Albemarle County Public Schools
***Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted,* 2025-30**
(in accordance with Title 8.Education/ Chapter 40. Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students)

—Approved by ACPS School Board, Oct 2025

PART I: Statement of Philosophy and Local Operational Definition of Giftedness for the School Division (8VAC20-40-60A.1)

A. Statement of Philosophy

ACPS Vision: Our learners are engaged in *authentic, challenging, and relevant learning experiences*, becoming lifelong contributors and leaders in our dynamic and diverse society.

ACPS Mission: Working together as a team, we will end the predictive value of race, class, gender, and special capacities for our children's success through *high-quality teaching and learning for all.* We seek to build relationships with families and communities to ensure that every student succeeds. *We will know every student.*

—ACPS Strategic Plan

ACPS embraces a philosophy of giftedness that ensures *all* students access advanced learning opportunities.

The mission and vision of the division calls for students to engage in "authentic, challenging, and relevant learning experiences" and "high-quality teaching and learning." We are, therefore, committed to providing all students with curriculum and instruction that reflects the principles and "best practices" that have emerged from the field of gifted education[1]

ACPS conceptualizes giftedness in terms of "potential," grounded in the understanding that intelligence and other special abilities are malleable and can increase with opportunities to learn, environmental supports and student's individual interest[2].

In order for us to "know every student," students must also know themselves. As stewards of students' developing self-concepts, we must concurrently exercise care and caution labeling students in ways that message beliefs about their capacity to learn. For example, a gifted label may signal that a student's "abilities" are fixed traits, while the lack of a label may result in students prematurely internalizing a lack of ability[3]. ACPS supports students'

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[1] Tomlinson, 2022, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018.
[2] Olszewski-Kubilius, 2024; Dai, 2020; Dweck 2019
[3] Hattie, 2023; Sternberg, 2023; Ibrahim, F.,Göddertz, D. & Herzberg, P.Y., 2023

self-discovery by helping them uncover, develop, and capitalize on their emerging strengths, aptitudes and interests.

ACPS' philosophy of giftedness is guided by current thinking in the field that talent manifests in specific domains with varied, developmental trajectories.

ACPS acknowledges the interrelationship between current research and instructional practices in the pursuit of talent development:

> Talent can be nurtured via critical educational and training opportunities that lead to careers and professional level involvement**.** But in all domains, talent begins with potential, and with the appropriate opportunities and effort, potential can be developed into competency, expertise, and for some individuals, field-altering creative contributions or eminence[4].

ACPS recognizes that students have many interests and talents, some of which are best nurtured through opportunities outside of the school's capacity. ACPS also recognizes that not all students choose to pursue pathways in which they show early indications of talent potential. However, we seek to encourage all students who want to explore a domain—and even aspire to the highest level of a field—by equipping them with the supports and opportunities they need to get and stay on these paths.

Given these foundational values and beliefs, ACPS' gifted education philosophy will be enacted through a Talent Development framework—a service model for gifted education reflecting current research in the field[5].

B. Operational Definition of Giftedness

Because giftedness is a construct, its meaning has not been universally agreed upon over time, in different places, and even within the field of gifted education itself[6]. ACPS hopes to communicate broad possibilities of talent potential to our students, families, and educators through an expansive and developmental view of giftedness (i.e., "talent potential") with a sharpened focus within a discipline (e.g., "student is demonstrating talent potential in …").

Giftedness as Talent Potential

State regulations use superlatives to define *giftedness*—"superior," "exceptional," "so outstanding"—which establishes a high threshold for the designation yet leaves room for interpretation and comparison (i.e., students

[4] Olszewski-Kubillus, Subotnik, & Worrell (2021)
[5] Olszewski-Kubilius, P., Subotnik, R., & Worrell, F. (2023); Olszewski-Kubilius, P. (2024); Potts, J. (2024)
[6] Borland, J. H. (2020); Sak, U. (2021); Sternberg, R. J. (2023).

demonstrating or having the potential to demonstrate “high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment,” “beyond” or “differ[ing] significantly from their age-level peers.”)

ACPS aligns with educational scholars who assert, “All children have profiles of strengths compared to other skills and abilities that they hold. Not all strengths attain levels of exceptionality or advancement. Such strengths, however, may indicate potential for talent, provided opportunities are given and taken.”[7] Therefore, ACPS defines “giftedness” on a continuum of potential:

> *Talent Potential* is the presence of a combination of strengths, aptitudes and interests, expressed within a domain, that suggest a student could work toward excellence in that domain.

Talent trajectories vary developmentally and individually, and we cannot and should not forecast a student’s future. What we *can* do is analyze a body of evidence collected over time and evaluate that evidence on a continuum of talent potential, if and when it benefits the student to create a more precise understanding of their learning needs. This terminology does not seek to limit or predict students’ future success; rather it serves to help illuminate students’ potential, in specific disciplines at a moment in time, in order to communicate that potential to themselves, their families, and their teachers.

