



MARK TWAIN

School for the Talented and Gifted

STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

A Guide for Students & Families

2026-2027

Quest for Excellence • All Gas, No Brakes.



DALLAS
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



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Document Introduction

Purpose

The 2026–2027 Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted Family Handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to the programs, expectations, procedures, and resources that support scholar success. It is designed to strengthen the partnership between home and school by providing families with the information needed to navigate the school year confidently.

This handbook should be used as a year-round reference and is intended to complement, not replace, official Dallas ISD policies and campus communications.

Intended Audience

This handbook is intended for all students enrolled at Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted and their families. Faculty, staff, and community partners may also use this handbook as a reference to better understand our campus expectations, procedures, and programs.

How to Use This Publication

This handbook is organized by topic to make information easy to locate throughout the school year. Families are encouraged to begin with the **Table of Contents** and reference the appropriate chapter as questions arise throughout the school year.

For the best experience:

- Refer to the **Table of Contents** to locate topics quickly.
- Use the handbook throughout the school year as a reference for campus expectations, procedures, and resources.
- Access the digital version to utilize embedded hyperlinks to campus and district resources.
- Continue to monitor official campus and Dallas ISD communications for updates that may occur during the school year.



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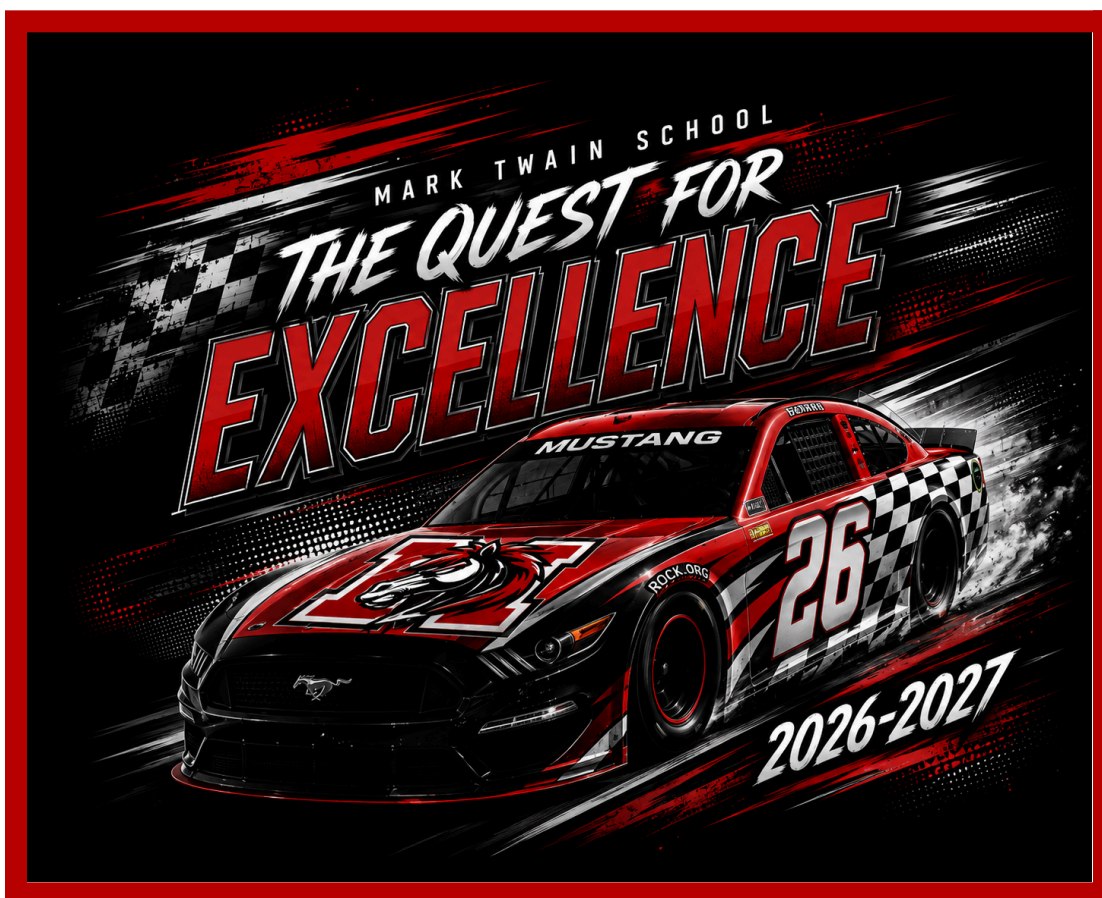


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Welcome to the Mark Twain Family

A Community of Excellence, Innovation, and Opportunity



Welcome to Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted! We are honored that you have chosen to be part of our school community. At Mark Twain, we believe that strong partnerships between students, families, and educators are the foundation of student success. Together, we are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and academically rigorous learning environment where every student is encouraged to grow, lead, and achieve at high levels. This handbook is designed to serve as a helpful resource throughout the school year, and we encourage you to refer to it whenever questions arise.



A Message from our Principal

Dear Mark Twain Students and Families,

Welcome to another exciting school year at Mark Twain School for the Talented & Gifted! It is my honor and privilege to welcome you to a campus where excellence is expected, relationships matter, and every student has the opportunity to thrive.

At Mark Twain, we believe every student deserves to be **seen, loved, and heard**. We are committed to creating a learning environment where students feel valued, challenged, supported, and inspired to reach their fullest potential. When students know they belong, they gain the confidence to take risks, grow through challenges, and achieve great things.



Our theme this year, "**Quest for Excellence: All Gas, No Brakes**," reminds us that success is earned through hard work, perseverance, and determination. The road ahead will require focus, responsibility, and resilience. There will be challenges, but those challenges are what prepare us for greatness.

As your principal, I promise to lead with high expectations, integrity, and heart. My commitment is to ensure every child receives an exceptional education in a safe, welcoming, and engaging environment. In return, I ask our students to come ready to learn, work hard, show kindness, and represent Mark Twain with pride.

To our families, thank you for trusting us with your children. Your partnership is invaluable, and together we will help every student grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

I am truly grateful you are part of the Mark Twain family. I cannot wait to celebrate your accomplishments, support you through challenges, and watch you discover all that you are capable of achieving. Together, we will continue our **Quest for Excellence** with **All Gas, No Brakes!**

Welcome home, Mustangs—I am honored to serve you, and I look forward to an extraordinary year together.

With gratitude,

Dr. Angela Williams
Principal

Mark Twain School for the Talented & Gifted



About Mark Twain



Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted is a Dallas Independent School District campus committed to providing a rigorous, engaging, and student-centered educational experience for every learner. Our school fosters academic excellence through high expectations, innovative instruction, and meaningful learning experiences that challenge students to think critically, collaborate effectively, and grow as leaders.

At Mark Twain, we believe every student has unique talents and unlimited potential. Our dedicated educators work in partnership with families and community partners to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where students are encouraged to explore new ideas, develop strong character, and prepare for success in high school, college, careers, and beyond.

Through academic excellence, leadership development, extracurricular opportunities, and a commitment to continuous growth, we strive to develop confident, responsible, and compassionate learners who are ready to make a positive impact in their communities.



Mission

Provide an innovative & rigorous approach to learning that empowers scholars to **Lead** by example, **Encourage** others, **Acquire** a wealth of knowledge, and **Diversify** their thinking and platform.

Vision

Empower scholars to use their unique talents & gifts to **LEAD**.

LEAD Core Values

At Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted, our LEAD Core Values serve as the foundation of our campus culture. They guide how we learn, interact with others, make decisions, and represent our school each day.

L – Lead by Example

We demonstrate integrity, responsibility, and respect through our words and actions. By setting a positive example, we inspire others to make good choices and contribute to a safe, supportive, and successful learning community.

E – Encourage Others

We build each other up through kindness, empathy, and encouragement. We celebrate successes, support one another through challenges, and create an environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

A – Acquire a Wealth of Knowledge

We embrace learning with curiosity, perseverance, and determination. We challenge ourselves to think critically, ask questions, and continuously grow as scholars and leaders.

D – Diversify Thinking and Platform

We value diverse perspectives, encourage creative thinking, and use our unique talents and voices to make meaningful contributions within our school and beyond. We recognize that our differences strengthen our community and prepare us to thrive in a global society.



Academic Excellence

At Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted, academic excellence is at the heart of everything we do. Our scholars are challenged through rigorous instruction, meaningful learning experiences, and high expectations that encourage critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and continuous growth. We believe every scholar can achieve at high levels when supported by dedicated educators, engaged families, and a strong commitment to learning.

Our Commitment to Scholars

At Mark Twain, every scholar can expect:

- Rigorous, engaging instruction
- A safe and supportive learning environment
- Opportunities to develop leadership skills
- Meaningful feedback that promotes growth
- Access to academic support and enrichment
- High expectations that prepare scholars for future success



AVID at Mark Twain

At Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is an instructional framework that helps scholars develop the skills needed for success in school and beyond. Through intentional instruction and consistent expectations, scholars learn to think critically, stay organized, collaborate effectively, communicate with confidence, and take ownership of their learning.

What Families Can Expect

Families can expect to see AVID strategies integrated into daily instruction across all grade levels. Scholars will regularly engage in activities that strengthen organization, note-taking, collaboration, inquiry, reading, and writing while preparing for future academic success.

Scholars Will Regularly Participate In:

- Focused Note Taking
- WICOR instructional strategies
- Collaborative learning activities
- Critical thinking and inquiry
- Academic goal setting and reflection
- Organizational routines



WICOR: How Scholars Learn at Mark Twain

WICOR is the instructional foundation of learning at Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted. Integrated into daily instruction across all grade levels, WICOR helps scholars develop the habits and skills needed for success in school and beyond. Through writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading, scholars become confident learners who are prepared to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve complex problems.

What is WICOR?

