

Winchester Public Schools

Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted

2017-2022

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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

Section 8VAC20-40-60A 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 January 2011). 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 completed comprehensive local plan for the education of gifted students has been approved by the local school board, 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.

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General Information regarding the Gifted Program in Winchester 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.

Area of Giftedness Identified by the Division	Grades Served
General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA)	
Specific Academic Aptitude (SAA) – English/Language Arts	K-12
Specific Academic Aptitude (SAA) – Mathematics	K-12
Career and Technical Aptitude (CTA)	
Visual and/or Performing Arts Aptitude (VPA) - Choose an item.	

(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

The staff of Winchester Public Schools (WPS) recognizes that each individual is different and unique. Each student has personal interests, talents, and needs that differ. The gifted students are those who, because of their superior potential, require differentiated instruction that is stimulating and challenging in order to meet their specific educational needs. Gifted students come from diverse backgrounds and from all socioeconomic levels of society. Winchester Public Schools is committed to identifying and serving these diverse students. Once identified, a differentiated curriculum is needed to meet their emotional, social, and cognitive needs.

It is Winchester Public Schools' belief that each student's educational needs must be addressed as an integral part of the regular curriculum in grades K-12. Therefore, we are committed to providing educators with ongoing professional development to assure a quality differentiated program for identified gifted students.

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.

Winchester Public Schools will recognize a student as "gifted" when he or she has demonstrated a variety of characteristics that are indicators of giftedness in the Specific Academic Aptitude of English/Language Arts and/or Math. Such indicators may include (but are not limited to) superior performance on nationally normed ability and/or achievement tests, highly advanced academic performance in school, highly developed critical and/or creative thinking skills, advanced problem-solving skills, inquisitiveness, advanced vocabulary and/or sense of humor, and high motivation for new learning. Some of these demonstrated characteristics will be indicated through a teacher checklist of known indicators of giftedness as well as a similar input form for parents. These students' learning needs require modifications of the standard curriculum to insure that they are academically challenged throughout the school year. "Twice exceptional

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students” are students who are both gifted and have a learning disability or other identified disability who require special modifications to the standard curriculum to reach their full academic potential. WPS does not allow any single criterion to deny or guarantee eligibility for gifted education services.

Part II: Program Goals and Objectives (8VAC20-40-60A.2)

This section should include goals and objectives for the school division’s gifted education program. Specific references pertaining to each area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

A. Identification:

1. Review and revise identification procedures based on “research-based national best practices to continue to increase identification of diverse learners for gifted education services.”
2. Evaluate all current testing and screening instruments to ensure that some are recognized for their effectiveness in identifying historically underserved gifted students from diverse demographics.
3. Explore use of alternative assessments that can be used with initial screeners showing conflicting data on the student’s overall profile.
4. Implement the use of a district-wide screening instrument for all second grade students.
5. Develop a talent pool identification process for grades K-2 to help nurture the potential of young learners, especially from under-represented populations.
6. Improve communication of screening/gifted service options in order to engage parents from underrepresented populations.
7. Implement fall (grades 3-8) and spring (grades 2-8) testing windows for students.
8. Post referral forms on the WPS web site in English and Spanish and all parent permission and notification letters are available in English and Spanish.

B. Delivery of Services:

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1. Develop and provide prescribed screening lesson experiences for all K-2 students in order to identify, nurture, guide and support young learners with potential to be identified as gifted/talented.
2. Provide a cluster model for instruction grades 3-4 in English/Language Arts and Mathematics for the purposes of differentiation within the regular classroom.
3. Provide a cluster model for instruction grades 5-6 in English/Language Arts for the purposes of differentiation within the regular classroom and advanced mathematics curriculum.
4. Provide a cluster model for instruction grades 7-8 in English/Language Arts for the purposes of differentiation within the regular classroom and advanced mathematics curriculum.
6. Use flexible grouping within a grade level and/or across grade levels, acceleration, and/or enrichment as appropriate to meet student learning needs.
7. Offer a center-based model to identified gifted students in grades 3-4 through a competitive application process. The center will use an integrated science curriculum with math and/or language arts focus, based on students' specific academic aptitudes.
8. Develop and design an integrated curriculum options for eligible students at grades 5-6 in Humanities or STEM.
9. Continue to offer advanced classes in mathematics in grades 5-12.
10. Continue to offer advanced/honors classes in English in grades 9-12.
11. Offer a daily gifted extension period to EXCEL students in grades 5-6 and 7-8.

