"I learned something that I will never forget. I learned to face challenges head on, and that I should not be afraid to express myself as an individual. If I were to describe FUTURA to an alien, I would tell him that it is a place where children go to learn how to solve problems as a group or by yourself, to find new ways to learn and explore, a place to be free. I know what FUTURA technically stands for but to me it stands for something special. It stands for a place of bright minds, hard work, and curiosity."

- FUTURA Student
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**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- The Hollingworth Center for Highly Gifted Children: [www.hollingworth.org](http://www.hollingworth.org)
- GT World: [www.gtworld.org](http://www.gtworld.org)
- National Foundation for Gifted and Creative Children (NFGCC): [www.nfgcc.org](http://www.nfgcc.org)
- Duke Gifted Letter: [www.dukegiftedletter.com](http://www.dukegiftedletter.com)
- Gifted Education Press: [www.giftedpress.com](http://www.giftedpress.com)
- Brainy Child: [www.brainy-child.com](http://www.brainy-child.com)
- Gifts for Learning: [www.giftsforlearning.com](http://www.giftsforlearning.com)

*Please visit the LCPS Gifted Department website for additional resources http://www.lcps.org/Page/617*

“KNOWLEDGE JOINED TO ACTION--KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WHAT MAN HAS BEEN AND IS--CAN PROTECT THE FUTURE.”

MARGARET MEAD, WOMAN AND SCIENCE
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Johns Hopkins University- Center for Talented Youth (CTY): www.cty.jhu.edu

Hoagie’s Gifted Education Page: www.hoagiesgifted.org


National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented-Virginia: http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/overview-gifted-277

Center for Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary (CFGE): http://cfge.wm.edu

NEAG Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development at the University of Connecticut: www.gifted.uconn.edu

The Davidson Institute for Talent Development: www.ditd.org

The Institute for Educational Advancement www.educationaladvancement.org

FUTURA PROGRAM

The FUTURA program seeks to enhance and to develop the intellect of fourth and fifth grade students who have been formally identified as generally intellectually gifted. FUTURA is a pull out program where identified students receive enrichment and challenges one day a week in a center at another school. Some students receive services in their own school through the In-House Model. Students are immersed in lessons that correlate the themes Structures and Systems to the Virginia Standards of Learning Objectives for the core content areas. FUTURA offers a stimulating environment focusing on higher level thinking skills and activities including:

- Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Evaluative Thinking
**HISTORY**

The FUTURA program began in 1975, in Loudoun County Public Schools, with 100 students and two teachers. By 1989, there were 231 students in the program and four teachers. Today there are more than 1600 students and twenty teachers. There are 15 FUTURA centers throughout Loudoun County.

The name FUTURA is an original acronym that means:

- Facilitating
- Understanding
- Through
- Utilizing
- Real-life
- Application

**RESOURCES -**

**Creative kids,** published four times a year. This magazine publishes students’ work and provides teacher ideas.

**Gifted Child Quarterly,** the official publication of the National Association for Gifted Children. This journal is of interest to professionals and those with some experience in the field of gifted education.

**Gifted Child Today Magazine,** published bimonthly. This magazine provides practical advice on working with gifted children. It includes articles on research and programming. Online version is available.

**Parenting for High Potential,** published quarterly by NAGC. Articles by experts and pullouts for family use are provided.

**Kids Discover Magazine** educational and entertaining Kids Discover is a fact-filled, educational, full-color magazine that covers nature, science, geography and man-made wonders. For children ages six and up.

**Muse** is almost like hiring a private inspirational guide for your curious child. Muse, a publication of non-fiction for youngsters aged nine to fourteen, is designed to inspire and stimulate children. This magazine offers articles about such varied subjects as space, lasers, rain forests, computers, genetics, math, physics and the visual arts. Muse is sponsored by the Smithsonian and produced by the editors and publishers of Cricket.


RESOURCES - ORGANIZATIONS

These organizations’ websites also contain valuable information about gifted children and gifted education.