- **Writing** – Scholars use writing to organize their thinking, reflect on learning, and communicate their understanding.
- **Inquiry** – Scholars ask questions, investigate ideas, and think critically to deepen their understanding.
- **Collaboration** – Scholars work together to solve problems, share ideas, and learn from one another.
- **Organization** – Scholars develop organizational habits that support academic success and personal responsibility.
- **Reading** – Scholars engage with a variety of texts to build knowledge, strengthen vocabulary, and develop critical thinking skills.

Focused Note Taking

At Mark Twain, scholars use AVID Focused Note Taking to organize learning, capture important information, deepen understanding, and reflect on their thinking. Focused Note Taking is used across content areas to help scholars actively engage with instruction rather than simply record information.

Focused Note Taking Helps Scholars:

- Organize learning in a consistent format
- Identify and record essential information
- Develop meaningful questions about their learning
- Summarize key concepts in their own words
- Reflect on learning and monitor their understanding
- Prepare effectively for discussions, assessments, and future learning



Scholar Organization

Organization is an essential skill that supports academic success and personal responsibility. At Mark Twain, scholars are expected to maintain organized learning materials, manage assignments, and come to class prepared each day. Strong organizational habits help scholars stay focused, meet deadlines, and take ownership of their learning.

Scholars Are Expected To:

- Bring required instructional materials to class each day.
- Maintain an organized binder, notebook, or digital organizational system as directed by teachers.
- Record assignments, projects, and important dates.
- Complete and submit assignments on time.
- Keep learning materials neat and accessible.
- Regularly review notes and class materials to prepare for assessments.



Assessments

State Assessments

State assessments measure scholar mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and provide valuable information about academic achievement and college and career readiness. Scholars participate in required state assessments based on grade level and course enrollment.

Grade Level	State Assessments
Grade 3	STAAR Reading Language Arts, STAAR Mathematics
Grade 4	STAAR Reading Language Arts, STAAR Mathematics
Grade 5	STAAR Reading Language Arts, STAAR Mathematics, STAAR Science
Grade 6	STAAR Reading Language Arts, STAAR Mathematics
Grade 7	STAAR Reading Language Arts (<i>Advanced scholars also take Grade 8 STAAR Mathematics and Grade 8 STAAR Science.</i>)
Grade 8	STAAR Reading Language Arts, STAAR Social Studies, Algebra I End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment

NOTE

Eighth-grade scholars also participate in the PSAT as part of Mark Twain's college and career readiness program.



Assessment of Course Performance (ACP)

Assessment of Course Performance (ACP) exams are Dallas ISD district assessments administered at the end of each semester in designated courses. ACPs measure scholar mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and provide valuable information about academic progress.

Grade	End of Semester 1	End of Semester 2
Grade 5	• Science	• None
Grade 6	• Science • World Cultures • Physical Education • Technology Applications <i>(if enrolled)</i>	• Science • World Cultures • Physical Education • Technology Applications <i>(if enrolled)</i>
Grade 7	• Science • Texas Studies • Physical Education <i>(if enrolled)</i> • Art II Foundations <i>(if enrolled)</i>	• Science • Texas Studies • Physical Education <i>(if enrolled)</i> • Art II Foundations <i>(if enrolled)</i>
Grade 8	• Physics • Algebra I • U.S. Studies • Physical Education <i>(if enrolled)</i> • Health <i>(if enrolled)</i> • Art II Foundations <i>(if enrolled)</i>	• Physics • Physical Education <i>(if enrolled)</i> • Health <i>(if enrolled)</i> • Art II Foundations <i>(if enrolled)</i>



Academic Success Begins with Partnership

At Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted, we believe every scholar achieves more when families and educators work together. Your partnership is one of the most important factors in your scholar's success. By encouraging learning at home, celebrating growth, and maintaining open communication with our staff, you help create a strong foundation for academic excellence. Together, we can inspire confidence, build lifelong learning habits, and empower every scholar to reach their full potential.

How Families Can Support Scholar Success

We encourage families to:

- Encourage your scholar to attend school every day and arrive on time.
- Ask about what your scholar is learning and celebrate daily successes.
- Review school communication and stay informed about upcoming events and important information.
- Provide a quiet space and regular time for homework, reading, and studying.
- Encourage organization by helping your scholar keep track of assignments and materials.
- Reach out to teachers whenever you have questions or need additional support.

We're Here to Support You

Our goal is to build a strong partnership with every family. We value open communication, mutual respect, and shared responsibility as we work together to ensure every scholar experiences success. If you ever have questions, concerns, or need assistance, we encourage you to contact your scholar's teacher or a member of our campus team. We are here to support you every step of the way.

Together, we will empower every scholar to LEAD, achieve academic excellence, and reach their highest potential.



Communication with Families

Mark Twain is committed to maintaining open, respectful, and ongoing communication with families throughout the school year. Regular communication helps families stay informed about classroom learning, campus events, and their scholar's academic and behavioral progress.

Families can expect communication through a variety of methods, including:

- Weekly grade-level newsletters
- [ClassDojo](#)
- Email
- Phone calls
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Campus and classroom communication

Families are encouraged to regularly monitor [ClassDojo](#) for classroom updates, important announcements, reminders, and communication from teachers and the school.

Academic Progress

Monitoring your scholar's academic progress is an important part of the home-school partnership. Mark Twain encourages families to stay informed by reviewing grades regularly, discussing academic progress with their scholar, and communicating with teachers whenever questions or concerns arise.

Mark Twain follows the **Dallas ISD nine-week grading calendar**. Throughout each grading period, families receive regular updates regarding their scholar's academic progress.

- **Progress Reports** are issued at the **third week** and **sixth week** of each nine-week grading period.
- **Report Cards** are issued at the conclusion of each **nine-week grading period**.
- Families are encouraged to monitor grades and attendance regularly through the [Dallas ISD Parent Portal](#). If questions arise regarding assignments, grades, or academic performance, contact the scholar's teacher promptly.

NOTE

The [Dallas ISD Grading Policy \(EIA — Academic Achievement: Grading/Progress Reports to Parents\)](#) provides detailed information regarding grading practices, progress reports, report cards, promotion requirements, and other grading procedures. Families are encouraged to review the current policy and administrative regulations throughout the school year.



Parent Portal

The [Dallas ISD Parent Portal](#) provides families with secure, real-time access to important information about their scholar. We encourage families to access the Parent Portal regularly to stay informed and actively involved in their scholar's education.

Through the [Dallas ISD Parent Portal](#), families can:

- View grades and report card information.
- Monitor attendance and tardies.
- Review class schedules.
- Access student and contact information.
- Stay informed about important academic information.

If you need assistance accessing or managing your [Dallas ISD Parent Portal](#) account, please contact the school. Our campus staff will be happy to assist you. Additional resources are available on the [Dallas ISD website](#) by selecting:

Home → Departments → Family and Community Engagement → Parent Resources → [PowerSchool – Parent Portal](#)

NOTE

The [PowerSchool – Parent Portal](#) page on the Dallas ISD website provides step-by-step instructions for creating an account, logging in, resetting your password, and managing your Parent Portal account.



Scholar Expectations

At Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted, every scholar contributes to a positive, safe, and respectful learning environment. Our expectations are designed to support academic success, encourage personal responsibility, and help every scholar demonstrate the LEAD Core Values each day. By working together and making positive choices, we create a school community where everyone can learn, grow, and thrive.

Every Mark Twain Scholar Is Expected To:

- Demonstrate the LEAD Core Values in daily actions.
- Treat others with kindness, courtesy, and respect.
- Come to school prepared and ready to learn.
- Follow classroom and campus expectations.
- Take responsibility for personal choices and actions.
- Respect school property and the property of others.
- Contribute to a safe, positive, and inclusive learning environment.

Together, our shared commitment to respect, responsibility, and academic excellence helps every scholar succeed.

Attendance

Why Attendance Matters

Regular attendance is one of the most important factors in a scholar's academic success. Every school day provides valuable opportunities to learn, participate in classroom instruction, collaborate with peers, and build meaningful relationships. At Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted, we encourage families to make school attendance a priority and to communicate with the campus whenever a scholar must be absent.

Texas Attendance Requirements

Texas law requires scholars to attend school every day unless they qualify for a legal exemption. This requirement applies to scholars who are enrolled in prekindergarten through age 19 as outlined by the Texas Education Code. Consistent attendance helps scholars remain engaged in learning and supports their academic growth throughout the school year.



What Families Need to Know

- Scholars are expected to attend school every day and arrive on time.
- Families should notify the school whenever a scholar is absent.
- A written excuse note signed by a parent or guardian must be submitted within **three school days** after the scholar returns to school.
- Scholars absent for **three consecutive days due to illness** must provide documentation from a medical provider.
- Scholars who arrive after **8:05 a.m.** will be marked tardy.

Excused & Unexcused Absences

Scholars may be excused from school for reasons recognized by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and Dallas ISD. Families are responsible for notifying the school when a scholar is absent and providing the appropriate documentation within the required timeline.

Examples of Excused Absences Include:

- Personal illness
- Death in the immediate family (including grandparents)
- Court appearances
- Religious holy days
- Quarantine or other health-related absences approved by the district
- Other absences recognized by Dallas ISD or Texas law

Examples of Unexcused Absences May Include:

- Family vacations
- Missed transportation
- Personal trips not approved by the district
- Other absences that do not meet district or state attendance requirements



IMPORTANT

Scholars with excused absences will be provided the opportunity to make up missed assignments in accordance with Dallas ISD policy. Families are encouraged to communicate with teachers regarding missed work and reasonable timelines for completion.



Attendance for Credit (90% Rule)

Texas law requires scholars to attend school at least **90% of the days** a class is offered in order to receive credit or be considered for promotion to the next grade level. Attendance and academic performance are both important. Scholars must meet the required attendance standards **and** demonstrate academic success to earn credit or be promoted.

