



Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted

2023-2024

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LEA#	003		
Superintendent	TBD		
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Local School Board Chairperson	Jacob Wright		
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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* (<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/report/ODYoH/>). 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 <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/specialized-instruction/gifted-education>

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 March 2017). 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.

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

General Information regarding the Gifted Program in Alleghany Highlands Public Schools

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. Indicated on chart below are all areas of giftedness that are identified and served within the division.

Area of Giftedness Identified by the Division	Grades Served
Potential General Intellectual Aptitude/(GIA)	K-2/3-12
Specific Academic Aptitude (SAA) - Choose an item.	
Career and Technical Aptitude (CTA)	
Visual and/or Performing Arts Aptitude (VPA) - Choose an item.	

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

Alleghany Highlands Public Schools provides equal opportunity for every student:

- To achieve maximum intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth;
- To insure that each individual be equipped to communicate effectively with other people;
- To be competent both in the work place and in higher education; and
- To feel confident of the ability to make creative and constructive decisions in his/her life.

It is the belief of the Alleghany Highlands Public Schools that all students are unique and, in a democratic society, have the right to educational opportunities appropriate to their needs and abilities. It is our mission to provide gifted students with a qualitatively differentiated instructional program to facilitate the fullest development of their potential. Therefore, we will seek to identify potentially gifted (K-2) and identified gifted (3-12) students from a variety of social, ethnic, and economic backgrounds and provide them a flexible continuum of service options from kindergarten through graduation.

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.

The Alleghany Highlands Public Schools Gifted Program is designed to identify and target the needs of those students who demonstrate outstanding and exceptional aptitude in the area of General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA) in grades kindergarten through twelve. The main focus of the Alleghany Highlands Gifted Program is to expand learning opportunities beyond the regular curriculum and to provide support for in-class differentiation.

Students identified as gifted in the area of General Intellectual Aptitude possess unique talents and superior abilities that differ profoundly from their peers. Recognizing that gifted students come from diverse backgrounds, the identification process incorporates multiple criteria to help ensure equitable identification procedures. The data used in the identification process

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may include: ability test scores (verbal, nonverbal, composite); achievement test scores (reading, math, composite); grades for the previous school year and/or the current marking period; behavior rating scales; anecdotal evidence and/or assessment of pupil products.

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:** Alleghany Highlands Public Schools will identify students with advanced aptitude or conceptualization in all populations. Utilization of the following assessments/screeners: Kindergarten - Otis Lennon Test of School Abilities (initial screener and potential pool); K-12 -Teacher Referrals; K-12 – KBIT II, KTEA II; Advancement – IAS.
- B. Delivery of Services:** Alleghany Highlands Public Schools will provide educational services which enable each identified student to develop his/her aptitude to the fullest potential by the following: K-2 (Explorer) and 3-5 (Aspire, currently through 7th grade, but implementation of 6/7 grade PreAP classes are a possibility) Pull-out Program, High School Dual Enrollment, Advanced Placement, Virtual Course-work, Governor's School.
- C. Curriculum and Instruction:** Alleghany Highlands Public Schools will improve classroom differentiation by encouraging teachers to pursue gifted endorsement and encouraging utilization of gifted teacher as a resource within instructional planning and differentiation within the regular classroom.
- D. Professional Development:** Alleghany Highlands Public Schools will improve teacher training in differentiation and core content by identifying and supporting staff development opportunities: VCGE, VA Gifted, Region 6 leaders, etc – with dissemination of information provided at monthly admin meetings.
- E. Equitable Representation of Students:** Alleghany Highlands Public Schools will review the current population of identified gifted students and compare to the general population of students to determine equitable representation for all subgroups of students by annual review of % ratios as well as cohort representations from the region. Financial and time objectives will be implemented to further align gifted instructional services are equitable.
- F. Parent and Community Involvement:** Alleghany Highlands Public Schools will enhance communication regarding the gifted program to parents, students, and community members. (Surveys, informational meetings, newsletters, advisory committee meetings, 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

To create a pool of potential candidates all students in kindergarten in Feb/Mar are given the Brigance ECIII assessment (cognitive components only). Students scoring (95% or above age 5 and 85% or above age 6) will be included in a screening pool for our gifted program. In addition, teachers in grades K-12 continuously screen students throughout the year for possible gifted abilities and inclusion within the offered programs. Student based instructional projects, along with quarterly benchmark assessments/class progress will also be taken into consideration.