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12. Offer opportunities to participate in extra-curricular gifted extension activities.

C. Curriculum and Instruction:

1. Develop a written curriculum including extensions in English/Language Arts and math to provide appropriate learning opportunities for gifted learners. These extension lessons will include options for full class, small group, and individual instruction.
2. Offer gifted students in grades 3-12 developmentally appropriate opportunities to research topics of their choosing and/or demonstrate their creativity through writing and projects.

D. Professional Development:

1. Train new teachers in the characteristics of gifted learners and their social and emotional needs to aid in the identification process.
2. Conduct annual training for all teachers in the identification process, which will include updates on program demographics and services.
3. Conduct annual training with school guidance counselors and Honors/Advanced Placement Teachers in the characteristics of gifted learners and their social and emotional needs.
4. Present cluster and center-based teachers with training in best practices for effective curriculum design and instruction to meet the needs of gifted learners.
5. Develop with cluster/center teachers extensions linked to ELA and Math curriculum units, and as they develop extensions of their own, they will share them across elementary schools and/or across secondary departments as applicable through Google platforms.

E. Equitable Representation of Students:

Winchester Public Schools is striving to ensure that the diversity of students in its gifted program is representative of the economic and cultural diversity within its

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community. Consistent with other division goals in the strategic plan, equity of access to programs is paramount. To monitor progress toward these goals the following practices will be implemented:

1. Evaluate identification procedures annually beginning with 2016-17 baseline data, to determine if changes resulted in increased numbers of referrals and identifications of students who are English language learners, twice exceptional learners, and learners from culturally diverse and/or low socioeconomic environments. Modify these procedures according to data analysis.
2. Ensure that all publications regarding the gifted education program are accessible in both English and Spanish.

F. Parent and Community Involvement:

1. Continue to support a district-wide parent advisory committee to provide input on the progress of the goals established for program improvement.
2. Seek ideas for improving communication to parents from all economic and cultural demographics so that they understand how to access gifted programs that may be appropriate to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of their children.
3. Utilize multiple avenues of communication, including websites, electronic newsletters, and other means that may enhance communication.

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

A. Screening Procedures (8VAC20-40-60A.3)

This section should provide screening procedures for each area of giftedness identified and served by the division. These procedures should include the annual review of student data used to create a pool of potential candidates for further assessment. Specific references pertaining to each area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

Screening Procedures for Specific Academic Aptitude (SAA)

Winchester Public Schools uses an annual screening process for Specific Academic Aptitude in the areas of English/Language Arts and Mathematics. All grades K-2

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students are screened for potential consideration for gifted education services. Students can also be referred for testing in grade levels 3-12.

Classroom teachers will use student achievement data and work samples in conjunction with observations on learning characteristics noted on their WPS Classroom Gifted Screening Form to determine students who should be formally referred for evaluation for gifted services and submit referral forms to the appropriate school administrator.

To address diversity goals, WPS teachers will be trained to recognize unique gifted characteristics found in potentially gifted students from underserved/special populations.

The following screening tools will be used as additional information to aid in the referral process:

- WPS Observation Checklist Form for Primary Students (K-2) and Portfolio Form (K-2) on an annual basis
- WPS Classroom Gifted Screening Form (2-8) due by the end of first semester
- NNAT3 - Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (2nd Grade) – administered in December
- PSAT/SAT
- Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (6th grade)
- Virginia Standards of Learning Assessments

Grade Level	Responsible for Screening	Screening Materials
K-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classroom Teachers ● Gifted Lead Teacher ● Building Administrators ● Other School Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observations Checklist Form for Primary Students (K-2) ● Student Portfolio ● Work Samples
2-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classroom Teachers ● Gifted Lead Teacher ● Building Administrators ● Other School Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WPS Classroom Gifted Screening Form ● NNAT3 (2nd grade) ● Standards of Learning Scores in Reading and Mathematics (Grades 3 and 4)

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student work samples ● Available test data
Grades 5-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classroom Teachers ● Building Administrators ● Other School Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WPS Classroom Gifted Screening Form ● Standards of Learning Scores in English and Mathematics ● Student work samples ● Available test data
Grades 9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classroom Teachers ● Gifted Lead Teacher ● Building Administrators ● Other School Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standards of Learning Scores in English and Mathematics ● Student work samples ● Available test data

