

VBCPS Gifted and Talented Bulletin

Volume 19, Issue 1



Director's Note: Dr. Nicole DeVries, Ph.D.

With the second semester now in full swing, I am thankful for the gifted resource teachers for their continued dedication to each of your gifted learners. Meeting the unique needs of gifted learners, both academically and social-emotionally, is not just their role, but it is also the passion that drives each of these amazing educators to build relationships with gifted students and their families. I have had the privilege of seeing examples of this support across the school division, at each level. *The Gifted and Talented Bulletin* is designed to highlight some of these examples. The gifted administrators in The Office of K-12 and Gifted Programs appreciate you taking the time to read the latest information for gifted education in Virginia Beach. Thank you for your ongoing support!

SENG-VBCPS Mini-Conference Highlights

On November 2, 2019, the Virginia Beach City Public Schools Office of K-12 and Gifted Programs hosted a SENEG one-day mini-conference at Kellam High School. Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) is a non-profit organization that has supported gifted, talented, and learners who are twice-exceptional since 1981. The conference began with an inspirational keynote address by renowned gifted educator and author, Dr. James Delisle. Afterwards, rotational breakout sessions were presented by a variety of experts in the field of gifted education including Dr. Tracy Cross, Dr. Christine Turo-Shields, Dr. Michael Postma, Dr. Ken Dickson, and Dr. Kasi Peters. VBCPS staff presenters included Dr. Kipp Rogers - Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Nicole DeVries - Director of K-12 and Gifted Programs and Dr. Laquiche Parrott - Director of Opportunity and Achievement. The Office of K-12 and Gifted Programs is excited to build upon the innovative work from the SENEG conference by expanding its SENEG Model Parent Group Facilitator training. More information on the SENEG Model Parent Group is forthcoming.



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Community Advisory Committee for Gifted Education (CAC)



The Community Advisory Committee for Gifted Education (CAC) continues to meet monthly with the aim of advocating for the academic, social and emotional needs of gifted students in VBCPS. Most recently, CAC members



convened at Seatack Elementary School, An Achievable Dream Academy, to learn more about the Emerging Scholars Initiative (ESI) for Title I Schools. Members also created their own “Cultural Frame of Reference” based on the research of Dr. Yvette Jackson (Teachers College, Columbia University). As 2020



begins, CAC members will continue to conduct site visits to various schools to see various elements of the gifted program in action. CAC meetings are generally held once a month on Mondays (no meeting in December) from 6:30 - 8:00 PM.

For more information, visit the VBCPS CAC for Gifted Education webpage:

<https://www.vbschools.com/cms/one.aspx?portalId=78094&pageId=306485>



2019 Virginia Association of the Gifted Annual Conference

Congratulations to Robin Schumaker (Senior Gifted Programs Coordinator, Office of K-12 and Gifted Programs), Lydia Kay Shows-Roberson (Gifted Resource Teacher, Frank W. Cox High School), Vivian Barber (sixth-grade math teacher, Old Donation School) and Sandy Beale-Berry (Parent of the Year) who were recognized during the *Virginia Association of the Gifted* Annual State Conference on October 17, 2019, in Richmond. Annually, this organization selects those from each region of the Commonwealth of Virginia who exemplify outstanding dedication and commitment to supporting the academic, social and emotional needs of gifted learners. VBCPS honorees were also recognized by VBCPS Superintendent, Dr. Aaron Spence, during the October 15th VBCPS School Board meeting.



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Social Emotional Learning Workshops

The Office of Gifted Programs recently presented newly developed professional development workshops for gifted resource teachers in support of the VBCPS division initiative on Social Emotional Learning (SEL). “Developing Empathy in Gifted Learners” and “Coaching for Culturally Responsive Practices” workshops served as vehicles for providing gifted resource teachers tools, resources, and the latest innovative research-based practices for gifted students and teachers of the gifted. The workshops, grounded in various SEL competencies as developed by CASEL (Collaborative for Social Emotional Learning) also aligned with goals outlined in the VBCPS 2015-2020 *Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted*, the *Compass to 2020* Strategic Plan, and the Strategic Action Agenda for 2019-2020. The workshops also support the division's focus on Transformational Learning by fostering student agency as they focused on developing empathy habits and enabling gifted resource teachers to craft culturally conscious learning experiences. Both workshops were adapted from the work of renowned educational psychologist, Dr. Michele Borba, and gifted education expert, Dr. Yvette Jackson of Teachers College, Columbia University.



