ALEDO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT GIFTED & TALENTED HANDBOOK

2026-2027

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AISD GIFTED TEAM

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MISSION AND VISION

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.

AISD Gifted/Talented Program Mission Statement

The mission of Aledo Independent School District's Gifted Education Program is to provide advanced enrichment experiences, promote higher level thinking skills, develop creative problem solving, and foster autonomous learning.

AISD Program Goals and Vision

The G/T program was developed to ensure that our students are challenged to achieve their highest potential and that curriculum and learning opportunities are in line with specific needs, interests, and advanced abilities.

The district's goals for meeting student needs include the following:

- Implementing an ongoing identification process of screening and selecting students based on multiple and specific criteria (both qualitative and quantitative) utilizing an A.R.E. Committee (Admission/Review/Exit).
- Developing and implementing a variety of differentiated and substantive learning opportunities that are linked meaningfully to the core content areas of language, math, social studies, and science (K-5) and through Advanced Academics (6-12) by the classroom teacher.
- Developing self-directed learners with advanced critical and creative thinking skills, research and communication skills.

MISSION AND VISION CONTINUED

- Developing an understanding how intellectual potential affects self-development, relationships with others and responsibilities to society.
- Developing skills of managing time and resources in order to set and meet goals.
- Assessing social and emotional needs and providing educational opportunities accordingly.
- Providing ongoing and appropriate training and staff development opportunities for administrators, counselors, and teachers involved in serving gifted and talented students.
- Soliciting parent and community involvement to promote collective participation in the gifted program.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the gifted program for the purpose of continued improvement and development.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND PROCESS

The Aledo Independent School District seeks to identify those students who possess exceptional abilities and potential for accomplishment so outstanding that they require special gifted and talented programs to meet their educational needs. Through the procedure described below, an ongoing, comprehensive, and systematic review of all students will be made in an attempt to identify those students in need of gifted/talented services. The purpose of identification is to determine which students will benefit from the services provided in the district's program for gifted/talented students.

The procedures used to identify the gifted and talented children within the AISD include three main stages: (1) Referral, (2) Screening, and (3) Selection. The campus Gifted Specialist will make both staff members and parents aware of the process through written communication, staff or parent meetings, individual conferences, and AISD Gifted and Talented Department webpage.

Students may be referred for the G/T program by any of the following:

- Themselves
- Parents
- Teachers
- Counselors
- Administrators
- Any other interested parties who are familiar with the student's abilities

Referral forms may be requested from the campus gifted specialists. Referrals are accepted throughout the year with multiple testing windows each school year. Kindergarten students will be screened in February and will begin pullout services in March.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND PROCESS CONT.

Step 2: Screening

Students in grades K-12 have the opportunity to be screened once per calendar year. During the screening process, relevant data is collected which shows the student's ability to perform or the potential to perform at the level of accomplishment that might indicate a student's need to receive services through the G/T department. In accordance with the Texas State Plan for the Education of the Gifted and Talented, AISD uses both quantitative (objective) and qualitative (subjective) measures.

1. After referrals are complete, the Gifted Specialist will begin collecting initial assessment data to develop the student profile. AISD uses both quantitative and qualitative measures to aid in the identification of gifted students.
2. Students who meet initial screener qualifications will complete further testing consisting of verbal, nonverbal, and quantitative components.

Step 3: Selection Process

Decisions regarding G/T services in the AISD Gifted Program are made by a Gifted and Talented A.R.E. Committee (Admission/Review/Exit) comprised of at least three professional educators. Members of the committee may consist of the campus Gifted Specialist, a teacher representative, the school counselor, and/or a campus administrator. Committee members are required to have thirty hours of gifted training with a six-hour yearly update.

1. The Committee reviews all relevant qualitative and quantitative data. The Committee makes the decision based upon AISD selection criteria to place the student or to decline placement of the student in the AISD G/T Program.
2. When the Committee has made a recommendation regarding services, the campus Gifted Specialist will notify the parents of the committee's decision. Notification will be sent to the parents.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND PROCESS CONT.

Student Evaluation

In kindergarten through fifth grade, student progress through the program will be reported through various means, such as, grading rubrics, self/peer evaluations, observation checklists, etc. Students in grades six through twelve receive a report card sent home by the school.

Homework

In kindergarten through fifth grade, gifted students are responsible for the knowledge covered in the classroom while attending the pullout sessions. While students should not be penalized for missing work done in class, they may be required to complete certain assignments in order to demonstrate mastery upon return from the G/T program. Students are responsible for homework given to the entire class.

Special Activities

In the elementary grades, staff will make every effort to avoid scheduling activities, such as projects, tests, test prep, field trips, guest speakers, class rewards, extended recess time, etc., while the student attends the gifted and talented pullout program, but all conflicts simply cannot be avoided. If scheduling conflicts arise, it is the activity organizer who is responsible for communicating this to parents.

Program Evaluation

The gifted program shall be evaluated annually by the GT Advisory Committee to determine if the goals and objectives of the AISD Gifted/Talented Program are met.

Community Awareness

The District shall ensure that information about the District's G/T program is available to parents and community members. They will be kept informed of district needs for the program and legislation related to the gifted. Parents and community members will be actively involved by serving on planning and evaluation committees. Involvement will also include referral of students for program participation. Program information will be relayed through family newsletters and the AISD G/T Department webpage.

PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Re-Assessment

Reassessment of gifted and talented students may occur and is based on declining academic performance in the regular or gifted classroom. Reassessment may occur only once in elementary grades, once in middle school grades, and one in high school.

Furlough

The Gifted and Talented A.R.E. Committee (Admission/Review/Exit) may place students who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance within the structure of the gifted and talented program on furlough. The purpose of such a furlough is to provide the student an opportunity to attain performance goals established by the committee. A student, parent, or gifted teacher may request a furlough from the G/T program if a student is facing extenuating circumstances or the G/T program no longer meets the child's needs.

