



# THE GLOBE



LETTER

*Gifted Learners' Outlook Bright & Exciting*  
**News About Bedford County Public Schools' Gifted Education Program**  
*Commonwealth of Virginia----- www.bedford.k12.va.us*

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**Improvements Made in Evaluations for Gifted Services**



Bedford County Public Schools has modified its procedures for evaluating students for gifted education services. In February the Stanford 10 Achievement Test (SAT10) and the Naglieri (NNAT2) Ability Test were delivered online to referred students in grades three through twelve.

The school division has administered the SAT10 for many years. The NNAT2, is a well known standardized ability test. It can be used in place of the Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT). The OLSAT will continue to be used as needed.

All second grade students will continue to be screened with the SAT10 paper and pencil test. The Otis Lennon School Ability Test (paper and pencil) will also be included in the administration. Referred kindergarten and first grade students will also be administered as paper and pencil tests.

Online testing has several advantages. There are no paper documents to route to and from schools. Tests do not have to be mailed to Texas for scoring. The wait time for the results is significantly shorter. Referred students can be evaluated within sixty days because the test windows can be opened more frequently and online testing is cost effective.

School personnel who participated in the first administration found the online format easy to use. The results were comparable to the former version. Due to these advantages the school division plans to continue with online testing.

**Special Announcements**

Due to the budget shortfall, the Summer Extension Program will not be held this current year. The school division hopes to presume the successful program in the summer of 2010.

Sixty-two gifted students from Bedford County, grades 4-7, will participate in the Piedmont Regional Governor's School. The dates are June 15-18, and June 22-25.

The inaugural class of Early College students graduated from Central Virginia Community College on May 14. All twenty-two students participated in the graduation ceremony.

Margaret Turley, County Coordinator for Gifted Education, will retire at the end of June 2009. Her job duties will be assumed by the school division's Director of Instruction, Tammy Parlier, and her team of content area specialists.

**Visit These Websites to Learn More about Gifted Education**

[www.bedford.k12.va.us](http://www.bedford.k12.va.us)  
[www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org) -  
[www.vagifted.org](http://www.vagifted.org) -

**Parent Resource Guide**  
 National Association for the Gifted  
 Virginia Association for the Gifted

**Notice:** Bedford County Public Schools accepts referrals for gifted education evaluations throughout the school year. See a teacher, guidance counselor, or principal for details.

**Bedford County Public Schools – School Calendar 2009\***

<b>Aug. 24</b>	<b>First Day of School</b>
Sept. 7	Labor Day Holiday
Oct. 26	End of 1 <sup>st</sup> 9 weeks (2 hr. Early Dismissal)
Nov. 2	Report Cards Go Home
Nov. 3	Election Day (School Closed)
Nov. 23	Parent/Teacher Conferences (12-7 p.m.) (School Closed for Students)
Nov. 24	Professional Development Planning Day (School Closed for Students)
Nov. 25, 26 & 27	Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec. 21 – Jan. 1	Winter Holidays
Jan. 18	Martin Luther King Holiday (Protected)
Jan. 20	End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> 9 Weeks- End 1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (2 hr. Early Dismissal)
Jan. 27	Report Cards Go Home
Feb. 11	Parent/Teacher Conferences (12-7 p.m.) (School Closed for Students)
Feb. 12	Professional Development Planning Day (School Closed for Students)
Mar. 5	Late Winter Break (School Closed)
Mar. 29	End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> 9 Weeks (2 hr. Early Dismissal)
Apr. 5-9	Spring Vacation
Apr. 12	Report Cards Go Home
April 30	Professional Development Planning Day (School Closed for Students)
May 31	Memorial Day – (Protected)
June 7 & 8	2 hr. Early Dismissal
June 9	Last Day of School - (2 hr. Early Dismissal)
June 12	Graduation

\*This is a partial list of events for the school year. Refer to individual school calendars for additional information.

