

GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM K-12: EVALUATION READINESS REPORT

VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The purpose of this evaluation readiness report is to comply with School Board Policy 6-26, adopted by the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach on September 5, 2007. According to the policy, “Existing programs will be evaluated based on an annual Program Evaluation Schedule which will be developed by the Program Evaluation Committee and approved by the School Board annually.” On September 9, 2008, the School Board approved the 2008-2009 Program Evaluation Schedule, in which the Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) Gifted Education Program was recommended for an Evaluation Readiness Report. The evaluation of the Gifted Education Program was to include service delivery models at all school levels (i.e., elementary, middle, and high), as well as Old Donation Center and Kemps Landing Magnet School. Based on School Board Policy 6-26, for programs scheduled for an Evaluation Readiness Report, the Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment will “assist program staff in defining measurable goals and objectives, as well as linkages with activities and outcomes.” According to the policy, an Evaluation Readiness Report focusing on the outcomes of this process and recommendations regarding future evaluation plans for the program will be presented to the Superintendent and School Board.

RESULTS OF EVALUATION READINESS PROCESS

- In collaboration with representatives from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, including the Office of Gifted Education, the evaluation readiness process resulted in a review of the existing goals of the Gifted Education Program from several sources. Using the existing goals as a foundation, goals for the program were revised and expanded and specific measurable objectives were developed.
- Goals were developed and organized by the target group for each goal. There were four program-focused goals, one building administrator goal, four goals for teachers of gifted students, two goals focused on parents of gifted students, and four goals for gifted students. Multiple measurable objectives were specified for each goal, including objectives regarding student outcomes.

- A summary of the components addressed within the Gifted Education Program’s goals and objectives includes the following: referral, identification, and selection processes for the Gifted Education Program; structure of the program, such as the various service delivery models and opportunities for gifted students; formative and summative student assessment methods within the program; program alignment from kindergarten to grade twelve; compliance with key VBCPS expectations or guidelines; differentiation of instruction; attending to gifted students’ cognitive, emotional, and social needs; collaborative work among teachers; staff development; opportunities for parent involvement and participation; and student outcomes.
- Objectives for students focused on students being challenged and engaged in instruction; becoming scholars and leaders; developing self-efficacy, self-regulation, and motivation; and acquiring and demonstrating understanding, knowledge, and skills, including 21st century skills.
- The purposes of the Gifted Education Program evaluation were determined. The purposes of the Gifted Education Program evaluation are primarily to provide information that will be used to guide program development and improvement and to determine the effectiveness of the program in terms of outcomes for gifted students.
- The scope of the Gifted Education Program evaluation includes all service delivery models at all school levels. The models for the delivery of gifted education services in VBCPS include the following: resource/cluster, resource only, special classes, special schools, and pull-out. This evaluation effort focuses on the gifted education services provided to approximately 9,700 students each year who are identified as intellectually gifted and/or gifted in the arts at elementary, middle, and high school.
- A framework and plan for the evaluation was developed which outlines a three-year effort to evaluate both the process of implementing and operating the Gifted Education Program as well as determining program outcomes for gifted students. An evaluation schedule and a data collection plan was also created.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1:

- Begin a process evaluation of the Gifted Education Program during 2009-2010 focused on evaluating the process-oriented goals and objectives. As part of the evaluation during 2009-2010, evaluation instruments will be developed, baseline data for outcome-oriented goals and objectives will be collected, and a year-one process evaluation report, including recommendations, will be provided to the School Board during fall 2010.

Rationale: It is proposed that a year-one process evaluation of the Gifted Education Program be conducted during 2009-2010. A process evaluation focuses on answering questions about how a program operates, documenting the various procedures that are followed and activities that occur when delivering services, and assessing the extent to which a program operates as it was

intended. A review of evaluation literature has indicated that determining the extent to which programs are implemented as intended and the nature of program implementation is an important first step in studying program outcomes because a program may not have the desired effect if components of the program are not implemented as intended. While the focus of the evaluation in 2009-2010 will not be on determining whether outcome-related goals and objectives are being met, baseline data for program objectives focused on outcomes will be collected for the purpose of setting performance targets in 2011.

