

Westmoreland County Public Schools

Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted

2020-2025

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Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted

Each school board must review and approve a comprehensive plan for the education of the gifted. That plan must provide specific explanations of the school division's implementation of the *Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students*. School divisions, working in conjunction with their school boards, should determine the appropriate timeframe of applicability for their division's gifted plan. Historically, division plans span five years. For the technical review, the DOE will request a division to send their most current, approved plan at the time of the review. The applicable timeframe for the division's plan does not need to correspond to the collection year of their technical review. Information on the DOE technical review schedule can be found at the gifted education homepage at the Virginia Department of Education's Web site [Gifted Ed Homepage - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted_ed/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted_ed/index.shtml)

Section 8VAC20-40-60A of the *Regulations* states that, "Each school board shall submit a comprehensive plan for the education of gifted students to the Department of Education (DOE) for technical review on a schedule determined by the Department. Each school board shall approve a comprehensive plan for the education of gifted students that includes the components identified in these regulations." To assist school divisions and school boards in complying with section 8VAC20-40-60A, the Virginia Department of Education has created this template for developing Local Plans for the Education of the Gifted (revised January 2011). This public document addresses all aspects of local services for gifted students, including, but not limited to, the area(s) of giftedness the school division will serve, an operational definition of giftedness in the division and its supporting identification procedures, program services, professional development, curriculum development, and parent and community involvement.

Each section of the plan should address specific procedures and information for each area of giftedness identified by the school division. If a school division identifies students in general intellectual aptitude (GIA) and specific academic aptitude-mathematics (SAA-M), then the section for referral procedures, for example, should reflect the specific referral procedures for GIA and SAA-M. Throughout the local plan template, school divisions may need to copy and paste the drop down boxes, the insert text form fields, and any pertinent information for each area of giftedness identified by the division. In order to be able to 'choose an item' from a drop down box, simply right click on the highlighted 'choose an item' wording and the drop down arrow should appear on the right. Right clicking on the arrow will then allow the drop down box choices to appear. If certain procedures or policies apply to more than one area of giftedness, simply copy and paste the drop down selection box to reflect all areas of giftedness that are applicable to the procedures or policy.

Once the completed comprehensive local plan for the education of gifted students has been approved by the local school board, the plan shall be accessible to the public through the division's Website. The division shall ensure that printed copies of the plan are available to citizens who do not have online access.

For more information, contact the Virginia Department of Education specialist for Governor's Schools and Gifted Education at 804-225-2884.

General Information regarding the Gifted Program in Westmoreland County Public Schools

In section 8VAC20-40-40A of the *Regulations*, divisions are required to screen, refer, identify, and serve gifted students in at least general intellectual aptitude or specific academic aptitude. School divisions may identify and serve gifted students in career and technical aptitude or visual or performing arts aptitude, or both, at their discretion.

Area of Giftedness Identified by the Division	Grades Served
General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA)	K-12
Specific Academic Aptitude (SAA) - English	K-12
Specific Academic Aptitude (SAA) - Mathematics	K-12

Part I: Statement of Philosophy and Local Operational Definition of Giftedness for the School Division (8VAC20-40-60A.1)

A. Division Statement of Philosophy for the Education of Gifted Students

Westmoreland County Public Schools recognize and value the individual differences of all students. We believe that all children have the right to an education commensurate with their abilities to learn, and that differentiated, individualized instruction is necessary to enable each student to reach his/her full potential. We believe all students should be challenged and learn something new every day, and we believe all students should have the opportunity to be successful.

In keeping with the general philosophy, Westmoreland County Public Schools recognize that gifted students need specific instructional services in order to reach their fullest potential, and we are committed to providing those services. We believe gifted education program options should provide an atmosphere and learning opportunities which foster the intellectual, emotional and social growth of gifted students. We believe gifted students need opportunities to interact with other gifted students, as well as with all students. We also believe gifted students need opportunities to interact with specially trained teachers and guidance counselors, along with other persons uniquely qualified to work with gifted students.

Finally, we believe that giftedness is equally prevalent in all ethnic, gender and socioeconomic classes, and we must be sensitive to identify and appropriately serve underserved populations of gifted students.

B. Division Operational Definition of Giftedness

This section should include an operational definition for each area of giftedness (general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, visual and/or performing arts aptitude, or career and technical aptitude) identified and served by the division. An operational definition provides the concrete, observable, and/or measurable criteria for 'giftedness' used by the division in the identification process. Such a definition might include a listing of the evidence of student readiness for gifted educational services, e.g. evidence of gifted behaviors as determined by a valid and reliable teacher checklist or evidence of superior academic performance based on a norm-referenced assessment of aptitude.

General Intellectual Aptitude

Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate:

- Superior reasoning;
- Persistent intellectual curiosity;
- Advanced use of language;
- Exceptional problem solving;
- Rapid acquisition and mastery of facts, concepts and principles; and

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- Creative and imaginative expression across a broad range of intellectual disciplines beyond their age-level peers.

