

January 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Very soon you will begin making decisions about middle school options for your child. We are very fortunate in Pinellas County to have a continuum of gifted services ranging from full-time services at one of the three Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies to part-time services available in all middle schools. The purpose of this letter is to help you make an informed decision based on your child's educational needs. I encourage you to consider your child's areas of strength and interest as you review the educational options available.

### **FULL TIME GIFTED SERVICES**

In the full-time service option, gifted students are in self-contained classes for all of the core classes: language arts, math, science, social studies, world language, and a specially designed magnet elective. All of the students in these classes have met gifted eligibility. Instruction is provided by gifted endorsed teachers. This educational setting is designed to be challenging and rigorous with curriculum delivered through instructional strategies that promote creative, critical and complex thinking.

This option is available at the three **Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies: Dunedin Highland, Morgan Fitzgerald and Thurgood Marshall Fundamental**. The Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies are a school within a school magnet model designed to meet the unique academic and social/emotional needs of adolescent gifted students through full-time gifted services.

All gifted students interested in attending one of the Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies must apply during the magnet application period **January 4-13, 2017**. For more information, please see *District Application Programs* at [www.pcsb.org](http://www.pcsb.org) or contact the Center for Gifted Studies in your geographic area.

The 2017-18 Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies curriculum map and ***Frequently Asked Questions*** are provided at the end of this letter.

### **PART-TIME GIFTED SERVICES**

In the part-time option, gifted students spend a portion of their day with other gifted students. Unlike the elementary pull-out program model, gifted services are part of a student's regular daily schedule. All Pinellas County middle schools offer part-time gifted services but options vary based on the gifted enrollment of the school. The service options are Advanced Academics 6-8 (gifted elective course), ALPSS Math, and ALPSS Science.

#### **Advanced Academics 6-8** (gifted elective course)

The **Advanced Academics 6-8** (gifted elective course) is offered in all middle schools. All of the students in the course have met gifted eligibility and instruction is provided by a gifted endorsed teacher. This course is similar to the elementary pull-out program in that it exposes students to topics not usually included in middle school curriculum. The Advanced Academics course topics rotate over the three years of middle school and include: Literature; Social Sciences-Philosophy and Psychology; Social Sciences-Investigating Cultures.

**ALPSS: Accelerated Learning Programs for Secondary Students in Math and Science.**

All middle schools offer advanced courses in math and science for academically talented students. In some schools, gifted services are provided through these advanced courses and are referred to as **ALPSS: Accelerated Learning Programs for Secondary Students in Math and Science.**

ALPSS classes are generally blended classes made up of gifted and academically talented students and are taught by a gifted endorsed teacher. For gifted students, the teacher is expected to differentiate instruction and assignments based on Educational Plan goals.

Students who successfully complete the three year ALPSS math course sequence will earn two high school math credits by 8<sup>th</sup> grade by completing Algebra I Honors (Gr.7) and Geometry Honors (Gr.8). Initial recommendations for ALPSS math is based on the 2016 4<sup>th</sup> grade FSA math scores. If your student scored a Level 3, 4, or 5, general information about the middle school accelerated math options (including ALPSS) will be shared with you through your elementary school this month. Information will also be shared regarding an accelerated math option available this spring through Pinellas Virtual School (PVS). Please review this information carefully in planning for your child.

Initial recommendations for ALPSS science, Science Advanced Accelerated will be for students who scored a Level 4 or 5 on the 2016 4<sup>th</sup> grade FSA Math and Reading. You will also receive additional information from your child's middle school.

The following schools will offer gifted services through math courses, ALPSS Math, in 2017-18, pending adequate enrollment: Carwise, East Lake, Meadowlawn, Palm Harbor, Safety Harbor, and Seminole.

The following schools will offer ALPSS Science in 2017-18, pending adequate enrollment: Bay Point, Carwise, Meadowlawn, Palm Harbor, Safety Harbor, Seminole, Clearwater Fundamental and Madeira Beach Fundamental.

