

# Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted

## Amherst County Public Schools

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2014-2019



Amherst County Public Schools

**Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted  
(Latest revision 6/23/2014)**

2014 - 2019

<b>LEA#</b>	<b>005</b>		
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<b>Date Approved by School Board</b>	<b>September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014</b>		

## 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 [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted\\_ed/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted_ed/index.shtml)

Section 8VAC20-40-40A 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 June 2014). 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 local school board has approved the completed comprehensive local plan for the education of gifted students, the plan shall be accessible to the public through the division's Web site. 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 Amherst 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. On the chart below, please indicate all areas of giftedness that are identified and served within the division. Please copy and paste any additional rows as might be needed to address all areas in Specific Academic Aptitude and/or Visual and/or Performing Arts that are identified by the school division.

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

(Please highlight, copy, and insert SAA and/or VPA rows as necessary to reflect all areas of giftedness served by the school division.)

**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**

It is the mission of Amherst County Public Schools to provide an appropriate education for each student in an environment that ensures success in the classroom and in future endeavors. Amherst County Public Schools is committed to an educational program that recognizes the special value and needs of the individual student. We are therefore committed to providing students who exhibit gifted characteristics with a qualitatively differentiated K-12 program that takes into consideration individual learning styles and special abilities.

In addition, it is our belief that each student's educational needs must be addressed as an integral part of the regular school curriculum. We provide gifted students in Amherst County Public Schools with a continuum of services through the regular classroom and through choices among a variety of enrichment opportunities.

We believe that all teachers should be knowledgeable about characteristics of giftedness and criteria for identification. It is essential that teachers who are working with gifted students be aware of their unique learning characteristics and styles and should be able to provide learning experiences appropriate to their needs. To this end, Amherst County Public Schools is committed to providing an ongoing staff development program for faculty and staff, and assistance with resources through site-based gifted plans.

**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.

Operation definition of giftedness: (8VAC20-40-20 *Regulations*)

**General Intellectual & Specific Academic:**

“General intellectual aptitude is defined as students who 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 creative and imaginative expression across a broad range of intellectual disciplines beyond their age-level peers.”

“Specific academic aptitude is defined as students who 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 creative and imaginative expression across a broad range of intellectual disciplines beyond their age-level peers in selected academic areas.” In ACPS, the specific areas include language arts and math.

**Operational Definition of Giftedness:**

In Amherst County Public Schools, gifted and talented students are those who have been identified using measurable criteria, have outstanding abilities, and are capable of high performance. These are students who require differentiated educational programs and services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program.

In keeping with our belief of “Every Child, Every Day,” ACPS is committed to providing appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction adapted to accommodate the accelerated learning aptitudes of identified students in their area(s) of strength.

**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. (See appendix A for complete goals/objectives.) Specific references pertaining to each area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

- A. Identification:** ACPS will evaluate, improve and implement identification methods to establish consistency in the academic programs.
- B. Delivery of Services:** ACPS will expect accountability for the delivery of the student Individualized Gifted Plan (IGP) and continuum of appropriately challenging curriculum.
- C. Curriculum and Instruction:** ACPS will develop and offer differentiated curriculum and instruction as appropriate to match students’ abilities and readiness.
- D. Professional Development:** ACPS will offer on-going staff development to support understanding and identification for equitable representation of students, including means to screen and identify K-1 students.

- E. Equitable Representation of Students:** ACPS will monitor and report the identification data from an available range of assessments used to identify twice exceptional students, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and culturally diverse students, including those who are English language learners.
- F. Parent and Community Involvement:** ACPS will increase parental understanding, support, and involvement in the gifted education program.

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

#### **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 and Specific Academic**

Screening is the annual process of reviewing existing, generally available, or specifically designated data for all students to determine whether students should be referred for identification for gifted services. No one criterion or measure may deny or ensure a student's eligibility for programs for the gifted. Screening to identify potentially gifted students takes place as indicated below:

During the school year, classroom teachers observe students for potential gifted characteristics. This may include a combination of students' results from literacy screenings, inventories, norm referenced tests, classroom performance and/or frequent demonstration of characteristics common to children identified as gifted. Students who exhibit such behaviors may be referred for formal screening. Additionally, referrals may be made at any time by parents, students, and/or community members. Referral forms are available in each school office, from high school guidance counselors, and from gifted education Specialists.

Screening Measures	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Grades-English, Math, Science, Social Studies (ongoing)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
PALS data (October)	√	√	√	√									
SOL Scores (May-June)				√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
				(English, Math, Science, Social Studies)									
Student Work	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Standardized Tests: Cognitive Abilities Test *whole grade 2	√	√	*	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Stanford Achievement Test *whole grade 2	√	√	*	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

To screen potentially gifted students, classroom teachers recommend potential kindergarten and first graders for pull-out work with gifted resource teachers when/if available. Students are given the CogAT(Cognitive Abilities Test) or the SAT 10 (Stanford Achievement Test). Standards of Learning assessment data, grades, and classroom work are also used to screen students K-12. A sixth grade (CogAt) screening is given to potential students for math and language arts. Test results along with other data are used to develop a pool of candidates for gifted assessment that is representative of the population of the school division’s students.

**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 of potentially gifted students may be made at any time by parents, administrators, teachers, students, and community members. If such a referral is made, parental permission is secured, and a formal assessment process is initiated. The Gifted Education Supervisor and Gifted Education Specialists provide information to school administrators about the gifted program with specific emphasis on identifying underserved populations. It is the responsibility of building administrators to ensure that this information is disseminated to teachers and guidance counselors who are encouraged to look for different behaviors that might be demonstrated by potentially gifted students from special populations.



**General Intellectual & Specific Academic:**

During the school year, classroom teachers observe students for potential gifted characteristics. This may include a combination of students' results from literacy screenings, inventories, tests, classroom performance and/or frequent demonstration of characteristics common to children identified as gifted. Students who exhibit such behaviors may be referred for formal screening. Additionally, referrals may be made at any time by parents, students, and/or community members. Referral forms are available in each school office, from high school guidance counselors and from gifted education Specialists.

Information about the referral process is available in a number of places. Brochures describing ongoing referral, screening and identification procedures are sent to all schools for distribution on registration day and are also available in each school's main office and guidance department. This information is also available in each school's student handbook which is sent home to all parents, and on the division's website. Referrals are accepted on an ongoing basis for students in grades K-12 from teachers, parents, guardians, students, peers, and individual members of the community. Referral forms about the gifted program are available at each office and may be returned to the appropriate school principal or school gifted education Specialist. Once a student is referred, a letter is sent to parents to obtain their permission for evaluation.

**Multiple Criteria Listing:**

This section includes the four or more criteria that are used by the division to develop a profile or composite for each student being considered. This criteria will include a superior score on either or both of the CogAt Abilities Tests or the Stanford 10 Achievement test. NOTE: No single instrument, score, or criterion may be used to exclude or include a child for eligibility.

**General Intellectual and Specific Academic criteria include:**

1. Assessment of student products, performance, portfolio
2. Record of observation of in-class behaviors
3. Appropriate rating scales, checklists, and questionnaires
4. Individual or group aptitude test(s)  
Specify: Cognitive Abilities Test Form 7-second grade, Form 6 other grades.
5. Individual or group achievement test(s)  
Specify: Stanford 10 (2003); Standards of Learning Assessment; Benchmark testing.
6. Record of previous achievements (awards, honors, grades, etc.)
7. Additional valid and reliable measures or procedures  
Specify: Informal Reading Inventory – Bader/QRI/SRI /Fountas & Pinell/ PALS/  
Ganske Spelling Inventory.

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

This section provides identification procedures for each area of giftedness identified and served by the division. 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.

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

This section includes the three or more criteria that are used by the division to develop a profile or composite for each student being considered. This listing of criteria 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: No single instrument, score, or criterion may be used to exclude or include a child for eligibility. Selection of either item 5a or 5b or both counts as a single criteria.

**General Intellectual and Specific Academic criteria include:**

- 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

Information is collected in a matrix type form with each piece of criteria assigned a number of points. Points are then calculated to determine identification.

**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/Placement Committee (8VAC 20-40-40D)**

- a. This section includes the **number** of persons comprising the Identification/Placement Committee by category.

**General Intellectual Aptitude**

- Classroom Teacher(s)
- Gifted Education Specialist
- Counselor(s)
- School Psychologist(s)
- Assessment Specialist(s)
- Principal(s) or Designee(s)
- Gifted Education/Classroom Teacher
- Other: School psychologist, special education teacher, ESL teacher, etc. may be included as appropriate.

**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.

**General Intellectual and Specific Academic**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Administered/ Completed by</b>	<b>Scored by</b>	<b>Provided to the committee by</b>
<i>Ex. Behaviors checklist</i>	<i>Current classroom teacher</i>	<i>School gifted education Specialist</i>	<i>School division gifted education Specialist</i>
Whole group screening 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade Cognitive Abilities Test	Gifted education Specialists and classroom teachers	Riverside Publishing	Gifted Education Specialist
Whole group screening 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade; Stanford 10	Gifted education Specialists and classroom teachers	Pearson	Gifted Education Specialist
Partial group screening Cognitive Abilities- 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	Gifted Education Specialists and classroom teachers	Gifted Education Specialists	Gifted Education Programs
Academic Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grades</li> <li>• Reading inventory</li> <li>• Observation of class performance</li> </ul>	Classroom teachers	Identification placement Committee	Student, teachers, referral source
Rating scales, checklists, questionnaires	Student, parent, teacher referral	Identification placement committee	Student, teachers, referral source, Gifted Education Specialist

Upon receipt of a parent, teacher, student, or community referral, a parent letter is sent requesting permission to compile data on the student’s eligibility is to be determined. Eligibility in GIA and SAA are determined by a profile-based method relying on committee consensus. Measures may include group screening, written recommendations, and evidence of student performance. Based on the data provided, students may be eligible as General Intellectual or they may demonstrate strengths in specific areas and be eligible for services in math, or language arts.

