

**Albemarle County Public Schools**  
**Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted**  
**2015-2020**

**Revised Summer 2019**

General Information regarding *Talent Development and Gifted Services*  
in Albemarle County Public Schools

Area of Giftedness Identified by the Division	Grades Served
General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA)	K-12
Specific Academic Aptitude (SAA)	N/A
Career and Technical Aptitude (CTA)	N/A
Visual and/or Performing Arts Aptitude (VPA)	N/A

## **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**

Albemarle County Public Schools is committed to unleashing each student's potential. The student-centered goal of the division is that "all Albemarle County Public Schools students will graduate having actively mastered the lifelong-learning skills they need to succeed as 21st century learners, workers, and citizens." While each student must be challenged and supported to reach his or her potential, the Code of Virginia recognizes that there are students "whose aptitudes and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special services to meet their educational needs." Albemarle County Public Schools seeks to provide each student with challenges and opportunities appropriate for his or her capabilities in order to enhance personal growth. For many advanced learners\* these opportunities require differentiated planning and monitoring. Educators work with students and parents to identify and provide a variety of learning opportunities and services that extend and enhance the curriculum in order to challenge advanced learners and address their unique educational needs.

\* Albemarle County Public Schools has decided to use the phrase *advanced learners* as an inclusive term to refer to the participants, instead of *gifted*, which connotes a systemic identification process that often excludes certain populations (Mazzoli Smith, 2014).

Mazzoli Smith, L. (2014). Extending sociological theorizing in high ability: The significance of values and lived experience. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 24(4), 354-371.  
doi:10.1080/09620214.2014.976436.

### **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.

Albemarle County Public Schools currently defines giftedness within the area of General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA). In order for students to be identified as gifted, students demonstrate advanced skills in thought processes, products, interests, development of basic skills, as well as their desire and need to relate to intellectual rather than strictly chronological peers. When referring to "giftedness" in the area of GIA, the educators in Albemarle County Public Schools are specifically referring to processing speed, working memory, verbal reasoning, visual-spatial reasoning, and quantitative.

Additionally, Albemarle County Public Schools is committed to a multi-faceted and inclusive approach to serving and identifying students whose needs often exceed the general course of

study or show potential for advanced curriculum and instruction. From observation inventories to the use of nationally and locally normed assessments, gifted resource teachers work collaboratively with colleagues and families to 1) create a pool of candidates, 2) provide services to students who show high levels of intellectual achievement or who show the potential for such achievement, and 3) act as an instructional resource for the content and grade level teachers to call upon for strategies and interventions to develop talent. Educators at the school level (including, but not limited to the Gifted Resource Teachers) collect a portfolio of data and artifacts to develop a student profile for each student referred for identification. This student profile is used by a school committee to determine if a student demonstrates or has the potential to demonstrate superior reasoning, persistent intellectual curiosity, exceptional problem solving, rapid mastery of concepts as well as creative and imaginative expression beyond his or her age-level peers with similar backgrounds and experiences.

It is important to reiterate that the division believes that giftedness is multi-dimensional and that the individual differences presented by students require a range of varied services and opportunities to meet their unique academic, social, and emotional needs. A flexible model of service ensures that gifted services are available to every student who could, should, and would benefit. Students who are not identified through traditional methods and/or students who show strengths in a domain not currently recognized by the school division will have the opportunities to be included in appropriate services.

(Note: For the 2019-2020 academic year, Albemarle County Public Schools will be conducting a program evaluation with the goal of shifting the operational definition and implementation of gifted education to follow a Talent Development Model paradigm (Dai & Chen, 2013). This will include a broader definition of gifted or advanced academic potential with a focus on differentiation, domain-specific understanding of talent, and an understanding of the malleability of talent and giftedness for all students. The purpose of this approach is to specifically encourage a more inclusive, and diverse range of strengths and talents for ACPS students.)

Dai, D. Y., & Chen, F. (2013). Three paradigms of gifted education: In search of conceptual clarity in research and practice. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 57, 151-168. doi:10.1177/0016986213490020

## **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.
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Goal – Identify gifted learners using multiple criteria that are valid and reliable.

Strategies to meet goal:

- Create profiles for students prior to the division issued aptitude test (CogAT in 2nd grade), including enrichment opportunities and anecdotal observations from parents/families, teachers, and GRT.

