



Hampton City Schools

Administrators' Brief Guide to Gifted Services

2015

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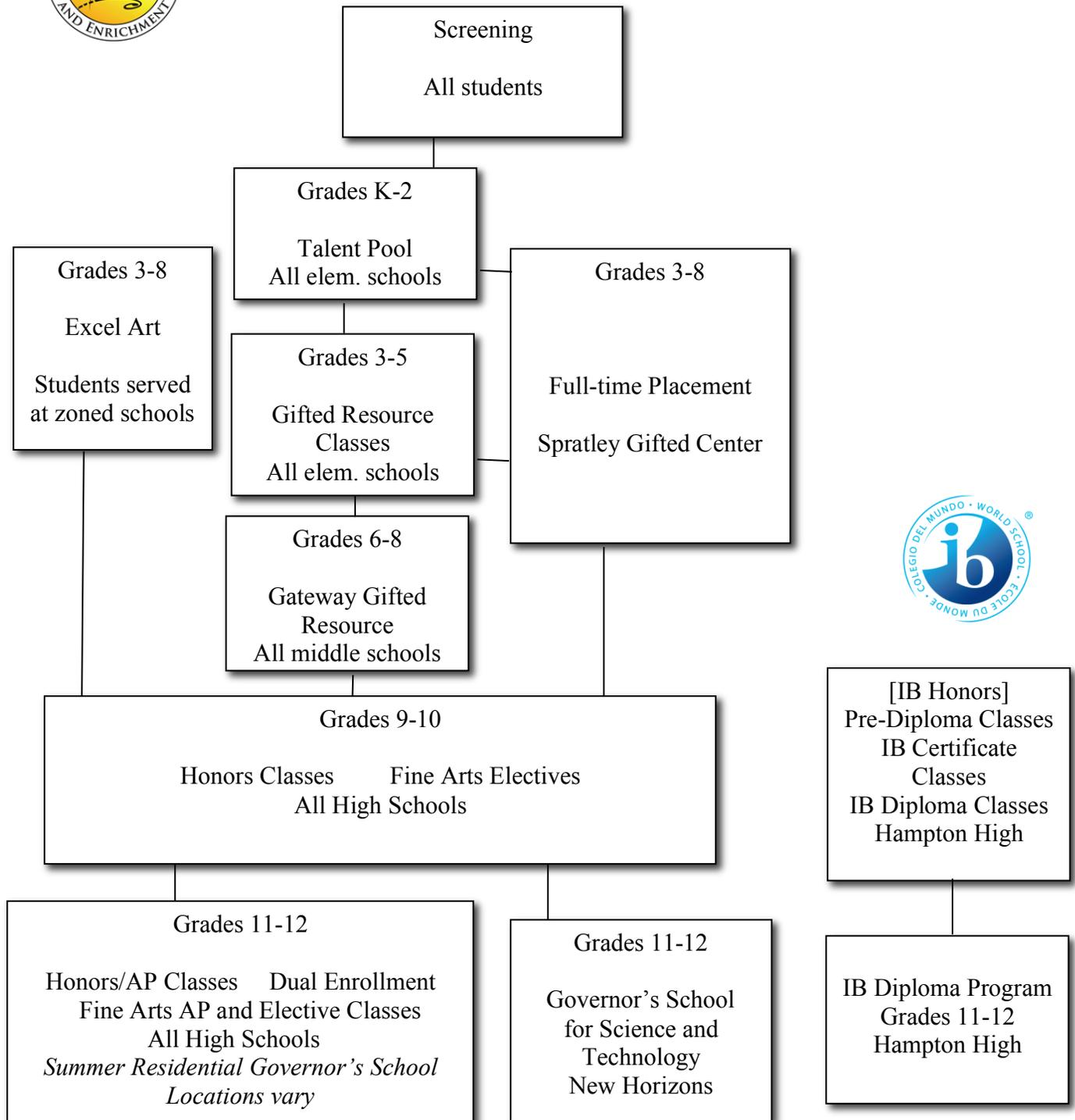
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FLOW CHART OF DAAE PROGRAMS



PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

The **Talent Pool** (grades K-2) and **Gifted Resource Program** (grades 3-5) provide advanced educational opportunities with trained gifted resource staff on a weekly pullout basis. The Talent Pool program is an evaluative program to develop critical thinking skills in potentially gifted students; students are usually not formally identified as gifted until third grade. The curriculum for these programs includes in-depth activities in the core content areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, as well as a variety of multidisciplinary activities that focus on the development of critical thinking skills and problem solving strategies. For identified students in grades K-5, the classes are held in each elementary school. In grades 6-8, the **Gateway** middle school gifted students whose academic needs can best be met in their zoned schools are primarily served through cluster grouping and appropriately differentiated instruction, as well as through weekly pull-out classes. The middle school classes focus on a variety of seminars, gaining an understanding of giftedness, planning for college and careers, and also provide an opportunity for students to do independent research investigations into areas of personal interest and passion.

