

- 1) My name is Pamela Clark, Campbell AAC or Advanced Academics Coach), and I've been teaching at Campbell since 2010, but I've been a teacher since 1990 after getting my bachelor's degree in elementary education from The College of William and Mary. I've taught in Stafford county, VA, Chicago, IL, St. Louis, MO, Fairfax County, VA, and then I began teaching in Arlington after getting my masters in educational psychology: gifted education from the University of Virginia. I chose Arlington because their model for serving advanced students is more inclusive than some other counties, and Campbell, in particular, has certain systems in place to support advanced students quite well. The learning expeditions and focus on high-quality work which are part of EL Education give all students the chance to do project-based learning and create products that impact the real world with high expectations for them to produce work that requires high levels of thinking, is authentic, and shows strong craftsmanship.
- 2) This meeting is about the gifted screening and identification process. The fall meeting was focused on how Campbell provides services to those students who have been found eligible for advanced academics or the Young Scholars program.
- 3) My objective tonight is to provide an overview of the advanced academics and talent development **screening and identification process**.
- 4) Based on APS's talent development model we identify for specific talent areas, so students can be identified for Academic areas (English, math, science and/or social studies) in grades K-12 & in music and/or visual arts in grades 3 – 12. Some counties identify students as GIA (general intellectual ability), but our county has chosen to be more specific since some students excel in some areas and not others.
- 5) Students are considered for gifted services on a yearly basis.

Unlike some school systems where they pretty much only go through the process in 3rd grade, here in APS, students can be referred any year K-12, and may be referred another year if they don't qualify or they are showing strengths in a new area for which they weren't initially identified.

Anyone who knows the child can submit a referral for gifted services; however, the most important thing you must remember from this presentation, is that: **If teachers see a need for challenge, depth and complexity, they do not need a formal identification to adjust curricular content for students so while the bulk of screening happens in the winter/spring, it is an expectation that all APS teachers are differentiating and adjusting their teaching based on student needs.**

- 6) In APS, we utilize a holistic case study approach during the screening process. AACs will develop a portfolio for each student with evidence based on these four key components. Please notice that testing only represents one piece of a portfolio, and we also welcome parent input to develop the student portfolios. Tonight, we'll dive into each component and what the supporting evidence might look like.
- 7) Nationally-normed ability assessments are just one piece of evidence we look at. In APS, we use the Naglieri in 1st grade and the CogAt in 2nd grade, but if students weren't here during those grades, they are tested using the CogAT the first year they are with us. Additionally, we look at the WISC if scores if students have them, and we can use the K-BIT to get scores on Kindergarten students who haven't had any ability testing. The state regulations call for a mass screening at least once in a student's educational career to help us find students who may not be demonstrating high performance in the classroom for a variety of reasons. APS added a mass screening tool in 1st grade with the NNAT. This is a test of general intellectual ability in a non-verbal format. This test was selected as a way to cast a net for students who may not be "school smart" but who have the ability to think and problem solve

at a higher level. This is what school systems use nationally to try to find historically-underrepresented gifted learners because it is a culturally unbiased instrument and helps to find students from poverty, 2e learners and ELLs.

- 8) School achievement data can provide evidence of specific talent areas, potential, interests, and motivation.

On the County level, we look at SOLs and other available achievement data, such as math and reading growth data from MAP testing. At the School Level there are ongoing formative and summative assessments. In addition, we look at data on an Individual Level, like honors or distinctions and self-selected work samples, such as products created by students as extensions of lessons and projects done during expeditions or related to particular content in class.

- 9) The third collection of evidence is in the form of the Gifted Behaviors Commentary. Students possess different characteristics which give us clues that they may need something different within the classroom. That's why teachers often talk about differentiation. **The local school committee made up of me, an administrator, either the principal or assistant principal, the classroom teacher and often the counselor, meets and completes a Gifted Behavior Commentary Form on each student referred for gifted services** Team documents observed behaviors and characters in a variety of settings across four major areas. The Parent information form, which parents fill out when they receive a referral email, also provides valuable information on what advanced behaviors are being observed at home.

