

GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM K-12: YEAR-TWO EVALUATION

VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Department of Educational Leadership and Assessment
Office of Research and Evaluation
2512 George Mason Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

November 2011

GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM K-12: YEAR-TWO EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AUTHORS: Heidi L. Janicki, Ph.D., Lead Evaluator, Coordinator of Research and Evaluation
Martin S. Barritt, Educational Data Specialist
Krystall E. Dunaway, Ph.D., Program Evaluation Specialist
Hope E. White, Ph.D., Program Evaluation Specialist
Department of Educational Leadership and Assessment

OTHER CONTACT PERSON: Jared A. Cotton, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent
Department of Educational Leadership and Assessment

On November 17, 2009, the School Board approved the Gifted Education Program K-12: Evaluation Readiness Report including the program goals and objectives, the evaluation plan, and the recommendations concerning the evaluation of the program. The recommended evaluation plans included the following: 1) begin a process evaluation during 2009-2010 focused on the process-oriented goals and objectives regarding how the program operates, 2) continue the process evaluation during 2010-2011, and 3) conduct an outcome evaluation during 2011-2012 focused primarily on evaluating the extent to which the outcome-oriented goals and objectives were met. This evaluation report is based on the School Board-approved plan and includes the results of the process evaluation that was conducted during 2010-2011. The evaluation included service delivery models at all school levels including the following: the resource/cluster models at elementary and middle schools, the resource model at kindergarten/first grade and high school, Old Donation Center (ODC) and Kemps Landing Magnet School (KLMS), and the programs for artistically gifted students (i.e., Gifted Visual Arts Program, Dance Education Program, and Governor's School for the Arts). The evaluation during 2010-2011 focused on the actions that occurred during 2010-2011 related to the recommendations from the year-one evaluation that were approved by the School Board on November 23, 2010; the changes to the Gifted Education Program in 2010-2011; and continued evaluation of the operational components of implementing the program. The operational components included the structure of the program and service delivery models; program alignment from kindergarten to grade twelve; implementation according to key Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) expectations or guidelines; referral, identification, and selection processes; differentiation of instruction; classroom assessment practices; collaborative work among teachers; staff development; parent involvement and participation; and attending to students' cognitive, emotional, and social needs. Survey data were analyzed and presented by service delivery model in order to identify strengths and weaknesses within the Gifted Education Program. Additionally, baseline student outcome data were analyzed from 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 to examine students' academic performance.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

Actions Taken Regarding the Year-One Evaluation Recommendations

- Multiple initiatives and activities occurred during 2010-2011 in response to the recommendations from the year-one evaluation of the Gifted Education Program. Many of the initiatives and activities related to the recommendations are ongoing, and the recommendations will be addressed over multiple years with actions also planned for 2011-2012.
- Based on the year-one evaluation in 2009-2010, 15 recommendations were made regarding the following areas: program models and services, referral and identification processes, staff development, parent workshops, data collection and storage, and program goals and continued evaluation.
- Recommendations related to program models and services focused on strengthening the middle school resource/cluster and high school resource models, aligning gifted services with other programs in which gifted students participate, and providing additional information to schools regarding the VBCPS guidelines and recommendations for the creation of cluster classes in the resource/cluster model. Several actions that addressed these recommendations included the following:
 - Middle and high school gifted resource teachers (GRTs) and other gifted staff attended several professional development workshops on a variety of topics focused on enhancing their abilities to support teachers, students, and parents.
 - New Cluster Teacher Training Modules were implemented at the middle school level.
 - Revisions were made to the high school gifted resource handbook to reflect the changes made to the high school gifted program to enhance the GRTs' role in professional development; differentiation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; collaboration with classroom teachers; and clustering gifted students in high school classes.
 - Collaboration was increased between middle and high schools and the Office of Technical and Career Education (TCE).
 - Academy and advanced academic program coordinators were apprised of the changes to the high school gifted resource program, and plans were made to increase the collaboration between GRTs, program coordinators, and teachers, as well as GRT contact with gifted students in the academy and advanced academic programs.
 - At the request of building administrators, gifted education coordinators provided guidance and support to building administrators and GRTs regarding the formation of cluster classes.
 - The director of the Office of Gifted Education reviewed cluster guidelines with elementary principals.
- Recommendations related to referral and identification processes focused on continuing to determine and implement strategies for increasing the representativeness of the division's students identified as gifted, strengthening training regarding the importance of teacher narratives in the referral process, and providing notification to parents that upon acceptance

into the Governor's School for the Arts (GSA), students are identified as artistically gifted in VBCPS. Several actions that addressed these recommendations included the following:

- Principals, GRTs, guidance counselors, and kindergarten and grade one grade-level chairpersons from Title I schools attended a two-day training on bridging the achievement gap among all populations of students by recognizing and responding to their characteristics and needs.
 - Training modules for parents and staff on the Dance Education Program and the Gifted Visual Arts Program referral and identification processes were developed in collaboration between the Office of Gifted Education and dance and visual arts teachers.
 - A timeline and related processes for the addition of a gifted screening in fifth grade were developed.
 - Gifted resource teachers participated in and provided training for all first-grade teachers (and kindergarten teachers at Title I schools) on using anecdotal records to identify gifted behaviors and gifted potential and increasing the quality of anecdotal records.
 - Gifted assessment specialists conducted on-site workshops on the gifted referral and identification process.
 - Processes for notifying parents and students of gifted identification associated with admittance to GSA were identified in consultation with the executive director of GSA.
- Recommendations related to staff development focused on building awareness of twice-exceptional learners, improving and increasing staff development for staff in the high school resource model, and ensuring that verification is readily available for the required Office for Civil Rights training that is offered in VBCPS on the identification and characteristics of gifted learners. Several actions taken to address these recommendations included the following:
 - The Office of Gifted Education, in collaboration with the Office of Programs for Exceptional Children, presented training open to parents of special education students on the twice-exceptional learner.
 - An informational brochure regarding twice-exceptional learners that was developed by the Office of Gifted Education was reprinted for distribution at all schools.
 - High school GRT professional development focused on a variety of topics such as concept-based curriculum and *Understanding by Design* curriculum models; the facilitation of collaborative planning; and training from the Department of Technology (DOT) on databases, tools for synthesizing information, and tools for evaluating resources.
 - Staff in the Office of Gifted Education provided high school GRTs and administrators on-site support focused on improving the quality of gifted services at the high school level.
 - Staff in the Office of Gifted Education tracked attendance/completion of the Office of Civil Rights training session submitted by building principals, and it was determined that an online training delivery system was the most appropriate format given the goals for improvement.

