

Fairfax County Public Schools

# **TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL (2e)** **HANDBOOK**



Guidance for families and schools to support the identification,  
instruction, and social-emotional wellness of 2e learners

# Acknowledgements

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) wishes to acknowledge those who contributed to the development and review of the *FCPS Twice-Exceptional (2e) Handbook*. This collaborative effort between the FCPS Instructional Services and Special Services departments was made possible through the contributions of school administrators and teachers, FCPS central office staff, and interested parents of FCPS students. This resource was created to provide schools and families with insight and general guidance to support the identification, instruction, and social-emotional wellness of 2e learners. Within FCPS, each student is met as an individual and no handbook can anticipate all questions or concerns. We encourage you to discuss your questions or concerns with the educators in your child's school.

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# **FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (FCPS)**

## **TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL (2e) HANDBOOK**

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### **Introduction**

The FCPS Twice-Exceptional (2e) Handbook was developed to provide schools and families with insight and guidance associated with the identification, instruction, and social-emotional wellness of students who are gifted and have learning challenges or disabilities. The content reflects a division-wide commitment to effectively address the needs of 2e learners through a model of shared understanding, responsibility, and collaboration among families and school staff.

The handbook is organized by the following categories:

**Part I: Overview of 2e Learners**

**Part II: School Resources**

**Part III: Students and Families**

**Part IV: Additional 2e Resources**

*FCPS has shifted from a focus of labeling students as “gifted” to a focus on identifying student strengths and providing a continuum of advanced academic services designed to develop and nurture students’ academic strengths over time. FCPS does not use the term “gifted”, but rather refers to intellectually, cognitively, or academically advanced learners with potential for exceptional academic performance when compared to others of the same age, background, and experience. For simplicity, and because educational researchers refer to giftedness, this handbook will use the term “gifted.”*

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# PART I: OVERVIEW OF 2E LEARNERS



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## **Part I: OVERVIEW OF 2e LEARNERS**

- 1. FCPS Philosophy Regarding 2e Students**
- 2. Who Are 2e Learners?**
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### **FCPS PHILOSOPHY REGARDING 2e STUDENTS**

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FCPS believes that each student is entitled to an excellent education that meets his or her individual needs, and that partnerships among students, parents, educators, and the community are critical to student success. The district is committed to evidence-based identification processes, interventions, and instructional practices designed to meet the diverse needs of 2e students.

FCPS embraces a student-centered, strengths-based approach to educating all students. For 2e learners, the focus is on addressing the students' high abilities while supporting their unique learning needs.

Twice-exceptional students in FCPS may participate in advanced academic programs and courses and receive accommodations, specialized instruction, modifications, and/or services through special education programs or 504 Plans in a variety of academic settings based on the needs of the students. In a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) (2007), the U.S Department of Education affirmed that a student with a disability is entitled to admission to an accelerated class or program and may not be excluded solely because of that student's need for special education or related aids and services, or because that student has a plan under Section 504.

#### **The Education of Gifted Students in FCPS**

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) defines gifted students as "those in public elementary, middle, and secondary schools beginning with kindergarten (through twelfth grade) who demonstrate high levels of accomplishment or who show the potential for higher levels of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment" (8VAC20-40-20).

In FCPS gifted services are available to students who exhibit exceptional performance capability in academic, intellectual, and creative endeavors through Advanced Academic Programs (AAP). A continuum of advanced academic services is provided to students in grades K-12 that builds upon students' individual strengths and skills and maximizes academic potential for all learners. When a student is screened for AAP, the school division considers a student's performance in the four core academic subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. FCPS also considers the diverse characteristics and behaviors associated with giftedness determined by multiple comprehensive assessments.

FCPS is committed to developing excellence and recognizes that children identified for advanced academic services have the potential to achieve at high levels in one or more academic areas. Advanced learners require a differentiated curriculum that addresses their cognitive and social-emotional needs and develops their abilities through instruction that is differentiated in depth, complexity, and pace.

FCPS has policies and procedures in place that are grounded in equity and inclusion. All students receive instruction to develop critical and creative thinking skills from kindergarten through grade 12. For more information, see [FCPS Advanced Academic Programs](#).

### **The Education of Students with Disabilities in FCPS**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guarantees a free appropriate public education to all eligible children with disabilities. The commonwealth of Virginia defines "Special Education" as specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent(s), to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability (34 CFR 300.39(a)(1)). "Specially designed instruction" means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards that apply to all children within the jurisdiction of the local educational agency (34 CFR 300.39(b)(3)).

Additional protection is provided by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a civil rights statute designed to "eliminate discrimination on the basis of handicap in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (34 CFR 104).

The mission of the FCPS Department of Special Services is to provide a planned program of instructional, psychological, social, and related services to help schools meet the unique needs of identified students and their families. Through instructional leadership, curriculum development, program evaluation, and staff development, FCPS Special Services provides a network of support to staff, students, and families that eliminates obstacles, facilitates instruction, and enables students to succeed as individuals within the learning environment.

### **REFERENCES**

Virginia Department of Education, Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students (various sections as cited), (2010), accessed 5/11/19 at [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted\\_ed/gifted\\_regulations.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted_ed/gifted_regulations.pdf)

## **WHO ARE 2e LEARNERS?**

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FCPS defines 2e learners as students who demonstrate high performance ability or academic potential and who have a cognitive, physical, behavioral, or emotional challenge or disability that requires specialized instruction and/or accommodations in order for their potential to be realized. These students' needs are best met with a strengths-based education with accommodations, services, modifications, and compensation strategies provided in response to individual needs.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF 2E LEARNERS

Twice-exceptional (2e) students' learning and behavior profiles are often complex, with strengths and needs occurring on a continuum. Students may demonstrate characteristics of gifted learners as well as characteristics of students who have cognitive, physical, behavioral, or emotional challenges.

The following chart describes potential strengths and challenges of 2e students. It is not an exhaustive list, and individual 2e students will not demonstrate all of the characteristics.

Potential Strengths	Potential Challenges
Highly advanced in one or more academic areas, e.g., verbal skills, conceptual understandings, early reading development	Uneven or inconsistent academic performance; working in a modality that is not a strength; emotional immaturity compared to same-age peers
Ability to memorize large amounts of information as compared to peers	Working memory (i.e. retaining information to complete multi-step tasks)
Highly imaginative, curious, unusual sense of humor	Social awareness; ideas may seem bizarre to peers; difficulty seeing other points of view; may discount or minimize views of others
Develops complex ideas and solutions to problems	Organization; time management; following multi-step directions and plans
Advanced moral reasoning about issues related to fairness and justice	Extreme emotional intensity and oversensitivity; regulating emotions
High level reasoning powers and problem-solving abilities	Systematically approaching problems (e.g., organizing, prioritizing, initiating tasks)
Very focused interests (i.e. has passion and deep knowledge about a specific topic of interest)	Focus on a particular area (often not school-related) to the exclusion of others (often school-related); unable to shift focus and be flexible with thinking/ideas
Able to concentrate for long periods in areas of interest	Sustaining attention on less preferred tasks
Often able to engage with adults in high-level conversations on topics of interest	Difficulty initiating and sustaining daily social conversations with peers and adults; may not have language and self-regulation skills to engage in reciprocal conversations with peers and adults
Outstanding critical and creative thinking abilities; often independently develop compensation skills	Executive functioning skills; may require frequent teacher support and feedback in deficit areas



## POSSIBLE INDICATIONS OF TWICE-EXCEPTIONALITY

If twice-exceptionality is suspected, it is helpful for parents and teachers to keep records and collect evidence to show the ways in which the child excels and struggles. Parents and teachers may advocate for the child to be evaluated for advanced academic, special education services, or both, as one exceptionality does not preclude the other. Below are some possible indications of twice-exceptionality. *This is not intended as a diagnostic tool.*

- Demonstrates exceptional strengths combined with areas of relative weakness
- High cognitive ability scores and lower than expected achievement, performance, or grades (not necessarily below grade level)
- Large discrepancies among subtests on cognitive ability tests, e.g. high verbal score and low processing speed score
- Sophisticated speaking vocabulary and poor written expression
- Uneven academic skills, inconsistent grades and test scores
- Excels in one high interest area yet appears to be unmotivated or “lazy” in others
- Does well given sufficient time but performs poorly on timed tasks
- Participates well in class discussions but does not follow through with implementation
- Experiences loss of confidence and self-esteem in area(s) of weakness
- Needs unusual amount of support in academics, social interaction, organization, follow-through on tasks
- Resists demonstrating weaknesses; may deflect attention with humor, avoidance, not taking academic risks
- Disconnect between how hard a bright child is working and achievement or grades
- Thrives on complexity yet has difficulty with rote memorization
- Understands concepts easily yet gets frustrated with the performance requirements
- Fatigues easily due to the energy required to compensate for areas of weakness
- Appears smarter than grades or test scores suggest
- Shows rigidity; once a decision has been made, it is very difficult to change it
- Unexpected changes often elicit strong emotional distress

## REFERENCES

Weinfeld, R., Barnes-Robinson, L., Jeweler, S. and Shevitz, B., *Smart Kids with Learning Difficulties: Overcoming Obstacles & Realizing Potential* (2013). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press

## 2e IDENTIFICATION CONSIDERATIONS

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According to the National Education Association’s publication, *The Twice-Exceptional Dilemma* (2006), an estimated six percent of students with disabilities are also academically gifted. It is important to note that the prevalence of twice-exceptionality may be even higher, as the data

does not capture students who have not been identified for gifted or special education services (due to masking) or those who have a Section 504 Plan rather than an Individualized Education Program (IEP). In FCPS, these students may be considered as 2e learners.