A student may be furloughed for a period of time (not to exceed 1 year) deemed appropriate by the committee. At the end of the furlough, the student's progress shall be reassessed, and the student may re-enter the G/T program, be removed from the program, or be placed on another furlough.

Exit Procedure

Student performance in the program shall be monitored. A student can be removed from the program at any time the Gifted and Talented A.R.E. Committee (Admission/Review/Exit) determines it is in the student's best interest. If a student or parent requests removal from the program, the committee shall contact the parent before honoring the request.

PROGRAM PROCEDURES CONTINUED

Re-Entry Procedure

A student, who exits the program, but not the district, may not be considered for re-entry to the G/T program until the next academic year. The student will be reassessed and must meet the district identification criteria.

A student who moves from and returns to the district within the same academic year remains eligible for that year. Students returning after a longer period of time must go through the normal re-screening process.

Out of District Transfer Students

Students moving into Aledo I.S.D. who were identified as gifted by their previous school district will be sent a referral packet/permission to test. After verification of identification and participation in a previous G/T program, students will be screened. If a student's school records reflect current comparable G/T testing and the scores/assessments meet the AISD criteria, then additional testing may not be necessary. However, additional testing and assessment may be necessary in certain cases to determine the best placement for the student.

Transfer Students Within District

When a student is identified as G/T by a school within AISD, they may transfer to another Aledo campus and continue to receive services.

Transfer Students Who Have an Active Military Parent

Students of active military families who were in G/T programs at their previous schools will automatically be accepted into the AISD G/T program as required by the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children.

THE APPEALS PROCESS

Informal Appeal

Campus Gifted Specialist -- The Gifted Specialist reviews screening data and other pertinent information with the parent. If no decision regarding placement can be made and the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal conference at this time, they can submit a “Request for Reconsideration” form to the Campus Gifted Specialist who will submit the form to the Selection Committee. This begins the formal process, level one.

Formal Appeal Process

1. Level I/Request for Reconsider -- The parent will complete the “Request for Reconsideration” forms and provide all documentation within the time frame outlined by FNG(LOCAL). The Selection Committee, along with the campus principal will review all documentation and make a determination on placement of the student. If the parent is not satisfied with the committee decision, they may file a Level II appeal.

2. Level 2 -- The parent will complete the appeal forms for Level II and provide all documentation to the Director of Advanced Academics, within the time frame outlined in board policy FNG(LOCAL). If the parent is not satisfied with the decision at Level II, they may file a Level III appeal with the Superintendent’s office.

3. Level 3 -- The parent will complete the appeal forms for Level III and provide appropriate documentation to the Superintendent's office within the time frame outlined in board policy FNG(LOCAL).

***Please note: All appeals - formal and informal - must be submitted within 10 days of receiving notification and results.**

AISD GIFTED PROGRAMS

Grades K-5

Aledo ISD offers a pullout program that meets weekly for identified gifted and talented students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Students participate in a variety of learning opportunities such as higher-order thinking skills, leadership, STEM based activities, public speaking, technology, and self-directed research projects.

Gifted in 6-8

Students in sixth through eighth grades who have been formally identified as G/T are served through advanced academic courses. The program and courses provide students with a differentiated, compacted, and when appropriate, accelerated curriculum. Aledo and McAnally Middle Schools offers the following Advanced Academics Courses:

- Sixth grade students may choose options for Reading Language Arts and Mathematics.
- Seventh and eighth grade students may choose options in Reading Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

Gifted in 9-12

Students are offered a wide selection of options to develop their talents and interests. The programs and courses provide students with a differentiated, compacted, and when appropriate, accelerated curriculum.

Options open to G/T and all students are:

1. Advanced Academics Classes
2. Advanced Placement courses
3. Examination for Acceleration
4. Required Courses/Early Graduation
5. Dual Credit Courses - Weatherford College
6. Dual Enrollment Courses - University of Texas at Austin

AISD GIFTED PROGRAMS CONTINUED

Advanced Academics Classes

Aledo High School offers a variety of Advanced Placement Courses. For more information, see the High School Course Handbook or contact the Counseling Office at Aledo High School. If a course is not required for graduation or does not meet minimum enrollment requirements, the course may be canceled. For more information, see the High School Course Handbook or contact the Counseling Office at Aledo High School.

Examination for Acceleration

A student will be permitted to take an examination to earn credit for an academic course for which the student has no prior instruction. For more information, see the High School Course Handbook or contact the Counseling Office at Aledo High School.

Required Courses/Early Graduation

Certain courses are required to fulfill graduation requirements. For more information, see the High School Course Handbook or contact the Counseling Office at Aledo High School.

Dual Credit Courses - Weatherford College

Aledo High School offers juniors and seniors the opportunity to take courses through Weatherford College Distance Education. Students will receive instruction in college courses during the school day at Aledo High School with Weatherford College instructors. For more information, see the High School Course Handbook or contact the Counseling Office at Aledo High School.

Dual Enrollment Courses - University of Texas at Austin

Aledo High School offers students the opportunity to take courses through the OnRamps program available through a partnership with the University of Texas at Austin. For more information, see the High School Course Handbook or contact the Counseling Office at Aledo High School.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

State Requirements

Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students must 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. All administrators and counselors will receive 6 hours of professional development that includes the nature and needs of gifted and talented students and program options for gifted students.

An ongoing Gifted and Talented professional development program for training teachers has been designed by Aledo I.S.D. Gifted Specialists.

Resources

Texas Education Agency. “Gifted Talented Education.” Texas Education Agency, Texas Education Agency, 1 Apr. 2022, https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/gifted-and-talented-education.