

Mecklenburg County Public Schools

Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted

2014-2019

LEA#	058		
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Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted

Each school board must review and approve a comprehensive plan for the education of the gifted. That plan must provide specific explanations of the school division's implementation of the *Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students*. School divisions, working in conjunction with their school boards, should determine the appropriate timeframe of applicability for their division's gifted plan. Historically, division plans span five years. For the technical review, the DOE will request a division to send their most current, approved plan at the time of the review. The applicable timeframe for the division's plan does not need to correspond to the collection year of their technical review. Information on the DOE technical review schedule can be found at the gifted education homepage at the Virginia Department of Education's Web site http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted_ed/index.shtml

Section 8VAC20-40-60A of the *Regulations* states that, "Each school board shall submit a comprehensive plan for the education of gifted students to the Department of Education (DOE) for technical review on a schedule determined by the Department. Each school board shall approve a comprehensive plan for the education of gifted students that includes the components identified in these regulations." To assist school divisions and school boards in complying with section 8VAC20-40-60A, the Virginia Department of Education has created this template for developing Local Plans for the Education of the Gifted (revised January 2011). This public document addresses all aspects of local services for gifted students, including, but not limited to, the area(s) of giftedness the school division will serve, an operational definition of giftedness in the division and its supporting identification procedures, program services, professional development, curriculum development, and parent and community involvement.

Each section of the plan should address specific procedures and information for each area of giftedness identified by the school division. If a school division identifies students in general intellectual aptitude (GIA) and specific academic aptitude-mathematics (SAA-M), then the section for referral procedures, for example, should reflect the specific referral procedures for GIA and SAA-M. Throughout the local plan template, school divisions may need to copy and paste the drop down boxes, the insert text form fields, and any pertinent information for each area of giftedness identified by the division. In order to be able to 'choose an item' from a drop down box, simply right click on the highlighted 'choose an item' wording and the drop down arrow should appear on the right. Right clicking on the arrow will then allow the drop down box choices to appear. If certain procedures or policies apply to more than one area of giftedness, simply copy and paste the drop down selection box to reflect all areas of giftedness that are applicable to the procedures or policy.

Once the completed comprehensive local plan for the education of gifted students has been approved by the local school board, the plan shall be accessible to the public through the division's Web site. The division shall ensure that printed copies of the plan are available to citizens who do not have online access.

For more information, contact the Virginia Department of Education specialist for Governor's Schools and Gifted Education at 804-225-2884.

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General Information regarding the Gifted Program in Mecklenburg County

In section 8VAC20-40-40A of the *Regulations*, divisions are required to screen, refer, identify, and serve gifted students in at least general intellectual aptitude or specific academic aptitude. School divisions may identify and serve gifted students in career and technical aptitude or visual or performing arts aptitude, or both, at their discretion. On the chart below, please indicate all areas of giftedness that are identified and served within the division. Please copy and paste any additional rows as might be needed to address all areas in Specific Academic Aptitude and/or Visual and/or Performing Arts that are identified by the school division.

Area of Giftedness Identified by the Division	Grades Served
General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA)	K-12
Visual and/or Performing Arts Aptitude (VPA) - Visual Arts	K-12

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

A. Division Statement of Philosophy for the Education of Gifted Students

We recognize that students of exceptional ability have the right to an education commensurate with their unique abilities. These exceptional children require a differentiated academic program that considers individual learning styles and unique capabilities. Mecklenburg County Public Schools is committed to identifying gifted students in kindergarten through grade twelve, and to provide these students with services that challenge them to expand their critical and creative thinking abilities.

B. Division Operational Definition of Giftedness

This section should include an operational definition for each area of giftedness (general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, visual and/or performing arts aptitude, or career and technical aptitude) identified and served by the division. An operational definition provides the concrete, observable, and/or measurable criteria for ‘giftedness’ used by the division in the identification process. Such a definition might include a listing of the evidence of student readiness for gifted educational services, e.g. evidence of gifted behaviors as determined by a valid and reliable teacher checklist or evidence of superior academic performance based on a norm-referenced assessment of aptitude.

General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA) - Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate 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 across a broad range of intellectual disciplines beyond their age-level peers. General intellectual ability is measured by tests of general aptitude with scores in the 95%-ile and above. We also use achievement test data in all core subjects, grades, student work samples and teacher/parent rating scales.

Visual or Performing Arts Aptitude(VPA)- Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate superior creative reasoning and imaginative expression; persistent artistic curiosity; and advanced acquisition and mastery of techniques, perspectives, concepts, and principles beyond their age-level peers in visual or performing arts. Visual and performing arts ability is measured by teacher/parent rating scales, student portfolio and observed student art work.

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

This section should include goals and objectives for the school division's gifted education program. Specific references pertaining to each area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

A. Identification: To provide a systematic identification process based upon research-based best practices that align with the delivery of services.

1. Continue to provide staff development for teachers and administrators in referral and identification of gifted and talented students, with an emphasis on identification of underrepresented student populations.
2. Collect data and analyze current identification practices to determine level of effectiveness.

B. Delivery of Services: To provide a continuum of services in grades K-12 which address the needs of identified gifted students.