Twice-exceptional students are at risk of being unidentified and underserved because one exceptionality may hide or mask the other. When this occurs, there is a range of potential academic and social-emotional consequences that can prevent 2e students from reaching their potential or demonstrating academic achievement commensurate with their ability.

Twice-exceptionality is not specifically addressed by any federal, state, or local regulations. FCPS does not formally identify students as 2e, but rather provides a continuum of advanced academic services, and, concurrently, special education services or Section 504 Plans to students who need both. Eligibility for services is independently determined by the Advanced Academic Programs (AAP) office and the Department of Special Services, following procedures outlined in state legislation and local regulations.

### **IDENTIFICATION FOR ADVANCED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

FCPS Advanced Academic Programs (AAP) provides services along a continuum of increasing levels of rigor which are available to all students beginning in kindergarten and continuing through high school. The identification procedures at each level are designed to find and nurture advanced academic potential so every student has the opportunity to participate at the appropriate level of challenge. The [AAP screening process](#) includes consideration of evidence of characteristics and behaviors associated with giftedness, as determined by multiple criteria.

Identification and placement practices are guided by an understanding that intelligence develops over time, can be nurtured, manifests itself in different ways in different cultures, is complex, and is affected by both genetic and environmental influences. This understanding drives the holistic approach to screening and identification that allows teachers to recognize and nurture gifted potential over time in order to promote continuous intellectual growth.

Twice-exceptional students who receive AAP services are provided with accommodations, specialized instruction, modifications, and/or services, as detailed in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan in a variety of academic settings in response to the student's individual needs.

### **Elementary Advanced Academic Programs Levels of Service**

- **Level I** services are a part of the curriculum for all students. Teachers embed critical and creative thinking strategies in lessons across all subject areas and grade levels.
- **Level II** services include differentiated lessons offered to students who show potential in areas of specific academic strength. Eligibility for Level II services is determined by a school-based screening committee.
- **Level III** part-time services extend and enrich the FCPS Program of Studies in the four core content areas. Eligibility for Level III services is determined by a school-based screening committee.
- **Level IV** full-time services focus on academic depth and complexity in the four core content areas. Eligibility for Level IV services is determined through a central selection committee.

### **Secondary Advanced Academic Programs Levels of Service**

Advanced academic services are implemented in middle schools using a school-based model through open enrollment Honors coursework, and, for students found eligible through central screening, Level IV (full-time) services in core course.

Advanced academic services in high school are implemented using a school-based model through a variety of rigorous programs and coursework open to all students. Course offerings vary by each school and may include Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programs (MYP), International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program (DP), and dual enrollment.

### **IDENTIFICATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND/OR 504 PLANS**

The FCPS Department of Special Services provides a planned program of instructional, psychological, social, and related services to help schools provide services to identified students. Identification as a child with a disability entitles the student to an Individualized Education Program (IEP), in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), or a 504 Plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These accommodations and services may include, but are not limited to:

- consultative services,
- accommodations, and
- specially designed instruction

A student's education includes academic, social-emotional, and adaptive functioning. For all areas of need, appropriate interventions support 2e students in developing their full potential.

If there is a reason to suspect a student has a disability, a request for evaluation can be made to the local screening team. A Multi-Purpose Referral (SS/SE-5) form may be completed by the requester or the appropriate school staff members. The Local Screening Committee (LSC) will follow mandated procedures to determine if there is sufficient evidence to suspect a disability. If the student undergoes a formal evaluation, a group of qualified professionals and the parents look at the child's evaluation results. Together, they decide if the student meets the criteria to be identified as a student with a disability, as defined by IDEA, with a need for specialized instruction and/or accommodations.

Students found eligible for special education services will receive an IEP, written by the IEP team, which includes parents and the student (when appropriate). These individuals pool knowledge, experience, and commitment to design an educational program that will help the student progress in the general curriculum.

In some cases, the student may not be eligible for special education, but may be eligible with a disability under Section 504. A 504 Plan is developed for the 504-qualified student, and this plan will include all necessary accommodations, modifications and/or services necessary for the student to obtain equal access to FCPS programs and activities. Some examples of accommodations include extended time, graphic organizers, positive reinforcement systems, chunked quizzes/tests, and audio texts.

## **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES WITH 2E IDENTIFICATION**

Twice-exceptional learners are at risk for under-identification for gifted services, special education services, and Section 504 Plans due to the complex interaction of exceptional abilities and exceptional learning challenges. Students who are gifted and have learning challenges or disabilities may fall into one of the following categories:

### **The strengths mask the disability.**

These 2e students are able to use their strengths to compensate for their areas of challenge, especially in the early grades, and they are identified for gifted services; however, as compensation becomes more difficult, these students may be perceived as underachievers who lack motivation as they fall behind their gifted peers due to their undetected learning disabilities.

### **The disability masks the strengths.**

These 2e students' learning challenges are clear, and often the focus of instruction is remediation. They may be found eligible for special education services or 504 Plans, but not for gifted services. Subsequently, these cognitively under-stimulated gifted students may develop negative behaviors, learned helplessness, and low self-esteem.

### **The disability and strengths mask each other, and neither is recognized.**

These 2e students are not found eligible for either gifted or special education programs. They have exceptional abilities, yet appear to have just average ability due to the effects of the disability. Subsequently, they do not receive support for their challenges or opportunities to demonstrate their strengths and abilities.

## **THE INFLUENCE OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ON IDENTIFICATION**

Perceptions of giftedness are influenced by both language and culture. Screening measures alone may not capture students with high potential who are in the early stages of acquiring English. Consequently, teachers and parents play a key role in the identification of English Learners (ELs) for Advanced Academic Programs. It is imperative that English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers participate in the process of identifying and serving ELs. In addition to classroom observations and assessment results, teachers should be aware of potential indicators of high ability in English Learners. These include, but are not limited to, rapid acquisition of English and/or rapid acculturation, high ability in mathematics, efficiency in switching between languages, leadership, creativity, and strong interpersonal skills.

Due to the complexity of identifying and serving the needs of English Learners with both advanced academic potential and disabilities, school teams collaborate to implement the following practices.

- Assessments are administered in the language most likely to yield accurate results. For English Learners, ELP Level 1 – 4 and 9, a dual language assessment is required for this purpose.
- Ensure that the student's parent(s)/guardian understands the proceedings of the eligibility meeting and provide interpreters and translations when possible.
- Include an ESOL teacher on the team and consider how the student's language, culture, and background may be impacting assessment results when screening or determining eligibility for special education.

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- National Education Association, The Twice-Exceptional Dilemma (2006). Retrieved September 17, 2018, from <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/twiceexceptional.pdf>
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- Jackson-Gilman, B., et al. (2013). Critical issues in the identification of gifted students with co-existing disabilities: The twice-exceptional. SAGE Open, July– September, pp. 1-16. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013505855>
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## COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

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Below are some common misconceptions about gifted students who also have a learning challenge or disability. Unaddressed, these misconceptions may prevent access to appropriate learning experiences and necessary supports required for academic success and social-emotional wellness.

### **Misconception 1: A student cannot be gifted and have a learning disability.**

2e learners have high cognitive abilities and learning challenges or disabilities. Understanding the needs of these students can be difficult because strengths may mask disabilities, disabilities may mask strengths, or they may mask each other. It is important to provide instruction based on a student's strengths while providing support for areas of challenge.