- Integrate use of Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Students (Renzulli et al., 2010) or other normed scales (U-STARs~PLUS, etc.) to document and measure multiple criteria for more consistent teacher and staff input;
- Develop and monitor a school-based talent development pool based on teacher observation, student products, aptitude test scores, and other observable or measurable outcomes;
- Create and maintain artifact portfolios for students who in the talent development pool: 1) need curricular modifications to meet academic needs and/or 2) show a unique ability for critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving and/or performance;
- Annually review materials used by identification committees in each school to monitor for consistent use of evidence and analysis.

Coleman, M. R., & Shah-Coltrane, S. (2011b). *U-STARs~PLUS: Professional development kit manual*. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Renzulli, J. S., Smith, L. H., White, A. J., Callahan, C. M. Hartman, R. K., & Westberg, K. W., Gavin, M. K., Reis, S. M., Siegle, D., & Systma Reed, R. E. (2010). *Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Student: Technical and administration manual* (3rd ed.). Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press, Inc.

## **B.Delivery of Services**

Goal – Provide a continuum of services K-12 to meet the academic and socio-emotional needs of advanced learners when their needs are not met by the general curriculum.

Strategies to meet goal:

- Implement a revised differentiated learning plan template to communicate selection of services to stakeholders;
- Provide a framework for school teams to determine schedules and structures to make the most of each building's gifted resource teacher;
- Introduce talent development learning experiences K-2 for co-observation of all students by classroom teachers and gifted resource teachers;
- Use real-time data to determine when students need services beyond the general curriculum;
- Document service delivery data to determine actual time were students are provided enrichment and talent development opportunities;
- Determine and monitor services for students in the talent development pool.

## **C.Curriculum and Instruction**

Goal - Provide differentiated curriculum and instruction to meet student needs.

Strategies to meet goal:

- Expand curricular resources provided by the division to support access to differentiated materials;

- Provide instructional support through GRTs for differentiated instruction with particular focus on heterogeneous classes and courses;
- Determine means to document and measure academic growth for gifted and advanced learners;
- Implement the use of real-time data to make instructional decisions for students.

#### **D. Professional Development**

Goal - Provide a range of professional learning opportunities for faculty and administrators on meeting the needs of gifted learners.

Strategies to meet goal:

- Integrate a focus on instructional design components to support rigor and engagement in New Teacher Academy;
- Develop and implement division level professional development sessions on differentiated instruction with an emphasis on the use of instructional technology;
- Support the integration of building-level professional development on needs and characteristics of advanced learners through materials developed by the gifted resource teacher cohort and available for use across the division.

#### **E. Equitable Representation of Students**

Goal - Use a variety of screening and assessment tools to create a diverse pool of candidates for gifted services.

Strategies to meet goal:

- Implement talent development learning experiences in grades K-2 in order to observe the potential of all students;
- Standardize protocols for using student background information when analyzing student assessment data (for example reducing the weight of the verbal scores in the Cognitive Abilities Test for English Language Learners);
- Maintain a flexible service model to ensure that delivery of gifted services is not limited to those identified and monitor the equitable representation of both students identified and served by a gifted resource teacher;
- Provide professional development for gifted resource teachers on culturally responsive teaching practices as well as identifying and supporting underrepresented student populations.

#### **F. Parent and Community Involvement**

Goal - Implement a tri-level communication program to support parent and community involvement through division, school, and personal communication tools.

Strategies to meet goal:

- Develop and maintain vetted resources to support parents and teachers at a division level;

- Include parent and family input on development of K-2 talent development pool by encouraging open nominations based on parent and family at-home observations and experiences;
- Coordinate and monitor communication of school-specific and time-bound opportunities by gifted resource teachers quarterly;
- Increase individualized communication between GRTs and parents to improve awareness of delivery of services and student growth.

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

Albemarle County Public Schools is dedicated to an ongoing process for monitoring, screening, and referring students for gifted identification. While a universal screener is administered in second grade, a student may be referred for identification at any time.

#### **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.

#### **Screening Procedures for General Intellectual Aptitude**

Using annually-determined top 10% performance bands (group-specific norms) on the screener assessment, observations from the K-2 talent development lessons, as well as other in-class data, GRTs create a talent development pool. While the end of the second grade school year is a time of focus on the talent development pool, a student can be added to the pool at any time throughout their experience in ACPS.

Beyond 2nd grade, student performance data and in-class observations are used to add students to the talent development pool. Any student in the fourth grade who does not have a CogAT screener score is given the full battery version of the assessment. In addition, a GRT may elect to administer a full battery version of the CogAT if the referral for gifted identification happens more than two years after the student takes the screener form or if the gifted resource teacher and classroom teacher determine that more information is needed to evaluate the student. Parent permission is needed for any additional testing beyond the 2nd and 4th grade administrations. The review of achievement measures and student performance data by gifted resource teachers is ongoing in order to ensure students who require and would benefit from services receive them.