Recommendation #2:

- Continue the process evaluation of the Gifted Education Program during 2010-2011 focused on evaluating the process-oriented goals and objectives. As part of the year-two process evaluation, adjustments to the evaluation instruments will be made as needed, modifications or changes made to the program will be described, baseline data for outcome-oriented goals and objectives will be collected for a second year, and performance targets for outcome-oriented objectives will be established using two years of data. A year-two process evaluation report, including recommendations, will be provided to the School Board during fall 2011.

Rationale: It is proposed that the process evaluation of the Gifted Education Program continue during 2010-2011 to address any modifications or changes to the program that occur due to previously planned modifications, changes to state regulations, or in response to the year-one process evaluation recommendations. Because new evaluation instruments for assessing process-related goals and objectives will be first designed and tested during 2009-2010, adjustments to the instruments may also be needed for the 2010-2011 process evaluation. Two years of process evaluations will allow for a more complete examination and understanding of the extent and nature of the implementation of the gifted program components at all school sites within the Virginia Beach school division. The degree to which the program is implemented as intended at the various sites will be an important component to consider during the subsequent examination of outcomes of the Gifted Education Program. While the focus of the process evaluation in 2010-2011 will not be on determining whether outcome-related goals and objectives are being met, baseline data for program objectives focused on outcomes will be collected for a second year with the purpose of setting performance targets for outcome-oriented objectives in 2011. Generally, it is recommended that more than one year of baseline data be collected prior to setting performance targets so that the targets that are set are realistic and informed by more than one “snapshot” of data at a given time. In addition, the literature notes the importance of identifying initiatives or changes that would be required to support achieving performance targets. Having more than one year of baseline data to set targets will allow time to assess which recommendations should be made that could impact whether future targets are met.

Recommendation #3:

- Conduct an outcome evaluation during 2011-2012 focused primarily on evaluating the extent to which the outcome-oriented goals and objectives were met. An outcome evaluation report, including recommendations for the program or for additional evaluation plans, will be provided to the School Board during fall 2012.

Rationale: Following the two years of process evaluation, it is proposed that the evaluation during 2011-2012 be focused on assessing the outcome-oriented goals and objectives of the program for students. Outcome evaluations primarily assess program outputs and benefits to participants to determine program effectiveness, but can also include information regarding program processes to provide context for how outcomes are produced. Key process information about the operation of the program at the various sites may be collected during 2011-2012 to inform the analysis of outcomes and possible relationships between types of service delivery and outcomes. However, the focus will be on the extent to which performance targets for outcome-related goals and objectives are met. Based on results from the 2011-2012 outcome evaluation process, additional evaluation update reports may be recommended to monitor certain outcomes or to provide information about possible adjustments to the Gifted Education Program due to changes in state regulations or due to program evaluation recommendations. Because some of the goals, especially for students, are longitudinal in nature, there may be longitudinal components of the evaluation which will need to be addressed beyond 2011-2012.

Attachment Gifted Education Program Goals & Objectives

Program Goals (4)

Goal #1: The referral, identification, and selection processes for the Gifted Education Program are effective, efficient, culturally sensitive, and responsive to the special needs of students, with enrolled students being representative of the school division.

Objective 1.1: The demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status) of students who are referred for gifted services is representative of the demographic characteristics of the overall school division as measured by the percentages of referred students in each group compared to the percentages of the school division's students in each group.

Objective 1.2: The Gifted Education Program builds awareness of twice-exceptional learners through staff development initiatives as measured by survey responses from teachers, staff members involved in gifted education, staff members in psychological services, and gifted identification and placement committee members.

Objective 1.3: The demographic characteristics of students identified as gifted in the school division are representative of the demographic characteristics of the overall school division as measured by the percentages of identified students in each group compared to the percentages of the school division's students in each group.

Objective 1.4: There is an increase in the identification of students for gifted services who are also receiving special education services as measured by increases in the percentage of special education students in the school division who are twice-exceptional.

Objective 1.5: The demographic characteristics of students applying for Old Donation Center (ODC) and Kemps Landing Magnet School (KLMS) are representative of the demographic characteristics of the gifted population.

