

FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS		Reg. No. 400-88
Subject:	GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION	Issued: 1/2/08
Preparing Office:	Office of the Superintendent	Amended: 11/17/21

I. Policy

II. Procedures

A. Overview

The Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) offers a comprehensive education serving the unique needs of academically gifted students. Gifted and talented (GT) supports provide academic rigor and challenge to students who meet the criteria for formal identification, as well as students who demonstrate a need for additional challenge, based on exceptional academic performance. The FCPS Essential Curriculum is extended through depth and complexity, exploration of specialized topics, the integration of several disciplines through concepts, and/or a variety of learning activities, which may include research and independent projects. The pace of instruction may be accelerated to better meet the needs of the learner. Both academic and social-emotional supports are provided to help the GT learner reach their full potential.

In accordance with COMAR 13A.04.07 (COMAR for Gifted and Talented Education), students are formally identified through an annual universal screening process that begins by the end of Grade 2. Prior to Grade 2, students participate in the Primary Talent Development (PTD) Program. Observations of early evidence of advanced learner behaviors during these lessons are documented. Any students who are formally identified as GT are provided academic and social-emotional supports and services through the home school. These supports may include, but are not limited to, cluster grouping within assigned grade level, specialized coursework, academic support through a teacher specialist, subject acceleration, or full-grade acceleration. Students who are not formally identified may also access these supports based on demonstrated need with specific skills. Additional information about Gifted and Talented and Highly Able Learner (HAL) services can be found on the FCPS Web site at: www.fcps.org/advacademics.

B. Identification

1. Gifted and Talented identification begins by the end of Grade 2 and is initiated through a county-wide universal screening process. Additional identification occurs within the 3-5 and 6-9 grade bands.
2. The identification pool for GT services encompasses all students. Each student is reviewed using multiple indicators of norm-referenced ability, achievement, and gifted learner characteristics. In accordance with practices for educational equity, and national research on Gifted and Talented Education, local norms are used during the identification process.

3. Grades Pre-K to 2 students participate in Primary Talent Development (PTD) lessons and observations. Early evidence of advanced learner behaviors is documented. Prior to universal screening at Grade 2, students may be grouped based on areas of strength.
4. A student may be identified for GT services and simultaneously receive other specially-designed or intervention services, such as those provided through an IEP/504 plan or those for English Learners.

C. Service Delivery

A continuum of services and specialized supports are in place for students identified as GT. These services are research-informed and match the demonstrated need(s) of the student. The goal of GT service delivery is to foster domain-specific talent development and social-emotional growth. A range of service delivery options may be available for students identified for GT service delivery. These include:

1. Early admission to Prekindergarten, Kindergarten and Grade 1 if the student is deemed eligible under Maryland law and the student demonstrates educational needs warranting early admission (FCPS Board Policy 430).
2. Primary Talent Development (PTD): PTD is provided to students in Prekindergarten – Grade 2. It provides students with thinking and learning opportunities that are not directly provided through the general education curriculum. Through PTD's early identification of advanced learner behaviors, students with demonstrated academic need(s) may participate in ability groups within the general, heterogeneous classroom setting.
3. The Elementary Cluster Grouping Model: Elementary Cluster Grouping services are provided to identified GT students beginning at Grade 3. Cluster grouping is in place when identified gifted students at a grade level are assigned to one or more classrooms with a teacher who has training on the characteristics and specialized instructional needs of GT learners. The other students in their assigned class are of mixed ability. Gifted students benefit from learning together. Cluster grouping allows students identified as Gifted and Talented to learn together within heterogeneously-grouped classrooms in the general education setting.
4. Middle School Highly Able Learner (HAL) Services: These services are provided to identified GT students in Grades 6-8, as well as any student who demonstrates advanced academic needs. Middle School HAL services may include accelerated, compacted, concept-based, and/or enriched resources. An ongoing assessment process, through pre-assessments and formative assessments, guides instruction for students accessing Middle School HAL services.
5. Highly Able Learner Intervention Support: Students in both elementary and middle schools who are identified as gifted may benefit from individualized or small group support outside of the general classroom settings. These services may be provided by a specialist within the school building or an Advanced Academic Teacher Specialist assigned to support students at the school.

6. **Specialized Coursework:** A subject specific course of study at the middle and high school levels structures an identified GT student's educational pathway. These courses of study such as Honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate Program, and Dual Enrollment options, are not limited to identified GT learners.
7. **Subject Acceleration:** Subject-specific acceleration may be necessary when a student's rate of academic growth and ability exceed the subject-specific cluster group. FCPS offers some specific advanced course options, such as the Math Pathway, for groups of students who meet the designated criteria. When subject acceleration cannot be accommodated through a specific FCPS course of study, a HAL Plan will be constructed through a partnership between the Advanced Academics Office, the school principal, and school-based specialist teams.
8. **Full Grade Acceleration:** Full-grade acceleration represents the highest level of GT service delivery in FCPS. If a student is a candidate for full-grade acceleration, a specific protocol of formal assessment and reviews is followed. Processes are in accordance with FCPS Regulation 500-10 *Placement and Promotion of Students*.

D. Appeal Process

Decisions not to formally identify a student as GT may be appealed by the parent/guardian of the student.

1. Questions or concerns about the decision should initially be directed to the school principal.
2. Should questions or concerns not be resolved, the parent/guardian may contact the Supervisor of Advanced Academics.
3. The next level of appeal, if needed, is to the Executive Director of Accelerating Achievement & Equity.

Approved:

Original signed by

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Superintendent