature with teacher directed lessons that address the individual student’s needs.

WINGS Academy

The WINGS Academy is a school within a school model designed to provide highly gifted students an advanced educational opportunity matched to their individual abilities, strengths and interests. The academy will open the fall of 2017 for highly gifted students in first and second grade. After the initial opening, the WINGS Academy will follow with the addition of a grade level each subsequent year until it reaches fifth grade.

Students must be enrolled in Alvin ISD and qualify through an evaluation process that includes qualitative and quantitative measures.

The school features:

- Multi-age group classes that allows learning with intellectual peers
- Curriculum specifically designed for highly gifted learners
- An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that appropriately challenges each student's abilities allowing her/him to engage in the curriculum at a pace and depth consistent with the student's knowledge, skills and personal motivations
- A learning environment that recognizes their social emotional needs and fosters leadership, integrity, personal responsibility, and an appreciation of individual differences, along with respect for others
- The opportunity to identify and develop students' unique talents and skills at an advanced level and be supported by teachers, professors and other experts in their fields of interest
- Engagement of parents in the learning process and provide opportunities for understanding and nurturing their children.

Junior High Level: Grades 6 - 8

GT students receive differentiated services with specially trained teachers in each of the four core content areas through Pre-AP. The Gifted and Talented curriculum is integrated with the TEKS and the Pre-AP College Board curriculum. An Advanced Academic Specialist offers individual support for students/teachers in producing/implementing advanced coursework and products. The wide range of learning experiences at this level may include out-of-school "competition" options as well as in-school individual project choices in the different content areas. Students also establish and enhance their technology skills as a "tool for learning" at the junior high level. Student progress as a gifted learner is reported to parents.

STEM Academy

The Alvin ISD STEM Academy is a school within a school model meeting the needs of the district's highly gifted population. Students must qualify through a series of qualitative and quantitative measures. The STEM Academy focuses on problem solving, discovery, creativity, exploratory learning, teamwork, leadership skills, and communication skills while providing the depth and complexity needed to meet the cognitive needs of the highly gifted student. After opening in the fall of 2016 with sixth grade, the STEM Academy will follow with the addition of 7th and 8th grades each subsequent year.

Magnet Academic Program (MAP)

The AISD Magnet Academic Program (MAP) offers an accelerated curriculum that includes the level of rigor needed for our students to be successful in advanced secondary course work. All fifth grade students in Alvin ISD are screened and tested at the end of their fifth grade year in order to qualify to participate in MAP in 6th through 8th grades. These students are administered a battery of mathematic assessments in the spring, both timed and untimed. Students are placed on a matrix that is tallied with information garnered from the tests as well as teacher recommendations and mathematics average for the year. MAP is currently offered at all AISD junior high campuses. Every Alvin ISD student is evaluated for the Alvin Magnet Academic Program (MAP) in the spring of their 5th grade year. Fifth grade students who transfer or move into Alvin ISD after our evaluation process may request testing. A student will only be assessed or evaluated one time for the program.

High School Level: Grades 9 - 12

GT students at the high school level are served in three course areas: Pre-Advanced Placement, Advanced Placement, and Dual Credit. Highly trained teachers integrate collegiate level curriculum with the TEKS in order to prepare students for the rigor of Advanced Placement and Dual Credit courses. The Advanced Placement and Dual Credit programs represent vertical and horizontal acceleration, allowing students to earn college credit while they are in high school. In addition, the Dual Degree program from Alvin Community College enables participating high school students the opportunity to earn an Associate of Arts degree.

Identification Process

Identification Policy

In order to comply with the [Texas State Plan](#) for the Gifted and Talented, students will be identified for participation in the AISD Gifted and Talented Program through the use of multiple criteria that are both quantitative (cognitive skill test, intelligence measures, etc.) and qualitative (professional recommendations and classroom performance data). The state plan requires at least three criteria be used to identify students. In accordance with state guidelines and in striving to be an exemplary gifted program, Alvin identifies students based on criterion and norm referenced testing, intelligence measures, and teacher recommendations.