Determination of eligibility is completed within 90 working days of receipt of parental permission for evaluation for gifted services.

The Identification/Placement Committee will review the data and reach decision with which the majority must agree. The committee will make one of the following decisions:

- 1) The student is identified as gifted and is eligible for services.
- 2) The student that does not meet the criteria for identification is not eligible for services.
- 3) The committee is unable to make a decision, and the student will be monitored for a specified period of time and additional data will be collected. The committee will reconvene within the specified period of time (not to exceed one school year) to further consider the student's eligibility for services.

Parents will be notified by letter of the Identification/Placement Committee's decision. If the student has been denied service, the letter will provide parents with the opportunity for a conference and the opportunity to appeal the committee's decision.

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

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

#### **General Intellectual and Specific Academic**

Following determination of eligibility, the school identification/placement committee working in concert with the Gifted Education Specialist and the student's teacher(s) shall determine appropriate placement. Placement will be based on data from the student profile, information from teachers and parents, and available placement options as outlined in Section VI. Appropriateness of placement options will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

All teachers of gifted students are provided with a list of the identified students that they teach to ensure that the academic needs of these students are met. Differentiated instruction is provided in all areas to those students identified as GIA and in math, and humanities to elementary and secondary students identified as SAA.

In elementary and middle grades, Gifted Education Specialists are responsible for the development of an annual Total School Plan from which GIA and SAA students may select activities in which they may participate. These Total School Plans incorporate activities in a variety of content areas that challenge and interest identified students. These may include differentiated classroom instruction, pullout activities with gifted education Specialists, field trips, projects, and academic competitions.

In grades 9-12, students and parents make course selections and the student's guidance counselor is consulted about the appropriate course work for GIA and SAA students.

#### **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.

##### **General Intellectual and Specific Academic**

Following referral and screening, parents/guardians are notified that the identification process is being initiated for their child. Once parental permission is received, this process begins.

After the school Identification/Placement Committee has determined whether or not a student is eligible, parents are notified in writing. If the student is found eligible for services, parental permission is requested for the recommended placement options. The signed permission form is filed in each student's permanent record. If the student is found ineligible, parents are notified in writing, informed of their right to appeal, and given information about the process to initiate such an appeal. If the committee is unable to make a definitive decision, the student may be monitored and may be re-evaluated for eligibility at the end of a specified period of time.

#### **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.

Students enrolled in the Amherst County Public Schools Gifted Program or their parents or guardians may request a change in instructional services or permission to exit from the program at any time. Parents or students wishing to initiate a change in placement or exit the program must contact the school's gifted education Specialist and submit a written request. Once this request is received, a conference with the student, parents, teacher, and/or gifted education Specialist at the school to determine if a request for change in placement or exiting the program is appropriate. If a decision to make a change in instructional services is made in this conference, a written request signed by the parents should be made to the Identification/Placement Committee.

If gifted students are identified as underachieving, the classroom teacher or gifted Specialist should initiate a plan to improve performance with the parent's participation. If, after a predetermined period of time of not less than 45 school days, this plan is unsuccessful, a written request that the student be exited from the program should be made to the Identification/Placement Committee. Parents will be notified in writing by the school of this request, the Committee's decision, and advised of their right to appeal and the procedures for such an appeal.

A student may change from active to inactive program placement or exit the program if the Identification/Placement committee concludes that:

- the student is not benefiting from the program
- placement at any given time is not in the best interest of the student
- the student elects not to participate.

If any changes in placement or exit procedures are carried out, parent and students are informed of this decision by letter including a statement that consideration for identification at a later date would be regarded as a new referral. A student who exits the program for longer than a school year may be considered for reinstatement by repeating the eligibility process.

### **Appeals:**

Parents may appeal any decision regarding identification or placement as follows:

1. Within 10 academic days of receipt of notification of the Identification/ Placement Committee's decision, the parent must inform the school principal **in writing** of the intent to appeal the decision.
2. Once written notification is received by the principal, he or she will notify the school's Gifted Education Specialist who will then convene a formal meeting of the Appeals Committee within 45 academic days of receipt of the parent's request.

The appeals committee will consist of the school principal or a designee, the school gifted education Specialist, a school psychologist or counselor, and two faculty members of the child's school.

3. The committee will review the procedures and results of the Identification/Placement Committee. They will determine if additional diagnostic data are needed. Documentation of this meeting will be on file. **Note: No single instrument, score, or criterion may be used to exclude or include a child's eligibility.**
4. Following the collection of additional data, the Appeals Committee shall meet to review all relevant data and render a decision concerning the appeal within 45 school days of the initiation of the appeal. The parent may present additional Cognitive ability and/or IQ test data from a psychologist or other certified test administrator to be considered as long as it is presented to the Gifted Education Specialist or school principal with appropriate documentation and contact information for the test administrator. Amherst County Public Schools will not reimburse any costs associated with such testing regardless of the results of the appeals committee decision. Following the Appeals Committee decision, parents will be notified of the committee's recommendation.

5. An appeal not resolved by the steps listed may be submitted in writing to the Assistant Superintendent. A conference shall be held within ten administrative days upon the request, the decision of which will be final.

The Appeals Committee will consist of the Assistant Superintendent, the appropriate level Gifted Education Specialist, and the school principal.

**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.

Levels/Grades	General Intellectual	Specific Academic
K-2	2a, 2b, 8b, 9a, 9b, 13a, 13b, 14b	2a, 2b, 8b, 9a, 9b, 13a, 13b, 14b
3-5	2a, 2b, 8b, 9a, 9b, 13a, 13b, 14b, 15a	2a, 2b, 8b, 9a, 9b, 13a, 13b, 14b
6-8	2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 8a, 8b, 8c, 9a, 9b, 9d, 13a, 13b, 14b	2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 8a, 8b, 8c, 9a, 9b, 9d, 13a, 13b, 14b
9-12	1, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3c, 3d, 3e, 4a, 4c, 4d, 4e, 7, 8a, 8b, 9a, 9b, 14b, 17	1, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3c, 3d, 3e, 4a, 4c, 4d, 4e, 7, 8a, 8b, 9a, 9b, 14b, 17

Codes listed above correspond to:

1. Academic year Governor’s School (Central VA Governor’s School)
2. Acceleration based on individual needs
  - a. Content area
  - b. Grade level
3. Advanced, Pre AP, and AP classes in specific content areas:
  - a. English
  - b. Foreign Language
  - c. Mathematics



- d. Science
- e. Social Studies
- 4. Advanced Placement classes
  - a. English
  - b. Foreign Language
  - c. Mathematics
  - d. Science
  - e. Social Studies
- 5. Virtual Virginia
- 6. Dual enrollment
- 7. Guidance services addressing special needs of the gifted
  - a. College/career counseling
  - b. Small group sessions
- 8. In-class differentiation by regular classroom teacher (cluster grouping)
  - a. Heterogeneously grouped
  - b. Homogeneously grouped
  - c. Multi-age grouped
  - d. Other cluster format
- 9. Independent study
  - a. For credit
  - b. Not for credit
- 10. Mentorship
- 11. Resource teacher
  - a. Pull-out
  - b. Push-in
- 12. Special seminars
  - a. For credit
  - b. Not for credit
- 13. Saturday or summer services
- 14. Summer regional governor's school
- 15. Summer residential 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.

**General Intellectual and Specific Academic**

K-8: Service options that provide gifted students with instructional time to work with age level peers include heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping, cluster grouping, compacting of instruction, tiered assignments, differentiated instruction and questioning techniques. Daily and weekly instructional decisions are determined based on the students' individual needs.

9-12: Service options that provide gifted students with instructional time to work with age level peers include heterogeneous and homogeneous groupings,

compacting of instruction, tiered assignments, differentiated instruction and questioning techniques. Daily and weekly instructional decisions are determined based on the students' individual needs.

**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.

**General Intellectual and Specific Academic**

K-5: Service options to provide instructional time with intellectual and academic peers include cluster grouping, flexible grouping, acceleration by grade level, acceleration of content, and cross-content acceleration. This may occur during the week and year as determined by the individual students' needs.

6-8: Service options to provide instructional time with intellectual and academic peers include homogeneous grouping, flexible grouping, acceleration of content/course sequences, access to high school credit-bearing courses. Year-long course decisions and sequences are made during the scheduling process. Daily/weekly scheduling decisions are determined by the individual students' needs.

9-12: Service options to provide instructional time with intellectual and academic peers include homogeneous grouping, acceleration by content, attending Academic Year Governor's School or Early College (CVCC) in grades 11 and 12; Advanced, Pre-AP, AP, and/or Dual Enrollment course opportunities. Year-long course decisions and sequences are made during the scheduling process at the end of each school year. Daily/weekly instructional decisions are determined by the individual students' needs

**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.

**General Intellectual and Specific Academic**

K-8: Service Options used to provide instructional time for gifted students to work independently include individualized instruction, one-on-one support, independent contracts, research based projects, science and technology fairs, differentiated assignments tailored to student interest, ability and/or learning modalities. Daily/weekly instructional decisions are determined by the individual students' needs.

9-12: Service Options used to provide instructional time for gifted students to work independently include individual instruction, one-on-one support, independent contracts, research-based projects, differentiated assignments tailored to student interest, ability and/or learning modalities, research projects, science and technology fairs, mentorships and internships and special project work. Daily/weekly instructional decisions are determined by the individual students' needs.