- The recommendation related to parent workshops focused on determining workshops that are of value for parents with students in the programs for the artistically gifted, the high school resource model, and the middle school resource/cluster model and providing additional workshops at convenient times. Several actions taken to address this recommendation included the following:
 - Various workshops and presentations were provided for parents with topics including growth mindset, self-regulation, executive functions, and self-efficacy.
 - Parent and teacher modules were developed at the high school level for implementation in 2011-2012. Parent modules focused on college planning and underachievement.
 - Training modules for parents and staff were developed on the visual arts and dance referral and identification processes.
 - The Parent Institute Committee met with staff from the Office of Gifted Education and the Department of Media and Communications Development to review current models and practices for providing training for parents of gifted students. It was determined by the committee that in lieu of a parent institute, the Office of Gifted Education will collaborate with the Department of Media and Communications Development to provide workshops of interest to parents of gifted and high ability learners within the Parent Connection structure where they will be open to all interested parties.

- Recommendations related to data collection and storage focused on reviewing the use of separately managed databases, recording additional information in the official VBCPS database, and developing a schedule and procedure to verify key data elements have been entered into the official database. Actions taken to address these recommendations included the following:
 - Several meetings with gifted testing staff from the Office of Gifted Education and DOT were held to determine needs for one database and how to transfer required information into Genesis. Work will continue during 2011-2012 to determine the extent to which data can be accommodated in the VBCPS database.
 - A schedule for verifying the entry of data elements was developed and uploaded to the Office of Gifted Education SharePoint site for easy access and reference by all gifted staff.

- The recommendations related to program goals and continued evaluation focused on determining if modifications were needed and communicating goals to all schools prior to 2011-2012, along with continuing the evaluation during 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 as planned. Actions taken to address these recommendations included the following:
 - Goals were reviewed, and it was determined that changes could impact the *Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted* and that any modifications would be reviewed following a review of data gathered during 2010-2011.
 - Gifted staff examined program goals and data from the year-one evaluation during a mandatory professional development session with Office of Gifted Education and Office of Research and Evaluation staff.
 - The evaluation continued as planned with the completion of the year-two evaluation during 2010-2011.

Changes or Modifications to the Gifted Education Program During 2010-2011

- Two substantive changes to the program that occurred during 2010-2011 were the additional emphasis on the transition of the high school resource model to a high school resource/cluster model and the transition of the middle school Gifted Visual Arts Program from a pull-out program at Old Donation Center (ODC) to a program embedded in the students' regular school day as a full-time student at Virginia Beach Middle School (VBMS).
- During 2010-2011, the practice of high schools purposefully clustering gifted students in at least one grade level was more prevalent than during 2009-2010. The high school gifted program handbook was revised in summer 2011 to communicate the revisions to the high school gifted program, and information on the school division's internet website was also updated to reflect the ongoing transition from a resource model to a resource/cluster model.
- Perception data were collected from high school staff members who indicated that their school implemented a resource/cluster model to some degree. At least 85 percent of staff members agreed that building administrators sought feedback from the GRT when assigning students to cluster classes, students who were twice-exceptional were typically placed in the cluster class, clustering provides a range of learners that is manageable for the teacher, and that cluster grouping assists teachers in the differentiation of curriculum and instruction.
- When high school staff members were asked various survey items about the selection of cluster teachers for the resource/cluster model, results showed that overall, there were high levels of agreement regarding the selection of cluster teachers (89% to 95%). Staff agreed that teachers were sensitive to the needs of gifted learners, willing to participate in special training and collaborate with the GRT regularly, and willing to differentiate curriculum and instruction.
- The Gifted Visual Arts Program for middle school students was implemented by incorporating a zero bell in students' schedules (from 8:15 a.m. to 9:05 a.m.) to provide time for visual arts and another elective during the course of the student's middle school day. Transportation to VBMS was provided for all students who attended the Gifted Visual Arts Program.
- The relocation of the Gifted Visual Arts Program to VBMS was designed to support students in both their academic and artistic development, expand learning opportunities, and decrease program attrition at the middle school level.
- At least 87 percent of the middle school Gifted Visual Arts Program students and at least 83 percent of parents agreed that the program supported students' academic and artistic development, that opportunities were extended and expanded during 2010-2011, and that students were more likely to continue their participation because it was embedded in their daily schedule. Staff also generally agreed that academic and artistic development was supported and that opportunities were extended and expanded, but most staff did not agree that the change would impact students' likelihood of remaining in the program.

- When asked an open-ended question about the benefits of the transition, staff members reported that students received daily services, students felt that they were part of the school community, and that students attended a state-of-the-art facility. Parents reported each of these as benefits, as well, and added that friendly, helpful staff and no commute between multiple schools were additional benefits.
- When staff was asked an open-ended question about the challenges of the transition, responses focused on logistical issues. These challenges included shortened class time, lack of flexibility in the schedule, and the necessity for staff to switch between two schools (ODC and VBMS) and multiple classrooms.

Progress Towards Meeting Gifted Education Program Goals and Objectives

Structure of the Program and Service Delivery Models

- Multiple service delivery models within the Gifted Education Program were operational within VBCPS during 2010-2011, including the resource/cluster model, the resource model, special classes, and full-time gifted schools for students identified as intellectually gifted. For artistically gifted students, VBCPS offered a pull-out model for dance students in elementary and middle schools and for visual arts students in elementary school. Special classes were offered for gifted visual arts students in middle school and artistically gifted students in high school who attended the Governor's School for the Arts.
- Based on data as of fall 2010, the resource/cluster model was available for 1,619 intellectually gifted elementary school students and 1,627 intellectually gifted middle school students. The resource/cluster model served 77 percent of intellectually gifted elementary school students and 73 percent of intellectually gifted middle school students.
- Based on data as of fall 2010, 484 intellectually gifted elementary school students were enrolled in ODC and 590 intellectually gifted middle school students were enrolled in KLMS. The full-time gifted school model served 23 percent of intellectually gifted elementary school students and 27 percent of intellectually gifted middle school students.
- Based on data as of fall 2010, 10,171 kindergarten and first-grade students were part of the school division's Talent Pool, which operates as a resource model for all students at these grade levels. The focus at these grade levels is on the recognition and development of student potential. In the Emerging Scholars Initiative, where anecdotal records are gathered for kindergarteners and first graders at Title I schools, 2,888 students were served in a resource model.
- The resource model at the high school level encompassed 2,833 intellectually gifted students as of fall 2010. Within the high school resource model, 193 gifted students (7%) participated in the Gifted Program Credit Courses. Other options in which intellectually gifted high school students participated, which were available to all VBCPS students, included advanced

or honors courses (96%), Advanced Placement courses (59%), academies or advanced academic programs (36%), and dual enrollment courses (3%).

