

# Aledo ISD Advanced Academics Course Selection in Middle School



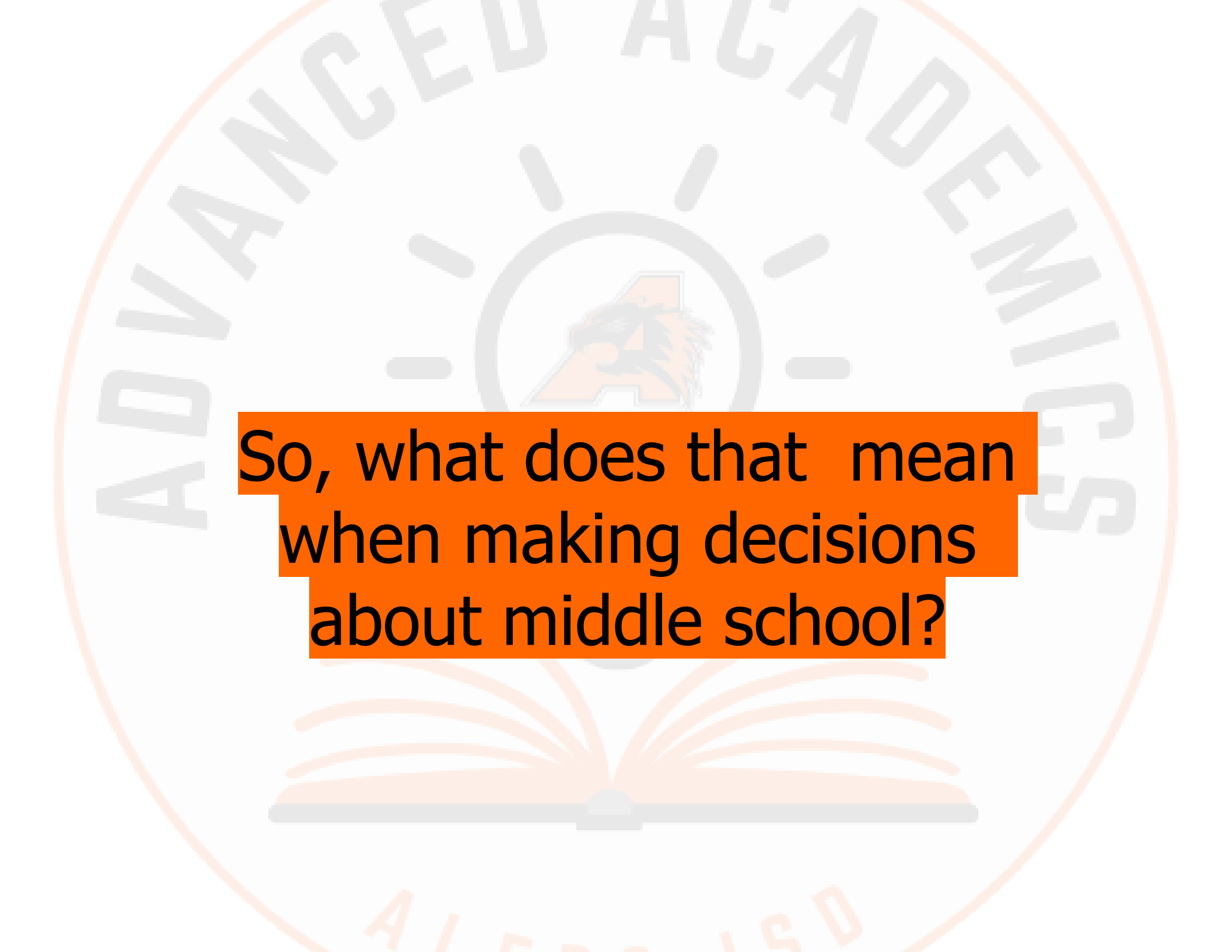
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Advanced Academics

# Rigorous Curriculum

- Taking a rigorous curriculum in high school is the best predictor of students' ability to complete a bachelor's degree. Time to completion is important!
- The number and quality of advanced courses a student takes is more significant than GPA or class rank for predicting college success.