Before your child completes 5th grade, your child's gifted teacher will invite you to a meeting to discuss and update your child's Educational Plan (EP). Your child's EP will be written to reflect the gifted services your child will receive in middle school.

Please feel free to contact the Gifted Education Office at 588-6037 if you have questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

Jenny Klimis  
ESE Specialist/Gifted  
Pinellas County Schools

### 2017-18 Part-time Gifted Service Options Middle School Gifted

The chart below indicates the gifted courses that will be available to 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2017-18. Course availability is pending adequate enrollment.

	Advanced Academics	ALPSS Science	ALPSS Math
<b>Azalea*</b>	X		
<b>Bay Point *</b>	X	X	
<b>Carwise</b>	X	X	X
<b>Clearwater Fundamental</b>	X	X	
<b>East Lake *</b>	X		X
<b>Largo*</b>	X		
<b>John Hopkins*</b>	X		
<b>Madeira Beach Fundamental</b>	X	X	
<b>Meadowlawn</b>	X	X	X
<b>Oak Grove</b>	X		
<b>Osceola</b>	X		
<b>Palm Harbor</b>	X	X	X
<b>Pinellas Park*</b>	X		
<b>Safety Harbor</b>	X	X	X
<b>Sanderlin IB Middle Years Programme*</b>	X		
<b>Seminole</b>	X	X	X
<b>Tarpon Springs</b>	X		
<b>Tyrone*</b>	X		
<b>Dunedin Highland ****</b>	X		
<b>Morgan Fitzgerald ****</b>	X		
<b>Thurgood Marshall****</b>	X		

\*Students enrolled in the magnet programs may have a required magnet curriculum course that does not allow space in the student's schedule for the Advanced Academics course (gifted elective). Parents should contact the magnet coordinator at the middle school regarding questions or concerns about gifted service.

\*\*\*\*The Advanced Academics course is the only gifted course available to students who attend Dunedin Highland, Morgan Fitzgerald or Thurgood Marshall, but are not enrolled in the Center for Gifted Studies magnet program.

## 2017-18 Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies Curriculum Map for Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders

### Dunedin Highland Middle/ Morgan Fitzgerald Middle/ Thurgood Marshall Fundamental Middle

The goal of the Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies is to provide a full-time gifted program experience for students. In this setting students learn in self-contained gifted classes with their intellectual peers with instructors who are specially trained in best practices in gifted education. The curriculum philosophy of the Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies is grounded in the belief that gifted students require comprehensive and on-going differentiated curriculum and instruction in order to develop their abilities appropriately. The curriculum is integrated across the broad concepts of change, systems and models, and uses an interdisciplinary approach. This unique curriculum design promotes in-depth learning and creative, critical and complex thinking.

	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade (2017-18)</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> Grade (2018-19)</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade (2019-20)</b>
<b>Language Arts (Required)</b>	Language Arts 2, Advanced (7 <sup>th</sup> gr. advanced Language Arts)	Language Arts 3, Advanced (8 <sup>th</sup> gr. advanced Language Arts)	English Honors I (high school credit)
<b>Literature (Required)</b>	Advanced Academics: Literature (6 <sup>th</sup> grade only)		
<b>Math (Required)</b>	Grade 6 Math , Advanced  OR  Grade 7 Math , Advanced	Grade 7 Math, Advanced  OR  Algebra I Honors (high school credit)	Algebra I Honors (high school credit)  OR  Geometry Honors (high school credit)
<b>Science (Required)</b>	Comprehensive Science 1, Advanced Accelerated Honors	Comprehensive Science 2, Advanced Accelerated Honors	Integrated Science 1 Honors (high school elective credit)
<b>Social Studies (Required)</b>	U.S. History Advanced and Career Planning	Civics	World History
<b>Required Magnet Elective</b>	Advanced Academics: Research	Advanced Academics: Creative and Critical Thinking	Advanced Academics: Independent Study
<b>World Language (Strongly recommended but not required)</b>	NA	World Language I (high school credit pending end of course assessment)	World Language II (high school credit pending end of course assessment)
<b>Electives</b>	Options vary by school site	Options vary by school site	Options vary by school site
<b>P.E. /Health</b>	as required	as required	as required