Specific Academic Aptitude

Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate, in selected areas that include English and math:

- Superior reasoning;
- Persistent intellectual curiosity;
- Advanced use of language;
- Exceptional problem solving;
- Rapid acquisition and mastery of facts, concepts and principles; and
- Creative and imaginative expression across a broad range of intellectual disciplines beyond their age-level peers.

The operational definition for both general intellectual aptitude (GIA) and specific academic aptitude (SAA) in all areas is evidenced by the following criteria used to determine eligibility for services:

- Record of observation of in-class behaviors, to include Gifted Rating Scale (GRS) and teacher narrative;
- Appropriate rating scales, checklists or questionnaires, to include a parent checklist and narrative;
- Individually or group-administered nationally norm-referenced aptitude tests, to include the Kauffman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT), Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), and/or the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT);
- Individually or group-administered nationally norm-referenced achievement tests, to include the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement; and
- Record of previous accomplishments (e.g., honors, awards, etc.)

For GIA identification, a nationally norm-referenced aptitude test shall be included. For SAA identification, a nationally norm-referenced aptitude or achievement test shall be included.

Part II: Program Goals and Objectives (8VAC20-40-60A.2)

This section should include goals and objectives for the school division's gifted education program. Specific references pertaining to each area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

The program goals and objectives pertain to all areas of giftedness served by the division.

Areas of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
Specific Academic Aptitude: English
Specific Academic Aptitude: Math

A. Identification:

- Develop and implement an effective identification model for students in grades K-12, with particular emphasis on identifying under-represented populations.

B. Delivery of Services:

- Provide a continuous and sequential program of services to students identified as gifted in grades K-12.

C. Curriculum and Instruction:

- Provide appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction in terms of content, process and product for gifted students in grades K-12.

D. Professional Development:

- Provide, organize, and promote a variety of materials and resources for teachers to use to meet the needs of identified gifted students in grades K-12.
- Provide high-quality professional development, especially in the following areas: characteristics of gifted learners, the gifted referral process, and differentiation of curriculum and instruction.
- Seek and promote opportunities for teachers to earn the Virginia endorsement in gifted education.

E. Equitable Representation of Students:

- Research and implement best practices for identifying students from under-represented populations.
- Implement identification tools, including nonverbal norm-referenced assessments and research-based teacher checklists, which promote the equitable representation of all student groups.
- Review relevant, current research annually to incorporate best practices into the identification process and to revise criteria and select instruments.

F. Parent and Community Involvement:

- Promote the awareness of the needs of gifted students among parents, school staff, and the community.
- Foster and maintain partnerships with a variety of community organizations.

Part III: Screening, Referral, Identification, and Service Procedures

A. Screening Procedures (8VAC20-40-60A.3)

This section should provide screening procedures for each area of giftedness identified and served by the division. These procedures should include the annual review of student data used to create a pool of potential candidates for further assessment. Specific references pertaining to each area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

The screening procedures pertain to all areas of giftedness served by the division.

Areas of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
 Specific Academic Aptitude: English
 Specific Academic Aptitude: Math

The search for and identification of gifted students is a continuous process. The first step in the process is to create a pool of candidates. Students may enter the pool through direct referral or general screening. A student may not enter the pool more than once annually.

The following standardized screening instrument will be used for general screening to create a pool of candidates for further assessment:

Cognitive Abilities Test (administered Spring of grade 2):

- CogAT scores will be reviewed in fall of the year taken by the Gifted Education Coordinator and the Gifted Lead Teachers.
- Students with scores at or above the 92nd percentile on the total test or on the verbal or non-verbal subtests of the CogAT will be considered for further assessment.

B. Referral Procedures (8VAC20-40-60A.3)

This section provides referral procedures for each area of giftedness identified and served by the division. These procedures shall permit referrals from parents or legal guardians, teachers, professionals, students, peers, self, or others. These procedures

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should include to whom referrals are submitted and the timeline for the division to provide parents/guardians with the results of the eligibility process. Specific references pertaining to each area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

The program referral procedures pertain to all areas of giftedness served by the division.

Areas of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
 Specific Academic Aptitude: English
 Specific Academic Aptitude: Math

Direct referrals are accepted any time throughout the school year up to March 1st. Referrals may be made by parents, teachers, other school personnel, community members, student peers or the student him/herself.

Referral forms are available in the guidance counselor of each school. Completed referral forms may be submitted to the guidance office and will be directed to the school Gifted Lead Teacher. The identification and placement process will be completed within 60 school days of receipt of permission to test.

Direct referrals are actively sought each school year. Several mechanisms are in place to promote awareness and understanding of the referral and identification process, as well as the services provided by the Gifted Education Program. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Fact sheets/fliers which explain how to make a referral, the evaluation and identification process, and the services provided by the program are distributed to all students in grades K-12 during the fall semester of each school year. Additional copies of these fact sheets are available through the guidance office of each school, as well as the office of the Gifted Education Coordinator.
- Periodically, an overview of the characteristics of gifted students, including underserved populations, the school division's identification procedures, and the referral process is presented to each school faculty as a collective group. Additionally, all principals and Gifted Lead Teachers are versed in the referral, evaluation, identification, placement and service delivery processes used in the county. These persons serve as consultants to other members of the faculty and staff, as well as parents and community members who inquire about these topics.