1. Identify outcomes for gifted students at each level, elementary, middle and high.
2. Align curriculum to identified outcomes.
3. Increase enrichment opportunities for gifted students.

C. Curriculum and Instruction: To provide differentiated curriculum and instructional opportunities which reflect the unique needs of gifted students.

1. Design differentiated curriculum that attends to the cognitive and affective needs of gifted learners.
2. Provide regular classroom teachers with information on gifted students' learning profile to assist in differentiation in the regular classroom setting.

D. Professional Development: To provide professional development for all school staff on identification and educational needs of gifted and talented students.

1. To continue to provide professional development to all staff on identification procedures and the educational needs of gifted and talented students.
2. To provide professional development to all staff on differentiation of instruction and student centered learning.

E. Equitable Representation of Students: To research and implement best practices for identifying students from the underrepresented populations.

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1. To continue to research best practices for identification of students from underrepresented populations.
2. Collect and analyze data on current identification practices to determine level of effectiveness in identifying students from underrepresented populations.
3. Revise current identification procedures, as necessary, based on data and research.
4. To provide staff development to teachers in the characteristics and needs of students from underrepresented populations.

F. Parent and Community Involvement: To promote the awareness of the unique needs of gifted students among parents, school staff, and the community.

1. To continue to increase awareness of programs and opportunities for gifted students through e-mail, website and brochures.
2. To provide information on the characteristics and needs of gifted students through parent workshops and the MCPS website.

Part III: Screening, Referral, Identification, and Service Procedures

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

This section should provide screening procedures for each area of giftedness identified and served by the division. These procedures should include the annual review of student data used to create a pool of potential candidates for further assessment. Specific references pertaining to each area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

Screening Procedures for General Intellectual Aptitude

Screening students for gifted services occurs annually and is completed on an on-going basis in grades K-12 through the review of student data. There is no limit to the number of times a student may be referred for gifted services; however, a student can only be tested once a year. Referrals can be submitted by parents/guardians, students, teachers, or administrators, who may have knowledge or expertise to make such a referral including community members, or by any other appropriate school personnel.

In addition to the annual screening, all students in grades 2 are given the NNAT (Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test) and students in grade 4 are given the OLSAT (Otis Lennon School Ability Test). Based on the results from these tests and teacher input, students are recommended for further testing.

Screening Procedures for VPA - Visual Arts

Screening students for the visual arts program is conducted annually by the classroom teachers, art teachers, and gifted resource teachers. Referrals can be submitted by parents/guardians, students, teachers, or other persons who may have knowledge or expertise to make such a referral. In addition, all students in grades 2 and 5 complete an Observed Art demonstration. Based on the results, students are referred and asked to complete a portfolio of art work to be evaluated by the Art Selection Committee.

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

This section provides referral procedures for each area of giftedness identified and served by the division. These procedures shall permit referrals from parents or legal guardians, teachers, professionals, students, peers, self, or others. These procedures should include to whom referrals are submitted and the timeline for the division to provide parents/guardians with the results of the eligibility process. Specific references pertaining to each area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

Referral procedures for General Intellectual Aptitude

Direct referrals are accepted throughout the school year. The eligibility process is organized into 3 cycles annually. Students who have completed referrals (referral form, permission to test, parent checklist) by each deadline will be tested and considered during that cycle. Incomplete referrals will be deferred to the next cycle.

<u>Completed Referral</u>	<u>Eligibility Notification</u>
October 1	December 15
December 1	March 15
March 1	June 15

Specific dates are established and publicized annually based on the school year calendar.

Parents of those students referred must provide written consent for formal testing. Parents, teachers, administrators, students, school staff and community members may refer students. Referral forms are available from the following sources:

- the guidance office in each school
- gifted education teachers
- gifted education contacts
- the Gifted and Talented Education Coordinator

Referral forms may be returned to classroom teachers, the gifted education teachers or contacts, guidance counselors, or the Gifted and Talented Education Coordinator.

A brochure describing the referral process is available in the guidance office of each school, or through the gifted education contact at each school.

Transfer students who have documentation of participation in another instructional gifted program will have their records reviewed by the Gifted and Talented Education Coordinator. Placement or testing in the Mecklenburg County Gifted and Talented Education Program will be made upon the recommendation of the Gifted and Talented Education Coordinator. Retesting, when necessary, will occur within 45 instructional days of confirmation of previous participation with the gifted program in the previous school. Participation in another city or county's instructional program

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does not automatically guarantee placement in Mecklenburg County Public School's Gifted and Talented Education Program.

Students who have been referred and do not meet the criteria must wait one calendar year before retesting may occur.

Students found eligible to attend the The Governor's School of Southside Virginia will be considered by Mecklenburg County Public Schools as gifted, and will be eligible for gifted services. Eligibility for the The Governor's School of Southside Virginia requires an application process.

Referral procedures for VPA - Visual Arts

Direct referrals are accepted throughout the school year. The Art Selection Committee will meet three times each year to score portfolios. Students who have completed referrals (referral and parent checklist) and a complete portfolio by each deadline will be considered during that cycle. Incomplete referrals or portfolios will be deferred to the next cycle.