What Families Need to Know

- Scholars should maintain attendance of **90% or higher** throughout the school year.
- **Elementary Scholars (Pre-K–5):** Attendance is reviewed based on the scholar's **overall attendance** and **overall passing average**. Scholars who earn an overall average of **70% or higher** but have attendance below 90% may be eligible to participate in a Principal's Plan (Attendance Recovery Plan) in accordance with Dallas ISD and campus procedures.
- **Middle School Scholars (Grades 6–8):** Attendance is recorded **for each class period**. Scholars must maintain attendance in **each individual class** and earn a final average of **70% or higher in each class**. Scholars who fall below the 90% attendance requirement in one or more classes may be eligible to participate in a Principal's Plan (Attendance Recovery Plan) in accordance with Dallas ISD and campus procedures.
- Families will be notified if attendance places a scholar at risk of losing promotion or credit.
- Scholars who participate in a Principal's Plan must successfully complete all requirements of the plan before promotion or credit can be considered.



IMPORTANT

Middle school attendance is recorded for **each individual class period**. A scholar may meet the 90% attendance requirement in one class but not in another. Families are encouraged to monitor attendance regularly and contact the campus if they have questions about attendance requirements or attendance recovery.



Truancy Prevention & Attendance Support

Regular school attendance is required by Texas law. When scholars accumulate unexcused absences, Dallas ISD and Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted are required to implement truancy prevention measures designed to support improved attendance and prevent continued absences.

What Families Need to Know

- A scholar who has **three (3) or more unexcused absences**, or parts of days, within a four-week period will begin the district's truancy prevention process.
- The campus will work with families to identify attendance barriers and provide support before additional interventions are considered.
- Parents are encouraged to submit excuse notes promptly and monitor their scholar's attendance throughout the school year.

Truancy Prevention Process

Tier 1	Every scholar participates in the General Attendance Agreement Pledge (GAAP) and receives information about the importance of regular attendance.
Tier 2	After 3 unexcused absences, families receive a truancy warning notice and are encouraged to submit excuse notes and monitor attendance closely.
Tier 3	After 5 unexcused absences , scholars and families participate in district-led attendance interventions.
Tier 4	After 7 unexcused absences , an intensive parent conference is conducted to address attendance barriers and determine additional support.



IMPORTANT

Truancy prevention is based on unexcused absences, while the 90% Attendance for Credit/Promotion Rule is based on overall attendance. These are separate processes, and scholars may be affected by one, both, or neither depending on their attendance record.



Arrival & Dismissal

Why Arrival & Dismissal Matter

A safe, organized arrival and dismissal process helps every scholar begin and end the school day successfully. Families play an important role in maintaining a safe environment by following campus procedures, using designated arrival and dismissal locations, and communicating transportation changes promptly. Working together helps ensure a smooth and efficient experience for all scholars, families, and staff.

Arrival Procedures

Pre-K–5

- Scholars in **Pre-K through Grade 5** should be dropped off using the **single-file front carline on Green Cove Lane** at the school's main entrance.
- Families should remain in the **single-file carline** and refrain from passing other vehicles unless directed by a staff member.
- Staff members will open vehicle doors and assist scholars as they safely exit their vehicles.
- After entering the building, scholars will report directly to their designated morning holding area:
 - **Pre-K–1st Grade:** Gymnasium
 - **Grades 2–5:** Auditorium
- Scholars will remain in their designated area under staff supervision until released to begin the school day.
- Families should ensure scholars have all necessary materials before arriving at the drop-off area to help keep the carline moving efficiently.
- For the safety of all scholars, families should not park or leave their vehicles in the carline unless directed by a staff member.



Grades 6–8

- Middle school scholars should be dropped off using the **single-file Lone Oak Drive carline**.
- Families should remain in the **single-file carline** and follow all staff directions to ensure a safe and efficient arrival process.
- Scholars will enter campus through the **Red Hall Entrance** and proceed through the **district-required metal detector screening for all middle school scholars** before entering the building.
- After entering the building, scholars may:
 - Report to the cafeteria to pick up breakfast and then return to **Red Hall** to wait outside their teacher's classroom door, **or**
 - Report directly to **Red Hall** and wait outside their teacher's classroom door.
- Scholars should remain outside their assigned classroom until their teacher welcomes them into class.

NOTE

Metal detector screening is required for all Dallas ISD middle school scholars as part of the district's commitment to maintaining a safe learning environment. Families can help the arrival process move efficiently by ensuring scholars are prepared to pass through the screening promptly each morning.



Dismissal Procedures

A safe and organized dismissal process ensures that every scholar is released to the appropriate parent, guardian, or transportation method at the end of each school day. Families play an important role in helping us maintain a secure and efficient dismissal by following campus procedures and communicating transportation changes as early as possible.

Car Riders

Pre-K & Kindergarten

- Car riders are dismissed through the **Oak Trail Gate** located next to the staff parking lot.
- Families should enter the **single-file carline from Town Creek** and remain in the designated curbside carline.
- Parents should remain in their vehicles while staff members identify scholars.
- Teachers will escort scholars to the designated exit and release them as parents are identified.
- Scholars will enter vehicles from the sidewalk.

Grades 1–2

- Car riders are dismissed from the **Bus Entrance at Green Cove and Oak Trail**.
- Families may approach from **Oak Trail**; however, vehicles **must be positioned along the curb on the school side of the street** before scholars are released.
- Teachers will escort scholars to the designated exit and release them as parents are identified.
- Scholars will enter vehicles from the sidewalk.

Grades 3–5

- Car riders are dismissed through the large gate at Haywood and Town Creek.
- Families may approach from Haywood; however, vehicles must be positioned along the curb on the school side of the street before scholars are released.
- Scholars will not be released to vehicles parked across the street in front of the neighboring homes.
- Teachers will escort scholars to the designated exit and release them as parents are identified.
- Scholars will enter vehicles from the sidewalk.



Grades 6–8

- Car riders are dismissed using the **Lone Oak Drive** dismissal area.
- Families may approach from **Lone Oak Drive**; however, vehicles **must be positioned along the curb on the school side of the street** before scholars are released.
- Middle school scholars will wait **inside the gate** until they see their parent or guardian's vehicle in the designated pickup area.
- Once identified, scholars will exit through the designated gate and enter their vehicle from the sidewalk.

Families with Multiple Scholars

To make dismissal more convenient for families with multiple scholars who are **car riders or walkers**, older siblings will be dismissed with the **youngest sibling** in the family. Families should report to the designated dismissal location for their **youngest scholar** to pick up all scholars at one location.

Example: If a family has scholars in **2nd Grade, 5th Grade, and 7th Grade** who are all **car riders**, all three scholars will be dismissed together at the **2nd Grade dismissal location**.

Late Student Pick-Up

If a scholar has not been picked up after dismissal, he or she will be escorted back into the building. Scholars will remain under adult supervision in the **auditorium** while the school contacts the parent or guardian. Families are encouraged to arrive on time each day to help ensure a safe and efficient dismissal process.



IMPORTANT

For the safety of all scholars, vehicles must remain in the designated curbside pickup area on the school side of the street. Families should never park across the street in front of neighboring homes or ask scholars to cross active traffic lanes to reach a vehicle. Scholars will only be released to vehicles waiting in the designated pickup area.



Bus & Daycare Riders

Bus and daycare transportation is carefully coordinated to ensure every scholar is safely released to the correct bus or daycare provider. Staff members supervise scholars throughout the dismissal process and verify that each scholar boards the correct bus or is released to the appropriate daycare provider.

Pre-K–5

- Designated staff members will escort bus and daycare scholars from their classrooms to the auditorium.
- Scholars will remain with their assigned staff member throughout the dismissal process.
- Upon arrival in the auditorium, scholars will be seated in their designated bus route or daycare area.

Grades 6–8

- Middle school bus and daycare scholars will report directly to the auditorium at dismissal.
- Scholars should proceed directly to the auditorium and sit in the designated seating area for their assigned bus route or daycare provider.
- Scholars should remain in their assigned area until their bus route or daycare provider is called.

Boarding Procedures

- Bus routes will be announced as buses arrive.
- Staff members will escort scholars to the appropriate bus.
- Scholars will board only the bus assigned to them.
- Staff members will verify each scholar's transportation assignment before the bus departs.



IMPORTANT

Scholars may not ride a different bus or change transportation without prior approval from the school. Any transportation changes must be communicated to the campus before dismissal and approved according to district and campus procedures.



If you have questions about your scholar's transportation, bus assignment, or daycare dismissal, please contact the school office before dismissal so we can assist you.



ABC/ETC Afterschool Program

The **ABC/ETC Afterschool Program** is Mark Twain's on-campus afterschool program. To ensure a safe and supervised transition, scholars enrolled in the program follow the established dismissal procedures before being released to ABC/ETC program staff.

What Families Need to Know

- Scholars enrolled in the ABC/ETC Afterschool Program are picked up by the designated school staff assigned to retrieve bus and daycare scholars during dismissal.
- Designated school staff escort ABC/ETC scholars to the gymnasium, where they remain under adult supervision.
- ABC/ETC Afterschool Program staff check in scholars, escort them to the cafeteria for their afternoon snack, and then to their assigned ABC/ETC classroom to begin the afternoon program, which may include enrichment activities, homework support, and tutoring opportunities. **Families enrolled in the ABC/ETC Afterschool Program will receive additional program information, including pick-up procedures, directly from the program staff.**

Transportation Changes

We understand that transportation plans may occasionally change. To help ensure the safety of every scholar, transportation changes should be communicated to the school office as early as possible. Transportation changes are handled differently depending on the type of transportation your scholar uses.

- Transportation changes for **car riders, walkers, daycare, or the ABC/ETC Afterschool Program** must be communicated to the **school office**.
- Transportation changes must be received **no later than 2:30 p.m.**
- Requests received after **2:30 p.m.** may not be accommodated, as dismissal procedures are already underway to ensure the safe release of all scholars.

Daily Transportation Changes

- Transportation changes for **car riders, walkers, daycare, or the ABC/ETC Afterschool Program** must be communicated to the **school office**.
- Transportation changes must be received **no later than 2:30 p.m.**
- Requests received after **2:30 p.m.** may not be accommodated, as dismissal procedures are already underway to ensure the safe release of all scholars.



Bus Transportation Changes

Bus route assignments are determined by **Dallas ISD Student Transportation Services**. The campus cannot approve temporary or permanent bus route changes. Families requesting changes to a scholar's assigned bus route must contact **Dallas ISD Student Transportation Services** directly.