Transfer students who were eligible for gifted education program services in their previous school division are automatically referred to the pool by the guidance counselor in the receiving school. With parent consent, assessment data is gathered, and additional evaluations conducted, as needed. Eligibility for continued

identification is determined by the Identification/Placement Committee utilizing local criteria and procedures.

C. Identification Procedures (8VAC20-40-60A.3)

This section provides identification procedures for each area of giftedness identified and served by the division. Identification in GIA programs shall be K-12 and must include a nationally norm-referenced aptitude test. Identification in SAA programs shall be K-12 or as assessment instruments exist to support identification, and must include either a nationally norm-referenced aptitude or achievement test. Identification in CTA and VPA programs shall be at the discretion of the school division. Specific references pertaining to each area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

1. Multiple Criteria Listing (8 VAC 20-40-40D.3)

This section includes the three or more categories that divisions shall include to develop a profile or composite for each student being considered. This listing of categories should be repeated for each area of giftedness identified by the division. Please copy and paste the section below to support all identified areas of giftedness. NOTE: Selection of either item 5a or 5b or both counts as a single category.

Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
 Specific Academic Aptitude – English
 Specific Academic Aptitude - Math

- 1. Assessment of appropriate student products, performance, or portfolio
- 2. Record of observation of in-class behavior
- 3. Appropriate rating scales, checklists, or questionnaires
- 4. Individual Interview
- 5a. Individual or group-administered, nationally norm-referenced aptitude test(s) (must be included for GIA)
and/or
- 5b. Individual or group-administered, nationally norm-referenced achievement test(s)
- 6. Record of previous achievements (awards, honors, grades, etc.)
- 7. Additional valid and reliable measures or procedures

Specify: None

2. Additional identification information:

None

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2. Eligibility (8VAC20-40-60A.3)

This section includes a chart detailing all criteria that could be considered in the identification process for a specific area of giftedness identified by the division. A description of the eligibility process used by the committee to make decisions regarding eligibility for services shall follow the chart. It includes a timeline for making eligibility decisions within 90 instructional days of the school division's receipt of the parent's(s') or legal guardian's(s') consent for assessment.

Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
 Specific Academic Aptitude – English
 Specific Academic Aptitude – Math

Measure	Administered/ Completed by	Scored by	Provided to the committee by
Parent Checklist	Parent	Identification/ Placement Committee	Gifted Education Coordinator
Parent Narrative	Parent	Identification/ Placement Committee	Gifted Education Coordinator
Gifted Rating Scale (GRS)	Classroom Teacher	Pearson Q Global	Gifted Education Coordinator
Teacher Narrative	Classroom Teacher	Identification/ Placement Committee	Gifted Lead Teacher
Aptitude Test - Kauffman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT) and/or Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT)	School Psychologist	School Psychologist	School Psychologist
CogAT	Gifted Lead/Testing Coordinator	Riverside Insights	School Counselor
Achievement Test – Woodcock Johnson	Diagnostician	Diagnostician	Diagnostician
Record of previous achievements (awards, honors, etc.)	Classroom Teacher/ School Counselor	Identification/ Placement Committee	Classroom Teacher/ School Counselor

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When a student enters the pool of candidates a copy of the referral form is forwarded to the Gifted Education Coordinator by the building level Gifted Lead Teacher within five school days.

Within five school days of the receipt of the referral, the Gifted Education Coordinator sends a letter to the parent/guardian which either acknowledges receipt of their referral or informs them that their child has been referred for gifted program consideration. Included with this letter are: 1) a parent checklist, 2) a parent narrative form, and 3) a request for parental consent to proceed with the evaluation of the child. The letter requests that parents return these completed forms to the Gifted Education Coordinator within ten days.

Upon receipt of parental consent to evaluate, the Gifted Education Coordinator completes and distributes an “assignment sheet” to each person expected to collect information or conduct an assessment as part of the eligibility process. This assignment includes a due date (within 60 school days of receipt of parental consent) by which the Identification/Placement Committee must meet. Individuals collect the information for which they are responsible and bring this information to the meeting.

The Identification/Placement Committee meets to review and discuss the information gathered for each child. This information is used to develop an individual student profile. The committee is responsible for conducting a thorough, holistic analysis of the profile and determining that the child is either eligible or ineligible for participation in the Gifted Education Program.

This determination is reached through consensus of committee members looking to establish a pattern of high superior potential and performance across measures. No single criterion may be used to include or exclude a student from participating in the program. Inclusion of a test score for eligibility does not mean that an individual student must score at an absolute prescribed level on a test to be found eligible for services. If the committee is initially unable to reach consensus or determines additional information is needed, they may recommend the collection of additional data, as appropriate, and schedule a second meeting.

An eligibility decision is made within sixty school days of the date parental consent for evaluation is received by the Gifted Education Coordinator (except in those cases in which the committee recommends obtaining additional data, in which case the committee establishes a second meeting date). In no case will the process exceed ninety school days.