## 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 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.

Referrals and nominations for gifted identification may be made at any grade level and at any point in the year from parents, classroom teachers, gifted resource teachers, administrators, or the student. Gifted resource teachers (GRTs) will actively solicit referrals through school-wide communication, such as, quarterly newsletters. Referral information will also be posted on school and division websites.

Nomination forms are submitted to the GRT who manages the process of collecting needed information and materials for the school-based review committee. Once a referral is initiated, the student's parents are notified and needed materials are collected. Completed nomination materials are submitted and reviewed during three cycles each year to ensure that a decision is provided in a timely manner. Students who have completed referrals/nominations (including nomination form, permission to test, and input from the person nominating) by each deadline will be considered during that cycle. Incomplete nominations will be deferred to the next cycle.

Completed Referral/Nomination	Eligibility Notification
October 1	December 1
December 1	March 1
March 1	May 15

### 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.

#### Categories of Criteria to Develop Student Profile for General Intellectual Aptitude Referral

<b>X</b>	Assessment of appropriate student products, performance, or portfolio
<b>X</b>	Record of observation of in-class behavior
<b>X</b>	Appropriate rating scales, checklists, or questionnaires
	Individual interview
<b>X</b>	Individual or group-administered, nationally norm-referenced aptitude test(s) (must be included for GIA) <i>Cognitive Abilities Test Form 7 Screener or Full Battery</i>
<b>X</b>	Individual or group-administered, nationally norm-referenced achievement test(s)
<b>X</b>	Record of previous achievements (awards, honors, grades, etc.)
<b>X</b>	Additional valid and reliable measures or procedures Specify: Examples include OLSAT, WISC-II, Raven, Naglieri.

#### 2. Additional Identification Information

The following materials are collected for review by the identification committee:

- Referral Form\*
- Parent Permission for Nomination\*
- Parent Input (In-person meeting or phone conversation is *preferred* to sending the form home)\*
- Teacher Input\*
- Student Artifact Portfolio\*
- Permission to Test\* (if no current data from nationally norm-referenced aptitude test is on file)
- Results from Nationally Norm-Referenced Aptitude Test (administered within the last three years by a non-related certified professional)\*

\* *Required components*

**D. Placement Procedures (8VAC20-40-60A.3)**

This section provides procedures for the placement of gifted students in each area of giftedness identified and served by the division. These procedures include information about the identification and placement committee.

**1. Identification/ Services Committee (8VAC 20-40-40D)**

**a. Services Committee**

This section includes the *number* of persons comprising the Identification/Placement

**ACPS Services Committee Composition (minimum of four educators)**

1*	Classroom Teacher
1*	Gifted Resource Teacher
	Counselor
	School Psychologist
	Assessment Specialist
1*	Principal or Designee
1	Talent Development Specialist
	Gifted Coordinator
	Others(s) Specify:

*\* Required components*

**b. Type of Identification/ Services Committee**

This section indicates the type of Identification/Placement Committee the division uses.

X School-level                      \_\_\_\_\_ Division-level

## 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.

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Administered/ Completed by</b>	<b>Evaluated by</b>	<b>Provided to the committee by</b>
Student Work Portfolio*	Classroom Teacher, Gifted Resource Teacher and Student	Reviewed by Gifted Resource Teacher and nomination committee	Gifted Resource Teacher
CogAT screener or full battery (using group-specific norms)	Gifted Resource Teacher or Trained Classroom Teacher	Gifted Resource Teacher and nomination committee	Gifted Resource Teacher
Parent Input Form	Parent and Gifted Resource Teacher	Reviewed by Gifted Resource Teacher and nomination committee	Gifted Resource Teacher
Student Interview (optional)	Gifted Resource Teacher	Reviewed by Gifted Resource Teacher and nomination committee	Gifted Resource Teacher
Teacher Rating Scale	Classroom Teacher	Reviewed by Gifted Resource Teacher and nomination committee	Gifted Resource Teacher
Assessment Data (Reading inventories, math benchmarks, SOL scores, MAP scores...)	Gifted Resource Teacher	Reviewed by Gifted Resource Teacher and nomination committee	Gifted Resource Teacher
Awards and Honors	Gifted Resource Teacher	Reviewed by Gifted Resource Teacher and nomination committee	Gifted Resource Teacher

\* A student work portfolio is managed at the school level. Students and parents may contribute samples from home to the portfolio.