<u>Completed Referral</u>	<u>Eligibility Notification</u>
October 1	October 30
January 5	January 30
June 1	June 30

Specific dates are established and publicized annually based on the school year calendar.

Parents of those students referred must provide written consent for formal evaluation. Parents, teachers, administrators, and school staff may refer students. Referral forms are available from the following sources:

- gifted education Art teachers
- the guidance office in each school
- the Gifted and Talented Education Coordinator

Referral forms may be returned to classroom teachers, the gifted education teachers or contacts, art teachers, guidance counselors, or the Gifted and Talented Education Coordinator.

A brochure describing the referral process is available in the guidance office of each school, or through the gifted education contact at each school.

Transfer students who have documentation of participation in another instructional gifted program will have their records reviewed by the Gifted and Talented Education Coordinator. Placement or evaluation in the Mecklenburg County Gifted and Talented Education Program will be made upon the recommendation of the Gifted

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and Talented Education Coordinator. Re-evaluation, when necessary, will occur within 30 instructional days of submission of completed referral and portfolio. Participation in another city or county's Visual and Performing Arts program does not automatically guarantee placement in Mecklenburg County Public School's Gifted and Talented Education Program.

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

This section provides identification procedures for each area of giftedness identified and served by the division. Identification in GIA programs shall be K-12 and must include a nationally norm-referenced aptitude test. Identification in SAA programs shall be K-12 or as assessment instruments exist to support identification, and must include either a nationally norm-referenced aptitude or achievement test. Identification in CTA and VPA programs shall be at the discretion of the school division. Specific references pertaining to each area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

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

This section includes the three or more criteria that are used by the division to develop a profile or composite for each student being considered. This listing of criteria should be repeated for each area of giftedness identified by the division. Please copy and paste the section below to support all identified areas of giftedness. NOTE: No single instrument, score, or criterion may be used to exclude or include a child for eligibility. Selection of either item 5a or 5b or both counts as a single criteria.

General Intellectual Aptitude

- 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
- 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:

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VPA - Visual Arts

- 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
- 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:

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

This section provides procedures for the placement of gifted students in each area of giftedness identified and served by the division. These procedures include information about the identification and placement committee.

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

- a. This section includes the **number** of persons comprising the Identification/Placement Committee by category.

General Intellectual Aptitude

- Classroom Teacher(s)
- Gifted Education Resource Teacher(s)
- Counselor(s)
- School Psychologist(s)
- Assessment Specialist(s)
- Principal(s) or Designee(s)
- Gifted Education Coordinator
- Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted

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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

VPA - Visual Arts

Classroom Teacher(s)

Gifted Education Resource Teacher(s)

Counselor(s)

School Psychologist(s)

Assessment Specialist(s)

Principal(s) or Designee(s)

1 Gifted Education Coordinator

6+ Other(s) Specify: Division-wide Art Teachers

c. 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)

This section includes a chart detailing all criteria that could be considered in the identification process for a specific area of giftedness identified by the division. A description of the eligibility process used by the committee to make decisions regarding eligibility for services shall follow the chart. It includes a timeline for making eligibility decisions within 90 instructional days of the school division's receipt of the parent's(s') or legal guardian's(s') consent for assessment.

General Intellectual Aptitude

Measure	Administered/ Completed by	Scored by	Provided to the committee by
OLSAT	Gifted Resource Teacher	Gifted Resource Teacher	Gifted Coordinator
NNAT	Gifted Resource Teacher	Gifted Resource Teacher	Gifted Coordinator
ITBS (Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies)	Gifted Resource Teacher	Gifted Resource Teacher	Gifted Coordinator
Grades	Gifted Resource Teacher	n/a	Gifted Coordinator
Student Work Samples	Gifted Resource Teacher	Gifted Resource Teacher/Gifted Coordinator	Gifted Coordinator
Teacher Behavior Checklist	Regular Education Teacher(s)	Gifted Resource Teacher	Gifted Coordinator
Parent Behavior Checklist	Parent	Gifted Resource Teacher	Gifted Coordinator

A multi-disciplinary committee will review assessment information of students referred for consideration for the gifted program. This committee will be comprised of the following:

- Gifted and Talented Education Coordinator
- Gifted Education Teacher
- Classroom Teacher(s)
- Guidance Counselor
- Administrator or designee from the child's school who serves as an advocate for the child

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- Additionally, building contacts or general education teachers who know the child and may be asked to serve as an advocate for the child on a case-by-case basis

Data will be compiled by the gifted education teacher or GATE contact. Once eligibility data collection is completed, an eligibility meeting will be scheduled. The gifted education teacher is responsible for all relevant data and forms which are considered and summarized on an Eligibility Matrix by the Eligibility Committee. The timeline for an eligibility decision on each case is 60 instructional days from the date received by the Gifted Coordinator.

Eligibility decisions are based on attainment of a set cut-off score on the Division Matrix for gifted education service. The committee reserves the right to determine a child is eligible even if the score is below cut-off as determined by consensus of the committee. Mecklenburg County Public Schools will not place nor deny gifted services based on any one component.