Objective 1.6: The demographic characteristics of students selected and enrolled in ODC and KLMS are representative of the demographic characteristics of those who applied for selection as measured by the percentages of ODC and KLMS students in each group compared to the percentages of the schools' applicants in each group.

Objective 1.7: The student identification process is effective as evidenced by students remaining as active participants in the gifted programs as measured by longitudinal enrollment data and survey responses from students, parents, and gifted identification and placement committee members.

Objective 1.8: The student selection process is effective as evidenced by students remaining enrolled in the ODC and KLMS programs as measured by longitudinal enrollment data and survey responses from students, parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and selection committee members.

Goal #2: The structure of the Gifted Education Program provides flexibility to meet individual student needs through a variety of opportunities and service delivery models.

Objective 2.1: The Gifted Education Program provides a continuum of services that includes multiple models for the delivery of services as evidenced by gifted students' enrollment in the various service delivery models.

Objective 2.2: Gifted students are provided opportunities for acceleration both across grades and within the grade level through curriculum and instruction as measured by enrollment records and student, parent, teacher, and guidance counselor survey responses, respectively.

Objective 2.3: The gifted resource teachers' (GRT) schedule is dedicated to meeting gifted learners' needs as measured by classroom teacher reports and GRT schedules regarding the time spent in classrooms working with gifted learners, supporting and training classroom teachers, collaboratively planning with classroom teachers, modeling and coteaching within the classroom, holding student conferences, and working with underachieving students.

Objective 2.4: Gifted pedagogy (models and strategies from research that support gifted education) is evident in the collaborative learning and unit plans developed by classroom teachers as measured with the use of a rubric/checklist for evaluating the plans.

Objective 2.5: The Gifted Education Program provides students with access to resources in the community, both within and outside the classroom, as indicated by a review of learning plans, quarterly newsletters, and teacher survey responses.

Goal #3: The Gifted Education Program utilizes formative and summative student assessment methods, including high-quality performance-based assessments, to promote student demonstration of their understanding, knowledge, and individual strengths.

Objective 3.1: On a regular basis, preassessment data are used to modify the curriculum and instruction to allow for greater depth or breadth in the student learning experience as measured by teacher survey items addressing the use of data and the prevalence of data usage.

Objective 3.2: In each unit of study, there is evidence of the use of formative and summative assessments based on descriptions in learning or unit plans and teacher survey responses.

Objective 3.3: Balanced assessment techniques, including preassessment of knowledge, understanding, and skills; formative and summative; multiple choice; open responses; performance assessments; and student self-assessment and reflection, are utilized during instruction as evidenced by teacher survey responses.

Objective 3.4: Performance-based assessments are high-quality as measured by the use of a checklist to assess the characteristics of the assessments, including whether they attend to the content, understandings, skills, and standards; whether the task and rubric are aligned with gifted curriculum and instruction benchmarks; and whether they are authentic, rigorous, and open-ended.

Objective 3.5: Assessments allow students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and understanding as measured by student and teacher survey responses.

Goal #4: The Gifted Education Program is aligned with other educational services to provide a seamless delivery of services from kindergarten through grade twelve.

Objective 4.1: The Gifted Education Program provides a seamless delivery of services from kindergarten through grade twelve as evidenced by the development of an inventory of various educational pathways that gifted students take throughout their education in VBCPS through high school graduation, including longitudinal data regarding student enrollment in those paths.

Objective 4.2: The Gifted Education Program provides a seamless delivery of services from elementary through high school as measured by survey responses from parents whose gifted children have been enrolled in the gifted program in elementary, middle, and high school.

Building Administrator Goal (1)

Goal #1: Building administrators support the Gifted Education Program by assuring that the service delivery models are implemented according to VBCPS expectations or guidelines.

Objective 1.1: The Office of Gifted Education provides building administrators with effective staff development opportunities as measured by administrator survey responses.

Objective 1.2: The VBCPS guidelines for creating cluster classrooms for the delivery of the Resource Cluster Model are followed by building administrators as measured by class enrollment records and administrator, GRT, and cluster teacher survey responses.

