



## ALC Schools Success Story

Garland ISD, TX

### The School District

Educating 55,000 students across 72 campuses, Garland Independent School District (ISD) ranks as the second-largest district in Dallas County, fifth-largest in Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, 15th-largest in Texas, and among the 75-largest in America. With a rich, 100-year tradition of excellence, GISD boasts a diverse population that speaks more than 100 languages, as well as technology-driven campuses, magnet programs, and approximately 200 Career and Technical Education courses. Their family of three cities shares a vision that serves to provide an exceptional education to all students.

### The Challenge

A devastating tornado at the end of winter break scattered district students to temporary housing across the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

### The Solution

ALC Student Transportation Solutions.

### The Value

- Reliable and high-quality student transportation
- Flexibility to expand and contract services as needed
- Ease of doing business
- Customizable reporting meets school board requirements

“Other transportation services may be available, but with ALC we get a level of service and accountability that satisfies our needs.”

- **Jeremy Smith**

Assistant Transportation Director,  
Garland Independent School District

Our mission is to give students with special transportation needs an equal opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed.



## Category 4 Tornado Devastates City; Highlights Need for Alternative School Transportation

In December 2015, Garland, Texas, was hit by a large and powerful EF4 tornado that was part of a significant tornado outbreak that destroyed homes and damaged property across North and Central Texas.

Jeremy Smith, Assistant Transportation Director for Garland ISD recalls jumping into action the minute he heard about the devastating tornado. "I had been traveling during the winter break and called my boss right away to ask what I could do to help," he said.

Following the tornado, Garland ISD determined that more than 1,000 students and their families had been displaced due to damaged or destroyed homes and neighborhoods throughout the district. Many students were now residing within the boundaries of neighboring school districts, with some living as far as 60 miles away. "The federally mandated McKinney-Vento Act requires school districts to provide transportation, free of charge, to students who are displaced by homelessness, so that they may continue to attend the school in which they were enrolled before displacement," continued Smith.

## Stop-Gap Transportation Measures Demonstrate Need for Sustainable Student Transportation

Garland ISD came back from the winter break and quickly put a temporary plan in place to ensure transportation for their displaced student population. "We began by having teachers and staff who were living in various parts of the Dallas Metroplex, but working for Garland ISD, transport the displaced students who were living near them in rented Chevy Suburbans. This was more of a stopgap for us and not a sustainable solution," said Smith.

It was during that time that a transportation director from a neighboring district mentioned ALC and recommended that Garland ISD reach out to them about providing McKinney-Vento transportation services. "We set up a meeting with the ALC team and were immediately impressed by their responsiveness, the quality of service they offer, and their experience with McKinney-Vento," added Smith.

The ALC proposal was submitted to the Garland ISD school board and within several weeks, the district was up and running with ALC. "One of the things we discovered after we began working with ALC was their ability to work across districts," continued Smith. "One of the provisions in McKinney-Vento is that both the student's district of origin and the district in which they are residing while displaced must share the cost of the transportation. ALC was great to work with on this as they knew how to work with shared billing arrangements and work across districts to maintain quality of service."

## Even After the Rebuilding Process, School District Identifies Ongoing Need for ALC Services

It took between 18 months and two years for things to normalize with Garland ISD following the December 2015 tornado. "By fall 2017, most of our students returned to living inside district boundaries, and while the high demand for ALC services was diminished, we still saw tremendous value in our relationship and the services they provide our district," said Smith. "For example, the reporting they give us enables us to pinpoint for our school board exactly how we are utilizing their services, how many students we are transporting and from where, and the cost of each trip. This helps tremendously in terms of budgeting and planning."

Smith shared that since Garland ISD began working with ALC, they have also tried other alternative student transportation services, but find ALC's offerings to be the most reliable. "With ALC we get a level of service and accountability that provides the best value for our district," continued Smith.

Garland ISD continues to use ALC for McKinney-Vento students and also special trips where a bus and driver can't be allocated due to available resources and other factors. "During the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to revise our services contract and were not using ALC as much, but in early 2021 when things began to normalize, we were able to quickly increase our usage, and we greatly appreciate the flexibility ALC has afforded during this time," said Smith.

Smith also noted that beyond the original scope of the district's relationship with ALC, they are now using the services to transport what they call "newcomer" students or those who have migrated from Central America, Asia, and other regions and must take special classes to learn English and other skills before transitioning into the general population. "From day one to now, the ALC staff have been tremendous to work with and I can't thank them enough for their partnership with Garland ISD," concluded Smith.

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- Jeremy Smith

Assistant Transportation Director,  
Garland Independent School District