Awards recognized by the Mecklenburg County Public Schools GATE program must have national data to support their assessment and recognition, i.e. John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY) Talent Search or the Duke University Talent Search.

VPA - Visual Arts

Measure	Administered/ Completed by	Scored by	Provided to the committee by
Observed Art Sample	Art Teacher	Committee of Art Teachers	Gifted Coordinator
Art Portfolio	Student	Committee of Art Teachers	Gifted Coordinator
Teacher Checklist	Art Teacher	Gifted Coordinator	Gifted Coordinator
Parent Checklist	Parent	Gifted Coordinator	Gifted Coordinator

The Art Selection Committee will meet to evaluate student portfolios at least three times each year. Portfolios, along with the Observed Art sample and teacher/parent checklists will be used to determine eligibility. Eligibility decisions are based on attainment of a set cut-off score on the Division Matrix. The committee reserves the right to determine a student eligible even if the score is below cut-off as determined by consensus of the committee.

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

This section describes the process of determining appropriate educational services for identified K-12 students.

General Intellectual Aptitude

The Eligibility Committee takes into consideration the child's demonstrated ability and intellectual aptitude for acceptance into the General Intellectual Aptitude program.

Upon review of the data collected the Eligibility/Placement committee decides one of the following options:

- a. The student is eligible and will be placed
- b. The student is not eligible for gifted services at this time
- c. The student will be monitored for potential reevaluation

Eligibility decisions are based on attainment of a set cut-off score on the Division Matrix for gifted education service. The committee reserves the right to determine a child is eligible even if the score is below cut-off as determined by consensus of the committee. Mecklenburg County Public Schools will not place nor deny gifted services based on any one component.

VPA - Visual Arts

The Eligibility Committee reviews all data on each candidate. Eligibility decisions are based on attainment of a set cut-off score on the Division Matrix. The committee reserves the right to determine a child is eligible even if the score is below cut-off as determined by consensus of the committee.

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

This section includes the procedures used for (a) notifying parents/guardians when the individual identification process is initiated; (b) requesting permission for individual testing and/or collection of additional information; (c) requesting permission for provision of appropriate service options; and, (d) parents/guardians wishing to file an appeal of the identification outcome, change in placement, or exit decision. Any procedural differences pertaining to a specific area of giftedness identified by the division should be clearly indicated.

General Intellectual Aptitude

The Gifted Coordinator or gifted teacher contacts parents by letter informing them of the referral, requesting permission to test, outlining eligibility criteria, and requesting the completion of a checklist for gifted program services.

The Gifted Coordinator contacts parents by letter, informing them of the decision of the committee and inviting them to meet to discuss their child's matrix. If a child is found eligible for Gifted Program services, a Permission to Participate form is sent with the decision letter. Students may begin to participate once this form is returned.

Parents of students found ineligible will be provided with information needed to appeal. Decisions regarding identification or placement may be appealed in writing no later than fifteen (15) instructional days after parents have been informed of a placement decision by the Identification/Placement Committee. Written request for an appeal must be submitted to Mecklenburg County's GATE Coordinator. Parents/Guardians who plan to seek outside testing in order to provide additional information for an appeal must include this information in the written request.

The Gifted Appeals Committee is responsible for reviewing and deciding any appeals. The Appeals Committee (the majority of which have not served on the school's Identification/Placement Committee) will include the gifted program resource personnel, the GATE Coordinator, the school's principal, and additional instructional or administrative staff when appropriate.

During an appeal, the reason for the appeal and the Identification/Placement Committee's decision will be clearly stated and all pertinent data will be reviewed. The Appeals Committee will meet within twenty (20) instructional days of the written request by the parents. The Appeals Committee will review criteria consistent with the Identification/Placement Committee criteria to maintain continuity of placement standards. Additional testing may be required by the Appeals Committee. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that the results from any outside testing are received by the GATE Coordinator by the meeting date. A licensed psychologist or accredited assessment agency must administer the additional testing. Parents will be notified in writing by the GATE Coordinator within six (6) working days of the decision of the Appeals Committee.

VPA - Visual Arts

The Gifted Coordinator or art teacher contacts parents by letter informing them of the referral, requesting permission to evaluate, outlining eligibility criteria, and requesting the completion of a checklist for Gifted Art Program services. The Gifted Coordinator contacts parents by letter, informing them of the decision of the committee and inviting them to meet to discuss their child's matrix. If a child is found eligible for Gifted Art Program services, a Permission to Participate form is sent with the decision letter. Students may begin to participate once this form is returned.

Parents of students found ineligible will be provided with information needed to appeal. A student can re-submit their portfolio at any time and it will be re-evaluated at the next portfolio scoring session.

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

This section includes the policy for written notification to parents or legal guardians of identification and placement decisions, including initial changes in placement procedures or exit policy from the program.

General Intellectual Aptitude

Students receiving services may be recommended for a change in placement, including exit from or suspension of gifted program services at the request/recommendation of the parents, the gifted resource teacher, the Gifted Coordinator, or the School Division Identification/Placement Committee. Parents are notified by letter of the decision for placement of their child, as well as their right to appeal, in writing to the Gifted Coordinator within 10 days of notification.