Specific Academic Aptitude

Because talent develops in a domain[8], ACPS will shift our definition from General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA) to Specific Academic Aptitude (SAA). This will draw a cleaner link between evidence and behaviors within a discipline and more targeted services and programming. Virginia code[9] defines SAA with the following criteria:

> superior reasoning; persistent intellectual curiosity; advanced use of language; exceptional problem solving; rapid acquisition and mastery of facts, concepts, and principles; and creative and imaginative expression…*in selected academic areas that include English, history and social science, mathematics, or science.*

ACPS values development of talent potential in disciplines not listed under these SAA specifications, which can be accessed through our robust arts programming, extra-curricular opportunities, and Scholars Studios.

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[7] Olszewski-Kubillus, Subotnik, & Worrell, 2021
[8] Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubillus, & Worrell, 2011
[9] REGULATIONS GOVERNING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR GIFTED STUDENTS.

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

A Identification

Identification must be flexible to accommodate the developmental nature of talent, as well as grounded in markers of talent of a domain and supported by standardized measures that allow for valid inferences to be drawn.

According to state regulations, the purpose of identification is to determine "students who are eligible for service options offered through the division's gifted education program. Given that ACPS Talent Development services and programming have entry points for all students, ACPS' goals for identifying talent potential are as follows:

- **help students recognize and believe in** their own potential in different academic domains;
- **use identification, not as a static/fixed label or "status" to be conferred, but rather as a way to inform** students, families and teachers about a student's emerging talent potential (i.e., strengths/assets and interests) that could be capitalized on and/or could be obscured by an intersecting variable;
- **provide structures and support for teachers** to seek potential in all students while concurrently recognizing indicators of domain-specific talent potential.

B. Delivery of Services

The ACPS Talent Development service model draws on the scholarship and recommendations of educational experts who frame gifted programming as Talent Development. Their work suggests structures should 1) capitalize on student interests, 2) include "levels of service" with increasing student autonomy, and 3) build *ascending intellectual demand* in a domain[10]

State regulations assert students with "aptitudes and potential for accomplishment [that] are so outstanding …they require special programs to meet their intellectual needs." This plan responds to that contention with a renewed focus on the systematic development of advanced learning opportunities across domains. These opportunities for advanced learning should allow all students with a keen interest in a domain to take intellectual risks in and embrace the complexity of a discipline.

The following goals guide Talent Development services and programming:

- build on existing programming across schools with which students and teachers have found success;
- provide students with support and opportunities to take intellectual risks and to explore a domain with depth and complexity.

[10] Treffinger & Selby, 2023; Reis, S. M., & Renzulli, J. S. (2023); Tomlinson et al, 2008

- clearly communicate talent development opportunities to students, teachers and families so that they are aware of and can access them.
- maintain and refine flexible service structures that reflect the developmental trajectories of different disciplines/domains and students' fluctuating aptitude, achievement, and/or interest;

C. Curriculum and Instruction

ACPS's department of instruction outlines the principles of high-quality curriculum and instruction for all students ACPS' *Framework for Quality Learning (FQL)*. ACPS curriculum frameworks are designed to incorporate recommendations for "gifted" curriculum, in which students consistently engage in work that

> is discipline-based, is anchored in the big ideas or concepts and principles that frame the disciplines, does call on students to solve problems, and think in ways that are similar to those of experts in the discipline, does help students develop the skills and habits of mind that support further development of their abilities, and does require students to create authentic products or performances for meaningful audiences to demonstrate their learning.[11]

Given that the goals of Talent Development align with ACPS' department of instruction, curriculum coordinators and talent development resource teachers (TDRTs) will collaborate with classroom teachers to:

- construct and and refine curriculum frameworks for all ACPS courses to establish blueprints for "teaching up"[12]
- enhance Tier One (i.e., classroom) instruction through emphasis on curriculum framework implementation, highlighting rigor in core programs (i.e., adopted textbook resources)
- build/expand *exposure* and *extension programming* focused on *ascending intellectual demand*[13] and *depth and complexity.*[14]
- develop formative assessments in target disciplines/courses that uncover and elicit student understanding in order to assess student thinking unconstrained by ceilings

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[11] "Those characteristics of curriculum and instruction are commended broadly by experts in education, psychology, and neuroscience as not only appropriate but as foundational for curriculum and instruction for the great majority of learners in our schools" (for example, Borland, 2003, 2018; Erickson, Lanning, & French, 2017; Pullan, Qninn, & McEachen, 2018; National Research Council, 2000; Schlechty, 2011, Sousa & Tomlinson, 2018; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