The **Spratley Gifted Center** (grades 3-8) provides a full-time program for identified gifted students with highly advanced skills and aptitudes who have already demonstrated their capacity for complex processing abilities. These students require a fully differentiated educational environment, with an accelerated program of studies across all content areas. This comprehensive instructional program is designed around the cognitive characteristics and learning styles of gifted children, providing a multidisciplinary curriculum incorporating focused reflection, interaction, and discussion. In addition to mastery of basic content and skills (as measured by Virginia SOL assessments), students attending the full time center are expected to master advanced competencies across all content areas. Opportunities are provided for extensive research, inquiry based learning, literary and scientific analysis, and project based learning to focus on topics of strength and interest.

The **Excel Art Program** is designed to nurture and enrich the gifts of young artists in grades 3-8. This program focuses on advanced, concentrated instruction in the principles, theory, and practice of visual art. Students participating in Excel Art are served at their zoned schools on a regular schedule. Students are accepted into this program based on an adjudicated portfolio, superior potential in art skills and creativity, advanced achievement in art, and recommendations by art teachers.

High school options offer a variety of advanced and high level courses to gifted students, including Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), and dual enrollment classes. Additional specialized courses are taught at the magnet schools. Other options include the New Horizons Governor's School for Science and Technology and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme. **Information about the IB program is on the website for Hampton High, or can be obtained by calling the IB coordinator at 757-896-5745.**

The **Governor's School for Science and Technology** at New Horizons offers a regional, specialized secondary program for gifted and high ability students in grades 11-12. Students attending the Governor's School also attend their home high school for part of each school day. Classes emphasize computer applications and hands-on laboratory experiences in an inquiry-based learning environment. Students may choose a strand in biological science, engineering, or scientific programming. Students attending the Governor's School also have opportunities to participate in original research and mentoring with scientists and practicing professionals in area hospitals, clinics, NASA Langley, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and the Jefferson Lab. College credit may be earned for these weighted dual enrollment classes. Interested students should refer to the web site at <http://www.nhgs.tec.va.us/governorsschool/> for online applications and information about prerequisite classes. Admission is highly competitive. A **Pre-Admissions Information Series (PAS)** provides additional information for prospective students entering ninth and tenth grades. Students interested in attending the Governor's School should consider applying for PAS.

Summer Residential Governor's School programs are offered by the Virginia Department of Education for exceptional students going into grades 11 or 12. The admission to these programs is highly competitive, but is a life-changing experience for the participants. The Summer Residential Governor's School programs include:

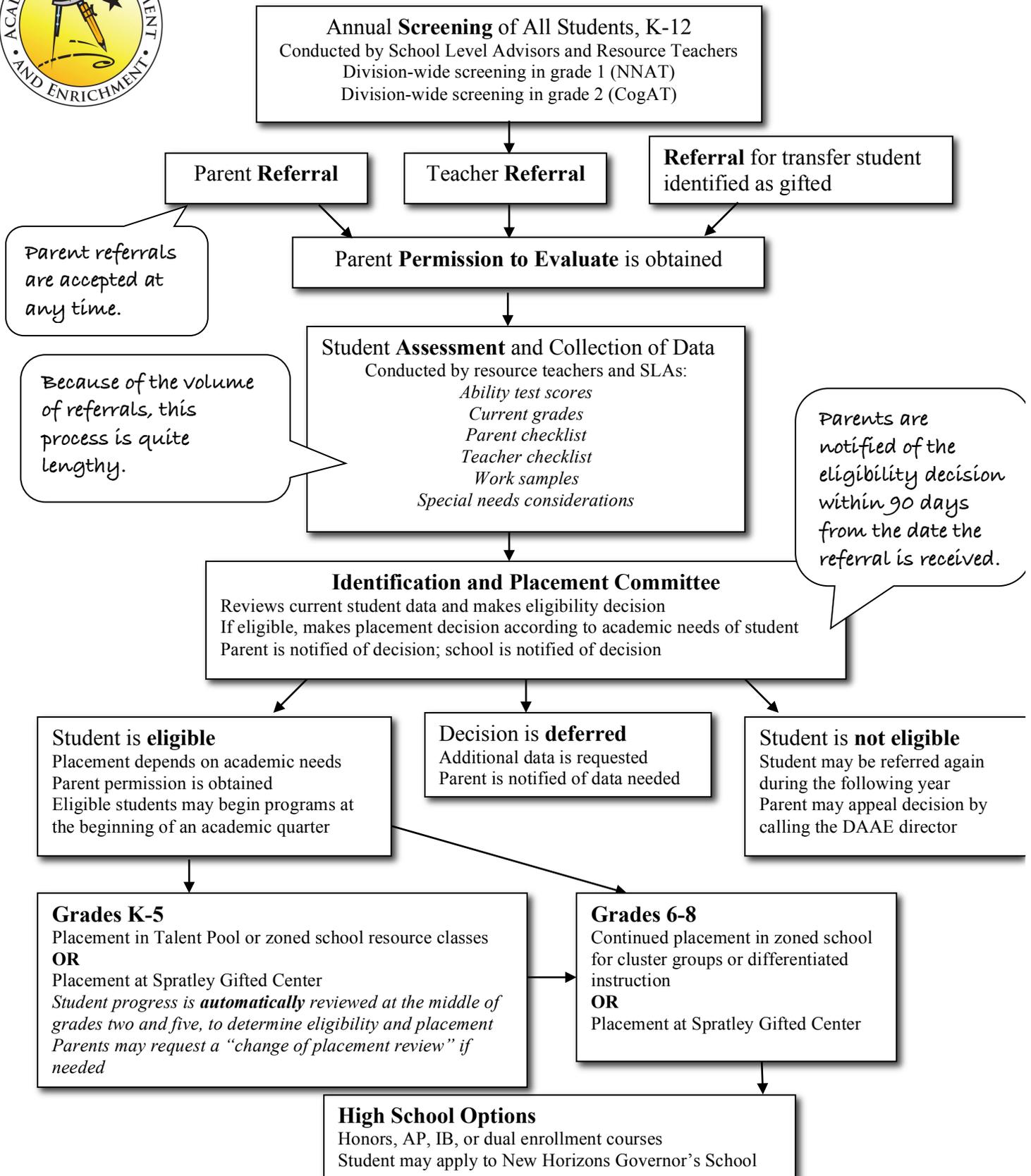
- **Humanities**
- **Visual and Performing Arts**
- **Math, Science, and Technology**
- **Agriculture**
- **Life Sciences and Medicine**
- **Marine Sciences Mentorships at VIMS**
- **Engineering Mentorships at NASA**
- **Foreign Language Academies in French, Spanish, German, Latin, Russian, Japanese, and Chinese**

Nominations may be made by teachers, guidance counselors, peers, or by the students themselves. The HCS selection committee chooses and forwards the nominees to a state committee. Consideration is given to students' academic records, test scores, extra-curricular activities, honors and awards, creativity, original essays, and teacher recommendations. Students applying for the Visual and Performing Arts Summer Residential Governor's School participate in a statewide adjudication where they audition or present portfolios for review before a pair of professionals in the specific arts field.

These programs are provided at no cost to the eligible students. Information about the application process for these programs is usually posted in October of each year and can be found on the Internet at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/governors_school_programs/index.shtml



FLOW CHART FOR GIFTED ELIGIBILITY AND PLACEMENT



GIFTED ELIGIBILITY AND PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

High-ability students are usually formally identified as gifted prior to the beginning of third grade, but in exceptional cases may be identified as early as kindergarten. All students are considered in the screening process at every grade level, and referrals are accepted at any time. The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) is administered to all second graders as part of the screening process, and the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) is administered to all first graders. A central office eligibility and placement committee looks carefully at extensive and detailed information for each referred student in order to make accurate identification and placement decisions. Parent permission is requested prior to individual testing. If a student is identified as gifted, then the committee looks at the eligibility information to determine the best educational placement for the student. Eligible students in grades K-2 are placed into a Talent Pool. Gifted students in grades 3-8 may be placed by the committee into a resource program, or into a full-time center-based program.