# Advanced Courses

- Students taking more advanced courses score about 2.4 points higher on the ACT composite than students taking standard graduation plan courses. Students also score higher on their SAT.
- Students taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses and OnRamps courses in high school have higher GPA in college than students who do not take AP courses.
- The number of advanced courses a student takes in high school may be a factor considered by a college when making admission/scholarship decisions.



So, what does that mean  
when making decisions  
about middle school?

# Aledo ISD Middle School

- Course leveling begins in middle school. Student and parents have choices in their level of rigor in some academic subjects starting in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Middle school courses build the foundation for advanced/accelerated courses in high school.
- In Aledo ISD we want to encourage our students to take the challenge!

# Levels of Courses in Aledo ISD

- Standard On-level Courses  
Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills
- Advanced Courses  
Emphasize required skills and strategies in addition to the TEKS. These courses are designed to prepare students for Pre-AP (starts in 9<sup>th</sup>) and other Advanced Academic offerings in 9-12

Gifted and Talented (GT) students are served in Advanced curriculum courses.

# Advanced Academic Philosophy in Aledo ISD

## **Advanced Academics is OPEN ENROLLMENT!**

In Aledo ISD we believe that we can prepare EVERY student for deeper intellectual engagement by starting the development of skills and acquisition of knowledge early. Addressed effectively, the middle and high school years can provide a powerful opportunity to help all students acquire the knowledge, concepts, and skills needed for post-secondary education and/or training. (there are some requirements for those selecting Accelerated Math. Please see your counselor.)

# Advanced Course Options

- Advanced ELAR- (Changing to RLA)
- Accelerated Mathematics (not open enrollment dependent on STAAR or MAP performance)

**6th Grade**

# Advanced Course Options

- Advanced ELAR/RLA
- Accelerated Mathematics (not open enrollment)
- Advanced Science
- Advanced History (Texas)

7th grade

# Advanced Course Options

- Advanced ELAR/RLA
- Advanced Science
- Advanced History (United States)
- Algebra I- (high school math credit) (not open enrollment)

8th grade

## Other Recommendations

1. Start your foreign language! (Spanish)

2. Several CTE courses that are STEM-oriented.

(Exploratory Ag, Prins of Ag, Principles of Information Technology (Engineering) Principles of Applied Engineering (Flight and Space/Design and Modeling)

3. Offer Principles of Arts A/V which is a Journalism course

All of the courses that earn high school credit are listed in the middle school planning guide.

# Frequently Asked Questions

Do advanced classes have more homework than standard courses?

Advanced classes may have more homework than standard courses. They typically require more reading, more writing, and more independent practice with the goal of developing advanced skills in those courses..

# Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are there any special qualifications for taking an Advanced course in middle school?

No. (Math has some basic requirements.) Advanced courses are open enrollment. We do recommend that students and parents make informed decisions about enrolling in advanced academic courses. You know your student best!

# Frequently Asked Questions

Can my student make a schedule change if he/she determines that an Advanced course is too difficult?

Schedule changes are at the discretion of the school counselor/administrator, and we try to keep them at a minimum. Some circumstances may warrant a schedule change, but we encourage students and teachers to work together for student success in our Advanced courses.

# Frequently Asked Questions

How might taking advanced academic courses affect my student's grades?

Advanced courses may influence grades because the standards of excellence are set very high in these courses. However, remember that participation in advanced courses has been a better predictor of future success than actual grades. We encourage parents to focus on what students are learning rather than the grades they may encounter in the journey.

# Final Thoughts

- Seek academic challenges as the best way to prepare students for an extended journey from adolescence to adulthood.
- Advanced courses provide rigorous learning environments. They require commitment on the part of the students, but the combination of rigor and commitment can have wonderful effects.



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