

Henrico County Public Schools

Gifted Education Programs

Frequently Asked Questions- Academic Aptitude

What is giftedness?

The National Association for Gifted Children defines giftedness as, “Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports).”

Characteristics of a gifted child may include:

- Thoughtfully interrelating complex knowledge from multiple subject areas
- Having exceptional insight to themes and generalizations
- Demonstrating sophistication in learning and applying new information to tasks
- Asking provocative questions which probe and analyze problems
- Giving diverse, thought-provoking responses which lead to innovative solutions
- Insightfully evaluating information and ideas
- Creating products that synthesize ideas from a variety of challenging sources
- Initiating and going beyond required assignments

What is the difference between a bright child and a gifted child?

Although each child is a unique individual and does not fit exactly any generalized description, the following information is provided to help parents/guardians understand the difference between a bright child and a gifted child.

BRIGHT CHILD	GIFTED CHILD
<i>Knows the answers</i>	<i>Asks the questions</i>
<i>Is interested</i>	<i>Is highly curious</i>
<i>Is attentive</i>	<i>Is mentally/physically involved</i>
<i>Has good ideas</i>	<i>Has wild, silly ideas</i>
<i>Works hard</i>	<i>Plays around, yet tests well</i>
<i>Answers the questions</i>	<i>Discusses in detail; elaborates</i>
<i>Top group</i>	<i>Beyond the group</i>
<i>Listens with interest</i>	<i>Shows strong feelings and opinions</i>
<i>Learns with ease</i>	<i>Already knows</i>
<i>6-8 repetitions for mastery</i>	<i>1-2 repetitions for mastery</i>
<i>Understands ideas</i>	<i>Constructs abstractions</i>
<i>Enjoys peers</i>	<i>Prefers adults</i>
<i>Grasps the meaning</i>	<i>Draws inferences</i>
<i>Completes assignments</i>	<i>Initiates projects</i>
<i>Is receptive</i>	<i>Is intense</i>
<i>Copies accurately</i>	<i>Creates a new design</i>
<i>Enjoys school</i>	<i>Enjoys learning</i>
<i>Absorbs information</i>	<i>Manipulates information</i>
<i>Technician</i>	<i>Inventor</i>
<i>Good memorizer</i>	<i>Good guesser</i>
<i>Enjoys straight-forward, sequential presentation</i>	<i>Thrives on complexity</i>
<i>Is alert</i>	<i>Is keenly observant</i>
<i>Is pleased with own learning</i>	<i>Is highly self-critical</i>
<i>By: Janice Szabos - Gifted Child Quarterly</i>	

What are gifted services for students identified in Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS)?

Grades K-3

Program services may include:

- Advanced curriculum with emphasis on 21st Century skills delivered by the classroom teacher
- Extension activities that correlate with the Standards of Learning (SOL) through the advanced curriculum delivered by the classroom teacher or the Primary Itinerant Gifted Resource Teacher
- Enrichment activities that reinforce and extend SOL skills and concepts delivered by the classroom teacher or the Primary Itinerant Gifted Resource Teacher
- Weekly consultative/support services provided by the Primary Itinerant Gifted Resource Teacher

Grades 4-5

Program services may include:

- Advanced curriculum & enrichment opportunities emphasizing 21st Century skills delivered by the classroom teacher
- *Zone Center Program option at Three Chopt Elementary or Ward Elementary Schools based on feeder pattern
- “Early-Bird” Mathematics Course 2 for highly gifted selected fifth-grade students
- Math/Science Innovation Center Saturday Enrichment Classes

*Note: Students identified in general intellectual aptitude may only enter the zone center program in September of their fourth or fifth grade year.

Grades 6-12

Program services may include:

- Advanced/accelerated curriculum emphasizing 21st Century skills for Grades 6-8 delivered by the classroom teacher
- Honors/Advanced Placement/Dual Enrollment courses for Grades 9-12 delivered by the classroom teacher
- Enrichment classes/seminars emphasizing 21st Century skills for Grades 6-8 delivered by the Secondary Gifted Resource Teacher
- Consultative services for Grades 6-12 delivered by the Secondary Gifted Resource Teacher
- Summer Governor’s School Academies for Grades 6-12

What is the Gifted Identification/Placement Process?