**Virginia Board of Education Adopts Revised Regulations**

The Virginia Board of Education met on Thursday, March 26, 2009 and adopted the revised Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students as proposed. The next step in the process is for the regulations to proceed to the Executive Branch for review and Governor Kaine's signature. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) will establish a timeline for the new regulations to become compliant. Some of the changes include:



- The local school board will be the body to approve school divisions' Five Year Plans for the Education of the Gifted. The VDOE will provide a technical review.
- The standard timeline for evaluating students for gifted services will be ninety instructional days. Bedford is operating with a sixty-day window.
- Funding for gifted programs will continue with a regulatory note indicating such. A statement for funding may also be found in the Virginia Standards of Quality.

Last September over eight hundred citizens from the Commonwealth of Virginia voiced their opinions regarding the proposed changes. Bedford County Public Schools very much appreciates your support.

This article appeared in Compass Points, published by the National Association for Gifted Children. The association receives similar questions from teachers and parents. Rarely is there an opportunity to explore how the "other side" might face the issue. Both groups benefit from the same information even though they look at it from different perspectives. The ongoing goal is for teachers and parents to develop a broader understanding of their students' potential and create stimulating learning environments. The process of talent development is ongoing and requires high levels of attentiveness, energy, and time. A collegial team (teacher & parent) can share the responsibility, and discover ways to positively reinforce each other's work. Spring 2009 - Robin M. Schrader & Jeff Danielian collaborated for this article.

## Topic: "Rights? Gifted Students? The Law? What should I know?"

**A Teacher's View:** Here come the parents and I see they have a stack of papers. It started with an email last week. Their daughter, Margie, is having trouble in all of her middle school classes, except mine. I asked them to come in this week to discuss possible solutions. They want to know what rights she has as an identified gifted and talented student. Having recently moved here from a neighboring state, they have found we don't have the same services offered in their old school system. Apparently she is not "gifted" here. Margie has stated that I am the only teacher who will "listen" to her, offering her choice in project type and interest in research area, and so her parents thought I could be of some help. I have a Masters in G/T Education, so I was able to offer several resources for them to explore. But that doesn't mean it is smooth sailing. Margie has three other teachers, not one of whom has any training in G/T. Our district doesn't offer services or funding for professional development. Help!

**A Parent's View:** I can't decide if I'm angry, frustrated, or just plain terminally sad. We sent our son, Sam, off to school with high hopes. In those beginning days, we didn't know about twice-exceptionality (gifts along with learning disabilities) – Sam's great with numbers, but he has real troubles getting things on paper. Now, with a new teacher, he's not only struggling with academics, he's also having behavior problems. We met with the school counselor who told us that his needs could be met in the regular classroom and we shouldn't be so concerned. Unfortunately we know the counselor is simply not correct. It IS time to worry. No matter how we've tried to convince the teacher that our son really will pay attention when he's challenged, she tells us he's not a candidate for G/T programs, according to her checklists. Plus she can't deviate from the established curriculum. The principal supports the teacher. What are our options? Does the law provide recourse? Who can help us? What steps can we take?

There are several risks when invoking "legal rights" to demand appropriate programming for gifted children. The most obvious issue is it immediately creates an adversarial situation. More pertinent is that trying to "make" a school provide for a gifted child through legal process is a difficult task. It's far more effective to argue for the best interests of a child within the context of existing policy (while, of course, working to expand and strengthen policy) than it is to argue on the basis of abstract principle. Here are some sobering facts: There is no federal mandate that explicitly protects the rights of gifted learners, although some gifted children who have been identified as disabled, are able to secure GT services through the individualized educational plan (IEP) process provided in IDEA. State law (which varies greatly on the issue of specialized learning for gifted students) has been used only rarely to successfully litigate for gifted programs. The most immediate recourse to argue educational rights for gifted children is through administrative hearing/review officer decisions based on individual state statutes, regulations, and/or district policies. This can be a long, protracted, frustrating process, which is why savvy parents and teachers never cease advocating within their local communities, districts, and schools. They find ways to help gifted programs through "side doors" by building positive awareness of the many faces and many needs of giftedness. In states that include GT students in the broader term "exceptional," families may have some additional strategies to ensure that twice-exceptional children receive services for both their gifts and their disabilities. The plan should contain a gifted component that addresses talent development objectives and services. For a better understanding of the complexities, read "A Family's Struggle to Achieve Justice in Education" from the *2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter*, posted with permission on the NAGC website at: <http://www.nagc.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/CHP/Fighting%20for%20FAPE%20link%20from%20May%2009%20CHP.pdf>. There are some recent, encouraging developments that can be used as a basis for productive conversations. For example, there are interesting considerations in the annual yearly progress (AYP) provision of the "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) Act. Parents and teachers should ask how AYP for gifted students is measured by their state and district. For more information, read "Does The No Child Left Behind Act 'Do' Anything For Gifted Students?" at: [www.nagc.org/index2.aspx?id=999](http://www.nagc.org/index2.aspx?id=999)