The GRT serving each school collects, organizes, and summarizes all available data, information, and work samples gathered for each nominated student. That summary and the collection of materials are shared with the school-based identification committee. The committee is comprised of the student's current teacher, principal, the school's gifted resource teacher, and one other educator (e.g. enrichment teacher). The gifted resource teacher and the principal will determine if multiple teachers should sit on the committee based on the student's schedule. The committee reviews evidence and data collected by the gifted resource teacher on each nominated student from teacher rating scales, parent input forms, a standardized aptitude test, state and/or local criterion referenced achievement data, a student portfolio or samples of student work, and records of awards, honors, and grades.

Together the committee develops a student profile keeping in mind the guidelines set forth by Virginia Code that "inclusion of a test score in a division identification plan does not indicate that an individual student must score at a prescribed level on the test(s) to be admitted to a program. No single criterion shall be used in determining students who qualify for, or are denied access to, programs for the gifted" (Regulations: 8 VAC 20-40-50). Therefore the student profile is a synthesis of data from aptitude and achievement assessments as well as evidence from input forms and student work samples. The student profile determines documented strengths in four categories (creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking, and performance).

<b>Student Profile</b>		
<i>Student Portfolio</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Artifacts: <b>Creativity</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Creativity</b> is the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. Creativity is characterized by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to generate solutions. Creativity involves two processes: thinking, then producing.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Artifacts: <b>Critical Thinking</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Critical thinking</b> is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, analyzing, applying, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Artifacts: <b>Problem Solving</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Problem solving</b> is using a process of working through the details of an issue in order to reach a solution.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Artifacts: <b>Performance</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Performance</b> is evidence of accomplishment such as works of exceptional merit, selection for special programs, and products that reflect achievement well above grade level.</p>
<i>CogAT</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Screener</li> <li>● Use Group-Specific Norms*</li> </ul>	<p>Determined every February based on the division-wide CogAT Screener administration in January, group-specific norms will be used to form talent development pools.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Full Battery</li> <li>● No benchmark score required</li> <li>● Documents two areas of strength in portfolio</li> </ul>	<p>When students are given the CoGAT in a single-test administration, educators should use the scores as a data point within the student profile. Consider: How did the student do on each subtest? Is there a performance discrepancy? What could that mean?</p>
<i>All other measures from the Eligibility Matrix on pg 11</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student Interview</li> <li>● Parent Input</li> <li>● Teacher Input</li> <li>● Assessment Data</li> <li>● Awards and Honors</li> </ul>	

\* Nationwide, minority students are under-represented in gifted programs. Albemarle County Public Schools faces the same issue, as test performance influences identification and the district’s minority students historically perform lower on the CogAT.

Gifted education experts suggest using local norms to identify gifted students as a way to pursue equitable representation in identification. Local norms allow for within-group comparisons so students are compared not against the student body as a whole but against

students who share similar characteristics, such as race or school attended. Lohman (2006, p. 13) argues that “Individual schools... rarely replicate the nation in their distribution of ability or achievement.” In addition, Lohman states that “the preferred comparison group [for talent identification] would be those who have had roughly similar opportunities to acquire the abilities sampled by the test”(2006, p. 14).

However, using local norms by race is not without risk. Worrell (2009, p. 140) cautions that “if solutions of this type are implemented without considering teacher expectations and stereotype threat concerns, they can result in increases in negative stereotypes of these students and, most important, undermine the self-efficacy and achievement potential of the very students that the policy is supposed to assist.”

Lohman, D.F. (2006). Identifying academically talented minority students (Research Monograph RM05216). Storrs, CT: The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, University of Connecticut.

Worrell, F.C. (2009). What does gifted mean? Personal and social identity perspectives on giftedness in adolescence. In F.D. Horowitz, R.F. Subotnik, & D.J. Matthews (Eds.), *The development of giftedness and talent across the lifespan* (pp. 131-152). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

While the nomination of students for gifted services is open all year, the eligibility process is organized into three cycles annually. (Cycle dates remain constant from year to year and are aligned with the norming months (fall, winter, spring) established by the CogAT.) Students who have completed referrals/nominations by the start of a cycle will be considered during that cycle. Incomplete nominations will be deferred to the next cycle.