### **Misconception 2: A student cannot receive special education services in advanced academic programs or courses.**

2e learners who need accommodations and/or specialized instruction and services cannot be denied access to appropriate high-level curriculum. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans can be delivered in a variety of settings, including advanced academic classes. At the secondary level, a student and his or her parents or guardians have the right to select any course for which the student has satisfied the course prerequisite(s).

### **Misconception 3: A student with good grades is not eligible for special education services.**

Teams consider the whole child when making an eligibility decision, and grades are not the sole indicator of progress or ability. The United States Department of Education specifies that all students with disabilities are protected by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and that schools must evaluate a student if a disability is suspected. IDEA [§300.304\(b\)\(1\) and \(2\)](#) requires the use of “a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant



functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent,” and prohibits the use of “any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child.”

**Misconception 4: It is not fair to reduce work or provide extra support for 2e students since they are gifted.**

Teachers make instructional decisions and build classroom culture based on an equitable, student-centered approach to education in which every student is treated as an individual. Fairness does not mean all students get the same thing, but rather all students get what they need. Students with disabilities, including those who are also gifted, are entitled to receive accommodations or specialized instruction as detailed in their IEP or 504 Plan. These documents are written to “level the playing field” and to empower students to learn and demonstrate understanding without the interference of a disability.

**Misconception 5: The student’s areas of weakness must be remediated before having access to advanced learning opportunities.**

A student does not have to master basic skills before engaging in high level curriculum and instruction. Focusing on remediation of skill deficits at the expense of access to interesting, relevant, emotionally engaging activities is typically unsuccessful, and may result in students becoming bored and unmotivated. Rather, a strength-based approach using advanced curriculum with supports and accommodations is more likely to result in higher achievement. Areas of need should be supported so students’ learning challenges do not prohibit them from full, active participation in cognitively advanced tasks.

**Misconception 6: 2e students develop cognitively and emotionally at the same level and pace.**

Twice-exceptional students are advanced in terms of intellect; however, their social-emotional maturity may not match their advanced intellectual development. This uneven development is referred to as asynchrony. The best way to address asynchrony is to focus on and further develop the students’ areas of strength, while continuing to support the areas of need through explicit instruction and accommodations. Gifted learners often exhibit intense emotional behaviors. Social skills, hypersensitivities, and executive functioning skills can improve with awareness, compassion, time, and strategic instruction and interventions.

**Misconception 7: Gifted students are self-motivated, and high-achievement comes easily to them.**

If the evaluation of a student’s academic abilities is influenced by the expectation of high motivation, strong executive functioning skills, and advanced reading and writing skills, a 2e student may appear unable or unwilling to handle challenging academic tasks. Twice-exceptional students are gifted yet may not perform at a high level due to insufficient academic support or social-emotional challenges. Over time, they may develop low self-esteem and become less willing to take academic risks. Students who receive needed supports and feel understood by their teachers are more likely to take academic risks, persevere through inevitable challenges, and achieve up to their potential.

## REFERENCES

Baum, Susan, Marcy Dann, Cynthia Novak and Lesli Preuss. "The Mythology of Learning: Understanding Common Myths about 2e Learners." 2e: Twice Exceptional Newsletter 2010 Print.

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Guide to the Individualized Education Program. (2007, March 23). Retrieved June 27, 2019, from <https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>

IDEA Statute and Regulations. (n.d.). Retrieved June 27, 2018, from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/statuteregulations/>

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## LEGISLATION REGARDING 2e STUDENTS

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There is no legislation that specifically addresses "twice-exceptional" students; however, the U.S. Department of Education has [clarified its position](#) that students who have both high cognition and disabilities are protected under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Below are summaries of the federal and state legislation regarding both gifted education and special education that govern and guide FCPS in serving the needs of 2e students.

### LEGISLATION REGARDING SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SECTION 504

FCPS abides by the procedures required for [Implementation of Special Education Regulations](#) in Virginia's Public Schools and complies with the following legislation regarding protections for students with disabilities.

Legislation	Summary
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ( <a href="#">IDEA</a> )	IDEA makes available a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to eligible children with disabilities and ensures special education and/or related services designed to meet the child's unique needs.

Legislation	Summary
<a href="#">Section 504</a> of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Section 504 is designed to eliminate discrimination based on disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. It requires schools to provide to students with disabilities appropriate educational services designed to meet the individual needs of such students.
Virginia Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities ( <a href="#">8VAC20-81</a> )	This list of regulations outlines requirements for the education of students with disabilities, including, but not limited to: referral, eligibility, FAPE, Individualized Education Program ( <a href="#">IEP</a> ), least restrictive environment placement, due process, and compliance with Section 504.

### LEGISLATION REGARDING GIFTED EDUCATION

FCPS complies with the following legislation regarding protections for gifted students:

Legislation	Summary
Virginia Regulations Governing Education Services for Gifted Students ( <a href="#">8VAC20-40-10</a> )	<p>This list outlines what each school division needs to include in its comprehensive plan for gifted education, including, but not limited to: definitions, screening, referral, identification, services, parental rights, and the local plan.</p> <p>The <a href="#">FCPS Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted</a> meets the Virginia regulations and is approved by the FCPS School Board. This document provides specific explanations of FCPS' implementation of the regulations. It includes a commitment to recognize and address the needs of children who have been identified as gifted and those who have high potential, including twice-exceptional learners.</p>

### REFERENCES

Fairfax County Public Schools, Procedures Required for Implementation of Special Education Regulations in Virginia's Public Schools, accessed 5/11/19 via <https://www.fcps.edu/sites/default/files/media/forms/OSEPSprocedures.pdf>

Virginia Department of Education, Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students (various sections as cited), (2010), accessed 5/11/19 at [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted\\_ed/gifted\\_regulations.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted_ed/gifted_regulations.pdf)

## PART II: SCHOOL RESOURCES



1. Best Practices for Instruction of 2e Learners
2. Accommodations
3. Assistive Technology
4. 504 Plans
5. Special Education Services
6. Disability Specific Information
7. Interventions and Specialized Supports

## **Part II: SCHOOL RESOURCES**

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### **BEST PRACTICES FOR INSTRUCTION OF 2e LEARNERS**

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FCPS promotes strengths-focused, dually-differentiated instruction that supports academic success and social-emotional well-being. Teachers develop 2e students' strengths and support them in areas of challenge through accommodations, specialized instruction, modifications, and/or services, and the development of compensation strategies that allow access to advanced learning opportunities.

#### **ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

The following are instructional elements to consider when planning to support the academic success and social-emotional wellness of 2e students:

##### **Ongoing assessments**

2e students often come to the classroom with previous knowledge and high capacity for learning. They also may have gaps in academic or social skills that require support to access higher level content. Ongoing assessments will allow teachers to understand 2e students' needs and help them support students in meeting or exceeding learning goals.

##### **Flexibility**

2e students perform better with teachers who, whenever possible, are flexible in instruction rather than rigid. Flexibility in time, materials, teaching and learning styles, student grouping, ways of expressing learning, and ways of assessing learning promotes student engagement and success in the classroom.

##### **Respectful learning tasks and learning environments**

2e students need relevant and engaging assignments with varied task complexity that offer choice based on interests and areas of strength. A respectful learning environment promotes appreciation of diversity, consistent structures and routines, and includes materials that reflect the interests and cultures of all students in the class. Teachers who understand asynchronous development and who emphasize growth over achievement create a learning environment that encourages academic risk-taking.



### **Teacher-student partnership**

2e students are empowered when the adults in their lives involve them in exploring what having exceptional ability and a disability means to them. A trusting partnership with the student is the key to successful differentiation. Teachers need to know the 2e student's strengths and interests, preferred learning environments, and the kinds of supports the student needs or does not need. A student can be a stronger self-advocate with a teacher who is open to listening and collaborating.

### **Differentiated Instruction:**

According to Tomlinson (2005), teachers must proactively consider 2e students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles when planning for differentiated instruction. Student choice is a critical component of differentiation, as it increases motivation and engagement. Teachers consider 2e learners' academic and social-emotional needs and use that information to differentiate the content (what students learn), process (how they learn), and products (how they demonstrate learning).

## **INTERVENTIONS AND SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTION**

A student's twice-exceptionality may impact multiple areas including reading, writing, mathematics, behavior, executive functioning, and social-emotional wellness. School teams work to identify students' strengths and needs as early as possible and use this knowledge to match students with the necessary interventions. School teams may develop a targeted plan with special education strategies or an evidence-based program to meet students' needs. As much as possible, interventions should be concurrent with advanced-level programming in the areas of strength and provide flexibility in pacing.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS THAT EMPOWER**

Accommodations help students compensate for their areas of weakness and allow high-ability students to move forward in learning in the moment, rather than interrupting learning to engage in remediation. For example, a student who has difficulty with written expression may be given a copy of class notes, which could help with preparation for academic conversations with peers. Accommodations are outlined in a student's Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan, while some accommodations are standard best practices that can be offered to any student, as needed.

