

**Aledo Learning Center  
Comprehensive Needs Assessment  
2014-2015**

**Background:** The Aledo Learning Center is a branch of Aledo High School. We are used as an intervention for high school students who have credits to be recovered, for students who are enrolled but in danger of dropping out of school or who have dropped out of school. A majority of our students are classified as at-risk. Our students are on a self-paced accelerated curriculum on the computer or in modules depending on the subject. Our computer curriculums are the Odyssey Ware software or the A+ Learning System and our modules are from American Preparatory Institute. These systems are aligned to the TEKS. We provide our students with a different way of learning which assists a majority of them in their quest to meet graduation requirements.

The data collected to establish this needs assessment is found in the following paragraphs and pages.

**Enrollment:** We had 73 students enrolled at the Aledo Learning Center during the 2013-2014 school year. Listed below is a breakdown of our enrollment.

- 42 – Students graduated – Met standards on the TAKS exit level exams/STAAR End of Course exams and completed the required credits for graduation.
  - 16 – students graduated on the recommended graduation plan.
  - 24 – students graduated on the minimum graduation plan.
  - 2 - out of school student returned and met standards on exit level TAKS exams. They are counted in our 42 graduates.
- 18 – Students are scheduled to return to ALC for the 2014-2015 school year.
- 3 – Students completed required high school credits but need one more EOC exit level exam.
- 12 – Students withdrew from the ALC during the 2013-2014 school year.
  - 1 – student withdrew to attend school out of state
  - 5 – students withdrew to attend public school in another Texas school
  - 1 – student withdrew to attend private school/home school
  - 3 – dropped out of school

**Attendance Rate:** In the 2013-14 school year we had an attendance rate of 88%. This is below our 90% attendance rate goal we set last year. When a student is absent and we have not been in contact with a parent, we call the parent to check on the absence. If a student has excessive absences we file truancy on the student and thwarting on the parent with our local Justice of the Peace.

**Ethnicity** – The ethnicity composition of the Aledo Learning Center for the 2013-2014 school year was as follows:

Caucasian – 61 students or 84%  
Hispanic – 11 students or 15%  
African American – 1 student .01%

**Gender** – Males – 43 students Females – 30 students

**Special Program Participation** – The Aledo Learning Center provided services to 7 students in Special Education, 13 students were classified as 504 and all students were recommended to TLC by the Aledo High School Response to Intervention committee.

**At-Risk Students** – ALC had 62 students in attendance during the 13-14 school year that were classified as at-risk students. Multiple categories of at-risk were typical for each student. The most prominent categories were (2) did not maintain an average of 70 in 2 or more subjects, (3) not promoted for one or more school years, (4) unsatisfactory performance on assessment instrument, (5) pregnant/parent, and (6) placed in DAEP.

**Teacher/Student Ratio** – Teacher-student ratio depends on enrollment, student needs and availability of teachers. There are times we have a 1-10 to 1-12 teacher-student ratio, while other times during the school year we may have a low 1-1, 1-2, or 1-3 teacher-student ratio based on the factors mentioned above.

**Course Assignments/Class Assignments** – Course/Class assignments are based on the student's personal graduation plan. We assign classes based on student needs of meeting graduation requirements. There are times we double and triple block a subject when a student has a weakness in a certain subject.

**College/University/Dual Credit/AP enrollment** – During the 13-14 school year no students from the Aledo Learning Center were enrolled in any of these areas.

**Discipline referrals** – Discipline referrals are at a minimum. Teachers and staff are asked to work on establishing a rapport and relationship with students and handle minor discipline problems. The principal is available if a situation cannot be resolved. During the 13-14 school year 25 referrals were handled by the principal. Listed below are the referral causes:

Confrontation with another student  
Profanity  
Failure to follow directives  
Cell phone violations

- Persistent misbehavior
- Disrespectful to teachers
- Disrespectful to peers
- Leaving class without permission
- Off task
- Classroom disruption

Consequences included:

- Student conferences
- Parent/student conferences

### **School Context and Organization**

The Aledo Learning Center is the only alternative school in the Aledo ISD. In addition to receiving state and local funds, the school also receives federal funds. The campus did not access Title 2 funding for professional development as the staff did not attend the TAAE conference. State Compensatory funds used by the Aledo Learning Center in 2013-2014 school year amounted to \$320,932.00 which is used for teacher salaries.