**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.

**General Intellectual and Specific Academic**

K-12: Service options that foster intellectual and academic growth during the school day and week include open ended question/answers, creative thinking, exceptional problem solving, focus on research and in depth-reporting, concentration on synthesis and evaluation levels of Blooms Taxonomy, competition, assessments that include creating and demonstrating, opportunities for sharing/teaching/leading.

**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.

**General Intellectual and Specific Academic**

K-12: Procedures for assessing academic growth in gifted students include narrative assessment, traditional grade scales, interview and conferencing, rubrics, self-assessment, benchmark testing, portfolio, matrixes, reading levels, criterion referenced testing, norm-referenced testing. The Gifted Education Specialist on an annual basis through eighth grade will complete a continuous student growth plan. High school students will show growth through a self -assessed growth model along with documentation of class grades and electives.

**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.

### **General Intellectual and Specific Academic**

Based on research by Carol Ann Tomlinson, Joseph S. Renzulli, and Karen Rogers, the design of curriculum for gifted learners in Amherst County Public Schools incorporates best practice in differentiating content, process, and product. This includes such strategies as process differentiation, pull-out programs, activities that encourage critical thinking, problem solving, and the use of technology to promote and to demonstrate learning. Teachers provide students with choice in demonstrating their knowledge of specific skills. Curriculum, instructional, and assessment strategies are selected to match appropriately the abilities, interests, and learning profiles of gifted student in socially and academically appropriate settings that emphasize academic rigor, complexity, abstract thinking, and the integration of varied content.

K-5: Acceleration by grade level; acceleration of content, and cross-grade content acceleration will all be used to develop and implement Individual Gifted Plans based on the needs of each student.

6-8: Acceleration by grade or content and enrollment in high school credit classes will be used to implement Individual Gifted Plans based on the specific needs of each student.

9-12: Acceleration by content; attending Academic Year Governor's School in grades 11 and 12, Pre-AP, AP, and Dual Enrollment participation in Summer Governor's School will be used to develop and implement Individual Gifted Plans based on the specific needs of each student.

### **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.

Amherst County Public Schools' philosophy with regard to student access to programs of study and advanced courses is to encourage all students and families to take rigorous and challenging course work within their respective areas of academic interest. We believe that all students not only are capable of succeeding in advanced learning opportunities, but that they also deserve exposure to more advanced learning opportunities.

Amherst County Public Schools' practice with regard to student access to programs of study and advanced courses is basically one of student/parent selection within the confines of course sequence requirements. Barriers to the selection of advanced courses such as lengthy summer assignments, scheduling issues, specific SOL scores, etc., are considered and discouraged. Every

consideration is given to challenging each student to reach his/her academic potential.

Amherst County Public Schools' policies support student access to programs of study and advanced courses as follows:

- File IGBB – Programs for Gifted Students
- File IGBBA – Attendance at Central Virginia Governor's School
- File IHA – Grouping for Instruction
- File JB – Equal Educational Opportunities / Nondiscrimination

### **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.

Amherst County Public Schools develops an annual professional development calendar which includes training based on the above competencies. During new teacher orientation, all new teachers are introduced to the philosophy and goals of the gifted education program. On-going training is provided by the division and within schools on the characteristics and identification of gifted students, as well as strategies for differentiated instruction (see sample calendar attached – appendix B).

### **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.

1. Amherst County Public Schools will annually review and report identification data (as determined through multiple criteria listed in Part III) by school, grade level, and ethnicity to the parent advisory board and school board.
2. Student growth as determined by selected measures (ie: SOL assessment, report card, growth index, etc.) will be annually reviewed by administrators, classroom teachers, and Gifted Education Specialists.
3. Student growth will be reported quarterly to parents through interim reports and report cards, as well as twice per year through the semester student growth measure reported by the Gifted Education Specialists.
4. The parent advisory committee will present an annual report of the progress of the goals of the gifted education plan and its effectiveness to the school board and division superintendent.

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

Each school division shall establish a local advisory committee composed of parents, school personnel, and other community members who are approved 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.

Members of the Local Advisory Committee may include parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. The parent component of the committee will include a parent recruited to represent each school (7 elementary, 2 middle and 2 high school). These members will serve as school representatives not more than 3 years on a rotational basis with 3 (or 4) schools' members rotating off the committee annually. This will provide the committee with a historical perspective of the program, as well as inviting new and fresh perspectives each year. Recommendations to serve on this committee will be made by the building administrator of each school. Composition is encouraged to be ethnically and geographically representative. The Supervisor of Gifted Programs will serve as the administrative representative, and the Gifted Education Specialists will also serve on the committee. All parents and community members are welcomed to attend any advisory committee meeting. There will be a minimum of four advisory meetings annually.

**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 school division must provide the following assurance:

- 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.

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Division Superintendent’s Signature                      Printed Name                      Date



# Objective Components

<b>GIFTED PLAN COMPONENT</b>	<b>Identification</b>			
<b>GOAL STATEMENT</b>	ACPS will evaluate, improve, and implement identification methods to establish consistency in the academics program.			
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>POSITION RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DATE DUE</b>	<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>
To assess identification procedures annually	<p>Annually review the implementation of whole group testing at grade 2.</p> <p>Compare data from achievement and ability testing to ensure that appropriate students are identified.</p> <p>Recommend consistency in identification timeline of all students.</p> <p>Align eligibility forms to reflect changes in the identification processes.</p> <p>Implement grade 6 screening for students in advance reading and math classes.</p>	<p>Gifted Specialist Classroom teachers Gifted Supervisor</p>	<p>November January</p>	<p>Fair and equitable representation of students</p> <p>Additional grade 6 students to be identified</p>
To provide information regarding the identification of gifted students to all stakeholders	<p>Present information at: Gifted Advisory Committee meeting Parent Advisory meetings at school level. Faculty meetings Principals' meetings</p>	<p>Gifted Specialist Gifted Supervisor</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>All stakeholders will be knowledgeable about the identification and screening of gifted students</p>

<b>GIFTED PLAN COMPONENT</b>	<b>Professional Development</b>			
<b>GOAL STATEMENT</b>	ACPS will offer on-going staff development to support understanding and identification for equitable representation of student, including means to screen and identify all students k-12.			
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>POSITION RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DATE DUE</b>	<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>
Provide staff development options to support teachers in gifted education to include equitable representation of all students.	Provide information to teachers regarding the characteristics of gifted students for screening and identification purposes.	Gifted Specialist Classroom teachers	Fall	Referrals based on targeted gifted characteristics.
Provide staff development on the screening and identification of all students, including K-1.	Provide staff development opportunities that include information on equitable representation of services and the identification of Twice Exceptional Students.	Gifted Specialist Classroom teachers Gifted Supervisor	On-going	All ACPS teachers will receive training in the understanding of and identification for equitable representation of students.

<b>GIFTED PLAN COMPONENT</b>  <b>GOAL STATEMENT</b>	<b>Parent &amp; Community Involvement</b>			
	ACPS will increase parental understanding, support, and involvement in the gifted education program.			
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>POSITION RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DATE DUE</b>	<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>
Encourage parent participation in the Gifted Advisory Committee  Increase parental involvement in information dissemination	<p>Solicit parent representation on Gifted Advisory Committee on a rotational basis representing all schools.</p> <p>Invite all parents of gifted students to attend school and division advisory meetings by way of email, letters, and phone calls.</p> <p>Publish gifted newsletter three times each school year.</p> <p>Provide gifted information of student events on the ACPS webpage.</p> <p>Hold a parent advisory meeting quarterly.</p> <p>Present the advisory report to the school board.</p> <p>Parent representatives will hold a minimum of two school meetings per year at the school site to involve interested parents.</p> <p>Hold a zone based gifted program to bring awareness to community stakeholders. Involve guidance counselors to discuss college/career plans.</p>	<p>Gifted Specialist Classroom teacher Gifted Supervisor</p> <p>Gifted Specialist Classroom teacher Gifted Supervisor</p> <p>Gifted Supervisor</p> <p>Gifted Specialist Gifted Supervisor</p> <p>Gifted Specialist Classroom teacher</p> <p>Gifted Specialist Classroom teacher Gifted Supervisor</p>	<p>August, Annually</p> <p>September, January, and April</p> <p>4 times</p> <p>Annually, April</p> <p>Fall/Spring</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>Provide better communication among all stakeholders.</p> <p>Provide up-to-date information on student participation and events related to gifted education.</p> <p>Provide information to assist parents/students in creating a year-by-year course plan.</p>

Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted  
Plan Components

Provide information about gifted services and advanced learning opportunities to parents.	Make gifted education program brochure in the administration building, each school office, and appropriate places in the community.	Gifted Specialist Gifted Supervisor	On-going	
	Review website, by-laws, brochures, and related forms annually and update as needed.	Gifted Supervisor	Annually, Fall	
	Provide and explain the Pathway brochure to parents and students in grades 4-7.	Gifted Specialist Classroom teacher	On-going	
	Provide information in the annual school board report regarding budget and identified members of student participants.	Gifted Supervisor	Annually, Spring	

Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted  
Plan Components

<b>GIFTED PLAN COMPONENT</b>	<b>Curriculum and Instruction</b>			
	ACPS will develop and offer differentiated curriculum and instruction as appropriate to match students' abilities and readiness.			
<b>GOAL STATEMENT</b>				
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>POSITION RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DATE DUE</b>	<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>
Provide continued training, support and resources on higher order thinking skills.	Monitor and support teachers K-12 in demonstrating differentiated curriculum through classroom lessons and activities. (To include by not limited to implementation of the division-wide initiative of Thinking Maps ©)	Gifted Specialist Classroom teacher Gifted Supervisor	On-going	Students receive differentiated instruction.
	Classroom teachers will meet with the Gifted Specialist to develop and implement lessons focused on increased rigor.	Gifted Specialist	On-going	Increased learning and academic achievement.
	Review instruments used to report student growth to parents and make adjustments for the upcoming school year.	Gifted Specialist Gifted Supervisor	Annual Review	Continued monitoring of student growth.