Spotlight on Gifted: Thalia Elementary School

Contributed by: Danielle Constance, Gifted Resource Teacher

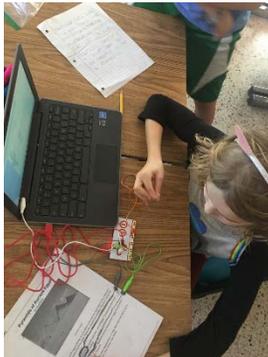
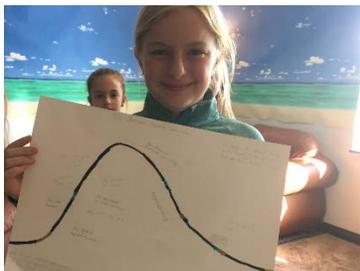
Fourth and fifth-grade students at Thalia Elementary School have been engaging in inquiry and problem solving through the lens of environmental education. Fourth graders used the C3 method of inquiry to better understand the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. They enjoyed rich discussion with each other and community experts. Fifth-grade students enjoyed numerous environmental "hooks" as they critically evaluated data, utilized the four question strategy and developed testable questions. These "hooks" will launch our fifth graders into an authentic community focused passion project. These learning experiences were developed to meet Virginia standards, engage higher-order thinking, SEL skills and address Standard 14: Life Below Water in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

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Spotlight on Gifted: Creeds Elementary School

Contributed by: Beth Smith, Gifted Resource Teacher



At Creeds Elementary, students have been busy analyzing text to improve comprehension, as technology in the classroom allows students to gain a deeper understanding of complex texts while keeping readers engaged. Fifth graders have been using Ozobots to create detailed plot structure maps in which tiny robot movements mirror the action in the story. Third graders have been using Makey-Makey to expand upon and elaborate on the details of nonfiction text. By connecting Makey-Makey to Scratch coding, students leverage technology to fully engage in text, adding connections, details and elaboration in an interactive way. Whether it's fiction or nonfiction, we are finding innovative ways to increase our comprehension and engagement while joyfully practicing 21st-century coding skills!

Spotlight on Gifted: Salem Elementary School

Contributed by: Melissa Ross, Gifted Resource Teacher

At Salem Elementary School, gifted learners in April Paras' fourth-grade gifted cluster class have been working to build class community by engaging in lessons to explore shared cultures. Recently, they participated in a community building and social-emotional lesson by engaging in a 'read aloud' strategy for the book, *The Good Egg*. After the story, the students identified the big idea using a Google slide to determine what the author shared about how to manage stress and accept ourselves, as well as others. Students then wrote their own strategies for dealing with stress and frustration on cards and shared them with teammates to revise and personalize plastic eggs by folding their messages inside. Next, they took pictures or recorded messages for their parents in the program, Seesaw, to share their messages and eggs. Once finished, students placed their eggs in class egg cartons. These cartons will remain in class for the remainder of the year to serve as a strategy bank. When students experience stress or frustration, they can read a strategy from the carton and try it. Mrs. Paras has shared that the social-emotional lessons have assisted the class in working together in a positive way. "Students enjoy being creative and tackling challenges together more because they are exploring their own thoughts and feelings and relating to each other." Lessons with a social and emotional focus do make a difference!



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Spotlight on Gifted: Brookwood Elementary School

Contributed by: Rebecca Winslow, Gifted Resource Teacher



“STEM Day” at Brookwood Elementary was a huge success! Fifth grade teachers, Megan Gamble and Jennifer Linn, joined forces with Dawn Carlucci, Math Coach, and Rebecca Winslow, Gifted Resource Teacher, to spend the day testing their engineering design knowledge and skills in various STEM stations. STEM stations comprised a variety of topics, including “Speed vs Friction” to determine how far a car would travel at various heights. The “Catapult” station had students use a popsicle stick as catapults to launch cotton balls, while the “Sink/Float” stations involved aluminum foil boats filled with graham crackers to determine at what point a boat would sink. Lastly, the “Paper Airplane” station allowed students to build and test designs for the longest flight. All activities were graphed by students on large graph pages and were displayed in the fifth grade hallways for everyone to see. Feedback collected on our STEM day idea was extremely positive, so our gifted learners will soon engage in an upcoming Geometric STEM day!