School decision-making efforts are a coordinated effort involving a campus improvement team made up of one administrator, two teachers, 1 counselor, 1 parent, 1 business representative and 1 community representative. Teachers are actively involved in decision making at the Aledo Learning Center. The teachers and staff play a vital role in the selection and implementation of curriculum, instructional strategies, and appropriate assessments with the ultimate goal of students increasing their achievement in academics, social settings and emotional settings.

### **Strengths:**

- Staff is very concerned and dedicated with helping at-risk students be successful.
- The Aledo ISD provides fiscal and management support of the Aledo Learning Center.
- Parents are involved in their child's education. Some parents are more involved than others.

### **Needs:**

- The need to involve parents in their child's education.

### **Student Achievement**

At the Aledo Learning Center student achievement is the most important goal of the administrator, teachers, staff, students and parents. Meeting graduation requirements is the primary goal of all shareholders. The nature of our students requires our staff to give instruction in all TEKS as well as EOC preparation throughout the year. Methods used for EOC preparation include daily EOC warm-up activities, in-school tutorial classes, online activities (TEA Website) and the use of technology resources. Teachers attempt to identify student learning styles and teach to maintain student strengths and to increase achievements in the areas of their weaknesses.

Data included in identifying student needs include benchmark testing, weekly progress reports, teacher input and observation, discipline referrals and personal graduation plans.

### **TAKS Results in 2013-14**

ELA – 2 students took the exam and 2 students met standards.

Math – 4 students took the exam and 4 students met standards. Two students were Out of School students who returned and met standards on this exam and graduated from high school.

Science – 2 students took the exam and 2 students met standards.

Social Studies – 2 students took the exam and 2 students met standards.

### **End of Course exams in 2013-2014**

English 1 – 12 students took the exam; 7 students met standards for a 58.3% passing rate.

English 2 – 13 students took the exam; 10 students met standards for a 76.9% passing rate.

Algebra 1 – 6 students took the exam; 4 students met standards for a 66.6% passing rate.

Biology – 5 students took the exam; 4 students met standards for an 80% passing rate.

U.S. History – 21 students took the exam; 21 students met standards for a 100% passing rate.

In reviewing the testing results for the 2013-2014 year, we realize the need to work on maintaining our strengths and working on improvement in our weaknesses. We are very pleased with the TAKS results for the 2013-2014 school year. The EOC results that need improvement can be identified by looking at the above data. We need to improve in all areas except the U.S. History. Our goal is that we have a 100% passing rate in all EOC exams our students must take to graduate from high school.

**Strengths:**

Student intervention opportunities include daily warm-up with emphasis on STAAR End of Course preparation, differential instructional strategies, pull out activities, and two to three week intense STAAR tutorial classes.

Staff is invested in at-risk student achievement.

Keeping parents informed of student academic achievements.

Providing at-risk students with social skills and emotional skills.

**Needs:**

Closing the achievement gap in all areas of the STAAR End of Course with heavy emphasis on English 1, English 2, Algebra I and Biology.

The need for all students achieving at grade level in all core subjects.

The need for additional opportunities to provide services to meet students' social and emotional needs. Motivation is a time consuming endeavor due to the nature of our students.

Increase staff awareness and efforts to ensure a safe and orderly learning environment.

**Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

The instructional staff identifies areas in the curriculum and instruction taking an active approach to design and implement lessons to meet student needs. The self-paced computer curriculum and module packets used at the Aledo Learning Center are aligned to the state standards. Individual student needs are identified by the instructional staff and instruction is provided to assist students in being successful in their academics.