Local
Superintendent's Advisory Committee for Gifted Education
http://www.lcps.org/page/624
Loudoun County Parents of Gifted Students
http://www.locopogs.org/
Northern Virginia Council for Gifted and Talented Education (NVCGTE)
http://www.vagifted.org/resources.html

State
Virginia Association for the Gifted (VAG)
http://www.vagifted.org
Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
http://www.cec.sped.org/
The Association for the Gifted (TAG)
http://cectag.com/

National
National Association for Gifted Children
http://www.nagc.org

PHILOSOPHY

*Developing the intellect through inquiry and investigation*

Intellectual development of gifted and talented students occurs best when the students are challenged to inquire, investigate, reason, communicate, and collaborate with depth in a positive and supportive environment. The FUTURA environment offers opportunities for students to make cognitive connections, design practical applications, solve complex problems, and collaborate meaningfully with peers. FUTURA seeks to develop the intellect of the students through an inquiry and investigative process which asks them to make informed decisions, to practice sound judgment, to think critically, to solve problems rationally, and to exhibit creativity. This process often involves authentic applications or “real-world” situations.
LCPS GIFTED EDUCATION
PROGRAM GOALS

1. To become divergent creative thinkers who recognize problems and solve them.

2. To construct personal meaning and understanding of others and of the world around them.

3. To develop the capacity for self-assessment.

These goals provide students with support and structure for finding challenge in the school environment while encouraging students to achieve their maximum potential.

"I found the creative, hungry-for-info, "leader of the pack", and the what's the rest of the story sides of me in FUTURA."

- FUTURA Student

HOME ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

- Broaden your child’s reading by encouraging more than the reading of just novels. Encourage poetry, biographies, short story, drama, and historical primary documents and speeches.

- Write a family newspaper or create a family web page! Use it with relatives and friends. Let your child study the parts of the newspaper or website and then complete his/her own.

- When planning a trip, involve your children. Write away for brochures and guides - make the decisions together. Plan the trip and analyze gas use versus mileage. Check climate and decide what kinds of clothing to pack. Let your child keep a log of the trip and make note of expenses and interesting happenings!

- Expose your child to fine art, theater, and music. Local theaters, local orchestras and local art galleries all help when more distant or expensive exposure is not feasible.
HOME ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Diamonds in the Rough- Loudoun County Public Schools, 1991

Here are some ideas to get you started or keep you going:

- When your child writes a story or poem, or creates a cartoon drawing that shows originality of thought, send it in to the variety of children’s magazines that publish children’s work. Initiate the suggestion and help your child with the follow through.

- Encourage science and discovery. Perhaps making things more complex: a salt water aquarium or elaborate fresh water one, an exotic pet, an unusual garden, an interesting “collection,” or a scientific hobby.

- Get involved in all kinds of crafts and handwork. Children delightfully join in on such projects and can learn many crafts at early ages. Check a book out from the library or attend a local class.

- Children sometimes get bogged down in writing stories. Help students become motivated. Look for the bound books that have blank pages and encourage imaginative stories or journals. Better yet - after your child has written a story, check with some local book companies to see about having them bound professionally.

- To further stimulate storytelling, when reading a story aloud, let your child add his/her own endings. Or, cut a cartoon from the newspaper and rewrite the captions to it. Better yet, invent your own family cartoon character - it can be a very useful tool. Humor can get across many serious points!

FUTURA CURRICULUM

LCPS Gifted Education program is designed to develop 21st century skills through a concept based multidisciplinary curriculum. Gifted students will gain the ability to develop complexity and depth within the context.

FUTURA is ability based, not achievement based, and focuses on developing thinking skills.

