

Baltimore County Schools' *Blueprint 2.0 Our Way Forward* outlines a vision for creating a culture of deliberate excellence for every student. The Office of Advanced Academics contributes to this system expectation through its commitment to all students who have the capability, potential, or motivation to access responsive, rigorous, and relevant curriculum and instruction.

The Office of Advanced Academics collaborates with content area offices regarding the development, implementation, and enhancement of curricular and instructional experiences that support students who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment. By nurturing potential through responsive, challenging, respectful learning experiences, the office supports BCPS' goal of preparing students to be globally competitive graduates.

The Office of Advanced Academics has been working toward shifting its work to respond to current research and best practices in the field of gifted education. New research prompted the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) to redefine giftedness.

Highlights of the NAGC's work include the following:

- The development of ability or talent is a lifelong process. It can be evident in young children as exceptional performance measures of ability, actual achievement in a subject area, or a rapid rate of learning compared to other students of the same age.
- Achievement and high levels of motivation in a subject area become the primary characteristics of giftedness as individuals mature from childhood to adolescence.
- Some gifted individuals with exceptional potential or aptitude may not demonstrate outstanding levels of achievement due to environmental circumstances such as limited opportunities to learn as a result of poverty, cultural barriers, physical/learning disabilities, or motivational/emotional challenges.

Identification of these students will need to emphasize aptitude and potential rather than relying only on demonstrated achievement.

BCPS is evaluating the present gifted and talented identification processes and will continue to do so during the 2014-2015 school year. A diverse team of school-based and central office-based educators will continue to make recommendations that will help educators recognize potential in all students.

Baltimore County Public Schools' Office of Advanced Academics is committed to advocating for high potential learners by developing, supporting, and implementing practices and procedures that develop 21st Century skills.



Curriculum and Instruction

Elementary School:

Reading/Language Arts: The Common Core State Standards (CCSS)-aligned elementary reading/language arts curriculum will allow all students in Grades 1–5 access to enriched and accelerated learning experiences through a responsive instruction model. Through ongoing informal/formal assessment, students will be flexibly grouped in teacher-facilitated instructional groups. The *Acceleration* small group pathway (formerly the GT reading curriculum) provides an enriched and accelerated pathway for those students who have the capability or potential to embrace a rigorous learning experience in language arts.

Students will have ongoing access to an accelerated learning pathway through a diagnostic pre-assessment task. Students do not have to be identified as “gifted” in order to participate in this curriculum and instruction. Teachers will use diagnostic data and student observation to determine the most appropriate pathway for each student before each unit. Three instructional pathways exist for each unit: on-grade level with support, enrichment, and acceleration.

Mathematics: During the 2014-2015 school year, Grades 3-5 teachers will be implementing a College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS)-aligned mathematics curriculum. Through the alignment to the standards, all students will be exposed to increased levels of rigor and significant changes in content standards as compared to the previous state curriculum. The revised advanced mathematics pathway is designed to provide opportunity and multiple access points for high potential learners.

All students in Grade 3 will be provided with regular opportunities for challenge and building deeper understanding of content through Enrichment tasks. It should be noted that many of the former Grade 4 standards are now part of the Grade 3 CCRS and are reflected in the Grade 3 mathematics curriculum.

The Grade 4 Advanced Mathematics curriculum is a Grade 4 CCRS-aligned mathematics program which is extended into the Grade 5 CCRS expectations where appropriate. Advanced and high-potential students learn all of the Grade 4 and part of the Grade 5 mathematics CCRS. Multiple opportunities for formative assessment exist throughout the curriculum, to provide access and opportunity to all students.

During the 2014-2015 school year, Grade 5 advanced and high-potential learners will be taught the existing GT Grade 5 Mathematics curriculum, which addresses content aligned with Grade 6 mathematics content. In 2015-2016, the Grade 5 Advanced Mathematics curriculum will transition to address the remaining Grade 5 CCRS-aligned mathematics program that was not taught in Grade 4, and all of the Grade 6 CCRS.

Middle School:

Middle school students have access to standard-level classes, as well as accelerated above-level GT classes across content areas.

High School:

High school students have access to standard-level courses, GT courses (Grades 9 and 10), and Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

General Characteristics of Students Who Demonstrate Advanced Learning Capabilities:

1. Advanced oral and/or written language skills; expressive language.
2. Ability to make unique connections; understand systems; see the "big picture."
3. Seek answers to many questions; seek in-depth information.
4. Nonconforming; risk-taking; independent.
5. Resourceful and creative at finding unique solutions.
6. Keen powers of observation; highly sensitive and insightful.
7. Intense and sustained interests; able to easily transfer learning to new situations.
8. Ability to provide nontraditional responses and/or develop unique products.



Gifted and Talented Education Advocacy Groups

The Citizens' Advisory Committee for Gifted Education (CAC)
www.bcps.org/offices/gt/CAC

Maryland Educators of Gifted Students
www.megsonline.net

Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education (MCGATE)
<http://www.mcgate.org/index.html>

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
1707 L Street, NW, Suite 550 Washington, DC 20036
Telephone: 202-785-4268 www.nagc.org

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)
P.O. Box 488, Poughquag, NY 12570
office@sengifted.org
Telephone: 845-797-5054

Johns Hopkins University – Center for Talented Youth (CTY)
ctyinfo@jhu.edu

Please visit the Office of Advanced Academics Website for more information:

www.bcps.org/offices/gt

After visiting our Website, if you have additional questions, please contact us.

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Advanced Academic Education

Baltimore County Public Schools



Creating a Culture of Deliberate Excellence



2014-2015