



Gifted Education & Academic Rigor Services (GEARS) Website <https://www.npsk12.com/GEARS>

### **Division Statement of Philosophy for the Education of Gifted Students**

**Norfolk Public Schools (NPS)** believes all students deserve to be challenged, learn something new every day, and have the academic and affective supports needed to cultivate their true potential. Every student deserves the opportunity to be provided with appropriate learning experiences that promote intellectual and personal growth.

**NPS'** gifted students reflect the diverse makeup of its city, each with a unique profile of strengths and abilities that require specialized services. They come from many different backgrounds, have unique characteristics, and may demonstrate their gifts in unconventional ways. Teachers of gifted students deliver differentiated curricula and instruction to equip them with higher level thinking skills and in-depth content knowledge, supporting advanced intellectual and personal development that empower students to be successful contributors to society. **NPS** also recognizes gifted education goes beyond academics. The distinct social and emotional characteristics of gifted students are addressed through appropriate learning experiences that reflect an authentic understanding of their affective needs, thus allowing them to attain their personal best. In creating and fostering learning environments that strengthen students' metacognitive skills, students are rooted in a healthy mindset that emphasizes "what they are learning rather than how well they are doing" (Kohn, 1999).

### **Division Operational Definition of Giftedness**

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) defines "gifted students" as those in public elementary and secondary schools beginning with kindergarten through twelfth grade who demonstrate high levels of achievement or show the potential for higher levels of achievement when compared to others of the same age, experience, environment, or cultural background. Their aptitude and potential for achievement are so outstanding that they require special services and programs to meet their educational needs. ( 8VAC20-40 Regulations Governing the Educational Services for Gifted Students )

**Students will be identified by professionally qualified persons using multiple criteria as having potential or demonstrated aptitudes in the following areas:**

**General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA).** These students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate several of the following characteristics beyond their age-level peers: advanced thinking/reasoning, persistent intellectual curiosity, exceptional problem solving, rapid acquisition/mastery of facts, concepts, and principles, or creative/imaginative expression across a broad range of intellectual disciplines.

**Specific Academic Aptitude (SAA).** These students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate several of the following characteristics beyond their age-level peers in *selected academic areas* such as English, history/social science, mathematics or science: advanced thinking/reasoning, persistent intellectual curiosity, exceptional problem solving, rapid acquisition/mastery of facts, concepts, and principles, or creative/imaginative expression across a broad range of intellectual disciplines.

**Visual and Performing Arts (VPA).** Such students demonstrate advanced creative expression, persistent artistic curiosity, and advanced acquisition/mastery of techniques, concepts and principles beyond their age-level peers through exceptional auditions or authentic products and creative expression.

**Emerging Scholars (Talent Development Pool):** Based on the first-grade screener, students not identified as GIA or SAA, whose CogAT composite score is in the top 15% of their school, are placed in the Emerging Scholars Talent Pool Program during grades 2-4. They will be reassessed in 4th grade.



## Procedure for Gifted Identification

	<b>1st Grade</b>	<b>2nd - 5th Grade</b>	<b>6th - 8th Grade</b>	<b>9th - 12th Grade</b>
<b>Referral</b>	All 1st grade students are tested using the CogAT test during the start of the second semester.	Parents, teachers, and community members can refer a student to be tested.	Parents, teachers, and community members can refer a student to be tested.	Parents, teachers, and community members can refer a student to be tested.
<b>Testing</b>	Students are tested using the Cognitive Ability Test ( CogAT ) on verbal, quantitative, and non-verbal areas. Over 3 days.	Students are tested using the Cognitive Ability Test ( CogAT ) on verbal, quantitative, and non-verbal areas. Over 3 days.	Students are given the Iowa Test of Basic Skills ( ITBS ) in four areas: communication skills, mathematics, social studies, and science.	Students are given the Iowa Test of Educational Development ( ITED ) in four areas: communication skills, mathematics, social studies, and science.
<b>Portfolio</b>	Samples of student work will be collected and evaluated by a school-based committee.		Samples of student work will be collected and evaluated by a school-based committee.	
<b>Interview / Observation</b>	The gifted resource teacher may conduct an interview or a class observation.		The gifted resource teacher may conduct an interview or a class observation.	
<b>Committee Decision</b>	A district-level committee meets to review the documents and determine eligibility for gifted services.		A district-level committee meets to review the documents and determine eligibility for gifted services.	
<b>Placement</b>	Identified students begin receiving services the following semester.		Identified students receive services in appropriate credit bearing classes.	



## G.E.A.R.S. Services

Grade Levels	Services
<b>Kindergarten &amp; First Grade</b>	The <b>Gifted Resource Teacher (GRT)</b> pushes into classrooms to provide learning experiences for all students to expose them to problem solving and creative thinking activities.
<b>2nd Grade - 5th Grade</b>	<p>Students who are identified as Gifted or Emerging Scholars will be clustered so their classroom teacher can provide instruction fitting the needs of the students in all subject areas.</p> <p>Students Identified as Gifted and those identified as Emerging Scholars (through 4th grade) will also receive pull-out or push-in services from the Gifted Resource Teacher.. These will include both enrichment and ( as appropriate ) acceleration activities and lessons. This is to supplement the core instruction in the classroom.</p>
<b>6th to 8th Grade</b>  <b>Middle School</b>	<p>A GRT is assigned to each middle school to facilitate the use of advanced instructional strategies. These GRTs also collaborate with counselors to provide social emotional support to gifted learners and ensure identified students are enrolled in courses meeting their academic needs.</p> <p><b>The Young Scholars Program.</b> This academically accelerated program is the only program in NPS exclusively for gifted learners, and infuses George Betts's Autonomous Learner Model (ALM). ALM guides students toward becoming independent learners. Young Scholars 8th grade students complete a capstone project (Passion Project) where they explore an area of interest, complete extensive research in that area, and share what they have learned with peers.</p>
<b>9th to 12th Grades</b>  <b>High School</b>	<p>High school gifted students through honors and Advanced Placement courses. Each high school is assigned a gifted resource teacher to collaborate with AP, IB and honors teachers individually, by department, and school-wide to facilitate research based strategies that increase student engagement and rigor in critical thinking, problem solving, and challenging instructional best practices. GRTs also partner with school counselors to ensure gifted students' social emotional needs are met and that they are appropriately enrolled in rigorous coursework.</p> <p><b>Visual and Performing Arts Aptitude</b> Norfolk Public Schools provides talented students the opportunity to apply for and audition to the Virginia <i>Governor's School for the Arts</i> (GSA). Advanced Placement courses in music and art are offered at select high schools. Students are able to enroll in these courses through their high school counselor(s).</p>
<b>Arts and Sciences Program</b>  <b>All Grade Levels</b>	High ability/gifted students are offered the opportunity to participate in their school's Arts & Sciences program, an after-school enrichment program that runs during the school year providing exposure, enrichment, and critical thinking offerings. Teachers engage students in diverse curricula based on student interest.



## Multiple Levels of Services

