

GIFTED & TALENTED (ATLAS)

OVERVIEW

The Mount Vernon Academies of Talent, Leadership, and Scholars (ATLAS) is the district's elementary Gifted and Talented program. It was developed in alignment with New York State Education Department (NYSED) guidance to provide differentiated, research-based services for students who demonstrate high performance capability, potential, or achievement in one or more academic areas.

The ATLAS program is designed to meet the academic, creative, and social-emotional needs of elementary students whose abilities require learning experiences that go beyond the general education curriculum. The program offers an enriched and accelerated instructional framework that emphasizes higher-order thinking skills, including inquiry, analysis, problem solving, reasoning, and creative thinking. Instruction encourages students to explore complex ideas, generate meaningful questions, examine multiple perspectives, and apply knowledge across disciplines. All learning experiences are intentionally designed to promote depth, complexity, and intellectual challenge while remaining developmentally appropriate for elementary learners.

In accordance with NYSED Gifted and Talented principles, the ATLAS program recognizes that giftedness may be demonstrated in a variety of ways and across diverse student populations. The program supports equity and access by valuing multiple expressions of talent, including academic strength, creativity, leadership, and advanced thinking skills. Instructional practices are flexible and responsive, allowing students multiple opportunities to demonstrate understanding through performance-based tasks, projects, and collaborative experiences.

A central focus of the ATLAS program is the development of the whole child. In addition to academic growth, the program emphasizes self-direction, intellectual risk-taking, curiosity, imagination, and perseverance. Students are guided to develop positive learning behaviors such as goal setting, reflection, and independent work habits. Interpersonal skills including collaboration, communication, and respect for diverse perspectives are cultivated through structured peer interaction and cooperative learning experiences.

The program framework supports both individualized projects and small-group learning, allowing students to pursue interests, conduct investigations, and engage in creative problem solving while benefiting from interaction with intellectual peers. Teachers facilitate learning environments that encourage exploration, innovation, and thoughtful discussion, fostering a love of learning and confidence in each student's intellectual abilities.

The long-range goals of the ATLAS program align with NYSED's vision for gifted education. These goals include supporting students in achieving self-actualization, fostering leadership potential, and developing a strong sense of responsibility to self, school, and society. Through challenging and engaging elementary learning experiences, the ATLAS program prepares students to become motivated learners, ethical thinkers, and active, socially responsible members of their school community and beyond.

SERVICES PROVIDED

CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING

ATLAS students regularly engage in advanced writing experiences that emphasize critical thinking, analysis, and reflection. Writing tasks encourage students to synthesize information, develop and defend ideas, and communicate thoughtfully using evidence. These experiences support academic rigor while nurturing creativity and clarity of expression.

RENZULLI LEARNING CURRICULUM

The ATLAS program utilizes the Renzulli Learning Curriculum, a nationally recognized, research-based model for gifted education. This curriculum supports interest-based learning, enrichment clusters, and differentiated pathways that allow students to explore topics aligned with their individual strengths and passions. Renzulli Learning fosters student engagement, creativity, and self-directed learning.

GROUP PROJECTS AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Collaborative group projects provide students with opportunities to work alongside intellectual peers while developing leadership, communication, and teamwork skills. Structured collaboration helps students learn to value diverse perspectives, share responsibility, and contribute meaningfully toward shared academic goals.

EDUCATIONAL COACHING AND MENTORING

Educational coaching and mentoring are integral supports within the ATLAS program. Students receive guidance from educators who serve as academic coaches and mentors, helping them set goals, reflect on their learning, manage challenges, and develop self-advocacy skills. Coaching supports intellectual growth while nurturing confidence, motivation, and resilience. Mentoring relationships encourage students to recognize their strengths, pursue academic interests, and develop leadership capacity in a supportive and purposeful environment.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Consistent with NYSED's emphasis on educating the whole child, the ATLAS program intentionally embeds social-emotional learning throughout instruction. Students are supported in developing self-awareness, self-direction, perseverance, and positive risk-taking. Emphasis is placed on building healthy relationships, a sense of responsibility, empathy, and a strong sense of belonging within the school community.

PROGRAM IMPACT

Together, these services ensure that ATLAS students receive a rigorous, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate Gifted and Talented educational experience. The program nurtures advanced abilities while fostering curiosity, creativity, leadership, and social responsibility, preparing elementary learners to become confident thinkers and engaged members of their school community.

FUNDING ACHIEVEMENTS

Under Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment), funds designated for Well-Rounded Education and Accelerated Learning will support the district's Gifted and Talented program by expanding access to enriched and rigorous learning opportunities for advanced learners. Funding will provide Renzulli Learning software licenses for students and support instructional field trips at each grade level, extending learning beyond the classroom.

