



INSTRUCTION: Special Programs

Advanced Academics and Gifted Education

I. Purpose

To implement Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board) Policy 6401 by establishing a process for the identification and referral of students for participation in advanced academics programs and services in Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS).

II. Definitions

- A. *Acceleration* – The movement of a student beyond his/her current grade level placement for one or more subjects.
- B. *Advanced Academics* – Resources, curricula and instruction that are accessible, differentiated, responsive and appropriately challenging beyond those provided by the regular school program.
- C. *Differentiation* – Multiple instructional approaches used within the classroom or course to address students’ abilities and interests by varying the instructional content, processes, products and/or environment.
- D. *File* – An appeal will be deemed to have been timely filed if, before the expiration of time, it has been:
 - 1. Delivered to the appropriate BCPS administrative office, or
 - 2. Deposited in the United States mail, as registered or certified or express mail, or deposited with a delivery service such as federal express, ups, or DHL, that provides verifiable tracking of the item from the point of origin.
- E. *Gifted and Talented Student* – As defined by state law, an elementary or secondary student who is identified by professionally qualified individuals as:
 - 1. Having outstanding talent and performing, or showing the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other students of a similar age, experience or environment;

2. Exhibiting high performance capability in intellectual, creative or artistic areas; or
 3. Excelling in specific academic fields.
- F. *Parent* – The biological or adoptive parent, legal guardian or person acting in the absence of the parent or guardian.
- G. *Responsive Instruction* – Instructional adjustments based upon a student’s demonstrated readiness and need.
- H. *Twice Exceptional (2e) Student* – A student identified for participation in advanced academics programs and services and who also has been determined eligible for an individualized education program (IEP) or for a section 504 plan.
- I. *Universal Screening* – A process conducted by a diverse, interdisciplinary review and referral team that ensures all students have equitable access to advanced academics programs and services by using multiple data points in order to make curricular and instructional recommendations based on potential and motivation as well as demonstrated student ability.

III. Responsibility

- A. The Division of Curriculum and Instruction shall establish procedures for identifying the ongoing instructional needs of advanced learners and implementing advanced academics programs and services in BCPS.
- B. A principal or his/her designee is responsible for informing parents about the nature, content and expectations of advanced academics programs and services.

IV. Advanced Academics Instruction

- A. Advanced academics programs and services shall include, but not be limited to:
1. Accelerated, extended and/or enriched instructional content, strategies and products in elementary courses;
 2. Gifted and talented and advanced academics courses, Grades 6–12;
 3. International baccalaureate courses;
 4. Advanced placement courses;

5. Dual enrollment courses; and
 6. Grade or subject level acceleration.
- B. The school principal, under the direction of the community superintendent, shall monitor advanced academics programs and services in his/her school as outlined in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction's *Handbook of Procedures for Implementing Advanced Academics*.
- C. Schools shall implement the differentiated advanced academics curricula developed by the division of curriculum and instruction.
- D. The Office of Advanced Academics shall provide professional development to teachers and other advanced academics staff which will include, but not be limited to, research-based best practices related to the needs of advanced learners, differentiated curriculum, teaching and assessment strategies, review and referral procedures, talent development and timelines.
- E. A student participating in advanced academics who also has on an individualized education program (IEP) or a section 504 plan shall receive the program modifications, accommodations and/or services required by the IEP or 504 plan. Educational disability shall not preclude student participation in advanced academics programs and services.
- F. A student's behavior, including his/her record of office referrals, suspensions and/or expulsions, shall not automatically exclude a student from access to advanced academics programs and services.
- G. The Office of Advanced Academics will provide resources for, and disseminate information to, parents and other interested community members concerning the advanced academics program on its BCPS Web page.
- V. Student Identification and Referral Process
- A. Annually, the Office of Advanced Academics shall provide to each school principal the timelines and procedures for student identification and referral.
 - B. Universal screening will be used to promote equity and access to advanced academics programs and services.

1. At the end of Grade 3, universal screening will identify students for participation in Grade 4 advanced academics programs and services.
2. At the end of Grade 5, universal screening will identify students for participation in advanced academics programs and services in Grade 6.

