

BOARD BRIEF

Date: August 18, 2023

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Carmen Sanders, M.S., Executive Director of Instructional Support
Megan Tempel-Milner, Ph.D., Director of Gifted and Advanced Academic Services

THROUGH: Pierrette Finney, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Melanie Kay-Wyatt., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Michelle Rief, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Advanced Academic Services (AAS) Screening Procedures for the 2023–2024 School Year

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

- Goal 1: Systemic Alignment
- Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
- Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
- Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation
- Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2023–2024 FOCUS AREA:

N/A

FY 2024 BUDGET PRIORITY:

N/A

SUMMARY:

This brief provides an overview of the Advanced Academic Services (AAS) screening process for the 2023–2024 academic school year.

DETAILS:

Each year, the office of Advanced Academic Services (AAS) provides the School Board with the annual AAS screening timeline. The screening timeline will follow the process outlined in the updated Plan for the Gifted, which the School Board approved on June 1, 2023.

Referrals:

To obtain an equitable and robust data set, ACPS's referral deadlines align with testing windows during the ACPS school year, including ability assessments, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments, end-of-quarter progress reports, a portfolio of work samples, and observations. The overall screening window for grades K–8 students will open on October 1, 2023, with referrals due in PowerSchool or

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submitted to the AAS Screening Lead by January 31, 2024. Additionally, since the 2023–2024 school year is a transition screening under ACPS’s updated Local Plan for the Gifted, there will be a fall screening window for grades 5–8. The previous screening cycle for students in grades 5–8 was fall of 2022, so ACPS has opened a screening window for students in grades 5–8 to be referred during two windows: the September 30 and January 31 windows during the 2023–2024 school year. During the 2024–2025 school year, students in grades 5–8 will follow the updated referral screening windows with a deadline of January 31, and an additional window will not be open.

Parents/guardians or teachers may write and submit referrals through PowerSchool forms, allowing seamless data management and integration of ACPS’s further adapted electronic AAS screening system. If a person is not able to submit a referral on PowerSchool, then a hard-copy referral may be obtained on the AAS website or through the AAS Screening Lead at the school. Parents/guardians may find a list of AAS Screening Leads at <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/AAS>.

Finally, grade 3 (rising grade 4, 2024–2025) students are a part of our universal screening schedule. Grade 3 is the universal screening grade level, where automatic referrals will occur for any grade 3 student who (a) has an ability score in the 85th percentile or higher on any subtest of a nationally normed ability test, (b) has an achievement score in the 85th percentile or higher on any subtest of a nationally normed achievement test within one testing period from the referral deadline, and (c) is in the top 15% of their school grade level (locally normed) for a gifted rating scale and all Young Scholars (YS) students. We encourage submitting a referral without waiting for the automatic confirmation.

Ability Testing:

With the Local Plan for the Gifted update, the testing calendar has shifted from previous years. For the 2023–2024 school year, grades 2 and 3 students will take the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). Starting in the 2025–2026 school year, all students in grade 3 will take the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT). Both tests meet the state requirement for a nationally normed abilities test to be used for Talented and Gifted (TAG) screening purposes. The CogAT and NNAT will serve as a universal screening for automatic TAG referrals for students who are in grade 3. Students who are referred but do not have any ability test will either take the CogAT or NNAT during the data collection process.

Additional Information:

The AAS Screening Lead (formally called the TAG Screening Lead/Designee) will collect updated achievement scores, gifted rating scales, and work samples through the screening process. The AAS office will send a confirmation letter to families whose child was referred through either automatic or submitted referral. Within the confirmation letter, families will receive information about the “Permission to Screen and Optional Additional Information Form” and how to submit optional student work samples to the local school’s AAS Screening Lead. Lastly, parents/guardians of Kindergarten through grade 8 students will be notified of the AAS screening process through the AAS website, AAS Screening Leads, school newsletters, and school presentations to parents and guardians, which will occur before October 1, 2023.

BACKGROUND:

On June 1, 2023, the ACPS School Board approved the updated Local Plan for the Gifted. The new plan shifts some of the previously used screening windows and processes, and this memo outlines some of

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those changes.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information within this brief.

IMPACT:

The process and timelines outlined in this brief allow schools to obtain equitable, robust data sets during the AAS screening process.

REFERENCES:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2023-2024_TAG_Screening_Timeline_and_Procedures

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