[12] "A paradigm of thinking and working that calls on educators to 'plan curriculum and instruction for students with 'high ceilings' of learning and then provide scaffolding that enables a very wide range of learners to access and succeed with that work" (Doubet, 2024; Tomlinson 2023)

[13] "Ascending Intellectual Demand" refers to providing increasing levels of challenge and complexity within the curriculum to match students' developing expertise.Tomlinson, Kaplan, Renzulli, 2002

[14] The Depth and Complexity Framework provides increasing levels of challenge and complexity within the curriculum to match students' developing expertise, mirroring the thinking processes of experts. Kaplan, Gould, Madzan, 1995

- communicate clear options and procedures for taking advanced coursework in High School (i.e.,including independent study and alternative options when courses not offered in Program of Studies online or where access may be impeded).

D. Professional Development

ACPS department of professional learning prioritizes robust learning experiences that reinforce the principles and practices in *ACPS Framework for Quality Learning.*

- TDRTs will be trained in domain-specific core curriculum in order to curate and build meaningful exposure and extension experiences.
- TDRTs will self-assess to determine a personalized learning pathway with Talent Development Coordinator
- Professional learning will be developed for classroom teachers to ensure that Tier I instruction is enhanced for all

E. Equitable Representation of Students

ACPS operates from the understanding that, while talent is equally distributed across membership groups, opportunity is not. In alignment with our vision and mission, we are committed to equitable access to opportunities.

To achieve this, TDRTs will:

- ensure stakeholders are aware of behaviors that could suggest domain-specific talent potential in different membership groups so that we can proactively look for talent potential when intersecting variables might mask students' talent potential (i.e., these might include English proficiency, learning disability, and/or a misalignment between student's lived experience and school norms)
- collaborate with teachers to develop talent profiles of student strengths and conduct quarterly audits of representation trends.

F. Parent and Community Involvement

The ACPS' mission and vision statement explicitly names
that we work together as a team, seek to build relationships with families and communities to ensure that every student succeeds, and know every student.

In alignment with our vision and mission, we will:

- Partner with families with the shared goal of better knowing their children.
- Increase communication at the division and school level that is clear, streamlined, and up-to-date so that students and families are informed about Talent Development opportunities and how students can access them.

- Leverage family and community enthusiasm and real-world experience/expertise in talent domains as community partners.

PART III: Screening, Referral, Identification, and Service Procedure

State regulations define identification as "the multi-staged process of finding students who are eligible for service options offered through the division's gifted education program." Because APCS does not put barriers on who can pursue advanced learning opportunities, a *talent potential* designation is not a required lever for access to talent development programming (i.e., service options).

The following section outlines procedures and protocols related to the creation and evaluation of Talent Development Profiles and the determination of service needs for students.

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

Universal Screening for Potential

In order to guarantee early screening for emerging potential, all ACPS 2nd graders take the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), a norm-referenced, standardized assessment.

> The results of the CogAT Form 7 full battery and screener are used to assess the level and pattern of cognitive development of students. The test measures general and specific reasoning abilities in three domains: verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal. These abilities reflect the overall efficiency of cognitive processes and strategies that enable individuals to learn new tasks and solve problems. (Lohman, 2013).

The CogAT reports a student's performance compared to a larger group, or *norming group* (i.e., students of the same age or grade level). This provides information about how a student's score ranks relative to their peers. A CogAT score does not measure "innate intelligence" (i.e., IQ); rather it measures reasoning and problem-solving skills that have developed over time. Testing experts and Virginia code caution that an assessment like this should not be used in isolation in determining an overall picture of student potential[15]. The CogAT provides one point of data in a comprehensive picture of a learner and can provide insights when triangulated with other data.

Talent Development (TD) Profile

The *TD Profile* is a collection of quantitative and qualitative student data (including student work samples) that highlights a student's strengths over time. All students

[15] Valler et al (2017)

should exit elementary school with a TD Profile initiated. Profiles consist of the following elements and data sources:

Elements	Examples of Data Sources
Assessments	Provide indicators of *reasoning*, *aptitude*, and/ or *achievement* in a domain ● Standardized assessments: CogAt, SOLS, Growth assessments, WIDA, and/or relevant domain-specific assessments ● Scales for observational, behavioral characteristics in a domain
Interest profile	Suggest *intellectual curiosity* in a domain ● Student surveys ● Conversations with students ● Exit tickets after learning experiences (after PETS K-2) ● Behavior characteristics checklists in a domain (TOPS; Renzuilli scales)
Production portfolio	Provide evidence of expression (i.e. creative, innovative) in a domain and/or reasoning and problem-solving, ● Student work samples

Table 1: Elements of a student Talent Development Profile

ACPS' goal is that students leave elementary school with a talent profile, even if the interest profile is the only robust element. In order to create a holistic understanding of a student, work in any domain of interest can be included (e.g., the arts, engineering/CS, leadership); however, only evidence in Math, English, Science, and Social Studies will be systematically collected, analyzed and evaluated for talent potential.

