



Loudoun County Public Schools

Gifted Education

Programs and Services

All students benefit from instruction that challenges them to reach meaningful academic goals. Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) is dedicated to providing the educational opportunity for each student to reach his/her full potential. Our mission is to identify students who are intellectually gifted and need academic challenge, and to provide advanced and challenging learning experiences to meet their academic and emotional needs. Through our continuum of gifted education services from K-12 we promote and facilitate continuous academic growth, self-esteem, self-discipline, and critical and creative thinking skills.

Identification

The identification of gifted students is designed to find gifted students from various backgrounds including students from culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, handicapped, and limited English proficient (ELL) groups in grades K-12. Students may be considered for gifted services through the screening process or by referral.

Students in grades K-5 are screened by local school Identification/Placement committees which determine the need for differentiated classroom instruction and/or school-based gifted education services. For program level gifted education services, FUTURA and SPECTRUM, students in grades 3-8 are screened and selected by a division level Identification/Placement committee to ensure equity. Middle school and high school students self-select honors level instruction and any high school student may enroll in Advanced Placement courses. The regional academic year governor's school, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology and the LCPS Academy of Science administer separate screening and selection processes.

Getting Started

A parent or legal guardian, an administrator, a teacher, a school counselor, or a gifted education resource teacher may refer a student for consideration for gifted education services.

A student may refer himself or herself.

The referral form is available on the Gifted Education Web page. Referral forms are also available in all schools. Before the process can begin, parents or legal guardians must sign a permission form giving permission for the identification process.

Also, parents can complete and submit an inventory of gifted characteristics for their child.

Eligibility Process

When evaluating a student's need for gifted education services, LCPS looks for a balance of exceptional student potential and performance.

The multi-criteria process includes these three components:

Student Performance: A portfolio of performance tasks completed during SEARCH lessons is created as part of the student profile. Parents may also submit work samples.

Classroom Performance: Teachers may provide evidence of gifted or exceptional learning behaviors through numerical ratings, anecdotal comments, and examples of student work.

Ability Testing: Aptitude Test Scores are included. Students in kindergarten and grades one, two, and three are given a Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test. This is a test that is administered individually to each student.

All second grade students are given a Cognitive Ability Test and, in third grade, a Naglieri Non-Verbal Abilities Test. These are group tests. Scores from these tests are used for students who are reviewed for identification for services after grade three.

Eligibility Decision

Each student profile is read by a committee who must reach a consensus on whether or not the profile provides evidence that supports the need for gifted services. For grades K-3, the school level Identification/Placement Committee determines eligibility and develops a Differentiated Classroom Instruction Plan for students found eligible.

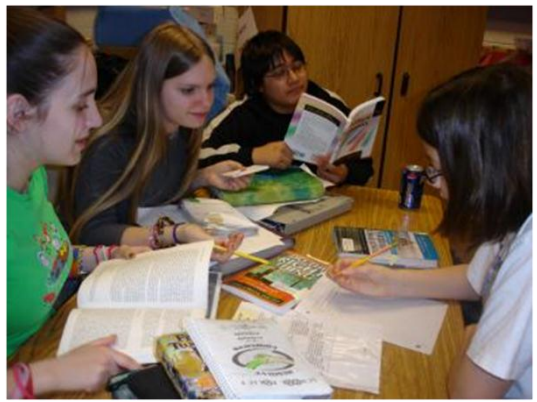
Students in grades 4-8 may be referred for program level services in FUTURA and SPECTRUM. A division level committee evaluates the student's profile and determines eligibility for program level services.

Appeals Process

If parents or legal guardians have concerns about the eligibility, placement, or services decision, an appeals request may be submitted in writing directly to the Supervisor of Gifted Education.

The request should be submitted within 10 instructional days after the notification of the decision.

Gifted Education Services and Programs



Identified students are offered continuous and sequential service options that include classroom and gifted education resource services from kindergarten through grade twelve. Students identified for gifted education services must have instructional time with age-level peers, instructional time with intellectual and academic peers, and time to work independently. Service options are designed to foster intellectual and academic growth. Instructional strategies are based upon School Division, Virginia, national, and international research-based best practices. Instructional strategies provide for differentiation in content, process, and product, and support collaboration and reflection.

Loudoun County Public Schools offers a continuum of gifted education services that meets the unique needs of the gifted learner. Through various options, students are offered complex thinking skills in preparation for challenging and rigorous coursework of honors level and AP level classes. Support and accommodations are provided for identified twice exceptional students.