The Gifted Education Coordinator notifies the parent/guardian in writing, within five school days, of the decision of the committee. Parent notification of eligibility for participation in the gifted program includes a consent form for placing the child in the program. Parents are requested to complete the form and return it to the Gifted Education Coordinator within ten days. Parent notification

that a child has been found ineligible for participation in the gifted program includes an appeal form. Parents are requested to complete the form and return it to the Gifted Education Coordinator within ten calendar days if they wish to appeal. Principals and Gifted Lead Teachers are provided copies of all notices.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision of the Identification/Placement Committee regarding eligibility or the placement/services selected. The parent must submit an appeal form to the Gifted Education Coordinator within ten calendar days of the notice of the decision. The appeal is heard within thirty school days of its receipt. The parent is invited to participate in a conference with the original Identification/Placement Committee which made the decision.

An appeal which is not resolved at this level is forwarded to an Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee has the same composition as an Identification/Placement Committee. Its members are drawn from the Identification/Placement Committees operating in schools other than the student's own. None of these persons will have served on the original committee, with the exception of the Gifted Education Coordinator, School Psychologist, and Diagnostician who will attend to share assessment information. The parent is invited to meet with the Appeals Committee within thirty school days of the appeal being forwarded. The decision of this committee is final. Parents will be sent written notice of the committee decision within five school days.

3. Determination of Services (8VAC20-40-60A.3)

This section describes the process of determining appropriate educational services for identified K-12 students.

Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
 Specific Academic Aptitude – English
 Specific Academic Aptitude – Math

When a student is initially identified, the Identification/Placement Committee determines appropriate program placement and services based on student strengths, instruments used during the evaluation phase, teacher recommendations, and available options. Gifted students at grades K-8 are assigned to cluster groups in otherwise heterogeneous classes taught by designated teachers of the gifted.

An Individual Plan for Educational Differentiation (IPED) is completed for each identified gifted student at grades K-8, within 30 school days of identification. The IPED outlines individual goals and services for the individual student. The IPED is reviewed and updated annually. The IPED is added to the student's cumulative file, and a copy is sent to the parent/guardian.

Students in grades 9-12 have academic and career plans that map out appropriate course selections to address individual needs and post-secondary considerations.

Part IV: Notification Procedures (8VAC20-40-60A.4)

This section includes the procedures used for (a) notifying parents/guardians when the individual identification process is initiated; (b) requesting permission for individual testing and/or collection of additional information; (c) requesting permission for provision of appropriate service options; and, (d) parents/guardians wishing to file an appeal of the identification outcome, change in placement, or exit decision. Any procedural differences pertaining to a specific area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
 Specific Academic Aptitude – English
 Specific Academic Aptitude - Math

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are notified in writing when their child enters the pool of candidates for gifted program consideration. This notice is sent by the Gifted Education Coordinator within five school days of receipt of a referral. This notice includes, among other things, a request for parental consent to proceed with evaluation of their child. The letter requests that parents return this completed form to the Gifted Education Coordinator within ten days. It further states that no formal evaluation of the child may take place without the parent's written consent.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are notified in writing of the decision of the Identification/Placement Committee. This notice is sent by the Gifted Education Coordinator within five school days of the committee decision. Parent notification that a child has been found eligible for gifted program participation includes a consent form for placing the child in the program. Parents are requested to complete the form and return it to the Gifted Education Coordinator within ten days. The letter advises parents the child may not participate in the gifted education program without the parent's written consent. Parent notification that a child has been found ineligible for participation includes an appeal form. Parents are requested to complete the form and return it within ten calendar days if they wish to appeal. An appeal conference is held within thirty school days of receipt, and parents are invited in writing to attend.

If, after initial identification and placement, there is a recommendation for a change in services or exit from the program, the parent is notified in writing of the recommendation. Parental consent is requested prior to conducting additional assessments, if any, needed to make an informed decision. Parents are then notified in writing of any decisions made by the Identification/Placement Committee regarding change of placement/services or exit. Parents are asked to provide written consent for the change/exit or to submit an appeal if they disagree with the decision.

Copies of all notifications are sent to the Gifted Lead Teacher and the principal.

Part V: Change in Instructional Services (8VAC20-40-60A.5)

This section includes the policy for written notification to parents or legal guardians of identification and placement decisions, including initial changes in placement procedures or exit policy from the program.

Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
 Specific Academic Aptitude – English
 Specific Academic Aptitude - Math

Placement of all students is subject to periodic review to ensure an appropriate match between individual student needs and available services. A change in placement/services may be recommended at any time by the parent, student, teacher, guidance counselor or administrator. Change in placement decisions will be made by the Identification/Placement Committee and will be based on the student's current performance, student products, available assessment data, and other pertinent data. If it is determined additional assessments need to be conducted, parental consent will be obtained before doing so.

Students exit from the program only when it is determined they no longer require gifted education program services. Students exit through the same process whereby they entered the program, unless the student is withdrawing at his/her own request.