Students from the pool will be evaluated by the screening committee at the school and those selected will go through the formal identification process. The screening committee is composed of at least four people in the home school eligibility committee.

Consideration of a student's basic background is taken into consideration such as Limited English Proficient, low income, culturally diverse, or handicapping problems.

Specific strategies used to screen and identify underserved groups of potentially gifted students:

- Teachers/principals are asked to be aware of looking for gifted characteristics in students from all backgrounds, races, ethnic origins, and special education designations.
- Teachers/principals are asked to make program information available to all students and parents.

Transfer students who were found eligible for gifted program services in other school divisions in Virginia will automatically be considered in the candidate pool. Such students will advance to formal assessment with parental permission. Formal assessment of transfer students is necessary to evaluate the student's achievement and ability and the level of service needed to supply school personnel with information to provide appropriate services.

Information for the public is provided through the division/school websites, Gifted/Parent advisory meetings.

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 may be made at any time by parents or legal guardians, school personnel, students, and/or community members. Referral forms are available in each school office, from the teacher representative at each school, from the gifted program coordinator, and on the division website. The appropriate referral form will be provided to the individual making a referral. When the appropriate forms have been completed, they must be returned to the coordinator for processing. New or transfer students may be referred and screened at any time. Particular attention will be afforded to subgroup populations in reference to screening and possible inclusion.

All direct referrals are sent to the program coordinator who notifies parents that their child has been referred for consideration for gifted services. With parental permission, the student proceeds to the eligibility procedure process.

The time frame for making eligibility decisions is 90 instructional days from the date parental consent is received.

No one score or other criterion is used to deny a student access to consideration.

The school division offers services continuously in General Intellectual Aptitude.

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 3-12 (Potential for K-2) 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. NOTE: No single instrument, score, or criterion may be used to exclude or include a child for eligibility.

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: Other test data provided by the parent or from other school divisions.

2. Additional identification information for General Intellectual Aptitude

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Consideration of a student's basic background is taken into consideration such as Limited English Proficient, low income, culturally diverse, or handicapping problems.

Specific strategies used to screen and identify underserved groups of potentially gifted students:

- Teachers/principals are asked to be aware of looking for gifted characteristics in students from all backgrounds, races, ethnic origins, and special education designations.
- Teachers/principals are asked to make program information available to all students and parents.

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

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="text" value="1"/> | Classroom Teacher(s) |
| <input type="text" value="1"/> | Gifted Education Resource Teacher(s) |
| <input type="text" value="1"/> | Counselor(s) |
| <input type="text"/> | School Psychologist(s) |
| <input type="text"/> | Assessment Specialist(s) |
| <input type="text" value="1"/> | Principal(s) or Designee(s) |
| <input type="text" value="1"/> | Gifted Education Coordinator |
| <input type="text"/> | Other(s) Specify: |

- b. Type of Identification/Placement Committee

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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
Behaviors checklist	Current classroom teacher/Parent if applicable	Division gifted education coordinator	Division gifted education coordinator
K-BIT 2	Gifted resource teacher	Gifted resource teacher	Division gifted education coordinator
KTEA II	Gifted resource teacher or SBIT chair	Gifted resource teacher	Division gifted education coordinator
Brigance ECIII	Classroom teachers	AHPS teaching staff	Division gifted education coordinator
Current academic record	Classroom teachers	Classroom teachers	Classroom teachers
Other academic information-assessment of student products	Classroom teachers	Classroom teachers	Classroom teachers

Eligibility is determined by examining a combination of criteria from those listed above. A minimum of four measures are considered for each student with at least one measure being an achievement or ability test. A student must meet the placement criterion in at least three of four categories to be recommended for program participation. The building representative and/or

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gifted coordinator will be responsible for recording and compiling all the appropriate information gathered on a student. No single criterion will be utilized for placement and achievement test benchmarks are not sole indicators.

Students found ineligible for gifted services may be nominated the following academic year.