Students who move out of the county and return to the county within one school year may continue to be eligible to receive gifted education services. Students returning to the county after more than one year will be treated as new referrals.

Parents wishing to initiate exit procedures must contact the Gifted Coordinator and submit a written Request to Exit Gifted Program Services form. Included on the form is the acknowledgement that the parent has received information on and fully understand the significance and consequences of such a request. Non-participating students will remain eligible for services for one school year, but must participate within one year to remain eligible for services. Failure to participate for more than one school year will result in the child being removed from eligibility and will require the child to be treated as a new referral in the future.

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Parents may withdraw a student temporarily from participation in Gifted Program services for a period of less than two academic years by contacting the Gifted Coordinator and submitting a Request to Suspend Gifted Program Services form. Resumption of services shall require written parental permission. Services shall resume upon receipt of a Permission to Participate form and approval of the Gifted Coordinator.

VPA - Visual Arts

Students receiving services may be recommended for a change in placement, including exit from or suspension of gifted program services at the request/recommendation of the parents, the gifted art teacher, the Gifted Coordinator, or the School Division Identification/Placement Committee. Parents are notified by letter of the decision for placement of their child, as well as their right to appeal, in writing to the Gifted Coordinator within 10 days of notification.

Students who move out of the county and return to the county within one school year may continue to be eligible to receive gifted education services. Students returning to the county after more than one year will be treated as new referrals.

Parents wishing to initiate exit procedures must contact the Gifted Coordinator and submit a written Request to Exit Gifted Program Services form. Included on the form is the acknowledgement that the parent has received information on and fully understand the significance and consequences of such a request. Non-participating students will remain eligible for services for one school year, but must participate within one year to remain eligible for services. Failure to participate for more than one school year will result in the child being removed from eligibility and will require the child to be treated as a new referral in the future.

Parents may withdraw a student temporarily from participation in Gifted Program services for a period of less than two academic years by contacting the Gifted Coordinator and submitting a Request to Suspend Gifted Program Services form. Resumption of services shall require written parental permission. Services shall resume upon receipt of a Permission to Participate form and approval of the Gifted Coordinator.

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

This section provides evidence that gifted education service options from kindergarten through twelfth grade are offered continuously and sequentially, with instructional time during the school day and week to (i) work with their age-level peers, (ii) work with their intellectual and academic peers, (iii) work independently; and (iv) foster intellectual and academic growth of gifted students. Parents and legal guardians shall receive assessment of each gifted student's academic growth. Career and Technical aptitude programs and Visual and/or Performing Arts programs are offered at the discretion of the school division.

A. Service Options are Continuous and Sequential

This section provides evidence that the division's program of curricula and instruction for gifted learners is continuous and sequential. GIA programs need to provide evidence from kindergarten through twelfth grade. SAA programs need to provide evidence that service options are continuous and sequential from identification until twelfth grade.

General Intellectual Aptitude

Mecklenburg County Public Schools is committed to providing deeper learning opportunities for all students K-12. Deeper learning prepares students to master academic content, think critically and solve complex problems, work collaboratively, and communicate effectively. Gifted students are motivated by authentic, complex problems, self-directed learning and the ability to extend the content based on interests and strengths.

When possible, identified students are cluster grouped in the elementary school. The gifted resource teacher meets to collaborate with these teachers in ways to differentiate and accelerate instruction. In addition, identified students in grades K-1 receive weekly pull out sessions for 30 minutes with the gifted resource teacher. In grades 2-3 students are pulled for 45 minutes weekly. Students in grades 4-5 attend a center-based program one day each week.

At the middle school, gifted students are grouped together for Language Arts. This curriculum will provide many experiences for students to read high quality texts. Emphasis on critical reading and the development of analysis and interpretation skills will be a focal point. For all other core areas, students are cluster grouped and instruction is differentiated for gifted students in each core class. The primary instructional approach is Project Based Learning. Using this approach, students go through an extended process of inquiry in response to a complex question, problem, or challenge. Rigorous projects help students learn key academic content and practice 21st Century Skills, such as collaboration, communication and critical thinking. This approach is ideal for gifted students because the content is conceptual, the pace is self-directed, and they are able to develop cognitive creativity. Creativity used this way allows students to be fluent

and flexible in their thinking as they explore multiple pathways in understanding tasks and producing product based outcomes.

In the high schools, students can participate in Honors or DE classes beginning in ninth grade. Differentiation is provided by the Honors or DE teachers. Qualified students can enroll in the Associate's Degree program, which allows them to get their Associate's Degree when they finish high school. In the spring of their sophomore year, they may also apply to attend The Governor's School of Southside Virginia. For more information on this program, please visit their website at <http://gssv.southside.edu/>.

VPA - Visual Arts

Identified students in grades K-12 receive differentiation in the regular art class. In addition, there are after-school and summer seminars that students may attend.

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

This section includes a description of the instructional strategies or program model that allows gifted students to interact with their age-level peers during the school day and week.

General Intellectual Aptitude

Students at the elementary level spend the majority of their time in heterogeneous groups. Their instruction is differentiated in the regular classroom setting. At the middle school level, students are cluster grouped within heterogeneous classes and differentiation is provided in all classes. Electives are heterogeneously grouped. At the high school level, students are grouped heterogeneously in elective courses.