Compensation strategies can be explicitly taught, embedded in curriculum, and/or developed by students as they move through school and discover what works. Accommodations are most effective when students understand their own disabilities and the benefits of supports. Parents and teachers can support successful development of self-advocacy in the following ways: foster resilience and persistence through challenges, teach organization and study skills, avoid unhealthy pressure for high grades, nurture talents and interests, reframe a learning disability in a positive manner, frame academic and self-regulation skills as skills that can be learned.

## **ACCELERATION**

Many 2e students learn at a faster pace, and in some cases, more independently than their same-age peers; most gifted students can benefit from some form of acceleration during their K-

12 school years (Assouline, et al 2015). Accelerating 2e students in areas of strength allows them to move through curriculum more quickly, resulting in more time to deeply explore content and personal interests related to the material. FCPS offers a variety of acceleration options that can be effective in meeting the needs of gifted students (e.g., compacting, subject matter acceleration, dual enrollment). When exploring acceleration for 2e students, it is important to ensure that areas of need are addressed. Additionally, potential academic and social-emotional issues are carefully considered, as failure to address possible unintended consequences may diminish the benefit of acceleration.

### **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**

The combination of giftedness and one or more disabilities may intensify the emotional challenge for 2e students and could increase their vulnerability to social-emotional struggles.

School factors that contribute to the social-emotional well-being of 2e students include a psychologically safe learning environment, school staff who model patience and tolerance of learning and behavior differences, and strengths-based learning experiences.

The home-school partnership is vital in managing students' social-emotional needs. FCPS school teams and families proactively plan to address concerns and collaborate on effective strategies. Creating a supportive learning environment with input from parents/guardians, who know the student best, will help 2e students grow academically, emotionally, behaviorally, and socially.

### **REFERENCES**

- Assouline, S. G., Colangelo, N., VanTassel-Baska, J., & Lupkowski-Shoplik, A. (2015). *A Nation Empowered: Evidence Trumps the Excuses Holding Back America's Brightest Students* (Vol. 2). IA City, IA: Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development, University of Iowa.
- Baska, A., & VanTassel-Baska, J. (2018). *Interventions that work with special populations in gifted education*. Waco TX: Prufrock Press.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2005). *How to Differentiate Instruction in Academically Diverse Classrooms*, 3rd Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

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Under federal law, students with disabilities have the right to equal access to learning. Accommodations are practices and supports provided to help a student access the curriculum and validly demonstrate learning.

Accommodations are based on individual learning needs of students and may be provided by classroom teachers, special education teachers, and/or other support staff. Accommodations included in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan ensure the student receives necessary supports and/or services in all learning environments. By law, these accommodations must be provided to students when completing classroom and standardized assessments to ensure that a student's knowledge is being assessed, not their ability (or

inability) to communicate that knowledge. In addition, English learners are entitled to receive English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) accommodations and services in addition to special education and AAP services.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS VS. MODIFICATIONS**

Classroom accommodations change how a student learns the material, while modifications change what material is to be learned. Testing accommodations change how a student expresses understanding of material, while modifications change what material is tested. For example, dictating answers to an essay test would be an accommodation. Requiring that only a portion of the content be assessed would be a modification. Modifications and accommodations should be revisited often, as the needs of 2e students change.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR 2e STUDENTS**

The needs of each student are considered when selecting appropriate classroom and testing accommodations for 2e students. Below are examples of accommodations that may be considered to help 2e students access advanced curriculum. For more information about your child's specific accommodations or needs, contact your child's school.

### **EXAMPLES OF ACCOMMODATIONS**

Accommodations are individualized to meet students' needs. This list provides examples, and is not intended to be exhaustive.

#### **Materials**

- Visual Aids (e.g., picture schedule, graphic organizers, charts)
- Audiobooks (e.g., Learning Ally, Bookshare, Storynory, audible.com, AIM-VA)
- Text-to-Speech tools (e.g., NaturalReader, Reading Pen, Voice Dream Reader App)
- Speech-to-Text tools (e.g., Dragon, Siri, voice recognition software)
- Note-taking supports (e.g., voice recorder, copy of class notes)
- Spelling and grammar software
- Calculator

#### **Instruction**

- Maintain classroom routines and schedules
- Simplify directions (e.g., step-by-step instructions, highlight key words)
- Repeat directions and check for oral language comprehension of presented information
- Provide written information, including copies of teacher presentations and notes, to avoid copying from the board
- Provide opportunities for hands-on learning; pair tactile learning with text
- Provide opportunities for small group learning
- Teach strategies for working collaboratively with others

### **Classwork, Homework, and Testing**

- Read aloud or reduced language level text
- Extended time
- Frequent breaks
- Options for response during testing (e.g., multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, allowing the student to respond orally rather than in a written format)
- “Chunking” assignments and assessment
- Options for demonstration of learning (e.g., posters, oral reports, blogging, slide presentations, video presentations)
- Separate testing space
- Scribe to record dictated responses
- Provide guided lecture notes or a note taker

### **Linguistic Accommodations for English Learners**

- Audio access to material
- Use of a bilingual dictionary
- Use of a scribe to record dictated responses
- Use of an English dictionary
- Visual aids (graphic organizers, whiteboards, etc.)
- Flexible schedule

### **Executive Functioning**

- Use technology or a planner to track assignments
- Frequent reminders of due dates
- An extra set of books at home (when available)
- Reduce the number and/or length of homework assignments
- Divide large assignments into smaller units (chunking)
- Use a checklist of tasks to be completed

### **Behavior**

- Use non-verbal cueing strategies
- Provide positive behavior supports (e.g., positive reinforcement strategies, behavior modification strategies)
- Flexible breaks (e.g., flash pass)
- Provide a place in the classroom where a student can go to regain control
- Allow a distraction-free work space
- Communicate expectations in clear, literal language

## STUDENT ROLE IN ACCOMODATIONS

Regular discussions about accommodations and their effectiveness for the student are important to ensure their continued appropriateness. Students are encouraged to play an active role in decisions about the provision of accommodations, as their insights are likely to prove invaluable in selecting those supports most likely to be useful and effective.

## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

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IDEA defines assistive technology as any technology that can “increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with disabilities” (Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments, 2004). There are many assistive technologies available to support access to the curriculum and increase capabilities for students with reading, writing, and organization difficulties. Many of these technologies are readily available in the classroom and can also be used at home to support a student who struggles with reading, writing, math, and executive functioning.

AT is never meant to replace instruction, but when paired with research-based instructional methods, it can bridge the gap between students’ current skills and the material that they need to access. While they continue to build on their current skills, students are able to use AT to gain access to higher level reading material, capture their ideas in writing, and organize for studying and writing.

## TYPES OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Below are some examples of tools and resources approved for use by FCPS students who need them. This list is general and not intended to be exhaustive; not all 2e students will benefit from every type of AT. School teams should work with the School Based Technology Specialist (SBTS) and AT resource teacher to identify currently approved software and application titles. Resources are listed below by category.

### Curriculum/Content

Reading	Math	Writing and Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible Instructional Materials</li> <li>• Electronic text (change size of text, font, background colors, text spacing)</li> <li>• Audio books</li> <li>• Screen reading software</li> <li>• Personal device settings (allow text to be read aloud, change text size, contrast)</li> <li>• Graphic organizers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calculator</li> <li>• Graphing calculator software</li> <li>• Spreadsheet software</li> <li>• Word processing with math extensions</li> <li>• Math writing software and applications (EquatIO® Chrome Extension, Panther Math Paper© iOS app)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word processor with spell check</li> <li>• Voice recognition software</li> <li>• Talking word processor</li> <li>• Word prediction software</li> <li>• Graphic organizing software</li> <li>• Recording software/device for prewriting or transcription from student dictation</li> </ul>



### Executive Functioning

Organization	Working Memory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• G-Suite and FCPS 24/7 (share assignments with teachers to turn in work)</li> <li>• Email (turn in assignments)</li> <li>• Electronic organizer software</li> <li>• Online calendars</li> <li>• Personal device options (reminders, calendar, take photos of assignments/notes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word processor (with annotation tools)</li> <li>• Highlighting tool (for digital materials)</li> <li>• Graphic organizer software</li> <li>• Flashcard software/applications</li> <li>• Personal device options (camera to record assignments, notes)</li> </ul>

Cognitive Flexibility/Shift Attention	Goal-Directed Persistence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timers</li> <li>• Watch (with vibration reminders)</li> <li>• Personal device option (timer)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calendars (Google Calendar, calendar on personal device)</li> <li>• Personal device options (reminders and notes applications)</li> </ul>

Metacognition	Attention and Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multimedia software (capture thinking)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal device options (clock and timer)</li> </ul>

### ACCESSIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS (AIM)

Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) are printed textbooks, trade books, and other educational materials that are converted to alternate formats (Braille, Large Print, Electronic/Digital Text, and Audio Recordings). Students with a documented visual, physical or print disability may require accessible instructional materials (AIM) if the limitations of print materials are the barrier to their success. IEP teams are required to consider whether a student requires materials in an alternate format. Students with a 504 plan do not qualify for AIM-VA.