B. Referral procedures (8VAC20-40-60A.3)

This section provides referral procedures for each area of giftedness identified and served by the division. These procedures shall permit referrals from parents or legal guardians, teachers, professionals, students, peers, self, or others. These procedures should include to whom referrals are submitted and the timeline for the division to provide parents/guardians with the results of the eligibility process. Specific references pertaining to each area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

1. Gifted Referral Procedures for Specific Academic Aptitude in English and Mathematics:

Students in grades K -12 may be referred for the gifted program by parents.

Parents or legal guardians, community members, school staff members, other students, the student him/herself may refer in grades 2-12. Students must be enrolled in Winchester Public Schools to be considered for referral to the gifted program.

Referral Forms are available in English and Spanish and may be retrieved from:

- all school administrative offices
- the Winchester Public Schools website (www.wps.k12.va.us)
- a WPS Gifted Lead Teacher/Superintendent’s Designee

Referrals are accepted for the fall and spring testing windows. All forms must be returned

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to the WPS Gifted Lead Teacher on or before the deadline indicated on the form. For students, grades 2-12, when a referral form from a source other than the parent is received, the Gifted Lead Teacher sends home a letter informing the parent that his or her child has been referred for gifted evaluation and requests parental permission to test through a permission to test form that requires a parent/guardian signature. WPS will complete the evaluation process within 90 instructional days of receipt of the parent or legal guardian’s consent for assessment.

2. Transferring Students with Gifted Identification:

Students who transfer into the division with an identification of giftedness from a previous school division, either in Virginia or outside the state, will be automatically referred, but must meet the district’s criteria to be identified in WPS. If the Gifted Lead Teacher’s review of student records indicates the student may meet the eligibility criteria an immediate referral will be made to the school’s Identification/Placement Committee. The committee may approve immediate placement, indicating his or her area(s) of strength. If not found eligible by the committee the student will go through the full eligibility process, utilizing the next established testing window.

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

This section provides identification procedures for each area of giftedness identified and served by the division. Identification in GIA programs shall be K-12 and must include a nationally norm-referenced aptitude test. Identification in SAA programs shall be K-12 or as assessment instruments exist to support identification, and must include either a nationally norm-referenced aptitude or achievement test. Identification in CTA and VPA programs shall be at the discretion of the school division. Specific references pertaining to each area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

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

This section includes the three or more categories that divisions shall include to develop a profile or composite for each student being considered. This listing of categories should be repeated for each area of giftedness identified by the division. Please copy and paste the section below to support all identified areas of giftedness. NOTE: Selection of either item 5a or 5b or both counts as a single category.

Specific Academic Aptitude in English/Language Arts and Mathematics

- 1. Assessment of appropriate student products, performance, or portfolio
- 2. Record of observation of in-class behavior
- 3. Appropriate rating scales, checklists, or questionnaires

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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

Identification Procedures

Upon receipt of the parent or legal guardian's consent for assessment the Gifted Lead Teacher administers and scores a variety of ability and achievement tests.

The Gifted Lead Teacher distributes, collects and records teacher and parent rating scales.

Teachers are encouraged to submit samples of unique student work to the Gifted Lead Teacher for consideration by the gifted education Identification/Placement Committee.

Once all elements of the evaluation portfolio are collected the Gifted Lead Teacher completes a student profile and schedules the meetings for the Identification/Placement Committee.

The entire identification process, from receipt of the parent or legal guardian's consent for assessment until the eligibility decision is made, must be completed within 90 instructional days.

The application processes for Mountain Vista Governor's School (year-round) and Summer Residential Governor's School are rigorous processes similar to the identification process for gifted education. Students who apply for either of these programs and are accepted or identified as eligible will automatically be identified as eligible for gifted services.

