



Arlington

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

More Than a Remarkable Education

Gifted and Talented Program Expansion

The Arlington ISD will bolster its Gifted and Talented program with a four-phase plan that includes a comprehensive system for nomination and identification of students that need to be served by the program and also increased student achievement for these students. As the GT program is expanded, the district will see increased student achievement and increased readiness for college and career pathways.

The district will work to increase the identification of GT students in the younger grade levels, beginning with kindergarten, first and second grades, as this is critical to the success of GT students.

Portfolios will be created for all kindergarten students for assessment, and the top 20 percent of screened portfolios will then take the online Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test. First- through sixth-grade students can be nominated by parents or teachers, and both quantitative and qualitative criteria will be collected on these students. First and second graders will take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills to help determine placement, while third through sixth graders will take the COGAT test. Identification for all grade levels will be determined by a campus placement committee.

Upon identification, students will be strategically placed together within a mixed-ability classroom – called cluster grouping – so they have the opportunity to work together as a group as well as with other students. These groups will be seven to 10 students or two groups of equal size if there are more than 10 GT students in a grade level. They will receive daily instruction by a GT-trained teacher.

Over a five-plus year period that began in 2016-2017, the AISD will implement the plan in four phases.

In Phase I (2016-2017), the district moved to a 1:2 GT lead teacher:elementary campus ratio, meaning there was one GT lead teacher for every two campuses to enhance and accelerate student learning to meet the needs of the gifted learner. For grades kindergarten, first and second, this GT lead teacher provided GT pull-outs for one hour for each designated grade level two to three times per week, and they also provided push-in services during the school day so they could customize and differentiate lessons for advanced-ability students.

During this time, kindergarten through second grades participated in Kingore Learning Experiences, which provides high-level, open-ended activities designed to elicit and diagnose gifted behaviors. The district previously had 10 campuses piloting Renzulli Learning, which promotes interest-based exploration, and it increased to 25 campuses during Phase I for grades 3-6.

In Phase II (2017-2018), the AISD will add approximately 17 GT lead teachers. A new curriculum enhancement for grades two through four will be literacy circles, or small group discussions, that build a community of learners and foster engagement in literature. Kindergarten through third grades will participate in Planned Learning Experiences, and Renzulli Learning will be implemented on all elementary campuses grades 4-6. There will be cluster grouping of third-grade GT students, and Kingore planned learning experiences for grades K-3.

In Phase III (2018-2019), Planned Learning Experiences will expand to kindergarten through fourth grades, and literacy circles will expand into fifth and sixth grades. Third and fourth grades will also implement advanced math.

In Phase IV (2019-2020), advanced math will expand to fifth and sixth grades, and all grade levels will participate in Planned Learning Experiences.

Beyond Phase IV and into secondary education, the district will work toward offering algebra I in seventh grade and supporting GT advanced placement students.