TDRTs work collaboratively with students and teachers to develop TD Profiles. Elementary school TDRTs initiate the portfolio starting in 3rd grade, focused on collecting evidence in math and ELA. In middle school, TDRTS will focus on science and social studies working collaboratively with students to support their developing agency.

Timeline for Reviewing Talent Profiles

- **K-8th grade, ongoing during school year:** TDRTs participate in professional learning communities (PLCs) for ongoing discussions of student strengths and interests
- **2nd grade, Spring:** The systematic evaluation of talent potential begins after the CogAt is administered. This timeframe ensures students have had opportunities to move through earlier developmental stages in a domain and allow patterns of interest, aptitude, and achievement to begin to emerge.

- **3rd-5th grade:** TDRTs review of student TD profiles with classroom teachers and administrators with focus on math and ELA.
- **7th-8th grade:** TDRTs review of student TD profiles with classroom teachers and administrators with a focus on science and social studies

This timeline outlines the ideal state for this plan. To be successful, implementation will be rolled out with intention, one grade level per year.

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

State regulations define *referral* as **"**the formal and direct process that parents or legal guardians, teachers, professionals, students, peers, self, or others use to request that a kindergarten through 12th student be assessed for gifted education program services.**"** ACPS interprets a *referral* or a *referral for assessment* as a request for a student's Talent Development Profile to be evaluated for *exceptional potential.* The following step should be taken as part of the referral process:

1) The first line of contact for a family to discuss how their student's needs are being met in the classroom should be the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher will consult with the TDRT to determine the types of differentiation the student may need.
2) If, after meeting with the teacher, a parent or guardian would like to pursue a referral (i.e., an evaluation of the student's current Talent Development Profile), their next step is to request a meeting with the school's TDRT.
3) The TDRT will contact and meet with the parent/guardian to ensure they have an understanding of the Talent Development model in ACPS, specifically:
    - Talent development programming is available to all students, built into the core curriculum, and offered with increasing intensity over time, regardless of a talent potential designation.
    - Student learning profiles are systematically reviewed annually starting at the end of 2nd grade.
    - A Talent Development profile accumulates over time; therefore, the younger the child is, the less likely they will have produced enough evidence or shown interest over time in a domain.
    - A *referral* is a formal request for a school team to evaluate a student's current profile against criteria of *exceptionality* (which indicates a student has needs that far exceed peers and have evidenced over time.) If a referral is requested and the committee does not find evidence of *exceptional* talent potential, families will need to wait a calendar year before requesting another referral.

4) If that clarifying meeting with the TDRT results in a request for a referral, parents should fill out an official request form (provided by the TDRT). The school then assembles a review committee that will evaluate the student's Talent Development Profile.

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

The following identification procedures apply to referrals to evaluate a Talent Profile for *exceptional talent potential.*

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

☑ 1. Assessment of appropriate student products, performance, or portfolio
☑ 2. Record of observation of in-class behavior
☑ 3. Appropriate rating scales, checklists, or questionnaires
☑ 4. Individual interview [if student work is submitted from outside the school]
☑ 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

Specify:

2. Additional identification information

Drawing inferences from student work that could have been completed with assistance can create issues with validity; therefore, if students and/or parents submit artifacts from work outside school, the TDRT will conduct a student interview in which the student and TDRT review the work together.

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

The following placement procedures apply to referrals to evaluate a Talent Profile for *exemplary potential.*

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

a. This section includes the <u>number</u> of persons comprising the Identification/Placement Committee by category.

☑ Classroom Teacher(s)

- ☑ Gifted Education Resource Teacher(s)
- ☑ Counselor(s)
- ☐ School Psychologist(s)
- ☐ Assessment Specialist(s)
- ☑ Principal(s) or Designee(s)
- ☐ Gifted Education Coordinator
- ☐ Other(s) Specify:

b. Type of Identification/Placement Committee

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

- ☑ School-level
- ☐ Division-level

2. Eligibility (8VAC20-40-60A.3)

The following eligibility procedures apply to referrals to evaluate a Talent Profile for *exemplary potential.*