VPA - Visual Arts

Identified students spend time with age-level peers during the regular art class, according to their schedule.

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

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This section includes a description of the instructional strategies used in the division to accelerate and enrich the content for gifted learners beyond the grade-level or course expectations for all learners. The description should include how these academic needs are met during the school day and week.

General Intellectual Aptitude

Identified gifted students are generally cluster grouped at the elementary level, giving them opportunities to work with academic peers. In addition, the pull-out programs at the elementary level provide gifted students with the opportunity to interact with other gifted students. At the middle school level, identified students are cluster grouped and have the opportunity to work with their academic peers through differentiated activities in each core class. In addition, after-school enrichment is provided for identified students that allows for additional time for them to work with their academic peers. At the high school, participation in Honors, DE, and/or Governor's School provides students time with their intellectual and academic peers.

VPA - Visual Arts

Identified students spend time with talented peers during the after-school and summer seminars.

D. Service Options Provide Instructional Time to Work Independently

This section includes a description of the instructional strategies or program model used in the division to allow gifted learners to work independently during the school day and week.

General Intellectual Aptitude

Gifted students are given the opportunity to work independently in the gifted resource classes, regular education classes, Honors and DE classes.

VPA - Visual Arts

Identified students are given the opportunity to work independently on art projects during the regular art class and in the after-school and summer seminars.

E. Service Options Foster Intellectual and Academic Growth

This section includes a description of the instructional strategies used in the division to foster intellectual and academic growth during the school day and week.

General Intellectual Aptitude

The curriculum for gifted students will be differentiated in content and process from the regular education program through extensive use of Bloom's Taxonomy of Higher Order Thinking Skills emphasizing application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. A division-wide focus on deeper learning provides opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, effective communication, and creativity. Differentiated instruction is characterized by introduction of advanced content, open-ended tasks, flexible pacing, student choice, self-directed learning, and product based learning. This instruction allows for an array of learning opportunities for gifted learners. Additional support and services depend on individual learner need and interests. Opportunities for acceleration are also available based on student strengths.

VPA - Visual Arts

Curriculum for gifted art students will focus on communication and expression, creating unique and complicated works using real-world issues and images, seeking critiques from teachers and peers, and exploring historical and contemporary imagery by other artists whose work relates to their own.

F. Procedures for Assessing Academic Growth in Gifted Students

This section includes a description of the procedures used by the division to assess the academic growth for gifted learners.

General Intellectual Aptitude

Pre- and post-assessments will be used to document the growth of gifted students, along with Benchmarks, PALS, STAR and other reading assessments. However, measuring student growth in gifted students involves looking beyond just the use of test scores. The use of nontraditional assessment tools such as rubrics, portfolios, and performance based assessments will also be utilized to document student growth.

VPA - Visual Arts

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Students will maintain an art portfolio in the Art GATE program. Evidence of student growth will be assessed through student created products.

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

The *Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students* defines appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction as curriculum and instruction adapted or modified to accommodate the accelerated learning aptitudes of identified students in their areas of strength. Such curriculum and instructional strategies provide accelerated and enrichment opportunities that recognize gifted students' needs for (i) advanced content and pacing of instruction; (ii) original research or production; (iii) problem finding and solving; (iv) higher level thinking that leads to the generation of products; and (v) a focus on issues, themes, and ideas within and across areas of study. Such curriculum and instruction are offered continuously and sequentially to support the achievement of student outcomes, and provide support necessary for these students to work at increasing levels of complexity that differ significantly from those of their age-level peers. This section provides a description of the school division's appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction demonstrating accelerated and advanced content for gifted learners.

General Intellectual Aptitude

The gifted curriculum will be differentiated in content and process from the regular education program through extensive use of Bloom's Taxonomy of Higher Order Thinking Skills emphasizing application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Differentiated instruction is characterized by introduction of advanced content, open-ended tasks, flexible pacing, student choice, and self-directed learning. Opportunities for acceleration are also available, based on students' interests and needs.

At the elementary level, concept development is used as a strategy to introduce students to an overarching year-long theme and to encourage abstract thinking. Differentiation of assignments and student choice are woven throughout the elementary curriculum. Instructional materials such as concept maps, 'jigsaw' activities and learning menus provide differing student perspectives and collaborative building of schema.

The middle school program focuses on creating deeper learning opportunities in each of the four core areas. These classes focus on application of content and critical thinking and problem solving skills. Differentiation of instruction will be provided to identified students based on their learning profile and areas of strength.

At the high school level, a full range of challenging courses is provided, including honors and dual enrollment classes. Differentiation of instruction will be provided to identified students. Qualified students can enroll in the Associate's Degree program starting in the ninth grade. This program will allow students the opportunity to earn an Associate's Degree when they finish high school. Academically motivated students can also apply to attend Governor's School of Southside Virginia in the spring of their sophomore year.

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This program offers a rigorous curriculum and the opportunity to earn an Associate's Degree.

Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction provided through additional service options: (PLEASE NOTE: These service options have a separate application process.)