The Identification/Placement Committee will be composed of the principal, referring teacher, guidance counselor, school psychologist (if applicable), building representative, division gifted coordinator, and at least one additional teacher. There will be a committee at each school which will be chaired by the building representative and scheduled whenever necessary. The committee will be responsible for the following duties:

1. Review all nominations and appropriate records pertaining to the nominee;
2. Recommending further testing by the school psychologist when necessary to determine the final placement;
3. Determining the final placement of the nominee based on the following review of the data and committee deliberations- determine if the nominee qualified for the gifted program; recommend placement if the student is found eligible.
4. Review students in certain subgroup populations that are under-represented and keep strict focus on their application process.

Students in grades K-2 will participate in the Alleghany Highlands Public Schools' Explorer's Program for potentially gifted students. Students will be reevaluated, with parental permission, in Grade 3 to become eligible for the ASPIRE program for gifted students.

The time frame for making eligibility decisions is 90 instructional days from the date parental consent is received.

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

Eligibility is determined by examining a combination of criteria from those listed above. A minimum of four measures are considered for each student with at least one measure being an achievement or ability test. A student must meet the placement criterion in at least three of four categories to be recommended for program participation. The committee decision is by consensus.

- A.** Following determination of eligibility, appropriate placement shall be determined by the individual school's identification/placement committee. Placement decision options are: The student is eligible for services intended to accommodate General Intellectual Aptitude including but not limited to: K-2 (Explorer) and 3-7 (Aspire) Pull-out Program, High School Dual Enrollment, Advanced Placement, Virtual Course-work, Governor's School

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 Identification/Placement committee reviews all referrals and appropriate records pertaining to the nominee and recommends testing to determine eligibility for the program.
- Parents/guardians are notified that a referral has been made and consent for testing is requested. All data is collected on each referral, with parental permission.
- Following a review of the data, the Identification/Placement Committee will recommend placement in an appropriate program when the student is found eligible.
- Parents/guardians are notified of the decision of the Identification/Placement Committee and must provide parental permission for the student to receive services through written consent form.
- Parents are also notified at the end of third grade that students need to be reevaluated for the ASPIRE program and must provide parental permission for the reevaluation. Parents will continue to be informed of student progress and may (in writing) request service options for students at the secondary level.

Appeal Process

In the event the parents disagree with the Identification/Placement Committee's decision for change of placement, program exit, or denial of gifted program services, the parents shall be afforded the opportunity to appeal. The parents receive, upon request, the written information about the Alleghany Highlands Appeals Procedure. These parents shall state in writing the basis of disagreement to the Director of Instruction within ten (10) school days of receiving this appeal information. The Director of Elem Instruction will appoint a Central Appeals Committee to review all appeals.

This Committee will convene no later than ten (10) administrative working days from the receipt of an appeal from parents. The following governs the function of this committee:

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- a) The Central Appeals Committee shall be comprised of no more than five members and shall not include members of the building level or division level Identification/Placement Committee.
- b) The Committee's function is to review disagreements that pertain to the child's identification and eligibility status. Disputes that are not within the purview of the appeals procedure shall be those areas that would constitute a public agency prerogative such as instructional materials, assignment of instructional personnel, and methods of instruction. The Committee's responsibility is to determine whether or not the procedural requirements of the identification process were satisfied and/or whether or not the building level or division level Identification/Placement Committee's decision was appropriate as it pertains to the child's eligibility status.
- c) The parents shall be afforded an opportunity to present to the Committee the basis for disagreement. The Committee shall review all appeal requests and inform the parents of its decision. In all cases, the decision of the Committee is final.
- d) Other Requirements:
 - The Director of Elem Instruction shall notify all parties to the appeal in writing as to the date, time, and location of the hearing.
 - The decision of the Committee shall be made in writing to the parents no more than five (5) administrative working days from the date of the hearing.

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

When students are re-evaluated in Grade 3, the building representative will update screening and selection forms with the most current data, will review the data and schedule an Identification/Placement Committee meeting to review only the placement of those students falling below the eligibility requirements. The division gifted coordinator will notify the parents by letter if a placement change is necessary.

Exit procedures:

A dismissal from the program may only occur for the following reasons

1. At the request of the parent/guardian;

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2. Upon the recommendation of the Identification/Placement Committee, the building representative will review the data upon the request of the parent/guardian, teacher, or during the re-evaluation process at grade
3. An Identification/Placement Committee meeting will be scheduled to review the placement of the student. If the student no longer meets the eligibility requirements, the division gifted coordinator will notify the parents in writing that the committee has recommended that continued participation shall be ceased. Parents who wish to review the decision of the committee will be advised of the appeals process as outlined in this plan. Ineligible students may be referred after one year.