Assessment Measures Considered

Measure	**Administered/ Completed by**	**Evaluated by**	**Provided to the committee by**
CogAt (2nd)	Talent Development Resource Teacher (TDRT)	TDRT and review committee	TDRT via ACPS Testing Coordinator/TDRT
SOLs (e.g, Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies)	Classroom teachers	TDRT and review committee	TDRT via VDOE
Growth assessments and/or relevant domain-specific , standardized assessments (e.g. WIDA if applicable)	Classroom teachers	TDRT and review committee	TDRT via VDOE
Observational scales for behavioral characteristics in a domain (e.g., *Scales For Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students*, *Traits, Aptitudes, and Behavior*s *Scale* (TABS) and/or *Teacher's Observation*	Classroom teachers, families, and/or TDRTs	TDRT and review committee	TDRT

of Potential in Students (TOPS)			
Student interest surveys & exit tickets	Classroom teachers and TDRTS	TDRT and review committee	TDRT via classroom teachers when applicable
Student exit tickets	Students	TDRT and review committee	TDRT via classroom teachers when applicable
Student work samples	Students	Reviewed by TDRT and review committee	TDRT via classroom teachers when applicable

Table 2: Instruments and data sources considered in ACPS eligibility reviews. Student work sample evidence should be housed in students' Talent Development Profile, managed at the school level.

Eligibility Process

TDRTs will manage the process of evaluating students' TD profile. This includes:

- reviewing the student's existing TD Profile to determine what data has already been collected over time
- completing a *Talent Development Profile* overview sheet
- assembling a review committee that will follow *Talent Potential Evaluation protocol* to determine the extent to which a student is evidencing talent potential in the requested domain.

The review committee evaluates the cumulative evidence in the student's TD profile in order to determine if they are showing *Exceptional Talent Potentia*l: domain-specific aptitude/strength and/or student-driven interest that has intensified over time (i.e., student has shown persistent curiosity and motivation to explore over time) and significantly exceeds age-level peers. This designation aligns with the language from the state regulations in which a student shows superior reasoning, persistent intellectual curiosity, advanced use of language, exceptional problem solving, rapid acquisition and mastery of facts, concepts, and principles, and creative and imaginative expression in selected academic areas.

Timeline

The following timeline applies to the Referral Procedures (see above, section B): If the parent/guardian decides to pursue/continue the referral after meeting the classroom teacher and TDRTs, the TDRT has 60-90 instructional days to assemble a review committee that will evaluate the student's Talent Development Profile. This broad time range accounts for a variety of factors to be considered. These include, but aren't limited to: how long the student has been in the school or division, the amount of evidence that has already been

collected, the age of the student, evidence that caregivers may be providing, the time of the school year, or other factors the TDRT will discuss with parents at the time of referral.

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

Albemarle County Public Schools offers a continuum of services that provides all students with opportunities to engage in content with increasing depth and complexity, receive appropriately differentiated instruction, and prepare for more challenging and rigorous classes as they advance in grade level. Regardless of whether the student profile indicates *emerging* or *exceptional* talent [16]potential, the committee will make recommendations for appropriate support and learning opportunities for the student based on their detailed analysis of the TD profile.

TDRTs partner with classroom teachers to highlight opportunities for advanced learning in the core curriculum and also collaborate with other educators in the building (e.g., arts teachers, media specialists, counselors) and sometimes community members to design and/or identify extension experiences. Opportunities become more specialized and focused as the child moves through school years.

PART IV: Notification Procedures (8VAC20-40-60A.4)

If an official referral has been submitted to the TDRT, parents will be sent the following written communications:

- *Request for evaluation:* a written request to the parent/guardian to permit a review committee to evaluate the student's Talent Development Profile for talent potential in the domain of math, ELA, science and/or social studies. The communication will explain Talent Development in ACPS and request permission to conduct other assessments and/or observations required, including sending checklists to be completed by the parent/guardian.
- *Decision:* an announcement of the committee's findings regarding the evaluation of the referred student's Talent Development Profile. This communication will include a summary of the review of current evidence of talent potential, as well as recommendations for further developing the child's potential. This communication will be sent within 10 instructional days of the decision and will inform a parent of their right to appeal and the process involved.

If a parent or legal guardian would like to appeal the review committee's decision, the following process shall be adhered to:

[16] Both designations will be reported to the state end of year data: Number and Ethnicity of all Students Referred for Gifted Services During Current School Year

1. The parent/guardian must file a written request for an appeal within 10 instructional days of receiving the committee's decision.
2. The appeal committee, consisting of a majority of members who did not serve on the initial review committee (e.g. a different administrator, a TDRT from another school, the division's Talent Development Coordinator), will convene within 30 instructional days of receiving the appeal. The committee may consider new information from any source.
3. The principal/designee will notify the parent of the committee's decision by letter within 10 instructional days of the appeal meeting.
4. Parents/guardians who desire to meet with an administrator to discuss the committee's decision should be given the opportunity to do so, coordinated by the administrator.

Following the notification and consent of a parent or legal guardian, the identification and placement committee shall apprise school administrators of each student's status (e.g., *emerging* or *exceptional* talent potential identified or not yet identified.)