<b>GIFTED PLAN COMPONENT</b>	<b>Delivery of Services</b>			
<b>GOAL STATEMENT</b>	ACPS will expect accountability for the delivery of the student Individualized Gifted Plan (IGP) and continuum of appropriately challenging curriculum.			
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>POSITION RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DATE DUE</b>	<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>
To increase accountability in upholding gifted strategies implemented on IGP.	<p>Provide professional development to teachers of gifted students to discuss appropriate strategies needed in developing an effective and appropriate IGP for each student.</p> <p>Collaborate with other teachers to schedule events to avoid conflicts within and among schools across the division.</p> <p>Plan and schedule activities for the following year</p>	Gifted Specialist Gifted Supervisor	Annually, Fall	<p>Teachers provide gifted students with a variety of appropriately differentiated activities.</p> <p>Teachers will have communicated and collaborated on scheduling to avoid conflicts and ensure maximum participation in activities planned for students.</p>
To ensure accountability for development of the IGP and appropriately differentiate curriculum.	<p>Provide appropriate personnel with updated gifted rosters at the end of each school year to be used in scheduling students.</p> <p>Review annually student work samples that show evidence of differentiated lessons for gifted students.</p>	Gifted Specialist Classroom teacher Gifted Supervisor	Annually	To encourage the most appropriate placement for all identified students.

<b>GIFTED PLAN COMPONENT</b>	<b>Equitable Representation of Students</b>			
<b>GOAL STATEMENT</b>	ACPS will monitor and report the identification data from an available range of assessments used to identify students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and culturally diverse students.			
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>POSITION RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DATE DUE</b>	<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>
To continue to review a range of assessments recommended through the VDOE for identifying underserved student populations.	Attend consortium and regional gifted education meetings as well as other professional development opportunities to gather information about assessment instruments.	Gifted Specialist Classroom teachers Gifted Supervisor	On-going	A range of assessment instruments will be available to identify underserved populations.
To develop a diverse pool of students from grade k-1 for early identification.	Students in grade K-1 will have enrichment opportunities designed to prepare them for identification.	Gifted Specialist Classroom teacher Gifted Supervisor	On-going	Better knowledge of students in early grade levels who may be referred for identification.
To provide identification data to the public.	Identification data will be provided to the school board, parent advisory, principals and public through meetings, newsletters, emails, and the ACPS webpage.	Gifted Specialist Classroom teacher Gifted Supervisor	On-going	Awareness of identification process and results.



# Associated Definitions

## Definitions associated with the identification of students

**Appeal:** The right of a parent/guardian or professionals to request a formal review of any eligibility or placement decision made by the gifted coordinator, placement committee, or other division professional regarding a specific student.

*While generally exercised by the student or parents when they disagree with the division's decision, appeals may be filed by professionals within the division or by the identification/placement committee itself if the committee believes the student's initial eligibility data are inconclusive. The division shall determine the steps and the timeline for appeals and shall make that information widely known to parents, teachers, and others who refer students for*

**Checklist:** A data collection measure, similar to a rating scale that seeks information on a series of behaviors and/or characteristics.

*Typically the respondent indicates the extent to which the specific quality is observed or may indicate whether a behavior is evident; occasionally respondents are required to provide an example of the behavior or characteristic.*

**Division identification plan:** A uniform set of procedures with common criteria for screening, assessment, and identification of gifted students used within all schools within the division.

These procedures shall permit referrals from school personnel, parents, or legal guardians, other persons of related expertise, peer, and self-referral of those students nominated for the gifted program.

**Exit policy:** The division's policy regarding circumstances and assessment criteria under which a student may be removed from services for gifted students.

**Exit procedures:** The means by which students are formally removed from the gifted program and re-placed in a regular education program.

**Furlough status/inactive status:** An option provided by a school division to allow a student for specific reasons to be removed temporarily from gifted services.

*The student remains eligible for such services according to the time constraints outlined in the agreement. Such an agreement should be signed by a parent/guardian to be official. Students who are furloughed continue to be counted in the division's annual report data.*

**Gifted student:** A student in public elementary and secondary schools beginning with kindergarten through graduation whose production or potential is remarkable beyond that of the student's age peers, and whose abilities and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that he or she requires special programs to meet his or her educational needs.

*Professionally qualified persons through the use of multiple criteria that assess demonstrated abilities as well as potential abilities will identify these students. High performance capabilities or potential may include leadership, as well as intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, technical or practical arts aptitude, and visual or performing arts aptitude.*  
(Virginia Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students, 1993)

**Gifted underachievers:** Students who exhibit a significant discrepancy between their superior scores on measures of expected achievement (i.e., standardized achievement test scores or cognitive or intellectual ability assessments) and their actual performance or achievement (as measured by grades or teacher evaluations). To be classified as a gifted underachiever, the discrepancy must not be directly influenced by an identified learning disability. (Reis & McCoach, 2000)

**Group achievement test:** A standardized measure that presents questions that span grade levels and measures a student's proficiency with the knowledge and/or skills pre-identified as important at each level. Such achievement measures typically have sections that correlate to major disciplines such as language arts/reading, mathematics, sciences, and social sciences.

**Group aptitude/ability test:** A standardized test used to measure a student's ability to acquire knowledge, process information, or develop skills with respect to the performance of his or her peers; also known as an ability or intelligence test. Scores are typically presented for verbal, non-verbal, quantitative, or spatial abilities.

*Group administered aptitude measures differ from individually administered measures in that the content may be more focused to a specific range of abilities. Group-administered aptitude measures include, but are not limited to:*

- Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)
- Stanford 10 Achievement Test

**Identification:** The process of reviewing student data collected through screening and the referral process to determine the student's need and eligibility for specific gifted services.

**Identifications matrix:** A data collection tool used by some Virginia school divisions to review data used in the identification of students for a gifted program.

*Typically, multiple criteria (e.g., test scores, teacher recommendations, rating scales) are assigned point values. The student is assigned points in each category according to a predetermined range. The identification/placement committee then totals the points and considers a student's score against the division's score for eligibility.*

**Identification minimum scores form:** A decision-making tool that presents the minimum scores of previously identified students and compares those scores to a nominated student's scores. Decisions are made through consensus of committee based on numerous years of successful identification data.

**Identification profile:** A decision-making tool that presents a student's collected data as a graphic of comparable (standard) scores and requires the identification/placement committee to determine, through analysis and discussion, the student's strengths and eligibility for gifted services.

**Individual achievement test:** A standardized measure that presents questions that span grade levels and measures a student's proficiency with the knowledge and/or skills pre-identified as important at each level.

**Individual aptitude test:** A standardized test used to measure student's ability to acquire knowledge, process information, or develop skills with respect to the performance of his or her peers; also known as ability or intelligence tests. Scores are typically presented for verbal, nonverbal, quantitative, or spatial abilities.

**Individual interview:** A data collection measure in which a student being considered for specific services is asked a series of questions in an individual or small group setting. The questions probe specific behaviors or characteristics of gifted learners.

**Informed consent:** A review process of data collection and service offerings that enables a student and his/her parents to participate voluntarily in a gifted education program.

**Leadership:** Leadership can be defined as the ability to direct individuals or groups to a common decision or action. Students who demonstrate giftedness in leadership ability use group skills and negotiate in difficult situations. Many teachers recognize leadership through a student's keen interest and skill in problem solving. Leadership characteristics include self-confidence, responsibility, cooperation, a tendency to dominate, and the ability to adapt readily to new situations. (Marland, 1972)

**Multiple criteria:** The process of using more than a single criterion to determine giftedness. Criteria should demonstrate reliability and validity for their use in the identification process. The multiple criteria may include, but not be limited to, assessment of student products, performance, or portfolios; record of observation of in-class behaviors; appropriate rating scales, checklists, and questionnaires; individual interviews; individual or group aptitude test(s); individual or group achievement test(s); record of previous achievements (awards, honors, grades, etc.); and additional valid and reliable measures or procedures. Selected measures should include both objective and subjective instruments. Such measures should enable students from economically disadvantaged, culturally diverse, and linguistically different backgrounds or environments, and those with special needs, to be identified for appropriate services in the gifted education program.

**Normalized or standard scores:** Scores obtained by transforming raw scores in such a way that those scores are normally distributed and have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1 (or some linear function of these numbers).

*Standard scores are expressed as an individual's distance from the mean in terms of the standard deviation of the distribution of scores. T-s cores, Z-s cores, and stanines are examples of normalized or standard scores.*

**Notification procedures:** The steps the division must follow to notify parents/legal guardians about the initiation of the identification process, a request for permission to collect specific information about the student referred for gifted education services, and any subsequent placement or change of placement for services. Such notification must be written and must include information that the parents/guardians have a right to appeal decisions made by the school division regarding eligibility or services.

**Percentile rank:** A point (score) in the distribution at or below which fall the percent of cases indicated by the percentile.

**Placement:** The determination of the appropriate educational option(s) for each eligible student.

**Questionnaire:** A data collection measure that elicits information about a specific set of criteria. In the identification process such questionnaires may inquire about student interests or examples of early/rapid mastery of information or skills.

**Rating scale:** A data collection measure that elicits a ranked answer for specific prompts.

*A rating scale may ask the extent to which a student demonstrates a specific behavior such as "advanced learning." For example, respondents will be asked to indicate whether a student rarely, occasionally, or frequently demonstrates the indicated quality. Rating scales produce numeric raw scores, unless the rating scale has some normative data supporting scoring.*

**Raw score:** An examinee's unconverted score on a test (e.g., the number of correct answers or the number of correct answers minus a certain portion of the incorrect answers).