Objective 1.3: Building administrators follow VBCPS expectations and guidelines for the selection of cluster teachers for the Resource Cluster Model as measured by administrator, GRT, and cluster teacher survey responses.

Objective 1.4: Building administrators receive effective support from the Office of Gifted Education when needed as measured by administrator survey responses.

Note: Other key elements of implementing the various service delivery models are represented elsewhere in the appropriate goals and objectives.

Teacher Goals (4)

Goal #1: Gifted resource teachers and classroom teachers provide differentiated instruction through student-centered lessons that involve interdisciplinary curriculum content and resources that are authentic and meaningful to the gifted learner.

Objective 1.1: Teachers of gifted students differentiate instruction through a variety of strategies as assessed through a content analysis of learning plans, the use of a classroom observation rubric/checklist, and student, teacher, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 1.2: Teachers of gifted students teach lessons that include interdisciplinary curriculum content as assessed through a content analysis of learning plans, the use of a classroom observation checklist, and student and teacher survey responses.

Objective 1.3: Teachers of gifted students include lessons in their teaching that are related to real-life experiences and are meaningful to the students as assessed through a content analysis of learning plans, the use of a classroom observation checklist, and student and teacher survey responses.

Objective 1.4: Teachers of gifted students use technology resources in authentic ways as measured by student and teacher survey responses, including computer resource and library media specialists.

Goal #2: Gifted resource teachers, classroom teachers, and counselors who work with gifted students effectively attend to the students' cognitive, emotional, and social needs.

Objective 2.1: Gifted resource teachers, classroom teachers, and counselors effectively attend to gifted students' cognitive needs based on student and parent survey responses.

Objective 2.2: Gifted resource teachers, classroom teachers, and counselors effectively attend to gifted students' emotional needs based on student and parent survey responses.

Objective 2.3: Gifted resource teachers, classroom teachers, and counselors effectively attend to gifted students' social needs based on student and parent survey responses.

Objective 2.4: Teachers of gifted students will facilitate the development of student self-efficacy by consistently providing students with feedback that is skill-oriented, specific, and recognizes that students put effort into production as measured by teacher and student survey responses.

Objective 2.5: Gifted resource teachers, classroom teachers, and counselors act as advocates for gifted students and the gifted education program based on student, teacher, administrator, and parent survey responses.

Goal #3: All teachers, including gifted resource teachers, classroom teachers, special education teachers, and specialists, work collaboratively to differentiate curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of gifted learners.

Objective 3.1: Cluster teachers meet the Gifted Education Program's expectations for effective collaboration with the gifted resource teacher as measured by the percentage of cluster teachers who are engaged in activities documented on the Gifted Program Collaboration Record, the Effective Collaborative Planning Form, and the Communication Plan monthly reports, as well as teacher survey responses.

Objective 3.2: Teachers of gifted students and special education teachers plan collaboratively for instruction with the GRT when twice-exceptional students are identified as measured by a review of meeting schedules and documentation, as well as GRT and special education teacher survey responses.

Objective 3.3: Specialists (e.g., RRT, CRT, LMS, etc.) are included in collaborative planning efforts for gifted learners as measured by teachers' and specialists' survey responses.

Objective 3.4: Collaborative planning with the GRT equips teachers of gifted students with the knowledge, understanding, skills, and confidence to differentiate for gifted learners on their own as measured by teacher survey responses.

Objective 3.5: As a result of collaboration, teachers of gifted students demonstrate high levels of self-efficacy with regards to teaching and continuously strive to improve their practice as measured by teacher survey responses.

Goal #4: Resource and classroom teachers participate in effective, ongoing professional development focused on understanding and meeting the academic and socioemotional needs of gifted learners.

Objective 4.1: Professional development for gifted resource teachers and classroom teachers on the identification and education of gifted students is ongoing as evidenced by a compilation of staff development opportunities and a review of the staff development schedule for target participants at both the division and school levels.