- As of fall 2010, the Gifted Visual Arts Program served 239 students, and the Dance Education Program served 368 students. This was a decrease in the number of students participating in the visual arts program and an increase in the number participating in the dance program compared to 2009-2010. During 2010-2011, 144 artistically gifted VBCPS students participated in the Governor's School for the Arts in Norfolk, Virginia. Another opportunity for artistically gifted high school students, along with all VBCPS students, is the Salem High School Visual and Performing Arts Academy. Of the artistically gifted high school students, 102 (11%) were enrolled in the academy.
- Within the Gifted Education Program, survey results indicated that gifted students were provided opportunities within the grade level for instruction at a faster pace. However, lower percentages of building administrators, teachers of gifted students, and gifted students in the high school resource model agreed that this was the case, relative to other service delivery models.
- When students were asked on a survey about working with their school's GRT during the school year, 94 percent of elementary school resource/cluster student respondents and 73 percent of middle school respondents indicated that the GRT came to their classes. The high school respondents in the resource model were the least likely to indicate that the GRT came to their classes (24%), but this was higher than the percentage in 2009-2010 (12%). Students at the high school level were more likely than students in other models to indicate that they worked with the GRT before or after their classes (32%) or that they did not work with their GRT (42%).

Program Alignment from Kindergarten to Grade Twelve

- Initial services for students in kindergarten and grade one are provided within the Talent Pool which includes the Emerging Scholars Initiative. Beginning in grade two, identified intellectually gifted students may participate in the resource/cluster model or the full-time school for gifted students. These options continue in middle school where intellectually gifted students may participate in the resource/cluster model or a full-time school for gifted students. As intellectually gifted students move to high school, the resource model is available throughout the division with an increasing number of high schools implementing the resource/cluster model in select grade levels.
- Instructional options are available for intellectually gifted students at each grade level, such as acceleration and differentiation within the classroom. A gifted resource teacher is also available at each school to work with teachers and within the classroom in the resource/cluster and the resource models.
- As of the 2010-2011 school year, artistically gifted students in grades three through eight participated in the Dance Education Program one full day per week at ODC. Beginning in September 2010, the elementary school gifted visual arts students attended the program one

day per week at ODC, while the visual arts students in grades six through eight attended Virginia Beach Middle School full-time. The Gifted Education Program option for artistically gifted students at the high school level is the Governor's School for the Arts, upon successful audition and selection. These programs do not serve all VBCPS students who have been identified as artistically gifted.

- Parents whose gifted child had been enrolled in the VBCPS Gifted Education Program in elementary, middle, and high schools were asked whether they agreed that the program provided a seamless delivery of services from elementary through high school. Of the parents who responded, 67 percent agreed that the program provided a consistent delivery of services from elementary through high school, while 33 percent disagreed. In comments on the parent survey, 31 percent of respondents with students at the high school level noted the need for increased communication about the opportunities for gifted students.

Implementation According to Key VBCPS Expectations or Guidelines

- All gifted resource teachers (GRTs) and instructional staff at ODC and KLMS must be certified in gifted education or working to obtain certification. Based on an analysis of qualifications of those teaching gifted students in the various service delivery models, results showed that GRTs on average were the most likely to have a gifted endorsement (82%) and they also had the most years of teaching experience on average (19 years). Teachers at ODC and KLMS were the next most likely groups to hold a gifted endorsement (71% and 70%, respectively) and were the most likely groups to have earned a graduate degree (68% for each).
- Resource/cluster program handbooks outlined various characteristics of cluster teachers that should be considered during the selection process, such as the willingness to participate in special professional development, collaborate with the GRT regularly, and differentiate instruction. When building administrators, cluster teachers, and GRTs were asked various survey items related to these criteria used in the selection of cluster teachers, results showed that overall, there were high levels of agreement on each expectation at the elementary school level (96% to 97%) and the middle school level (90% to 95%).
- When building administrators, cluster teachers, and GRTs working in the elementary school resource/cluster model were asked about the process for creating cluster classrooms, 96 percent agreed that cluster grouping assisted teachers in the differentiation of curriculum and instruction, 93 percent agreed that the clustering provided a range of learners in the classroom that was manageable for the teacher, 97 percent agreed that students identified during the school year were provided the option to move into the cluster classroom, 89 percent agreed that building administrators sought input from the GRT when assigning students, and 93 percent agreed that twice-exceptional students were typically placed in a cluster classroom. The lowest level of agreement from staff was that students with strong needs for academic support are generally not placed in the cluster classroom (64%).
- At the middle school level, when building administrators, cluster teachers, and GRTs working in the resource/cluster model were asked about the process for creating cluster

classrooms, 97 percent agreed that cluster grouping assisted teachers in the differentiation of curriculum and instruction, 95 percent agreed that the clustering provided a range of learners in the classroom that was manageable for the teacher, 78 percent agreed that students identified during the school year were provided the option to move into the cluster classroom, 87 percent agreed that building administrators sought input from the GRT when assigning students, and 86 percent agreed that twice-exceptional students were typically placed in a cluster classroom. The lowest level of agreement from staff was that students with strong needs for academic support are generally not placed in the cluster classroom (53%).

- When asked about specific resource/cluster model practices, relatively high percentages of elementary and middle school staff indicated that the statements regarding guidelines or recommendations for the creation of cluster classes were completely accurate or somewhat accurate reflections of their practices. One exception, where higher percentages at both levels indicated that the recommendation was not an accurate reflection of practice, was that students identified as gifted in the arts be considered in creating cluster classrooms. However, the percentage of GRTs who indicated that artistically gifted students were *not* considered in creating cluster classes declined from 2009-2010 at both school levels.
- Most building administrators across the division agreed that they received effective support from the Office of Gifted Education when they needed it (97%).