*Checklists, rating scales, and other observation inventories typically generate raw scores that must be incorporated into the data analysis device for use by the identification/placement committee.*

**Record of observation of classroom behaviors:** A data collection measure that allows a teacher or other professional to document students' academic proficiency, creativity, or academic/program progress.

*Rating scales and checklists are two of the most common sources of classroom behavior data.*

**Record of previous achievements/accomplishments:** Documentation of an individual student's awards, honors, grades, extra-curricular activities, and other accomplishments within a specific area.

**Referral of students:** A direct procedure that enters a student into a school division's identification process. Referral of a student requires the school division to administer all assessments and reach an eligibility decision as specified in the division's approved local plan for the education of the gifted.

*Referrals may be offered by parents, teachers, community members, administrators, peers, or the student him or herself*

**School or division identification/placement committee:** A standing committee, with training in the identification of giftedness as interpreted by the specific school division, comprised of a professional who knows the student, classroom teacher(s), school psychologists/assessment Specialists, gifted program staff, school administration, and other persons who can assess a student's need for services and potential for advanced achievement in the school's gifted program.

While typically found at the school level, such an identification/placement committee may also operate solely at the division level in small school divisions, but in either case criteria must be consistent across the division.

**Screening:** Annual process of reviewing existing, generally available, or specifically designated data for all students to determine whether students should be referred for identification for gifted services.

**Stanine:** A standard score scale consisting of the scores 1 through 9 and having a mean of 5 and a standard deviation (SD) of 2.

*Each stanine (except 1 and 9) is one-half SD in width, with the middle stanine of 5 extending from one-fourth SD below to one-fourth SD above the mean.*

**Student performance:** The assessment of a student's abilities and achievement through standardized, norm-referenced or specific area testing, grades, or observation as assessed through pre-designed rubrics and/or criteria. Performances may be in academic/cognitive/affective areas, visual and/or performing arts or other areas served by the locality.

**Student product:** Any student-generated work created as the result of classroom assignment or generated from the student's individual interest. Such products may include but are not limited to literary works, videos, paintings, musical compositions, drawings, or multi-dimensional compositions that relate to the area(s) of giftedness and demonstrate advanced conceptualization or skill development or potential for such development.

**Student portfolio:** A collection of student work, generated from classroom assignments, student interests/research, or activities beyond the classroom, gathered to exhibit/demonstrate the student's efforts, progress, or achievement in one or more areas.

**Twice-exceptional students:** Students who have been identified as special needs in addition to their identification as gifted. Terms such as *gifted/LD* or *gifted/ADHD* are often used to designate a student's specific educational needs. Also known as **dually identified gifted students**.

*Identification may be difficult because the disability or giftedness may mask the student's true abilities. Educational planning for students with dual exceptionalities requires attention to both the student's giftedness and his/her special need.*

### **Definitions associated with the delivery of service options**

**Ability grouping:** Using ability/achievement ranges to place students in the same classroom or group for purposes of instruction. (Kulik, 2003)

*In some cases, students are exposed to different curricula and/or educational methods; in other cases, students study the same materials.*

**Academic-Year Governor's School:** Regional programs for high school students operated jointly by no fewer than three school divisions, with consultation from the Virginia Department of Education. These programs provide specific, focused, appropriately differentiated programs and curricula tailored to the needs of gifted learners. These programs most typically provide part\* day services, where specific courses, such as advanced-leveled mathematics, science, technology, or arts, are augmented by additional required coursework offered in the student's base high school.

*For 2005-2006, 17 Academic-Year Governor's Schools operated throughout the commonwealth, providing students with acceleration and exploration in areas ranging from the arts to government and international studies, and to mathematics, science, and technology. Students from participating school divisions must qualify through their base school division to be eligible for attendance. The Academic-Year Governor's School regional governing board makes eligibility decisions. (<http://wvAv.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Govschools>)*

**Advance/Pre-AP:** Classes offered to academically advanced students that provide opportunities to study and learn with other advanced students and to accelerate their learning in a specific content area. (Feldhusen, 2003)

*Pre-AP* classes are developed locally to meet the needs of high-achieving students and cover the same curricula offered in the corresponding regular, non-honors classes at the base high school, but are designed to be more challenging by covering additional topics or some topics in greater depth. The content may be accelerated or enriched beyond typical grade-level expectations.

**Advanced Placement (AP):** High school courses originated and administered by the College Board/Educational Testing Service, which in Virginia must and typically in other states carry weighted grades for students' successful achievement on AP examinations, given annually in May.

*As part of the Early College Scholars program in Virginia high schools, AP classes are offered by the student's high school, online through the Virginia Virtual AP School, or through satellite technology.*

**Center-based program:** Gifted education services provided to eligible students at a specifically designated facility, with curricula and instruction tailored to meet the needs of students in the specific content area. Centers may be stand-alone facilities, or they may operate as schools- within-schools. Center-based programs may be full-time services, serving as the students' base school, or students may spend one or more days a week at such facilities.

**Cluster grouping:** A group of no fewer than three identified gifted students, who are placed in a mixed-ability or heterogeneous classroom.

*Teachers in such classrooms are responsible for delivering services as part of the gifted education program, are expected to be trained in gifted education curriculum and instructional methods, and must provide differentiated instruction to meet these students' needs. (Gentry, 1999)*

**Collaboration model:** A method of instruction that integrates specialized services for high ability learners within the general education program through differentiated instruction provided within a mixed-ability classroom.

**College/career counseling:** Services and resources offered to students in preparation for completing college and financial aid applications, and assessing other post-secondary career options. (Feldhusen, 2003)

**Content-area acceleration:** An educational accommodation/intervention that moves a student through a certain subject (e.g., mathematics) at a faster rate.

*Such acceleration may be accomplished by physically moving a student to a higher-level class for specific instruction or through the use of needs-appropriate curricular materials in the student's assigned classroom. (Southern & Jones 2004)*

**Delivery models:** The complete continuum of programs the school division uses to provide specific gifted education services. Examples may include but are not limited to the following: inclusive services such as the consultation/collaboration model; clustering gifted students in a heterogeneous classroom; pullout programs offered in resource rooms or at specifically designated centers; self-contained classes, special schools, and/or specialized programs designed specifically to meet the cognitive/affective needs of gifted learners.

**Delivery of services:** A systematic sequential plan, set of strategies, and program offerings provided to meet the educational needs of identified students.

*These options should be aligned with the goals of the gifted program and the needs of the students. Such services shall be offered by a teacher trained in gifted education as defined in the school division's local plan for the education of the gifted.*

**Determination of services:** The process used to select services matching the student's needs as determined in the identification process. The determination of services should take into account educational goals and objectives of the student.

**Distance learning:** Classes/courses that are offered in the local school district or community through online, satellite, or virtual programs.

*Consistent with the 2002 Standards of Accreditation, divisions must provide a minimum of two Advanced Placement or dual enrollment college courses for high school students. Distance learning opportunities may be used to provide these courses. For more information about such opportunities, see The Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University's Web page.*

**Dual Enrollment:** A program, offered by local high schools, that enables high school students to earn high school and college credit simultaneously either at the high school or within the Early College Program at Central Virginia Community College.

**Early admission/early entrance:** An accelerative option used when a student shows exceptional ability, motivation, and readiness.

*The term most commonly refers to a student entering kindergarten/first grade or entering college prior to her age-level peers, but it may also include early entrance in middle school or high school. Allowing and encouraging middle school students to take high school credit courses such as Algebra I in eighth grade is an example of this process. Such provisions must be consistent with Code of Virginia, the Standards of Accreditation, and school division policies.*

**Grade-level acceleration:** An educational accommodation/intervention that advances a student one or more grades to move the student into a classroom with his/her intellectual peers.

*Examples of grade-level acceleration may include early admission to kindergarten or through grade-skipping, depending on the provisions found in the governing school division or state code or regulation. (Southern & Jones. 200-1)*

**Grade-skipping:** An accelerative option for students who show exceptional ability, also referred to as full acceleration.

*Grade skipping may be used at any level, depending upon policies established by the school board. Important considerations in evaluating the potential merits of (such acceleration for a student are the student's social, emotional, and physical maturity; motivation; and ability to handle challenge. Such decisions should be made on a case-*



**Heterogeneous classes:** Students grouped with other students of varying ability/achievement levels within the same classroom. (Kulik. 200?)

**Homogeneous classes:** Students grouped with other students of similar ability 'achievement level within the same classroom. (Kulik. 2003)

**Independent study:** A facilitated differentiation process that enables students who have demonstrated mastery of specific aspects of the general curriculum to conduct individual or small-group research on topics or projects of specific interest and value.

As a stand-alone component, independent study enables students to conduct individual or small-group research on topics or projects of specific interest and value. The teacher assists students with setting goals and objectives, planning strategies to reach goals, and self-evaluation of progress and quality of work. (Maker & Nielson, 1995)

**Mentorship program:** One-on-one relationships (typically for a year or more) pairing a student/intern with a mentor/expert who provides specialized, individual attention to a student's understanding and appreciation of a shared career/interest/project.

Mentorships are typically used as part of an integrated curriculum that allows students to identify future areas of collegiate and/or professional studies. (Callahan & Kyburg, 2005)

**Pull-out model:** Instruction provided when students are "pulled out" of their regular education classroom to receive special instruction, often in a small group, from a gifted education teacher.

**Push-in model:** A model where differentiated learning experiences are brought into the general classroom and delivered by a gifted education teacher (Specialist) so that all learners have an opportunity to participate in appropriately challenging curriculum. Also known as collaboration.