Dallas ISD Student Transportation Services

- **Phone:** 972-925-4287
- **Website:** [Dallas ISD Student Transportation Services](#)
- **Customer Care:** Families requesting a bus route change should submit their request through the [Let's Talk Platform](#) or use the [Parent Resources](#) section of the Dallas ISD Student Transportation Services website. Families may also contact Student Transportation Services directly at **972-925-4287** for assistance.

Early Student Check-Out

We understand that appointments and emergencies may occasionally require a scholar to leave school before the end of the school day. To help ensure a safe and orderly dismissal process, families should plan early check-outs whenever possible and allow sufficient time for the campus to prepare scholars for dismissal.

Check-Out Procedures

- Scholars must be checked out through the **main office**.
- **The individual checking out a scholar must be listed in PowerSchool as a person authorized to pick up the scholar.**
- A valid government-issued photo ID is required before a scholar will be released.
- To ensure scholar safety and minimize classroom disruptions, scholars will not be called from class until the parent or authorized adult has arrived, identification has been verified, and the check-out process has been completed.
- Early student check-out ends at **2:30 p.m.** each school day.
- Scholars who are not checked out by **2:30 p.m.** will be dismissed through their regular dismissal procedure.



IMPORTANT

For the safety of every scholar, please keep your scholar's emergency contacts and authorized pick-up information in PowerSchool current throughout the school year. Changes should be made as soon as possible whenever contact or pick-up information changes.



Dress Code & Personal Appearance

Why Dress Code Matters

At Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted, our uniform dress code reflects our commitment to excellence, school pride, and a positive learning environment. Wearing the school uniform helps scholars focus on learning, promotes a sense of belonging, and prepares scholars to represent themselves and our campus with pride. As we build and groom leaders, we encourage every scholar to wear the uniform with confidence and professionalism.

School Uniform Requirements

We are elevating our look as we Build and Groom Leaders!



Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted



Tops

Elem: White or Red

6th grade: Gray

7th grade: Light Blue

8th grade: Black



We would like for scholars to start wearing our school crest **on the left** of their shirts/jackets. Shirts with school logo are strongly recommended but not mandatory.

Fridays ONLY

Spirit shirt, College shirt, or House shirt with uniform bottoms.*

*Jean days will be announced



Required for ALL GRADE LEVELS

2026 - 2027

School Uniforms



All jackets must be a solid color (red, black, blue, or gray).

No hoodies.



No sandals or Crocs allowed.

Bottoms

Black, Khaki, Blue, or Red Plaid



A black belt should be worn with items with belt loops.

All shoes must have a closed toe and heel.





Elementary Scholars (Pre-K–5)

Uniform Shirts

- Scholars in **Pre-K through Grade 5** wear **red or white collared uniform shirts**.
- Shirts with the **Mark Twain logo** are encouraged but are **not required**.
- Shirts should remain tucked in throughout the school day.

Middle School Scholars (Grades 6–8)

- **Grade 6:** Gray collared uniform shirt
- **Grade 7:** Light blue collared uniform shirt
- **Grade 8:** Black collared uniform shirt
- Shirts embroidered with the **Mark Twain logo** are encouraged but are **not required**.
- Shirts should remain tucked in throughout the school day.

Uniform Requirements for All Scholars

Uniform Bottoms

- Scholars may wear **black, khaki, or navy blue** uniform pants or shorts.
- **Girls** may also wear **red plaid uniform skirts or jumper dresses**.
- **Skirts, jumper dresses, and shorts must be at least finger-tip length**, in accordance with the Dallas ISD standardized dress code.
- All uniform bottoms should fit appropriately and allow scholars to participate comfortably and safely in all school activities.

Footwear & Accessories

Dallas ISD requires scholars to wear footwear that is safe and appropriate for the school environment. Mark Twain's additional footwear expectations are outlined below.

Footwear

- Scholars must wear athletic shoes, loafers, dress shoes, or other closed-toe, closed-heel shoes. Closed-toe, open-heel mules are permitted in accordance with the Dallas ISD standardized dress code.
- Crocs, sandals, slides, flip-flops, and other open-toe or open-heel shoes are not permitted as part of the Mark Twain dress code.
- Footwear should be appropriate for daily classroom instruction, recess, physical education, and other school-related activities.



Accessories

- Scholars should wear a black belt with uniform bottoms that have belt loops.
- Approved uniform neckwear includes:
 - A solid black or navy blue necktie.
 - A solid red or red plaid cross tie that coordinates with the approved school uniform.
- Uniform accessories should complement the approved school uniform and be worn appropriately throughout the school day.

Outerwear

Dallas ISD permits scholars to wear outerwear over their approved school uniform. At Mark Twain, outerwear is expected to maintain a professional appearance while allowing scholars to remain comfortable throughout the school day. To support a consistent learning environment and campus safety, the following outerwear expectations apply to all scholars.

Approved Outerwear

- Scholars may wear **solid red, black, gray, or navy blue** sweaters, cardigans, quarter-zip pullovers, and jackets **without hoods** over their approved school uniform.
- Outerwear should be appropriately sized and worn over the approved school uniform.
- Outerwear may not display offensive language, inappropriate graphics, symbols, or designs that interfere with the learning environment.
- Hooded sweatshirts (**hoodies**) and hooded jackets are **not permitted** to be worn during the school day.

Cold Weather Outerwear

- During cold weather, scholars may wear larger coats with hoods when arriving at school.
- Upon entering the building, coats with hoods should be removed and stored in the scholar's locker.
- **Scholars who wear a winter coat with a hood to school should also bring an approved hoodless sweater, cardigan, quarter-zip pullover, or jacket to wear inside the building during the school day.**

NOTE

During cold weather, scholars may wear their winter coats with hoods when arriving at school, going outside for recess, participating in outdoor activities, and at dismissal. Hooded winter coats should be removed and stored in lockers while scholars are inside the building during the instructional day.



Spirit Days

Spirit Days are an opportunity for scholars to celebrate school pride while continuing to meet Mark Twain's dress code expectations. Participation is encouraged, and scholars are expected to represent themselves and the Mark Twain community with pride.

Spirit Day Attire

- On designated **Spirit Days**, scholars may wear a **Mark Twain spirit shirt**, **House shirt**, or **college shirt**.
- Spirit Day shirts must be worn with **approved uniform bottoms**.
- Scholars must continue to wear approved footwear.
- **Jeans are not permitted on Spirit Days unless the principal has specifically authorized a jeans day.**

NOTE

Spirit Days and other special dress days will be communicated through campus newsletters, parent communication, and other official Mark Twain communication throughout the school year.

General Appearance

Scholars are expected to maintain a neat, clean, and professional appearance that reflects pride in themselves and the Mark Twain community. Clothing, hairstyles, and accessories should support a safe, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment.

Appearance Expectations

- Uniforms should be clean, properly fitted, and worn as intended throughout the school day.
- Clothing should be free of tears, excessive fraying, or alterations that do not meet campus dress code expectations.
- Hats, caps, bonnets, hoods, and other non-approved head coverings may not be worn inside the building unless required for religious or documented medical reasons.
- Sunglasses may not be worn inside the building unless approved for a documented medical need.
- Hairstyles, hair color, jewelry, and accessories must not create a safety concern or substantially disrupt the educational environment.
- Clothing, accessories, or personal items displaying inappropriate language, images, symbols, or messages that are inconsistent with the [Dallas ISD Student Code of Conduct](#) are prohibited.



Dress Code Concerns

If a scholar arrives at school out of dress code, any staff member may identify the concern and notify campus administration. The school will contact the parent or guardian to request that dress code-approved clothing or shoes be brought to campus. Campus administrators will make the final determination regarding whether a scholar's attire or appearance meets district and campus dress code expectations.

Logo Shirts & Patches

Mark Twain logo apparel provides scholars with additional approved uniform options while promoting school pride. Logo shirts and patches are available throughout the school year. Families should contact the school or visit the campus website for current ordering information and approved purchasing options.

Logo Apparel

Mark Twain logo shirts are the preferred school uniform shirt and are encouraged for all scholars. Logo shirts should match the scholar's assigned grade-level uniform color.

Logo shirts must be clean, in good condition, and worn in accordance with the campus dress code.

Logo Patches

- Official Mark Twain logo patches may be added to approved uniform outerwear.
- Families interested in purchasing official Mark Twain logo patches should contact the school or visit the campus website for current ordering information.

Uniform Assistance

Mark Twain is committed to ensuring every scholar has access to appropriate school uniforms. Uniform assistance is available throughout the school year for families in need. Families are encouraged to contact the school as soon as a need arises. Campus staff will work with families to identify available resources and determine how the school can best support their needs.

Requesting Assistance

- Families needing assistance with school uniforms should contact the school counselor or main office.
- Uniform assistance is available throughout the school year based on available resources.
- Families are encouraged to request assistance as soon as a need arises to allow the school time to coordinate support.



Uniform Exemptions

Dallas ISD recognizes that some families may request an exemption from the standardized dress code based on sincerely held religious beliefs or philosophical objections. Families requesting a uniform exemption should contact the school principal for information regarding the district's exemption process.

Requesting a Uniform Exemption

- Requests for uniform exemptions must follow Dallas ISD guidelines and procedures.
- Families should contact the principal to discuss the exemption process and complete any required documentation.
- Scholars with an approved exemption are expected to dress appropriately for school in accordance with the [Dallas ISD Student Code of Conduct](#).

Student ID Badge Requirements

Dallas ISD requires all scholars, regardless of grade level, to wear their school-issued student identification (ID) badge throughout the school day. Student ID badges are considered part of the required school dress code and support a safe, secure, and efficient learning environment.

