

Aledo

Independent School District



Gifted & Talented Handbook

2019-2020

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AISD Mission and Program Goals

State Goal for Services for Gifted/Talented Students

Students who participate in services designed for gifted/talented students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment. High school graduates who have participated in services for gifted/talented students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.

Aledo I.S.D. Gifted/Talented Program Mission Statement

The mission of Aledo Independent School District's Gifted Education Program is to provide advanced, appropriate, and quality educational experiences, which develop in students, higher level thinking skills, creative problem solving, and the desire for excellence and autonomous learning.

Aledo I.S.D. Program Goals

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

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

- Implementing an ongoing identification process of screening and selecting students based on multiple and specific criteria (both qualitative and quantitative) utilizing an A.R.E. Committee (Admission/Review/Exit).
- Developing and implementing a variety of differentiated and substantive learning opportunities that are linked meaningfully to the core content areas of language, math, social studies, and science (K-6) and through PreAP and AP classes (7-12) by the classroom teacher.
- Developing self-directed learners with advanced critical and creative thinking skills, research and communication skills.
- Developing an understanding how intellectual potential affects self-development, relationships with others and responsibilities to society.
- Developing skills of managing time and resources in order to set and meet goals.
- Assessing social and emotional needs and providing educational opportunities accordingly.

- Providing ongoing and appropriate training and staff development opportunities for administrators, counselors, and teachers involved in serving gifted and talented students.
- Soliciting parent and community involvement to promote collective participation in the gifted program.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the gifted program for the purpose of continued improvement and development.

Program Description / Procedures

Gifted/Talented Program Description / Procedures

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

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

Step One: Referral Process

1. Students may be referred for the G/T program by any of the following:
 - Themselves
 - Parents
 - Teachers
 - Counselors
 - Administrators
 - Any other interested parties who are familiar with the student's abilities

Referral forms may be requested from the Gifted Specialists.

2. Referrals are accepted various times of the year.
 - a. Kindergarten-October
 - b. K-6 March/April

Step Two: Screening

1. Students in grades K-12 have the opportunity to be screened annually.

2. Kindergarten students entering the G/T program will receive services before March 1.

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

1. After referrals are completed, the Gifted Specialist will begin administering assessments needed to develop the student profile.
2. Assessment data will be collected for each student being screened for the program. AISD uses both quantitative and qualitative measures to aid in the identification of gifted students.

Upon completion of the screening process, the student's records continue to the selection process.

Step Three: Selection Process

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

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

Reassessment

Reassessment of gifted and talented students may occur and is based on performance in response to gifted and talented services. Reassessment may occur only once in elementary grades, once in middle school grades, and one in high school.

Furlough

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

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

Exit Procedure

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

Re-Entry Procedure

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

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

Out of District Transfer Students

Students moving into Aledo I.S.D. who were identified as gifted by their previous school district will be sent a referral packet/permission to test. After verification of identification and participation in a previous G/T program, students will be screened.

Transfer Students Within the District

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

Transfer Students who have a parent that is Active Duty Military

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

Appeals Process

The appeals process allows for the reevaluation of a student for possible placement in the program. A parent may appeal a final decision of the Gifted and Talented A.R.E. Committee (Admission/Review/Exit) regarding the decision to provide or decline services, or removal of services from the gifted program. An appeal shall be made in accordance with FNG (LOCAL).

Steps of Appeals Process

Informal Appeal

Campus Gifted Specialist -- The Gifted Specialist reviews screening data and other pertinent information with the parent. If no decision regarding placement can be made and the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal conference at this time, they can submit a

“Request for Reconsideration” form to the Campus Gifted Specialist who will, in turn submits the form to the Selection Committee. This begins the formal process, level one.

Formal Process

1. Level I/Request for Reconsider -- The parent will complete the “Request for Reconsideration” forms and provide all documentation within the time frame outlined by FNG(LOCAL). The Selection Committee, along with the campus principal will review all documentation and make a determination on placement of the student. If the parent is not satisfied with the committee decision, they may file a Level II appeal.
2. Level 2 -- The parent will complete the appeal forms for Level II and provide all documentation to Scott Kessel, Director of Gifted/Talented Program within the time frame outlined in board policy FNG(LOCAL). If the parent is not satisfied with the decision at Level II, they may file a Level III appeal with the Superintendent’s office.
3. Level 3 -- The parent will complete the appeal forms for Level III and provide appropriate documentation to Superintendent’s office within the time frame outlined in board policy FNG(LOCAL).

Student Evaluation

In kindergarten through sixth grade, student progress through the program will be reported through various means, such as, grading rubrics, self/peer evaluations, observation checklists, etc.