FUTURA goals are achieved through a concept based curriculum. Concepts are universal abstracts that cross disciplines and areas of cognitive thought. Organizing topics around a concept promotes a richer integrated curriculum. Themes provide a framework with many facets to allow choice in content. In the two year cycle of curriculum for FUTURA, Systems and Structures are the overarching themes. These themes are relevant to the Virginia Standards of Learning and to life outside of school. Embedded in each of these themes are the following five essential understandings:
ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Structures Year

- Structures meet the needs of the designer/user
- Structures provide frameworks
- Structures are self-supporting
- Structures can be modified
- Structures are meaningful arrangements of elements

Systems Year

- Systems have a design
- Systems have a function
- Systems have boundaries
- Systems can change
- Systems have parts that interact

Units include a wide range of problem-finding and solving skills associated with reading, research, information analysis and evaluation, scientific inquiry, and effective oral and written communication.

THE PARENT—CHILD CONNECTION

Recognize your child’s approach to learning:

- Encourage curiosity and acceptance
- Recognize that your child may not be gifted in all areas, all the time
- Help your child deal with tendencies toward perfectionism
- Support and praise intellectual risk-taking
- Encourage problem solving and decision making
- Initiate learning experiences that will make your child think in a new way

Enjoy your special opportunity:

- Understand that your child is a child first and gifted second
- Be open-minded and consistent
- Love your child; let him/her know
- Sensitize your child to beauty in the surrounding world
- Let your home be a place where knowledge is valued and the quest for learning respected
- Support your child’s enthusiasm and curiosity
THE PARENT—CHILD CONNECTION

Develop special abilities and interests:
- Show the big, wide wonderful world to your child - museums, trips, music, cooking, and interesting people
- Help your child to learn to make choices and decisions
- Demonstrate your interest in school by volunteering and supporting it
- Recognize the fine line between encouraging and pushing your child
- Question your child; challenge him/her and let him/her challenge you

Strengthen social skills:
- Give your child age appropriate responsibilities
- Teach your child that there is no excuse for unacceptable behavior
- Encourage your child’s friendships with peers
- Structure opportunities for successful social interactions on a one-to-one basis, as well as in groups
- Allow time for ordinary things
- Play with your child - everything from board games to word games
- Talk with your child about his/her feelings and about relationships with other people

FUTURA PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

The FUTURA Performance Assessment has been carefully designed. The assessment describes skills and learning behaviors that research shows are necessary for the gifted learner. FUTURA provides opportunities for students to demonstrate and acquire these skills.

Unlike a traditional academic report card, the FUTURA Performance Assessment indicates how students are performing in terms of the expected learning behaviors and outcomes within the FUTURA program. The students have a column to assess themselves in each of the categories. Research has shown that such reflection by the learner adds value to the learning experience through increased awareness. Students are evaluated on a 6 point learning progression scale. Please do not try to compare the scale to letter grades—there is no correlation.
A series of descriptors is listed in each of the four areas of the assessment. The areas are: Thinker, Reflector, Connector, and Worker. On each of the skills, students are evaluated on a 1-6 scale. A 6 indicates the student is demonstrating that skill above and beyond the expectations set forth in the FUTURA classroom. A 1 indicates that the student has not shown ability in the given skill. If the skill was not presented that semester in FUTURA, then an N/A will be present in that area. Lower scores on this progression scale may reflect that this skill is new to the student. As the student gains more experience with this skill, it will continue to develop.

Learn avidly. Question repeatedly what you have learned. Analyze it carefully. Then put what you have learned into practice intelligently.

- Confucius

THE PARENT—CHILD CONNECTION

You are your child’s most important link to the world. Here are some things you might do to ensure that this link is strong but flexible enough to allow for growth and development.

Encourage self-awareness and a positive self concept:

- Help your child accept his/her strengths and limitations
- Allow time to daydream and to play
- Foster your child’s sense of humor
- Let him/her do things for himself/herself
- Work with your gifted child toward self-discovery and self-improvement
- Know your child’s special talents and special needs
- Remember that you can share your interests and ideas.
- Respect your child; she/he is special
FUTURA ESSENTIALS

Parent Conferences:
- Parents may schedule a conference at any time by calling or emailing the FUTURA teacher and setting up an appointment.

