



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 all students and every program.

Core Beliefs

- Trusting relationships in a safe and caring environment are vital to an innovative learning organization.
- A learning organization focused on excellence will continually transform to best suit the needs of our students and community.
- Through community support and engagement, quality public schools build and preserve a healthy democratic society.
- Every student is uniquely capable and deserves to be provided engaging, challenging and meaningful work.
- Each student should be empowered to realize the opportunities that they have as 21st century learners.

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 GT 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.

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.

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 two AISD junior high campuses: Nolan Ryan Junior High and Harby Junior High.

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.

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6420>

Identification Procedure

Nominations (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 nominations.
- Referrals for all grade levels must be submitted in writing to the campus GT/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.
- Nomination forms are available on the district website:

http://www.alvinisd.net/cms/lib03/TX01001897/Centricity/Domain/282/GT_Student_Nomination_Form_Revised.docx

Assessment Grades 1-12

- Student referrals in grades 1-5 must be turned in to the GT Specialist by April 15.
- The campus level committee, made up of the following personnel, reviews student's testing data to determine placement: GT 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 GT 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.

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 GT 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: GT 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.