Daily Expectations

- All scholars are required to wear their issued student ID badge throughout the school day.
- Student ID badges should remain visible and be worn appropriately at all times while on campus.
- Student ID badges are school property and should not be altered, defaced, or shared with another scholar.
- **Each scholar will receive one student ID badge and lanyard at no cost at the beginning of the school year.**



Forgotten Student ID Badge

Scholars who forget their student ID badge will be issued a temporary badge for the school day. **Temporary badges must be returned at the end of the school day.**

Lost or Damaged Student ID Badge

Scholars who lose or damage their student ID badge will be issued a temporary badge while a replacement badge is prepared. A **\$5.00 replacement fee** is required for each lost or damaged student ID badge. The replacement fee must be **paid to the main office** on the next school day so the replacement badge can be issued. If payment is not received, the school will contact the parent or guardian to arrange payment before a permanent replacement badge is issued.



IMPORTANT

Student ID badges are considered part of the Dallas ISD dress code. Scholars are expected to wear their school-issued ID badge throughout the school day. Refusal to wear a student ID badge or repeated failure to comply with ID badge expectations may result in disciplinary consequences in accordance with the [Dallas ISD Student Code of Conduct](#).

Hallway Expectations

Hallways are learning spaces where scholars transition safely and respectfully between classrooms and other campus locations. By following hallway expectations, scholars help create a positive learning environment that minimizes disruptions and maximizes instructional time.

Hallway Procedures

- Walk at all times and remain on the **right side** of the hallway.
- Use a **Level 1 voice** during hallway transitions unless otherwise directed by a staff member.
- Keep hands, feet, and personal belongings to yourself.
- Travel directly to your destination without unnecessary stops or detours.
- Follow staff directions promptly and respectfully.
- Help keep hallways clean by placing trash in designated receptacles.
- Backpacks should remain in scholars' lockers or classrooms and should not be carried throughout the instructional day.



Classroom Transitions

Elementary Scholars (Pre-K–5)

Elementary scholars transition between classrooms with their teacher and are expected to remain with their class, follow teacher directions, and demonstrate respectful hallway behavior throughout each transition.

Middle School Scholars (Grades 6–8)

Middle school scholars transition independently during passing periods. Scholars are expected to report directly to their next class, arrive before the tardy bell, and avoid congregating in the hallways.

Welcoming Visitors

Mark Twain scholars are encouraged to help create a welcoming school environment. Campus Ambassadors are responsible for greeting and assisting visitors. Other scholars are encouraged to greet visitors respectfully and then continue directly to their destination without disrupting instruction.

Hall Passes

During instructional time, scholars who leave the classroom must have a hall pass or be accompanied by a staff member unless they are participating in a supervised class transition.

Restroom Expectations

Restroom expectations help maintain a clean, safe, and respectful environment for all scholars while minimizing interruptions to instruction. Scholars are expected to use the restroom appropriately, respect the privacy of others, help keep facilities clean, and return promptly to learning.

Restroom Expectations

- Use the restroom for its intended purpose only.
- Respect the privacy and personal space of others.
- Keep restrooms clean by flushing toilets, placing trash in designated receptacles, and helping maintain a sanitary environment.
- Wash hands thoroughly before leaving the restroom.
- Return directly to class after using the restroom.
- Report any unsafe conditions, damage, or concerns to a staff member immediately.
- Loitering, horseplay, and disruptive behavior are not permitted in school restrooms.



Restroom Access

Primary Scholars (Pre-K–Grade 1)

Restrooms are located inside Pre-K through Grade 1 classrooms. Scholars use the classroom restroom under the supervision and direction of their teacher. When participating in specials or other activities outside of the classroom, scholars may use the designated public restroom under the supervision of school staff.

Elementary Scholars (Grades 2–5)

Elementary scholars may use the restroom as part of a teacher-supervised class restroom break or with teacher permission during instructional time. Scholars are expected to follow teacher directions and return promptly to class.

Middle School Scholars (Grades 6–8)

Middle school scholars are encouraged to use the restroom during the **three-minute passing periods** between classes. Scholars needing to use the restroom during instructional time must receive teacher permission and have a hall pass.



Cafeteria Expectations

The cafeteria is an extension of the classroom where scholars are expected to demonstrate respect, responsibility, and good citizenship. By following cafeteria expectations, scholars help create a positive dining environment where everyone can enjoy their meal safely and respectfully.

Cafeteria Expectations

- Treat fellow scholars, cafeteria staff, and school personnel with courtesy and respect.
- Enter and exit the cafeteria using a **Level 0 voice**.
- Maintain a **Level 1 voice** while eating and talking with those seated nearby.
- Raise your hand if you need assistance from a staff member.
- Pick up or purchase all meal items, including utensils, milk, juice, and condiments, while moving through the serving line.
- Demonstrate good table manners by remaining seated while eating, using appropriate language and behavior, and cleaning up after yourself.
- Respect the food and personal belongings of others. **Do not eat or share another scholar's food.**
- Work together to clean the table and the area around your seat before leaving.
- Dispose of all trash and recyclable items in the appropriate containers.

Meal Procedures

- Scholars who bring lunch from home may either begin eating their lunch upon entering the cafeteria or choose to receive a complete school meal by going through the serving line.
- Scholars must wait until permission is given by cafeteria staff or the supervising staff member before purchasing snacks.
- Microwave ovens are **not available** for scholar use.
- Cafeteria-provided food and beverages must remain in the cafeteria and may not be taken to classrooms or other areas of the building.

Family Lunch Visits

Parents and guardians are welcome to enjoy lunch with their scholar in the designated family seating area. Family lunch visits are scheduled on designated days or dates determined by campus administration. Additional information regarding family lunch schedules and visitor procedures will be communicated by the school.



Positive Behavior Expectations

At Mark Twain, we believe every scholar can learn, grow, and make positive choices. Our goal is to teach and reinforce appropriate behaviors while partnering with families to help scholars develop responsibility, self-regulation, and strong character. When behavior concerns arise, the school uses restorative practices and positive interventions to help scholars learn from their choices and remain engaged in learning.

Our 3R Discipline System

Mark Twain uses the **3R Discipline System** to address behavior concerns while keeping scholars engaged in learning whenever possible. The system emphasizes restorative practices, opportunities to reset, and family partnership before disciplinary referrals are considered.

The 3R Process

Step 1: Restorative Practices

Teachers begin by reteaching expectations, conferencing with scholars, and using classroom strategies that help scholars regulate their behavior and return to learning.

Step 2: Reset

If additional support is needed, scholars may participate in a classroom reset, meet briefly with the school counselor, or the teacher may partner with the parent or guardian to develop strategies for success. Families will be notified when behavior concerns require this level of intervention.

Step 3: Administrative Support

When restorative practices and resets have not been successful in addressing **repeated minor behavior concerns (Level I behaviors)**, or when a scholar engages in **more serious behavior (Level II or higher offenses)** that requires immediate administrative involvement, campus administration will determine the appropriate next steps.

Family Partnership

Families play an important role in supporting positive behavior. Mark Twain values open communication and encourages parents and guardians to partner with teachers and campus staff to reinforce school expectations and help scholars make positive choices.

NOTE

While Mark Twain is committed to using restorative practices and partnering with families whenever possible, all disciplinary actions and decisions are made in accordance with the [Dallas ISD Student Code of Conduct](#), which outlines the district's behavior expectations, levels of student misconduct, and disciplinary procedures.



Personal Communication Devices

To support a safe, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment, Mark Twain has established a [Personal Communication/Electronic Devices Campus Policy](#) that outlines expectations for the possession, storage, and use of personal communication devices during the school day.

Personal Communication Device Expectations

- All personal communication devices must be **powered off** upon arrival at school.
- Devices must be stored in the school-issued **labeled storage pouch (Ziploc bag)** and placed in the designated classroom storage bin for the duration of the school day.
- Scholars may not access or use personal communication devices during the school day unless permitted under an approved exception.
- Personal communication devices include, but are not limited to, cell phones, tablets, smartwatches, earbuds, and other electronic communication devices.

NOTE

Please review the [Mark Twain Personal Communication/Electronic Devices Campus Policy](#) for complete information regarding device storage procedures, confiscation and return procedures, prohibited areas, replacement pouch procedures, exceptions, and disciplinary consequences.



Magnet Program Expectations

Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted is a Dallas ISD application-based magnet school. Scholars accepted into the magnet program are expected to maintain the academic and behavioral standards required for continued enrollment. Families acknowledge these expectations during the application process and are encouraged to partner with the school to support scholar success.

Continued Enrollment

To remain enrolled in the Mark Twain magnet program, scholars are expected to:

- Demonstrate satisfactory academic progress.
- Meet district promotion requirements.
- Demonstrate appropriate behavior and citizenship.
- Follow the expectations outlined in the [Dallas ISD Student Code of Conduct](#) and applicable Dallas ISD Magnet Program policies.

Academic Expectations

Scholars are expected to maintain satisfactory academic performance throughout the school year. When academic concerns arise, Mark Twain is committed to partnering with families and providing appropriate academic interventions to support scholar success before a recommendation for dismissal from the magnet program is considered.

Behavior Expectations

Scholars are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior and citizenship at all times. Repeated serious behavior concerns or conduct that results in mandatory disciplinary action under the [Dallas ISD Student Code of Conduct](#) may result in a recommendation for dismissal from the magnet program in accordance with applicable [Dallas ISD Magnet Program regulations](#).

NOTE

Continued enrollment in the Mark Twain magnet program is governed by [Dallas ISD Magnet Program Regulation EHB](#) and the [Dallas ISD Student Code of Conduct](#). Families are encouraged to review these documents for complete eligibility requirements, disciplinary procedures, and continued enrollment expectations.



Technology & Digital Citizenship

Technology plays an important role in teaching and learning at Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted. Scholars use district-issued technology to collaborate, create, communicate, and explore new learning opportunities. With these opportunities comes the responsibility to use technology safely, respectfully, ethically, and responsibly both at school and when using district technology outside of school.

District Technology Resources

Dallas ISD provides scholars with access to instructional technology and digital resources that support teaching and learning. Scholars are expected to care for district-issued equipment and use technology in accordance with district expectations.