### Advocacy 101

#### At School

It's not unusual for teachers to feel overwhelmed by the needs of high-ability learners in their classrooms, especially if they haven't benefitted from professional development opportunities in their districts. What has your district offered that relates to teaching gifted learners? Find out. Then, explore your state gifted education association for upcoming opportunities.

[www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=609&gbs](http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=609&gbs). A visit to Gifted Education Works on the NAGC website: [www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=566](http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=566) will provide a level of comfort for teachers looking to strengthen their knowledge of successful practices. • Successful advocacy for your students starts with you! Work with parents to help them become familiar with The Big Picture at: [www.nagc.org/index2.aspx?id=532](http://www.nagc.org/index2.aspx?id=532)

#### At Home

Do gifted students have any rights because they are "gifted"? Only through their individual state statutes, regulations, or past published decisions. Download the NRC/GT's monograph *The Law on Gifted Education* at:

[www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/nrconlin.html#05178](http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/nrconlin.html#05178). Parents do have a legal right to review cumulative files with a counselor or coordinator. This can help inform and guide educational choices. *NAGC's Mile Marker Series*™ is designed to help parents find the information they need, when they need it. Materials and resources in Mile Marker #3 offer information about how to reach out to others when advocating for individual gifted children. You can download and share articles like "Parents and the Legal Rights of Gifted Children." Read more at: [www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=3546](http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=3546)

### Role Models and Mentoring

#### At School

Share what you know! If you are the one in your school with knowledge about where to find the word to your colleagues. Be creative. Check out the article "Re-thinking Staff Development: The Power of Coaching" from the Winter 2007 issue of *Teaching for High Potential* at: [www.nagc.org/uploadedFiles/THP/THP\\_Issues/THP2007WinterIssue.pdf](http://www.nagc.org/uploadedFiles/THP/THP_Issues/THP2007WinterIssue.pdf). Volunteer to give an interactive presentation or workshop on gifted as part of a professional development day at your school. NAGC's educator section provides a great place to start! [www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=49](http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=49).

#### At Home

Parents who have successfully advocated for their children offer this tip – Don't be hampered by the things you can control. Being well prepared is the key: Collect accurate information, keep strong emotions in check, and find others who have experienced similar situations, and try to build collaborative rather than adversarial relationships. The Dec. 2008 issue of *Parenting for High Potential* is rich with collected wisdom about how to successfully influence change. Read "Dancing Toward District Advocacy" and "Advocating for Our Future" from that issue at: [www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=1180](http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=1180).

### Keep Learning!

#### At School

Encourage your school to send a team to regional conferences and spread the word by offering to return with a report. Consider including a parent in your planning and discussion, allowing others to see how educators and parents can benefit when they work together. Find more colleagues. If you are not a member of your state or national gifted education association, become one. [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)

#### At Home

For background, check the book *Gifted Children and Legal Issues: An Update* (Great Potential Press). Learn how to negotiate. There are excellent models in the field of special education. As you read, think of adaptations to meet your needs. See *From Emotions to Advocacy* (Wright's Law) and the *Special Needs Advocacy Resource Book: What You Can Do Now to Advocate for Your Exceptional Child's Education* (Prufrock Press).