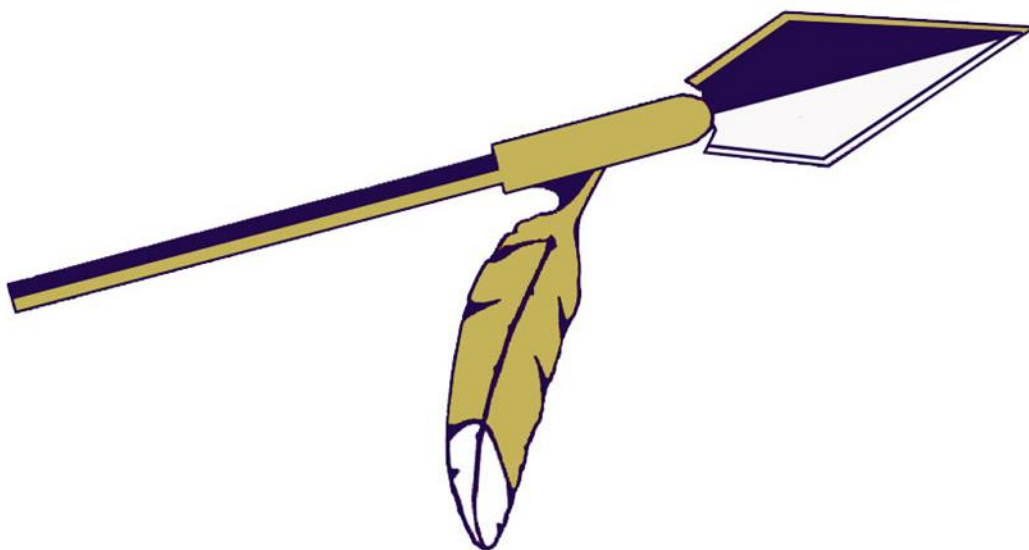


Alvarado Independent School District



GIFTED & TALENTED PROGRAM

STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK

2018 - 2019

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Alvarado Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, race, color, and national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Section 504 and Title VI.

For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Kenneth Estes, at 817-783-6800, or the Section 504 Coordinator, Arlene Gallagher at 817-783-6800.

For information regarding the Alvarado Independent School District Gifted and Talented Program, contact the Executive Director of Special Programs, Dr. Lori Nunez at 817-783-6800 Ext: 1041.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Compliance Statement	2
State Definition of Gifted Students and History	4
Who are gifted?	4
Program Philosophy	5
Gifted and Talented Identification Procedures	5
Program Goals and Objectives	7
Program Description	8
Late Entry Students/Transfer Students	9
Furlough Policy	9
Exit Procedures	9
Reassessment Policy	10
Appeal Process	10
Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee	10
Practical Hints for Parents of Gifted Children	11-13

STATE DEFINITION OF GIFTED "Gifted and talented student' is a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who:

- (1) exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area;
- (2) possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or
- (3) excels in a specific academic field."

(Texas Education Code Ann. § 29.121)

HISTORY OF GIFTED EDUCATION IN TEXAS

- 1977 The Texas Legislature passed its first legislation concerning the education of gifted students.
- 1979 State funds for providing services to gifted children were made available, but providing such services was optional for school districts.
- 1987 The Texas Legislature mandated that all school districts must identify and serve gifted students at all grade levels.
- 1990 The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students was adopted.
- 1999 The Texas Performance Standards Project for Gifted/Talented Students was created:
<http://www.texaspsp.org> and Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented: [ttp://txgifted.org/](http://txgifted.org/)

WHO ARE THE GIFTED?

Gifted and talented students often go unrecognized by teachers, counselors, parents, employers, or contemporaries. Some have overcome this obstacle as shown by the following examples:

Her family suggested Louisa May Alcott should find work as a servant or a seamstress. An editor told her she could never write anything with popular appeal. Beethoven handled the violin awkwardly and preferred playing his own compositions instead of improving his technique. His teacher called him hopeless as a composer. Caruso's parents wanted him to be an engineer; his teachers said he had no voice at all and could not sing.

Winston Churchill failed sixth grade. Charles Darwin, who gave up a medical career begun at Edinburgh, was told by his father, "You care for nothing but shooting, dogs, and rat-catching."

