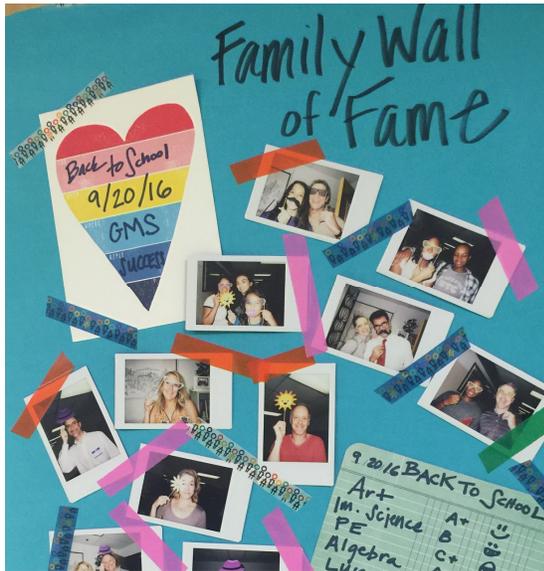


We  
are



Welcome Back 2018–  
2019 Gifted News  
and Introduction



Welcome back, and Welcome to Gunston! My name is David Steele and I am the new Resource Teacher for the Gifted (RTG).

Our motto is “At GMS, our quest: success!” The search for success starts with exploring and experimentation.

As an RTG, students and teachers are my primary ‘clients.’ Daily, I work with students during core content classes to promote critical & creative thinking, to promote rigor, and to coach students to make connections across content areas. I meet with Collaborative Learning Teams (CLTs) and grade level teams

**Research has shown that the highest predictor of student achievement is**

each week to be an active part of the planning team and to help build opportunities for interdisciplinary learning. Because of this collaboration, I consider myself to be a part of all teams at GMS! In addition, I am the liaison between Gunston and APS Gifted Services department. Each month I meet with my secondary RTG colleagues to share best practices for instructional delivery, to report on identification procedures, and to learn about teaching tools and methods in order to help facilitate gifted education in all classrooms.

I work with all students and teachers in grades 6-8 as well as collaborate with our school’s specialists for reading, math, electives, special education, HILT, and administrators. Although my role is multi-dimensional, my main task is to build capacity—both in students as well as in teachers so there is daily differentiation in the classroom.

My goal is to be strategic while building the Gifted Services program at Gunston and mindfully help students, teachers, and families build their Critical & Creative Thinking toolkits.

**the quality of teacher-student interactions.**

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## What does this look like in middle school classrooms?

- ***We emphasize metacognition.*** Students explain their own cognitive processes- through self-evaluation, reflection, and planning, they are able to understand their progress on mastering a certain skill or topic and can create an action plan that will help them target growth areas.
- **Analysis and inquiry are objectives in learning, not just rote memorization.** This gives students the chance to construct alternatives predict, hypothesize, or brainstorm problems and questions.
- **Teachers actively facilitate student's involvement** through questioning and appropriate pacing- students are consistently actively interested and engaged: **they are focused on important work.**
- **Teachers provide a high degree of quality feedback that expands and extends learning and understanding- it pushes learning.** One way this may happen is through feedback loops, or frequent back and forth exchanges between the teacher and students or among students-- this leads student to obtain a deeper understanding of material and concepts.

When we cultivate classrooms where all students experience personalized learning, where students are respected and can meaningfully lead their learning, we can ensure our children enjoy a world-class education.

**As a teacher, I know that working with gifted children can be delightful, mesmerizing, challenging, and infinitely rewarding.** Every day, your children amaze me by their risk-taking, their passion for social justice and inquiry, and their wide variety of talents.

**What does it mean to be gifted?** While definitions vary, generally it means someone has the ability, motivation, or potential to perform at high levels. One thing that sets Arlington Public Schools apart is our district's commitment to recognizing the wide variety of passion and potential our students offer.

Within APS, the Office of Gifted Services follows the [APS Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted](#) which complies with Virginia Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students based on the following concepts:

- Giftedness is developmental; it is potential which must be nourished;
- Gifted students share some characteristics with all other children; and
- There is variability among the gifted.

**The gifted services eligibility process identifies students in the following areas.**

- **Specific Academic Aptitude:** students with specific aptitudes in the academic areas of mathematics, science, English, social studies
- **Visual/Performing Arts Aptitude:** students with specific aptitudes in visual art and/or instrumental or vocal music areas the plan and provide detailed feedback on the plan's goals.

**It's my goal to be an ally for your child so they can:**

- fully participate in accelerated and enriched instruction;
- are motivated to reach their potential in Gunston classes and student life;
- be inspired to take ownership for future programs and career pathways

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### **A Little About Me:**

Hi! Again, I just want to welcome each and every one of you to Gunston Middle School. Whether your child is a returning Hornet or you are new to our school, we are ecstatic to have you.

Above, I have included my educational

### **Educational Background**

**David Steele**

PhD: Science Education, University of Georgia

Ed.S: Science Education, University of Georgia

M.Ed.: **Biology Education, Auburn University**

B.S.: **Microbiology, Auburn University**

Fellowship: **Albert Einstein**

**Distinguished Educator Fellow at the National Science Foundation**

background and I just wanted to provide some information that will allow us to begin the process of getting to know each other.

As a small child in rural Alabama, my parents emphasized the importance of using education as a vehicle to better my position in society. As a gifted student, my teachers were not prepared to properly instruct a student who was so advanced and so I presented some challenges when I became bored. Little did I know then that I would go into education and be determined to develop lessons for my students that would be challenging, rigorous, and engaging.

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In my ten years of teaching, I have made it a habit of pushing my students out of their comfort levels and to cause them to learn by struggling with data and content. It has allowed students to accomplish things they never dreamt possible. It is this desire to push people and to push myself that led me to pursuing my doctorate at the University of Georgia. This program allowed me to develop a greater understanding of student learning, teacher learning, and instructional practice. My goal is to take what I have learned during my experiences as a student and a teacher and help teachers and students at Gunston reach beyond their potential!

Cheers to a great new school year!!!

Curious about Gifted@Gunston?

**Email:** [david.steele@apsva.us](mailto:david.steele@apsva.us)

**Visit online:** <https://gunston.apsva.us/gifted-services/>

**Follow:** Twitter: @GGunstonms  
and Instagram: gifteded\_gunsonms

**Stop by** Gifted Services in room 123d, adjacent to the Gunston Clinic

### **Gifted Services Information Night**

The Parent-Teacher Association meeting on 11/15 featured a presentation on gifted services.

### **Couldn't attend in person?**

The presentation is posted online @ <https://gunston.apsva.us/gifted-services/>

### **The Gifted Identification Process**

In the winter, we re-visit the PTA for a follow-up session on the Gifted Identification process.

Stay tuned for more information!