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

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

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

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

Specific Academic Aptitude for English/Language Arts and Mathematics
ELEMENTARY

2 - Classroom Teacher(s) (preferably “cluster” trained)

1 - Gifted Lead Teacher

1 - Counselor

School Psychologist(s) (as needed)

1 - Principal(s) or Designee(s)

1 - Superintendent’s Designee

1 - Other(s) ESOL Case Manager (as needed)
SpEd Case Manager (as needed)

Specific Academic Aptitude for English/Language Arts and Mathematic
SECONDARY

2 - Classroom Teacher(s) (preferably “cluster” trained)

1 - Gifted Lead Teacher

1 - Counselor

School Psychologist(s) (as needed)

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1 - Principal(s) or Designee(s)

1 - Superintendent's Designee

1 - Other(s) Specify

ESOL Case-Manager (as needed)

SpEd Case-Manager (as needed)

b. Type of Identification/Placement Committee

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

Elementary: School-level Identification/Placement Committee

Secondary: School-level Identification/Placement Committee

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 or legal guardian's consent for assessment.

Eligibility for Specific Academic Aptitude English/Language Arts and Mathematics

Measure	Administered/ Completed by	Scored by	Provided to the committee by
Teacher Behaviors checklist	Classroom teacher	Gifted Lead Teacher School-based Counselor	Gifted Lead Teacher
Parent Rating Form	Parent/legal guardian	Gifted Lead Teacher OR School-based Counselor	Gifted Lead Teacher
Aptitude Assessment NNAT3	Gifted Lead Teacher	On-line through assessment company	Gifted Lead Teacher
Achievement Assessments ITBS Survey (K-8)	Gifted Lead Teacher	Gifted Lead Teacher OR School-based	Gifted Lead Teacher

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and ITED (9-12)		Counselor	
Student Work Samples/Products	Classroom Teacher, Gifted Lead Teacher	Cluster teachers	Gifted Lead Teacher
Grades SOL Scores	Classroom Teacher	Classroom Teacher	Gifted Lead Teacher
PSAT or SAT	Teacher or Counselor	College Board	Gifted Lead Teacher

Eligibility timelines specific to elementary and secondary will be provided to building level administrators and posted on the division’s website yearly. WPS will complete the evaluation process within 90 instructional days of receipt of the parent or legal guardian’s consent for assessment.

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

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

Eligibility for Specific Academic Aptitude English/Language Arts and Mathematics

The school’s Identification and Placement Committee carefully examines the multiple criteria obtained during the assessment process and determines student eligibility as reported on the Student Profile. Areas of eligibility and specific criteria are used to match the student’s needs with the appropriate level of program service. No single instrument, score, or criterion is used to exclude or include a child for eligibility. Placement options include school-based (K-12) and center-based (3-4) gifted education program services.

School-based Eligibility

Grades K–4

The student is identified gifted in English/Language Arts and/or Mathematics according to the data collected in the following areas:

- Aptitude (NNAT3)
- Nationally-normed achievement assessments (IOWA)
 - Reading Vocabulary
 - Reading Comprehension
 - Mathematics Problem Solving
- Gifted Characteristics Rating Scales

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- Parent
- Teacher
- Grades (math, reading/writing)
- SOL scores
- Student products/work samples

Grades 5–12

The student is identified gifted in English/Language Arts and/or Mathematics according to the data collected in the following areas:

- Aptitude (NNAT3)
- Nationally-normed achievement assessments (IOWA 5-8, ITED 9-12)
 - Reading Vocabulary
 - Reading Comprehension
 - Mathematics Problem Solving
- Gifted Characteristics Rating Scales
 - Parent
 - Teacher
- Grades (math, reading/writing)
- SOL Scores
- Student products/work samples

Center-based Eligibility

Grades 3-4

To be eligible for consideration for center-based services, the student must be enrolled in Winchester Public Schools and identified as gifted in one or more academic areas. The parent must complete an application by the established deadline. Existing data is reviewed and new information is collected to determine eligibility for placement the following school year. The criteria considered are as follows:

- Aptitude (NNAT3)
- Nationally-normed achievement assessments (IOWA)
 - Reading Vocabulary
 - Reading Comprehension
 - Mathematics Problem Solving
- Gifted Traits
 - Parent

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- Teacher
- Grades (math, reading/writing)
- SOL Scores
- Student products and evidence of problem solving

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.

Notification Procedures for Identification and Placement

Parents/Guardians receive written notification for the following:

- request for permission of student assessment, including individual or group testing and/or collection of additional data for Student Profile
- committee decision regarding student eligibility for program services
- request for permission regarding student placement in the gifted education program

At the beginning of the school year, parents/guardians receive information about gifted services that explain assessment and identification/placement procedures. The information is included in each school's student handbook, on the WPS website, and through informational meetings in English and Spanish.