In his autobiography, Darwin wrote, "I was considered by all my masters and by my father as a very ordinary boy, rather below the common standard in intellect." Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper editor for lack of good ideas.

Thomas Edison 's teachers said he was too stupid to learn anything. Einstein did not speak until he was four years old and didn't read until he was seven. His teacher described him as "mentally slow, unsociable and adrift forever in his foolish dreams." He was expelled and was refused admittance to the Zurich polytechnic school.

"A stupid, heavy blockhead, little better than a fool, whom everybody made fun of," was the schoolboy portrait of Oliver Goldsmith. Carl Jung, who had trouble with math, was considered stupid by his teachers. His concept of himself was less intelligent, less hardworking, attentive, decent, and clean than many of the other boys. Louis Pasteur was only a mediocre pupil in undergraduate studies, 15th out of 22 in chemistry.

Werner Von Braun failed ninth grade Algebra. Fred Waring was once rejected by his high school chorus. Tennessee Williams was enraged when his play, Me, Vasha, was not chosen in a class competition at Washington University, where he was enrolled in English XVI. The teacher recalled that Williams denounced the judges' choices and their intelligence. F.W. Woolworth's employers at the dry goods store said he had not enough good sense to wait upon customers. Emile Zola failed his class in literature at the lyceum, receiving a mark of zero.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Gifted and Talented program serves students who are gifted in general intellectual ability and is facilitated in the regular education classrooms through an inclusion model. AISD uses "Texas Performance Standards Projects (TPSP)" as a resource in providing differentiated instruction to the GT students. At each grade level, the TPSP provides guidelines for independent learning experiences and research projects that teachers can adapt and use with the GT students. The projects, or "tasks," are based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and focus on the foundation content areas of English language arts and reading, mathematics, science, and social studies with interdisciplinary connections.

The guiding characteristic of the G/T program is to provide each student with extensions for learning which can open circuits for exploring, experiencing, and expression. Activities are structured to guide students' growth as learners and producers; to aid in the accurate assessment of their unique abilities, talents and needs; and to stimulate development of higher level thought processes.

GIFTED AND TALENTED IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES

A Gifted and Talented Compliance Committee will be appointed. This committee will be composed of three or more members representing the following roles:

1. Campus Administrator

2. G/T Teacher(s)
3. G/T Coordinator
4. Parent(s) or Teacher(s) - optional

This committee is responsible for screening, selecting, and exiting students in and out of the gifted and talented program as needed.

Parental Consent: The district must have written parental consent before G/T testing is conducted.

Consideration:

Step 1: Nomination

Students can be nominated by a counselor, a classroom teacher, by their parents or other interested persons. Students may also nominate themselves.

Step 2: Screening of Matrix Information

Screening for grades K -12 includes scores from:

- CoGat (measures cognitive ability)
- Subject-Specific Teacher Inventories
- Academic Portfolio

(Items will include state assessment response items/TPRI Results; report card; work samples, and a Parent Inventory)

The screening process will be conducted by the G/T Compliance Committee once per school year.

Step 3: Selection

Using weighted criteria, the nominated students will be placed on the screening matrix. Scores will be tallied and nominations will be ranked from highest to lowest.

Final selection of students will be made by the G/T Compliance Committee. Matrix results will be retained for a calendar year for those students who do not qualify for the program.

Alternative Testing Procedures:

For students with special needs (i.e. limited English proficient, migratory, or in special education classes), alternative components will be used to ensure equality of gifted and talented opportunities. The Naglieri may also be used for those students whose scores are inconclusive.

- CoGat (measures cognitive ability) –Translation Available
- Naglieri (measures non-verbal problem solving skills) – Translation Available
- Items that will be considered but not held against a child:
 - Parent Inventory – Translation Available
 - TAKS/STAAR Response Items

Parent Notification:

The district shall provide written notification to parents of students who qualify for services through the gifted and talented program.

Parental Consent:

The district must have written parental consent before a student is placed in the gifted and talented program.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

It is the goal of AISD's G/T program to meet the needs of the gifted/talented students by modifying the depth, complexity, and pacing of the curriculum and instruction ordinarily provided by the school. The district strives to be EXEMPLARY according to the "Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students".

