

Gifted Education

Intellectually gifted students attending middle schools have a variety of program options to consider. Students may apply for admission to the gifted middle school program at Old Donation School, or students may choose to remain in their home schools and receive gifted instruction through the collaborative work of cluster teachers and the gifted resource teacher. Either option allows gifted students to work to their potential through curricular opportunities emphasizing differentiated curriculum and instruction and the use of strategies designed especially to raise the level of challenge. The resource-cluster program promotes optimum understanding of the needs of gifted children for all school staff. Gifted students interact with their teachers, classmates, and gifted peers in a heterogeneous grouping, while attaining benefits through the modification of content, process, product, and learning environment. Students in each middle school have the opportunity to take advanced classes in English, science, and mathematics and may begin a world language. The pace in these classes is rapid, and students explore subjects in great depth and with intensity. Selection of these courses in middle school affords students the opportunity to take advanced classes in high school, whether as part of advanced placement curricula, in high school academy programs, or in advanced academic programs.

Middle school students identified as gifted in dance will have opportunities for talent development through a one-day-a-week program for dance education at Old Donation School. All sixth through eighth grade students identified as gifted in visual arts who wish to participate in the Gifted Visual Arts Program will attend Virginia Beach Middle School full-time. Students must apply to the Gifted Visual Arts or Gifted Dance Education Program. All middle schools, including Old Donation School, may offer extended-day and after-school programs.

Old Donation School

Old Donation School is a full-time school for intellectually gifted students in grades two through eight. Students must apply to Old Donation School, be accepted, and demonstrate Virginia Beach residency in order to attend.

Applications are due in early February. Contact the guidance office at 757-648-3267 for program information and applications. The curriculum at Old Donation School is developed with the Virginia Beach Instructional Objectives and the Virginia Standards of Learning as the foundation. The school's teachers, specialists and administrators work collaboratively to create a conceptually-based curriculum that is rich, engaging, and supportive of student inquiry. Instruction is differentiated to meet the diverse needs of all students and is created using methods that are widely accepted in the field of gifted education as appropriate for academically advanced students.

Students selected to attend the middle school program (grades 6-8) are required to take English, mathematics, science, social studies, health and physical education, world language, and an elective class. Students are required to take a world language each year they attend. Students select from among Latin, Spanish, French, Japanese, or another world language.

In addition to these language credits, all students receive credit toward graduation for Algebra I, Geometry, and Earth Science upon successful completion of these courses. Because a world language is required of all students in the school's middle level program, an extended day allows participation in elective courses. The school's commitment to nurturing student interests is evidenced through classes such as chorus, orchestra, band, theater, computers, art, and other specialized courses.

Extracurricular activities may include options such as Destination Imagination, Forensics, Debate,

Academic Challenge, SCA, and several other clubs in which students have special interests. The school does not offer a competitive sports program; however, students routinely participate on athletic teams at their neighborhood middle schools. Students also participate in the Presidential Service Award Program (grades 2-8) and Capstone (grade 8) as components of the school's commitment to nurturing service learning, encouraging students to use their gifts and talents to better their community and their world.