### FINDING AN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY MATCH

AT staff members work in collaboration with school teams to ensure that all students with disabilities who require AT have the technology tools and training necessary in order to access the curriculum, narrow the achievement gap, gain essential life skills, and reach their full potential. The art of AT is in finding the right amount of support to help a student based on their needs. For example, using a calculator would provide a 2e student with a math disability access to higher-level problem-solving tasks without being slowed down by struggling with basic calculations. The decision regarding an appropriate AT match is individualized and takes into consideration specific student needs, the environment where learning is taking place, and the types of tasks that are required.

### HOW CAN A STUDENT GET ACCESS TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY?

The types of assistive technology tools available to a given student are based on his/her documented need, given relevant assessment and classroom-based data. Access to the tools may be provided through general education, 504 Plans, IEPs, and AIM-eligibility. Every FCPS school has an AT resource teacher who helps to incorporate AT for students with disabilities. The AT resource teacher can provide professional development to teachers about the effective use of AT and how it can also be used to benefit students in the general education environment.

If a student has an IEP or 504 Plan, an AT assessment can be requested during the IEP or 504

Plan meeting. The AT assessment starts with an evaluation of student needs. Assistive technology tools are chosen, and data is collected regarding their impact. As a result of this assessment, the AT resource teacher writes a report listing the recommended technological supports that make the identified classroom function(s) less difficult for the student.

The IEP or 504 Plan team reconvenes and makes decisions about which supports from the report will be implemented. The chosen supports are documented on the accommodations page. Training is provided to the student and teacher in the supports chosen by the IEP or 504 Plan team. Given that a student's needs and available technologies change frequently, AT is an ongoing assessment process.

### **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL STUDENTS**

FCPS provides an array of technology resources to ensure students experience a digitally rich learning environment that meets their instructional needs. What designates technology as "assistive" is that a student requires it in order to access the curriculum. For example, all students have access to FCPS eBooks, but for students with decoding or comprehension difficulties, using eBooks is considered assistive technology.

Most schools allow students to bring personal technology devices into the school setting. These personal devices can provide additional support for any student. For example, both the Google Apps for Education suite and the Microsoft Office Suite offer tools that can be used to support deficits in reading (e.g., speech to text), writing (e.g., outlining), and organization (e.g., graphic organizers).

FCPS has embarked on a district-wide initiative, called FCPSOn. In FCPSOn schools, each student receives an FCPS-issued laptop to access dynamic resources and participate in learning tailored to the student's individual needs. Students have access to the device at school, and in some schools and grade levels, they may take their device home. This initiative has the potential of making AT more convenient and its use less conspicuous for 2e students who require it to access learning.

### **STUDENT VOICE IN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY**

Because of the shifting nature of needs for AT, it is important for the student, especially at the secondary level, to be involved in the process of reflecting on the use of different tools and updating the plan for which ones will best support him or her. Students are much more dedicated to using the tools that they have chosen and view as helpful. Technology abandonment becomes less of an issue when a student's preferences are considered during the AT assessment process.

## **SECTION 504 AND 504 PLANS**

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Some 2e students may qualify with a disability under [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#). Section 504 as amended, is designed to eliminate discrimination based on disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. This act requires that no qualified student who demonstrates a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (e.g., self-care, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, learning, eating, sleeping, standing, lifting, bending,

reading, concentrating, thinking, operation of a major bodily function, and communicating) shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subject to discrimination in any program or activity offered FCPS. An impairment that is episodic or in remission is a disability if it substantially limits a major life activity when active.

### **WHAT IS A 504 PLAN?**

A knowledgeable committee composed minimally of the principal or designee and a teacher of the student develops the 504 Plan for qualified students. The 504 Plan reflects the unique needs of the student and is related directly to the impairment. Only the accommodations, modifications, and/or services necessary for the student to have an equal opportunity to access programs and activities should be included. A knowledgeable committee must meet at least once a year to review the 504 Plan, and update as appropriate. The committee determines if the student no longer qualifies as a student with a disability under Section 504.

A complete description of the Section 504 identification, evaluation, and reevaluation process can be found on the [Section 504 Information](#) page on the FCPS website. Additionally, a presentation offered through the [Parent Resource Center](#) (PRC), 504 Plans: What Parents Need to Know, can be viewed on the PRC YouTube Channel.

### **REFERENCES:**

Fairfax County Public Schools, Procedures Required for Implementation of Special Education Regulations in Virginia's Public Schools, accessed 5/11/19 via <https://www.fcps.edu/sites/default/files/media/forms/OSEPSprocedures.pdf>

Virginia Department of Education, Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students (various sections as cited), (2010), accessed 5/11/19 at [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted\\_ed/gifted\\_regulations.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted_ed/gifted_regulations.pdf)

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

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Some 2e students may qualify to receive special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

### **WHAT IS IDEA?**

The [Individuals with Disabilities Act \(IDEA\)](#) makes available a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) to eligible children with disabilities and ensures special education and/or related services designed to meet the child's unique needs. Public school students found eligible to receive services under IDEA will receive appropriate services in accordance with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). IEPs are unique, individualized documents that address the specific educational needs of the child. The IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities.

The following disabilities may qualify a student to receive services under IDEA: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment (including ADHD), specific learning disability (including dyslexia), speech or language impairment, traumatic

brain injury, and visual impairment.

### **PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY**

The process for consideration of special education eligibility begins with a referral to the Local Screening Committee (LSC) initiated by an educator, parent, or guardian. This referral may be based on any number of academic, social-emotional, adaptive functioning, and/or behavioral concerns from parents or school staff.

At this meeting of the LSC, information and data about the student's progress in academic areas are shared and reviewed. A decision is made whether formal testing is necessary to address concerns relating to a possible disability. The assessment battery that is considered by the committee may include a psychological, educational, or sociocultural evaluation, as well as other related evaluation components. No evaluations are conducted unless there is written parental consent.

Upon completion of evaluations, the LSC and the parent(s) will reconvene to review all results and complete the process for determining whether the student qualifies as a student with a disability. The eligibility committee will use the FCPS Basis for Committee Decision (BCD) forms to discuss and review the criteria for any areas of eligibility for which the student may be suspected to qualify. Each disability has specific identification criteria, including the need for specialized instruction to address the educational impact of the identified disability.

To qualify for special education services, students must require, as a result of the disability, specially designed instruction that cannot reasonably be provided solely through general education.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 defines specially designed instruction as "adapting, as appropriate, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the student that result from the disability and to ensure student access to the general curriculum." Specially designed instruction is more than short-term participation in specialized programs. A student may have a disability that requires accommodations and interventions, but does not require specially designed instruction. In this case, the student would not qualify for an IEP.

Parents who disagree with an eligibility determination have the right to appeal a decision made by the eligibility committee. The [Due Process & Eligibility](#) office can assist parents and staff when conflict arises regarding eligibility decisions.

### **INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)**

For students found eligible for special education services, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be developed to address the special education and related services the student will receive during the year. Services in special education will be addressed through an IEP for students with disabilities who qualify. Services will differ from student to student depending on the identified areas of weakness and severity of the disability. To address the identified weaknesses, the IEP team will propose targeted goals and specially designed instruction.

The IEP team, which includes a school administrator, the parents or guardians, the student's general education teacher, a special education teacher, and related service providers as

needed, reconvenes at least annually to report on progress and set new goals, propose service hours and delivery options, and discuss accommodations. Other educational professionals may include the Advanced Academic Resource Teacher (AART), to provide the IEP team information related to the student's participation in Advanced Academic Programs, or a representative from English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to speak to the impact of the student's English language development and its impact on his/her learning. As appropriate, the student can be included as a member of his/her own IEP team.