If, after initial identification and placement, there is a recommendation for a change in services or exit from the program, the parent is notified in writing of the recommendation (or receipt of the recommendation if made by the parent). Parental consent is requested prior to conducting additional assessments, if any, needed to make an informed decision. Parents are then notified in writing of any decisions made by the Identification/Placement Committee regarding change of placement/services or exit. Parents are asked to provide written consent for the change/exit or to submit an appeal if they disagree with the decision.

Part VI: Evidence of Appropriate Service Options (8VAC20-40-60A.10)

This section provides evidence that gifted education service options from kindergarten through twelfth grade are offered continuously and sequentially, with instructional time during the school day and week to (i) work with their age-level peers, (ii) work with their intellectual and academic peers, (iii) work independently; and (iv) foster intellectual and academic growth of gifted students. Parents and legal guardians shall receive assessment of each gifted student’s academic growth. Career and Technical aptitude programs and Visual and/or Performing Arts programs are offered at the discretion of the school division.

A. Service Options are Continuous and Sequential

This section provides evidence that the division’s program of curricula and instruction for gifted learners is continuous and sequential. GIA programs need to provide evidence from kindergarten through twelfth grade. SAA programs need to provide evidence that service options are continuous and sequential from identification until twelfth grade.

Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
Specific Academic Aptitude – English
Specific Academic Aptitude - Math

When possible, identified gifted students are cluster-grouped in classrooms at the elementary level (grades K-5) with teachers who plan and provide differentiated instruction utilizing instructional best practices.

When possible, identified gifted students at the middle school level (grades 6-8) are cluster-grouped, and they are scheduled into advanced English and math classes. Additionally, middle school students have the opportunity to enroll in select high school credit courses, in which teachers provide appropriately differentiated instruction.

At the high school level (grades 9-12) students may choose to take Honors, Advanced Placement or Dual Enrollment courses, in which teachers provide appropriately differentiated instruction. Course offerings may be offered in an on-campus, online or blended format. Students also may apply to attend the Chesapeake Bay Governor’s School.

B. Service Options Provide Instructional Time with Age-level Peers

This section includes a description of the instructional strategies or program model that allows gifted students to interact with their age-level peers during the school day and week.

Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
Specific Academic Aptitude – English

Specific Academic Aptitude - Math

Students in grades K-8 are typically grouped with age-level peers for virtually all core courses and provided with appropriately differentiated instruction. Students in grades K-8 are also typically grouped with age-level peers for virtually all resource and elective courses. Students at the high school level typically are not restricted by age level when enrolling in courses, but have opportunities to interact with their age-level peers throughout the school day and week.

C. Service Options Provide Instructional Time with Intellectual and Academic Peers

This section includes a description of the instructional strategies used in the division to accelerate and enrich the content for gifted learners beyond the grade-level or course expectations for all learners. The description should include how these academic needs are met during the school day and week.

Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
 Specific Academic Aptitude – English
 Specific Academic Aptitude - Math

When possible, identified gifted students are cluster-grouped in classes at the elementary level (grades K-5) and cluster-grouped and scheduled into advanced English and/or math classes at the middle school level (grades 6-8), giving them daily opportunities to work with academic and intellectual peers. At the high school level, identified gifted students have daily opportunities to interact with their intellectual and academic peers if they choose to enroll in Honors, Advanced Placement, Dual Enrollment or Chesapeake Bay Governor’s School courses.

D. Service Options Provide Instructional Time to Work Independently

This section includes a description of the instructional strategies or program model used in the division to allow gifted learners to work independently during the school day and week.

Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
 Specific Academic Aptitude – English
 Specific Academic Aptitude - Math

Gifted students are routinely provided the opportunity to work independently through directed inquiry. Opportunity to work independently is provided in cluster-grouped K-8 classes, as documented on the Individualized Plan for Educational Differentiation (IPED). In grades 9-12, students have opportunities to work independently in Honors, dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, and Chesapeake Bay Governor’s School courses.

E. Service Options Foster Intellectual and Academic Growth

This section includes a description of the instructional strategies used in the division to foster intellectual and academic growth during the school day and week.

Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
 Specific Academic Aptitude – English
 Specific Academic Aptitude - Math

The Virginia Standards of Learning and the school division pacing guides provide the curricular foundation for the gifted education program, as well as other instructional programs in the division.

Teachers of the gifted differentiate curricula in terms of content, pacing, instructional process, products, and evaluation methods.

Content Differentiation – Curriculum objectives may be compacted for students demonstrating early mastery of objectives. Curriculum objectives also may be extended in terms of depth and complexity. Content also may be differentiated through use of advanced level materials, appropriate pacing, and use of content related to themes, issues or problems.

Process Differentiation – Process may be differentiated through utilizing questioning techniques and activities that stimulate higher level thinking, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. Process also may be differentiated by providing opportunities to develop and use research skills.

Product Differentiation – Products may be differentiated by allowing for choice in selection of products, encouraging products that result from in-depth study of a topic, providing access to multiple sources of information and presenting/displaying products to a variety of audiences.