Appeal Process

In the event the parents disagree with the Identification/Placement Committee's decision for change of placement, program exit, or denial of gifted program services, the parents shall be afforded the opportunity to appeal. The parents receive, upon request, the written information about the Alleghany Highlands Appeals Procedure. These parents shall state in writing the basis of disagreement to the Director of Elem Instruction within ten (10) school days of receiving this appeal information. The Director of Elem Instruction will appoint a Central Appeals Committee to review all appeals.

This Committee will convene no later than ten (10) administrative working days from the receipt of an appeal from parents. The following governs the function of this committee:

- e) The Central Appeals Committee shall be comprised of no more than five members and shall not include members of the building level or division level Identification/Placement Committee.
- f) The Committee's function is to review disagreements that pertain to the child's identification and eligibility status. Disputes that are not within the purview of the appeals procedure shall be those areas that would constitute a public agency prerogative such as instructional materials, assignment of instructional personnel, and methods of instruction. The Committee's responsibility is to determine whether or not the procedural requirements of the identification process were satisfied and/or whether or not the building level or division level Identification/Placement Committee's decision was appropriate as it pertains to the child's eligibility status.
- g) The parents shall be afforded an opportunity to present to the Committee the basis for disagreement. The Committee shall review all appeal requests and inform the parents of its decision. In all cases, the decision of the Committee is final.
- h) Other Requirements:
 - The Director of Elem Instruction shall notify all parties to the appeal in writing as to the date, time, and location of the hearing.
 - The decision of the Committee shall be made in writing to the parents no more than five (5) administrative working days from the date of the hearing.

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

Within the framework of the Standards of Learning curriculum, classroom teachers in grades K-12 differentiate instruction to provide appropriately challenging learning experiences for gifted students. Through the use of flexible grouping models and other differentiation strategies such as tiered assignments, classroom teachers differentiate content, process and product based on readiness, interest, and learning style.

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

Potential and identified gifted students (K-12) are serviced within their "home" school. At the elementary level, during the school day they are in heterogeneous groups for all academic subjects as well as the special areas of art, music, and physical education. At the middle school level, student schedules are influenced by their participation in advanced course work in Math/English (beginning in sixth grade) and foreign language (beginning in seventh grade). Otherwise middle school students are grouped heterogeneously. High school gifted students have many options including dual enrollment; distance learning; online learning; academic year regional governor's school in math,

science, and technology; summer regional governor's school in field ecology and advanced placement courses. Each of these options allows gifted students to interact with their age-level peers during the school day and week.

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

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

At the elementary level, resource teachers go into the classroom to work with groups of identified gifted students. Elementary students also participate in a "pull out" program, Explorers (K-2) and ASPIRE (3-5), that focuses on a unit of study each nine weeks that supports regular classroom instruction. These units provide more depth and breadth to their study. At the middle school level, student schedules are influenced by their participation in advanced course work in Math/English (beginning in sixth grade) and foreign language (beginning in seventh grade). Sixth and seventh grade students currently participate in the ASPIRE "pull out" program once per week until full implementation of PreAP courses are complete. Like the elementary school, these units of study provide more depth and breadth to regular classroom instruction. High school gifted students have many options including dual enrollment; distance learning; online learning; academic year regional governor's school in math, science, and technology; summer regional governor's school in field ecology and advanced placement courses. In addition, high school students have the opportunity to participate in mentorships and independent study. Each of these options allows gifted students to interact with their intellectual and academic peers during the school day and week.

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

Classroom teachers are encouraged to use a variety of differentiation strategies to allow gifted learners to work independently during the school day and week. These strategies include the use of independent learning contracts, choice menus, mentorships, and independent projects.

