

Gifted Education

Lexington City Schools

A Parent's Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide parents, guardians, and the general public information concerning gifted services offered in Lexington City Schools. This guide is based on Lexington City Schools' **Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted**, the **Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students**, and collaborative input and guidance from the staff and Gifted Advisory Committee for Lexington City Schools. A copy of the local plan may be found on the division website at www.lexedu.org.

Lexington City Schools Administrators and Gifted Coordinators

Superintendent	Scott Jefferies	(540) 463-7146
Director of Instructional Services	Rebecca Walters	(540) 463-7146
Harrington Waddell Elementary School	Tim Martino, Principal	(540) 463-5353
Lylburn Downing Middle School	Jason White, Principal	(540) 463-3532
Gifted Coordinator	Jordan Clark	(540) 463-3532
Gifted Instructor	Laura Joyner	(540) 463-3532

Introduction

What is gifted education?

Gifted Education is a special educational program that nurtures and develops the talents and abilities of students in kindergarten through eighth grade who exhibit high intellectual aptitude and offers identified students appropriate educational experiences and opportunities. The Gifted Program in the Lexington City Schools is integrated into the total school curriculum. The program provides differentiated instruction for students through:

- Enrichment opportunities
- Advanced content and pacing of instruction
- Projects and research
- Problem solving opportunities
- Higher level thinking in academic products
- Cross-curricular study and projects

Identification

How are students identified for gifted services?

The steps below briefly describe the identification process:

1. The student, parent, guardian, peer, community member, teacher, or other school personnel submits a referral to the gifted coordinator.
2. The gifted coordinator reviews the students' sustained high performance in class and strong performance in provided enrichment opportunities.
3. The student completes the CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) screening: referred K-1 students (end of March), 2nd grade students new to Lexington or who were referred after the spring testing date (March) of the prior school year, all 2nd grade students (end of March), middle school students as referred for additional evaluation. Third graders take the full battery of CogAT tests in November. These results are used as part of the identification process. **K-2 students may be referred for participation in enrichment activities and programs. Students in grades 3-8 may be referred for gifted program identification.*
4. The gifted coordinator collects student assessment results and any other needed student portfolio data for review.
5. A committee (consisting of the principal, gifted coordinator, and other school staff) meet to review the collected student data and determine eligibility.
6. The parent(s)/guardian(s) is notified of the eligibility decision and, if eligible, permission to provide services is requested.
7. With permission, gifted services begin.

Services

What gifted services are available at the elementary level?

K-2 Approach: A Program for Extension and Enrichment

In the early primary grades, services include differentiated instruction by the classroom teacher with support from specialists and the gifted coordinator. Differentiation includes the design and/or selection of curriculum, instructional practices, grouping strategies, varied resources, pacing, and assessment of learning. Modifications are made in the areas of language arts and math where the curriculum and instruction is varied to address the individualized needs of students.

- **In-class extension:**
 - **Language Arts**
 - Instruction is designed to include whole group instruction on grade level standards and small group instruction that is differentiated by reading level. Differentiated instruction includes the appropriate materials, process, and product for the level of learning groups.
 - Writing instruction is also differentiated by varied learning levels.
 - Students are given creative writing assignments at least once per grading period and given some opportunities to self-select topics for writing.
 - **Math**
 - Math instruction includes a whole group lesson that addresses grade level standards and some small group instruction possibly combined with math centers or stations that allow for scaffolded learning experiences.
 - Pretesting may be used to identify "mastery" and plan for "challenge" or "enrichment" assignments for students.

- **Professional development** activity offerings support teachers in meeting the needs of exceptional learners.
 - A quarterly professional learning activity for K-5 and 6-8 will include the sharing of strategies and/or resources that teachers will plan for and implement in their own classrooms and share outcomes with staff at the next professional learning session. Teachers at various grade levels and content areas will have the opportunity to share strategies, projects, and resources that have been effective in meeting the needs of advanced learners. Teachers will earn recertification points for participation in the professional development activities.
- **Additional extension opportunities** may be provided for “advanced” K, 1st, or 2nd grade students through the library/computer lab and through the regular classrooms with literature, research, writing, or technology experiences that enhance the general curriculum
- **Increased collaboration between the gifted coordinator and the classroom teachers** will further support in-class enrichment opportunities. The gifted coordinator will help to set up a group e-mail, shared documents, and/or quarterly planning sessions with the grade level teams to assist with planning for enrichment/extension learning experiences in the classroom.
- In addition to services provided during the regular school day, our school division offers **enrichment programs** after school to help meet the intellectual and academic needs of students.
- **Other resources or community offerings** will be shared with families through the gifted program newsletter.

