Advanced Academic Programs (AAP) Elementary Continuum of Services

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) is committed to challenging all students through talent development efforts and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of advanced learners.

FCPS offers a continuum of advanced academic services for all students in Grades K-12. The continuum of services approach recognizes unique student needs and focuses on matching services, not labeling students. Through the continuum, students have:

- Multiple entry points for deeper learning opportunities in specific areas of need as they develop.
- A cluster group of students with similar academic needs to continue growing in their learning.

Teachers, Advanced Academic Resource Teachers (AARTs), and school administrators work together to provide the following levels of service at the elementary level:

Access to Rigor, Grades K-6 (Level I)

All students have opportunities to think critically, reason, and problem-solve.

- All teachers use critical and creative thinking strategies in their lessons.
- Classroom teachers provide opportunities using materials from the AAP Curriculum Framework a minimum of once per quarter.

Because Access to Rigor is for all FCPS students, there is not a screening process.

Subject Specific Advanced Differentiation, Grades K-6 (Level II)

Some students are strong in a specific subject area. Classroom teachers may adjust instruction for students in these area(s) by:

- Providing different assignments and resources in those subjects,
- Grouping students by their strengths, interests, and readiness, and
- Providing additional challenges using materials from the AAP Curriculum Framework.

Student needs for subject specific differentiation are re-evaluated each year at the local school.

Part-Time Services, Grades 3-6 (Level III)

Some students have advanced academic needs in multiple subject areas in addition to specific subject differentiation. They need part-time AAP services.

- Students work with other students that have similar academic needs through weekly pull-out classes or weekly co-taught lessons with the AART and classroom teacher.
- Teachers provide frequent opportunities to use materials from the AAP Curriculum Framework in Language Arts, science, social studies, and/or mathematics.

Part-time services continue through Grade 6. Students do not need to be evaluated each year.

Full-Time Services, Grades 3-8 (Level IV)

Some advanced learners need a full-time advanced academic program with differentiated instruction in all four core content areas (Language Arts, mathematics, social studies, and science).
Students eligible for full-time AAP services are cluster grouped on a full-time basis and receive:

- Full-time use of materials from the AAP Curriculum Framework in Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, and
- Curriculum that is differentiated through acceleration, depth, and complexity of content.

Full-time services continue through Grade 8. Students do not need to be evaluated each year.

Screening for Advanced Academic Program Services

Multiple data points are reviewed holistically to determine eligibility for all FCPS advanced academic services. Committees consider student work from opportunities with AAP lessons, examples of student reasoning or gifted behaviors from class discussions and activities, progress reports, achievement and ability scores, and parent input. Committees consider whether students have access to a group of students with similar academic needs to support academic conversations and growth in the classroom. No pieces of the data are weighted in the holistic screening process.

Eligibility decisions for subject-specific advanced differentiation and part-time services are made by a committee at the local school, and screening is ongoing throughout the school year. To refer for subject-specific advanced differentiation and part-time services, submit the AAP School-Based Referral Form to the AART at the local school.

Eligibility decisions for full-time services are made by the countywide central selection committee.

Screening for full-time services occurs during specific screening cycles:

- Fall screening is available for students who are new to FCPS since January.
    - The fall screening referral window is from the first day of school - October 15.
- Spring screening is available for any Grade 2-7 FCPS-enrolled student.
    - The spring screening referral window is from the first day of school - December 15.

Please do not wait for test scores before submitting a referral for your student in Grades 2-7. Referrals submitted after the full-time services referral windows noted above will not be accepted.

Referral forms for all advanced academic program services are found at https://www.fcps.edu/node/38893.

For more information, please visit the AAP website at: https://www.fcps.edu/registration/advanced-academics-identification-and-placement/current-fcps-students.

Ability Testing

FCPS uses ability testing as one consideration of the holistic screening process for advanced academic services. Test scores are not weighted or prioritized in the holistic screening process.

- All students in Grade 1 take the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT).
- All students in Grade 2 take the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT).
- NNAT and/or CogAT may be administered to students in Grades 3-6 who do not have an ability test score during the regularly scheduled testing windows.

Parents or guardians may request a one-time retest of either the CogAT or the NNAT in grades 3-6. Requests must be made during the fall testing windows. Please contact the school testing coordinator Alyssa Grabel, angrabel@fcps.edu, no later than September 15 to request the CogAT or October 15 for the NNAT.

Elementary Parent Information Meeting

A parent information meeting will be held at Timber Lane ES on _October 12 at 6-7pm. The AART will provide information about levels of service, explain the screening processes, and answer questions about advanced academic services.

Young Scholars

The FCPS Young Scholars model seeks to identify and affirm, from an early age, students with high academic potential from groups historically underrepresented in advanced academic programming. The goal of the model is to eliminate barriers for Young Scholars' access to and success in advanced academic opportunities in elementary, middle, and high school.

Twice-Exceptional (2e)

Some gifted students with advanced learning needs may also have a learning disability. Twice-exceptional (or "2e") students need strengths-based instruction while receiving advanced programming. The FCPS continuum of AAP services provides multiple entry points to meet student needs while also supporting their learning challenges. FCPS has created a 2e handbook to help schools and families understand how to identify and serve 2e students. You can find these resources by going to www.fcps.edu and searching "2e."

Advanced Academic Programs in Middle and High School

Middle School AAP

Advanced coursework at the middle school level is open enrollment. All students are encouraged to enroll in at least one Honors course each school year in an area of strength and/or interest.

Students eligible for the full-time services have the option to attend the middle school center assigned to their address or enroll in Honors courses in the four core content areas at their base school.

High School AAP

Advanced coursework at the high school level is open enrollment. All students are encouraged to enroll in at least one Honors course beginning in Grade 9. Each high school in FCPS offers AP, IB or Dual Enrollment courses which begin in Grade 10 or 11, depending on the program and the school.

Additional information about middle and high school services may be found on the Advanced Academic Programs web page: https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/advanced-academic-programs.