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

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

Determination of educational services is an ongoing process as school teams work to meet the varying needs of advanced learners. Initially, the school-based identification committee makes recommendations for appropriate services, opportunities, and supports based on their detailed analysis of the data and materials collected during the nomination process. A differentiated planning form can be used to note service options selected and expected indicators of growth and performance. As students progress through grade levels and coursework, updated differentiated planning forms are used with teachers, parents, and students.

### 4. Developing and Monitoring the Talent Development Pool

A talent pool is defined as a group of students who demonstrate an advanced ability in a particular area, but at this time do not meet the criteria for formal gifted identification. Students in a talent pool are provided differentiated instruction and/or gifted services. As students are presented with additional levels of challenge and rigor, increased achievement may occur. A student may meet the criteria for gifted identification at a later date. We believe the gifted identification should never be just a moment in time during the educational career path of a student. Identification is fluid and continuous throughout the school years.

- Classroom observations and/or,
- CogAT group-specific norms are used to create a first draft of the talent development list (Spring of grade 2).
- The Gifted Resource Teacher maintains a paper or electronic portfolio for each student in the talent development pool.
- Students within the talent pool should receive appropriate service options and/or interventions to address strengths and areas for growth; many of these services will be carried out by the classroom teacher.
- Selection for a talent pool is not just being included on a list for future identification assessment. Rather, it is inclusion into appropriate differentiated service options necessary to develop an academic or talent aptitude and promote achievement and growth.

## **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.

When a student is nominated or referred for services, the gifted resource teacher informs the student's family by letter. This communication provides an overview of the identification process and requests written permission for the nomination process to move forward. If additional assessments will need to be administered for the nomination to be complete, permission to test is sought and received at this time. If there is no response, the school's gifted resource teacher makes one additional attempt to obtain permission to proceed. Parental permission is required for identification.

By the end of each identification cycle, the principal notifies parents of the school-based identification team's determination by letter. If a student is identified as needing services, the letter requests permission to provide services and a parent conference to review the differentiated planning form. The division does not re-evaluate the status of students who are identified for services. Students remain eligible for services as needed for the remainder of their time in Albemarle County.

If the school-based team does not identify the student for services, the letter advises the parents of the appeal process and associated deadlines. In the first level of appeal, the division's Facilitator for Gifted Services or Talent Development Specialist sits on the review committee. In the second level of appeal, the superintendent or his/her designee as well as the division's Facilitator for Gifted Services sits on the review committee. In each level of appeal, the parent may speak with the review committee. The decision of the third review committee is final. Students not identified as gifted may be re-nominated after at least one calendar year unless they have exhausted the appeal process.

## **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.

Gifted resource teachers at each school continuously monitor the progress of identified students as well as students in the talent development pool. While a student is never removed from the division's list of identified students, services may change. The differentiated planning form may be used to provide an overview of general services and opportunities in a given year. Parents, administrators, teachers, and gifted staff will collaborate as needed to determine student needs and related adjustments to services.

Parents who wish to remove a child from active participation in gifted services should contact the gifted resource teacher, classroom teacher, or principal of the school. After a conference with either the gifted resource teacher or principal, parents submit a written request for withdrawing the child. School personnel will honor this request. Any inactive student remains eligible for gifted services and may be reconsidered for active status at any time. To resume participation in gifted services, parents submit a written request to the principal. The gifted resource teacher will invite the parents to a conference to discuss the return to services.

A student who wishes to remove himself/herself from active participation in gifted services should contact the gifted resource teacher, classroom teacher, or the principal. The gifted resource teacher or principal will discuss the request with the school's gifted resource teacher/principal, classroom teachers, and the student's parents. Determination of participation status will be documented by the principal after consultation with the student, parents, and gifted resource teacher.

## **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.

Click here to select area of giftedness. - General Intellectual Ability  
Insert Evidence of Service Options

All students in Albemarle County engage in complex endeavors that replicate real-world experiences with authentic problem solving, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. The goal of this work is to build a continuum of skills that transfers across subjects and to a variety of situations. Albemarle County teachers work to deliver learning opportunities that support each student's learning profile and intellectual, social, and personal development. For all students, learning experiences are based on student readiness, interest, and cognitive needs. Due to advanced learners' performance or potential for accomplishment, they require appropriately differentiated services to challenge and support them. Experiences for advanced learners complement and expand existing curriculum and reflect content, process, and product guidelines that are appropriate for the abilities of gifted students.