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

Gifted coordinators work closely with teachers to ensure differentiated opportunities meet the needs of the student. These students can often times work at a higher level of knowledge than many of their age peers, and possess the ability to process information in the higher realms of Bloom's Taxonomy of Thinking (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). Teachers are encouraged to use flexible, small group instruction or tiered lessons with appropriately challenging material to allow creativity and individuality in the choice of assignments and products that students create. Cooperative learning, creative problem solving, critical and creative thinking and higher order questioning are other strategies that foster intellectual and academic growth. The Explorers and ASPIRE programs support students' intellectual growth by providing stimulating learning experiences. At the high school level, students self-select the classes that will offer them the appropriate level of challenge that will foster intellectual and academic growth. Teachers are encouraged to use teaching models such as problem-based learning, simulations, Socratic questioning, and critical and creative thinking tied to the curriculum.

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

Gifted students who participate in Explorers and ASPIRE receive a narrative report each nine weeks from the gifted resource instructor. In addition, all students receive report cards each nine weeks which detail the grades earned in the curriculum chosen by the students. Gifted students will also participate in division assessments designed to measure a student's academic growth annually.

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

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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

Alleghany Highlands Public Schools' curriculum is academically demanding. Rigorous coursework is provided at all grade levels to put learners from all populations in a position to maximize achievement and potential. It is designed to build on individual strengths and to provide educational opportunities that are responsive to the needs of all students. Classroom differentiation activities are offered in students' area in strength and interest. Pull-out instruction is offered to provide challenging academic, problem solving and research units. The basis of our curriculum instruction is using the philosophy of Bloom's taxonomy and the work of Carol Tomlinson in differentiating instruction through content, process, and product.

CONTENT:

- Advanced content and student selected topics (reading)
- Acceleration (math)
- Enrichment (non-routine math problem solving)
- Student chosen topics with the possibility for advanced content and enrichment (social studies and science topics, elementary school enrichment classes, and extra-curricular middle school programs)
- Broad-based themes (interdisciplinary units and simulations)
- Contemporary and futuristic issues (social studies classroom discussions/projects, pullout instruction)

PROCESS:

At all levels, the development of effective skills and critical and creative productive thinking skills is emphasized. Teachers are expected to provide opportunities for the use of the higher level thinking skills-analysis, synthesis, and evaluation-through the use of simulations, pull-out program instruction of team work and analytical skills. A goal of both content and process differentiation is to provide learners with the self-directed skills and tools to pursue independent and group investigations at all levels.

PRODUCT:

Teachers at all levels provide individual and small group opportunities for choice in topic and presentation mode including written work, demonstrations, experiments, and dramatics.

Most classrooms are heterogeneously grouped with differentiated instruction and cluster grouping for special projects and instruction as the need arises.

Use of mathematics and reading testing is monitored by CIP Benchmarks, Mastery Connect Assessment/Analytics, IXL Performance, etc., on the computer at the elementary, middle and some high school levels providing skills at their own pace and enrichment in non-routine problem solving. Some classes are homogeneously grouped and offer advanced content. For example, Algebra I and Geometry for high school credit are offered at the middle school for qualified students.

At all levels, research skills are taught to aid students in the acquisition and analysis of information. Research opportunities provide challenges at various levels of ability. Independent and/or study and research options allow students the opportunity to extend the depth and breadth of their study in areas of strength/interest. The use of real-world resources and primary sources, such as community experts and computer ties to information (Internet, etc.) are utilized.

Alternative assignments are offered when possible to accelerate or enrich the concept being taught. Open-ended problems and tasks are an integral part of the curriculum. Simulations and other activities provide for group interaction among peers in the classroom.

Pull-out program instruction allows for peer interaction and academically challenging instruction. Identified students in grades K-5 (currently up to 7th grade) meet for a minimum of 45 minutes per week with a resource teacher at the home school.

Teachers working with students are highly qualified in their subject area. Gifted resource teachers hold an endorsement in gifted education. Ongoing professional development is provided for all teachers according to the Alleghany Highlands Public Schools Professional Development Plan.

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. Refer to ACPS Policy Manual Section IGBB.

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General Intellectual Aptitude

K-2/3-8

Identified gifted students in the elementary school have access to Rosetta Stone foreign language acquisition software to begin the study of Spanish. Identified middle school students may take (PreAP core course offerings TBD based on staff availability), Spanish I and II, French I and II, Algebra I and Geometry. Students in K-7 participate in enrichment pull out programs offered by gifted resource teachers.

Middle School and High School

High school students may enroll in dual enrollment courses, advanced placement courses, virtual coursework and in the Jackson River Governor's School during the academic year. In addition, middle school and high school students may participate in the Summer Regional Governor's School in Field Ecology.