**Saturday or summer services:** Enrichment- or academically-based programs that meet on Saturdays during the school year or for several weeks during the summer.

*Typically, summer programs may be residential and designed for the cognitive and affective growth of older students, while Saturday programs focus on younger students' needs and interests. (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2003)*

**Self-contained class:** A class comprised wholly of identified gifted students and high-achieving peers. Generally used at the elementary level, with a teacher trained in working with gifted students. (May also be described as a homogeneously grouped class.)

**Service options:** The instructional approach(es), setting(s), adaptation(s), and staffing selected for the delivery of appropriate service(s) that are based on student needs.

**Small group sessions:** In such sessions, students typically work with three to six peers, usually with a teacher who has specific training in gifted education or in the designated interest area. Such activities may be part of an independent study session, part of an acceleration option within the pullout or center-based session, or within the general education classroom. Such groups may include students from different grade levels working on activities-projects of common interest. (Kulik. 2003)

**Special classes provided on a part-time basis:** Students elect to enroll in coursework, either through their school or as part of a Saturday or summer program, which allows advanced instruction or college credit or both. (Southern & Jones. 2004)

**Subject-skipping:** An example of partial acceleration in which a student with special skills or strengths in an academic area takes classes with intellectual peers in higher grade levels.

*Though certain subjects lend themselves better to subject skipping than others, due to their sequential nature (e.g., mathematics, foreign languages), the strategy can be used across disciplines. Ensuring content and skill continuity can pose a planning challenge; however, subject skipping allows students with special strengths to move ahead while developing grade-level skills in other areas. (Davis & Rimm. 190S)*

**Summer Regional Governor's School:** Summer programs, designed to meet regional needs that offer gifted students opportunities for in-depth learning experiences.

*Twenty Summer Regional Governor's Schools are available throughout Virginia. The Summer Regional Governor's Schools exist in a variety of formats. Cohorts of school divisions frequently design these programs to meet the needs of their local gifted elementary and middle school students. These schools provide opportunities in the arts, sciences, and humanities. The Virginia Department of Education evaluates each school once every six years. Summer Regional Governor's Schools typically are housed at a public school or on the campus of a college, community college, or university and are mostly non-residential. Program lengths vary, lasting from a week or less to four weeks. (<http://www.doe.Virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Govschools/>)*

**Summer Residential Governors School:** Competitive programs, offered during the summer that serve gifted high school juniors and seniors, sponsored by school divisions and the Virginia Department of Education.

*These schools provide intensive 'educational experiences for four weeks at college, university, or specific sites, in visual and performing arts: humanities: life science and medicine: mathematics, science, and technology: or through mentorships in marine science or engineering.*

**Talent pool (grades K-2):** A talent pool is a specific group of students designated as potentially gifted and who are provided activities and opportunities to acquire critical and creative thinking strategies, and or to pursue topics of individual or small group interest with the intention that trained teachers will recognize growth and development within the students that will be used in the eligibility assessment at the end of grade two.

*The Talent Pool approach to identifying gifted students is based on Renzulli's (1986) three-ring conception of giftedness, which stresses the development of gifted behaviors rather than the determined achievement or test scores. Accordingly, the Talent Pool aims to identify many gifts and talents by "casting a wider net" through five methods: test score nominations, teacher nominations, alternate pathways, special nominations, and action information nominations. The last two processes are intended to be "safety valves " that ensure students who might be missed via the first three nomination procedures are identified.*

**Talent Search:** Several universities offer curricular opportunities to students identified for services through testing. Each program has two facets: identification and programming. Using the ACT and SAT examinations as identification tools, these programs invite students to take summer, Saturday, or distance courses through an affiliated university program (e.g., Duke University, Northwestern University, Johns Hopkins University).

### **Definitions associated with curriculum and instruction**

**Accelerative options/acceleration strategies:** Curriculum management that allows a student to move through content and processes at an accelerated pace, including the opportunity to replace previously mastered content and processes with others that are more developmentally appropriate to the learner. Acceleration options include, but are not limited to, subject acceleration, grade skipping, grade compacting, concurrent enrollment, grade telescoping, and early entrance to college.

**Appropriately differentiated curricula:** Designed in response to students' cognitive and affective needs, assessed strengths, interests, and goals, such curricula provide emphasis on both accelerative and enrichment opportunities for advanced content and pacing of instruction.

*Elements of appropriately differentiated instruction include original research or production, problem finding and solving, higher-level thinking that leads to the generation of products, and a focus on issues, themes, and ideas within and across areas of study.*

**Assessment strategies:** The different ways of evaluating student performance and growth that result from the differentiated curriculum and instruction offered by trained teachers in either the general education classroom or in the specially designed setting.

*Assessment of learning typically includes a rubric indicating specific areas of interest for teacher and student. Students, their peers, and mentors may take part in the assessment of performance based on pre-determined criteria. Measures capturing individual progress can be used to determine proficiency in one or more areas over time and are scored using predetermined set of criteria.*

**Consent:** The scope and sequence of curricular concepts, principles, and information presented to students that represent the essence of the disciplines.

*Mapping of topics, differentiation, developing skills and coherence of subject matter are based on the needs of the student. Content for gifted students must have abstractness, depth, and complexity. (Maker & Nielson, 1996)*

**Curriculum and instructional design:** The theoretical foundation that forms the basis for the development, implementation, evaluation, and revision of the instruction that teachers employ to differentiate services for gifted students in the regular classroom or for the independent units used in resource centers or Governor's Schools. Through these theoretical frameworks, teachers understand how, where, and why they must modify the content, process, and products for identified students.

**Curriculum compacting:** Adjustments made to the subject-area or grade-level curriculum for students who have already mastered the content or skills to be learned or who could benefit from streamlined instruction.

*Four main steps are involved in the curriculum compacting process:*

1. *Define the unit or lesson objectives.*
  2. *Pre-test students on the objectives.*
  3. *Eliminate instructional time for students who demonstrate mastery; streamline instruction for students who show potential for accelerated mastery.*
  4. *Provide more challenging and productive uses of the students' time.*
- (Reis, Bums, & Renzulli, 1992)*

**Curriculum modification:** Changes made to the general curriculum to meet the cognitive and affective goals for individual or groups of students.

*Such modifications are made by adding depth and complexity to content, by adding critical or creative thinking or independent research to the process, by developing divergent products, and by incorporating metacognition and individually established criteria into the evaluation process. Modification may also include the replacement of larger elements of the curriculum with materials that meet students' needs for acceleration. The level of complexity, number of facets involved, degree of transferability or application, level of independence, structure, level of abstractness, and pace all may be modified to tailor curriculum. (Tomlinson, 1999; Maker & Nielson, 1996)*

**Differentiation in the regular classroom:** The needs of gifted students in the regular classroom may be met by means of modifying the curriculum, instruction, and assessment. See curriculum modification.

*Differentiation should build on rich, meaningful curriculum with clearly identified learning goals. While the tasks may be different for the gifted student(s) and others in the class, all learning tasks should be equally respectful. On-going assessment informs instructional grouping, pace, appropriate resources, and the degree of challenge for the instructional tasks. Additionally, hallmarks of a differentiated classroom include the consideration of the needs of the whole child—student readiness, interest, and learning profile used to differentiate content, processes, or products. (Tomlinson, 1999)*

**Enrichment options:** Activities, assignments, or programs that replace or extend the regular curriculum by adding depth, breadth, or complexity.

*These opportunities provide a broadening of the school curriculum within the classroom for pupils to widen their experiences extend their vision and increase their depth of understanding.*

**Process:** The instructional sequence of learning and the different stages through which the learner moves, to accomplish a range of learning experiences. Such stages should include opportunities to learn and re-conceptualize existing knowledge, to perceive things from various points of view, and to use information for new purposes or in new ways.

*Instructional processes should allow motivation, practice, transfer of training, and feedback, and enable students to make appropriate and relevant decisions regarding what is to be learned and how it can be learned. (Clark, 1988)*

**Product:** A tool for learning and a verification of learning; products communicate the synthesis and assimilation of both knowledge (content) and skills (processes).

*As tangible evidence of critical thinking, student understanding, and achievement, student products (e.g., work samples, portfolios) must be assessed according to the learning objectives for the product assignment. The product needs to reflect the content taught and may be modified to meet students' cognitive and affective needs.*

**Rubric:** A rule or guide presenting clear criteria by which a complex performance may be judged. (McAfee and Leong, 2002)

**Scoring rubric:** A fixed scale and a list of characteristics describing performance for each of the points on the scale. Usually one level of the rubric is considered the acceptable level of performance. (McAfee and Leong, 2002)

**Student evaluation:** Assessment that occurs before the lesson or unit begins (pre-assessment), throughout the lesson or unit (ongoing assessment), and after the lesson or unit is over (summative assessment). The teacher uses data from these assessments to determine the students' readiness, interests, learning styles, and understanding that enable appropriate curricular and instructional adjustments.

**Student outcomes:** Indicators of content and skill acquisition, specified expectations, and demonstrations of learning.

*Outcomes should articulate expectations for advanced levels of performance for gifted learners and should be based on the assessment of student cognitive and affective needs.*

**Telescoping:** A type of curriculum compacting that involves completing a program that usually requires a fixed number of years to finish in less than the usual time. (Reis, Bums, and Renzulli, 1992)

*Telescoping is employed when the student spends less time than normal in a course of study, as in completing a one-year course in one semester. (Southern & Jones, 2004)*

**Theoretical foundations:** The research literature that outlines the approach or approaches that a division or school adopts for use by teachers in its gifted education curriculum and instruction. The theoretical foundation determines how the curriculum and instruction will be delivered to the students based on best practices in the field.

**Weighted grades:** Grades for Advanced Placement classes, as well as those defined in the *Transcript Regulations*, may receive additional grade point values.