Families and scholars are required to review and acknowledge the following district documents each school year:

- **Dallas ISD Technology Acceptable Use Policy ([CQ — Technology Resources](#))**
- **[Dallas ISD Technology Equipment Use Agreement for Students and Parents/Guardians](#)**

These documents outline expectations for the appropriate use, care, security, and return of district-issued technology resources

NOTE

The **[Dallas ISD Technology Acceptable Use Policy](#)** and **[Technology Equipment Use Agreement for Students and Parents/Guardians](#)** provide complete information regarding technology expectations, equipment care, acceptable use, and parent responsibilities.



Digital Citizenship

Mark Twain encourages scholars to demonstrate responsible digital citizenship by:

- Using technology for educational purposes.
- Respecting the privacy and digital property of others.
- Communicating respectfully in digital environments.
- Protecting usernames, passwords, and personal information.
- Reporting unsafe, inappropriate, or concerning online activity to a trusted adult or school staff member.
- Following all district technology policies while using district devices and online resources.

If a district-issued device is lost, damaged, or not functioning properly, families should contact the school as soon as possible. Campus staff will assist families with the appropriate procedures and provide guidance regarding available technology support.

Additional technology resources for parents and students are available on the **Dallas ISD website** by selecting:

[Home](#) → [Departments](#) → [Educational Technology](#) → [Parents and Students](#)



The Mustang Experience

The Mustang Experience extends far beyond the classroom. At Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted, scholars are challenged to pursue academic excellence, discover their strengths, develop leadership skills, and build meaningful relationships within a supportive school community. Through enriching academic, leadership, service, and extracurricular opportunities, scholars cultivate the knowledge, character, and confidence needed to become lifelong learners who are prepared for success in high school, college, careers, and beyond. Every experience is intentionally designed to inspire curiosity, encourage personal growth, and empower scholars to make a positive impact on their communities and the world.

The House of L.E.A.D.

The House of L.E.A.D. is the heart of the Mustang Experience and serves as the foundation of our school culture. More than a traditional house system, the House of L.E.A.D. fosters a sense of belonging, encourages meaningful relationships, and provides every scholar with opportunities to lead, serve, and grow. Through collaboration, friendly competition, service, and school traditions, scholars develop the character, confidence, and leadership skills needed for success both in and beyond the classroom.

Guided by our LEAD Core Values, every scholar contributes to a culture of excellence while preparing for success in high school, college, careers, and life.

How the House of L.E.A.D. Works

Pre-K–Grade 2

Scholars in Pre-K through Grade 2 proudly support their teacher's assigned House. Through age-appropriate activities, celebrations, and friendly competitions, scholars begin learning the LEAD Core Values while building school pride and a sense of belonging.

Grades 3–8

Scholars in Grades 3–8 are officially welcomed into one of the four Houses during the annual House Sorting Ceremony. Each House includes scholars from multiple grade levels, creating opportunities for mentorship, collaboration, leadership, service, and healthy competition throughout the school year.



Our Four Houses

Every House has its own identity, traditions, symbols, and color. Although each House is unique, all four Houses work together to uphold the LEAD Core Values while building a strong and connected Mustang community.



House of Ifa

Legacy

House of Ifa represents scholars who set the standard for leadership through courage, integrity, and responsibility. Members strive to leave a lasting legacy by inspiring others, serving their community, and leading with honor in everything they do.

Symbol	Meaning
Zulu Headdress	Symbolizes leadership, honor, and status within the Zulu culture, reminding scholars to lead by example.
Lion	Represents majesty, strength, courage, and justice. Even in a chaotic world, the lion maintains its dignity as the king of the jungle.
Diamond	Derived from the Greek word <i>adamas</i> , meaning <i>invincible</i> or <i>everlasting</i> . It symbolizes resilience, perseverance, and an enduring legacy.
House Color	Red – Represents strength, leadership, and the courage that is passed from one scholar to the next.



House of Lakasán

Empowerment

House of Lakasán represents scholars who encourage, inspire, and uplift others. Members lead with compassion, courage, and determination while empowering those around them to achieve success.

Symbol	Meaning
Medinilla Magnifica Flower	Known as the "Rolls-Royce of flowers," it symbolizes beauty, abundance, growth, and the nurturing spirit of empowerment.
Eagle	Represents courage, strength, creation, leadership, and high achievement while inspiring others to soar to new heights.
Heart	Symbolizes compassion, understanding, and the moral, emotional, and intellectual support scholars provide to others.
House Color	Blue – Represents freedom, intuition, imagination, inspiration, and sensitivity.



House of Yukō

Ambition

House of Yukō represents scholars who approach every opportunity with wisdom, optimism, and ambition. Members embrace new beginnings, persevere through challenges, and pursue their dreams with confidence and purpose.

Symbol	Meaning
Torii Shrine	Represents entering a sacred place of hopes, dreams, and new opportunities.
Asian Black Bear	Symbolizes wisdom, hope, optimism, and the courage to embrace new beginnings.
Crescent Moon	Represents new beginnings and serves as a reminder to pursue dreams with confidence.
Koi Fish	Symbolizes strength, perseverance, and resilience. Known as "living jewels," koi remind scholars to overcome challenges while continuing to grow.



House of Tainga

Dedication

House of Tainga represents scholars who demonstrate dedication, professionalism, confidence, and perseverance. Members embrace their unique strengths while striving to leave a lasting impression through leadership, service, and excellence.

Symbol	Meaning
Narwhal	Known as the "unicorn of the sea," it symbolizes creativity, calm determination, and the drive to turn dreams into reality.
Crown	Represents leadership and reminds scholars that they are the rulers of their own future.
Traditional Tā Moko (Tattoo)	Represents leaving a lasting mark through character, achievement, and service.
House Color	Black – Represents seriousness, professionalism, confidence, potential, and limitless possibilities.

A legacy of leadership, empowering all to achieve the ambition to grow and dedication to succeed.



Scholar Leadership

Leadership is an essential part of the Mustang Experience. At Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted, every scholar is encouraged to develop the confidence, responsibility, and character needed to lead both inside and outside the classroom. Through meaningful leadership opportunities, scholars learn to communicate effectively, collaborate with others, serve their community, and make a positive impact on those around them.

Leadership at Mark Twain is not limited to elected positions. Every scholar has opportunities to demonstrate leadership through daily actions, academic excellence, service, and participation in school activities.

Leadership Through Service

Mark Twain scholars learn that leadership begins with serving others. Through service-oriented leadership opportunities, scholars represent the school, welcome visitors, and contribute to a positive campus culture.

Mark Twain scholars develop leadership through:

- Campus Ambassadors
- Community Service Projects
- Peer Mentoring
- School and Family Events

Leadership Through School Culture

The House of L.E.A.D. provides scholars with opportunities to build school pride, collaborate with peers, and develop leadership skills through House activities, friendly competitions, and service initiatives.

Scholars strengthen leadership and school pride through:

- House Leadership Roles
- House Meetings
- House Competitions
- School Spirit Activities



Leadership Through the Classroom

Leadership begins in the classroom, where scholars develop responsibility, organization, communication, and teamwork while supporting their classmates and teachers.

Leadership is developed through:

- AVID Classroom Ambassadors
- Classroom Leadership Roles
- Collaborative Learning Teams
- Peer Support Opportunities

Leadership Through Student Voice

Scholars are encouraged to share ideas, represent their peers, and contribute to decisions that strengthen the Mark Twain community.

Scholars represent their peers through:

- Student Council
- Campus Committees
- School Improvement Initiatives
- Other Student Leadership Organizations



Student Activities

Student activities are an important part of the Mustang Experience. Through academic competitions, enrichment opportunities, and sports, scholars discover new interests, develop leadership skills, strengthen friendships, and apply their learning beyond the classroom. Participation in student activities encourages creativity, collaboration, responsibility, and school pride while supporting the development of well-rounded learners.

District Academic Competition Programs

Mark Twain proudly participates in a variety of Dallas ISD academic competition programs that challenge scholars to think critically, solve complex problems, collaborate with teammates, and represent the school in district, regional, and state competitions. These programs meet after school and provide scholars with opportunities to develop academic and leadership skills beyond the classroom.

District academic competition programs include:

Academic Competitions

Academic UIL
Debate
Chess
Lone Star Challenge
Pentathlon
TMSCA

STEM & Innovation Competitions

Coding
Destination Imagination
Esports
FIRST LEGO League
VEX Robotics
Mah Jong

STEAMporium

STEAMporium is Mark Twain's biweekly enrichment program that encourages scholars to explore new interests, discover hidden talents, and develop new skills through engaging clubs and hands-on experiences. Designed to foster creativity, collaboration, and innovation, STEAMporium provides scholars with opportunities to learn beyond the classroom while building meaningful connections with their peers. STEAMporium club offerings can change each semester based on student interests.

STEAMporium clubs include:

Leadership & Service

Ambassadors
Student Council (House Leads)
Scouts

Creative Arts & Media

Art Club
Broadcasting
School Production/Drama

Interest & Exploration

Board Games & Puzzle Club
Book Club/Reading Club
Garden Club
Pokémon Club



Sports and Athletics

Mark Twain provides opportunities for scholars to develop teamwork, sportsmanship, leadership, and healthy lifestyles through campus sports programs and recreational activities.

Sports opportunities include:

- Cheerleading
- **P.L.A.Y. (Physical Learning Activities for Youth) Initiative** (*Grades 4–6*)

The P.L.A.Y. Initiative is a voluntary after-school program that introduces scholars to traditional and non-traditional sports while emphasizing participation, teamwork, physical wellness, and lifelong fitness.

Athletics

Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted does not offer UIL middle school athletics. However, scholars in Grades 6–8 are eligible to participate in athletic programs at their designated home middle school in accordance with Dallas ISD athletic eligibility requirements and campus procedures. Families interested in athletic participation should contact their scholar's home school for additional information regarding eligibility, tryouts, and participation requirements.

Campus Traditions & Celebrations

Campus traditions and celebrations are an important part of the Mustang Experience. Throughout the school year, scholars and families come together to celebrate learning, recognize achievements, honor diverse cultures, and create lasting memories. These experiences strengthen our school community, reinforce school pride, and provide opportunities for every scholar to connect, grow, and celebrate success.