Students in grades seven through twelve receive a report card sent home by the school.

Homework

In kindergarten through sixth grade, gifted students **are responsible for the knowledge covered in the classroom while attending the pullout sessions. However, they should not be penalized for missing work done in class, nor be required to complete assignments such as worksheets missed in their classroom while attending the G/T pullout program.** Students **are** responsible for homework given to the entire class.

Special Activities

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

Program Evaluation

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

Community Awareness

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

IV. AISD Gifted Programs

Grades K-6

Aledo ISD offers a pullout program that meets weekly for identified gifted and talented students in third through sixth grade. Students participate in a variety of learning opportunities such as, higher-order thinking skills, leadership, social and emotional awareness, public speaking, technology, and self-directed research projects culminating in a GT EXPO. The GT EXPO is attended by school members, family members, and others who are invited.

Students in 6th grade are offered the following Pre-Advanced Placement Course(s):

- Pre-Advanced Placement Math

Gifted Program (Grades 7-8)

Students in seventh and eighth grades who have been formally identified as G/T are served through pre-advanced placement courses. The program and courses provide students with a differentiated, compacted, and when appropriate, accelerated curriculum.

Aledo Middle School offers the following Pre-Advanced Placement Courses:

- Pre-Advanced Placement English
- Pre-Advanced Placement Math
- Pre-Advanced Placement Science
- Pre-Advanced Placement Social Studies

Gifted Program (Grades 9-12)

Students are offered a wide selection of options to develop their talents and interests. The programs and courses provide students with a differentiated, compacted, and when appropriate, accelerated curriculum. The Gifted Specialist may assist the subject-matter teachers with developing a differentiated, compacted, and when appropriate, accelerated curriculum. Options open to G/T and all students are:

PRE-AP AND ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES

Aledo High School offers a variety of Advanced Placement Courses. For more information, see the High School Course Handbook or contact the Counseling Office at Aledo High School.

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

EXAMINATION FOR ACCELERATION

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

REQUIRED COURSES / EARLY GRADUATION

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

DUAL CREDIT COURSES – WEATHERFORD COLLEGE

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

DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES – UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS at AUSTIN

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

DISTANCE LEARNING

Aledo High School offers distance learning. For more information, see the High School Course Handbook or contact the Counseling Office at Aledo High School.

*If a course is not required for graduation or does not meet minimum enrollment requirements, the course may be cancelled. For more information, see the High School Course Handbook or contact the Counseling Office at Aledo High School.

Gifted/Talented Program Aledo I.S.D.

Professional Development

State Requirements

All teachers who work with identified gifted students must obtain gifted teaching certification by completing state and district required courses (30 clock hours).

All teacher must receive six hours of GT training per year.

All administrators and counselors will receive 6 hours of professional development that includes the nature and needs of gifted and talented students and program options for gifted students.

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

Some Learning Characteristics of Gifted Children

While no one person has all of the characteristics listed below, most gifted children show more than one of them. With these characteristics come some potential related problems. Your child may not have any of these problems now. However, some of them may arise. Gifted children need support and understanding from their parents to overcome many issues that may arise.

Characteristics	Related Problems
1. Keen power of OBSERVATION ; naïve receptivity, sense of the significant; willingness to examine the unusual	1. Possible gullibility; social rejection; value system and its defense
2. Power of ABSTRACTION ; conceptualization; synthesis; interest in inductive learning and problem solving; pleasure in intellectual activity	2. Occasional resistance to direction; rejection or omission of detail
3. Interest in CAUSE-EFFECT relations, ability to see relationships; interest in applying concepts; love of truth	3. Difficulty in accepting the illogical
4. Liking for STRUCTURE AND ORDER ; liking for consistency, as in value systems, number systems, clocks, calendars	4. Invention of own systems, some conflicting
5. RETENTIVENESS ; retains knowledge easily	5. Dislike for routine and drill; need for early mastery of foundation skills
6. VERBAL proficiency, large vocabulary; facility in expression; interest in reading; breadth of information in advanced areas	6. Need for specialized reading vocabulary; early parental resistance to reading; escape into verbalism
7. QUESTIONING attitude; intellectual curiosity; inquisitive mind; intrinsic motivation	7. Lack of early home or school stimulation
8. Power of CRITICAL THINKING ; skepticism; evaluative testing; self-criticism and self-checking	8. Critical attitude toward others; discouragement from self-criticism
9. CREATIVENESS AND INVENTIVENESS ; liking for new ways of doing things; interest in creating, brainstorming, free-wheeling	9. Rejection of known; need to invent
10. Power of CONCENTRATION ; intense attention that excludes all else; long attention span in certain areas	10. Resistance to interruption
11. PERSISTENT ; goal-directed behavior	11. Stubbornness
12. SENSITIVITY ; intuitiveness; empathy for others; need for emotional support and a sympathetic attitude; ego-involvement; need for courage	12. Need for success and recognition; sensitivity to criticism; vulnerability to peer group rejection
13. HIGH ENERGY ; alertness; eagerness; periods of intense voluntary effort preceding invention	13. Frustration with inactivity and absence of progress
14. INDEPENDENCE in work and study; preference for individualized work; self-reliance; need for freedom of movement and action	14. Parent and peer group pressures and nonconformity; problems of rejection and rebellion
15. VERSATILITY AND VIRTUOSITY ; diversity of interests and abilities; many hobbies; proficiency in art forms such as music and drawing	15. Lack homogeneity in group work; need for flexibility and individualization; need for help in exploring and developing interests; need to build basic competency in major interests
16. FRIENDLY AND OUTGOING ; exceptional interpersonal skills	16. Need for peer group relations in many types of groups; problems in developing social leadership

