

The Screening, Referral, Identification, and Eligibility Processes for the Gifted Program  
Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools

*Screening*

All students in Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools are continuously screened for the potential need for gifted services each year of school. Gifted Resource Teachers work with principals and other specialists in the building to screen regularly collected student testing data and look for test scores that might indicate a need for more academic challenge in the classroom. Some of the types of tests that students may take are:

- PALS (Phonological Assessment of Literacy Skills, grade K-2),
- MAP in Reading and Math (Measures of Academic Progress, grades 3-8),
- Math pre-tests and post-tests for each math unit in each grade level (grades K-8),
- SOL tests in Reading and Math (Virginia Standards of Learning, grades 3-11),
- A nationally-normed ability test (grade 2), and
- PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test, grade 11).

Gifted Resource Teachers collaborate with teachers of students who consistently meet high and/or above-grade-level benchmarks on one or more of these tests each year and are exceeding expectations in the classroom. They support the teacher with providing Tier II Differentiation in the classroom, which is when the curriculum, instruction, and activities are adapted to be more rigorous than the core curriculum.

*Referral*

When a student's test scores and classroom performance is far beyond that of his or her classroom peers, the teacher may consider the student to be someone who might be eligible for the gifted program. In this situation, the teacher may refer the student for the gifted program, and parents are contacted by the school for permission to allow the student to undergo the gifted identification and eligibility process (Internal Referral). This typically happens in the spring of each school year, when the student has had a whole semester to demonstrate his or her academic abilities.

The Commonwealth of Virginia also allows parents, guardians, community members, peers, and even the student himself or herself, to refer a child for consideration for a school division's gifted program at any time (External Referral). When considering whether or not to refer your child for gifted services, parents may want to ask their child's classroom teacher the following questions:

1. In what areas are my child showing strength beyond the majority of the class?
2. What types of potentially gifted behaviors are my child showing in your class (a few examples of these behaviors are: intense curiosity, passion for learning in a strength

area, outside-of-the-box thinking, and the potential for very high achievement in a strength area)?

3. What types of Tier II Differentiation is my child receiving in Reading, Writing, and Math (“Tier II Differentiation” means curriculum, instruction, and activities that are modified to provide enrichment or acceleration in the regular classroom)?
4. Are there any other things that can be done to challenge my child in the classroom in his or her strength area that you haven’t tried yet?

After deciding to refer your child for the Gifted Program, parents must complete a [Referral Form](#) and a [Parent Consent Form for Gifted Testing](#). These must be turned in to the Gifted Resource Teacher at your child’s school. Once permission for gifted testing is received, the division operates under a 90-school-day timeline to complete the identification and eligibility processes.

### *Identification*

Once gifted personnel receives gifted referrals, then the identification process begins. The division has a 90-school-day timeline to complete the entire identification (testing) and eligibility processes. Gifted Resource Teachers at each school conduct the gifted testing activities. There are four areas for which data is collected:

Ability: The Gifted Resource Teacher will administer a new ability test to the student if there is not a current ability test score on file from the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade ability screening done at all elementary schools each spring. The ability test will produce ability scores for the areas of Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal.

Achievement: If needed, the Gifted Resource Teacher will administer a nationally-normed gifted achievement test in English/Social Studies and/or Mathematics that has a high ceiling on it so that students can show their true strength in the subject. Measures of Academic Progress test scores in Reading and Math, grades 3-8, can also be used to help with gifted identification because they have high ceilings and are nationally-normed.

Gifted Behavioral Observations: Classroom teachers and specialists who serve the referred student will be asked to complete a gifted behavioral checklist to provide insight into how the student performs in his or her general education class. Teachers should write down anecdotal notes and specific examples of students’ higher level thinking ability and performance as well as note student performance in any Tier II Differentiation activities provided by the teacher. Parents will also be asked to provide observational input based on examples of gifted behaviors the student might display at home and in the community.

Gifted Performance Tasks (Products): The Gifted Resource Teacher will collect performance task data on the student. These tasks could be math problem solving activities, writing

samples, literature analysis activities, creative or critical thinking activities, etc. Ideally, students who are referred for the gifted identification process should have experienced some Tier II Differentiation in their regular classroom, as well, and that performance data should be collected for the student, too.

Gifted Resource Teachers will also gather input from any specialists who work with the referred student, such as case managers for special education students or English Language Learners. Data pertaining to those specialized program will also be collected.

Once collected, all of the data must be scored and the results placed on a *Student Profile Sheet*.

### *Eligibility*

After all gifted testing data is collected, scored, and placed on the profile sheet, the Identification/Placement Committee meets to determine each students' eligibility for gifted services. The committee is made up of an administrator, 1-2 Gifted Resource Teachers, and often the student's classroom teacher at each school. Other school personnel may attend if appropriate (such as specialists or case managers), and the WJCC Gifted Coordinator facilitates each eligibility meeting.

For the General Intellectual Ability program (grades 1-5), students must earn at least 15 out of 20 points on the Profile Sheet to be eligible for gifted services. For the Specific Academic Ability Program in Math or English/Social Studies (grades 5-12), students must score in the "Superior" range on 3 of the 4 categories discussed under the "Identification" section- Ability, Achievement, Gifted Behaviors, and Gifted Products.

Students who score very close to the eligibility thresholds may be provisionally placed into the gifted program under certain circumstances.

After eligibilities are held, parents will receive a Determination Letter, and may meet with the Gifted Resource Teacher at their child's school to discuss the profile sheet. After discussing the profile sheet with their Gifted Resource Teacher, parents may appeal the determination through a time-sensitive Appeals Process described in the Determination Letter.

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If you have any questions about the WJCC Gifted Program, please do not hesitate to contact the Gifted Resource Teacher at your child's school.