Referral, Identification, and Selection Processes

- In VBCPS, students are identified for gifted services in the areas of general intellectual aptitude, visual arts, or dance. Program services are available for intellectually gifted students in grades two through twelve and for artistically gifted students in grades three through eight. Students accepted into the Governor's School for the Arts in grades nine through twelve are subsequently identified as gifted in VBCPS in one of the school's six focus areas (i.e., dance, theater, musical theater, instrumental music, vocal music, visual arts).

Processes for Intellectually Gifted Students

- All first graders are administered the *Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (2nd Edition)* in the divisionwide screening. Students scoring at or above the 90th percentile are referred for additional testing, and parents must complete a parent permission form to initiate this stage of the referral process. Parents, guardians, or anyone with knowledge of the student's abilities may request additional testing for students who do not score at the 90th percentile.
- Students who are not identified as gifted in grade one can be referred for gifted services at any time during grades two through twelve by those knowledgeable about their abilities, such as teachers, parents, or the student.
- An Identification and Placement Committee meets throughout the school year to review students' referral information and determine eligibility for gifted program services. The

committee utilizes multiple criteria to determine eligibility for gifted services. The profile approach includes a review of academic achievement data, teacher recommendations, ability test data, and a parent/guardian behavior checklist. For students who submit an application, additional selection committees determine the identified gifted students whose needs would best be met at a full-time school for gifted students.

Process for Artistically Gifted Students

- The identification of students eligible for gifted services in the visual arts or dance programs in grades three through eight is also accomplished through the work of committees (i.e., Gifted Visual Arts Identification and Selection Committee, Dance Identification and Selection Committee).
- The process for determining students who are gifted in visual arts includes a review of a portfolio as the screening; performance tasks; observation of in-class behaviors; rating scales, checklists, and questionnaires; individual interviews; and records of previous achievements. The process for determining students who are gifted in dance includes a group audition as the screening; observation of in-class behaviors; rating scales, checklists, and questionnaires; and an individual audition. Scoring rubrics are used by the committees to assess both the students' talent as well as their potential.
- The identification process for the Gifted Visual Arts Program is a two-step process that occurs during the spring of each school year beginning with a portfolio screening followed by a full-day assessment at ODC for those recommended for the second step in the process. The identification process for the Dance Education Program is also a two-step process that begins during the spring of one school year and ends during the fall of the next school year. First, students apply for the dance program in the spring and are evaluated during a group audition. Based on students' performance, selected students are then invited to attend ODC during the fall of the next school year for an eight-week assessment.

Data Regarding Representativeness Within Demographic Groups (e.g., Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, and Gender) and Perceptions of Effectiveness

- At the first-grade level, where the largest percentage of students are referred for gifted services, the percentage of referred students who were African American and the percentage of referred students who were economically disadvantaged were less than the percentages of these demographic groups in the overall VBCPS grade-one population. Conversely, a greater percentage of referred students were Caucasian compared to the overall population. For other groups, percentages of referred students and the VBCPS population were more similar (e.g., male/female students, Hispanic students, Asian students, multiracial students). At the elementary school level, which accounted for approximately 89 percent of all referrals for gifted services in 2010-2011, the pattern remained similar to the pattern at the first-grade level.

- In 2010-2011, the percentage of referred male students was more similar to the percentage of male students in the elementary school population (4% difference) than it was in 2009-2010 when there was nearly an 8 percent difference, with fewer referred students being male.
- When students identified as intellectually gifted were compared with the overall VBCPS population at grades two through twelve, results showed that the percentage of intellectually gifted students who were African American and the percentage of intellectually gifted students who were economically disadvantaged were less than the percentages of these demographic groups in the overall population. Conversely, a greater percentage of intellectually gifted students were Caucasian compared to the overall population. For other groups, percentages for intellectually gifted students and the population in grades two through twelve were more similar (e.g., male/female students, Hispanic students, Asian students, multiracial students).
- Students identified as artistically gifted were compared with the overall VBCPS population at grades three through twelve. Results showed that the percentage of artistically gifted students who were male, the percentage who were African American, and the percentage who were economically disadvantaged were less than the percentages of these demographic groups in the overall population. Conversely, a greater percentage of artistically gifted students were female and were Caucasian compared to the overall population. For other groups, percentages for artistically gifted students and the population in grades three through twelve were more similar (e.g., Hispanic students, Asian students, multiracial students).
- The largest difference between identified students in the gifted program and the overall VBCPS population was found for the arts with regards to male students. While 51 percent of the grades three through twelve students in the VBCPS population were male, the percentage of artistically gifted students who were male was 24 percent, a difference of 27 percent.
- Of the students who had been identified as special education students, 2.6 percent (n=202) were also identified as intellectually gifted and less than 1 percent (n=46) were also identified as artistically gifted in 2010-2011. These results were the same or similar to results from 2009-2010.
- Based on survey responses, 93 percent or more of the identification committee members, building administrators, teachers of gifted students, other staff, and parents of gifted students agreed that they understood the process for referring a student for gifted services. At least 92 percent agreed that being identified as gifted allowed students to receive educational services more appropriate for their needs.
- Based on survey responses from identification or selection committee members, building administrators, teachers of gifted students, other staff, and parents of gifted students, from 86 to 100 percent of each group agreed that VBCPS has an effective process for identifying students as intellectually gifted, gifted in visual arts, gifted in dance, and for the selection of gifted students for specific programs (e.g., ODC, KLMS).

- At least 84 percent of parents who responded to the survey agreed that their child benefited from participating in the Gifted Education Program. Agreement levels were highest for the programs for artistically gifted students and for ODC and KLMS (97% to 100%). Parents' agreement level was somewhat lower for the high school resource model, although agreement was relatively high at 84 percent. A similar pattern of results was found for students' responses, with at least 92 percent of students agreeing they benefited from participation.
- On the 2011 VBCPS Climate Survey for all parents in spring 2011, parents responded to items regarding the referral and identification processes. From 20 to 52 percent of the parents skipped these survey items or selected "Don't Know" (20% when asked about the referral process, 27% when asked about the identification process for intellectual giftedness, 44% when asked about the identification process for visual arts, and 52% when asked about the identification process for dance.) However, of parents who rated their level of agreement when asked about these areas, 85 percent understood the referral process and from 83 to 84 percent agreed VBCPS had an effective process for identifying students as intellectually gifted, gifted in visual arts, and gifted in dance.