Teachers of the gifted use a variety of strategies for differentiating instruction in the regular classroom. These strategies include, but are not limited to pretesting, curriculum compacting, learning contracts, tiered assignments, research projects, learning centers, higher level questioning, and individual/small group exploration of high-interest topics. Using these and other strategies, teachers of the gifted are able to document students' mastery of grade level curriculum in an abbreviated time frame, freeing up time for the pursuit of enrichment and acceleration activities.

Emphasis is placed on pursuing topics in greater depth/breadth and complexity. Students are provided opportunities to interact with advanced, rich and varied learning materials and to pursue open-ended, problem-based exploration of topics

and issues within and across disciplines. Students at all levels are encouraged to produce creative, original independent and group projects.

F. Procedures for Assessing Academic Growth in Gifted Students

This section includes a description of the procedures used by the division to assess the academic growth for gifted learners.

Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
 Specific Academic Aptitude – English
 Specific Academic Aptitude - Math

Academic growth of gifted students is assessed using a variety of assessment options, including pre-and post-assessments, various non-traditional assessments including portfolios, rubrics, performance-based assessments, student self-reflection and other formative and summative assessment tools deemed appropriate.

Outcome reports (Individual Plan for Educational Differentiation Outcome Reports) are prepared for identified gifted students at grades K-8 and distributed to parents in conjunction with the fourth quarter interim report each year. These reports serve to document the area(s) in which the student received differentiated instruction, the level/types of differentiation provided and the student's response (growth).

Part VII: Program of Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction (8VAC20-40-60A.11)

The *Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students* defines appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction as curriculum and instruction adapted or modified to accommodate the accelerated learning aptitudes of identified students in their areas of strength. Such curriculum and instructional strategies provide accelerated and enrichment opportunities that recognize gifted students' needs for (i) advanced content and pacing of instruction; (ii) original research or production; (iii) problem finding and solving; (iv) higher level thinking that leads to the generation of products; and (v) a focus on issues, themes, and ideas within and across areas of study. Such curriculum and instruction are offered continuously and sequentially to support the achievement of student outcomes, and provide support necessary for these students to work at increasing levels of complexity that differ significantly from those of their age-level peers. This section provides a description of the school division's appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction demonstrating accelerated and advanced content for gifted learners.

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Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
Specific Academic Aptitude – English
Specific Academic Aptitude – Math

Westmoreland County Public Schools provide an academically demanding curriculum. It is designed to build on individual student strengths and to provide educational opportunities that are responsive to the needs of all students. Classroom activities are designed to differentiate for the academic readiness and pacing of students on all levels. The Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) objectives are modified, extended, enriched, and/or accelerated to meet the needs of identified gifted students.

Differentiation of curriculum and instruction follows recommendations set forth by the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) and may include:

- Acceleration of instruction,
- A high degree of complexity,
- In-depth study,
- Advanced content, and/or
- Variety in content and form.

At the elementary level, identified gifted students are cluster-grouped when possible and receive differentiated instruction from the designated classroom teachers of the gifted. Differentiation strategies include those published by Susan Winebrenner, among others. This differentiation is documented by teachers.

Extension and enrichment are provided using research-based instructional strategies and curricular models, e.g., the William & Mary Language Arts Curriculum for High Ability Learners. Elementary students are accelerated on an individual basis. Additionally, gifted students in grades four and five have the opportunity to apply for participation in the Northern Neck Regional Governor's School. This summer program provides in-depth problem-based learning experiences, as well as opportunities for creative, artistic expression. Identified gifted students in grades four and five also have the opportunity to participate in supplemental enrichment activities, e.g., Community Problem Solving, Future Problem Solving and Scenario Writing.

At the middle school level, identified gifted students are cluster-grouped when possible and scheduled into advanced English and/or math classes, where differentiated instruction is provided by the designated classroom teachers of the gifted. Differentiation strategies include those published by Susan Winebrenner, among others. This differentiation is documented by teachers. Extension and enrichment are provided using research-based instructional strategies and curricular models, e.g., the William & Mary Language Arts Curriculum for High Ability Learners. Middle school students are accelerated on an individual basis. Qualifying students may take advanced courses for high school credit. Additionally, gifted students in grades six and seven have the opportunity to apply for participation in the Northern Neck Regional Governor's School (NNRGS). Students at grade

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eight and beyond have the opportunity to return to the NNRGS as student assistants. Identified gifted students in grades six - eight (and grade nine from the high school) also have the opportunity to participate in supplemental enrichment activities, e.g., Community Problem Solving, Future Problem Solving and Scenario Writing.

At the high school level, students may choose to take Honors, Dual Enrollment and Advanced Placement courses. These courses may be offered in an on-campus, online or blended format. Teachers of these courses provide appropriately differentiated instruction for identified gifted students. Additionally, students may apply to participate in the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School for Marine and Environmental Science. This half-day, academic year governor's school serves students in grades ten – twelve. High school students also may apply to the Summer Residential Governor's School. Additionally, through an articulation agreement developed with Rappahannock Community College (RCC), high school students have the opportunity to complete an Associate's Degree or a General Education Certificate from RCC concurrent with a high school diploma.

