



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION *Division of Instruction* *Office of Mathematics and Governor's Schools*

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BRIEFING

To: Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

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Topic: Navigating Gifted Education & Governor's School Programs as a Military Transfer Student

Understanding Gifted Education Programs in Virginia

Each school division in Virginia establishes procedures for the identification of gifted students and for the delivery of services to those students, consistent with the Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students. In Virginia, gifted services provide curriculum and instruction to those students whose academic needs are not met by the regular curriculum and instruction in that particular division. Virginia law allows school divisions to establish gifted education policies and procedures according to the needs and interests of the local division. Divisions must choose to identify and serve students in either General Intellectual Aptitude or Specific Academic Aptitude programs. While these areas of giftedness are both academic, they serve different kinds of learners. School divisions can elect to identify and serve students in the visual and/or performing arts and/or career and technical aptitudes. Therefore, identification procedures and service options may differ greatly between school divisions.

Transitioning To Virginia's Gifted Programs

Since each Virginia school division has a unique local plan for the education of gifted students, the identification and services a student was receiving in another state or locality may not match with the services provided in the new school division. Here are a few things to consider and do to help ensure the student receives the appropriate educational services:

1. Review the school division's local plan for the education of the gifted to determine the focus of their program and how it is similar and different from the student's current gifted

program. The division's local gifted plan should be available on the school division's Web site.

2. Once you have established residency, contact the new school division's gifted coordinator regarding the student (this is best done in the summer before school starts). It would be helpful to have gifted identification documents from the previous school. However, these documents may or may not be considered by the new school division to determine the student's gifted identification status.
3. Work with the division's gifted coordinator or designee to determine the educational services that best meet the needs of your child based on the division's available service options. School divisions that offer an enriched curriculum and instruction to all students may find that the regular curriculum meets the academic needs of your child. Therefore, although the child may be gifted in another state or school division, the receiving school may not identify the student gifted because the student's academic needs are met by the enriched curriculum and instruction offered to all students. Providing the school division personnel has determined that the division's gifted services are similar to the transferring division's gifted program, the student can be placed in a gifted service option prior to being formally identified by the division. A gifted referral form will be required in order to start the process of formal gifted identification in the school division.

Understanding Virginia's Governor's Schools

Virginia has three different types of Governor's School programs: Academic Year Governor's Schools (AYGS); Summer Residential Governor's Schools (SRGS), and Summer Regional Governor's Schools (SRgGS). Academic Year Governor's Schools operate as full day or partial day schools during the regular school year. The nineteen AYGS programs are established as "joint schools" by Virginia school law and, as such, they are typically managed by a regional governing board of representatives from the school boards of each participating division. As a joint or regional school serving several divisions, the governing board of the AYGS program shall decide the area of focus for the school's curriculum, grade level of students served, and the overall program model timeframe (full day or partial day). As a result, each AYGS is unique. While most school divisions participate in one AYGS, several school divisions do not participate in any AYGS program and some school divisions may participate in two AYGS programs. Students can only attend an AYGS program if their school division is a participating public school division and the students are selected by the AYGS program through a competitive admission process. The AYGS governing board establishes its own policy as to the participation of private school students in the program.

Virginia gifted tenth- or eleventh-grade students may apply for one of the seven Summer Residential Governor's Schools. Applications are made available in early October on the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Web site. Each school division has a specific number of student nominations it may make to the VDOE. School divisions set their own deadlines for selecting viable candidates for each program. Students interested in the Visual and Performing Arts Summer Residential Governor's School must be nominated by their school division in late

November to participate in a statewide adjudication where students audition or present portfolios for review. A school division selection committee chooses the final nominees for each SRGS program from their division, forwarding the applications to the VDOE in February. Not all nominated students will be accepted for participation at the state level. State-recognized accredited private school students must compete for nomination through a regional private school SRGS coordinator.

There are twenty Summer Regional Governor's Schools in Virginia. Each SRgGS program is unique and serves a select number of local participating school divisions. Not all school divisions in Virginia participate in a summer regional program. Gifted students may apply for the regional summer school through their school division, providing their division participates in a SRgGS program. The SRgGS director and a local committee of representatives from the participating school divisions oversee the nomination and selection procedures. Program information and local contact information are posted in late spring on the VDOE Web site.

Transferring to an Academic Year Governor's School Program

Transferring students should inquire with school division guidance counselors as to the availability of AYGS programs in that school division. While most school divisions participate in one AYGS, several school divisions do not participate in any AYGS and some divisions may participate in two AYGS programs. Students can only attend an AYGS program if their school division is a participating public school division and the students are selected by the AYGS program through a competitive admission process. All AYGS participating divisions have a limited number of students that they can support in the AYGS program. Students attending a Governor's School in another state or locality will want to verify that the program at the new AYGS matches the services and program provided at the transferring school.

All AYGS programs are unique, so transferring students will want to decide if the AYGS focus area meets their interests and abilities. Most AYGS programs start their admissions process in December or January. Here are a few things to consider and do to help insure the student receives the appropriate educational services:

1. Once residency has been established, contact the school division's gifted coordinator regarding your student. It would be helpful to have any information from the previous school.
2. If the student has moved to the area before the AYGS application deadline, he/she will want to express an interest in the program to the guidance counselor and complete the application according to the timeline.
3. If the student has moved to the area after the application deadline, he/she will be allowed to complete an application and submit it to the AYGS director or participating school division coordinator for consideration in the AYGS program. If AYGS student selection has already been made, the student's application will be received, reviewed and, if deemed a viable candidate, their name will be placed on a waiting list in accordance with their ranking amongst the other waitlisted applicants.

4. School division administration will work with all transferring students to assist in appropriate course placement in either an AYGS program or other high school service options.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) about gifted education and Governor's Schools can be found on the VDOE Web site.