*For example, students acquiring an A in a weighted class might receive 5.0 instead of the traditional 4.0 value given standard courses. Weighted grades compensate for the higher degree of challenge required in order to attain the same grade in a class that is less challenging.*

### **Definitions associated with professional development and teacher designations**

**Add-on endorsement in gifted education:** A series of graduate-level courses with a practicum, designed to provide knowledge and understanding of issues in educating gifted and talented children. Endorsement coursework must demonstrate mastery of competencies outlined in pertinent state licensure regulations.

*A specific endorsement that may be added to a Virginia Collegiate Professional or Postgraduate Professional license provided specific endorsement requirements have been met.*

*The candidate must have completed:*

- © An approved teacher preparation program in gifted education, or graduated with a baccalaureate degree with an endorsement in any teaching area:
- ® Completed 12 hours of graduate-level course work in gifted education competencies; and ® Completed a practicum of at least 45 instructional hours. One year of successful, fulltime teaching experience in an accredited public or nonpublic school may be accepted in lieu of the practicum. A mentor holding a valid license with an endorsement in gifted education must be assigned to the teacher.

**Full- and part-time teachers of the gifted:** A designation made by the public school division about specific teachers who serve gifted students. Those teachers who work with gifted students predominately throughout the day or the week may be designated as full-time teachers of the gifted.

*These designations do not necessarily align with division's FTE reporting for these teachers. Part-time teachers of the gifted may be full-time employees of the school division. Local school divisions are responsible for determining how teachers who are responsible for providing gifted education services will be classified*

**Gifted education coordinator:** A district-level administrator assigned to coordinate programs, initiate and evaluate services, and supervise teachers of gifted students as described in the *Virginia Plan for the Gifted*,

*The responsibilities of the Gifted Education Coordinator as described in the Virginia Plan for the Gifted may include the following: assist in teacher selection, teacher evaluation, curriculum design, program planning and evaluation, and budget.*

**Gifted education resource teacher/Specialist:** A teacher of the gifted assigned to provide specific services for students at one or more schools in collaboration with classroom teachers, building administrators, and the division's gifted education coordinator and who typically has special training and/or an endorsement in gifted education.

*The gifted education resource teacher supports students and teachers by providing differentiated activities and content either as part of a pullout program or through the provision of in-class, collaborative teaching with his or her general education teaching colleagues.*

**Professional development:** Any of a variety of coordinated opportunities for teachers to become trained in serving the cognitive and affective needs of gifted children, grades K-12. Professional development could include, but not be limited to, classes offered by the division, courses at a local university or college, conference attendance, and options tailored to meet the needs of the specific educator or group of educators.

### **Definitions associated with parent and community involvement**

**Local gifted education advisory committee:** A committee representing the ethnic and geographical composition of the school division composed of parents, school personnel and other community members that is charged with conducting an annual review of the locality's implementation of the local plan and reporting its findings in writing to both the superintendent and the school board.

**Local gifted education advisory committee review procedure:** The local advisory committee shall review annually the local plan for the education of gifted students, including revisions, and determine the extent to which the plan for the previous year was implemented. The recommendations of the advisory committee shall be submitted in writing to both the school board and the division superintendent. § 22.1-18.1. Code of Virginia

**Local plan for the education of the gifted:** A plan for the provision of gifted education services submitted by each school division to the Virginia Department of Education for approval. Each local plan includes a statement of philosophy; a statement of program goals and objectives; procedures for early and on-going identification of gifted students; a procedure for notifying parents/legal guardians of additional testing, information gathering and for obtaining permission prior to placement of students in an appropriate program; placement in appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction that matches the student's assessed strengths; required teacher training; the framework of curriculum and instruction that support program options; and methods of increasing the involvement of parents and community in these programs. In addition, the plan includes a policy for notifying parents/guardians about changes in placement or exit from a program, and assurances that records are maintained according to "Management of Student's Scholastic Record in the Public Schools of Virginia."

**Parental and community involvement:** Purposefully established opportunities for parents/guardians, relatives, friends, and the general community to become involved in the gifted program or the programming for an individual gifted student. Opportunities may include, but are not limited to, presentations about specific areas of interest, parent advocacy activities, and/or service as mentors or experts for students' research endeavors.

**Stakeholders:** Everyone whose life is affected by the quality of gifted services in a school division. This includes but is not limited to students, parents, teachers, administrators, board members, and community members.

### Miscellaneous definitions/terms

**Annual report, programs for the gifted:** Annual data and information collection required by the *Code of Virginia* on student membership, teacher data and training, and program options.

**Gifted program evaluation:** The systematic, organized process of providing information about a gifted program that enables school districts, parents, and other intended audiences to make informed judgments about the program.

Program evaluation can assist in the establishment of a new gifted program or be part of an improvement initiative for an existing gifted program. (Callahan & Caldwell, 2000)

**Management of Student's Scholastic Record in the Public Schools of Virginia:** A document maintained by the commonwealth providing guidelines by which public schools must manage records directly related to a student.

**Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students:** The legal documentation, cited in the Administrative Code of Virginia, of the requirements concerning gifted education programs to be provided by school divisions in Virginia. (8VAC20-40-10 through 8VAC20-40- 70)

# Forms



**Amherst County Public Schools  
Talented and Gifted Program**

**INITIAL NOMINATION FORM**

I would like for this student to be given consideration as a participant in the Talented and Gifted Program (TAG) in the area of General Intellectual or Specific Academic Aptitude.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Has the student been involved in a gifted and talented program previously?

No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ if yes where?

Please state specific reasons for referring this student for the TAG Program.

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Person nominating this student:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Amherst County Public Schools  
Talented and Gifted Program**

**CANDIDATE FOR PLACEMENT LETTER**

Date:

Dear Parents of \_\_\_\_\_:

Your child is a candidate for placement in the Amherst County Public Schools' Talented and Gifted Education Program – specifically in the area of \_\_\_\_\_. Consideration for placement will be based on the following: teacher, parent, guardian, student or peer referral, standardized test scores, and classroom performance. We are requesting permission to begin the eligibility process. Please read the enclosed permission form, sign where appropriate, and return to your child's teacher at your earliest convenience.

Additionally, we request that you complete the enclosed checklist as it relates to your child. Your observations will be an important part of the assessment process. Please share as much information as possible on the questions at the end of the checklist. Other components of the identification process will be standardized test scores, ability test scores, a teacher checklist, a classroom performance evaluation, and additional relevant data regarding superior achievements, awards, or honors. Based on our experience with this assessment, we recommend focusing very little or no attention on this process in order to avoid any undue pressure or stress on your child.

Assessment will be completed within 65 working days of receipt of permission to evaluate your child. The assessment process consists of the following:

- 1) Collecting all pertinent data
- 2) Convening an Identification/Placement Committee, made up of any combination of the following: teachers (familiar with the candidate), Gifted Specialist, counselors, administrators.
- 3) Reviewing all data as documented on the student profile sheet (The committee will be looking for evidence of performance, ability and/or achievement in the superior range for eligibility.)
- 4) A formal recommendation for placement or non-placement made by the committee.

Once the Eligibility Committee has completed its work, parents will be notified in writing of the committee's decision.

If you have any questions concerning this letter or would like any additional information, please call.

Sincerely,  
Gifted Education Specialist

**Amherst County Public Schools  
Talented and Gifted Program**

**EVALUATION PERMISSION**

Dear Parent:

Please indicate below whether or not you grant permission to have your child evaluated for participation in Amherst County Public Schools' Talented and Gifted Education Program . Please return this form to your child's teacher, the school's Gifted Specialist.

I **do** give permission to have my child, \_\_\_\_\_, evaluated.

Child's DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I **do not** give permission to have my child, \_\_\_\_\_, evaluated.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Amherst County Public Schools  
TAG Program**

**PARENT/GUARDIAN CHECKLIST**

STUDENT'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON COMPLETING \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION I: Please use the rating scale on the chart by checking the level of frequency of the behavior exhibited by the student.

CHARACTERISTICS:	RATING		
	SUPERIOR	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE
1. Attempts/performs above grade level			
2. Is creative/Imaginative			
3. Extensive use of oral/written language			
4. Adjusts to change			
5. Stays on task			
6. Uses expressive speech			
7. Uses common objects for inventive purposes			
8. Is independent			
9. Relates to adults/adult topics			
10. Converses appropriately on a variety of topics			
11. Is curious			
12. Highly developed sense of humor			
13. Notices details/observant			
14. Has a good memory			
15. Always finds something to do			
16. Takes a leadership role			
17. Self motivated/shows initiative			
18. Maintains intense concentration			
19. Is sensitive to the feelings & needs of others			
20. Sees unusual/diverse relationships			
21. Enjoys being on his/her own			
22. Shows a high level of peer interaction			
23. Enjoys role playing/story telling			
24. Risk-taker/Adventurous			
25. Shows musical/artistic ability			

SIDE 1 (PLEASE COMPLETE OTHER SIDE)

SECTION II

Please include any information in this section that would be helpful in compiling a complete profile of your child's abilities. Your comments are very important. We encourage you to take time to share additional observations or facts.

Give examples of this child's unique talents.

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List any circumstances affecting your child, which should be considered.

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Please share any additional comments that will be helpful in evaluating this student for the Talented and Gifted (TAG) Program.

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**Amherst County Public Schools  
TAG Program**

**GRADES K-12 TEACHER CHECKLIST**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Person Completing Form \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Section I: Please use the rating scale by checking the level of frequency exhibited by the student being evaluated.**

<b>Part 1: Learning Characteristics</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Above Average</b>	<b>Average</b>
1. Has unusually advanced vocabulary for age or grade level; uses terms in a meaningful way; has verbal behavior characterized by "richness" of expression, elaboration and fluency			
2. Has a ready grasp of underlying principles. Seems to "Get it" quickly.			
3 Can quickly make valid generalizations about events, people, or things; looks for similarities and differences in events, people and things.			
4 Applies and demonstrates problem-solving skills.			