Teams crafting IEP goals for 2e learners focus on developing specifically needed skills rather than rule compliance (Delahooke, 2017); for example, framing personal goals such as improving self-regulation, self-understanding, and self-advocacy rather than simply measuring how well the students adhere to age-normed expectations. Students with strong academic skills may have weak executive functioning skills, poor social skills, self-regulation difficulties, and other uneven skills that may need to be taught in order for the students to make meaningful academic progress.

## REFERENCES

- Fairfax County Public Schools, Procedures Required for Implementation of Special Education Regulations in Virginia's Public Schools, accessed 5/11/19 via <https://www.fcps.edu/sites/default/files/media/forms/SEPSprocedures.pdf>
- Virginia Department of Education, Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students (various sections as cited), (2010), accessed 5/11/19 at [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted\\_ed/gifted\\_regulations.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted_ed/gifted_regulations.pdf)
- U.S. Department of Education, A Guide to the Individualized Education Program (2007), accessed 5/11/19 via <https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>

## INTERVENTIONS AND SPECIALIZED SUPPORTS

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In collaboration with the Instructional Services Department, the PreK-12 Office of Special Education Instruction provides support to 2e through:

- Training and support for schools implementing a tiered system of support for students
- Professional development in the areas of behavioral interventions, core instruction (literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies), collaborative teaching, differentiated instruction, use of formal and informal assessments, and research-based instructional strategies for teaching content
- Research-based materials to match curriculum and instructional needs
- Consultations with school staff to provide school-based professional development in areas related to instruction and behavior intervention
- Curriculum development in areas of support for students with disabilities

The PreK-12 curriculum for FCPS is guided by the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) and the FCPS Program of Studies (POS) which include objectives that have been identified for each

grade level and curriculum area. This curriculum is a tool for planning, monitoring, and evaluating students' work and progress on a continuous basis. Specialized instructional programs for reading, writing, mathematics, and executive functioning are evidence-based, providing students with targeted, systematic, and explicit instruction on a consistent basis as determined by the IEP team. These programs are used to supplement the general education instructional program and provide students with differentiated approaches to access the curriculum.

Special education services for 2e students are designed for those who participate in the general education curriculum with accommodations, specialized instruction, modifications, and/or services as indicated in their IEP. These students are generally found eligible for special education services under the disability categories of autism (AUT), emotional disabilities (ED), specific learning disabilities (LD), and other health impairment (OHI). Students may or may not experience other disabilities that have a secondary impact on their educational progress.

### **CONTINUUM OF INTERVENTIONS FOR 2e STUDENTS**

The interventions that serve the needs of 2e students as a part of a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) occur on a continuum. Interventions to support the academic, behavior or social-emotional needs of students, whether in elementary or secondary schools, may be delivered in a variety of settings (in the classroom, small group, an intervention period, etc.). School teams routinely review data to ensure early identification of students in need of support. The strengths and instructional needs of each student are considered in order to ensure the intervention provides the right combination of instructional components and intensity of implementation.

Tier 1: Needs-based instruction in classroom

Tier 2: Targeted explicit instruction or specialized programs

Tier 3: Intensive/comprehensive specialized programs

### **SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS**

FCPS offers a number of research-based, specialized programs for students who require targeted or intensive intervention with reading, math, executive functioning, and social-emotional needs. School staff have access to scheduled training opportunities for these specialized programs throughout the year.

#### **Instructional Matching**

One size does not fit all with specialized programs for 2e students. A match must be made between the students' areas of need and the program that is developed to target that area. It is important that families and educators discuss the identified needs and build consensus on the services to address them.

#### **Fidelity**

If a school team decides to use a specialized program to provide intervention for a student, the program should be used with fidelity for maximum efficacy. Fidelity means the program is

implemented in the way the research indicated the program will be most effective according to the publisher.

IEP teams determine the amount of services a particular student will require in order to have the program implemented with fidelity. There are three important elements of fidelity: frequency, duration, and pacing. Frequency is how often the program is offered. Duration means how many minutes each lesson takes. Pacing is the recommended schedule for introduction of each lesson and/or unit of study. Appropriate pacing will enable students to make expected progress over the course of program implementation.

### **Progress Monitoring**

Monitoring students' progress by measuring the targeted skills at regular intervals is important in ensuring that the specialized program continues to be the appropriate instructional match. It is best practice to notify parents and guardians of progress at regular intervals, and of any proposed changes to intervention programming.

### **Key Components for Successful Interventions**

- Student needs are specifically identified; interventions are matched to the underlying skill deficits and are delivered by a trained professional.
- Instruction is well planned, sequenced, and implemented with fidelity.
- Students improve by building necessary skills/strategies.
- Progress is monitored on the specific skill/strategy and discussed on a consistent basis.
- Communication occurs between the interventionist and all other stakeholders, including families.
- Students continue to receive high quality core instruction.

## **DISABILITY-SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

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Twice-exceptional (2e) learners have high academic abilities and a disability that results in a discrepancy between potential and performance. Below are descriptions of four categories of disabilities, including examples of how each disability may interfere with learning and accommodations, specialized instruction, modifications, and/or services students may need.

### **Specific Learning Disability (SLD)**

Specific Learning Disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disabilities, of emotional disabilities, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Dyslexia, for example, is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin and distinguished from other learning disabilities due to the weakness occurring at the phonological level. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the

provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

The characteristics and examples of SLDs provided below are not exhaustive and not all disabilities are included. Gifted students who are identified with a specific learning disability will not display all of the characteristics listed.

Possible Strengths	Possible Struggles	Instructional Considerations
High verbal ability	Written expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer opportunities for oral expression</li> <li>• Provide graphic organizers and assistive technology supports</li> <li>• Grade written work on content, not language conventions</li> </ul>
High comprehension	Decoding text and/or reading fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide audio support for written text at cognitive level</li> <li>• Target phonological skills instructionally</li> </ul>
Strong problem-solving skills	Mathematical calculations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide assistive technology</li> <li>• Access to manipulatives and graphic organizers</li> </ul>

### **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. Autism does not apply if the child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in IDEA. A child who manifests the characteristics of autism after age three could be identified as having autism if the criteria in this definition are satisfied. The characteristics and examples provided below are not exhaustive. Gifted students who are identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder will not display all of the characteristics listed.



Possible Strengths	Possible Struggles	Instructional Considerations
Attention to detail, excellent rote memory	Grasping the big picture Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break big concepts into smaller parts</li> <li>• Task analysis to systematically connect detail to the whole picture</li> <li>• Make explicit connections between factual knowledge and complex concepts to build conceptual understanding</li> <li>• Build on areas of strength regarding rote memory</li> <li>• Incorporate visual supports and interventions to develop comprehension skills and Fluency</li> </ul>
Highly skilled in one area	Asynchronous development: strength in one area with weakness in another; may be academically advanced and emotionally immature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help build strengths and assess areas of needs for more targeted interventions and supports</li> <li>• Highlight strengths for high-level programming</li> <li>• Teach social skills and self-regulation strategies</li> </ul>
In-depth knowledge in areas of interest	Motivation to learn and retain areas not of interest; Appropriately participating during group tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expose students to activities, studies, and careers that connect to their strengths and passions</li> <li>• Visual scheduling to support transitions from preferred to non-preferred activity</li> <li>• Positive acknowledgement for engaging with non-preferred areas of interest; highly structured protocols for group activities</li> </ul>

### Emotional Disabilities (ED)

An Emotional Disability (ED) means a condition in which an individual exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disability. The characteristics and examples provided below are not exhaustive. Gifted students who are identified with an emotional disability will not display all of the characteristics listed.

Possible Strengths	Possible Struggles	Instructional Considerations
Intense emotional responses	Behavioral manifestations of mental health diagnoses (e.g., anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a plan based on student-specific triggers, including nonverbal cues, de-escalation strategies, and alternative spaces</li> <li>• Provide student time to de-escalate prior to engaging student</li> <li>• Explicitly teach skills for self-regulation across environments</li> </ul>
Awareness of surroundings; strong observational skills	Hypersensitive to environmental changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a plan based on student-specific triggers, including nonverbal cues, de-escalation strategies, and alternative spaces</li> </ul>
May be receptive and engaged with teachers and peers	Difficulty regulating emotional and behavioral responses when triggered or overstimulated which can result in behavioral escalations and/or emotional responses that do not appear to match the context of situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help students set their own behavioral goal before class and self-reflect during or towards the end to build fluency across environments</li> <li>• Proactively teach self-regulation skills (e.g., breath techniques, taking a break)</li> <li>• Provide positive feedback for specific desired prosocial behaviors (e.g. token economy)</li> </ul>

### Other Health Impairment (OHI)

Other Health Impairment (OHI) means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that 1) is due to chronic or acute health problems such as a heart condition; tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis; arthritis; asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia;

epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes and Tourette syndrome; and 2) adversely affects a child's educational performance. The characteristics and examples provided below are not exhaustive. Gifted students who are identified as having OHI will not display all of the characteristics listed.

