



AVONDALE K-1 GIFTED PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Avondale's K/1 Gifted Program is designed to nurture curiosity, creativity, and confidence in our youngest learners through engaging and flexible learning experiences grounded in Universal Design for Learning. We are committed to fair and inclusive identification practices that honor the many ways giftedness can be expressed. Our dedicated teachers provide a rigorous and responsive curriculum that supports both academic growth and social-emotional well-being.

The following Frequently Asked Questions offer additional details about the program, our approach to identification, and what families can expect from this enriching learning experience.

How does Avondale define giftedness?

Avondale recognizes giftedness as advanced intellectual, academic, creative, or social-emotional development that differs significantly from typical age-peers. Gifted learners may demonstrate asynchronous development, meaning their cognitive abilities may outpace their physical, emotional, or social development.

Our district is committed to supporting gifted learners across all buildings, and we continue to advocate for increased state-level recognition and support through partnerships with the Michigan Association for Gifted Children (MAGC).

What is the purpose of the K-1 gifted program?

The program is designed to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of gifted learners before 2nd grade. Early identification is important because when gifted students are not challenged or supported, they may develop frustration, behavior concerns, or lose interest in school. This program provides an environment that aligns with how gifted young children learn and grow, helping them build healthy learning habits and confidence from the start.

When can families apply, and when are decisions shared?

- Gifted Program Information Nights: December 9, 2025 & January 28, 2026 at GATE Magnet School
- Tentative Application Window: January 30–February 28, 2026 (during GATE School of Choice window)
- Assessment: Scheduled in March
- Placement Notifications: Mid-April
- Letter of Intent Due: End of April

How are students identified for the program?

Students are considered through a multi-measure rubric that includes:

- Parent/family inventories
- Teacher input
- Primary CogAT assessment (non-verbal version for Kindergarten applicants; full CogAT for 1st graders)

Note: Families may submit additional artifacts or assessments, but these are not required.

Will families have an opportunity to share input about their child?

Yes. Parent/family inventories are a central part of the identification process and allow families to describe their child's strengths, learning preferences, and needs.



How is this classroom different from a traditional K–1 setting?

While all Avondale classrooms use universally designed instruction, this program is intentionally designed for gifted learners. Students experience:

- Learning paced to match their cognitive readiness
- Opportunities for creative and advanced thinking
- Support for social-emotional development, including navigating intensity and perfectionism
- Instruction responsive to asynchronous development

Can students apply again in future years?

Yes. Students are welcome to reapply each year during the School of Choice window. Even if a student is not accepted into the K–1 program, Avondale School District as a whole recognizes and supports gifted learners at every school. Our teachers receive ongoing professional development in gifted education, and districtwide practices ensure that staff are equipped to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of advanced learners in all classrooms. Gifted students have opportunities to thrive throughout the district, regardless of program placement.

Who teaches in the K–1 gifted program?

The program is staffed by highly qualified teachers with training in gifted education and early childhood development. Teachers receive:

- Ongoing professional development through state and national gifted organizations
- Training in differentiation and social-emotional support
- Job-embedded coaching from Avondale's Gifted & Talented Instructional Coach, Michelle Gierman, who also serves in leadership roles with the Michigan Association for Gifted Children (MAGC).

Where is the program located? Will transportation be available?

The K–1 Gifted Program will be located at Woodland Elementary in Troy, MI.

Transportation is provided for families who reside within Avondale School District boundaries.

What will class sizes look like?

Class sizes will be similar to typical K–1 classrooms. Avondale prioritizes maintaining low class sizes districtwide and may provide additional instructional support based on enrollment.

Does placement in this program guarantee placement in the 2nd–8th grade GATE Program?

Not automatically. Students will continue to be monitored for best-fit placement. All 1st graders take the CogAT prior to 2nd grade to ensure the instructional environment continues to meet their needs.

What if the program is not the right fit after placement?

Families and staff will meet to develop a support or transition plan as needed. Gifted learners are supported in all Avondale schools through strong Tier 1 differentiation and ongoing teacher training.

How are twice-exceptional (2E) students supported?

The program is intentionally designed for gifted learners, including those with IEPs, 504s, or additional learning needs. Instruction is tailored to support both their strengths and their learning differences.



Does English language learning status affect eligibility?

No. Avondale welcomes learners from all language backgrounds. Students needing language support will also receive services from our state-recognized English Language Development team.

Kindergarten screening uses a non-verbal CogAT, ensuring accessible evaluation.

Are tours or information sessions available?

Yes. Families can learn more about the program at the District Gifted Program Information Nights, with sessions scheduled for December 9, 2025, and January 28, 2026. Families are also encouraged to attend Kindergarten Signing Day in March to visit Woodland Elementary and explore the program in person.

Are out-of-district families eligible to apply?

Yes. The program is open to in-district and out-of-district families (including contiguous counties), pending School of Choice availability.

What if my child has siblings not enrolling in the K-1 gifted program?

Families from outside of the district with multiple students are welcomed and encouraged to apply, but placement is not automatic. Families should submit an application for each child during the district's regular School of Choice window, and students must be accepted based on the standard process. The district offers School of Choice at all buildings, so families have the opportunity to enroll siblings in Avondale School District if space and eligibility allow.

What supports are available for families and caregivers of gifted students?

Avondale provides a variety of support and opportunities for families to connect and learn. Families can participate in community-building events at schools, engage with their PTO, and join parent book clubs focused on gifted education. Additionally, the district partners with experts like licensed counselor, Mark Talaga, who offers resources, podcasts, and guidance for gifted families through Hopelessly Gifted (<https://www.hopelesslygifted.com>). These opportunities help families share experiences, gain insights, and advocate effectively for their children.