

GAL Model and Services at FSK

FSK Vision

Francis Scott Key Elementary/Middle School recognizes and nurtures the potential of each student from Pre-k through 8th grade with a focus on developing the whole child. We do this by providing a challenging academic curriculum, experiential learning opportunities, and a community of caring adults including exceptional teachers, an active PTO, and multiple community partners.

Gifted and Advanced Learning at FSK

Every student deserves to be offered appropriately challenging academic experiences which help them develop critical and creative thinking as well as academic skills. We are committed to nurturing the gifts and talents of our students through interest based projects and the use of research based best practices in gifted education.

- Universal screening of all students in PreK and K

Identification Code	Criteria
Talent Development	A score in the 75th to 99th percentile range on the district-approved nationally norm-referenced screener of ability
Advanced	Ability results (NNAT or CogAt) in the 80th to 89th percentile range ELA and Math achievement results in the 80th to 89th percentile range or district-established equivalent
Gifted	Ability results (NNAT or CogAt) in the 90th to 99th percentile range ELA and Math achievement results in the 90th to 99th percentile range or district-established equivalent

- Reassessment of students who demonstrate strengths and talents after the initial screening or who are new entrants to FSK
- Formally identified GAL students are invited to participate in accelerated/honors classes
- Individualized Learning Plans addressing both cognitive and affective goals developed for each student identified as Gifted, Advanced, or Talent Development
- The use of specialized gifted curricula such as Jacob's Ladder, M2, M3, and William and Mary units
- Specialized gifted curricula designed to address social and emotional needs such as Jacob's Ladder Affective series, I'm Not Just Gifted, When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers
- Accelerated work (above grade level) used in accelerated/honors classes
- Classroom instruction that is both proactive and responsive, planning to meet anticipated student needs based on pre-assessments while also being flexible enough to address misconceptions or rapid acquisition of skills
- Support and community building for parents through SENG (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted) parent groups

BCPSS Regulations and Policy

We are guided by Baltimore City Public Schools' policy and regulations around gifted education. To find out more you can access the [policy standards](#) linked here.

Gifted and Advanced Learning in Elementary and Middle School

Kindergarten to grade 5	Grades 6 to 8
<p>In the early grades, gifted and advanced learners are grouped in their classrooms and receive enrichment through supplementary programs such as Jacob's Ladder in reading and language arts Project M2 and M3 for mathematics, and specialized science and math units of study from the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary.</p>	<p>In middle school, honors math, English, science, and social studies classes are available to challenge all students. FSK has an Advanced Academics/Honors program in middle school. Gifted and advanced learners taking these classes should expect to experience above-grade-level curricula in honors English and compacted/telescoped curricula in honors math. GAL students will participate in Science Fair, National History Day, and an accelerated math sequence.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Additional Enrichment Opportunities Math Olympiad Destination Imagination Debate Chess Club</p>	
<p>All identified GAL students will have an Individualized Learning Plan, outlining strengths, needs, and goals for the academic year aligned to their interests and abilities.</p> <p>We create an ILP for each GAL student to get all involved parties on the same page with a plan that will help ensure that each GAL student is growing both academically and socially each year. Click here to see a sample annotated ILP to learn what you can expect to see when you receive your child's ILP.</p>	

Common Questions

My child is not coded as GAL... We believe that all students have potential and should be engaged in work that challenges them and helps them develop as learners. We want to meet students where they are and offer experiences that will help them grow. A child's classroom teacher should always be the first person you contact if you have concerns about a mismatch between your child's ability and classwork, however if you feel that your child has blossomed since their last screening and should be reassessed, just let us know.

My child was pulled for GAL services last year but isn't coded as GAL this year...At times we include non-GAL identified students in our enrichment groups because their teacher feels they would benefit from the added challenge. More than likely, they simply have not tested at a level where they have been identified as gifted, but they were pulled for enrichment services due to strong academic behaviors being demonstrated in the classroom. Last year they needed this intervention, but this year their needs are being met in the classroom. You can always reach out to classroom teachers with questions about how your child's needs are being met.

My child is coded as GAL but not in accelerated/split class...Each year, class placements are made by a team of FSK educators and each student's placement is reevaluated to make sure it is an optimal placement for that child's academic and social emotional growth and well-being. This means, each year students have an opportunity to enter into an accelerated/split class if it is determined that the placement would be in the best interest of the child. Alternatively, it is sometimes determined that placement in an accelerated/split class is not beneficial to a student and they may be placed in a traditional classroom. At FSK the groupings are flexible.

My child is coded as GAL but not in the Advanced Academics (Middle School Honors) Classes...Here at FSK we do not take a one size all approach to classroom

placement. We consider the academic aptitude and achievement but also the social emotional well being, processing speed and other factors. We like to err on the side of being inclusive in the honors courses for students who will benefit from the pacing and challenge but not every student who is coded as GAL will benefit from such a placement.

Can students have a 504 Plan, IEP, or ESOL services and still be in GAL? YES!

Twice exceptional students, those who have both a learning difference and high cognitive ability, are most successful when both their strengths and areas of need are addressed. While some twice exceptional learners are able to fully access gifted curricula without formal plans for accommodations, others may need a 504 or IEP to provide them with the supports needed to achieve to the best of their ability.

How can I help prepare my child for universal screening? Other than the regular things you do to prepare your child for a good day at school like a good night's sleep and breakfast, there's nothing you need to do to prepare them for universal screening. We work with primary students on analogies and analogical thinking so that they are familiar with these skills before screening. We also use Primary Talent Development lessons to help build and identify gifted learning behaviors such as creativity, perception, inquisitiveness, persistence, resourcefulness, leadership and communication skills.

Who can I contact for more information about Gifted and Advanced Learning at Francis Scott Key EMS? We have two GAL Lead Teachers who both directly support students and work with teachers to provide resources. Please contact Alex Clough (AClough@bcps.k12.md.us) or Felicity Ross (FRoss@bcps.k12.md.us) for more information.

Local organizations and resources

- [Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education](#): This volunteer organization is made up of parents, professionals, graduate students, educators, and others who share an interest in gifted education.
- [Maryland Mensa](#): The local affiliate of the [national organization](#) provides opportunities to network with and support gifted learners.
- [Maryland State Department of Education](#): The Maryland State Department of Education's Gifted and Talented education information site which includes regulations and guidelines.
- [Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth](#): This organization works to identify and develop the talents of the most advanced K-12 learners.
- [GT Discover](#): GT Discover builds the capacity of schools, communities, and parents to identify and serve more gifted and talented students, especially those who are historically underrepresented, serving as a repository of resources, learning opportunities, and a collaborative community for stakeholders.