1. Meherrin Regional Summer Governor's School (MRS GS)

a. Description

MRS GS is a two-week, full-day, non-residential summer program for students gifted in the area of Gifted Intellectual Aptitude who are currently in grades 4 – 7. This science and technology program is held during July in the high-school science department in Greensville County.

b. Eligibility Procedures

- A written application is made available to all students who have been identified for gifted education services in the General Intellectual Aptitude area during February.
- Applications are due to the gifted education coordinator in February. Eligibility is determined according to the criteria for the program by the regional selection committee.
- Notification is sent to students in March.
- Acceptance forms are due in April.

2. Governor's School of Southside Virginia

a. Description

GSSV is a one-half day regional academic-year program for students in grades 11 and 12. Slots are based on Mecklenburg County's enrollment.

b. Eligibility Procedures

- Statement of Interest forms are made available by the high school guidance department to all students in grade 10 during November/December.
- Shadowing of students who are already attending GSSV is offered during December and January to students who intend to apply.
- Applications are provided to students who meet the program criteria.
- Testing components and a written essay are administered in February.
- Student profiles are evaluated and the essays are scored at a regional meeting in March which results in a ranked list.
- Selection is determined by the high-school eligibility committee based on matrix scores and the number of vacant slots.

3. Residential Summer Governor's School

a. Description

The Virginia Department of Education provides six residential enrichment programs for academically gifted and/or artistically talented students in grades 11 and 12. These programs are held on college campuses. Mecklenburg County is allowed to nominate four students for academic

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areas, two students for agriculture, and one student for each of the visual and performing arts areas.

b. Academic Programs

- Humanities
- Mathematics/Science
- Medicine
- National Aeronautics and Space Association (NASA)
- Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS)
- Agriculture

c. Visual and Performing Arts Programs

- Vocal Music
- Instrumental Music
- Dance
- Visual Art
- Theater

d. Eligibility Procedures

- Information about each program is made available to interested students in grades ten and eleven during October.
- Application procedures and forms are explained to students who want to apply in November. Applications are due to the Gifted Coordinator in December.

VPA - Visual Arts

The gifted art program will be differentiated through the exposure to various experiences (museum visits) and opportunities to work with media different from the regular art classes. Students will further develop their creative thinking and problem solving skills through more challenging art production. Students will have the opportunity to express their creativity independently as well as opportunities to work in small groups.

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

This section provides the school division's policies and procedures that allow access to programs of study and advanced courses at a pace and sequence commensurate with the learning needs of the gifted student.

General Intellectual Aptitude
VPA - Visual Arts

According to MCPS School Board policy IGBB:

To provide acceptable programs for gifted students, educational opportunities appropriate to exceptional abilities must be provided. The responsibility of providing each student with the opportunity to realize his/her potential is recognized by the Mecklenburg County School Board. Gifted students require a unique, advanced, and challenging educational program in order to enhance the development of their special abilities. The division shall use multiple criteria for the identification of gifted students as prescribed by the Board of Education. The School Board shall submit an annual report on its Program of Gifted Education to the Department of Education as prescribed by the Board of Education.

The School Board actively promotes and develops an appropriately differentiated educational program for gifted students in order to facilitate the fullest development of their potential. The School Board shall establish a local advisory committee for the gifted education program. Annually, the committee shall review the gifted education program, including any revisions to the program. The committee shall also determine the extent to which the program for the previous year was implemented by the division. The comments and recommendations of the committee shall be provided in writing to: (1) the Superintendent and (2) the School Board. The program shall be in compliance with the Code of Virginia and the Board of Education Regulations.

Adopted: March 17, 1997
Revised: September 15, 2008

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-18.1, 22.1-253.13:1.D.5.
8 VAC 20-40-20.
8 VAC 20-40-50.

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

School divisions must provide evidence of professional development based on the following teacher competencies outlined in 8VAC20-542-310 below.

1. Understanding of principles of the integration of gifted education and general education, including:
 - a. Strategies to encourage the interaction of gifted students with students of similar and differing abilities; and
 - b. Development of activities to encourage parental and community involvement in the education of the gifted, including the establishment and maintenance of an effective advisory committee.
2. Understanding of the characteristics of gifted students, including:
 - a. Varied expressions of advanced aptitudes, skills, creativity, and conceptual understandings;
 - b. Methodologies that respond to the affective (social-emotional) needs of gifted students; and
 - c. Gifted behaviors in special populations (i.e., those who are culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, or physically disabled).
3. Understanding of specific techniques to identify gifted students using diagnostic and prescriptive approaches to assessment, including:
 - a. The selection, use, and evaluation of multiple assessment instruments and identification strategies;
 - b. The use of both subjective and objective measures to provide relevant information regarding the aptitude/ability or achievement of potentially gifted students;
 - c. The use of authentic assessment tools such as portfolios to determine performance, motivation/interest and other characteristics of potentially gifted students;
 - d. The development, use, and reliability of rating scales, checklists, and questionnaires by parents, teachers and others;
 - e. The evaluation of data collected from student records such as grades, honors, and awards;
 - f. The use of case study reports providing information concerning exceptional conditions; and
 - g. The structure, training, and procedures used by the identification and placement committee.
4. Understanding and application of a variety of educational models, teaching methods, and strategies for selecting materials and resources that ensure:
 - a. Academic rigor through the development of high-level proficiency in all core academic areas utilizing the Virginia Standards of Learning as a baseline;
 - b. The acquisition of knowledge and development of products that demonstrate creative and critical thinking as applied to learning both in and out of the classroom; and
 - c. The development of learning environments that guide students to become self-directed, independent learners.

