

Advanced Academic Programs Advisory Committee (AAPAC) Report 2009 Staff Response to Recommendations

In its 2008-09 annual report to the School Board, the Advanced Academic Advisory Committee (AAPAC) provided a review of the committee's work during the 2008-2009 school year and offered recommendations for advanced academic services. Listed below are the committee's recommendations followed by staff responses.

1. **Recommendation:** Assessment should promote student and parent understanding of individual progress toward mastery of content, skills, and higher-level thinking

Response: Accounting for the achievement and progress of advanced learners requires an assessment system that is designed to accommodate high levels of performance. Staff is working on establishing criteria for student performance that exceeds grade level standards and include in-depth knowledge, an advanced application of skills, and a deep understanding of the content. Open-ended assessments, progress towards mastery, and individual goal-setting are critical components that will be addressed through this work.

2. **Recommendation:** Ideally, vertical articulation of students should continue to take place as they rise through grade levels, ensuring growth and appropriate subject area acceleration.

Response: The reorganization of Instructional Services supports the vertical articulation of students through a continuum of advanced academic programs and services. Professional Learning Communities continue to be a focus at all levels and provide ongoing opportunities for planning, assessment, and the implementation of research-based best practices that lead to continuous academic achievement and growth for all learners.

In February 2009, the Advanced Academic Programs Advisory Committee (AAPAC) was asked by FCPS School Board member and AAPAC liaison, Brad Center, to consider the current delivery of services model for Advanced Academic Programs in Fairfax County Public Schools and make recommendations to the school board.

AAPAC has three sets of recommendations for the School Board:

1. **Recommendation:** It is vital that both traditional GT centers (now Level IV) and existing Local Level IV services at the elementary level continue to receive strong support.

Response: Local Level IV and traditional centers will continue to co-exist. Staff will continue to implement a careful and thoughtful planning and review process as the Local Level IV option expands.

2. **Recommendation:** Although we are sensitive to the current economic climate, this committee recommends that transportation to Level IV centers serving grades 3 – 8 and Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST) continue to be provided.

Response: Currently there is no plan to eliminate transportation, however, with the ongoing budget shortfall all programs are being reviewed for budget cuts.

3. **Recommendation:** FCPS should continue to support the current delivery model of Level I through III services; advanced academic programs staff should continue to enhance their communication, particularly by making use of their informative web site and other outreach efforts, to explain the levels of service.

Response: The advanced academic programs will continue to offer a continuum of advanced academic opportunities to a wide range of learners. The website is currently being updated and revised in response to parent feedback. Multiple avenues of communication are being employed to communicate with parents and community members. The continuum of services graphic has been revised and expanded to better explain the programs and services that are available K – 12.