The school division's identification protocol adheres to best practices and to the state regulations in the use of a multiple criteria process to determine the educational need for gifted education services. Additionally, the division makes a concerted effort to seek out traditionally under-identified potentially gifted learners, particularly those attending Title I schools who are designated as socio-economically disadvantaged, English as a Second Language learners, and culturally diverse students. The research-based criteria enable our staff to use a range of data sources, including standardized data as well as more subjective descriptors that may be provided by parents and teachers. Students may be evaluated more than once, but not more than once per year.

Transfer students who have been identified as gifted in their previous school divisions will be evaluated and placed in comparable settings, if available, as soon as possible. Student eligibility is determined according to Hampton City Schools criteria, which may be different from the criteria used in the previous division. If insufficient data is available in the student's records, additional testing may be necessary. **Students in military families** transferring into Hampton City Schools will be evaluated as quickly as possible, and may be evaluated during the summer if a qualified examiner is available.

Students who are currently attending **private schools** and are considering transferring into Hampton City Schools will be evaluated during the regular evaluation cycles. A student must be a resident of Hampton in order to be tested. Private school students must enroll in Hampton City Schools in order to be eligible to apply for the Governor's School for Science and Technology. **Home-schooled students** must be enrolled part-time in Hampton City Schools in order to apply for and attend Governor's School. Further information may be found in the *Hampton City Schools Policy Manual*.

KEY POINTS FOR ELIGIBILITY

- Referrals may be made at any time, by any person who knows the capabilities of a student
- Parent permission must be obtained
- Multiple criteria are used for identification and placement
- The timeline can take up to 90 instructional days
- Eligibility and placement decisions are made by the Identification and Placement Committee
- Appeals may be made by calling the director

Multiple criteria:

We use multiple criteria with both subjective and objective data to get a comprehensive picture of the student's abilities.

- Two objective nationally-normed ability tests (not criterion-referenced achievement tests such as SOLs) to measure intellectual ability. The tests we use are current, culturally bias-free, and designed to objectively measure ability in all populations. We also have non-linguistic ability tests that are used for ESL students.
- Subjective and objective ratings (K-2 and 3-12 rating scales or nationally normed Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS) from the teacher or teachers for in-school gifted behaviors and performance)
- Subjective ratings from the parent for non-school gifted behaviors
- Performance in core content classes from the student (grades, work samples, interviews)
- Adjudicated portfolios are included for Excel Art eligibility
- Advocacy process to ensure a level playing field for students who may be at a disadvantage (limited English proficiency, dual exceptionalities)

Eligibility decisions:

- Students may be found eligible for gifted services, not eligible, or the decision may be deferred to gather additional information.
- Once the student is identified as gifted, then a placement decision is made.
- The placement decision may be for gifted resource classes at the zoned school, or for full-time services at Spratley Gifted Center.
- The identification and placement decisions are very carefully considered for each student, and are based on the total number of points on a matrix, according to the eligibility criteria.
- Students must always meet the criteria prior to placement in gifted services.
There are no provisional placements.

More information needed...

When a student has points or scores that are very close to meeting the eligibility criteria, or if there are large discrepancies between test scores, grades, and/or teacher ratings, the committee will request additional information. That information may include additional tests, ratings from another teacher, an alternate rating, or the decision may be deferred pending grades from the next grading period.

“Just one more point”...

Remember that “one or two points” may mean very different things depending on whether they are matrix points, rating scale points, percentile points, or percentage points. When someone says that a student missed eligibility by one point, it is usually only part of the picture (see **More information needed**, above).

Transition points (automatic review of placement):

Once students are placed into the Talent Pool or gifted resource classes, they develop their abstract thinking and critical reasoning skills with the trained gifted resource teachers, and then are automatically re-evaluated at transition points to determine the most appropriate educational placement:

- Grade 2 Review - middle of grade 2 for all Talent Pool students
The grade 2 review determines formal identification as gifted as well as placement for grade 3.
- Grade 5 Review - middle of grade 5 for all gifted resource (zoned school) students, to determine middle school placement
For Grade 5 review, we do look at grades to understand more about the student’s motivation and probability of success in a highly rigorous class.