Identification Procedure

Referrals

- Referrals are accepted on an ongoing basis for the GT program from the following: teachers, administrators, parents, counselors, peers, the student or anyone familiar with the student's behavior, performance, or products and who is aware of characteristics of the gifted and talented.
- Community notices are placed on district & school websites regarding referrals.
- Referrals for all grade levels must be submitted in writing to the campus Advanced Academics Specialist.
- The Alvin ISD gifted program does not offer assessments for non-enrolled students. Students must be enrolled and in actual attendance prior to consideration for GT assessment.
- Click [here](#) to download the Alvin ISD GT referral form. Deadline for referrals is March 1st.

Assessment Grades 1-12

- Student referrals in grades 1-5 must be turned in to the Advanced Academics Specialist by March 1.
- The campus level committee, made up of the following personnel, reviews student's testing data to determine placement: Advanced Academics Specialist, administrator, counselor, and classroom teacher with 30 clock hours of GT training.
- Students may be tested two times in elementary: first through fifth. Testing occurs in the spring semester.
- Secondary (Grades 6-12) assessment opportunities are made available once a semester.

Kindergarten

- All kindergarten students will be screened during the fall semester and students who qualify will be tested during the months of January/February.
- GT services will begin by March 1st of the school year.

Transfer Students

- Identified gifted and talented students from another district will be considered for placement during the first six weeks of enrollment.
- Previous gifted and talented documentation should be provided by parents to the campus Advanced Academics Specialist.
- Further assessment will be initiated as indicated
- The campus GT selection committee will review the assessment data and determine the best placement for the student
- Parents will be notified of the campus GT selection committee decision.

Private and Home School

Private and home schooled students enrolling in the district are considered transfer students and fall within the guidelines previously described. Students must be enrolled and in actual attendance prior to consideration for GT assessment.

The Alvin ISD Advanced Academics department will conduct summer screenings for private school and home school students for possible GT testing. Depending on the outcome of the screening, a student may qualify to participate in GT testing. If your child is newly enrolled in Alvin ISD as a previous private school or home school student and has never attended public school, the district will conduct a summer screening on your child. In order to have your child screened, the student must be enrolled in an Alvin ISD elementary school.

Parents of newly enrolled private or home school students who do not go through the summer screening process, must indicate when enrolling their child that they would like to have their child screened for GT. All screenings and/or testing will occur within the first two weeks of school. After that time, student testing will occur during the spring testing.

Appeals

A parent or staff member may appeal an identification decision made by the selection committee. The appellant must submit an appeal letter to the campus Advanced Academics Specialist no later than 15 working days after the committee has announced its selection decisions. A response will be made to the person making the appeal no later than 15 working days after receipt of the letter of appeal.

Furlough

- Students unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the GT program may be placed on furlough by the selection committee which includes: Advanced Academics Specialist, classroom teacher, administrator, and counselor.
- If a student fails any grade level state-mandated test, he/she will be placed on *furlough* for one year until passing the next year's grade level state-mandated test. If the student continues to fail any grade level state-mandated test, he/she will be considered for *exit* from the GT program. The committee may consider extenuating circumstances.
- If a student fails a core class (English/Language Arts, Science, Math, and/or Social Studies) for a nine week period, he/she may be furloughed from the GT program.
- At the elementary level, if a student chooses not to participate in the levels of service offered to GT students, he or she will be furloughed from the GT program and will not attend GT pullout classes.
- Students may be furloughed for a period of time deemed appropriate by the above committee, with student's progress reassessed at the end of the furlough.
- At the end of the furlough period, the student will be re-evaluated by the GT selection committee. A decision will be made for the student to continue in the GT program or begin exit procedures.

Exit Provisions

A student may be exited from the GT program when the furlough requirements have not been met. A committee will evaluate and make the final recommendation for the student. In order to re-enter the program, the student must be referred, screened, and tested for re-entry into the GT program. A parent/guardian may request in writing program exit at any time.