Albemarle County Public Schools provides challenging learning experiences through differentiated, enriched and accelerated curricula to students who have demonstrated a need for such interventions. Each school has a gifted resource teacher (GRT) who supports teachers, students, and families to meet the needs of students. In primary grades, GRTs work with classroom teachers in the development and delivery of critical thinking and creative problem solving lessons to gather information on younger students and their ability to demonstrate advanced academic skills, specifically looking for patterns of behavior and characteristics typical of gifted students. In all grades, curricular modifications are designed to meet the needs of advanced learners and are delivered through a continuum of services. In elementary grades, differentiated learning experiences occur within and outside of a student's regular classroom. These experiences are planned collaboratively by classroom teachers and GRTs and are tailored to individual needs and strengths. Collaborative planning and implementation of differentiated learning experiences continues in middle and high school grades; however, students also have access to an increasingly wider range of course offerings, accelerated course opportunities, and co-curricular activities. As students mature, they become an essential partner in identifying and determining the learning experiences that will meet their needs and passions.

The Albemarle County Public Schools talent development and gifted services model aligns with Joseph Renzulli's School-Wide Enrichment Model (SEM). The SEM provides enriched learning experiences and higher learning standards for all children through three goals; developing talents in all children, providing a broad range of advanced-level enrichment experiences for all students, and providing advanced follow-up opportunities for young people based on their interests.

Renzulli, J. S. (2003). The Schoolwide Enrichment Models an Overview of the Theoretical and Organizational Rationale. *Gifted education international*, 18(1), 4-14.

## **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.

Albemarle County Public School teachers are charged with creating classroom cultures that fully embrace differentiation of instruction, student work, and assessment based upon individual learners' needs. To support meeting a range of learner needs, gifted resource teachers provide direct and indirect services that support all students, including those identified as gifted, through routine consultation with regular classroom teachers. In elementary grades, students are placed with their age-level peers in heterogeneous classrooms. In secondary grades, course offerings vary with some being heterogeneous and others leveled. GRTs collaborate with building level colleagues, periodically co-teaching lessons with general education teachers. In addition, GRTs are available to provide consultation and assistance to all teachers in planning and delivering instruction. The support of the GRT allows teachers to enhance the opportunities and learning experiences they are able to provide for all students while meeting the needs of gifted learners.

## **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.

Recognizing the desire and need for gifted learners to work with intellectual and academic peers, Albemarle County Public Schools employs a range of services for students. The GRT in each school supports planning and delivery of both pull-out and push-in opportunities for students. Learning opportunities with the GRT are directly connected to the classroom objectives and enrich the learning that is simultaneously happening in the content area. In heterogeneous classes, pre-assessment data is used to determine flexible grouping arrangements or pull-out opportunities that are accelerated or provide enrichment. Opportunities for small group work or extended projects with intellectual peers provide an alternative and a complement to daily strategies of differentiating within the classroom to meet learner needs. In addition, co-curricular opportunities such as projects and regional and national competitions

create an avenue for students to work with intellectual peers in an area of personal interest and passion.

As students move into middle and high school, they have increasingly greater access to coursework of their choosing. In high school, students may elect to take dual credit courses at a college or university to earn both high school and college credit. In these dual enrollment courses students take courses at their school with a certified teacher who is also an adjunct faculty at the corresponding college or university. Students may also take advantage of Advanced Placement courses through the College Board. These courses may lead to college credit with the successful completion of the national AP exam for the course. In addition, virtual coursework is an expanding means for students to increase the range of courses in which they can participate.

#### **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.
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Albemarle County Public Schools recognizes that student engagement and motivation increase when students are able to pursue their own areas of interest and passion. In addition, the division strives to ensure that all students have access to an array of learning opportunities that will allow them to determine areas of interest and strength. From in-school projects designed by students in collaboration with teachers to coordinating field work done with a professional, GRTs work to support students in seeking and organizing independent work.

As students mature, their role in shaping and designing independent work increases. Commonly accessed opportunities include Independent Study in which students who have intellectual, artistic, or career interests that cannot be fully pursued within the existing school curriculum design a project for which they receive an elective credit and a pass/fail grade. Students may also participate in an off-campus internship in order to evaluate a career field or area of interest. As virtual courses become more widely available within and beyond the division, students may seek additional learning opportunities through courses with Virtual Virginia. Finally, Summer Residential Governor's Schools are available to selected students in Humanities, Math/Science/Technology, Agriculture, Medicine, Engineering, Visual/Performing Arts, and Foreign Language. Students selected by the state for these schools spend a month of the summer in residence on a college campus. Tuition for the students is paid by the state and by the school division.