Supporting objectives for students enrolled in the G/T program are as follows:

- An array of appropriately challenging learning experiences in each of the four (4) foundation curricular areas is provided for gifted/talented students in grades K-12, and parents are informed of the opportunities (19 TAC §89.3).
 - Curriculum options in intellectual, creative and/or artistic areas; leadership; and specific academic fields are provided for gifted/talented students.
 - Opportunities are provided for career and leadership assessment and training in areas of student strength.
- A continuum of learning experiences is provided that leads to the development of advanced level products and/or performances such as those provided through the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) (19 TAC §89.3(2)).
 - The opportunity for students who have been served in a gifted program for one or more years to develop sophisticated products and/or performances assessed by external evaluators who are knowledgeable in the field that is the focus of the product is available through gifted/talented curricula.
- Opportunities are provided to accelerate in areas of student strengths (19 TAC §89.3(4)).
 - Flexible pacing is employed, allowing students to learn at the pace and level appropriate to their abilities and skills.
- Provisions to improve services to gifted/talented students are included in district and campus improvement plans (TEC §§11.251-11.253).
 - Gifted/talented curriculum is designed and evaluated through collaboration by specialists in content areas, instructional techniques, and gifted/talented education.
 - Student progress/performance in response to gifted/talented services is periodically assessed using standards developed by experts in the areas served. Results are communicated to parents or guardians.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

G/T PROGRAM - Grades K-6

Each campus schedules their G/T student's instruction differently according to needs and flexibility of the campus:

- **Alvarado Elementary North** – Provides G/T instruction two times a week during grade level Guided Reading/Station time. Students work collaboratively with grade level G/T peers on self-directed learning, thinking, research and communication as evidenced by the development of innovation products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity.
- **Alvarado Elementary South** – G/T students are serviced through a pull out program. All grade levels meet together to participate in the weekly topic of interest on self-directed learning, thinking, research and communication as evidenced by the development of innovation products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity.
- **Lillian Elementary** – Implements the G/T program as an inclusionary model of instruction. Students stay in their home classroom with the addition of the G/T curriculum. Each teacher is responsible for providing the required enrichment of the G/T curriculum to his/her students.
- **Alvarado Intermediate** – Groups G/T students as a grade during their Accelerated Instruction period to work collaboratively with grade-level G/T peers on projects and Socratic seminars. One teacher from each grade level is responsible for the G/T curriculum.

Once the students are identified, they are not required to re-qualify for the GT program each year.

G/T PROGRAM - Grades 7-12

The G/T program in grades 7-8 will allow the opportunity for students to take advanced courses that offer differentiated curriculum for the gifted and talented learner. The G/T program in grades 9-12 is an instructional program for gifted students through Pre -Advanced Placement (PAP), Advanced Placement (AP) classes, dual credit courses, independent studies, and mentorship. The G/T program provides a variety of different learning experiences, techniques, and advanced curriculum, which allows the gifted learner a deeper exploration of the subject areas. The counselors monitor student's schedules to ensure that G/T students are in the appropriate class for their qualified subject area(s).

Once the students are identified, they are not required to re-qualify for the GT program each year.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM PROCEDURES

LATE ENTRY STUDENTS/TRANSFER STUDENTS

Students entering school from another district's G/T program will receive access to Alvarado's G/T program without re-qualification. Transfer students will be placed on probation for a six-weeks grading period. At the end of the probation period, if a concern is expressed, the G/T Compliance Committee will meet to consider continued placement.

Students entering school after the identification process has been completed may be considered for participation in the program during the next scheduled screening period.

FURLOUGH POLICY

G/T students are expected to maintain TEKS mastery in their regular classroom work for each grading period as well as produce quality work within the G/T program.

If an elementary student makes poor progress in either the regular classroom or the G/T assignments, he/she may be placed on a furlough. Unless progress is shown within the next six week period, the student may be considered for exiting from the G/T program.

If a secondary level G/T student receives a subject grade of 69 or lower in the G/T class in a 3-week reporting period, he/she is placed on a furlough for a period of 3 weeks. If the student does not achieve 70 or above in the G/T subject during the successive reporting period, the student may be considered for exiting the G/T subject class. The Compliance Committee will conduct reviews at the end of the first semester and at the end of the year as needed.