Celebrating Culture & Community

Mark Twain celebrates the rich diversity of our school community by recognizing the cultures, traditions, and contributions that make us stronger together. These celebrations encourage scholars to appreciate different perspectives while fostering respect, understanding, and unity.

Campus celebrations include:

- Hispanic Heritage Month
- Black History Month
- End-of-Semester Holiday Program



Celebrating Academic Achievement

Recognizing scholar achievement is an important part of the Mustang Experience. Throughout the school year, scholars are celebrated for their academic growth, leadership, character, attendance, and accomplishments as they work toward excellence.

Recognition events include:

- End-of-Quarter Awards Ceremonies
- End-of-Year Awards Celebration
- End-of-Semester Program

Families are invited to attend the End-of-Year Awards Celebration and the End-of-Semester Program as we celebrate the accomplishments of our scholars.

Celebrating Learning

Learning comes to life through experiences that encourage scholars and families to explore, create, and celebrate academic achievement together. These events provide opportunities for scholars to showcase their talents, share their learning, and engage with the Mark Twain community.

Annual learning events include:

- Family Literacy Night
- Family Math Night
- Science Fair
- Fine Arts Showcase

Celebrating Milestones

Milestone celebrations recognize important moments in a scholar's educational journey while creating lasting memories for scholars and their families. These traditions celebrate growth, achievement, and the transition to the next chapter of learning.

Elementary Milestones

- PK4 to Kindergarten Celebration
- Kindergarten to First Grade Celebration
- Second Grade to Third Grade Celebration
- Fifth Grade Bridging Ceremony



Eighth Grade Milestones

- Sunrise Ceremony
- Eighth Grade Trip
- Eighth Grade Prom
- Eighth Grade Week
 - Signing Day
- Sunset Ceremony
- Eighth Grade Awards Ceremony

Celebrating Community

Building a strong school community is an important part of the Mustang Experience. Throughout the school year, Mark Twain provides opportunities for scholars and families to connect, celebrate, and create lasting memories together. These experiences strengthen partnerships between home and school, foster school pride, and create lasting memories that define the Mustang Experience.

Community traditions include:

- Fall Festival
- Family Game Night
- Family Movie Nights
- School Dances (*all grade levels*)

Scholar Recognition

Recognizing scholar success is an important part of the Mustang Experience. At Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted, we celebrate scholars who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership, character, perseverance, and a commitment to the LEAD Core Values. Recognition encourages scholars to strive for their personal best while celebrating the accomplishments and contributions of every Mustang.

Monthly Recognition

Monthly recognitions include:

- Mustang of the Month
- LEAD Scholar Awards



House of L.E.A.D. Recognition

The House of L.E.A.D. celebrates scholars who demonstrate leadership, teamwork, school spirit, service, and commitment to their House throughout the school year.

House recognition includes:

- House Champion Awards
- House Competitions
- House Challenges
- House Celebrations

Quarterly & Annual Recognition

Throughout the school year, scholars are recognized for their academic achievement, leadership, attendance, character, and growth. Quarterly and annual recognition ceremonies celebrate scholar accomplishments while encouraging continued excellence.

Quarterly recognitions include:

- Community Circle End-of-Quarter Awards Ceremonies

Annual recognitions include:

- End-of-Year Awards Celebration
- End-of-Semester Program
- **Principal's Award** – Presented to the scholar with the **highest cumulative grade point average for the school year** in each grade level.
- **Assistant Principal's Award** – Presented to the scholar with the **second-highest cumulative grade point average for the school year** in each grade level.

Celebrating Every Mustang

At Mark Twain, we believe every scholar has unique strengths and talents worthy of celebration. Whether recognized for academic excellence, leadership, character, attendance, service, personal growth, or participation, every scholar is encouraged to strive for excellence and contribute positively to the Mark Twain community. Through recognition and celebration, we inspire scholars to continue learning, leading, and leaving a lasting legacy as proud Mark Twain Mustangs.



Safety & Security

The safety and well-being of every scholar, staff member, and visitor is our highest priority. Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted is committed to maintaining a safe, secure, and welcoming learning environment where scholars can learn and thrive. Through established campus procedures, district safety protocols, and strong partnerships with families, we work together to ensure every scholar is safe, supported, and prepared for success.

Campus Security

Campus security is an essential part of maintaining a safe learning environment. Mark Twain follows Dallas ISD safety protocols and implements additional campus procedures designed to protect scholars, staff, and visitors.

Building Security

To help maintain a safe and secure campus:

- All exterior doors remain locked during the school day.
- All visitors must enter through the school's designated main entrance.
- Every visitor must check in through the main office, be approved before entering the building, and wear a visible visitor badge at all times while on campus.
- Students, staff, and visitors should never hold doors open for others or leave exterior doors propped open.
- Campus staff conduct routine safety checks of all exterior doors at least twice each week, exceeding the recommendations of the Texas School Safety Center.

Student Safety Procedures

- Students must wear their school-issued identification badge at all times while on campus.
- All scholars are required to use a clear or mesh backpack in accordance with Dallas ISD requirements.
- Scholars should immediately report any unsafe conditions, suspicious activity, or safety concerns to any staff member.
- Scholars are expected to follow all campus safety procedures and directions provided by school staff during drills or emergency situations.



Emergency Preparedness

The safety of our scholars and staff depends on being prepared for a variety of emergency situations. Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted follows all Dallas ISD and State of Texas emergency preparedness requirements. Scholars and staff participate in regular safety training and emergency drills to ensure everyone is prepared to respond safely and appropriately.

Emergency Drills

To prepare for emergencies, scholars and staff participate in required safety drills throughout the school year. These drills help familiarize everyone with established safety procedures and reinforce appropriate responses during emergency situations.

Emergency drills include:

- Fire Drills
- Severe Weather Drills
- Secure Drills
- Lockdown Drills
- Evacuation Drills
- Other drills required by Dallas ISD and the State of Texas

Emergency Communication

Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted and Dallas ISD are committed to providing timely and accurate communication during emergency situations. If an emergency affects campus operations or requires family notification, information will be shared through official district and campus communication channels.

Emergency communications are provided through:

- Dallas ISD communication systems
- Campus phone calls, emails, and text messages
- ClassDojo
- The [Mark Twain website](#)
- Official Mark Twain social media platforms

Families are responsible for keeping their phone numbers, email addresses, and emergency contact information current. Please notify the main office promptly whenever contact information changes.



Health Services

The health and well-being of our scholars are important to their academic success. Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted partners with Dallas ISD Health Services to provide care for scholars who become ill or injured during the school day. Families play an important role by providing current health information and following district health procedures.

School Clinic

The school clinic is available to provide care for scholars who become ill, are injured, or require medication during the school day. The school nurse evaluates scholars and determines the appropriate course of action based on their medical needs.

If a scholar visits the school clinic because of an illness or injury, the school nurse will notify a parent or emergency contact regarding the scholar's condition and any recommended next steps. If additional medical attention or early dismissal is needed, the school nurse will provide families with the appropriate instructions.

Medication at School

To ensure the safety of all scholars, prescription and over-the-counter medications are administered in accordance with Dallas ISD Health Services procedures.

- All medications must be brought to the school by a parent or guardian.
- Medications must be in the original, properly labeled container.
- Medications are stored in the school clinic unless otherwise authorized by the school nurse (such as approved emergency medications).
- Medications may be administered by the **school nurse or trained designated school personnel** in accordance with Dallas ISD procedures.

Families must complete the appropriate Dallas ISD Health Services forms before medications or specialized health procedures can be provided at school. Current forms are available on the Dallas ISD website:

Home → Departments → Health Services → [Health Information for Parents and Employees](#)



Student Health Information

Families are responsible for providing current emergency contact information and notifying the school of any changes to their scholar's health, medications, allergies, or other medical conditions. Keeping this information current helps ensure scholars receive appropriate care during the school day.

Information regarding communicable diseases, food allergies, immunization requirements, health-related services, and other health resources is available on the Dallas ISD website:

Home → Departments → Health Services → [Health Information for Parents and Employees](#)

Families with questions regarding their scholar's health needs or required medical documentation should contact the school nurse.

Visitors & Volunteers

Families and community members are valued partners in the success of our scholars. Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted welcomes visitors and volunteers while maintaining procedures that ensure a safe and secure learning environment for everyone on campus.

Visitor Procedures

To maintain campus safety and security, all visitors are expected to follow Dallas ISD and campus visitor procedures.

- All visitors must enter through the designated main entrance.
- A valid government-issued photo ID is required to check in.
- **All visitors are screened through the Raptor Visitor Management System and approved by the main office before proceeding beyond the reception area.**
- Visitors must wear their visitor badge at all times while on campus.
- Visitors must sign out before leaving campus.



Volunteers

Mark Twain values the time and talents of parents, guardians, and community members who volunteer in support of our scholars and school community.

All volunteers must complete the required Dallas ISD volunteer application through **Voly.org** and renew their volunteer status each school year before participating in campus volunteer activities.

Volunteer registration is available on the Dallas ISD website:

Home → Get Involved → [Become A Volunteer](#)

Celebrations & Deliveries

Mark Twain welcomes opportunities to celebrate our scholars while maintaining an environment that supports learning and classroom routines.

Birthday Celebrations

- Birthday celebrations are held at **2:30 p.m.**
- Celebration items, including cakes or cupcakes, must be provided for the entire class.
- Balloons may be brought to the school for birthday celebrations.

Party Invitations

- Invitations distributed at school must be provided for every student in the class.
- Invitations are placed in scholars' folders for distribution.

Lunch Deliveries

- Parents and guardians may arrange for lunch to be delivered to the school for their scholar.
- Scholars are **not** permitted to order food deliveries.



Family Resources

Strong partnerships between home and school are essential to scholar success. Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted is committed to supporting families by providing access to campus and district resources throughout the school year. We encourage families to utilize these resources and reach out whenever assistance is needed.