Differentiation of Instruction

- Differentiation of instruction is a central component of the Gifted Education Program as evidenced by the division's philosophy for the education of gifted students which states that gifted students "require school experiences that are differentiated" from those of other students.
- Elements of differentiation within the program were assessed through survey results in 2010-2011. The evidence of differentiation was organized around three general principles of differentiation, which included the following: 1) matching learning experiences to students' needs based on readiness, interest, and learning profile; 2) flexible grouping characterized by whole-group, small-group, and independent work opportunities; and 3) ongoing assessment.
- Based on survey responses, 82 to 100 percent of teachers of gifted students (including GRTs) and building administrators in each service delivery model agreed that teachers of gifted students differentiated instruction through a variety of strategies. The lower percentage of agreement was at the high school level where 82 percent of teachers agreed. Eighty-six percent (86%) or more of the teachers, building administrators, and gifted students agreed that gifted students were provided with learning opportunities that met their learning needs.
- At least 92 percent of teachers of gifted students (including GRTs), building administrators, and gifted students in each service delivery model agreed that gifted students were provided with opportunities to learn with the whole class, in small groups, and on their own.
- Concerning preassessment for the purpose of differentiation, relatively high percentages of teachers (including GRTs), building administrators, and students within the elementary resource/cluster model, ODC, and KLMS, agreed that teachers determined what gifted students already knew before teaching them information and skills (82% to 100%). Between

71 and 78 percent of students in the middle school resource/cluster model and the visual arts and dance programs agreed. Agreement levels from teachers of gifted students, building administrators, and students in the high school resource model were consistently lower (59% to 65%).

- Within the various gifted service delivery models, 83 percent or more of teachers of gifted students (including GRTs) agreed that lessons for gifted students included interdisciplinary curriculum content, with the exception of staff in the high school model where agreement was lowest at 67 percent. At least 86 percent of teachers and students in most models agreed that teachers' lessons were based on a common theme or big idea that was studied in more than one subject area. Agreement levels were lower for teachers in the middle school resource/cluster model (69%) and the high school model (66%) and lower for students in the high school model (79%).
- Within the various gifted service delivery models, 83 percent or more of teachers of gifted students (including GRTs) and students agreed that teachers included information in their lessons that was related to real-life experiences that were meaningful to gifted students, with the exception of students in two models. At the high school resource model and the middle school resource/cluster model, students' agreement was lower at 73 and 78 percent, respectively. Approximately 92 to 100 percent of teachers in each service delivery model agreed that teachers encouraged gifted students to apply knowledge to real-life situations, with students' agreement levels ranging from 81 to 99 percent for most models (76% for high school model).

Classroom Assessment Practices

- With classroom assessment being a central element of differentiated instruction, one of the program goals focused on using a variety of assessment methods to promote student demonstration of their understanding, knowledge, and individual strengths.
- Across all service delivery models, survey responses from teachers of gifted students (including GRTs) indicated that the most common reasons for using preassessment data were to determine student readiness and form flexible groups.
- Within each service delivery model, 94 percent or more of the teachers (including GRTs) agreed that in each unit of study, there was evidence of their use of formative assessments, and 94 percent or more agreed there was evidence of the use of summative assessments.
- Based on survey results, teachers (including GRTs) in most service delivery models indicated that they were most likely to use preassessments as part of instruction one or more times per week. Respondents at KLMS were most likely to indicate that they used preassessments as part of instruction one or more times per month. Teachers in the visual arts and dance programs were most likely to use these assessments one or more times per quarter.
- For each service delivery model for identified intellectually gifted students, the largest percentages of teachers (including GRTs) indicated that they used formative assessment and

student self-assessment and reflection one or more times per week. For each of the models except the resource model at kindergarten and grade one, the largest percentages of respondents indicated they used summative assessment one or more times per month.

- In contrast to most of the gifted program models for intellectually gifted students, the teachers within the VBCPS programs for artistically gifted students were more likely to indicate that they used peer assessment, and the largest percentage indicated that they used this type of assessment one or more times per week. They also indicated that they used student self-assessment and reflection in every class.
- Regarding the use of performance tasks for assessment, the largest percentages of teachers (including GRTs) in the elementary resource/cluster model, the kindergarten and grade one resource model, and KLMS reported using performance tasks one or more times per month. The largest percentages of respondents in the middle school resource/cluster model and ODC reported using performance tasks one or more times per quarter. The largest percentage of high school teachers reported using performance tasks one or more times per week, and most teacher respondents from the visual arts and dance programs reported using performance tasks during every class.
- Perceptions about assessments within the classroom were very positive. Ninety-six percent (96%) or more of the teachers of gifted students (including GRTs) and students within each service delivery model agreed that assessments in their classes allowed gifted students opportunities to show what information they knew and understood. In addition, 92 percent or more of teachers and students within each service delivery model agreed that assessments allowed gifted students to show what they were able to do with what they knew (i.e., apply what they learned).
- Approximately 91 percent or more of the teachers (including GRTs) agreed that assessments in the classroom allowed gifted students opportunities to show their individual strengths. Students' agreement levels also ranged from 89 to 97 percent for most models, with the exception of the high school resource model (79%) and the middle school resource/cluster model (83%).

Collaborative Work Among Teachers

- Collaboration between teachers of gifted students and the GRTs in the resource/cluster and the resource models is a central component of the Gifted Education Program. The importance of collaboration within the program is reflected in the goal that all teachers, including GRTs, classroom teachers, special education teachers, and specialists, work collaboratively to differentiate curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of gifted learners.
- Teachers of gifted students (including GRTs) in the resource/cluster models at elementary and middle schools and the resource model at kindergarten/grade one and high school were asked about the benefits of collaboration among GRTs and teachers, including ongoing education, guided practice, feedback, and support for teachers of gifted students. The pattern

of responses demonstrated that perceptions regarding collaboration were more positive within the resource/cluster models (91% to 96% agreement) compared to the resource models (74% to 85% agreement), with the lowest agreement levels typically at the high school level. However, agreement levels among high school teachers indicated more positive responses in 2010-2011 compared to 2009-2010 levels.