Funds spent in the 2013-2014 school year to improve curriculum, instruction and assessment is as follows:

ELA - \$2218.85

Math - \$2653.44

Science – \$2964.16

Social Studies – \$2502.74

Study Guides for preparation of State Exams – \$1513.16

Physical Education -\$176.35

Software Updates – \$3500.00

Computer supplies (IPad) - \$485.74

Spanish I & 2 – \$1164.86

Art 1 - \$665.51

Student Assistance - \$47.45

Staff Development - \$249.00

Data sources reviewed in the identification of curriculum and instructional needs included teacher input, student achievement data such as TAKS and STAAR End of Course results and student understanding of the curriculum.

**Strengths:**

The addition of Compass Learning software to prepare our students for the future.

Staff developed TEKS based instruction

The use of technology through computer based curriculum and interactive boards to meet student needs.

**Needs:**

Improved strategies in all core areas to improve and meet student achievement needs.

**School Culture and Climate**

As an alternative education program, the Aledo Learning Center operates differently than a traditional high school. Our students feel that it is a place where they can come and be themselves; where teachers make them a priority and try to meet their needs on a daily basis. Our teachers feel that the Learning Center is an empathetic, encouraging environment, where students are offered countless opportunities to succeed. The mission that all students can learn is the embodiment of what the Learning Center is. Both students and staff work diligently in order to make sure everyone is successful here. Students are offered one-on-one instruction daily in order to meet their needs and goal of graduation. Because the students are at-risk of dropping out, attitudes change on a daily basis. In a small environment like the Learning Center, the teachers are able to provide additional educational and emotional support to each student. Occasionally students need more discipline than they get in the classroom and are referred to the principal. This does not happen often, but issues such as inappropriate language, excessive talking, and excessive absences do occur. Teachers are expected to have classroom procedures that create order in the classroom. They are also expected to manage their classroom at all times. The Learning Center is viewed as a safe environment by both students and staff. Students come with the expectation that if they work hard they can recover credits quickly and can graduate early or on time. Staff expects students to come to school ready to learn with the goal of passing TAKS/STAAR Exams and graduating on-time. The students who tend to be most satisfied with the school culture and climate are those that are truly driven to complete credits, are here daily and on time. There are some teachers who have trouble managing their classes at times. These are usually the classrooms that are not as focused and are not getting as much work done in return. The biggest problem may be substance abuse among the students outside of school. It is no longer seen as taboo to be involved in underage drinking or marijuana use. Students are instructed that talk about being involved in illegal activities will not be tolerated. Many have spoken with principal and/or counselor concerning issues they may have. Students are also offered an online course to learn about what illegal substances can do to their bodies and how they can change their lives. When students come to the Learning Center they are no longer able to participate in extracurricular activities at the high school. Students are still allowed to attend sporting events and those events that do not take place during the day or on the high school campus. Many of our students work outside of school or are parents who go home to take care of their children.

Both students and staff agree that our facilities are very nice. Our building is less than 10 years old and everyone works hard to keep it looking nice. The classrooms do seem small when the Learning Center is at full capacity. There is a nice cafeteria/gathering place in order for students to socialize between classes and daily meetings.

### **Strengths**

- Encouraging environment
- One-on-one instruction
- Feeling of safety and a modern facility

### **Needs**

- More focus from some students
- Better classroom management

### **Technology**

The Aledo Learning Center currently has 10 Thin Clients in each classroom. The Thin Clients are connected to a server in the technology building, 3 classroom Smart Boards and a Smart Response System. The students and staff use technology daily and are very confident and proficient in using technology. Much of our curriculum is completed using computers. Some barriers that potentially prevent our effective use of technology include inability to log onto computers when server is down, and some internet blocks prevent from students from logging onto educational websites. Our teachers have had smart board training which helps them implement new and exciting ways to get students involved in learning. Technology is employed in all the classes offered. Many of our core subjects and electives are completed using the A+ system/Compass Learning. The subjects that are computer-based include: English I, English II, English III, English IV, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Math Models, Integrated Physics and Chemistry, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Earth and Space Science, Health, World Geography, World History, US History, Government, Economics, Art Appreciation, and Sociology. All other subjects taught require use of computers for research. Technology at the Aledo Learning Center enables students to work at their own pace; with immediate response on test and quizzes. The design of our network provides the ability for our students to complete credits at an accelerated pace. The addition of the smart boards has increased student participation in their learning and preparation for the TAKS test.