## **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.

ACPS recognizes that all students have the right to comprehensive services that address their unique academic, social, and emotional needs. In addition to the instructional curricular services described above, GRTs at each school coordinate a range of personal services to support students. Working with colleagues, GRTs assist in the development of learning profile inventories and assessments of student readiness, interests and learning profile to better personalize instruction. GRTs consult with colleagues and families to determine educational needs and course selections as well as co-curricular opportunities. As students mature, GRTs partner with students to explore course and college selection and to provide information about local, regional, and national enrichment opportunities. GRTs work with fellow teachers and school counselors to arrange seminars on topics such as the college application and selection processes, and to counsel students who may need special assistance.

## **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.

Advanced learners are identified based on their potential for high levels of achievement and services are provided to support them in meeting this potential. However, careful assessment of student progress is needed to better understand the academic growth of advanced learners. Given their high levels of potential, even high achieving students may not be growing to the extent that their abilities may allow. In addition, for a variety of reasons, advanced learners may not show expected academic growth and may perform below expectations given their ability. Therefore, careful monitoring of student academic growth by GRTs is an essential element of supporting gifted learners.

Working with colleagues, GRTs engage with a range of assessment tools that include but are not limited to:

- Reading inventories such as the QRI;
- Running records for math and numeracy growth such as SNAP and ACAMB;
- Key Math assessment as needed;
- Measure of Academic Progress assessment (grades 6-8, in both reading and math);
- Ongoing assessment and data analysis at the classroom level through PLC work with formative and summative assessments;
- Student Work Portfolios;
- ACPS Performance Assessments aligned to Lifelong Learner Standards;
- PSAT (10th and 11th grade);
- Dual Enrollment or Dual Credit exams;
- AP Exams.

## **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.

The core purpose of Albemarle County Public Schools is to establish a community of learners and learning, through relationships, relevance, and rigor, one student at a time. To achieve this mission, ACPS's instructional philosophy is articulated in our curriculum framework, known as the Framework for Quality Learning (FQL). The Framework for Quality Learning sets rigorous expectations for how all students learn, analyze information, and communicate, leading to increased student engagement, content mastery, and higher-order thinking.

Despite these high expectations in ACPS for all students, in order to meet the needs of many advanced learners, curriculum must be adapted and modified to emphasize differentiated, conceptually challenging, and in-depth content (NAGC, 2010). Using the FQL, GRTs and classroom teachers create concept-centered lessons that demand critical and creative thinking and extend learning through opportunities to create, solve problems, and develop projects and portfolios by all students. For advanced learners, GRTs and classroom teachers collaboratively design differentiated curricula that enrich and extend curriculum in depth, breadth, and pace. Instructional differentiation strategies include modifying content, process, and product through tiered lessons, flexible grouping, compacted curriculum, acceleration, problem-based learning, stations/learning centers, and independent study.

As students mature, GRTs work with students to develop or identify accelerated and personalized opportunities that match their areas of interest. From early access to high school credit courses in middle school to early access to courses for college credit in high school, students may take advantage of a range of opportunities for accelerated work. In addition, the independent study program provides a structure for students to design their own learning experiences and formally document that learning.

When a student's academic needs require grade-level or course acceleration, a School-Based Intervention Team (SBIT) must be formed to collectively determine the needs of the child as well as the course progression to graduation.

### **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.
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Albemarle County is dedicated to providing a range of opportunities to help all students meet their potential. Policies and procedures aim to support open student access to opportunities including advanced coursework. Below are several policies that facilitate student access.

#### **Promotion/Retention/Acceleration (ACPS School Board Policy IKEB)**

The curriculum and schedule of elementary, middle and high schools will provide flexibility in placing students in programs or subjects normally considered above or below their grade level. Scheduling students into classes above or below the normal grade level should be 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 9th grade successfully complete 9th-, 10th-, 11th-, or 12th- grade subjects, credit shall be counted toward meeting the units required for graduation in grades 9-12. Students shall be encouraged to take advantage of this option. To earn a verified credit for these courses, students below the ninth grade level must meet the same requirements applicable to other students.

Before making any decisions regarding the course or grade level acceleration of a student, a school-based intervention team will meet to review the student's current performance and academic needs.

#### **Student Course Load (ACPS School Board Policy IFF)**

##### Generally

All students in kindergarten through grade 12 shall maintain a full-day schedule of classes (5 1/2 hours) unless a waiver is granted by the Superintendent/Designee.

##### Course Load

With the consent of the principal, a student may be permitted to carry more or less than a normal class load.