Spotlight on Gifted: Landstown Middle School

Contributed by: Diane Tarkenton, Gifted Resource Teacher



In December, seventh grade Life Scientists at Landstown Middle participated in a transformational learning opportunity entitled, “The Science Cafe” in order to research a topic of their choice as a segue between the cells and genetics units. Students first began by examining and interacting with a *Virginian Pilot* article that featured Old Dominion University staff inviting and gathering local community members to participate in an informal discussion on sea level rise. The ODU staff members used a “Science Cafe” approach to reach out to ordinary folks and enable them to learn more about scientific topics. Sandra Kaplan’s Depth and Complexity icons were utilized to have students examine trends over time in both the community content and in the use of this format which originated in seventeenth-century England. Students then participated in a Carousel Brainstorm to generate possible topics about cells and genetics with the broad categories of medicine, disease, nutrition, health and the environment. Research transitioned to using our school databases and then venturing to other online resources, if needed. Students used the digital program, SMORE, to present their findings in order to develop a visually appealing Infographic poster. Our culminating ‘Science Cafe’ occurred after school on Tuesday, December 17th, in our school cafeteria. All parents and staff were invited to attend and celebrate student research and findings.



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Spotlight on Gifted: Cox High School

Contributed by: Kay Shows-Roberson, Gifted Resource Teacher

Cox High School gifted students in Mr. Johnson's Honors 10 English cluster class have been working on the gifted benchmark, "Students will compare their ideas, abilities and goals to those of practicing professionals" through a project called "Voter 2020." In this



research project, students were able to choose a contemporary issue that will be debated in the 2020 election. The Gifted Resource Teacher, Kay Roberson, and Library Media Specialists, Laura Dember and Jennifer Ludford, collaborated with Mr. Johnson to develop students' critical thinking skills as they researched the issue from two different perspectives. Students were challenged to "think like a professional" using the gifted instructional model, Sandra Kaplan's Frames of the Discipline, as they constructed a persuasive paper intended to address an audience of professionals (e.g.: policymakers, scientists, etc.). However, the challenge did not end there! Students were assigned an additional task of creating a professional quality infographic flyer intended to communicate the salient points of the issue to a targeted audience of average American citizens. Thanks to additional collaboration with the Instructional Technology Specialists, David Pugh and Thomas Smith, the students were able to produce professional quality flyers which conveyed their research in a way that was visually appealing and easy for American voters to understand.

2019-2020 E.E. Brickell Scholarship Program (Sponsored by the Virginia Beach Rotary Club)



The Class of 2020 E.E. Brickell Scholarship Program, sponsored by the Virginia Beach Rotary Club, kicked off another exciting year on December 12, 2019. Brickell Scholars participated in a "Scholar Meet and Greet Seminar," comprised of various icebreaker activities, and learned more about the scholarship program. Virginia Beach Rotary Club Brickell Scholarship Chairman and VBCPS School Board Member, Mr. Daniel Edwards, shared information with the scholars about the program's rich

history and impact on students. This year, the E.E. Brickell Scholarship Program is celebrating its 30th anniversary. Twenty-four students will compete for the prestigious \$5000 Brickell Scholarship to be awarded during the annual Virginia Beach Rotary Club Scholarship dinner on May 14, 2020. Brickell Scholars are selected from each VBCPS high school during the spring of their junior year. Criteria for selection include exceptional scholastic achievement and outstanding community service leadership. To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the program, this year's keynote speaker will be Dr. Deepak Talreja, of Eastern Virginia Medical School, who was the first Brickell Scholarship winner from the VBCPS Class of 1990.



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S.A.P.L.I.N.G.S Program Highlights: Students and Parents Learning Intellectual Growth Strategies



The VBCPS Office of K-12 and Gifted Programs continues to provide Title I kindergarten students and their parents with a Saturday field trip for the Students and Parents Learning Intellectual Growth Strategies (SAPLINGS) program at the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk. From October to December 2019, each Emerging Scholar Initiative (ESI) elementary school had the opportunity to interact with Chrysler Museum docents while classroom teachers and Gifted Resource Teachers (GRT'S) scribed anecdotal notes on student performance. The classroom teachers, students and GRT'S loved learning about the artwork, while thinking like artists, historians, and architects!



Five-Year Plan for the Education of the Gifted: Development of the Local Plan for Gifted Education

The Office of K-12 and Gifted Programs is in the strategic development of the *2020-2025 Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted*. Once developed, the five-year plan will be submitted for approval to both the VBCPS School Board and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The new five-year plan will guide the work of the VBCPS gifted education through the year 2025. Three meetings were held this year by each of the various subcommittees in order to develop the new plan goals and initiatives moving forward. The subcommittees were comprised of Testing and Identification, Delivery of Services, Curriculum and Instruction, Parent/Community Involvement and Professional Development.

The current Five-Year Plan for the Education of the Gifted can be found on the VBCPS Gifted Education site: [2020-2025 Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted](#)

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VBCPS Office of K-12 and Gifted Programs: Administrative Team

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