- When teachers were asked about activities during collaboration with the GRTs, from 87 to 94 percent of elementary and middle resource/cluster teachers agreed that during collaborative planning, assessment data were used to plan for differentiation, specific curriculum units and lessons were developed, and information about the gifted program was communicated to stakeholders. Agreement levels ranged from 66 to 78 percent for kindergarten/grade one and high school teachers depending on the survey item.
- Among teachers who responded to the survey from the full-time gifted schools and the visual arts and dance programs, 88 to 100 percent agreed that collaboration among teachers of gifted students provided ongoing education, guided practice, feedback, and support for teachers of gifted students. From 83 to 100 percent agreed that in collaborative planning, teachers used assessment data to proactively plan for differentiation, developed specific curriculum units and lessons, and worked collaboratively to effectively communicate the gifted program to all stakeholders.
- When teachers and GRTs were asked to rate the extent to which special education teachers were part of collaborative planning for instruction when students were identified for both gifted and special education services, less than 43 percent in most models indicated that this occurred almost always or often. However, at ODC 73 percent of teachers indicated that special education teachers planned collaboratively with teachers almost always or often in this situation, which was a large increase from 2009-2010 (44%).
- Based on combined survey responses from teachers of gifted students, GRTs, and specialists, results showed that GRTs were more likely to be included in collaborative planning efforts almost always or often in the resource/cluster model (93% elementary school, 79% middle school) compared to the resource model (72% kindergarten/grade one, 43% high school).
- Based on combined survey responses from teachers of gifted students, GRTs, and specialists, a range of respondents in each model indicated that the reading resource teacher (7% to 46%), computer resource specialist (30% to 60%), and library media specialist (33% to 65%) was included in teachers' collaborative planning efforts almost always or often.
- In most service delivery models, 92 percent or more of the teachers (including GRTs) agreed that collaborative planning equipped teachers with the knowledge, understanding, and skills to differentiate instruction on their own for their gifted learners, and 91 percent or more agreed that collaborative planning equipped teachers with the confidence to differentiate instruction on their own for gifted learners. Agreement levels were lower for respondents in the kindergarten/grade one and high school resource models compared to the other service delivery models on these two survey items (73% to 77%).

Staff Development

- Professional development for staff working in the Gifted Education Program occurs primarily through turnkey training where GRTs receive training and then provide training within their buildings, professional development within the VBCPS Professional Development Program (PDP), and through cadres of staff who attend professional development opportunities outside the school division and return to provide training within the program.
- At all school levels, the largest percentage of survey respondents (i.e., building administrators, teachers of gifted students, and GRTs) from the resource/cluster and resource models indicated that GRTs provided staff development through workshops (50% to 69% depending on school level). In addition, a majority of elementary and middle school respondents also indicated that GRTs provided staff development through coteaching and modeling. High school respondents were the least likely to indicate that staff development opportunities were provided in the form of workshops (50%), coaching (22%), coteaching (22%), and modeling (21%).
- When asked about the effectiveness of staff development initiatives to build awareness of twice-exceptional learners, 59 percent of gifted identification committee members, 44 percent of building administrators, 30 percent of teachers of gifted students, and 42 percent of other staff indicated that the training was “very effective.” Most others who attended training indicated that it was “somewhat effective.”
- Based on combined responses from building administrators, teachers of gifted students, and GRTs, from 62 to 76 percent of elementary and middle school survey respondents indicated that the Gifted Education Program’s staff development was “very effective” at providing information about the following areas: characteristics of gifted learners; referral process; identification of gifted learners; differentiation principles and practices; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; academic needs of gifted learners, and social/emotional needs of gifted learners. However, from 31 to 47 percent of high school respondents indicated that staff development in each of these areas was “very effective.” Most other respondents indicated staff development was “somewhat effective.”
- Eighty-three percent (83%) or more of the building administrators and teachers of gifted students (including GRTs) agreed that professional development for GRTs developed their capacity to provide leadership to other staff involved in the instruction of gifted students.

Parent Involvement and Participation

- In order to facilitate parent involvement and participation in the Gifted Education Program, various strategies have been implemented such as publishing a divisionwide newsletter, school-based newsletters, meetings between GRTs and parents at schools, the Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) at ODC and KLMS, and parent workshops conducted by GRTs at the schools or through the Office of Gifted Education.

- Based on results from parents and teachers of gifted students (including GRTs), 80 percent or more within each service delivery model agreed that parents had opportunities to become involved in their gifted child's education.
- Based on results from parents, teachers of gifted students (including GRTs), and building administrators, 84 percent or more within the majority of service delivery models agreed that communication efforts between the school and parents were effective at providing parents with relevant information about the gifted program. Parents of students in the high school resource model (64%), middle school resource/cluster model (70%), and the elementary resource/cluster model (73%) were less likely to agree.
- Eighty-one percent (81%) or more of the parents, teachers of gifted students (including GRTs), and building administrators within most service delivery models agreed that communication efforts between the school and parents were effective at keeping parents informed about their gifted child's education. Agreement levels were lower for parents of students in the high school resource model (75%).
- Of parent survey respondents, 81 percent or more with students in the elementary and middle school resource/cluster model, the full-time gifted schools, and the Gifted Visual Arts Program agreed that they had opportunities to participate in workshops or training offered in VBCPS during 2010-2011 to both enhance their gifted child's learning and to increase their awareness of the unique needs of their gifted child. From 67 to 78 percent of parents of students in the high school resource model, the Dance Education Program, and the Governor's School for the Arts agreed with these statements.
- The parents who were most likely to indicate that they attended VBCPS workshops or training focused on gifted students or the Gifted Education Program were parents of students in the elementary resource/cluster model (42%).
- Of the parents with students in each service delivery model who attended workshops or training, from 71 to 100 percent agreed that the training they attended was effective at increasing their knowledge so that they could enhance their gifted child's learning and at increasing their awareness of their gifted child's cognitive needs, emotional needs, and social needs. Agreement levels were generally highest when asked about the training related to their child's unique cognitive needs.
- Parents were asked whether the range of topics addressed in the workshops or training were issues of value to them as a parent of a gifted student. Agreement levels varied by service delivery model, with the highest agreement from parents of ODC (88%) and KLMS (89%) students, followed by parents of students in the elementary resource/cluster model (80%). From 56 to 72 percent of parents of students in the programs for artistically gifted students indicated agreement, 67 percent of parents of high school resource model students agreed, and 68 percent of parents of students in the middle school resource/cluster model agreed.