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5. Understanding and application of theories and principles of differentiating curriculum designed to match the distinct characteristics of gifted learners to the programs and curriculum offered to gifted students, including:
 - a. The integration of multiple disciplines into an area of study;
 - b. Emphasis on in-depth learning, independent and self-directed study skills and metacognitive skills;
 - c. The development of analytical, organizational, critical, and creative thinking skills;
 - d. The development of sophisticated products using varied modes of expression;
 - e. The evaluation of student learning through appropriate and specific criteria; and
 - f. The development of advanced technological skills to enhance student performance.
6. Understanding of contemporary issues and research in gifted education, including:
 - a. The systematic gathering, analyzing, and reporting of formative and summative data; and
 - b. Current local, state, and national issues and concerns.

The Division Gifted Administrator will provide staff development to the faculty of each school on the identification process for gifted education. This will include providing information on the characteristics of gifted students, with an emphasis on the underserved populations.

The Gifted Coordinator will meet with gifted staff multiple times each year to review critical aspects of the gifted program, review student work samples, and assess the effectiveness of the identification process and services provided. They will be encouraged to attend trainings in gifted education from various professional organizations and universities (Va. Association of the Gifted, Va. Art Education Association, The College of William and Mary, UVA, etc.). The gifted resource teachers will meet periodically with regular classroom teachers to collaborate and share teaching strategies that are effective with gifted students and to discuss their social and emotional needs.

The Department of Instruction will provide staff development each year. Year one will focus on student centered instruction. This staff development will include differentiation, project-based learning, and open-ended problem solving techniques which require creative and critical thinking skills. A Professional Development calendar will be shared with all teachers. Teachers will be required to attend a certain number of sessions each year. Continued professional development will focus on training in project based learning and other deeper learning strategies, where 21st Century skills are emphasized.

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

This section provides the procedures for the annual review of the effectiveness of the school division's gifted education program, including the review of screening, referral, identification, and program procedures toward the achievement of equitable representation of students, the review of student outcomes and the academic growth of gifted students. School divisions may decide to focus on one or more areas to review each year. However, reviews shall be based on multiple criteria and shall include multiple sources of information.

The Gifted Advisory Committee will assess the effectiveness of the school division's gifted education program each year through the review of student, parent, and teacher surveys as well as identification and student data. This committee will decide which aspect of the gifted program to evaluate each year and determine the tools that would best provide the information needed for evaluation. Identification and data will automatically be included in each review. The data will be compiled for the Gifted Advisory Committee at their last meeting of the school year. The committee will write observations, conclusions, commendations, and recommendations which will be provided to the School Board annually in June. Any modifications to the Local Plan will be presented at the June School Board meeting.

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

Each school division shall establish a local advisory committee composed of parents, school personnel, and other community members who are appointed by the school board. This committee shall reflect the ethnic and geographical composition of the school division. This section should include the school division's procedures for the establishment of the local advisory committee for the gifted program.

Parent members shall be nominated from each school in the division through the parent-teacher-student organizations or the building administration in consultation with the Division Gifted Administrator. Nomination of community member(s) shall be made by the division administration. The ethnic and geographic composition of the representation will be taken into account. The teacher members shall be nominated by the Division Administrator in consultation with school administration and the Gifted Program resource personnel. The Division Gifted Administrator shall be an ex officio member of the committee with one other building or central office administrator being nominated from among the Gifted Program resource personnel by the Administrator. This committee will meet a minimum of three times each year. The two main responsibilities of this committee is to annually review the Local Plan and determine the extent to which it was implemented.

Part XII: Assurances (8VAC20-40-60A.6; A.7; A.8; A.9)

In accordance with the *Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students*, the following assurance must be provided by the school division:

- Assurances that student records are maintained in compliance with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations;
- Assurances that (i) the selected and administered testing and assessment materials have been evaluated by the developers for cultural, racial, and linguistic biases; (ii) identification procedures are constructed so that those procedures may identify high potential or aptitude in any student whose accurate identification may be affected by economic disadvantages, by limited English proficiency, or by disability; (iii) standardized tests and other measures have been validated for the purpose of identifying gifted students; and (iv) instruments are administered and interpreted by trained personnel in conformity with the developer’s instructions;
- Assurances that accommodations or modifications determined by the school division’s special education Individual Education Plan (IEP) team, as required for the student to receive a free appropriate public education, shall be incorporated into the student’s gifted education services; and
- Assurances that a written copy of the school division’s approved local plan for the education of the gifted is available to parents or legal guardians of each referred student, and to others upon request.

Pursuant to these requirements, I hereby certify that the school division is in compliance with this language.

_____	Dr. James Thornton	October 20, 2014
Division Superintendent’s Signature	Printed Name	Date