**Curriculum highlights include:**

- Advanced and enriched content
- Accelerated courses earning up to six high school credits
- College of William and Mary language arts and science curriculum
- Strong vocabulary program
- Curriculum integrated across the concepts of change, systems and models
- Interdisciplinary connections
- Academic competitions – *National History Day, National Engineers Week Future City Competition, Future Problem Solving*
- Unique magnet elective that focuses on research skills, creative and critical thinking, independent study, and social-emotional needs of the gifted learner.
- Option to select one non-magnet elective course such as band, art, technology

For further information, please feel free to contact:

Gifted Program Office	(727) 588-6037
Dunedin Highlands Center for Gifted Studies	(727) 469-4112
Morgan Fitzgerald Center for Gifted Studies	(727) 547-4526
Thurgood Marshall Center for Gifted Studies	(727) 552-1737

## 2017-18 Frequently Asked Questions about the Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies

### **My child has never been in a full-time gifted program experience, how can I know if he/she will be successful?**

Students who meet the criteria for gifted have the academic potential for success in a full-time gifted program. However, not all gifted students demonstrate the need for a full-time gifted curriculum that includes acceleration and advanced content in all subject areas. The curriculum at the Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies is designed to provide a challenge and promote academic growth. Important factors to consider are your child's willingness to meet an academic challenge and to persevere if the work is complex or difficult. Time management, self-direction and organizational skills are also important. Your child's elementary general education and gifted teachers can provide some guidance in making the decision to apply based on your child's performance. The teachers at the Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies will work with students and parents to provide support as needed through the Educational Plan (EP) process.

### **Will Ridgecrest Center for Gifted Studies students be given priority acceptance for the Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies?**

Yes, Ridgecrest Center for Gifted Studies students have a feeder assurance to the middle school gifted center in their geographic application area. However, **parents must follow the district process for application and acceptance.**

### **If my child is zoned for Dunedin or Fitzgerald, do I still need to apply for the Center for Gifted Studies?**

**Yes, parents must apply through the district application process for a seat in the Center for Gifted Studies.**

### **Do I have to submit a copy of my child's Educational Plan (EP) with my application if my child is currently enrolled in gifted classes in a Pinellas County School?**

No, gifted eligibility of Pinellas students can be verified through the district information system.

### **Will transportation be provided to the Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies?**

Yes, arterial bus transportation is provided to students who live more than two miles from the school.

### **Will the students accepted at Thurgood Marshall Fundamental Middle School Center for Gifted Studies be required to follow the policies of a fundamental school?**

Yes, the Center for Gifted Studies is a school within a school magnet. Since Thurgood Marshall is a fundamental school, all students must adhere to the fundamental policies. Students will also have a priority to a fundamental high school.

### **Will the curriculum be a challenging, rigorous curriculum?**

Yes, the curriculum for each class has been designed to provide acceleration, advanced content and enrichment based on best practices in gifted education.

### **Will courses in the Center for Gifted Studies count towards high school credit?**

Yes. High school credit can be earned for successful completion of requirements for: Algebra I Honors, Geometry Honors, English I Honors, Integrated Science 1 Honors, and World Language I and 2.

### **Will the students take all coursework within the Center for Gifted Studies?**

**Students must take all of the courses required in the magnet curriculum.** Each year students have the option to enroll in at least one elective class such as art, band, orchestra, or technology.

### **Will the students participate in competitions?**

Yes, students will participate in the following national academic competitions: *National History Day*, *National Engineers Week Future City Competition* and *Future Problem Solving*. Additional opportunities will also be available for participation in other competitions such as *Science Olympiad*, *Odyssey of the Mind*, and *Math Counts*.

### **Will there be extensive homework?**

Homework decisions will be made by the teachers. It should not be assumed that students will have an extraordinary amount of homework because they are in a full-time gifted school. The recommended guidelines are 1- 2 hours of homework daily.