<b>Part 2: Creativity</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Above Average</b>	<b>Average</b>
1. Applies and demonstrates creative thinking skills			
2. Produces many and varied solutions to problems.			
3. Manipulates ideas, adapts, improves and modifies. Improvises with commonplace materials.			
4. Is individualistic; not afraid of being different			

<b>Part 3: Leadership</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Above Average</b>	<b>Average</b>
1. Carries responsibility well; can be counted on to do what she/he has promised and usually does it well.			
2. Is self-confident with children his/her own age as well as adults; seems comfortable when asked to show work to the class; directs activities in which involved.			
3. Adapts readily to new situations; is flexible in thought and actions and does not seem disturbed when the normal routine is changed.			
4. Generally directs the activity in which he/she is involved.			

<b>Part 4: Expression</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Above Average</b>	<b>Average</b>
1. Shows ability in role-playing and storytelling.			
2. "Plays" with oral/written language (uses puns and riddles).			
3. Displays respect for opinions and ideas of others.			
4. Expresses ideas clearly.			

<b>Part 5: Motivation</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Above Average</b>	<b>Average</b>
1. Becomes absorbed and truly involved in certain topics or problems. (It is sometimes difficult to get him/her to move on to another topic).			
2. Strives toward perfection; is self-critical; is not easily satisfied with own speed or products.			
3. Prefers to work independently; requires little direction from teachers or parents.			
4. Pursues challenging, complex or difficult tasks. Completes tasks.			

**Section II**

1. Give specific examples of this student's unique talents as you have observed them.

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2. List any circumstances that you are aware of which might affect this student's talents or abilities.

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3. Please share any additional comments.

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**Amherst County Public Schools  
Gifted and Talented Program**

**DEFERRED PARENT GIFTED LETTER**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent(s),

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_ is being evaluated as a candidate for participation in Amherst County Public Schools Gifted Education Program. The Eligibility committee has recommended additional assessment before a final decision is made about the placement of your child. In some cases, this may require diagnostic work that could take more than the 65 days stipulated in the original letter requesting permission to evaluate your child.

The school's Gifted Specialist will contact you with specific information regarding additional assessment. We ask for your patience as we complete this process.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Gifted Education Specialist

**Amherst County Public Schools  
Talented and Gifted Program**

**SERVICE ELIGIBLY LETTER**

Date:

Dear Parent(s):

We have evaluated your child, \_\_\_\_\_ as a candidate for participation in Amherst County Public Schools' Talented and Gifted Program. We have found your child eligible for services in the area(s) of \_\_\_\_\_.

Gifted program services are offered on two levels, which will specify activities for extended learning. An Individual Gifted Plan (IGP) will be developed for your child in grades K-8. The purpose of the IGP is to document curriculum modifications for gifted students. Based on the student's interests, academic need, and areas of strength, the IGP will:

- document activities that extend the regular classroom
- be a working document and be modified throughout the school year
- be developed by teachers, students, and parents
- be evaluated by teachers, students, and parents after development and at the end of each semester.

Your child will automatically be placed in Advanced, Honors, and Advanced Placement classes, which offer modifications within the regular curriculum and take the place of the IGP in grades 9-12. If at any time, you wish for your child to be taken out of the program, you will need to meet with your child's guidance counselor to discuss this decision. At that time, you will sign a document stating the termination of gifted services.

Sincerely,

Gifted Education Specialist

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**Amherst County Public Schools  
Talented and Gifted Program**

**NON-ELIGIBILITY LETTER**

Date:

Dear Parent(s):

We have evaluated your child, \_\_\_\_\_ as a candidate for participation in Amherst County Public Schools' Talented and Gifted Education Program. We have found that your child is not eligible for services at this time.

The Eligibility Committee recognizes your child's special abilities and achievements and is certain that appropriate educational challenges can be provided in the regular classroom setting. Please be assured that whenever possible, your child will be encouraged to participate in academic activities or programs offered in the schools.

After a one-year period has elapsed, your child may be referred for assessment once again by a teacher, parent, guardian, self, or peer. Enclosed is a copy of the Appeals Process for the Talented and Gifted Program. If you have any questions, please call.

Sincerely,

Principal

Gifted Specialist

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**Amherst County Public Schools  
TAG Program**

**PERMISSION FORM**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Grade \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby give my permission for my child, \_\_\_\_\_,  
to participate in the Talented and Gifted (TAG) Program in Amherst County Public Schools.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*\*\*\*\*

I do not give permission for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to  
participate in the Talented and Gifted (TAG) Program in Amherst County Public Schools.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*Records pertaining to the TAG Program are maintained in the student's cumulative school file.

**Amherst County Public Schools  
Talented and Gifted Program**

**APPEALS PROCESS FORM**

Parents may appeal any decision regarding identification or placement as follows:

- 1) Within 10 academic days of receipt of notification of the Eligibility Committee's decision, the parent must inform the school principal in writing of the intent to appeal the decision.
- 2) Once written notification is received by the principal, he or she will notify the Gifted Education Coordinator, who will then convene a formal meeting of the Appeals Committee within 10 academic days of the receipt of the parent's request. This committee will consist of the principal or a designee, the Gifted Education Specialist, a school counselor or psychologist, and two members of the faculty of the child's school. The majority of the Appeals Committee will not have served on the Eligibility Committee.
- 3) The committee will review the procedures and results of the Eligibility Committee. The Appeals Committee members will determine if additional diagnostic information is needed. Documentation will be on file.
- 4) Following the collection of additional data, the Appeals Committee shall meet to review all relevant data and render a decision concerning the appeal within forty-five academic days of the initiation of the appeal.
- 5) Following the decision of the Appeals Committee, parents will be notified in writing of the committee's recommendation.

**Amherst County Public Schools  
Talented and Gifted Education Program**

**INDIVIDUALIZED GIFTED PLAN  
SCHOOL YEAR:**

**Student Name:**

**School:**

**Grade:**

**Determination of Services**

Your child has been found eligible for services in gifted education through the identification process of the Talented and Gifted Education Program. This process also includes a procedure for the determination of services for each child found eligible for services. Your child will receive services in the specific subject area or areas designated below:

**General Intellectual Aptitude**

**Specific Academic Aptitude:**

**Language**

**Mathematics**

**Individualized Gifted Plan**

These differentiated services will be offered both through the classroom and through the gifted education resource program. The attached document is a plan indicating how gifted education services will be provided for your child. This is a plan and may be altered as the school year progresses.

Classroom Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Gifted Education Specialist \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject:**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal: Student will receive appropriately challenging instruction and activities.**

**The classroom teacher will make the following accommodations:**

**Instructional Activities provided by the Gifted Education Specialist.**

Student will attend weekly pullout sessions with the Gifted Education Specialist.



# Amherst County Public Schools

## Gifted Education Growth Assessment

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

The Student Growth Plan places an emphasis on critical and creative thinking skills as well as support for students to develop both independent and interactive group learning skills. The Gifted Education Specialist evaluates student skill development at the beginning and end of each year (√ indicates beginning of year- ○ indicates end of year progress). Students will be assessed each year during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> nine weeks. Information will be shared with parents and a copy of the assessment will be sent home with the interim report.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS	SKILL DESCRIPTION	LEVELS OF ASSESSMENT											
	<b>Asks questions and identifies problems</b>	With teacher support	With increased independence			Demonstrates independence			Demonstrates mastery				
<i>Assessment</i>	1   2   3	4   5   6	7   8   9	10   11   12									
<b>Generates multiple alternative solutions</b>	With teacher support	With increased independence			Demonstrates independence			Demonstrates mastery					
<i>Assessment</i>	1   2   3	4   5   6	7   8   9	10   11   12									
<b>Evaluates alternative solutions</b>	With teacher support	With increased independence			Demonstrates independence			Demonstrates mastery					
<i>Assessment</i>	1   2   3	4   5   6	7   8   9	10   11   12									
NOTES	<b>Gifted Education Specialist</b> _____ <b>Date</b> _____												
	<b>Generates many possible ideas</b>	With teacher support	With increased independence			Demonstrates independence			Demonstrates mastery				
<i>Assessment</i>	1   2   3	4   5   6	7   8   9	10   11   12									
CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS	<b>Is flexible in thinking</b>	With teacher support	With increased independence			Demonstrates independence			Demonstrates mastery				
	<i>Assessment</i>	1   2   3	4   5   6	7   8   9	10   11   12								
	<b>Provides elaboration and detail in work</b>	With teacher support	With increased independence			Demonstrates independence			Demonstrates mastery				
	<i>Assessment</i>	1   2   3	4   5   6	7   8   9	10   11   12								
NOTES	<b>Gifted Education Specialist</b> _____ <b>Date</b> _____												
	<b>Uses own initiative</b>	With teacher support	With increased independence			Demonstrates independence			Demonstrates mastery				
<i>Teacher Assessment</i>	1   2   3	4   5   6	7   8   9	10   11   12									
INDEPENDENT LEARNING	<b>Commits to task</b>	With teacher support	With increased independence			Demonstrates independence			Demonstrates mastery				
	<i>Teacher Assessment</i>	1   2   3	4   5   6	7   8   9	10   11   12								
	<b>Explains thinking processes</b>	With teacher support	With increased independence			Demonstrates independence			Demonstrates mastery				
	<i>Teacher Assessment</i>	1   2   3	4   5   6	7   8   9	10   11   12								
NOTES	<b>Gifted Education Specialist</b> _____ <b>Date</b> _____												