Change of placement requests:

If a student has received gifted resource services in a zoned school for at least one full semester, and the parent feels that full-time services would be more appropriate to meet that student’s needs, then the parent may request a change of placement review. Change of placement review request forms may be obtained from the school counselor or gifted resource teacher. The eligibility committee will review the eligibility data and gather additional current information. The student must meet the criteria for full-time placement in order for the services to be changed.

Appeals process:

Any eligibility or placement decision made by the eligibility committee may be appealed. The first required step in the appeals process is to call the director to discuss the decision. Concerns can usually be resolved at this level; if not, the next step is to submit a formal letter requesting an appeal. This letter must be submitted to the director within ten days of receipt of the original eligibility or placement decision. An appeals committee will be convened within 20 days of the receipt of the written request, and will review all relevant information. Parents will be notified by letter of the committee’s decision. The decision of the appeals committee is final.

Withdrawal from services and opting out of full-time placement:

A parent may initiate a withdrawal from elementary or middle school gifted services in writing, by completing a withdrawal form. The signed form should be sent to the DAAE. The student may then be withdrawn from services, but will remain on the roster of identified students. A student withdrawing from the Spratley Gifted Center will return to his or her previous school. If a parent chooses to opt out of a full time Spratley placement recommended by the eligibility committee for the student, the parent must sign an opt out form and return it to DAAE. If a student has been withdrawn or opted out of full time placement at Spratley for more than one semester, a formal change of placement review must be conducted and signed by the director before the student is allowed to return to full time placement.

IMPORTANT NOTES ON THE ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

- Current research on gifted students gives us a very different perspective now than when IQ scores were used many years ago. Students may have very specific areas of giftedness rather than global giftedness. They may be very gifted in non-verbal areas, but not appear gifted in reading or language arts.
- Students may have factors that make identification and performance more complex (including dual exceptionalities, limited English proficiency, cultural differences, or social/emotional considerations such as underachievement).
- Not all gifted students look gifted - that is why we have extensive criteria to consider. “Teacher pleasers” may not be your most gifted students.
- Students may be re-evaluated no more than once a year, if the eligibility picture has changed and warrants additional consideration.
- Grades are only a part of the big picture.
 - Students may get straight As and not be identified as gifted
 - Students may get poor grades and still be considered gifted
- Once gifted, always gifted - we do not “ungift” students, although we may change a placement if needed.
- We give students second chances, because students can change over time.
- And because students change over time, *if a full-time placement at Spratley is not accepted, the student must go through a placement review prior to full-time placement at a later time.*
- The “sibling rule” and “legacies” do not apply at Spratley Gifted Center.
- If a parent feels that we need to consider additional information for the student, a request for review can be made by calling the director.
- The eligibility process is comprehensive and thorough for each student, and consequently may take up to 90 instructional days.
- To help ensure that we do not miss any potentially gifted students, we do division-wide screening of every student in grades one and two.
- Admissions to the International Baccalaureate (IB) program are done by the IB coordinator. Students do not have to be identified as gifted.
- Admissions to the Governor’s School for Science and Technology are done by the Governor’s School. It is a HIGHLY competitive admissions process. Students should pay attention to prerequisites and take the most rigorous math courses available!



HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL

To make a referral, complete the referral form, which may be obtained from the school level advisor or gifted resource teacher at the student's school. Referral forms are also available on the DAAE website, or by calling the DAAE office. Parents, teachers, peers, guidance counselors, and other professionals who know the student may make a referral. Students may also make self-referrals.

Parents should also complete the checklist/questionnaire (parent consent) form. The student's teacher will complete a gifted characteristics checklist after parent permission is received. There is no deadline for referrals, but due to the length of the process, referrals that are submitted in June may not be completed until the following September. *The timeline from referral to decision may take up to 90 instructional days.* After parent permission is received, school level advisors create a student profile packet containing all forms. Gifted resource teachers check all packets for completion prior to sending them to the central office of gifted education (DAAE), and individual testing is scheduled as needed. **All of the information included in the packets is confidential.**

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL LEVEL ADVISOR (SLA)

A school counselor at each school is appointed to be the gifted School Level Advisor (SLA). The SLA is primarily responsible for distributing and gathering gifted referral forms, obtaining parent permissions and teacher rating scales, sending the eligibility packets to DAAE, and distributing information from DAAE as requested. The SLA may also be needed to assist in obtaining classroom space for the gifted resource teachers, working out schedules, and providing information to parents as needed. SLAs are also responsible for screening students (asking teachers for referrals, checking to see if transfer students were previously identified in another division, reviewing standardized test scores, etc.) and assisting in the application processes for the Governor's School programs. The SLAs serve collaboratively with the gifted resource teachers to advocate for their gifted students as needed.