PART V: Change in Instructional Services (8VAC20-40-60A.5)

The decision of the committee will be communicated to parents in writing (see Part IV). Parents who wish to remove a child from active participation in talent development services or programming should contact the talent development resource teacher, classroom teacher, or principal of the school. After a conference with either the TDRT or principal, families submit a written request for withdrawing the child. School personnel will honor this request. Any inactive student remains eligible for services and may be reconsidered for active status at any time.To resume participation in talent development services, parents submit a written request to the principal. The talent development resource teacher will invite the parents to a conference to discuss the return to services.

A student who wishes to remove himself/herself from active participation in talent development services should contact the talent development resource teacher, classroom teacher, or the principal. The talent development resource teacher or principal will discuss the request with the school's talent development resource teacher/principal, classroom teachers, and the student's parents. Determination of participation status will be documented by the principal after consultation with the student, parents, and talent development resource teacher.

Part VI: Evidence of Appropriate Service Options (8VAC20-40-60A.10)

A. Service Options are Continuous and Sequential

   ACPS offers a continuum of services to all students and strives to match student needs to appropriate services. Talent development is a school-wide endeavor, and a student's needs can be developed by a variety and/or

combination of people. Classroom teachers respond daily to students' fluctuating learning needs, guided by a variety of informal and formal assessments. While each school is staffed with a TDRT, they alone do not deliver Talent Development services. TDRTs share their expertise in gifted education through partnerships with teachers and students to ensure we are offering increasing levels of depth and complexity to students.

In grades K-2 TDRTs work with classroom teachers in the development and delivery of critical thinking and creative problem solving lessons to ensure that all students are explicitly exposed to opportunities for critical and creative thinking. In grades 3-5, TDRTs prioritize collaborative planning with teachers to ensure students have access to advanced learning practices and opportunities (i.e., with a focus on math and ELA in accordance with regulations for SAA). Collaborative planning between teachers and TDRTs continues in middle grades with TDRTs shifting focus to Social Studies and Science. In high school students also have access to an increasingly wider range of course offerings, accelerated course opportunities and co-curricular activities. As students mature, they become an essential partner in identifying and determining the learning experiences that will meet their needs and passions.

	Exposure experiences	**Extension experiences**	**Exploration experiences**
K-2	Introduce higher order thinking skills (e.g., deductive, divergent, spatial, analytical, evaluative)		
3-5	Stimulate curiosity and build interests	Prioritize Math & ELA, but can incorporate science and social studies when possible	
6-8	Stimulate curiosity and build interests	Prioritize Science, Social Studies and ELA opportunities (Math transitions to acceleration model through course selection)	Independent study (when possible and appropriate)
9-12	Electives & clubs to stimulate interests	Advanced levels in electives Advanced course options: AP, Dual Enrollment, IB (at Community Lab)	Independent Study Course

Table 3: Continuum of services from K-12.

B. Service Options Provide Instructional Time with Age-level Peers

ACPS students regularly work with age-level peers. Given ACPS' emphasis on *teaching up,* curriculum is ideally built with the most advanced learner in mind with scaffolding for all learners to engage in robust learning experiences together. Flexible grouping within classes means that students work in a variety of configurations that shift in duration and purpose throughout a unit of instruction.

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

Ongoing, formative assessments provide insight into where students are relative to the learning goals of a unit or lesson. Flexible grouping creates opportunities for students to engage with peers who share the same readiness for learning goals or who are similarly motivated by a topic. Extension opportunities are directly connected to the classroom objectives and enrich the learning that is simultaneously happening in the content area. These may include extended projects with intellectual peers which provide a complement to daily strategies of differentiating within the classroom to meet learner needs. In upper elementary and middle school, students who are motivated by competition will be informed of local, regional and national competitions that create an avenue for students to work with intellectual peers in an area of personal interest and passion.

In high school, students may elect to take dual enrollment courses at a college or university to earn both high school and college credit. In these dual enrollment courses students take courses at their school with a certified teacher who is also an adjunct faculty at the corresponding college or university. Students may also take advantage of Advanced Placement courses through the College Board. These courses may lead to college credit with the successful completion of the national AP exam for the course. In addition, virtual coursework is an expanding means for students to increase the range of courses in which they can participate.

D. Service Options Provide Instructional Time to Work Independently

ACPS recognizes that student engagement and motivation increase when students are able to pursue their own areas of interest and passion. In addition, the division strives to ensure that all students have access to an array of learning opportunities that will allow them to determine areas of interest and strength. From in-school projects designed by students in collaboration with teachers to coordinating field work done with a professional, TDRTs work to support students in seeking and organizing independent work.