Funds are also allocated for instructional materials and supplies for teachers and administrators. Professional development opportunities will further strengthen staff capacity to identify and effectively serve gifted students through research-based instructional practices. Title IV funds will additionally support an afterschool Project-Based Learning (PBL) program, including resources for program materials and supplies, as well as staffing support for teachers, teaching assistants, and administrators to facilitate and oversee programming throughout the school year.

PROGRAM EVALUATION ENSURING STUDENT OBJECTIVES MET WITH FUNDING ALLOCATION

The purpose of the ATLAS program evaluation is to measure the effectiveness of program services in supporting the academic growth, higher-order thinking, and overall development of gifted and talented elementary students. The evaluation assesses student progress in English Language Arts and Mathematics, the impact of enrichment and project-based learning, and the degree to which students demonstrate advanced skills aligned with NYSED Gifted and Talented expectations. Evaluation data will be used to monitor student growth and achievement, assess program effectiveness and instructional impact, inform instructional planning and program improvements, and support accountability and reporting requirements.

EVALUATION MEASURES AND DATA SOURCES

iReady Diagnostic Scores (ELA and Math): Beginning, mid, and end-of-year iReady diagnostic scores are used to measure academic growth over time and assess progress in foundational and advanced reading and mathematics skills. Data is used to monitor student progress throughout the year, identify strengths and learning gaps, and evaluate the impact of ATLAS instructional strategies.

New York State ELA and Mathematics Exam Scores: NYS exam scale scores and proficiency levels are used to evaluate student performance in relation to state learning standards and to compare outcomes for ATLAS students to district and school benchmarks. This data also supports examination of long-term academic achievement trends and alignment with NYSED standards.

Capstone Project Scores: Capstone project rubrics assess research, problem solving, creativity, communication, and presentation skills. These scores evaluate student mastery of inquiry-based learning and measure the application of critical thinking and real-world problem solving.

Student Project Scores: Scores and rubrics from class projects, group work, and enrichment tasks are used to track student engagement and skill development, assess creativity and applied learning, and guide instructional adjustments.

Student Progress Reports: Quarterly or trimester progress reports, along with teacher observations and narrative feedback, provide ongoing documentation of student growth across academic, behavioral, and social-emotional domains.

EVALUATION TIMELINE	
Timeframe	Data Source
Beginning of Year	iReady Math & ELA Diagnostics
Throughout the Year	Student project scores, progress reports
Mid-Year	iReady Math & ELA Diagnostics
End of Year	iReady Diagnostics, Capstone Project Scores

Data will be reviewed by program administrators and ATLAS instructional staff. Individual student growth and overall program performance will be analyzed, and trends will be identified to determine strengths and areas for improvement. Results will be shared with district leadership and used for program planning, refinement, and reporting.

GOALS

GOAL 1: Develop and Nurture Students' Gifts and Talents

To identify, develop, and nurture students' strengths, abilities, and potential across academic, creative, and leadership domains through differentiated, enriched learning experiences that allow talents to emerge and flourish.

GOAL 2: Accelerate Academic Growth and Achievement

To support gifted and talented elementary students in achieving advanced levels of performance in English Language Arts and Mathematics by providing rigorous instruction that emphasizes depth, complexity, and higher-level content aligned to New York State standards.

GOAL 3: Develop Higher-Order Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

To strengthen students' critical and creative thinking abilities through inquiry-based learning, hands-on projects, research experiences, and Capstone projects that require analysis, reasoning, innovation, and real-world application.

GOAL 4: Foster Independent Learning, Leadership, and Social-Emotional Growth

To promote self-direction, leadership, and social-emotional development by cultivating goal-setting, perseverance, intellectual risk-taking, collaboration, and a sense of responsibility to self, school, and society through coaching, mentoring, and collaborative learning experiences.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Gifted & Talented (ATLAS) Department (District-Wide)

MVCS D 2026-2027 Budget Expenses (Appropriation)

as of 4/23/2026

By Function; By Object

Fund - A

FUNCTION	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	OBJECT DESCRIPTION	2024-2025 EXPENSED	2025-2026 ADOPTED BUDGET	2026-2027 PROPOSED BUDGET	\$ AMOUNT DIFFERENCE	% AMOUNT DIFFERENCE
2110	TEACHING - REGULAR SCHOOL	TEACHER SALARIES-GR 4-6			494,543	494,543	100.0%
2110	TEACHING - REGULAR SCHOOL	TEACHER SALARIES-GR K-3			315,945	315,945	100.0%
2110	TEACHING - REGULAR SCHOOL	TOTAL			810,488	810,488	100.0%

26-27 Proposed Gifted & Talented Budget Expenses