Possible Strengths	Possible Struggles	Instructional Considerations
Interested in multiple ideas or subjects	Maintaining attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to cognitively challenging learning tasks, courses, resources, and programs in areas of interest</li> <li>• Allow for flexibility in pacing</li> <li>• Provide choice and opportunities for movement</li> </ul>
Keen observational skills	Attention to detail in productive work (e.g., following multi-step directions, initiating task, or persisting through obstacles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide multi-modal supports (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)</li> <li>• Teach task analysis and goal-setting skills</li> </ul>
Sustained attention when interested	Transitioning from one task to the next due to hyper-focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a plan to support transitions</li> <li>• Provide multi-modal supports (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)</li> <li>• Teach task analysis and goal-setting skills</li> <li>• Provide positive feedback for specific desired prosocial behavior</li> </ul>
Strong critical and creative thinking abilities	Behavioral issues due to disengagement with unstimulating environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer choice and alternative ways to demonstrate thinking</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for movement and academic conversations with intellectual peers</li> </ul>

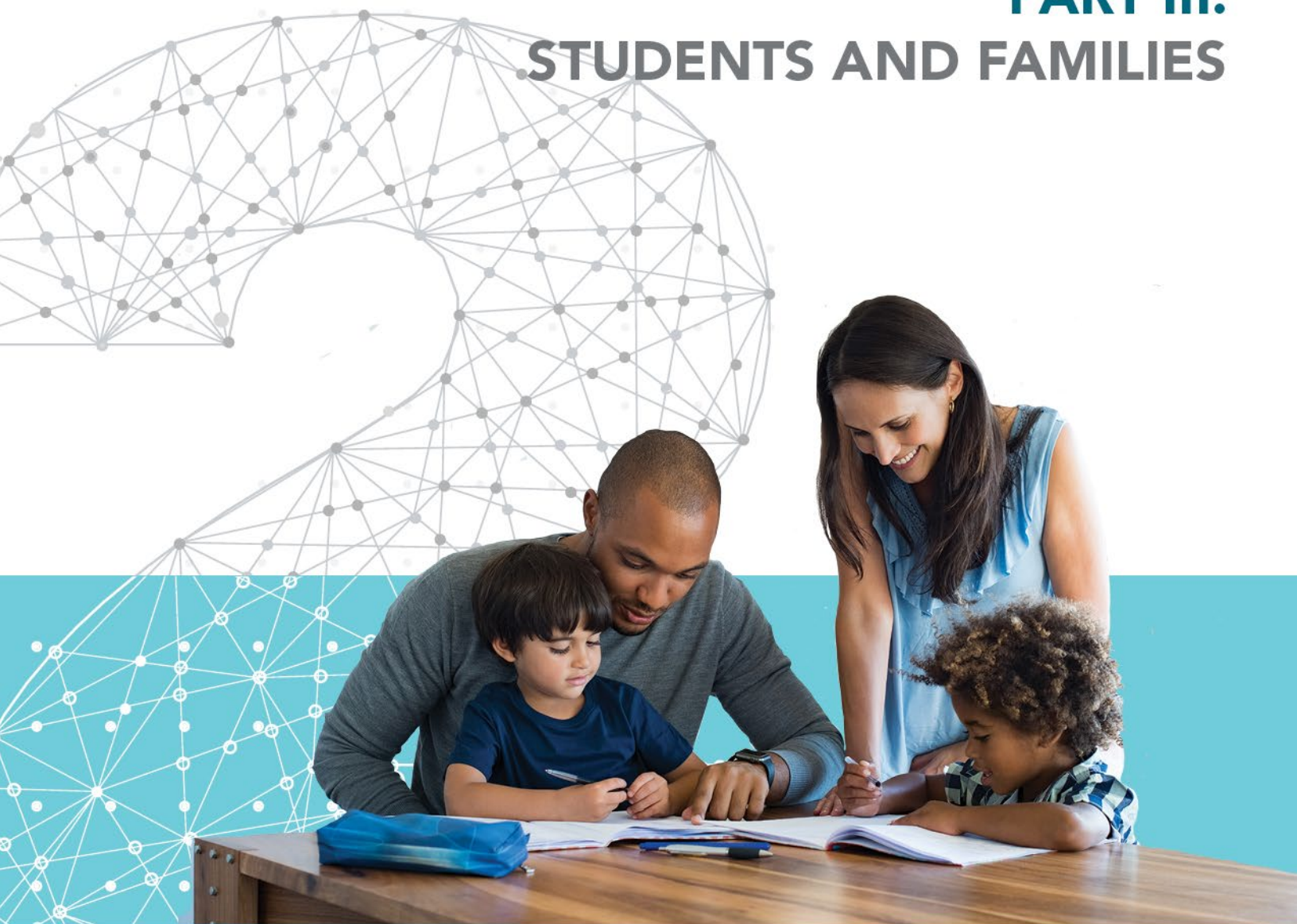
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## **PART III:**

# **STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**



1. Social-Emotional Impacts of 2e
2. Self-Advocacy and Student Voice
3. Family and Schools as Partners

## **Part III: STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**

- 1. Social-Emotional Impacts of 2e**
- 2. Self-Advocacy and Student Voice**
- 3. Family and Schools as Partners**

### **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL IMPACTS OF 2e**

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Several decades of writing and research on emotional characteristics of gifted learners has pointed to the unique social-emotional challenges facing gifted learners with disabilities (Beckman, E. and Minnaert, A., 2018). Despite their considerable strengths, 2e students are prone to low self-esteem, perfectionism, performance anxiety, social isolation, and underachievement (Assouline, S.G. et al, 2010; Webb et al, 2010). Some 2e students have a disability that is primarily emotional, such as an anxiety disorder or depression (Probst, 2011). Severe anxiety and depression, when not addressed, can lead to chronic absenteeism, school phobia, school refusal, and dropping out (US Dept. of Ed, 2013-14).

Due to their capacity for high level cognition, 2e students may have heightened awareness about the impact of their disabilities. They may worry excessively about disappointing teachers and parents due to their inconsistent performance, may doubt their own abilities, and may disengage from school if they are not performing to their potential (Weinfeld et al, 2011).

### **SUPPORTING STUDENTS' SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEEDS**

It is important for families and educators of 2e students to recognize and support students' feelings, thoughts, and ideas by discussing how they are impacted by dual exceptionalities. Trusted adults can help 2e students identify achievable goals, celebrate successes, and recognize and celebrate effort and progress.

When working with 2e students, it is essential to help them come to understand that all students have a variety of abilities and challenges across educational and non-academic areas. Being understood and supported by educators and families can help these students understand they need not be limited by their challenges. Schools and families can work together to support the development of resiliency, which is defined as the capacity to withstand or recover quickly from difficult circumstances. When 2e students learn to be resilient, they can face their challenges and find ways to overcome or manage them.

The school environment includes potential stressors such as transitions, crowded hallways, changes in schedule, fire drills, assemblies, group work, and/or social interactions. Twice-exceptional students may struggle in the school environment due to sensory overload, hypersensitivity, and managing emotions. Communication between families and school staff is important when working to mitigate stress factors in the school environment.

## SOCIAL CHALLENGES

Navigating friendships and social situations can be difficult for 2e students. Students with disabilities, including 2e students, are bullied at a higher rate than non-disabled students (Horowitz, et al 2016). Twice-exceptional students may feel like they do not fit in with typical peers, gifted peers, or peers with disabilities. They may gravitate toward older or younger students and adults, have difficulty making friends, or be targets for bullying. Consequently, some 2e students, especially those with autism, social anxiety, or difficulty reading social cues, may require direct and explicit instruction in social skills and/or additional supports to access some classwork and inclusion in clubs and extracurricular activities (Weinfeld, et al 2011).

Parents and schools should be attentive to changes in the 2e student's emotional state and address them as appropriate. School counselors, psychologists, and social workers can provide parents with referrals to outside agencies when necessary. Parents may also wish to consult with their insurance providers and community agencies to find needed resources.

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## SELF-ADVOCACY AND STUDENT VOICE

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Twice-exceptional (2e) students are empowered when the adults in their lives involve them in exploring what having exceptional ability and a disability means to them, advocating for the supports that help the most, and celebrating effort, progress, and strengths.