As students mature, their role in shaping and designing independent work increases. In secondary, exploration experiences take the form of student-generated investigations, based on a domain of interest and emphasizing on student autonomy in identifying a problem or challenge situated in domain Commonly accessed opportunities include Independent Study in which students who have intellectual, artistic, or career interests that cannot be fully pursued within the existing school curriculum design a project for which they receive an elective credit and a pass/fail grade. Students may also participate in an off-campus internship in order to evaluate a career field or area of interest. As virtual courses become more widely available within and beyond the division, students may seek additional learning opportunities through courses with Virtual Virginia. Finally, Summer Residential Governor's Schools are available to selected students in Humanities, Math/Science/Technology, Agriculture, Medicine, Engineering, Visual/Performing Arts, and Foreign Language. Students selected by the state for these schools spend a month of the summer in residence on a college campus. Tuition for the students is paid by the state and by the school division.

E. Service Options Foster Intellectual and Academic Growth

Conversations about students strengths and interests and how to capitalize on them should be ongoing in classrooms and PLCs. If the eligibility committee determines a student is evidencing *exceptional talent potential*, the TDRT may engage in *check and connect* meetings with the student during which theTDRT would facilitate goal setting with the student in the identified area of potential. Services could also include a *talent push,* an interaction in which teachers and TDRTs check that students are aware of and are taking advantage of challenges available to them in their strength domain.

F. Procedures for Assessing Academic Growth in Gifted Student

ACPS views assessment as an instructional tool, employed before, during, and after learning so that both teachers and students continually know where they are in relation to learning goals. When students self-reflect on their work, they engage in assessment as learning, a key element in Talent Development. Self-assessment is its own learning process as it encourages students to critically analyze their own strengths and needs. Students setting goals based on this reflection—independently or in *learning partnerships* with teachers—supports their ability to monitor and regulate their own learning.

Classroom teachers, specialists and TDRTs engage students in a range of assessment tools that include but are not limited to:

- Reading inventories;
- Running records for math and numeracy growth;

- Key Math assessment as needed;
- Ongoing assessment and data analysis at the classroom level through PLC work with formative and summative assessments;
- PSAT (10th and 11th grade)
- Dual Enrollment or Dual Credit exams;
- AP Exams.

Part VII: Program of Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction
(8VAC20-40-60A.11)

As stated in the goals section, ACPS Talent Development programming is informed by recommendations from seminal thinkers whose work emerged from the field of gifted education. Renzuilli's School-wide Enrichment Model[17] focuses on student interest as a key lever in developing talent. Treffinger[18], known for his work on creativity and creative problem solving, emphasizes student interests and suggests programming framed by "levels of service." *The Parallel Curriculum,* whose authors include Tomlinson (leading expert on Differentiation) and Kaplan[19] (creator of the *Depth and Complexity* model), argues for curriculum that provides ascending intellectual demand in a domain.

All insist on flexibility, responsiveness and inclusivity. All emphasize collaboration among educators, students, parents, and community members to create a supportive and enriching learning environment. All refrain from classifying students into rigid categories and emphasize different ways in which students' strengths can be recognized and nurtured through various learning experiences.

The table below provides a sense of the continuum of advanced learning opportunities that exist in, complement, and expand core curriculum. These learning experiences embed advanced learning principles and practices, build in ascending intellectual demand, and are categorized on a continuum of intensity from exposure to guided extension to student-driven exploration. These opportunities work together to promote student development with a trajectory toward excellence.

While all students are invited to participate, as learning experiences intensify and student interests shift, students may become more or less interested in engaging with them.

[17] Renzulli & Reis, 2014
[18] Treffinger & Selby, 2023
[19] Tomlinson, Kaplan, Renzulli, 2002

Exposure Experiences	Extension Experiences	Exploration Experiences
Ascending Intellectual Demand →		
Highlight advanced learning practices in the core curriculum *Infuse* advanced learning practices through challenges and interest-stimulating mini-lessons	*Extend* advanced learning practices and concepts in the core curriculum through enhanced depth & complexity. Students evaluate their level of interest in the field and desire for continued involvement.	*Student-generated investigation* (in secondary) a domain of interest; emphasis on student autonomy in identifying a problem or challenge situated in domain

Part VIII: Policies and Procedures for Access to Programs and Advanced Courses (8VAC20-40-60A.12)

Albemarle County is dedicated to providing a range of opportunities to help all students meet their potential. Policies and procedures aim to support open student access to opportunities including advanced coursework. Below are several policies that facilitate student access.

ACPS School Board Policy IKEB: Promotion/Retention/Acceleration.
"The curriculum and schedule of elementary, middle and high schools will provide flexibility in placing students in programs or subjects normally considered above or below their grade level. Scheduling students into classes above or below the normal grade level should be done with counseling based on evidence of ability, past scholastic achievement, and cooperation of the individual student and his parents or guardian.