Dual Enrollment: Alleghany High School in conjunction with local community college, offers courses for dual enrollment credit. Courses are taught at the high school by a college-accredited high school staff member. These offerings include English, Political Science, Biology, and Calculus.

Jackson River Governor's School for Math, Science, and Technology: JRGS offers a rigorous half day program designed for eleventh and twelfth grade students who have a strong interest in math, science and technology. Positions are awarded based on the strength of the student's application.

Advanced Placement Program: Advanced Placement courses offer students the opportunity to do college-level work while still in high school. They are available to qualified, academically oriented students in eleventh and twelfth grades. Courses are offered on site (U. S. History) as well as via Virtual Virginia. Students will be required to apply for admission for any AP course.

Independent Study: An independent study provides the senior student the opportunity to pursue a program of his/her own design or interest. This is a highly selective program designed for seniors who show academic excellence, a high interest level, and the ability to work independently. Eligible students will be asked to confer with a member of the respective department involved. Upon mutual agreement, final selection for the independent study program will be made by the teacher, counselor, principal, and Director of Instruction.

Early College Scholars: Early College Scholars is a program that encourages juniors and seniors who are prepared and interested in accelerating their coursework toward a college degree while still in high school. A student who wishes to be a part of this program must sign an agreement along with his parent, counselor, and principal and agree to: have a "B" average or better; be pursuing an Advanced Studies diploma; and, be completing or have completed college level coursework that will earn at least 15 transferable college credits.

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. A professional development plan for each school is required yearly addressing how staff will receive updated training on each principle 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.
- 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 personnel who work exclusively with the Alleghany Highlands Schools Gifted Program are two Gifted Resource Teachers and one Gifted Program Coordinator. They must have knowledge of differentiated teaching strategies, curriculum development, and dealing with the characteristics of the gifted learner. They must hold an endorsement in gifted education and be able to work cooperatively with parents, teachers, administrators, and students to ensure the challenging environment needed by students. In addition, they must be able to administer each component of a dynamic program, be current in latest technologies, and be open to new ideas. The Gifted Resource Teachers, like all personnel, are selected by the Superintendent and approved by the Alleghany Highlands School Board. They are supervised by the principals and Director of Elem Instruction who is the Gifted Program Coordinator.

All teachers in the division are charged with providing an appropriate educational program for all learners in their classroom. Staff development opportunities in curriculum differentiation strategies and characteristics of gifted learners have been provided for all teaching personnel.

Each principal selects the teachers who will be responsible for the instruction of the identified gifted students in their school. Gifted Resource Teachers are available for consultation related to specific student needs, strengths, etc.

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

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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.

Annual review of the effectiveness of the Alleghany Highlands Public Schools gifted education programs will include the ongoing review of screening tools and procedures used to ensure that no student is discriminated against due to gender, cultural diversity, socio-economic status, learning exceptionality or other factors. Also, we will review current population of identified gifted students for equitable representation. Surveys of students, parents, teachers, and administrators are conducted in the spring of even numbered years to provide information regarding program effectiveness.

The Alleghany Highlands Public Schools' Plan for the Education of the Gifted will be reviewed annually by the Local Advisory Committee. After the plan is reviewed by the Gifted Advisory Committee, any amendments (including referral and identification procedures) it is submitted to the Alleghany Highlands School Board for approval.

Principals will evaluate classroom teachers and gifted resource teachers annually based on their ability to meet the needs of gifted students through differentiation and the use of appropriate curriculum adjustments. Recommendations from cohort schools will be communicated during Region 6 meetings based on the multiple criteria descriptors.

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.

The Alleghany Highlands Public Schools Local Advisory Committee for Gifted Education shall include

- Parents (6-12) nominated from each school in the division by the building principal in consultation with the program coordinator and members of the previous year's Advisory Committee
- Teachers (2) nominated by the building principal in consultation with the program coordinator
- Administrators
- Representatives from the community nominated by the coordinator in consultation with the building principals and superintendent.

The school board will approve the committee members. Members of the Committee will be drawn from a broad range of interested persons who reflect the geographic and ethnic composition of the school division. The coordinator shall be an *ex officio* member of the committee.

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.

Kim Halterman

Division Superintendent's Signature

Printed Name

Date