3-5 Approach: A Program for Extension, Enrichment, and Gifted Services

In the upper elementary grades, services include differentiated instruction by the classroom teacher with support from specialists and the gifted coordinator. Differentiation includes the design and/or selection of curriculum, instructional practices, grouping strategies, varied resources, pacing, and assessment of learning. Modifications are made in the areas of language arts and math where the curriculum and instruction is varied to address the individualized needs of students.

- **In-class extension:**
 - **Language Arts**
 - Instruction is designed to include whole group instruction on grade level standards and small group instruction that is differentiated by reading level. Differentiated instruction includes the appropriate materials, process, and product for the level of learning groups.
 - Writing instruction is also differentiated by varied learning levels.
 - Students are given creative writing assignments at least once per grading period and given some opportunities to self-select topics for writing.
 - **Math**
 - Math instruction includes a whole group lesson that addresses grade level standards and some small group instruction possibly combined with math centers or stations that allow for scaffolded learning experiences.
 - Pretesting may be used to identify “mastery” and plan for “challenge” or “enrichment” assignments for students.
- **Identified “gifted students”** will additionally be served through a **pull-out model** led by the gifted coordinator. Jordan Clark, Gifted Coordinator, will work with Waddell staff to schedule weekly pull-out sessions for 3rd-5th grade extension services. The time offered during the 2016-17 school year will be an increase from the current scheduled time.

- **Professional development** activity offerings support teachers in meeting the needs of exceptional learners.
 - A quarterly professional learning activity for K-5 and 6-8 will include the sharing of strategies and/or resources that teachers will plan for and implement in their own classrooms and share outcomes with staff at the next professional learning session. Teachers at various grade levels and content areas will have the opportunity to share strategies, projects, and resources that have been effective in meeting the needs of advanced learners. Teachers will earn recertification points for participation in the professional development activities.
- In addition to services provided during the regular school day, our school division offers **enrichment programs** after school to help meet the intellectual and academic needs of students.
- **Other resources or community offerings** will be shared with families through the gifted program newsletter

What gifted services are available at the middle school level?

6-8 Approach: A Program for Extension, Enrichment, and Advanced Courses

In the middle school grades, services include extension and enrichment through the English and Math programs, as well as advanced course offerings and after school enrichment opportunities. Modifications are made to the English and Math curriculum and instruction in grouping, content, learning process, products, and assessments.

- **English** teachers will collaborate with Laura Joyner, gifted support staff, to design and implement differentiated units, projects, or assignments during the year to enrich the curriculum for advanced learners.
- Laura Joyner will continue to partner with **sixth grade math** teachers to offer extension activities and support the design of differentiated units.
- Middle school students have the opportunity to complete **Pre-Algebra and Algebra** for high school credit in 8th grade.
- **Foreign Language courses** for high school credit are offered to students.
- We are in the process of researching some possible **distance learning opportunities** for students. This would allow students to take advantage of courses or studies of interest or not currently offered at the middle school.
- **Professional development** activity offerings support teachers in meeting the needs of exceptional learners
 - A quarterly professional learning activity for K-5 and 6-8 will include the sharing of strategies and/or resources that teachers will plan for and implement in their own classrooms and share outcomes with staff at the next professional learning session. Teachers at various grade levels and content areas will have the opportunity to share strategies, projects, and resources that have been effective in meeting the needs of advanced learners. Teachers will earn recertification points for participation in the professional development activities.

- In addition to services provided during the regular school day, our school division offers **enrichment programs** after school to help meet the intellectual and academic needs of students.
- **Other resources or community offerings** will be shared with families through the gifted program newsletter

Parent and Community Involvement

How can families and the community become aware and involved with gifted education?

Families and community member awareness and involvement in gifted education is encouraged through:

- Active participation in gifted activities and programs
- Read the quarterly LCS gifted program newsletter
- Membership on the local or state Gifted Advisory Committee
- Explore books and periodicals on gifted education available to parents at the local library, colleges, and universities
- Membership in the National Association for Gifted Children and/or the Virginia Association for the Gifted
- Attend conferences and local inservices featuring speakers sharing information on educational opportunities and gifted topics
- Seek student opportunities available in our local or regional communities

Additional Resources

What opportunities are available to students outside the school system?

The following programs, academies, and schools offer qualifying students opportunities for continued learning in Virginia. Please visit their websites for more information.

University of Virginia Saturday and Summer Enrichment Program (SEP)

<http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/overview-enrichment-201>

Valley Ridge Governor's School

<https://sites.google.com/a/harrisonburg.k12.va.us/gcollins/home/governor-s-schools/vrgs>

Jacob's Ladder Summer Enrichment Program

<http://jladder.org/>

Fine Arts in Rockbridge

<http://fairva.org/>

Summer Tech Camps at the University of Virginia

<https://www.idtech.com/locations/virginia-summer-camps/charlottesville/id-tech-university-of-virginia/>