Common Misconceptions About Young Gifted Children

Here are a few common, but for the most part **inaccurate**, assumptions about young gifted children:

1. They can succeed on their own.
2. They are self-motivated and therefore “teach themselves.”
3. They love to teach other children.
4. They are proud to be held up as examples of model work and behavior.
5. They are naturally “loners.”
6. They can’t be identified until the third or fourth grade.
7. They should be held back so they won’t suffer socially and emotionally.
8. They have no special needs because every child is gifted in some way.

When applied to a particular child, any one of these assumptions might be borne out in some way. None of them, however, pertains to all or even most gifted children.

Meckstroth, Elizabeth A.; Smutny, Joan Franklin; Walker, Sally Yahnke; Teaching Young Gifted Children in the Regular Classroom, Minneapolis, MN; Free Spirit Publishing, Inc., 1997, p. 166.

Resources

1. Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented – <http://www.txgifted.org>
2. Hoagies’ Gifted Education Site – <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>
3. American Mensa – <http://us.mensa.org/activities/giftedchildren.php3>
4. Articles for Parents of Gifted Students – <http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/pages/ed.gifted.html>

A High Achiever...	A Gifted Learner...	A Creative Thinker...
Remembers the answers.	Poses unforeseen questions.	Sees exceptions.
Is interested.	Is curious.	Wonders.
Is attentive.	Is selectively mentally engaged.	Daydreams; may seem off task.
Generates advanced ideas.	Generates complex, abstract ideas.	Overflows with ideas, many of which will never be developed.
Works hard to achieve.	Knows without working hard.	Plays with ideas and concepts.
Answer the questions in detail.	Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives.	Injects new possibilities.
Performs at the top of the group.	Is beyond the group.	Is in own group.
Responds with interest and opinions.	Exhibits feelings and opinions from multiple perspectives.	Shares bizarre, sometimes conflicting opinions.
Learns with ease.	Already knows.	Questions: What if...
Needs 6 to 8 repetitions to master.	Needs 1 to 3 repetitions to master.	Questions the need for mastery.
Comprehends at a high level.	Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas.	Overflows with ideas--many of which will never be developed.
Enjoys the company of age peers.	Prefers the company of intellectual peers.	Prefers the company of creative peers but often works alone.
Understands complex, abstract humor.	Creates complex, abstract humor.	Relishes wild, off-the-wall humor.
Grasps the meaning.	Infers and connects concepts.	Makes mental leaps: Aha!
Completes assignments on time.	Initiates projects and extensions of assignments.	Initiates more projects that will ever be completed.
Is receptive.	Is intense.	Is independent and unconventional.
Is accurate and complete.	Is original and continually developing.	Is original and continually developing.
Enjoys school often.	Enjoys self-directed learning.	Enjoys creating.
Absorbs information.	Manipulates information.	Improvises.
Is a technician with expertise in a field.	Is an expert who abstracts beyond the field.	Is an inventor and idea generator.
Memorizes well.	Guesses and infers well.	Creates and brainstorms well.
Is highly alert and observant.	Anticipates and relates observations.	Is intuitive.
Is pleased with own learning.	Is self-critical.	Is never finished with possibilities.
Gets A's.	May not be motivated by grades.	May not be motivated by grades.
Is able.	Is intellectual.	Is idiosyncratic.

Kingore, B. (Spring 2004). High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Learner. Understanding Our Gifted.