A student may request to have a furlough from the Gifted and Talented program. Acceptable reasons for furloughs include but are not limited to illness, scheduling conflicts, and interruptions for home schooling. The furlough would not exceed one semester/term in length and the student is limited to two furloughs. Final permission for furlough requests can only be made with a majority vote of the G/T Compliance Committee.

EXIT PROCEDURES

A parent may request in writing that his/her child be withdrawn from the G/T program at anytime. It is recommended, however, that the review process be conducted. All review requests will be made through the Director of Special Programs. If exiting is under consideration, a meeting of all persons associated with the student (principal, counselor, G/T teacher, Director of Special Programs, parents, and student) will be held by the Compliance Committee to determine whether or not the student's needs are being best served by a continuation in the G/T program. Exiting may be accomplished by a majority vote of the G/T Compliance Committee.

If a student exits the G/T program through the request process, he/she will have to qualify to reenter the program.

REASSESSMENT POLICY

The District shall not perform routine reassessments.

During the appeal process, it can be determined by the G/T Compliance Committee that reassessment is necessary to best recognize a student's strengths for the gifted and talented program. Reassessment can only occur with the recommendation of the Compliance Committee.

APPEAL PROCESS

Parents of students not selected may register an appeal to the G/T Compliance Committee under the following conditions:

1. student must have been in the screening process; or
2. a matrix error is suspected.

An appeal must be made to the Director of Special Programs within ten calendar days after notification of non-acceptance. The Director of Special Programs will schedule an appeal hearing to be conducted by the Compliance Committee. A majority vote of the Compliance Committee is required for consideration for the G/T program.

Matrix results will be retained for a calendar year for those students who do not qualify for the program.

GIFTED AND TALENTED ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee is appointed by the Executive Director of Special Programs and determines G/T policy. The committee is composed of the following roles:

1. Campus Administrator
2. Board Member (if available)
3. G/T Coordinator
4. G/T Teachers
5. Parent

PRACTICAL HINTS FOR PARENTS OF GIFTED CHILDREN

BY GINA GINSBERG

*Children begin by loving their parents:
As they grow older they judge them;
sometimes they forgive them.*
Oscar Wilde

If you are the parent of a child who does things a little earlier, a little better, a little faster, and maybe a little differently from most other children, you are probably the lucky parent of a gifted child. That means, among other things, that you have a child who is curious and excited about everything under the sun, who is able and eager to communicate with you, and who wants to share feelings and information when he or she is still a very small person.

Parents are Children's First Teachers

Parents are their children's first teachers and as such have the greatest and most lasting impact on their lives. They are first in line to offer values, shape attitudes, and dispense information. So, if you are the parent of a gifted child, take heart, rise to the challenge, and cross your fingers; your child may be our president one day, write a perfect symphony, find a cure for cancer, or improve the quality of our lives in whatever direction his or her gifts lead.

The hints that follow are the result of much trial and error, soul searching, and the fervent wish that somebody had given me this information when my own children were younger. They were probable my most valuable teachers and certainly, my most vocal and severest critics. My heart and thanks go to them for being their gifted selves and the free spirits they have become.

Twenty Helpful Hints

1. Gifted children are children first and gifted second. A five year old may be able to solve mathematical problems worth bragging about to the grandparents, but he has only lived five years, and only behavior reasonable for a five year old should be expected of him.
2. Enjoy! Of all the problems children have, giftedness is the best one. Your gifted child may try your stamina and endurance at times, but enthusiasm and lust for learning will more than make up for the pace. Your argumentative youngster may be practicing to become a great trial lawyer, and the artwork taped to your refrigerator may promise competition to Rembrandt in spite of the fact that you cannot tell which way is "up". Relax and enjoy the excitement.
3. Listen to your gifted child. Dinner may be about to burn and the telephone ringing, but **listen** because the question may be important and, if ignored, the curiosity to ask may

disappear. The one thing we can all give our children is our undivided attention—at least, most of the time.