When students below the 9th grade successfully complete 9th-, 10th-, 11th-, or 12th- grade subjects, credit shall be counted toward meeting the units required for graduation in grades 9-12. Students shall be encouraged to take advantage of this option. To earn a verified credit for these courses, students below the ninth grade level must meet the same requirements applicable to other students.

Before making any decisions regarding the course or grade level acceleration of a student, a school-based intervention team will meet to review the student's current performance and academic needs."

ACPS School Board Policy IFF: Student Course Load

"Generally
All students in kindergarten through grade12 shall maintain a full-day schedule of classes (5 ½ hours) unless a waiver is granted by the Superintendent/Designee.

Course Load

With the consent of the principal, a student may be permitted to carry more or less than a normal class load.

Advanced Placement

Courses may be offered in high school to eligible students for which the student receives high school credit and which colleges or universities may accept for advanced placement or college credit.

College or University Courses

Upon the recommendation of the principal and acceptance by a college or university, qualified students may be released during school hours to take college or university courses. Tuition and transportation will be the responsibility of the student. Students may take college courses for dual credit according to the Virginia accreditation standards."

ACPS School Board Policy LEB: Advanced/Alternative Courses For Credit.

"The Albemarle County School Board will enter into an agreement for postsecondary degree attainment with a community college in the Commonwealth specifying the options for students to complete an associate's degree or a one-year Uniform Certificate of General Studies from the community college concurrent with a high school diploma. The agreement will specify the credit available for dual enrollment courses and Advanced Placement courses with qualifying exam scores of three or higher.

Beginning in the middle school years, students will be counseled on opportunities for beginning postsecondary education and opportunities for obtaining industry certifications, occupational competency credentials, or professional licenses in a career and technical education field prior to high school graduation. Such opportunities will include access to at least three Advanced Placement courses or three college-level courses for degree credit. Students taking advantage of such opportunities shall not be denied participation in school activities for which they are otherwise eligible. Wherever possible, students will be encouraged and afforded opportunities to take college courses simultaneously for high school graduation and college degree credit (dual enrollment), under the following conditions:

- Written approval of the high school principal prior to participation in dual enrollment must be obtained.
- The college must accept the student for admission to the course or courses.
- The course or courses must be given by the college for degree credits (no remedial courses will be accepted)."

Part IX: Personal and Professional Development (8VAC20-40-60A.13)

Albemarle County Public Schools is a community of learners and encourages the ongoing professional growth of all educators. ACPS' professional learning is grounded in research-based principles that support transfer to practice. Educators engage in a variety of professional learning opportunities that are collaborative, content-focused, job-embedded, and self-directed. Professional learning communities (PLCs) at the school and division levels allow colleagues to work together to share practices & reflect on their learning. Professional learning has a content-focus and centers learning on curriculum, assessment and instructional delivery.

TDRTs must hold or be working towards an endorsement in gifted education. In addition, they collaboratively further their learning through division-wide PLCs led by the Talent Development Coordinator. Meetings may include grade bands of K-12, K-5, 6-8, 9-12,and/or feeder patterns so that group TDRTs can share resources and think vertically as they explore current issues and topics in gifted education.

TDRTs also facilitate professional development opportunities. Within their buildings, through faculty meeting sessions and PLCs, TDRTs support colleagues' learning on differentiating instruction and talent development. For both TDRTs and general education teachers, the division's Opportunities Courses provide an option for focused study with colleagues. The division's professional development reimbursement program(PDRP) also supports TDRTs in formal coursework and/or professional conference attendance.

Part X: Procedures for Annual Review of Effectiveness (8VAC20-40-60A.14)

Annually, a review of the effectiveness of talent development services will be managed by the Talent Development Coordinator in order to integrate feedback and data from a range of stakeholders, including TDRTs, school personnel, parents, and students. The Talent Development Coordinator will work with the Talent Development Advisory Committee (TDAC) to identify specific areas for review each year, as well as to monitor ongoing progress on the goals set forth by this local plan. For consistency, each year data will be reviewed to study progress towards equitable representation within schools and across the division, and artifacts will be collected to document consistency in collection and analysis of qualitative evidence for identification. Articulation of annual priority areas for review will be communicated to TDRTs by the end of the first semester with data to be collected and analyzed by the end of the second semester.

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

Albemarle County will continue to have a Talent Development Advisory Committee composed of representatives from each school in the division. Members will serve a three-year term with schools having the option to rotate the type of member that represents their site (i.e., parent, administrator, classroom teacher, talent development resource teacher). The Coordinator for Talent Development may request that additional members be invited to join the committee so that it better reflects the ethnic composition of our community. Coordinator for Talent Development will coordinate the meeting structures for the committee. The committee will meet four times a year.