

ISM Program Description

The Independent Study Mentorship (ISM) program at Frisco ISD is designed for junior and senior GT and advanced academic students. Students go through a selection process and are chosen to participate. They select topics of study, and the facilitator, (the ISM teacher) helps them narrow and focus their study. A mentor is carefully selected to work with the student over the course of the year with the chosen topic. The ISM teacher works with the students on management, communication, interpersonal skills, interviewing, and goal setting. The ISM instructor follows each student's progress closely, communicates often with mentors, and makes sure each student stays task committed.

Class time is used working with the students on their research and products, developing research skills, listening to guest speakers, and giving progressively longer speech presentations. Students are allowed to leave campus during the ISM class period on chosen days to do research, conduct interviews, or visit with mentors. Students are required to document the work that was accomplished on the off campus visits. They are also required to have signed permission from parents before being allowed to travel. It is the student's responsibility to locate potential mentors.

In the fall semester, the students develop a research portfolio that has a collection of secondary resources, such as articles, surveys, and Internet research. They will also have a section of primary resources, such as interviews, letters of inquiry, observations, and visits with their mentor as well as pieces of original work. Students are required to provide items such as a mission statement, resume, and bibliography.

In the spring semester, students will focus on creating a product. The product will be related to the topic, and they will work on this with the mentor. The product is required to have a real-world application. Depending on the topic, the emphasis may be on the process as much as the product itself. In May, the students will give a formal presentation to invited guests. They will present their research portfolios and products. The mentors are asked to be present to formally evaluate the student and the product.