Gifted identification is a multistage process designed to find K-12 students from various backgrounds who are eligible for service options through HCPS gifted education programs. The multiple stages are screening, referral, and gathering of multiple criteria for the gifted identification/placement process that concludes with the determination of eligibility by the school-level Gifted Identification/Placement Team.

In what categories may a student be screened and referred for academic gifted services?

- General Intellectual Aptitude which includes both English/language arts and mathematics (K – Grade 12)
- Specific Academic Aptitude-English/language arts (K – Grade 12)
- Specific Academic Aptitude-Mathematics (K – Grade 12)

How is the screening process different from the referral process?

Screening is the process of reviewing existing, generally available, or specifically designated data for all students to determine whether students should be referred for the formal identification process. The referral process is the direct procedure that enters a student into the formal identification process.

Who may be screened for gifted services?

Any K-12 student enrolled in HCPS may be screened for gifted services in English/language arts and/or mathematics.

Note: Information regarding the screening, referral, and identification/placement processes for non-enrolled children (private school children, home-schooled children), or children moving into Henrico County is located on the HCPS website. The link is:

<http://henrico.k12.va.us/Pdf/Gifted/GiftedIDTimeline.pdf>

What is the timeline for the screening process?

There are two screening windows; October 1-31 for the first semester and January 1-31 for the second semester.

Note: For the 2011-2012 school year only:

- Students in grades 4, 5, and 6 will be screened and referred during the first semester. Only transfer students into HCPS after October 31 will be screened and referred second semester.
- Students in grades K-3 and 7-12 will be screened and referred during the second semester.

How does a student enter the screening process?

A student may enter the screening process by any one of the following:

- *Pre-Screening Checklist of Gifted Characteristics* completed by the classroom teacher
- Inquiries from parent/guardian, professional educators, community members, peers, or students
- Nationally Norm-Referenced Test Scores
- Student Work Samples
- Records of Identified Transfer Students

What automatically places a student in the screening process?

Students with qualifying standardized test scores of 96th percentile or higher are automatically placed in the screening process by the school division.

Who should a parent/guardian contact if they wish to make an inquiry regarding placing their child in the screening process?

Parents/Guardians should contact their child's school to speak with the school's Gifted Identification Coordinator from October 1-31 or from January 1-31. If the parent/guardian wishes to have their child screened, they must **send an email or a request in writing** within the appropriate screening window. Screening inquiries received after October 31 or January 31 will be considered during the next appropriate screening window. The school's coordinator will send an email or note to the parent/guardian verifying they received the request by November 1 or by February 1.

What student information is reviewed when a student is placed in the screening process?

Once students are placed in the screening process, the following information is reviewed:

Grades K-2

- *Professional Rating Scale of Gifted Characteristics* completed by the classroom teacher
- Three classroom work samples with attached *Work Sample Rating Scale*
- Informal assessments, if standardized test data is not available

Grades 3-12

- *Professional Rating Scale of Gifted Characteristics* completed by the classroom teacher
- Three classroom work samples with attached *Work Sample Rating Scale*
- Classroom grades in English/language arts and/or mathematics

How is the information reviewed for a student in the screening process?

Grades K-2

- *Professional Rating Scale of Gifted Characteristics* completed by the classroom teacher with a majority of characteristics indicated on the scale
- Two of three classroom work samples with a score of 15 or higher on the *Work Sample Rating Scale Summary*
- Informal assessments above grade level of 85 percentile or higher

Grades 3-12

- *Professional Rating Scale of Gifted Characteristics* completed by the classroom teacher with a majority of characteristics indicated on the scale
- Two of three classroom work samples with a score of 15 or higher on the *Work Sample Rating Scale Summary*
- Grades of an A average in English/language arts and/or mathematics

How does a student proceed from the screening process to the referral process?