Parents/Guardians are notified by letter when their child has been referred for formal assessment. They are asked to contribute to the process by completing the Parent Gifted Characteristics Checklist and must sign a consent form for required testing.

The Identification/Placement Committee will meet twice a year, fall and spring. The data gathered for each student is reviewed by the committee to determine eligibility based on established criteria. The committee will make one of three decisions:

- The student is eligible for services in English/Language Arts and/or Mathematics
- The student is ineligible for gifted services
- More data on a specific area, by a certain date is requested

Once the committee has made a determination, the Gifted Lead Teacher

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communicates the decision of the committee to parents by letter within 10 days of the eligibility decision. If the student is eligible, parents/guardians also receive a form for their signature giving their permission for the student's participation of services.

Parents/Guardians of students determined not eligible are notified of the appeal process, as well as the re-evaluation process. Students may be referred again once a full calendar year from the date of the Permission to Test letter has passed. A student may be referred no more than two times in K-4 and two times in 5-12, with the exception of evaluation for Mountain Vista Governor's School (MVGS).

Appeals Process

Parents/guardians who have initial questions regarding the Identification and Placement Committee eligibility decision shall contact the Gifted Lead Teacher and request a meeting to discuss and review the student's portfolio. If the parent/guardian disputes the decision, he/she may submit a written request of the appeal to the Gifted Lead Teacher within 10 instructional days from receipt of the committee's decision. The written request of appeal should include specific concerns related to the eligibility decision that the parent/guardian would like to have considered in the review.

The Gifted Lead Teacher appoints an Appeals Committee within ten instructional days of receiving the appeal. The division's Appeals Committee is comprised of at least five members, the majority of whom were not involved in the student's eligibility decision. The members may be comprised of teachers, principals/assistant principals, guidance counselors, psychologists, and a Gifted Lead Teacher. Once the written appeal is received, the GIS will have 30 instructional days to meet with the committee and collect additional data (as needed). The division-level Appeals Committee reviews all information used in determining student eligibility and any new information gathered. Only assessments administered by Winchester Public Schools will be considered during the appeals process. The Appeals Committee provides written notification of its decision to parents/guardians and school-level personnel within 10 instructional days. All decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.

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.

Specific Academic Aptitude in English/Language Arts and Mathematics

Students found eligible for the gifted program are not required to be re-evaluated for

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gifted eligibility, but there are circumstances when a change in services may be necessary. Changes in services may be recommended by a parent/guardian, a building administrator, a teacher, the Gifted Lead Teacher, or the student him/herself. No changes in placement will be made without direct communication with the parent/guardian.

If a student begins to experience academic difficulty or exhibits behavioral or social/emotional concerns that are impeding his/her learning and/or that of other students, a meeting will be held to discuss academic and behavioral concerns and create an improvement plan for the student that sets evaluation standards and timelines. The plan will be created by parent/guardians and other school staff who are directly involved with the academic, intellectual, and social needs of the student. The plan will include a clear statement that a student's inability to meet expectations within the prescribed timelines will result in change of placement to alternative service options. Written notification of the change in service will be provided to parents/guardians when a change in placement is made.

In addition to the procedures outlined above, a parent/guardian may elect to exit his/her child from a particular service (center-based program or cluster-based) for the remainder of a school year. The next year the parent/guardian may submit a written request for re-entry to the program, otherwise Winchester Public Schools will assume the exit request remains in effect.

The student does not lose his or her status as an identified gifted student in Winchester Public Schools when a change of placement is made.

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.

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1. School-based (K-12)

Winchester Public School's program of curricula and instruction for gifted learners are adapted from the Virginia Standards of Learning. The Virginia Standards of Learning is a continuous and sequential framework for students in kindergarten through grade 12. Students are cluster-grouped with a teacher trained in gifted education when available. Trained, cluster classroom teachers differentiate content, process, product, and learning environment according to the student's readiness, interest, and learning profile to meet each gifted learner's specific needs. Pretesting is used at each grade level to determine students' previous knowledge so that new learning can take place. Some opportunities are available for acceleration within grades levels as well as within content areas so that students can progress at their own speed. Students' academic needs are evaluated at the end of each school year so that they can be placed with teachers the following year where they can continue to be challenged. The Gifted Lead Teacher works with building administrators, teachers, and counselors to provide an enriched, differentiated, and challenging curriculum for our gifted learners.