A number of academic, problem-solving, creative competitions, contests and enrichment experiences are offered to students at all levels. As it becomes available, information related to gifted enrichment opportunities offered by external agencies (e.g., the William & Mary Saturday and Summer Enrichment Programs, Johns Hopkins University Talent Search, etc.) is disseminated to students and parents.

**Part VIII: Policies and Procedures for Access to Programs and Advanced Courses
(8VAC20-40-60A.12)**

This section provides the school division's policies and procedures that allow access to programs of study and advanced courses at a pace and sequence commensurate with the learning needs of the gifted student.

Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Aptitude
 Specific Academic Aptitude – English
 Specific Academic Aptitude - Math

School Board Policies IGBB (Programs for Gifted Students) and IKEB (Acceleration) address this section and appear on the next two pages.

PROGRAMS FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

The Westmoreland County School Board approves a comprehensive plan for the education of gifted students that includes the components identified in Board of Education regulations. The development process for the plan includes opportunities for public review of the school plan. The plan for the education of gifted students is accessible through the division's website and printed copies of the plan are available to citizens who do not have online access.

The school division has uniform procedures for screening, referring, identifying, and serving students in kindergarten through twelfth grade who are gifted in general intellectual or specific academic aptitude.

The school division provides written notification to and seeks written consent from parents and legal guardians to conduct any required assessment to determine a referred student's eligibility for the division's gifted education program, and to provide services for an identified gifted student in the division's gifted education program.

The School Board may establish a local advisory committee composed of parents, school personnel, and other community members appointed by the School Board. The committee will reflect the ethnic and geographical composition of the school division. If established, the committee will annually review the division's plan for the education of gifted students, including revisions, and determine the extent to which the plan for the previous year was implemented. The findings of the annual program effectiveness and the recommendations of the committee will be submitted annually in writing to the superintendent and the School Board.

Adopted: September 13, 1999

Amended: August 12, 2002

Amended: July 9, 2004

Amended: August 8, 2008

Amended: May 16, 2011

Amended: July 16, 2012

Amended: April 25, 2022

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-16, 22.1-18.1, 22.1-253.13:1.

8 VAC 20-40-40.

8 VAC 20-40-55.

8 VAC 20-40-60.

Cross Refs.: BCF Advisory Committees to the School Board
 IKEB Acceleration

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Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted

ACCELERATION

The curriculum and schedule of elementary, middle and high schools provides flexibility in placing certain students in programs or subjects normally considered above their grade level. Scheduling eighth grade students into subjects above the normal grade level is done with counseling based on evidence of ability, past scholastic achievement and cooperation of the individual student and his parents or guardian.

When students below the ninth grade successfully complete courses offered for credit in grades 9 through 12, credit is counted toward meeting the standard units required for graduation provided the courses are equivalent in content and academic rigor as those courses offered at the secondary level. To earn a verified unit of credit for these courses, students below ninth grade level must meet the same requirements applicable to other students.

In any high school credit-bearing course taken in middle school, a parent may request that the grade be omitted from the student's transcript and the student not earn high school credit for the course. Such request shall be made in the format and by the deadline set forth in regulations developed by the superintendent.

Adopted: August 10, 1998
Amended: August 12, 2002
Amended: May 16, 2011
Amended: July 20, 2015
Amended: July 18, 2016
Amended: July 16, 2018

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78. 22.1-253.13:3.
8 VAC 20-131-50.
8 VAC 20-131-51.
8 VAC 20-131-90.

Cross Ref.: IGBB Programs for Gifted Students
JO Student Records
JOA Student Trans

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Part IX: Personal and Professional Development (8VAC20-40-60A.13)

School divisions must provide evidence of professional development based on the following teacher competencies outlined in 8VAC20-542-310 below.

1. Understanding of principles of the integration of gifted education and general education, including:
 - a. Strategies to encourage the interaction of gifted students with students of similar and differing abilities; and
 - b. Development of activities to encourage parental and community involvement in the education of the gifted, including the establishment and maintenance of an effective advisory committee.
2. Understanding of the characteristics of gifted students, including:
 - a. Varied expressions of advanced aptitudes, skills, creativity, and conceptual understandings;
 - b. Methodologies that respond to the affective (social-emotional) needs of gifted students; and
 - c. Gifted behaviors in special populations (i.e., those who are culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, or physically disabled).
3. Understanding of specific techniques to identify gifted students using diagnostic and prescriptive approaches to assessment, including:
 - a. The selection, use, and evaluation of multiple assessment instruments and identification strategies;
 - b. The use of both subjective and objective measures to provide relevant information regarding the aptitude/ability or achievement of potentially gifted students;
 - c. The use of authentic assessment tools such as portfolios to determine performance, motivation/interest and other characteristics of potentially gifted students;
 - d. The development, use, and reliability of rating scales, checklists, and questionnaires by parents, teachers and others;
 - e. The evaluation of data collected from student records such as grades, honors, and awards;
 - f. The use of case study reports providing information concerning exceptional conditions; and
 - g. The structure, training, and procedures used by the identification and placement committee.
4. Understanding and application of a variety of educational models, teaching methods, and strategies for selecting materials and resources that ensure:
 - a. Academic rigor through the development of high-level proficiency in all core academic areas utilizing the Virginia Standards of Learning as a baseline;