Self-advocacy provides students with the skills needed to speak up for their needs. When 2e students identify and communicate their needs in the learning environment, they are more involved in shaping their own educational experiences, ultimately leading to greater confidence,

self-awareness, and success. Studies have shown that students who are given the chance to participate in decisions being made about their lives are more likely to earn higher incomes one year after graduation (Wehmeyer, 2004). Promoting students' self-determination has been identified as a best practice in special education. Research on students with disabilities demonstrates that self-determination promotes goal attainment and access to the general education curriculum (Shogren, Palmer, Wehmeyer, Williams-Diehm, & Little, 2012). Self-advocacy, like other skills, is learned and takes time to develop.

Students must come to understand their own experience with their unique learner profile, so they can seek out the supports to maximize their strengths and minimize their limitations. This self-advocacy, taught as early as possible, will be essential for success in college, career, and relationships in adulthood.

## **STUDENT VOICE**

Student voice is present when adults value students' expertise, opinions, and ideas, and solicit their contributions to shape and create school and classroom experiences. When students believe their voices matter, they are more likely to be invested and engaged (Quaglia & Corso, 2014). Encourage students to describe, in their own words, how their dual exceptionalities affect them in all areas of their lives, including how they learn best, and what strategies can be used to support them. This awareness will empower them to be self-advocates and partners in their learning.

## **DEVELOPING SELF-ADVOCACY AND PROMOTING STUDENT VOICE**

Creating emotionally safe environments is vital to promoting learning (Quaglia & Corso, 2014). Students who feel safe are more likely to pose questions and advocate for their learning needs. Examples of ways families and educators can support the development of self-advocacy and the empowerment of student voice are listed below.

### **Engage in Active Listening**

- Dialogue with students about how they learn best. Implement some of their ideas at home or in the classroom to honor their input.
- Support students in learning to articulate how their unique learning profile affects them in all areas of their lives.
- Learn about students' aspirations for the future in order to support the development of self-worth, engagement, and purpose (Quaglia & Corso, 2014).

### **Facilitate Collaboration**

- Encourage students to find their voice. Ask them to describe what being 2e means to them, and to identify their strengths and areas for growth.
- Facilitate opportunities for students to explore and share what strategies help most.
- Familiarize students with the goals and accommodations on their IEPs or 504 Plans.
- Encourage students to contribute to or participate in their IEP or 504 meetings, as appropriate.
- Practice dialogue and the use of "I" statements through role-play to make finding words easier; this also provides opportunities for feedback (Jones, 2014).



### **Foster a Growth Mindset and Risk-Taking**

- Promote a growth mindset, the belief that students can continue to learn and overcome challenges through hard work and perseverance (Dweck, 2016).
- Teach students to evaluate their own efforts and set ambitious yet achievable goals.
- Help students reflect on the learning strategies they use and explore alternative ones when they struggle.
- Encourage students to take calculated risks by communicating that mistakes are an essential part of learning.
- Teach students to ask for help. There is value in recognizing when we need support (Jones, 2014).

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## **FAMILY AND SCHOOLS AS PARTNERS**

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Effective school partnerships recognize expertise of both parents and school staff as they partner together to create a holistic plan for the student which addresses all of the student's needs and considers their experience at school, home, and in other settings.

### **FAMILY AND SCHOOLS AS PARTNERS**

It takes the expertise of numerous individuals to determine what works best for each child. The ultimate goal is for schools and families to work together toward self-understanding for the student to help them self-advocate and experience success in school and in life.

Many structures are available in the school setting that allow 2e students to negotiate the social-emotional and academic demands of their day. Outside of school these structures may be

different. Parents bring information from home and other social settings, including the impact of school requirements on the student outside of school. Schools bring information from the school setting. An effective home-school partnership can support 2e students' access to and success in advanced academic programs and courses.

The FCPS Parent Resource Center offers a welcoming environment for parents, educators, and community members to access information and resources to support the success of all students, including those with learning challenges. Free workshops, tutoring information, confidential consultations, and a lending library including a variety of books about twice-exceptionality are available to help ensure that all students are inspired, engaged, and thriving.

### **COMMUNICATING WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE FAMILIES**

Culturally and linguistically diverse families may bring expectations and experiences that differ from those who have only experienced the American school system. Effective partnerships demonstrate respect for different points of view and a mindfulness around explaining the FCPS educational system, expectations, opportunities, and procedures. Concepts of giftedness and special education differ between educational systems and cultures. Additionally, many educational terms do not translate directly and may require additional explanation.

Parent liaison support is available through the schools and is targeted to the needs of individual school communities. Parent liaisons focus on facilitating home-school-community communication, encouraging parent involvement in children's education and connecting parents to what their children are learning. Additionally, parent liaisons help to build relationships with and among parents, staff members, and community members. They provide FCPS information and resources, promote understanding of families' cultural diversity, provide information about and connect parents to human services, and make parents feel welcome, trusted, and valued by the school.

FCPS [Parent Information Phone Lines](#) are available in eight different languages to assist parents who do not speak English as their first language. A school system employee will respond to calls in the preferred language within 24 hours, Monday through Friday. The caller will provide requested information and arrange for individuals to speak with the appropriate school employee who will provide access to resources.



## **PART IV:** **ADDITIONAL 2e RESOURCES**

1. FCPS Points of Contact
2. FCPS Printable Resources
3. FCPS Web Resources
4. Books
5. Public Web Resources
6. 2e Communities

## Part IV: ADDITIONAL 2e RESOURCES

### FCPS Points of Contact

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#### SCHOOL-BASED POINTS OF CONTACT

Parents who have questions or concerns should begin by contacting the child's school, beginning with the classroom teacher(s), followed by other school-based staff, as needed. Contact information for each school can be found on the [FCPS website](#) by searching [Schools and Centers](#). Below are school-based staff who can support parents with questions or concerns:

- Classroom teachers
- Advanced Academic Resource Teacher (elementary schools)
- Special Education Case Manager or 504 Plan Case Manager
- School Administrators
- School Counselor
- School Psychologist
- School Social Worker

#### FCPS CENTRAL OFFICES

Parents and school staff may contact FCPS central offices for assistance. Staff will work collaboratively with schools, parents, and other central office departments to answer questions and address concerns.

Office of Advanced Academic Programs

Website: <https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/advanced-academic-programs>

Phone: (571) 423-4740

Office of Special Education Instruction

Website: <https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/special-education-instruction/special-education-instruction-contact>

Phone: (571) 423-4100

Office of the Ombuds

Website: <https://www.fcps.edu/departments/ombuds>

Phone: 571-423-4014

Office of Special Education Procedural Support

Website: <https://www.fcps.edu/node/32894>

Phone: 571-423-4290

Procedural Support Liaisons (by pyramid)

Website: <https://www.fcps.edu/node/31223>

Phone: 571-423-4813

Regional Office inquiries:

Contact Us: <https://www.fcps.edu/contact-us>

## FCPS Printable Resources

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- [Characteristics of 2e Learners](#)
- [Common Misconceptions about 2e Learners](#)
- [School to Home Communication Tips](#)
- [School-Based Intervention Programs for Behavior and Wellness](#)
- [Strategies to Support Homework and Classwork](#)
- [Supporting 2e Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder \(ASD\)](#)
- [Supporting Social-Emotional Needs of 2e Learners](#)

## FCPS Web Resources

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- [Advanced Academic Programs](#)
- [Dyslexia Handbook website](#)
- [Parent Resource Center](#)
- [Special Education Instruction](#)

## Books

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- *Interventions that Work with Special Populations in Gifted Education* by Ariel Baska & Joyce VanTassel-Baska
- *School Success for Kids with High-functioning Autism* by Stephan Silverman
- *Smart Kids with Learning Difficulties* by Rich Weinfeld
- *Twice Exceptional: Supporting and Educating Bright and Creative Student with Learning Difficulties* by Scott Barry Kaufman

## Public Web Resources

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- [How You can Help Children Solve Problems](#)
- [Identifying Gifted and Talented English Language Learners](#)
- [Supporting the Identification and Achievement of the 2e Student \(VDOE\)](#)
- [Teaching Kids a Practical Strategy for Everyday Problem Solving](#)

## 2e Communities

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- [2E Newsletter](#): FCPS families who wish to purchase a subscription may contact the Parent Resource Center for a discount code.
- [Davidson Institute for Talent Development](#)
- [National Association for Gifted Children \(NAGC\)](#)
- [Understood: for learning and attention issues](#)