

# SCHOOL NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

## ADVANCED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS (AAP) CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) offers a continuum of advanced academic services for all students in grades K-8. Learning experiences are designed to develop higher-level thinking through enrichment, acceleration, and extension of the Program of Studies. Teachers, administrators, and advanced academic resource teachers (AARTs) work together to provide the following Levels of Service:

- **Critical and Creative Thinking Lessons, Grades K-6 (Level I)**  
The first level is provided to all students in grades kindergarten through grade six and consists of model lessons that are designed to teach critical and creative thinking skills. The lessons are modeled in all classrooms by advanced academic resource teachers and the thinking strategies are then used throughout the year by classroom teachers and other teachers who work with students. Student responses to these lessons are used as part of the identification process for levels II-IV. Parents may also practice these strategies during family conversations and activities. A description of the 9 critical and creative thinking strategies can be found at <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/aap/level1.html>.
- **Differentiated Lessons in Areas of Academic Strength, Grades K-6 (Level II)**  
The advanced academic resource teacher collaborates with classroom teachers to provide additional challenge through lessons and resources that extend and enrich the program of studies. Screening for this level of service is ongoing throughout the school year. The Young Scholars Model begins at this level and is designed to find and nurture advanced academic potential in students from historically underrepresented populations.
- **Part-Time Advanced Academic Program, Grades 3-6 (Level III)**  
Students identified by a local school screening committee for part-time advanced academic services (Level III) are challenged through models and strategies designed to extend and enrich the POS in the four core subject areas. Screening for this level of service is ongoing throughout the school year.
- **Full-Time Advanced Academic Placement, Grades 3-8 (Level IV)**  
Students found eligible for placement in a full-time Advanced Academic Program (Level IV) through a central selection process receive a highly challenging instructional program in the four core subject areas. Screening for this level of service occurs in the fall for students who are new to FCPS and in the spring for all other students. The referral deadline is in October for students who are new to FCPS and the first week of February for spring screening. Additional information is available in the Parent Information Packet, published on the AAP website, [www.fcps.edu/dis/aap](http://www.fcps.edu/dis/aap).
- **IBMYP: Selected Schools, Grades 6-10**  
The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program is designed for students ages 11-16. The program helps students develop the knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and skills necessary to participate actively and responsibly in a changing world. The curriculum is supported by the fundamental concepts of intercultural awareness, holistic learning, and communication.
- **Honors, Grades 7-8**  
Advanced and/or accelerated classes are available for students in grades 7- 8 through an open enrollment process. Students receive instruction that is differentiated for advanced learners in the four core subjects in one or more areas of academic strength or interest.

## SCREENING

Multiple criteria are reviewed to determine eligibility for all FCPS Advanced Academic Programs. The local school committee determines student eligibility for part-time school-based services. The countywide central selection committee determines eligibility for full-time AAP (Level IV) placement.

## TESTING

Each fall all FCPS first grade students are administered the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT). Students in second through seventh grades who do not have an NNAT score may also be administered the NNAT. Each fall all FCPS second grade students are administered the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). Students in third through seventh grades who do not have a CogAT score may also be administered the CogAT. A second grade screening pool is established using the test results from first and second grade testing. Students in the second grade pool are automatically screened for full-time AAP (Level IV) placement. Parents or guardians may exercise a one-time retest option during the fall testing cycle.

## REFERRALS for FULL-TIME ADVANCED ACADEMIC PLACEMENT LEVEL IV (Grades 2–7)

Parents or guardians of students not in the second grade screening pool may initiate the full-time AAP (Level IV) screening process by completing and submitting an **AAP Level IV Referral Form to the local school principal no later than February 3, 2012.** No late referrals will be accepted. Second graders **not** in the pool and **all** third through seventh graders are screened only by referral. Forms are available on the AAP website ([www.fcps.edu/DIS/aap](http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/aap)) and in the *Parent Information Packet* available at the local school. (Please note: Parents or guardians of students who are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade pool will be notified by the school. Students who are not in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade pool will not receive notification. The benchmark score used to create the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade pool will be published on the Advanced Academic Programs website mid-January.)