

# 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](http://www.lexedu.org).

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## 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. Gifted services in the Lexington City Schools are integrated into the total school curriculum. Lexington City Schools provide 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?***

K-2 students may have the opportunity to rotate through small grouped, skill-based enrichment activities. They may be referred for these by parents, teachers, or other school personnel.

In 2nd grade all students are screened for gifted identification; they do not need to be referred. Any student in grades 3-8 may be referred for identification.

The steps of the referral and identification process are outlined below. This process must be completed within 90 instructional days.

1. The student, parent, guardian, peer, community member, teacher, or other school personnel submits a referral to the gifted coordinator.
2. The gifted coordinator/instructor begins the process by reviewing the students' performance in class and in enrichment opportunities.
3. The student completes a nationally normed aptitude test.
  - In the spring, all second graders will take this test as a universal screener.
  - Referred students in grade 3-8 will be tested within a time frame to allow for all steps of the identification process to be complete within 90 days.
4. The gifted coordinator/instructor collects student assessment results and other needed student profile data for review.
5. A committee (consisting of the principal, gifted instructor, 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 instructor. Differentiation can be modifications in content, like different reading or spelling levels; in process, as in activities which require greater complexity or depth of thinking; in product, for instance by giving students options in how to demonstrate learning; or in learning environment by using rubrics, supports or grouping strategies. Modifications to curriculum and instruction are 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 differentiated by varied learning levels through Writing Workshop.

- Students are given creative writing assignments at least once per grading period and given opportunities to self-select topics for writing.

## **Math**

- o 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. Project based assessments will be incorporated into the math curriculum.
- **Additional extension and enrichment opportunities** that enhance the general curriculum may be provided for K, 1<sup>st</sup>, or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students through small group enrichment activities. These activities will be provided for students on a rotational basis.
- **Increased collaboration between the gifted instructor and the classroom teachers** further supports in-class enrichment opportunities. The gifted instructor provides teachers with auxiliary materials to support students who complete work quickly, as well as self-paced logic and verbal problem solving for students who need additional challenges.
- 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. These offerings are made available to students when volunteers are available.
- **Professional development** activity offerings support teachers in meeting the needs of exceptional learners.
  - o Professional learning activities are provided annually to help teachers develop a better understanding of the characteristics of gifted students and of different ways to incorporate differentiation into lesson planning. Teachers and gifted staff have the opportunity to request participation in professional learning conferences and workshops as available.
- **Other resources or community offerings** will be shared with families through the gifted newsletter, school newsletter, or website.

### **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 instructor. Differentiation can be modifications in content, like different reading or spelling levels; in process, as in activities which require greater complexity or depth of thinking; in product, for instance by giving students options in how to demonstrate learning; or in learning environment by using rubrics, supports or grouping strategies. Modifications to curriculum and instruction are varied to address the individualized needs of students.

In third grade, all students are considered for gifted identification. If found eligible, 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students can receive small group instruction, in addition to whole class services.

## **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 differentiated by varied learning levels through Writing Workshop.
      - Students are given creative writing assignments at least once per grading period and given 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. Project based assessments will be incorporated into the math curriculum.
- **Identified gifted students** will additionally be served through a **pull-out model** and through **push-in services** facilitated or led by the gifted instructor. The gifted instructor will work with Waddell teachers to schedule weekly pull-out and/or push-in sessions for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade extension services.
- 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. These offerings are made available to students when volunteers are available.
- **Professional development** supports teachers in meeting the needs of exceptional learners.
  - Professional learning activities are provided annually to help teachers develop a better understanding of the characteristics of gifted students and of different ways to incorporate differentiation into lesson planning. Teachers and gifted staff have the opportunity to request participation in professional learning conferences and workshops as available.
- **Other resources or community offerings** will be shared with families through the gifted newsletter, school newsletter, or website.

## ***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. Modifications to curriculum and instruction are varied to address the individualized needs of students.

- **English** teachers offer students instruction that is differentiated through content, process, and product. Student choice is emphasized in self select reading options and in open-ended writing assignments. In the sixth grade, writing instruction is differentiated by varied learning levels through Writing Workshop. In other grades, writing workshop strategies are emphasized.

- **Math** teachers at LDMS work to raise the bar for all students by providing them with exposure to rigorous and challenging questions/problems and by supporting them through the process of internalizing and mastering the tools that come with mathematical thinking. The school wide math curriculum is structured to support all students in their mathematical growth, through differentiated instruction and practice. Students are encouraged to challenge themselves by participating in the AMC 8 competition and in math extension time outside of class.
  - **Math 7** is a compacted course curriculum that emphasizes mastery of math 7 standards and exposes students to math 8 content. Students who successfully demonstrate proficiency in math 8 content will be recommended for **Algebra 1** in 8th grade.
- **Foreign Language courses** for high school credit are offered to students.
- **Professional development** supports teachers in meeting the needs of exceptional learners.
  - Professional learning activities are provided annually to help teachers develop a better understanding of the characteristics of gifted students and of different ways to incorporate differentiation into lesson planning. Teachers and gifted staff have the opportunity to request participation in professional learning conferences and workshops as available.
- 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. These offerings are made available to students when volunteers are available.
- **Other resources or community offerings** will be shared with families through the gifted program newsletter, school newsletter, and website.

## 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:

- Lead and participate in after school enrichment programs
- Read the LCS gifted newsletter
- Membership on the local or state Gifted Advisory Committee
- Membership in the National Association for Gifted Children and/or the Virginia Association for the Gifted
- Explore books and periodicals on gifted education available to parents at the local library, colleges, universities, or online
- Attend conferences and local presentations 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.

#### **Virginia Association for the Gifted**

[www.vagifted.org/](http://www.vagifted.org/)

#### **National Association for the Gifted**

[www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)

#### **Jacob's Ladder Summer Enrichment Program**

<http://jladder.org/>