The referral window is from November 1-15 or February 1-15. ***Only students initially in the screening process may proceed to the referral process.** Moving from the screening process to the referral process occurs in several ways.

- Automatic school division referrals are given to students with a qualifying score of 96 percentile or higher on a nationally norm-referenced ability and/or achievement test.
- Students with information gathered during the screening process that met all three criteria as described in the previous question and response.

*Note: Parents/Guardians will receive a letter from the school's Gifted Identification Coordinator with the school's recommendation of whether their child should proceed to the referral process by November 10 or by February 10.

May a student referral be initiated by a parent/guardian, professional educator, community member, self, or peer?

A student referral may only be made if the student was **in the initial screening process** during the appropriate screening window. Referrals are accepted in writing by the school's Gifted Identification Coordinator from November 1-15 or February 1-15. Referrals received after November 15 or February 15 will be considered during the next appropriate referral window.

What initiates the identification/placement process?

The school's Gifted Identification Coordinator will send the parent/guardian the *Academic Referral Form* and the *Parent Questionnaire* within the referral window of November 1-15 for first semester or February 1-15 for second semester. The *Academic Referral Form* must be signed and returned to the school by November 15 or February 15. Forms received after November 15 or February 15 will be considered during the next appropriate referral window.

What student information is gathered and reviewed during the identification/placement process?

The following information **must** be gathered and reviewed:

- *Parent/Guardian Questionnaire*
- *Professional Questionnaire with the Professional Rating Scale of Gifted Characteristics*
- Classroom grades
- Standardized test scores

The following information **may** be gathered and reviewed:

- Three student classroom work samples
- Performance Based Assessments
- Report of student interview
- Report of student observation

What is the timeline for the Identification/Placement Team to make a recommendation?

Once a signed *Academic Referral Form* from the parent/guardian has been received by the school's Gifted Identification Coordinator, the school-level Identification/Placement Team has **60 instructional days** to meet to determine the eligibility status of each student.

What kind of assessments are the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) administered by HCPS?

The CogAT is an aptitude test. Riverside Publishing states, "The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) measures students' learned reasoning abilities in the three areas most linked to academic success in school: Verbal, Quantitative and Nonverbal."

The Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) computerized *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests are achievement tests which "determines a student's level of achievement" in reading and math.

*Note: HCPS found a strong correlation between the fall administration of the MAP reported percentiles and the fall administration of the Iowa Achievement Test and the Stanford Achievement Test. Therefore, only the fall MAP scores may be used for the process.

What nationally norm-referenced tests scores are utilized for the identification process?

English/Language Arts

- CogAT: Verbal Battery
- CogAT: Composite Score
- MAP: Reading Score

Mathematics

- CogAT: Quantitative Battery
- CogAT: Composite Score
- MAP: Math Score

Note: The CogAT Nonverbal Battery of 96 percentile or higher may substitute for the Verbal Battery and/or Quantitative Battery.

Note: A maximum of two supporting test scores from the same test may be used for the process. The two scores can be: two ability test scores from the same test; or two achievement test scores from the same test; or one ability test score and one achievement test score in the area of referral.

How is the information evaluated to determine if a student is identified for gifted services?

As stated in the Identification/Placement Procedural Manual for Academics, the following criteria must be met:

Intellectual Identification

- Aptitude and achievement test scores of 96 percentile or higher require the following:
 - Five criteria supporting identification in English/language arts **and**
 - Five criteria supporting identification in mathematics

English/Language Arts Identification

- Aptitude and achievement test scores of 96 percentile or higher require five criteria to support identification

Mathematics Identification

- Aptitude and achievement test scores of 96 percentile or higher require five criteria support identification

What if a student has aptitude or achievement scores of 95 percentile or lower?

A student with aptitude or achievement test scores of 95 percentile or lower needs six criteria supporting identification in English/language arts and six for identification in mathematics.

Are nationally norm-referenced test results from other school divisions accepted for transfer students?