Attending to Students' Cognitive, Emotional, and Social Needs

- Attending to students' cognitive needs was assessed based on perceptions of challenging schoolwork, students' confidence in their abilities, and the development of students' potential. Attending to students' emotional needs was assessed based on perceptions of the teachers' understanding of gifted students as individuals and helping gifted students deal with stress, if necessary. Finally, attending to students' social needs was assessed based on perceptions of whether students were provided opportunities to learn and interact with others who had similar interests and abilities.
- Within each service delivery model, at least 86 percent of the parent respondents whose child received services for intellectual giftedness agreed that their child was given challenging schoolwork in each core subject area. For student respondents, from 69 to 96 percent agreed they were given challenging schoolwork in each subject area. Higher percentages of students in the full-time gifted schools agreed that their schoolwork was challenging (85% to 96%).
- From 80 to 100 percent of parents of artistically gifted students and students agreed that the arts-related schoolwork was challenging.
- Eighty-one percent (81%) or more of the parents within each service delivery model agreed that teachers helped their child feel confident about his or her abilities and helped their child develop his or her potential. For student respondents, at least 78 percent agreed that their teachers helped them feel confident, and at least 81 percent agreed their teachers helped them develop their potential.
- Eighty percent (80%) or more of the parents with students in each service delivery model agreed that teachers understood their child as an individual. At least 81 percent of students in each service delivery model, with the exception of the middle school resource/cluster model (71%) and the high school resource model (72%), agreed that teachers understood them as an individual.
- Approximately 79 percent or more of the parents with students in each service delivery model, with the exception of the high school resource model (72%), agreed that if necessary, teachers helped their child deal with stress or anxiety about school. Students' agreement levels were lower and ranged from 53 to 83 percent depending on the model and school level.
- At least 87 percent of parents in each service delivery model agreed that their child was provided opportunities to learn and interact with other students with similar interests and abilities, and 81 percent or more of the students in each service delivery model agreed.
- Overall, at least 86 percent of the parents within each service delivery agreed that classroom teachers effectively attended to their child's cognitive/intellectual needs, 71 percent or more agreed that teachers effectively attended to their child's emotional needs, and 77 percent or more agreed that teachers effectively attended to their child's social needs.

- At least 78 percent of parents and at least 66 percent of students within each service delivery model agreed that teachers of gifted students, GRTs, and guidance counselors supported and promoted the interests of the gifted students. Students in the visual arts and dance programs generally had the lowest agreement levels when asked about the GRTs' and the guidance counselors' support.
- Based on combined responses for all staff survey respondents, 87 percent or more within each service delivery model agreed that teachers supported and promoted both the interests of gifted students, as well as the Gifted Education Program. At least 87 percent of all staff respondents agreed that GRTs supported and promoted both the interests of gifted students and the Gifted Education Program, and 80 percent or more in most service delivery models agreed that guidance counselors supported and promoted both the interests of gifted students and the Gifted Education Program.

Student Outcomes

- Compared to students in other service delivery models, higher percentages of intellectually gifted students in the full-time gifted schools (87% to 94%) indicated that the work in their core classes was challenging for them, but that they understood if they put forth the effort. A higher percentage of elementary resource/cluster students (22%), middle school resource/cluster students (18%), and high school resource model students (18%) indicated that the work was too easy, and they were not challenged.
- Based on responses from teachers of gifted students (including GRTs), 88 percent or more agreed that gifted students were intellectually engaged in the learning process, and 88 percent or more agreed that class lessons were interesting and kept gifted students' attention. From 91 to 97 percent of students in each service delivery model agreed that they were intellectually engaged in the learning process, and from 82 to 93 percent agreed that class lessons were interesting, with the exception of middle school resource/cluster students (64%) and high school resource model students (66%).
- Seventy-seven percent (77%) or more of the student survey respondents within each service delivery model indicated that the pace of instruction was just about right. However, from 12 to 16 percent of elementary and middle resource/cluster students and high school students indicated that the pace was too slow.
- The percentages of parents and students in each service delivery model who agreed that the student's academic or artistic needs were met by services offered in the Gifted Education Program ranged from 85 to 100 percent, with the exception of parents of high school intellectually gifted students (75%).
- Within each service delivery model, 80 percent or more of the parents agreed that their child participated in activities that contributed to their community, and 79 percent or more of the student respondents agreed that they contributed to their community.

- At least 91 percent of the students in each service delivery model expressed agreement with survey items that indicated that they had high levels of self-efficacy with the belief that their performance was based on skill development and effort.
- Within each service delivery model, from 87 to 98 percent of student survey respondents indicated that they were committed to doing the best they could do in whatever they did.
- Based on survey responses from teachers of gifted students (including GRTs), parents, and students in each service delivery model, 77 percent or more agreed with statements indicating that gifted students were developing metacognitive skills, such as developing an awareness of how they learn and developing skills to control their learning and thinking processes.
- Eighty percent (80%) or more of the teachers (including GRTs) within each service delivery model agreed that gifted students collaborated with their peers to reach their learning goals, and at least 93 percent of the student respondents in each model agreed that during instruction, they had opportunities to work as a team with their classmates.
- Parent and student responses to multiple survey items indicated that overall, students developed a deep level of knowledge and a high level of understanding in their classes within their area of giftedness (i.e., intellectual or artistic), with nearly all agreement levels within each service delivery model at least 83 percent.
- Parents and students within each service delivery model demonstrated relatively high agreement levels indicating that students were able to take what they learned and create new knowledge or products (89%+ and 85%+, respectively).
- At least 89 percent of the parent respondents in each service delivery model agreed that their child incorporated what he or she learned into his or her everyday life. In most service delivery models, 78 percent or more of the students agreed, with lower agreement from high school resource model students (68%) and middle school resource/cluster students (74%).
- At least 86 percent of the parents within each service delivery model agreed that their child's instruction encouraged the development of innovative ideas. At least 78 percent of the students agreed, with the lower agreement from high school resource model students (78%).
- Student academic performance data analyzed during 2010-2011 for key student outcomes showed that 98 percent of intellectually gifted middle school students and 96 percent of intellectually gifted high school students enrolled in an advanced or honors course.
- For intellectually gifted middle school students, at least 84 percent earned final grades of B or higher in each subject area in advanced, honors, or gifted courses during 2010-2011, with an overall percentage of 87 across all courses. For intellectually gifted high school students, at least 69 percent earned final grades of B or higher in each subject area in 2010-2011, with an overall percentage of 77 across all advanced, honors, or gifted courses.