### Advanced Placement

Courses may be offered in high school to eligible students for which the student receives high school credit and which colleges or universities may accept for advanced placement or college credit.

### College or University Courses

Upon the recommendation of the principal and acceptance by a college or university, qualified students may be released during school hours to take college or university courses. Tuition and transportation will be the responsibility of the student. Students may take college courses for dual credit according to the Virginia accreditation standards.

### **Advanced/Alternative Courses For Credit (ACPS School Board Policy LEB)**

The Albemarle County School Board will enter into an agreement for postsecondary degree attainment with a community college in the Commonwealth specifying the options for students to complete an associate's degree or a one-year Uniform Certificate of General Studies from the community college concurrent with a high school diploma. The agreement will specify the credit available for dual enrollment courses and Advanced Placement courses with qualifying exam scores of three or higher.

Beginning in the middle school years, students will be counseled on opportunities for beginning postsecondary education and opportunities for obtaining industry certifications, occupational competency credentials, or professional licenses in a career and technical education field prior to high school graduation. Such opportunities will include access to at least three Advanced Placement courses or three college-level courses for degree credit. Students taking advantage of such opportunities shall not be denied participation in school activities for which they are otherwise eligible. Wherever possible, students will be encouraged and afforded opportunities to take college courses simultaneously for high school graduation and college degree credit (dual enrollment), under the following conditions:

- Written approval of the high school principal prior to participation in dual enrollment must be obtained.
- The college must accept the student for admission to the course or courses.
- The course or courses must be given by the college for degree credits (no remedial courses will be accepted).

## **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.

Albemarle County Public Schools is a community of learners that supports the ongoing professional growth of all educators. Teachers and administrators access professional learning opportunities through a variety of means from job-embedded learning with instructional coaches to workshops and courses. Therefore there are a range of professional learning opportunities to support gifted services for both classroom teachers and gifted resource teachers.

Gifted resource teachers must hold or be working towards an endorsement in gifted education. In addition, they further their learning through division-wide professional learning communities coordinated by the Facilitator of Gifted Services and Talent Development Specialist. Meeting in grade bands of K-5, 6-8, 9-12, feeder patterns as well as together as a K-12 group, gifted

resource teachers share resources and curriculum as they explore current issues and topics in gifted education. The division's professional development reimbursement program supports GRTs in formal coursework and professional conference attendance.

Gifted resource teachers facilitate professional development opportunities for their colleagues. Within their buildings, through faculty meeting sessions and professional learning community meetings, GRTs provide sessions on characteristics of gifted learners and strategies for differentiating instruction to meet the needs of gifted learners. For both gifted resource teachers and general education teachers, the division's Opportunities courses provide an option for focused study with colleagues.

## **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.

Annually, a review of the effectiveness of gifted services will be managed by the Facilitator of Gifted Services in order to integrate feedback and data from a range of stakeholders including GRTs, school personnel, parents, and students.\* The Facilitator of Gifted Services and Talent Development Specialist will work with the Gifted Advisory Committee to identify specific areas for review each year as well as to monitor ongoing progress on the goals set forth by this local plan. For consistency, each year data will be reviewed to study progress towards equitable representation within schools and across the division, and artifacts will be collected to document consistency in collection and analysis of qualitative evidence for identification. Articulation of annual priority areas for review will be communicated to GRTs by the end of the first semester with data to be collected and analyzed by the end of the second semester.

\* For the 2019-2020 school year, the Facilitator of the Gifted Services along with the GRTs and the newly appointed Talent Development Specialist will conduct a formalized program evaluation of the gifted programs across ACPS. The purpose of this analysis will provide insight into the services provided and actual students reached, methods to engage and support stakeholders, and identify areas that will align with the goal for a Talent Development Model and what areas will need support or change. The data gathered may include quantitative (parent and family surveys, service time, student participant data, and demographic data) and qualitative data (focus groups, observations, team meetings, one-on-one interviews, and portfolio data). The evaluation will inform the logic model development and implementation of a Talent Development framework to service the students of ACPS.

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

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.

Albemarle County will continue to have a Gifted Advisory Committee composed of representatives from each school in the division. Membership on the committee will be for a three-year term with schools rotating the type of member that represents their site (parent, administrator, classroom teacher, gifted resource teacher). The Facilitator of Gifted Services may request that additional members be invited to join the committee so that it better reflects the ethnic composition of our community. The Facilitator for Gifted Services will coordinate the meeting structures for the committee. The committee will meet four times a year.

**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