Services:

SEARCH Grades K-3

SEARCH teachers provide model lessons in thinking skills to all students in grades K-3. Classroom teachers work with the SEARCH teacher to screen students for referral and identification for gifted services.

Empowering Diversity in Gifted Education (EDGE) Grades K-5

A program designed to nurture and challenge students with potential from historically underrepresented populations beginning in kindergarten. Enrichment and challenges are provided by the SEARCH teachers in collaboration with the classroom teacher.

Differentiated Classroom Instruction, DCI, is provided for early identified students in grades K-5. SEARCH teachers collaborate and plan with classroom teachers to differentiate instruction for the identified student or students to meet the needs of the gifted learner(s).

Programs:

These services are provided on a part time basis for identified students.

FUTURA is a pull out program where identified students in grades 4 and 5 receive enrichment

and challenge one day a week in a center at another school. Some students receive services in their own school through the In-House Model or Pilot Program.

SPECTRUM provides services for identified students in grades 6-8. SPECTRUM is scheduled for a half block on a rotating day basis. The program is designed to meet the needs of gifted learners with an emphasis on higher level thinking skills, problem solving, and decision making. The program provides students with opportunities for self-assessment and reflection on the demands and responsibilities of the gifted learner.

SIGNET provides identified high school students with opportunities to continue developing their higher level thinking skills through seminars, independent study/research, and problem solving challenges.

Additional opportunities and support for gifted learners:

Honors Level Instruction

Honors level instruction is available to all students who seek academic challenge and rigor. Offered in the core academic subjects, honors level instruction extends the regular curriculum with depth and complexity. This level of instruction helps students develop critical and creative thinking skills in preparation for future advanced academic work.

Advanced Placement Classes

Advanced Placement (AP) classes are open to all students and serve those students who demonstrate high achievement, interest, or potential to achieve in the advanced college level coursework. Students may qualify for college credit through AP examinations.

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST) Grades 9-12

TJ is a regional academic year governor's school that provides an innovative, specialized learning environment for highly motivated students who have an interest and high potential in the biological, physical, mathematical, and computer sciences. It offers students a very comprehensive college preparatory program in science, mathematics, and technology.

Dual Enrollment

Offered in conjunction with local community colleges, colleges, and universities, these courses provide opportunities for the advanced student to seek additional challenges and earn college credit while still in high school.

Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

In the regular classroom the curriculum is based on *Virginia Standards of Learning*, but modified with extensions, acceleration, and enrichment to provide the complexity, depth, and rigor needed to support the continued academic growth of the gifted learner. Teachers differentiate by content, process, product, and learning environment according to students' readiness, interest, or learning profile. Rigorous, challenging curriculum units are designed by classroom teachers in collaboration with gifted resource teachers to meet the unique cognitive needs of identified gifted students. Drawing from the work of Marzano and Costa, the continuum of services for identified gifted services strives for three program goals:

Gifted Education Program Goals K-12:

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 (ownership of the learning).

With a focus on issues, themes, and ideas within and across areas of study, the FUTURA and SPECTRUM programs provide sequential curricula and assessments that support and measure growth in accomplishing these program goals.

LCPS gifted services also incorporate programming standards from the National Association for Gifted Children

Professional Development

Loudoun County Public Schools employ licensed instructional personnel qualified in their assigned subject areas. The gifted resource teacher is required to meet Virginia Gifted Endorsement standards within 3 years of employment.

All teachers receive local in-service training and staff development. On-going, research-supported training opportunities that address the foundations of gifted education, characteristics of students with gifts and talents, assessment, curriculum planning and instruction, learning environments, and social and emotional needs of students eligible for gifted services may be made available through building level in-service, division-wide in-service, study groups, online or electronic communities, as well as opportunities to attend workshops and seminars conducted by experts in the field of gifted education. Gifted resource teachers may provide in-service training to classroom teachers by consultation, collaboration, co-planning, shadowing, and team teaching.

Parent and Community Involvement

LCPS Gifted Education Services and Programs offer many informational opportunities for parents and students. Informational Nights are scheduled throughout the school year to provide information about the services and identification process. Workshops and informal school “Coffees” provide opportunities for dialogue and exchange of ideas. The Superintendent’s Gifted Education Advisory Committee meets regularly to advise the superintendent and school board concerning the educational needs of all gifted students in the division.



Gifted Education Professional Development for Teachers and Administrators

On-line PD Modules on “Understanding Giftedness for Classroom Teachers” are available in VISION.

Workshops available in My Learning Plan

***National Association for Gifted Children will hold their annual conference in Baltimore, MD, November 13-16, 2014*