- b. The acquisition of knowledge and development of products that demonstrate creative and critical thinking as applied to learning both in and out of the classroom; and
 - c. The development of learning environments that guide students to become self-directed, independent learners.
5. Understanding and application of theories and principles of differentiating curriculum designed to match the distinct characteristics of gifted learners to the programs and curriculum offered to gifted students, including:
- a. The integration of multiple disciplines into an area of study;
 - b. Emphasis on in-depth learning, independent and self-directed study skills and metacognitive skills;
 - c. The development of analytical, organizational, critical, and creative thinking skills;
 - d. The development of sophisticated products using varied modes of expression;
 - e. The evaluation of student learning through appropriate and specific criteria; and
 - f. The development of advanced technological skills to enhance student performance.
6. Understanding of contemporary issues and research in gifted education, including:
- a. The systematic gathering, analyzing, and reporting of formative and summative data; and
 - b. Current local, state, and national issues and concerns.

The Gifted Education Coordinator and Gifted Lead Teachers provide professional development annually to the faculty of each school on the gifted referral and identification process. This includes information on the characteristics of gifted students. The division also provides professional development on differentiation strategies to teachers in a variety of formats.

The Gifted Education Coordinator meets periodically with the Gifted Lead Teachers to review critical aspects of the gifted program and identify current professional development needs. Gifted Lead Teachers share teaching strategies and available resources that effectively meet the academic and socio-emotional needs of gifted students. This includes, among others, resources developed by Susan Winebrenner.

The Gifted Education Coordinator informs and encourages teachers and other staff to participate in local workshops, conferences, and college courses pertaining to gifted education. This includes, but is not limited to, professional development offered through the Regional Education Consortium, as well as the state organizations supporting gifted education (i.e., the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Association for the Gifted). Gifted Lead Teachers and the Gifted Education Coordinator participate in annual professional development related to gifted education. This may include attending the Virginia Association for the Gifted (VAG) conference or seminar, the Virginia Consortium of Gifted Education Administrators (VCGEA) annual meeting, and/or other conferences and workshops.

Part X: Procedures for Annual Review of Effectiveness (8VAC20-40-60A.14)

This section provides the procedures for the annual review of the effectiveness of the school division's gifted education program, including the review of screening, referral, identification, and program procedures toward the achievement of equitable representation of students, the review of student outcomes and the academic growth of gifted students. School divisions may decide to focus on one or more areas to review each year. However, reviews shall be based on multiple criteria and shall include multiple sources of information.

The Gifted Education Coordinator, Principals and Gifted Lead Teachers assess the effectiveness of the school division's Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted each year and determine the extent to which it is being effectively implemented and producing the desired outcomes. Progress toward goals set forth in the Local Plan, as well as student related data will be included in this review. This group will make recommendations for the improvement of the gifted education program and, as appropriate, will present any proposed revisions to the Local Plan to the School Board for approval.

The Gifted Education Coordinator completes and submits the annual report on gifted education to Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). This report includes information about student membership, referrals, the administrator, and services provided to identified gifted students in grades K-12. Additional student data is submitted to the VDOE through the End-of-Year Student Record Collection.

Part XI: Procedures for the Establishment of the Local Advisory Committee (8VAC20-40-60B)

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Each school division may establish a local advisory committee composed of parents, school personnel, and other community members who are appointed by the school board. This committee shall reflect the ethnic and geographical composition of the school division. This section should include the school division's procedures for the establishment of the local advisory committee for the gifted program if the division has elected to establish a committee.

The division elects not to establish a Local Advisory Committee for Gifted Education. In lieu of an advisory committee, the division will conduct periodic surveys and/or focus group meetings to solicit input and feedback from students, parents, teachers and other members of the school community.

Part XII: Assurances (8VAC20-40-60A.6; A.7; A.8; A.9)

In accordance with the *Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students*, the following assurance must be provided by the school division:

- Assurances that student records are maintained in compliance with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations;
- Assurances that (i) the selected and administered testing and assessment materials have been evaluated by the developers for cultural, racial, and linguistic biases; (ii) identification procedures are constructed so that those procedures may identify high potential or aptitude in any student whose accurate identification may be affected by economic disadvantages, by limited English proficiency, or by disability; (iii) standardized tests and other measures have been validated for the purpose of identifying gifted students; and (iv) instruments are administered and interpreted by trained personnel in conformity with the developer's instructions;
- Assurances that accommodations or modifications determined by the school division's special education Individual Education Plan (IEP) team, as required for the student to receive a free appropriate public education, shall be incorporated into the student's gifted education services; and
- Assurances that a written copy of the school division's approved local plan for the education of the gifted is available to parents or legal guardians of each referred student, and to others upon request.

Pursuant to these requirements, I hereby certify that the school division is in compliance with this language.

Division Superintendent's Signature

Printed Name

Date