



## Learning Enrichment and Acceleration Program Talent Pool Information



This following information is meant to familiarize all parents with Middlesex County Public Schools' gifted program, known as the Learning Enrichment and Acceleration Program (LEAP), and particularly the program's Talent Pool for grades K-3.

In order to meet the needs of students in K-3 who are demonstrating the desire, ability, and need to work at expectation levels beyond their peers, Middlesex Elementary School offers a weekly, one-hour pull-out instructional session called Talent Pool. Talent Pool is aimed at strengthening students' advanced skills in the areas of idea analysis, topic evaluation, and creativity. As much as possible, LEAP instruction combines accelerated, complex challenges with creative approaches and high expectations in the LEAP and traditional classroom.

After observing and assessing students for four to six weeks each fall, teachers in grades K-3 are asked to identify Talent Pool students using a Primary Gifted Characteristics Rating Scale. Because academic and intellectual development is so widely varied in the primary grades, Talent Pool pull-out does not automatically follow students from one grade to the next. In other words, a student who attended Talent Pool in kindergarten may not necessarily be identified for pull-out the next year. Talent Pool may also vary from marking period to marking period. Talent Pool must be a flexible, fluid program, guided by teacher recommendations and based upon each grade's benchmarks and expectations; this is the best way to avoid overlooking or overburdening students.

Typically, students are evaluated for formal gifted identification in the spring of third grade. Identification is based on multiple criteria, including a variety of standardized and clinical tests (ITBS, CogAT, KBIT2, KTEA), in-class observations, student interview responses, and a teacher rating scale; no one test score or rating scale can prevent identification. It is important to note, however, that parents may specifically request that K-2 teachers complete a Primary Rating Scale, or they may refer students for the process of gifted evaluation at any time. Teachers and other staff members may also make the same request or referral at any time throughout the year.

If you have additional questions about LEAP and Talent Pool, or would like more information, please contact your child's teacher, request a brochure from the school's office, or email the gifted education coordinator/teacher, Kim Waite, at [kwaite@mcps.k12.va.us](mailto:kwaite@mcps.k12.va.us).