### **Strengths:**

- Supports self-paced curriculum
- Smart boards have increased classroom participation
- Teacher laptops
- Quick research

### **Needs:**

- No smart board in English/Language Arts.

Students cannot complete assignments if the server is down.

### **Family and Community Involvement**

A majority of parents of our at-risk students want their child to be successful. The involvement of parents varies from the minimum to the maximum. Students are required to make application to attend our school. A parent and student orientation is required with at least one parent and the student as participants. Routines and Procedures are discussed in this orientation as well as our student handbook and the Aledo ISD Student Code of Conduct. Parents are encouraged to contact the school with requests and concerns of their child's education. We encourage a team of school personnel, parents and student involved with meeting the educational needs of the child.

Community involvement is present when help is requested. The Aledo Advocats are very proactive in meeting the needs of students and their families with financial support in the areas of food, clothing and shelter. Several business owners are supportive of our students by providing gift cards as rewards for student attendance and academic achievement. The Aledo ISD Connections mentoring program assists our students with mentors to provide guidance in reaching their educational goals.

Special education services were provided to seven students last year. We also provide services to thirteen students that were classified as 504 students. These students were referred to us by the RTI committee at Aledo High School.

### **Strengths:**

- Parents required to attend orientation.

- Parents know what progress their child is making in school by sending weekly progress reports.

- Community organizations and businesses willing to assist our students.

- Special Education department and the staff at the Aledo Learning Center collaborate regularly in meeting the needs of special services students.

- The staff is willing to attend new training to assist students in meeting their educational needs.

### **Needs:**

- Parent involvement needs to improve.

### **Professional Development**

The Aledo Learning Center staff collaborates regularly to share ideas and plan instruction. We have one teacher in each of the core areas. Teachers share ideas on what has been successful with individual students in their core areas. They also brainstorm to find new strategies that may motivate individual students. Teachers at the Aledo Learning Center work well together to provide an opportunity for students to meet their educational goals.



During the 2013-2014 school year, the Aledo Learning Center was staffed with the following personnel:

1 – Principal, 1 – Half time Counselor, 1 – Secretary, 1 – English teacher (5 of 7 periods), 1- Math teacher (6 of 7 periods), 1 – Science teacher, 1 – Social Studies teacher 1 – Health/PE teacher (6 of 7 periods) and 1 paraprofessional.

Professional Staff Development sessions attended by one or more staff members are as follows:

C.P.R. training

C.P.I. training – attended by the CPI team

TELPAS Training

Fundamental 5 Training

Compass Learning Software Training

Concussion Training

AESOP Training

Diabetic, Air bourn Antigens and Epi-pens

McKinney-Vento training

PDAS Update

Parent Concern Procedures

Crisis Plan training

Assessment Training

Thinking Map Training

504 Training

ELPS Training

Tech It Up

Twitter for the Classroom

Pixelating Projects

Get Smart: Smartboard Basics

iPaid for an iPad, Now What? Ipad basics

**Strengths:**

Staff working together as a team to ensure At-risk students will be successful.

Staff that is willing to grow and learn by attending professional development workshops which will assist in meeting our student needs.

The Professional staff is 100% highly qualified.

Teacher retention rate is above state average.

District wide technology professional development in the use of Smartboards.

The constant awareness of staff to provide a safe learning environment for our students.

**Needs:**

A need for full time staff members without extra duties.

Motivational workshops to increase knowledge of the non-motivated student.