

Advanced Academic Programs (AAP) Elementary Continuum of Services

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) is committed to challenging all students through talent development and differentiated instruction. A continuum of advanced academic services is offered for students in Grades K-12. This model is designed to match services to unique student needs, moving away from a focus on student labels.

Through the continuum, students benefit from:

- 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 foster intellectual growth.

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

Access to Rigor, Grades K-6

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 Services, Grades K-6

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 services are re-evaluated each year at the local school.

Part-Time Services, Grades 3-6

Some students have advanced academic needs in multiple subject areas in addition to Subject-Specific services. 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

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 depth, complexity, and acceleration of content.

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

Elementary Family Information Meeting

A family information meeting will be held at the local school to discuss Advanced Academic Programs (AAP). At the meeting, the AART will:

- Provide information on the continuum of AAP services.
- Explain the screening processes.
- Answer questions about advanced academic services.

Screening and Eligibility for Advanced Academic Program Services

Subject-Specific and Part-Time AAP Services

Eligibility decisions for Subject-Specific and Part-Time AAP services are made by a committee at the local school, and screening is ongoing throughout the school year. To refer for Subject-Specific and Part-Time AAP services, submit the AAP Subject-Specific or Part Time Referral Form to the AART at the local school.

Full-Time AAP Services

Eligibility decisions for AAP Full-Time services are made by a countywide central screening committee. There are specific screening cycles for Full-Time services:

- **Fall Screening:** Available to students who have enrolled in FCPS since January. The referral window is from the **first day of school to October 15**.
- **Spring Screening:** Available to any FCPS student in **Grades 2-7**. The referral window is from the **first day of school to December 15**.

Important: Please do not wait for ability test scores before submitting a referral for your child in Grades 2-7. Referrals submitted after the deadlines will not be accepted. Referral forms for all Advanced Academic Program services are found at <https://www.fcps.edu/node/38893>.

Holistic Review for AAP Services

The screening committee conducts a holistic review of multiple data points to determine eligibility. Screening committees consider whether students have access to a group of students with similar academic needs to support academic conversations and growth in the classroom.

Screening committees review:

- 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
- family anecdotal feedback

All of these factors are considered holistically, without any single piece of data being weighted more than another.

Ability Testing

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

- All students in Grade 2 take the Naglieri General Ability Test (NGAT)
- The NGAT 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 an ability test in grades 3-6. Requests must be made during the fall testing windows. Please contact the school testing coordinator **no later than September 30** to request a one-time retake.

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 advanced learners may also experience learning challenges. Known as twice-exceptional (2e), these students require strengths-based instruction that nurtures their potential while addressing their learning challenges. The FCPS continuum of Advanced Academic Programs (AAP) provides multiple entry points to support both their strengths and areas of need. To guide schools and families in identifying and supporting 2e learners, FCPS has developed a comprehensive 2e handbook. You can find the 2e Handbook by going to www.fcps.edu and searching "2e."

Advanced Academic Programs in Middle and High School

Middle School AAP

Advanced coursework is available to all middle school students through open enrollment. All students are encouraged to enroll in at least one Honors course each year in an area of strength and/or interest. Students eligible for Full-Time AAP services can choose 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.

Some FCPS middle schools also offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP), which encourages critical and reflective thinking. All students at these schools participate in the program.

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. Each high school in FCPS offers AP, IB and/or Dual Enrollment courses depending on the program and the school.

Additional information about Advanced Academic Programs may be found on the Advanced Academic Programs web page: <https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/advanced-academic-programs>.