C. Identification and Referral Responsibilities

1. Principals are required to follow the procedures outlined in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction's *Handbook of Procedures for Implementing Advanced Academics* to:
 - (a) Encourage ongoing student referrals from a variety of sources, including but not limited to teachers, parents, test data and self-nominations; and
 - (b) Establish diverse, interdisciplinary review and referral teams that implement comprehensive student review processes.
2. Reporting
Annually, each school principal shall provide to his/her community superintendent and the office of advanced academics:
 - (a) An analysis of his/her school's implementation of advanced academics procedures; and
 - (b) Disaggregated data related to student participation in advanced academics programs and services.

D. Transfer students

Receiving schools must enroll students in advanced academics programs and services based solely on the sending school's recommendations.

VI. Academic Acceleration

- A. A student may be referred for subject or grade-level acceleration by a teacher, administrator or parent. A student may also refer himself or herself through an administrator or teacher who has knowledge of the child's abilities.
- B. The principal or his/her designee shall obtain the written permission from the student's parent to evaluate the student for possible accelerated placement.
- C. Accelerated Placement Request Process
 1. The accelerated placement request must be made in writing and submitted to the school's review and referral team. Requests for the following school year shall be postmarked on or before May 1.

2. The review and referral team will complete the evaluation process within 45 calendar days based on the guidelines outlined in the Division of Curriculum and Instructions *Handbook of Procedures for Implementing Advanced Academics*.
3. A parent may appeal the decision of the school's review and referral team as outlined in paragraph VIII.

VII. Exiting Advanced Academics

- A. A parent, student and/or teacher may request that a student exit an advanced academics course by submitting a *Request to Exit an Advanced Academics Course* form to the review and referral team.
- B. Prior to exiting a student from an advanced academics course, the principal or the principal's designee will follow all procedures outlined in the *Handbook of Procedures for Implementing Advanced Academics*, including the implementation of differentiated support strategies and ongoing communication with the parent and student regarding the request to exit an advanced academics course.
- C. The review and referral team will review accumulated evidence and supporting documentation, including achievement measures, student work samples, teacher surveys and assessment data. The review and referral team will advise the parent in writing of the team's decision.

VIII. Appeals

A decision regarding identification, participation in advanced academics programs and services or exiting advanced academics programs and services under this rule may be appealed as outlined below.

- A. Appeals to the senior executive director
 1. A decision of the review and referral team under this rule may be appealed to the senior executive director of curriculum operations (hereinafter, senior executive director).
 2. The parent shall complete a *Request for Advanced Academics Appeal* form and file the appeal form with the senior executive director **within fifteen (15) school days** of the date of the review and referral team's decision.

3. The senior executive director, or his/her designee, will review the facts of the case and issue a final decision in writing within thirty (30) school days of receipt of the appeal.
4. The placement of the student shall not change until the appeal process is complete or the deadline for filing an appeal has passed.

B. Appeals to the Superintendent

1. If the parent is not satisfied with the decision rendered by the senior executive director, he/she may further appeal that decision by filing an appeal with the superintendent.
2. The appeal must be made in writing and filed with the superintendent **within ten (10) school days** of the date of the senior executive director's decision.
3. The superintendent, or his/her designee, will review the facts of the case and issue a final decision in writing.

C. Appeal to the Board of Education

1. A decision of the superintendent, or his/her designee, under this rule may be appealed to the Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board).
2. The appeal must be made in writing and filed with the Board **within thirty (30) calendar days** of the date of the superintendent's decision.
3. The procedures for filing an appeal with the Board are outlined in Board Policy 8340, *Appeal Before the Board of Education*.

- D. For all appeals filed under this paragraph, electronic transmittals will not be accepted.

IX. Program Review and Reporting

- A. Annually, the Division of Curriculum and Instruction shall provide to the superintendent disaggregated data related to the effectiveness of its identification process and its programs and services to ensure continuous improvement in the advanced academics program.
- B. Annually, the superintendent shall report to the Board on the school system's advanced academics program that will include disaggregated data for student achievement, attendance, suspension rate, graduation rate and standardized test scores.

Legal References: *Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article §5-401,
Comprehensive Master Plans
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §§8-201—204,
Gifted and Talented Children
COMAR 13a.04.07, *Gifted and Talented Education*

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 0100, *Equity*
Board of Education Policy 5200, *Promotion and Retention*
Board of Education Policy 6000, *Curriculum and Instruction*

Rule

Superintendent of Schools

Approved: 09/09/03

Revised: 09/08/09

Revised: 04/17/18