Objective 4.2: Professional development for gifted resource teachers and classroom teachers is effective at providing information on the identification of gifted learners and helping teachers understand and meet the academic and socioemotional needs of gifted learners as measured by responses to training exit ticket surveys, course evaluation forms, and teacher survey responses.

Objective 4.3: Professional development for gifted resource teachers is effective at developing their capacity to provide leadership to other staff involved in the instruction of gifted students as determined by administrator, GRT, and classroom teacher survey responses.

Parent Goals (2)

Goal #1: Parents have opportunities to become involved in their gifted child's education.

Objective 1.1: Parents are provided with opportunities to become involved in their gifted child's education as measured by parent and teacher survey responses.

Objective 1.2: Communication efforts between the school and parents regarding the gifted students' education are effective at providing relevant information about the program and keeping them informed as measured by parent, teacher, gifted resource teacher, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 1.3: A variety of communication tools, including paper and electronic, are used to maintain communication with parents as measured by parent and teacher survey responses.

Objective 1.4: Community organizations and agencies are utilized in efforts to establish and maintain connections with parents regarding the Gifted Education Program based on data provided by the Office of Gifted Education, the gifted resource teachers, and the guidance departments at schools.

Goal #2: Parents have opportunities to participate in training workshops to enhance their gifted child's learning and to learn about the unique needs of their gifted child.

Objective 2.1: Parents of gifted students have opportunities for training offered by the school division to enhance their child's learning and to increase awareness of the unique needs of their gifted child as measured by the schedules of parent workshops and parent survey responses.

Objective 2.2: Parents indicate that the training sessions they attend are effective and helpful at increasing their knowledge so that they can enhance their gifted child's learning as measured by parent training exit ticket survey responses.

Objective 2.3: Parents indicate that the training sessions they attend are effective and helpful at increasing their awareness of the unique cognitive, emotional, and social needs of their gifted child as measured by parent training exit ticket survey responses.

Objective 2.4: Parents indicate that the range of topics addressed in training sessions were issues of value to them as parents of gifted students based on parent survey responses.

Student Goals (4)

Goal #1: Students in the Gifted Education Program are challenged and fully engaged in instruction delivered at levels commensurate with their abilities.

Objective 1.1: Students identified as intellectually gifted report being cognitively and academically challenged in their current core classes based on responses to a student survey.

Objective 1.2: Students identified as gifted in the arts report being artistically challenged in the classes within their area of identification based on student survey responses.

Objective 1.3: Students are intellectually engaged in the learning process in their current classes within their area of identification based on student and teacher survey responses.

Objective 1.4: Students report that pacing of instruction is appropriate and allows for skill mastery with minimal repetition based on responses to a student survey.

Objective 1.5: The models for delivering gifted services currently in place meet the academic and artistic needs of gifted learners as measured by student and parent survey responses.

Goal #2: Students in the Gifted Education Program become scholars and leaders.

Objective 2.1: Gifted students show evidence of scholarship and leadership either in the classroom or at home based on student, teacher, and parent survey responses.

Objective 2.2: Gifted students show evidence of scholarship by volunteering to participate in academic or artistic extracurricular teams, clubs, or competitions (e.g., Odyssey of the Mind, Destination Imagination) as measured by extracurricular participation data.

Objective 2.3: Gifted students show evidence of leadership through serving in leadership roles (e.g., team captain, student government) in extracurricular or community activities based on student survey responses.

Objective 2.4: Gifted students earn college scholarships that are awarded based on scholarship and leadership criteria as measured by the percentage of gifted seniors receiving these awards.

Objective 2.5: Gifted students contribute to their community based on student and parent survey responses and based on evidence of community service hours if applicable to programs or classes in which students are enrolled.

Objective 2.6: Gifted students show evidence of becoming scholars and leaders as measured by the percentage who enroll in college, graduate from college, and complete graduate degrees based on National Student Clearinghouse college data.

Goal #3: Students in the Gifted Education Program develop and demonstrate high levels of self-efficacy and self-regulation and are motivated to perform at levels of excellence in their area(s) of giftedness.

Objective 3.1: Intellectually gifted students demonstrate high levels of self-efficacy and motivation by selecting challenging coursework as measured by the percentage who enroll in advanced or honors classes in middle or high school.