- For artistically gifted students participating in the Gifted Visual Arts Program, the Dance Education Program, and Governor’s School for the Arts during 2010-2011, from 86 to 100 percent earned grades of B or higher in courses related to their area of giftedness each quarter and for the final grade.
- Between 32 and 46 percent of intellectually gifted fourth graders scored *at or above the 90th* percentile on the reading, language, and mathematics subtests of the *Stanford Achievement Test, 10th Edition*, indicating that they performed as well as or better than 90 percent of a national sample of students.
- In 2010-2011 across all Advanced Placement (AP) tests taken by intellectually gifted students, 73 percent scored 3 or higher which provides students the opportunity to earn college credits for the courses they took in high school.
- The majority of intellectually gifted students who took the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) in 2010-2011 scored in the highest quartile (76th percentile) on the critical reading, writing, and mathematics subtests (53% to 58%). Regarding the SAT test performance, 50 to 57 percent of the students who took the test in 2010-2011 scored in the highest quartile on each subtest. Overall, higher percentages of intellectually gifted students in 2010-2011 scored at or above the 76th percentile on each of the ACT subtests (from 61% to 79%).
- In 2010-2011, 93 percent of intellectually gifted seniors who graduated earned an advanced diploma (i.e., Advanced Studies Diploma or International Baccalaureate Diploma).

Overall Satisfaction with the Gifted Education Program

- Across all staff members, 89 percent were satisfied with the Gifted Education Program options at their school, and 93 percent were satisfied with the Gifted Education Program options in VBCPS. Staff’s satisfaction levels with the program at their school varied from 81 to 82 percent for the resource models, 92 to 93 percent for the resource/cluster models, and 100 percent for the full-time gifted schools and the visual arts and dance programs.
- Overall, 84 percent of parents were satisfied with the gifted program options at their child’s school, and 90 percent were satisfied with the Gifted Education Program options in VBCPS.
- Parents’ satisfaction levels with the program at their child’s school varied to some extent based on the service delivery model. Parents’ satisfaction levels within the full-time gifted schools at ODC and KLMS were very high (99% and 94%, respectively). Of the parents with students in the resource/cluster model, 87 percent were satisfied at the elementary school level and 79 percent were satisfied at the middle school level. Seventy-two percent (72%) of parents with students in the high school model were satisfied. For parents whose students were artistically gifted, 89 to 93 percent were satisfied with the gifted program options (i.e., visual arts, dance, and Governor’s School for the Arts programs).

- Across all service delivery models, 89 percent of students were satisfied with the Gifted Education Program. Students' satisfaction levels were 90 percent or above for all service delivery models with the exception of the high school model (78%).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1:

- Continue to address the recommendations from the year-one evaluation in 2009-2010 with activities and initiatives planned for 2011-2012. (Office of Gifted Education)

Rationale: Following the analysis of year-one evaluation data in 2009-2010, 15 recommendations were made regarding program models and services, the referral and identification processes, staff development, parent workshops, data collection and storage, and the continued evaluation of the program. Numerous activities and initiatives occurred during 2010-2011 that were related to each of the recommendations, and due to the long-term nature of many of the recommendations, additional work is planned for the 2011-2012 school year. No additional recommendations are made at this time as a result of year-two evaluation data due to the findings from survey data collected from staff, students, and parents in 2010-2011. The data collected regarding the operation of the program demonstrated similar overall patterns of results as during the first year of the evaluation. Results suggested that as in 2009-2010, overall patterns of results for the high school resource model were less positive compared to other models of service delivery in the program. One of the year-one recommendations focused on this and is the focus of continued change and improvement. Other recommendations focused on implementing strategies for increasing the representativeness of the division's students who are identified as gifted, and these activities and initiatives are ongoing to address the continued pattern of results. Two additional recommendations focused on improving staff development focused on building awareness of twice-exceptional learners and improving and increasing staff development for staff in the high school resource model. Patterns of results continue to suggest these areas for improvements, and the activities and initiatives focused on these areas will continue in 2011-2012. Staff in the Gifted Education Program also continues to address the recommendation regarding workshops for parents of gifted students, especially in areas where the topics could be modified to be of increased value to parents. Recommendations regarding the data collection, storage of data, and data accuracy for the Gifted Education Program were initially addressed during 2010-2011, but additional attention and actions are planned for 2011-2012 to move towards the goal of determining how existing information in various databases can be consistently recorded in the official VBCPS database.

Recommendation #2:

- Conduct the outcome evaluation during 2011-2012 as planned, and as part of the evaluation, continue to assess the transition of the high school program from a resource model to a resource/cluster model. (Department of Educational Leadership and Assessment)

Rationale: The outcome evaluation during the 2011-2012 school year will focus primarily on evaluating the extent to which the Gifted Education Program's outcome-oriented goals and

objectives were met. The outcome goals and objectives that will be addressed are those based on gifted students' academic performance data. Academic performance data over the three-year evaluation period will be examined. Given that surveys were conducted during 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 for all staff, students, and parents who were part of the gifted program and patterns of results were relatively stable from year to year, additional divisionwide collection of survey data is not planned during the year-three evaluation. However, surveys will be conducted for staff and intellectually gifted students at the high school level to continue to monitor and evaluate the transition of the high school program from a resource model to a resource/cluster model. Results will be analyzed based on whether a resource/cluster model has been introduced at the high school and will examine the extent to which the resource/cluster model has been implemented and the level of implementation fidelity. Following the completion of the year-three evaluation addressing student academic outcomes and continued implementation of a resource/cluster model at the high school level, the evaluation report will be provided to the School Board during fall 2012. The report may include additional recommendations for the program or for additional evaluation plans.