Specific Academic Aptitude for English/Language Arts

Gifted elementary students will be cluster-grouped with other high-ability learners in the specific academic areas of identification in their home school. Students will be provided with curriculum differentiation and enrichment activities designed by the classroom teacher in cooperation with the instructional specialist(s) for gifted education. Learning activities that develop critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and technology skills are the focus. Additional extension activities may be provided by district-wide and/or school-based opportunities and/or learning experiences. Acceleration is based on individual need within content areas and/or grade levels. WPS gifted cluster teachers complete two courses centered on the nature and needs of gifted learners and appropriate curriculum design to meet students' advanced learning needs. Some teachers will elect to complete two additional courses independently through an accredited university to meet the state requirements for an endorsement in gifted education (K-12).

Gifted students in grades 5-6 and 7-8 will either be 1.) cluster grouped in an English Language Arts classroom and provided with opportunities for greater depth and complexity in learning, or 2.) homogenously grouped into an integrated curriculum model approach that focuses on individual student's specific academic aptitude and interests. Students will also receive research and writing

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assignments that allow them to express their creativity, as well as assignments that will encourage them to think critically and provide support for their opinions and conclusions. An emphasis will be placed on assignments that do not have a “ceiling effect”.

In high school, students will receive advanced, in-depth instruction by selecting Honors and Advanced Placement/Dual Enrollment courses. The emphasis in these courses is highly challenging literature, critical analysis, and formal writing. There are also elective options for students to pursue creative writing at the high level.

Specific Academic Aptitude for Mathematics

Gifted elementary students will be cluster-grouped with other high-ability learners in the specific academic areas of identification in their home school. Students will be provided with curriculum differentiation and enrichment activities designed by the classroom teacher in cooperation with the instructional specialist(s) for gifted education. Learning activities that develop critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and technology skills are the focus. Additional extension activities may be provided by district-wide and/or school-based opportunities and/or learning experiences. Acceleration is based on individual need within content areas and/or grade levels.

Gifted students in grades 5-6 and 7-8 will either be 1.) cluster grouped in a grade-level math classroom and provided with opportunities for greater depth and complexity in learning, or 2.) enrolled in an advanced math class. Additionally, identified math students may have the option of being homogeneously grouped into an integrated curriculum model approach that focuses on individual student’s specific academic aptitude and interests.

The advanced course option allows students to be on a sequence that allows them to complete math courses for high school credits in Algebra and possibly, Geometry. In rare cases, when resources allow, individualized education plans are designed for students who are ready for advanced content beyond Geometry.

2. Center-based (3-4) – Integrated English/Language Arts and Mathematics

The center-based program is designed for gifted students who learn at a faster pace and can handle advanced concepts of greater complexity. The goal of the program is to provide highly able and self-motivated students with an accelerated

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and enriched instructional program. The ACE Center instructors hold an endorsement in Gifted Education and work closely with the Gifted Lead Teacher to provide an accelerated curriculum with differentiated instruction to meet the unique needs and goals of each student. All WPS grade-level appropriate students who are eligible for gifted services may apply for the ACE Center.

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.

Specific Academic Aptitude for English/Language Arts and Mathematics

All identified gifted students in both service models will spend at least 50% of their instructional day in classrooms with age-level peers. Within those classrooms there will be regrouping for particular instructional purposes to meet the needs of all learners.

C. Service Options Provide Instructional Time with Intellectual and Academic Peers

This section includes a description of the instructional strategies used in the division to accelerate and enrich the content for gifted learners beyond the grade-level or course expectations for all learners. The description should include how these academic needs are met during the school day and week.

Specific Academic Aptitude for English/Language Arts and Mathematics

For K-4 students, identified students will either be cluster-grouped with other gifted students in their area(s) of strength or placed in a center-based program with academic peers (3rd and 4th grade only).

For 5-6 and 7-8 students, identified students will either be cluster-grouped with other gifted students in their area of strength, or homogeneously grouped.

Multi-age grouping will be used when appropriate in advanced classes and Advanced Placement/Dual enrollment classes in high school.

