

Advanced by Design

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Gifted Education in Colorado

Colorado State Definition:

Downloaded from the Gifted Education Unit homepage: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/index.htm>

"Gifted and talented children" mean those persons between the ages of five and twenty-one whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. Children under five who are gifted may also be provided with early childhood special educational services. Gifted students include gifted students with disabilities (i.e. twice exceptional) and students with exceptional abilities or potential from all socio-economic and ethnic, cultural populations. Gifted students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these areas of giftedness:

- General or specific intellectual ability.
- Specific academic aptitude.
- Creative or productive thinking.
- Leadership abilities.
- Visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor abilities.

Colorado Gifted Education Unit Mission, Principles, and Vision

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/MissionVision.htm>

Mission

Gifted students' learning and growth ensured by needed provisions and advocacy.

Principles

- Relevant, appropriate instruction and outcomes for gifted learners
- Shared responsibility and involvement of educators, parents, and community for the academic and affective outcomes and growth of gifted learners
- A climate of excellence and rigorous curricula for every child
- Differentiation in curricula, instruction, and assessment supporting tiered programming and a continuum of services for every gifted learner
- High quality standards for educators and counselors who work with gifted learners
- Identification and gifted programming in all populations of race, culture, gender, and income level

Vision (2008-2012)

Gifted student education is a shared responsibility among educators, parents and community members for the learning and growth of gifted students. Collaboration creates a partnership in which purposeful direction is set in the State Performance Plan and local Program Plans. Meaningful efforts are aligned and supported by all stakeholders. Regional networks expand a statewide support system, and, include representation from parents and each district. Aligned local and state policies ensure high expectations, personnel and accountability for gifted

students. Jointly, stakeholders obtain additional resources for gifted student education.

Gifted student achievement is accomplished in an RTI adaptable system of ongoing assessment, problem solving and learning through a continuum of benchmarks and tiered programming options. Strengths, interests and needs of diverse gifted learners are matched to programming and/or interventions. Curriculum is rigorous and differentiated. 100% of administrative units implement evidence-based models and strategies for curriculum and instruction. Assessment (screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and summative) drives instruction and student grouping. District and classroom assessments provide meaningful data for pace, depth and complexity. Acceleration methods are implemented in the areas of strength using Tier II and III methods for continued learning. Counseling and early college planning are vital to the needs of gifted students. 100% of administrative units meet their local achievement targets.

A system of accountability and record keeping for identification and programming is implemented by an advanced learning plan (ALP) for every gifted student. 100% of administrative units have Program Plans that align with the needs expressed in the ALPs of their particular gifted population. ALPs are dynamic documents developed by the student, parent and educators to address the exceptional ability and potential of gifted students, in any one or more areas of giftedness. ALPs are well articulated throughout the school system.

Gifted students are motivated toward maximum performance. Qualified personnel inspire and facilitate learning. 100% of administrative units provide professional development in gifted student education individually or through other means. Institutions of higher education support local and state efforts in professional development.

Parental engagement is valued and respected. Trusting relationships and sharing of responsibilities are the norm. Parents are well informed. Parents participate in ALP development, local and state committees, and provide input into important strategic planning and accountability efforts.

A statewide monitoring system for gifted student education is shared between administrative units and the state. High relationship between directors and the state create a positive attitude to improve and grow gifted education, together. The work in the field is valued and fostered through positive communication, technical assistance and collaborative networks. Statewide professional development aligns with needs identified through the shared work.

Highlights of the Gifted Education Unit website <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/index.htm>

The Challenger newsletter from CDE Gifted Education Unit:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/download/pdf/Challenger_October2009.pdf

West Central region addition:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/download/pdf/Challenger_WC_Oct2009.pdf

Director's Corner: Links to events, important documents, and other information

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/director.htm>

To access *FastFacts* documents on Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs), Early Access, and the State Performance Plan, go to <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/fastfacts.htm>

Download State Guidelines for Identification, Programming, and Twice Exceptional students at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/publications.htm>

Resources including publications; examples of ALPs, lesson plans, etc.; documents about identification and programming; the Reference Series; bibliography; glossary; etc., are available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/resources.htm>

Legal basis for gifted education in Colorado:

CRS 22-20-101-118, Exceptional Children’s Educational Act

CRS 22-26-101-108, Gifted and Talented Students Act

Rules and Regulations for the Administration of the Exceptional Children’s Education Act
(pursuant to CRS 22-26-104)

For complete text, go to:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/download/pdf/gtECEA_RulesGiftedEd.pdf