Withdrawals or changes in placement:
- Concerns should always be communicated directly to the FUTURA teacher.
- A parent/guardian may withdraw their child from the program at any time by written notification. A Withdrawal Form (available online) should be completed, signed, and sent to:

  Wendy S. King, Supervisor Gifted Education
  21000 Education Court
  Ashburn, VA 20148

- A request for a change in gifted services may originate from parents, regular classroom teachers, and FUTURA program teachers. Gifted service changes are made only after an effort has been made to resolve the situation. (This is in accordance with the State Approved Division Plan for Gifted L.C.P.S.)

ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES

Thinker: A FUTURA thinker recognizes problems and possible solutions through reasoning and makes informed decisions. Skills include:
- Problem Solving/Decision Making
- Analyzing – Cause & effect, recognize parts & how they work together, Identify relationships
- Creative Thinking
- Researching

Reflector: A FUTURA reflector evaluates their own products and performances and takes ownership of their learning. Skills include:
- Goal Setting
- Self Assessing
- Connector

Connector: A FUTURA connector constructs meaning through real life applications and communicates their own ideas with clarity and depth. Skills include:
- Explaining Connections (between real world and unit of study)
- Communicating

Worker—A FUTURA worker pursues challenges both independently and cooperatively in collaborative group. Skills include:
- Collaborating
- Pursuing Challenges
- Managing Time
- Producing Quality Work
NOTES ABOUT ASSESSMENT

At the end of each semester, both students and FUTURA teachers complete a performance assessment evaluating student progress in the FUTURA classroom.

Please keep in mind that assessments are based on a once-a-week observation of your child in the FUTURA program.

Additional assessments occur throughout the year.
Projects often involve assessments based on the categories and skills found on the FUTURA Performance Assessment.

Please encourage your child to discuss his/her assessment with you.

FUTURA ESSENTIALS

Lunch:
- Students may bring their lunch from home or purchase a lunch from the cafeteria of the FUTURA center. Lunch money on an account at the base school can be easily accessed at the FUTURA center.

Make up work policy:
- FUTURA students are expected to make-up class work missed on FUTURA days as deemed necessary by the general education classroom teacher and based on the student’s academic needs. Most likely, this will not include all missed daily work. The classroom teachers will explain these expectations to FUTURA students at the beginning of the year.
- Whenever possible, tests and special events should not be scheduled on the days students attend FUTURA program.
- Assignment due on FUTURA days are to be turned in on or before the day.
- Students have two days to make-up essential base school work. (Example: FUTURA on Monday means work is due on Thursday) *Please let both teachers know if this becomes a stressful issue for your child.
FUTURA ESSENTIALS

Attendance:

- Unless a student has an authorized excused absence from school, he or she is expected to be in FUTURA on the assigned day. If your child must be absent on a FUTURA day, please call the base school and the FUTURA center (an email to the FUTURA teacher is fine).

- Any change in gifted services (missing a FUTURA day) must be documented in writing/email by a parent/guardian and given to the FUTURA teacher before the change occurs. This includes staying at the base school for any reason on a FUTURA day.

- If there is a delay in school opening, students will attend FUTURA. If there is a one hour delay, FUTURA will begin one hour late. If there is a two hour delay, FUTURA will begin two hours late.

Emergency Forms/Medications:

- All students are required to have an emergency form at the FUTURA Center. Base schools provide a copy of the emergency form to the FUTURA site. Parents are requested to provide the clinic aide at the FUTURA center with any required medications for their child.

THE FUTURA DAY

All times are approximate and will vary by FUTURA center.

8:45-9:00 – FUTURA bus picks students up from base school.

9:00 -9:15 – Students arrive at their FUTURA center.

- Centers — Interest Development Center—Students work independently on a center they choose.
- Systems/Structures Investigation — Students learn through units based on these themes. Projects often include developing a product.
- Creative Problem Solving — warm up activity, strategy development, logic puzzles etc.
- Lunch
- Recess/Diversions

1:45-1:50 Students depart FUTURA center and return to base schools

Note: Students do not participate in specials at the FUTURA Center