Objective 3.2: Gifted students indicate that they have high levels of self-efficacy with the belief that their performance is based on skill development and effort as measured by student survey responses.

Objective 3.3: Gifted students who are identified as underachieving work to improve their performance as measured by the percentage of underachieving gifted students who are reported by teachers as being successful after intervention plans are implemented.

Objective 3.4: Gifted students show evidence of self-regulation based on the percentage who earn satisfactory or outstanding grades in citizenship and work habits in elementary school, the percentage who have no disciplinary referrals in middle and high school, and teacher and student survey responses.

Objective 3.5: Gifted students indicate that they are motivated to perform at levels of excellence as measured by student survey responses.

Objective 3.6: Gifted students will develop metacognitive skills that foster independent and self-directed learning in order to develop self-understanding as measured by the percentage who earn satisfactory or outstanding grades in work habits on the report card for elementary students and student, parent, and teacher survey responses.

Goal #4: Students in the Gifted Education Program acquire and demonstrate high levels of understanding, knowledge, and skills, including 21st century skills.

Objective 4.1: Intellectually gifted students demonstrate higher-order skills (e.g., critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving, effective written communication) as measured by their performance on divisionwide performance tasks and digital portfolios upon the implementation of these assessments.

Objective 4.2: Intellectually gifted students in high school demonstrate higher-order skills (e.g., critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving, written communication) as measured by their performance on the College and Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA) and similar divisionwide assessments for elementary and middle school students upon the implementation of these assessments.

Objective 4.3: Intellectually gifted students demonstrate high levels of understanding, knowledge, and skills as measured by the percentage who score in the pass advanced range on the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests.

Objective 4.4: Intellectually gifted students demonstrate high levels of understanding, knowledge, and skills as measured by the percentage who perform at or above the 90th percentile on the Stanford 10 assessment in grades 4, 6, and 9.

Objective 4.5: Middle and high school intellectually gifted students demonstrate success in rigorous courses as measured by the percentage who earn grades of B or higher in advanced, honors, or gifted classes.

Objective 4.6: Intellectually gifted students in high school demonstrate high levels of understanding, knowledge, and skills as measured by the percentage who earn scores of 3 or higher on advanced placement (AP) tests.

Objective 4.7: Intellectually gifted students in high school demonstrate high levels of understanding, knowledge, and skills as measured by the percentage who earn scores in the highest quartile on national assessments, including the ACT, PSAT, and SAT.

Objective 4.8: Gifted students who enroll in Technical and Career Education certification programs in high school demonstrate high levels of understanding, knowledge, and skills as measured by the percentage who earn Technical and Career Education certifications.

Objective 4.9: Students who are gifted in the arts demonstrate high levels of understanding, knowledge, and skills as measured by the percentage who earn grades of B or higher in courses related to their area of giftedness.

Objective 4.10: Intellectually gifted students acquire high levels of understanding, knowledge, and skills as measured by the percentage who graduate with advanced diplomas (e.g., advanced studies or IB diplomas).

Objective 4.11: Gifted students show evidence of purposeful collaboration with their peers during instruction as measured by the extent to which student interactions exhibit characteristics of collaboration within the classroom through the use of a collaboration checklist and rubric during classroom observations, as well as teacher and student survey responses.

Objective 4.12: Students acquire a depth of knowledge and a high level of understanding in their areas of giftedness, successfully transfer the knowledge and understanding to create new knowledge or products, and incorporate what they learn in the gifted program into their everyday lives as measured by student and parent survey responses.

Objective 4.13: Gifted students are academically successful in college as measured by the percentage of students who report having a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher after one year in college.

Objective 4.14: Gifted students indicate that their experience in the VBCPS Gifted Education Program prepared them to be successful in college as measured by survey responses one year after high school.

Objective 4.15: Gifted students indicate that they were better prepared for college relative to their peers in college as measured by survey responses one year after high school.

Objective 4.16: Gifted students indicate that their experience in the VBCPS Gifted Education Program prepared them to be successful in their employment activities as measured by survey responses one year after high school.