Questions or concerns regarding a scholar should first be directed to the scholar's teacher. Most concerns can be resolved through open communication and collaboration. If additional assistance is needed, campus administrators and support staff are available to provide support.

Counseling & Mental Health Services

Supporting the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral well-being of scholars is an important part of the Mark Twain experience. Our school counselor and Dallas ISD Mental Health Services work together with scholars, families, and staff to provide a safe, supportive learning environment where every scholar can thrive.

School Counseling

The school counselor supports scholars through a comprehensive counseling program designed to promote academic achievement, social-emotional development, and college and career readiness. Services are provided through classroom guidance lessons, individual counseling, and small-group counseling based on scholar needs. Classroom guidance addresses topics that support scholar safety, wellness, personal growth, conflict resolution, bullying prevention, goal setting, college and career awareness, and responsible decision-making.

Dallas ISD Mental Health Services

Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted partners with Dallas ISD Mental Health Services to provide school-based mental health support for scholars. A licensed Dallas ISD Mental Health Clinician is available on campus multiple days each week to collaborate with scholars, families, and staff in supporting scholars' social, emotional, and behavioral well-being.

Mental Health Services support scholars through prevention, intervention, consultation, crisis response, and individual or group counseling based on identified needs. Services are designed to help scholars



succeed academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally while strengthening the connection between home, school, and the community.

Families who have concerns regarding their scholar's social, emotional, or behavioral well-being are encouraged to contact the school counselor. When appropriate, the school counselor will work with the Dallas ISD Mental Health Clinician to determine available supports and services.



Dallas ISD Family Resources

Families are encouraged to **select the linked resource name or use the navigation path below to access** Dallas ISD resources for information, services, and additional support.

Dallas ISD Resource	Dallas ISD Website Navigation
Academic Calendar	Home → About → About Dallas ISD → District Calendars → Dallas ISD Approved Calendars
Dual Language ESL	Home → Departments → Dual Language ESL → Dual Language ESL
Educational Technology	Home → Departments → Educational Technology → Parents and Students
Family & Community Engagement	Home → Departments → Family and Community Engagement
Food & Child Nutrition Services	Home → Departments → Food & Child Nutrition Services → Food and Child Nutrition Services
Health Services	Home → Departments → Health Services → Health Information for Parents and Employees
Parent Portal	Home → Departments → Family and Community Engagement → Parent Resources → PowerSchool – Parent Portal
Parent Curriculum Support	Home → Parents / Students → Parent Curriculum Support
Special Services	Home → Departments → Special Services → Special Services
Student Engagement & Support	Home → Departments → Student Engagement & Support → Office of Student Engagement & Support
Student Transportation Services	Home → Departments → Student Transportation Services → Student Transportation Services
Volunteer Registration	Home → Get Involved → Become A Volunteer



Who to Contact for Assistance

We are committed to partnering with families to support every scholar's success. The following guide can help you identify the appropriate person or department to contact based on your question or concern. If you are unsure where to begin, please contact the main office, and we will be happy to assist you.

If you need assistance with...	Contact
Academic concerns or classroom questions	Scholar's Teacher
Attendance	Registrar, then Counselor
Behavior concerns	Scholar's Teacher, then Assistant Principal
Bullying or student safety concerns	School Counselor or Assistant Principal
Counseling or social-emotional support	School Counselor
Enrollment or student records	Registrar or Campus Data Controller
Family engagement or volunteer opportunities	Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) or Main Office
General questions	Main Office
Health or medication	School Nurse
Mental health services	School Counselor
School events or campus activities	Main Office
Special Services (Special Education, Section 504, Dyslexia, etc.)	School Counselor or Main Office
Technology support	Campus Technology Support
Transportation	Dallas ISD Student Transportation Services



Grade-Level Information

Every stage of a scholar's journey at Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted is designed to foster academic excellence, leadership, and personal growth. While all scholars are held to the same high expectations and embody the LEAD Core Values, each grade band provides unique learning experiences that prepare scholars for continued success. As scholars progress through each stage, they develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed for future academic achievement and lifelong learning.

Early Learning (PK3–Kindergarten)

Building a Strong Foundation

The Early Learning program provides a nurturing and engaging environment where scholars build the foundational academic, social, and emotional skills needed for lifelong success. Through purposeful play, hands-on exploration, and structured learning experiences, scholars develop literacy, mathematics, communication, and problem-solving skills while learning classroom routines and expectations.

AVID strategies are implemented using developmentally appropriate practices that foster organization, collaboration, inquiry, and a love of learning. All classrooms follow a self-contained instructional model, allowing scholars to build confidence and independence.

What Families Can Expect

- Developmentally appropriate, hands-on learning experiences
- Daily literacy and mathematics instruction
- AVID strategies integrated into classroom instruction
- Self-contained classrooms
- Leadership development through the LEAD Core Values
- A smooth transition into elementary school



Lower Elementary (Grades 1–2)

Building Academic Confidence

During the lower elementary years, scholars strengthen foundational academic skills while becoming increasingly independent learners. Instruction emphasizes literacy, mathematics, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving through engaging, student-centered learning experiences.

AVID strategies continue to be embedded into daily instruction, helping scholars develop organization, inquiry, note-taking, and collaborative learning skills that prepare them for increased academic rigor.

What Families Can Expect

- Strong literacy and mathematics instruction
- Increasing independence and responsibility
- AVID strategies integrated into daily instruction
- Leadership opportunities through the House of L.E.A.D.
- Preparation for upper elementary learning

Upper Elementary (Grades 3–5)

Expanding Leadership and Academic Responsibility

Upper elementary scholars continue to build independence while engaging in increasingly rigorous learning experiences. AVID strategies remain an integral part of daily instruction, strengthening organization, collaboration, inquiry, and academic readiness.

To support the instructional program, **Grades 3 and 5** follow a departmentalized schedule, while **Grade 4** follows a self-contained instructional model. Throughout these grades, scholars continue developing leadership skills through the House of L.E.A.D., academic competitions, service opportunities, and campus activities while preparing for the transition to middle school.

What Families Can Expect

- Rigorous academic instruction across all content areas
- AVID strategies integrated into daily instruction
- Departmentalized instruction in Grades 3 and 5; Self-contained instruction in Grade 4
- Leadership opportunities through the House of L.E.A.D. and campus activities
- Preparation for middle school expectations



Middle School (Grades 6–8)

Preparing for High School and Beyond

Middle school provides scholars with increased independence while preparing them for success in high school and beyond. Scholars follow an **A/B block schedule**, rotating between A Day and B Day courses that promote organization, responsibility, and effective time management. Attendance is recorded during each class period, reinforcing the importance of punctuality and consistent attendance.

Scholars continue to develop AVID skills through daily classroom instruction across all content areas. In addition, **Grade 6 scholars have the opportunity to participate in AVID as an elective course**, providing additional support in organization, study skills, and college and career readiness.

Advanced Academic Opportunities

As a School for the Talented and Gifted, Mark Twain offers an accelerated academic program designed to challenge scholars through rigorous coursework that extends beyond grade-level expectations while preparing them for advanced high school studies.

Grade 6 Advanced

Sixth-grade advanced scholars receive instruction aligned to both **Grade 6 and Grade 7 Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)** in Reading Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

Grade 7 Advanced

Seventh-grade advanced scholars receive instruction aligned to both **Grade 7 and Grade 8 TEKS** in Reading Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.



Grade 8 Advanced

Eighth-grade advanced scholars continue an accelerated course of study through advanced instruction in **Grade 8 Reading Language Arts, Grade 8 Social Studies, Algebra I, and Physics**.

Through successful completion of the eighth-grade advanced program, scholars have the opportunity to earn **high school credit** in:

- Algebra I
- Physics

Eighth-grade scholars also participate in the **PSAT**, supporting college readiness and future academic planning.

Elective Opportunities

Middle school scholars participate in courses that extend learning beyond the core curriculum while fostering creativity, innovation, problem-solving, academic success, and college and career readiness. Course offerings are designed to complement the academic program, support individual scholar needs, and provide opportunities to explore future academic and career interests.

Grade 6

Required Elective

- Technology Applications

Elective Opportunities

- AVID
- Drones
- Math Applications and Study Skills



Grade 7

Elective Opportunities

- Path to College and Career Readiness
- Introduction to Programming and Robotics
- Math Applications and Study Skills

Grade 8

Elective Opportunities

- Advanced Robotics and Programming
- Art III Foundations
- Math Applications and Study Skills

High School Credit Elective

- Principles of Arts A/V (*Career and Technical Education – CTE*)

Elective offerings are subject to change based on campus programming and student interest.

What Families Can Expect

- An A/B block schedule that promotes organization, independence, and responsibility
- Rigorous instruction with opportunities for advanced coursework and high school credit
- AVID strategies integrated across all content areas, with AVID offered as a Grade 6 elective
- Grade-level course opportunities that support innovation, college and career readiness, and future success
- Technology-rich learning experiences
- Leadership development through the House of L.E.A.D., student organizations, and campus activities
- Preparation for high school through rigorous academics, assessments, and eighth-grade milestone experiences

A Journey of Excellence

Every stage of the Mark Twain journey prepares scholars to lead with integrity, achieve with excellence, and succeed in high school and beyond.



Thank You for Being Part of the Mustang Family

Thank you for partnering with Mark Twain School for the Talented and Gifted in your scholar's educational journey. Together, we are committed to fostering academic excellence, developing leaders of character, and preparing every Mustang for future success.

We encourage families to stay connected throughout the school year by visiting the [Mark Twain website](#), reviewing campus communications, and participating in school events and activities. Your partnership is essential to creating a supportive, engaging, and successful learning environment for every scholar.

Handbook Information

Dallas ISD Board Policies

This handbook is intended to provide an overview of campus procedures, programs, and expectations. In the event of a conflict between this handbook and Dallas ISD Board Policy, administrative regulations, or applicable state or federal law, the official district policy or governing law shall prevail.

Handbook Revisions

Information contained in this handbook is subject to change during the school year as a result of updates to district policy, administrative regulations, state law, or campus procedures. Families will be notified of significant changes through official campus and district communication channels.