Test scores are accepted from other school divisions if the scores are within a two-year window from the date the test was administered.

What other tests may be used for the identification process?

For parents seeking testing outside of HCPS, the following individual intelligence assessments administered by a state licensed psychologist will be accepted: WISC-IV Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test, Woodcock Johnson Ability Test, and *Cognitive Abilities Test. The report must be on letterhead stationery, signed by the psychologist and accompanied by a copy of the psychologist's license. The results must be reported as standard age or grade national percentile scores.

* CogAT scores will not be utilized if the test is given within eight (8) months prior or post of being administered by HCPS.

NOTE: HCPS reserves the right to refuse test reports from non-accredited agencies or professionals.

What happens after the information is gathered on a student's ability and performance?

After information is gathered from multiple sources, a meeting of the Identification/Placement Team is scheduled at the student's school. The Identification/Placement Team is comprised of the principal or designee, the school's Gifted Identification Coordinator, the school counselor, the classroom teacher(s), and the gifted resource teacher. The student's parents/guardians are invited to attend the meeting.

At the meeting, the Identification/Placement Team shares and discusses the student's portfolio. The Team makes a recommendation and forwards the student information to the Specialist for Gifted Education Programs for review. The review by the Educational Specialist is to ensure consistency of the identification process established by HCPS and compliance with the Virginia Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students. Formal notification is sent to the parents/guardians from the school after the Identification/Placement Team's recommendation is reviewed and approved by the Educational Specialist.

When can a parent/guardian review the evidence in the portfolio?

Evidence is reviewed and shared with the parent/guardian at the school's Identification/Placement Team meeting. If the parent/guardian is unable to attend the meeting, they may have access to their child's portfolio at the completion of the process. The process is completed when the parent/guardian receives a copy of the Identification/Placement Team Summary from the school's Gifted Identification Coordinator.

Note: Parents/Guardians may review the information in their child's portfolio with the school's Gifted Identification Coordinator or school administrator. No copies of any information or scored rubrics/checklists will be given to the parent/guardian. Only copies of student work samples completed and collected in class may be given to the parent/guardian.

What kinds of recommendations can the Identification/Placement Team make?

The types of recommendations that may be made include one of the following:

- Identified for gifted services in General Intellectual Aptitude (K – Grade 12);
- Identified for gifted services in English/Language Arts Aptitude (K – Grade 12);
- Identified for gifted services in Mathematics Aptitude (K – Grade 12);
- Not identified for gifted services at this time; or
- Designated as monitor status.

What does the recommendation of monitor status mean?

The Identification/Placement Team needs one or two additional pieces of information to complete the review and evaluation of the student. The Team indicates the additional information to be gathered and sets a specific date the information will be reviewed. Parents/Guardians are invited to review the additional information with the Team.

If the recommendation is not identified for gifted services at this time, can the student be referred again?

Students may be referred only once during a twelve-month period.

OVER

What if a parent/guardian does not agree with the decision?

Parents/guardians receive a copy of the appeal process as described in the Identification Procedural Manual for Academics at the completion of the Identification/Placement meeting. After the identification process is complete and written notification has been received, parents/guardians who disagree with the decision may contact, in writing, the school's principal. This must be done within ten (10) instructional days of notification. All decisions made by the Division-Level Appeal Committee are final.

Who should parents/guardians contact if they want more information about the process?

Parents/Guardians should contact their child's school to speak with the school's Gifted Identification Coordinator. Also, parents/guardians may contact the Gifted Education Programs Office at 804.652.3765.

Are there websites which provide additional information about HCPS gifted education programs and the identification/placement process?

Two HCPS websites are listed below.

- HCPS Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted 2011-2016: <http://henrico.k12.va.us/Pdf/Gifted/2011-2016Gifted%20Plan.pdf>
- Identification/Placement Procedural Manual for Intellectual/Academic Aptitude 2011-2016: <http://henrico.k12.va.us/Pdf/Gifted/GiftedIDPlacementProceduralManual.pdf>