D. Service Options Provide Instructional Time to Work Independently

This section includes a description of the instructional strategies or program model used in the division to allow gifted learners to work independently during the school day and week.

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Specific Academic Aptitude for English/Language Arts and Mathematics

WPS utilizes a variety of instructional strategies that allow K – 12 gifted learners to work independently on developmentally appropriate assignments. These strategies include 21st Century Skills, problem-based learning, independent research projects, curriculum compacting, learning centers, product choice menus, independent contracts and tiered lessons. Models and strategies are chosen based on students' needs which allow classroom teachers to tailor curriculum and differentiate by interest, learning styles, and/or rigor.

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.

Specific Academic Aptitude for English/Language Arts and Mathematics

A variety of instructional strategies and program models that foster academic growth among gifted students in grades K – 12 will be utilized. They may include:

- Cluster grouping and/or advanced course offerings
- Curriculum Compacting
- Tiered assignments
- Independent study
- Alternate assignments when a student has demonstrated mastery
- Socratic Seminar Discussions (small group or whole group)
- Upper-level questioning at the levels of synthesis, analysis and evaluation
- Opportunities to debate
- Opportunities to use drama to express core content in creative ways
- Use of readers' theater and/or student-written plays to create deeper learning
- Opportunities for creative writing
- Problem Based Learning (PBL)
- Inquiry Method of Reading Instruction from Junior Great Books
- Concept based lessons
- Interdisciplinary lessons that invite connections across disciplines
- Problem finding and problem solving of "real world" problems
- Differentiated task demands

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- Accelerated and advanced reading materials
- Emphasizing the vocabulary of the academic discipline

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.

Specific Academic Aptitude for Language Arts/English and Mathematics

It is the intent of the division to develop and implement the use of progress reports twice a year for students who are served in the cluster-based model. The report will indicate the student's progress on a continuum of concept, process or product-related skills appropriate to the student's intellectual level in the specific academic aptitude of identification.

Report cards for the center-based program have been modified to align with the advanced curriculum and 21st Century skills.

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.

Specific Academic Aptitude for English/Language Arts and Mathematics

The Winchester Public Schools Gifted Education Program (EXCEL) provides services for students identified as gifted in the specific academic areas of English/Language Arts and/or Mathematics through curriculum differentiation, enhanced and extended curriculum, integrating multiple disciplines, content acceleration, and research based instructional strategies.

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The WPS EXCEL program focuses on providing a curriculum based on a conceptual understanding of subject matter utilizing rigorous instructional expectations and required authentic assessment. Utilizing the Virginia Standards of Learning and the Winchester Public Schools Curriculum Frameworks as a guide, the curriculum for the gifted is modified to meet the distinct learning needs of gifted students in the content areas for which services are provided.

Through a modification of the learning and instructional environment, EXCEL curriculum differentiation engages students in a continual growth model that promotes self-directed questioning and purposeful selection of independent or small group research targets to build students' leadership and communication skills. Student learning targets build critical and creative thinking skills, problem solving, decision-making, research, logic/reasoning and metacognition. Students' learning experiences require conceptual development through integrated content and in-depth study of major ideas, issues, and problems of interest to students. The program consists of advanced content and appropriately differentiated instructional strategies to reflect the accelerated learning pace and advanced intellectual processes of gifted learners. Specifically, in designing qualitative differentiation for EXCEL students, teachers and instructional specialists plan, share, document and implement appropriate approaches to content, process, and products at levels and pace based on student strengths, as well as their differences in preparation, interests and learning goals.

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.

Specific Academic Aptitude for English/Language Arts and Mathematics

Teachers and building administrators work with parents of students eligible for gifted services to make sure programs of study are challenging. Access to above grade-level content, flexible grouping, independent study, and advanced courses is available to these students to meet their learning needs.

High school students who have taken the required prerequisite courses may register for Advanced Placement and/or Dual Enrollment courses. Requests for courses not offered at John Handley High School will be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine whether or not an online course can be supported.

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High school students may elect to apply for the Mountain Vista Governor's School for Science, Math, and Technology (MVGS), a year-round half-day program for students in grades 10-12. Students must meet prerequisite course requirements for MVGS to be eligible to apply. Students receive advanced instruction with intellectual peers from surrounding school divisions.