- 10) Notice there are 4 categories we look at on the GBC. Exceptional Ability to Learn-evidence that the child picks up concepts quickly, Exceptional Application of Knowledge-their ability to that their knowledge and apply it in a variety of ways, Exceptional Creative and Productive Thinking-which is their ability to show their thinking

is creative ways or notice things like patterns and make connections. The last is Exceptional Motivation to Succeed, and that's a student's drive to take on challenges, working groups, show leadership qualities, and task commitment. I meet with teachers before the meeting to fill this out, I add parent comments into the appropriate sections, and we also add information at the Gifted Identification meeting that comes up during our discussion.

- 11) The last thing we look at is student performance in the form of work samples created at school. Teachers save exceptional work throughout the year in student portfolios, but I also go in and do critical and creative thinking lessons occasionally and will keep work samples. We have a lot of wonderful advanced curricular materials in APS, so there are many opportunities for students to demonstrate their advanced abilities.
- 12) Now, switching gears a bit, AACs also lead the screening and ID process for the Visual and Performing Arts (Music). Students may be referred starting in grade 3. Anyone who knows the child may refer him/her for gifted services. Like the academic referrals, the bulk of this work happens in winter and spring. Again like the academic referrals, **teachers do not have to wait for an official ID to provide depth and complexity for students who demonstrate a need for this level of differentiation.**
- 13) Differentiation in art and in music takes place during regular art and general music classes, band, or orchestra. It's not a separate class; however, the art teacher's projects have an open-ended quality to them so students have choice and voice in what they create. Also, during class, the teacher, knowing students' talents can help guide them to greater heights in their art.
- 14) In music as well, the teacher, knowing that talent, can capitalize on it by asking higher level questions or adapting assignments to

make them more rigorous for students ready for the challenge. Art and music identifications also help teachers because they are made aware of the special artistic and musical talents of the students in their classroom, so they can also use that information to help motivate them or give assignments that might speak to those particular strengths.

- 15) So all this evidence is collected. Then what?
- 16) Well, a committee meets, and then we communicate the decision to parents via email. This happens within 90 instructional days, so it will be before the end of the school year, usually in May. Like I said before, the local school committee made up of me, an administrator, either the principal or asst. principal, the classroom teacher and often the counselor. It also may include a special education teacher or teacher of English Language Learners, or a math or reading coach with special knowledge of that student's performance in school and their characteristics. Their comments are also added to the GBC, Gifted Behaviors Commentary.
- 17) **Again, access to advanced curriculum/critical and creative thinking skills does not have to wait for the ID,** but if students ARE found eligible, APS asks that we cluster group students who are labeled as gifted with others who are also labeled so she have a peer group. That way, the teachers are better able to serve those advanced students. As you might imagine if there are only one or two in a class, their needs would likely be more difficult for the teacher to meet since there are only a very few in the class. At Campbell, we also sometimes regroup during the school day, so groups of students with similar academic needs can get what they need most in the form of instruction.
- 18) I attend weekly PLC meetings (Professional Learning Committees) to support teams of teachers as well as meeting with them individually to discuss the best ways to meet the needs of

students.

- 19) If a child is not found eligible, an email letter is sent home and includes information on the appeals process. If a parent disagrees with the decision, you can appeal the decision. In level one, the parent can talk to the principal, look at the data, and find out more about how the decision was made, and level two if a parent is still dissatisfied with the decision, the level allows other people to have a look at the data, namely the supervisor of gifted.
- 20) Here is the timeline of the screening and identification process. As you can see we're in the season where I am communicating about referrals and resharing the process with teachers, collecting information and products in preparation for the meeting in April or May.
- 21) There are lots of parent resources out there if you want to access them.
- 22) Arlington Public Schools also has a Parent Advisory Committee that meets monthly who you can contact and possibly join.
- 23) You can check out the website where you can access lots of information on the way we serve and identify students in APS.
- 24) Plus you can contact me or my supervisors at the education center.
- 25) Does anyone have any questions?