

BOARD MEMO

Date: May 5, 2022
For ACTION
For INFORMATION
Board Agenda: Yes
No

FROM: Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Gerald R. Mann, Jr., Ed. D., Executive Director of Instructional Support
Megan Tempel-Milner, Ph.D., Director of Gifted and Advanced Academic Programs

THROUGH: Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Meagan L. Alderton, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Talented and Gifted (TAG) Local Plan

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

- Goal 1: Systemic Alignment
- Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
- Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
- Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation
- Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2020–2021 FOCUS AREA:

- Focus Area 3: Strategic Plan Implementation
- Focus Area 5: Talented and Gifted

FY 2022 BUDGET PRIORITY:

- Implementation of the 2025 Strategic Plan
- Reduce Disproportionality in TAG and Advanced Courses

SUMMARY:

During the 2021–2022 school year, the TAG office has worked to update the Local Plan for the Gifted. The Local Plan utilizes steering committees, which consist of school and central office leaders, teachers, counselors, Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) members, parents, and outside consultants, to align our program goals with best practices in gifted education and ACPS’s 2025 Strategic Plan.

The TAG steering committee has developed four recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: Change Program Name to Advanced Academic Services.
- Recommendation 2: Develop a Continuum of Service Model Similar to the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS).
- Recommendation 3: Access to Rigor for All Through Tier 1 Instruction.
- Recommendation 4: Align the Local Plan with ACPS Initiatives.

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The TAG steering committee would like to continue to work on further developing Recommendations 2 through 4 and then work on the identification process for TAG.

BACKGROUND:

School divisions are required to identify gifted K–12 students and provide instructional services to meet their needs, and division School Boards are required to approve a comprehensive Local Plan. After the School Board approves the Local Plan, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) receives a copy of the plan. The VDOE periodically conducts technical reviews of each school division’s Local Plan and provides feedback. ACPS’s most recent technical review occurred in the 2021–2022 school year. The current Local Plan has been continually reviewed and updated to comply with state law [8VAC20-40-60](#) and ACPS’s 2025 Strategic Plan.

The work on updating ACPS’s Local Plan for the Gifted began at the start of the 2021–2022 school year. The work is being completed through the formation of and collaboration with steering committees, which consist of school-based leaders, central office employees, teachers, counselors, researchers in the gifted field, and parent advisory groups. To date, our steering committees have made four recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Change Program Name to Advanced Academic Services.

The Local Plan’s steering committees have drafted the “Statement of Philosophy” and “Local Operational Definition of Giftedness,” which focus on shifting the school system culture from labeling students to identifying various levels of need for all students in ACPS. The shift moves us to an office that provides Advanced Academic Services for students, with an emphasis on the service rather than a student label. From this work, the committees have made a recommendation to change the program name to Advanced Academic Services.

Recommendation 2: Develop a Continuum of Service Model Similar to the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS); Recommendation 3: Access to Rigor for All Through Tier 1 Instruction.

Our steering committees have spent the last six sessions drafting the “Service Options Are Continuous and Sequential” and “Change in Instructional Services” sections. ACPS is recommending we continue to focus on and refine different levels or tiers of Advanced Academic Services that students require within our school system, similar to the MTSS for interventions. The interventions for Advanced Academic Services will focus on learning experiences beyond VDOE standards. Within a system of Advanced Academic Services, the tiers will vary in frequency, duration, and access to higher levels of instruction. Aligned with this model, the committees recommend ensuring all students have access to high-quality and rigorous Tier 1 instruction in the general education setting. Tier 1 instruction includes access, but is not limited, to project-based learning and critical and creative thinking strategies.

Recommendation 4: Align the Local Plan with ACPS Initiatives.

The update to the Local Plan is interrelated with other ACPS initiatives, including the Middle School Project Work (MSPW) Team. The MSPW will address potential revisions, additions, and refinements in various areas, including honors courses and mathematics pathways. The work is being completed in unison with the Local Plan, so the recommendations set forth by both initiatives can be in alignment with each other. In addition, the Local Plan has connected regulations, which will require updating to be in alignment with each other, including *IKEB-R: Acceleration Regulations*.

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Finally, our committees are working diligently to complete ACPS's Local Plan. Our next steps in the process are to refine additional tiers to Advanced Academic Services, establish identification models that focus on eliminating access and opportunity gaps, develop a timeline for implementation, and solidify a plan for program evaluation. In addition, we will seek input from national consultants as well as opportunities for School Board feedback and public comments.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information in this memo.

IMPACT:

With the revision of ACPS's Local Plan for the Gifted, students will have access to the educational resources needed to enhance their learning. It will eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps to ensure that all students graduate ready for college, careers, and life.

ATTACHMENT:

220505_Board_Presentation_ACPS_TAG_Local_Plan

REFERENCE:

1. [Talented and Gifted \(TAG\) Identification Process, March 10, 2022](#)
2. [Talented and Gifted \(TAG\) Delivery Model and Identification Process Update, March 24, 2022](#)

CONTACT:

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