While in middle school, students who meet prerequisites defined by Winchester Public Schools can take courses for high school credit taught on site at Daniel Morgan Middle School. Additional requests for high school courses not regularly offered at the middle school will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

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

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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.

Professional Development for Teachers of the Gifted

All teachers in Winchester Public Schools will receive annual in-service training that addresses the characteristics of gifted learners, their social and emotional needs, and WPS referral procedures. Professional development will also include effective use of pre-assessment, principles of curriculum differentiation, curriculum compacting, flexible learning environments, and planning and instruction for gifted learners. Training will be kept current with new research on best practices.

School-based (K-12)

Gifted Teachers who provide instruction for cluster groups of gifted students in the School-Based Gifted Education Program are encouraged to complete two courses offered by WPS that are centered on the nature and needs of gifted learners and appropriate curriculum design to meet students' advanced learning needs. Some teachers will elect to complete two additional courses independently at a local university to meet the state requirements for an endorsement in gifted education (K-12).

Center-based (3-4)

Gifted Teachers who provide full-time instruction of gifted students in the Center-Based Gifted Education Program must hold an endorsement in gifted education from the state of Virginia. Four graduate-level courses are required by the state of Virginia for the add-on endorsement in gifted education. These classes should focus on the following topics related to gifted learners:

- identification and characteristics
- instructional strategies
- curriculum
- affective needs of gifted learners

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WPS teachers seeking endorsement should work closely with the Department of Human Resources to make sure that current requirements are met. Transcripts should be submitted to Human Resources upon completion of each course. Application for endorsement should be submitted upon completion of the four required courses.

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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.

Using the division's strategic planning model, Winchester Public Schools will annually review the EXCEL gifted education program with the Plan/Do/Study/Act framework. It will consider aspects such as communication with parents, program offerings and procedures for selection of students. The Directors of Secondary and Elementary will also review data on screening, referral, and identification of students, maintaining student confidentiality. The review must be based on multiple criteria and shall include multiple sources of information. The Gifted Lead Teacher will provide appropriate support in gathering data. The Directors will present the findings and make recommendations in an annual report to the school board at a fall meeting. The Directors will select specific area(s) of the local plan for yearly review, but the school board may also request the Directors to address additional areas of need.

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

Each school division may establish a local advisory committee composed of parents, school personnel, and other community members who are appointed by the school board. This committee shall reflect the ethnic and geographical composition of the school division. This section should include the school division's procedures for the establishment of the local advisory committee for the gifted program if the division has elected to establish a committee.

Members are nominated by the individual school administrators/designees and/or the Gifted Lead Teacher and will be approved by the Winchester School Board. All efforts will be made to ensure that members nominated for the committee reflect the ethnic and geographical composition of the school division. Committee membership must include a minimum of 8 members and no more than 12. The membership must include at least one parent representative from each school. A parent with children in multiple schools must specify which school he/she represents on the advisory committee. At large positions can be filled by additional parents, community members, or Winchester Public Schools staff members. The Gifted Lead Teacher serves as ex-officio member. The voting membership must have a quorum of fifty percent of its membership to conduct business. The committee elects its own officers (chair, vice chair, and secretary) by simple majority vote.

Part XII: Assurances (8VAC20-40-60A.6; A.7; A.8; A.9)

In accordance with the *Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students*, the following assurance must be provided by the school division:

- Assurances that student records are maintained in compliance with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations;
- Assurances that (i) the selected and administered testing and assessment materials have been evaluated by the developers for cultural, racial, and linguistic biases; (ii) identification procedures are constructed so that those procedures may identify high potential or aptitude in any student whose accurate identification may be affected by economic disadvantages, by limited English proficiency, or by disability; (iii) standardized tests and other measures have been validated for the purpose of identifying gifted students; and (iv) instruments are administered and interpreted by trained personnel in conformity with the developer’s instructions;
- Assurances that accommodations or modifications determined by the school division’s special education Individual Education Plan (IEP) team, as required for the student to receive a free appropriate public education, shall be incorporated into the student’s gifted education services; and
- Assurances that a written copy of the school division’s approved local plan for the education of the gifted is available to parents or legal guardians of each referred student, and to others upon request.

Pursuant to these requirements, I hereby certify that the school division is in compliance with this language.

Division Superintendent’s Signature

Printed Name

Date