ROLE OF THE GIFTED RESOURCE TEACHER (GRT)

The primary responsibility of the gifted resource teacher (GRT) is to provide enriched, complex, advanced, in-depth learning experiences to their students in the gifted resource classes, including critical thinking and open-ended problem solving activities in core content areas. Summaries of the gifted curricula for each grade level are available on the website. The GRTs also are responsible for administering individual ability tests, work samples, and student interviews as required for the eligibility process. If asked, the GRTs may support classroom teachers by providing them with strategies for differentiation and enrichment, and may provide gifted workshops for parents or teachers. GRTs may be invited to attend SIT and IEP meetings as advocates for their gifted students.

HOMEWORK AND MAKE-UP WORK GUIDELINES FOR GIFTED RESOURCE AND EXCEL ART STUDENTS

It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to make sure that the students know and understand the required content materials. Since gifted students generally learn very quickly and efficiently, it should not be necessary for them to make up all work missed during time in gifted resource classes. In some cases, missed lessons may be abbreviated or compacted; for example, a student may be asked to do the five most difficult questions in an assignment rather than all 25 questions. In other cases, if the student has demonstrated sufficient mastery, the missed work may be not required at all. In all cases, the students should not be punished for their time in mandated gifted services by the assignment of excessive make-up work.

The regular classroom teacher may not deny gifted services to identified students because of missed homework, make-up of class tests, or discipline issues.

The intervention block scheduled at each school may also be used to provide purposeful enrichment and extended learning opportunities for gifted students who have already mastered the content material. Many ideas for providing enrichment and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of these students are available under the “for teachers” tab on the gifted website. The key is to provide *different* (or differentiated) work, not *more* work.

SCHEDULING GIFTED RESOURCE CLASSES

The gifted resource teachers try to schedule gifted resource classes during math and language arts blocks, when possible, for these reasons:

- The curriculum for the elementary gifted resource classes includes advanced instruction in core content areas (including advanced math, language arts, and science), but does not generally include music or art or health/PE.
- It is easier to make-up missed math and language arts (compacted homework if needed) than to make-up missed art or music or health/PE.
- Gifted students generally are already ahead in math and language arts, and can learn missed instruction easily, but the music and art concepts may be new to them (and parents may have a harder time assisting with these).
- Math and language arts classes are daily rather than weekly, so a missed class does not mean a whole missed week, as it does for music, art, etc.
- Some students feel that missing music or art or PE is "punishment," and we do not want to punish students for being gifted.

Gifted resource classes are scheduled for as many as five classes in one day at each school, so the gifted students will likely miss something important (but not lunch or recess!) Counselors and principals should be flexible in working with the gifted resource teachers to create a workable schedule. Of course, if a gifted student is struggling in a core content area, the gifted resource teacher should be informed.