4. Don't compare your gifted child to other children. It places on the gifted one the responsibility to be gifted all the time, and it certainly is not fair to whoever comes off second best. Every child is unique and special in some way. So—cool it.
5. It is a great big wonderful world. Show it to your gifted children in the form of trips, books, music, museums, fire stations, digs, interesting people, wiggly things, daisy chains, and the magical chemistry that makes a cake rise.
6. Let them specialize if they want to. You may not enjoy living with dinosaurs by the year, but there are fringe benefits. They could be learning to do research, keeping notes, knowing the Dewey Decimal System, and keeping some kind of order in that disaster area that passes for a room, after you learn that there are things more important than neatness.
7. Education is expensive. Start saving now.
8. Children don't have to be gainfully employed every waking minute. There should be time to daydream, do baby things, and to lie on an unmade bed and contemplate the ceiling. Gifted children are usually creative children, and it is hard to be creative on schedule.
9. Don't expect your gifted child to live up to your unfulfilled aspirations. You may dream of "my son or daughter, the doctor", but he or she may have other heroes.
10. Let them do for themselves what they say they can do, because they probably know. If the child's judgment is faulty, that is learning too. Gifted children are future leaders who thrive on early responsibility. Parents are the ones who have the problem of letting go.
11. Praise you gifted child because he or she needs all the encouragement available. Praise him or her for the wonderful things accomplished. If the great experiment does not work and the shaky tower of blocks comes tumbling down, praise the child for trying. Inquiring minds must take intellectual risks, and risk taking needs to be supported and praised. Constructive criticism, recognizing good effort, is a form of praise, too.
12. Discipline is necessary and comes in the same shape for all brothers and sisters, whether gifted, curly-headed, or slowpokes. Giftedness is no excuse for unacceptable behavior.
13. Recognize that there are times to reach out a helping hand, and that there are times to get out of the way. Knowing the difference makes you a very gifted parent.

14. You cannot expect your perceptive gifted child to develop a high sense of morality if you cheat on your income tax. Would George Washington lie?
15. Let your home be a place where knowledge is valued and the quest for learning respected.
16. Remember that the fine line between encouragement and pushing may make the difference between a happy and productive youngster and an unfulfilled, underachieving child.
17. Be a welcome person at your child's school. You cannot switch to the competition (another public school system) anyway—there isn't any. Support the school's effort to provide for your child's special learning needs and demonstrate your genuine interest in quality education for all children.
18. Give houseroom to books and magazines, give prime time at the dinner table for discussion of topics of interest by all members of the family, and give praise to all efforts in the pursuit of excellence.
19. Parents of gifted children are people too. They need help and guidance in understanding and appreciating the special needs of their children without feeling inferior or jealous. Hostile feelings could lead to over protection, domination, or exploitation of the child.
20. Don't expect your gifted child to be gifted all the time. That kind of halo makes for a very bad headache.

Remember, it is a privilege to be the parent of a gifted child. Most of the time it means a lot of fun, but sometimes the responsibility of helping your children become all they can become weighs heavily. I really don't think that you or I personally, can make the whole world a better place, but maybe one day our children will. We are fortunate parents indeed.

Appendices

ALVARADO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM
SELECTION MATRIX

Name: _____
 School: _____
 E: _____

Grade: _____
 Date: _____
 ES: _____

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT						
Procedure	Weight/Score					Score
1. CogAT Verbal	5	4	3	2	1	
	90+	80-89% ile	70-79% ile	60-69% ile	50-59% ile	
2. CogAT Quantitative	90+	80-89% ile	70-79% ile	60-69% ile	50-59% ile	
3. CogAT Non-Verbal	90+	80-89% ile	70-79% ile	60-69% ile	50-59% ile	
TEACHER INVENTORY						
1. Teacher Inventory - Science	5	4	3	2	1	
	35+ points	30-34	25-29	20-24	15-19	
2. Teacher Inventory - Math	35 + points	30-34	25-29	20-24	15-19	
3. Teacher Inventory - ELA	30 + points	26-29	23-25	20-22	17-19	
4. Teacher Inventory – Social Studies	26 + points	22-25	19-21	16-18	13-15	
Total						

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND NON-COGNITIVE ATTRIBUTES						
Portfolio Score	Professional Quality Work		Exceeds Expectations		Met Expectations	

Parent's Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip _____

Screening/Selection Committee Review Date _____

Recommended for G/T

Reading _____

Math _____

Parent Permission

Parent Appeal

Appeal Approval

Yes ____

Science ____

Social Studies ____

Yes ____

Yes ____

Yes ____

No ____

No ____

No ____

No ____