HOW TO STAY IN COMPLIANCE WITH STATE GIFTED REGULATIONS

1. **Let everyone know they can make a referral**, and how to obtain a referral form. DAAE bookmarks with contact information can be put in offices, notices can be put in student handbooks, newsletters, and posted on your website, announcements can be made at PTA meetings, Family Engagement Specialists can hold workshops, etc.
2. Encourage teachers to **look for evidence of critical thinking**, abstract reasoning, and problem solving skills. Your most highly gifted students may not be straight-A students. Look hard for those non-traditional and underserved gifted students!
3. Make sure your teachers are providing (and documenting) **appropriately differentiated instruction** to meet the needs of their high-achieving students.
4. Provide **cluster grouping** so that the gifted students do not work in isolation. The state regulations mandate that gifted students have the opportunity on a daily basis to work with their intellectual peers. For example, you may need to cluster your three gifted third graders together in one classroom rather than give one gifted student to each of your three third grade teachers. For more information on cluster grouping, contact DAAE.
5. Use intervention/enrichment blocks appropriately to **provide advanced instruction** to your students who have demonstrated mastery of the content. Document the instruction provided and the student learning outcomes.
6. **Make sure your gifted students can receive their mandated services consistently:**
 - a. Make sure that your gifted resource classes have adequate classroom space every week.
 - b. Avoid scheduling field trips, testing, assemblies, programs, etc., on gifted resource days.
 - c. Make sure that teachers do not hold students out of resource classes for disciplinary reasons or to complete unfinished classwork or homework.
7. **Provide opportunities for professional development** on the needs and characteristics of gifted students. The gifted regulations state that all full-time teachers who work with gifted students must have this training. Online modules are available through Edivation, workshops may be requested through DAAE, and other opportunities are posted through Organizational Development. Guidebooks for teachers of gifted students are posted on the DAAE website. HCS also offers onsite gifted endorsement classes on a rotating basis.
8. **Schedule classes appropriately.** On the elementary level, this may mean ensuring that students who are reading or doing math significantly above grade level can be clustered into a higher grade class for that subject. On the middle and high school levels, this may mean ensuring that gifted students take the most rigorous math and language arts classes, and that they are on the prerequisite track for IB, Governor's School, and AP classes. You might also want to make sure your middle and high school gifted students and parents are given copies of, or are aware of, the College [planning] Handbook, which can help with class planning decisions. These are on the gifted web page; hard copies are available on request.
9. High schools should ensure that the **Summer Residential Governor's School programs are well publicized.** Information and applications are available on the VDOE web site in early October. Deadlines for adjudication are in early November.

INTERPRETING AND USING COGAT AND NNAT SCORES

The CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) and NNAT (Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test) are tests of critical thinking, reasoning, and problem solving, and can provide helpful data for making instructional decisions to meet the needs of the students in the regular classroom. Gifted eligibility uses **percentile scores**. *A percentile score of 84 does not mean that the student got 84 percent of the answers correct, but rather that the student performed better than 84 out of 100 students being tested across the nation.* The average range on the percentile rank is between the 25th and 75th percentiles.

Along with SOL scores, CogAT and NNAT scores can be used for:

- Identifying at-risk students
- Identifying gifted students
- Guiding differentiation of instruction to support student strengths and weaknesses (especially for students with strengths in nonverbal areas)
- Determining clusters or flexible groups for specific or supplemental instruction
- Determining the need for enrichment or remediation
- Finding relative strengths and weaknesses of the class as a whole as well as for individual students
- Counseling students who might be underachieving
- **Identifying students whose predicted levels of achievement are considerably different from their observed levels of achievement**

For more information on interpreting and using subtest scores, please see the teachers' tab on the gifted website.

LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR GIFTED EDUCATION

The purpose of the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) is to advise the school board through the division superintendent of the educational needs of all gifted students in the division. The membership of the committee consists of parents, teachers of the gifted, administrators, and community members. Agendas for upcoming meetings and minutes of previous meetings are posted on the HCS gifted education web page. The meetings are open to the public, and public comments are always welcome. Nominations for new members are accepted at any time. For further information about the LAC, please contact the DAAE office at 757-727-2160.



RESOURCES ON THE DAAE WEB SITE

The DAAE Web site (gifted department) is at

<http://www.sbo.hampton.k12.va.us/departments/gifted/gifted.html>

Information on this site includes:

- Program descriptions and application deadlines
- Referral forms and procedures
 - Referral forms, parent consent forms/rating scales
 - Excel Art portfolio directions, packets, and exemplars
- Handbooks and guides
 - *Teacher Guidelines*
 - *Parent Handbook*
 - *College [Planning] Handbook*
 - *Administrators' Brief Guide to Gifted Services*
- Strategies for teachers
 - Differentiation strategies
 - Enrichment and independent study ideas
 - Strategies for visual/spatial learners
- Curriculum summaries for Talent Pool, gifted resource, and Excel Art
- The *Local Plan for Gifted Education*
- Local Advisory Committee agendas and minutes
- Gifted endorsement requirements and information
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Governor's School information
- Contact information for DAAE staff
- Links to further resources

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Mrs. Alethea Lewis
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Gifted Education Hotline:

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New Horizons Governor's School for Science and Technology:

Vikki Wismer, Director 757-766-1100 ext. 3313
www.nhgs.tec.va.us

Gifted School Level Advisors:

Contact the school office, school counselor, or DAAE office

Local Advisory Committee:

Contact the administrative secretary, Mrs. Alethea Lewis, at 757-727-2160