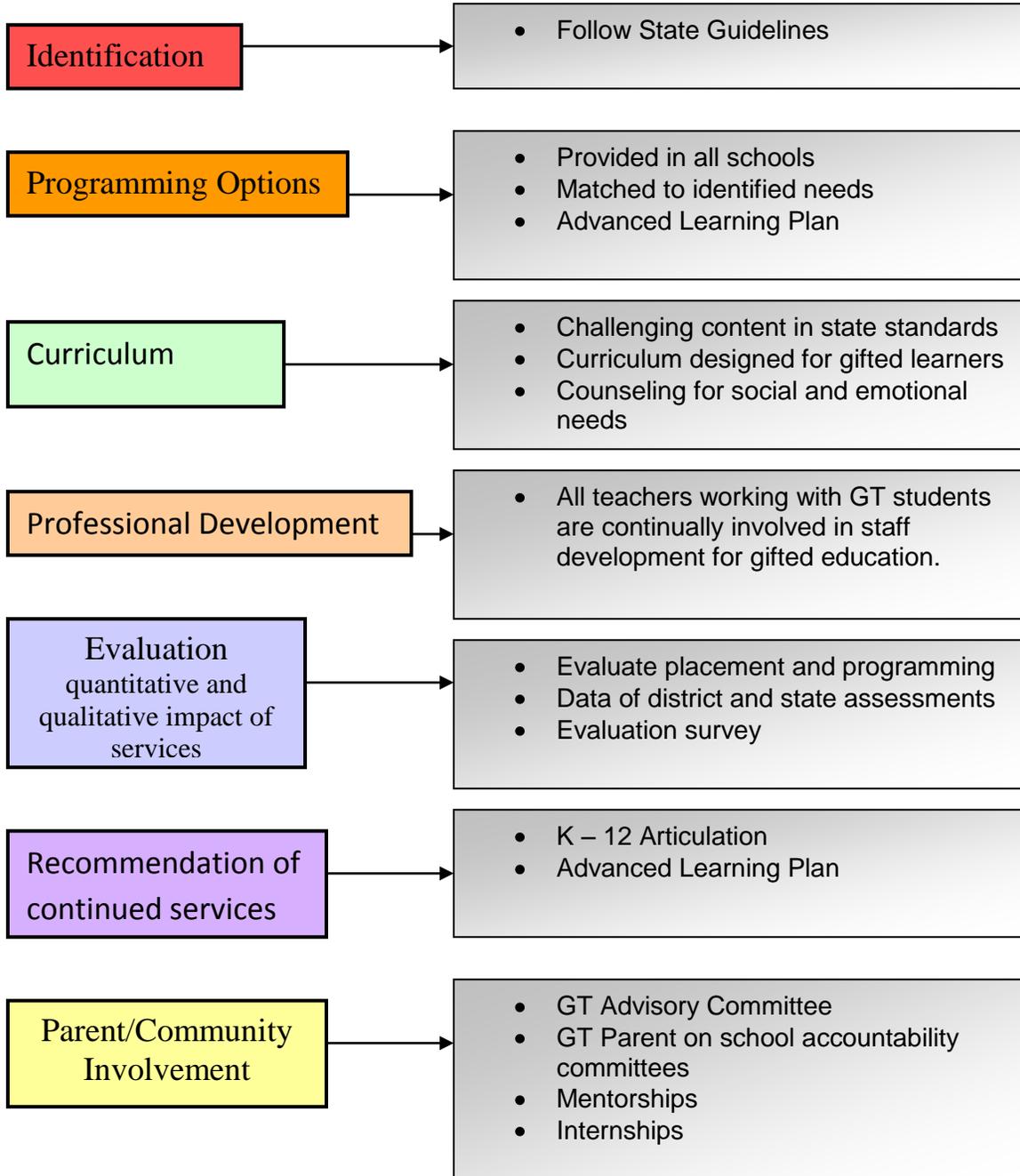
Exceptional children – educations programs – gifted students (HB 07-1244)

Requires a school district, a board of cooperative services, and the state charter school institute (an “administrative unit”) to adopt and submit to the department of education a program plan to identify and serve gifted children. Requires an administrative unit to implement its program plan to the extent that funds are provided for implementation. Requires each administrative unit to ensure that its constituent schools and school districts make available appropriate special provisions for gifted children to the extent that funds are provided for the special provisions.

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION MODEL AND GOALS

Mesa County Valley School District 51

Mesa County School District 51 recognizes and addresses the needs of gifted and talented students in accordance with the Exceptional Children's Act.



GOALS FOR GIFTED PROGRAMMING

1. All schools will follow district Gifted Education Department guidelines.
2. Each school will be supported with appropriate levels of staff to match identified gifted education needs with a minimum of a half time FTE.
3. Gifted education teachers will:
 - a. Participate in coursework towards gifted education highly qualified status: Colorado state endorsement or Master's degree.
 - b. Work with gifted students in their strength or interest areas and create for the child:
 - Challenging content in state standards
 - An understanding of social and emotional needs
 - Self-directed learning and self-developed projects
 - A safe environment for risk-taking in learning
 - Open-ended projects in passion areas
 - A climate for creativity
 - Real world learning opportunities
 - An understanding of process and organizational skills
 - c. Communicate with parents, teachers and administrators regarding students, district goals, and gifted education.
 - d. Provide building staff with ongoing staff development:
 - Identification
 - Programming
 - Social and emotional needs
 - Differentiation
 - e. Model and facilitate gifted education philosophies and strategies.
 - f. Advocate for gifted students.
4. Continuity of services available K – 12 based on the Advanced Learning Plan.
5. All staff working with gifted students will understand social and emotional needs and best practices for teaching gifted and talented students.
6. Gifted students will show commensurate growth.
7. Identification and programming will be equitable according to state guidelines.

Gifted and Talented
Identification Guidelines and Procedures
Mesa County Valley School District #51
Gifted and Talented Office

We are guided by our district Mission and Vision statements for gifted and talented programming:

Mission

To recognize and nurture gifted and talented youth so that they may reach their individual potential by rigorously pursuing and evaluating achievement of high academic and ethical standards in an appropriate environment.

Vision

All gifted students in district #51 are identified by their strength areas and needs. Educational programming is designed and implemented to match their identified needs. Student progress and achievement are monitored through ongoing dynamic assessment. Teachers of gifted students participate in professional development to increase knowledge, skills and understanding of gifted students and required instruction.

CDE guidelines

We follow Colorado Department of Education Exceptional Student Services guidelines for identification of gifted students. These guidelines include the following components, based on research and best practice:

- Define the gifted learner
- Provide equitable access to screening
- Use multiple sources, tools, and criteria for a body of evidence
- Communicate about the identification process
- Provide an ongoing process of identification and review
- Integrate identification with recommendations for services
- Provide professional development for identification of the gifted
- Align identification with services on a continuum

Purpose of Identification Procedures

To have:

- Consistent identification processes for gifted and talented learners throughout the district
- Clear identification procedures for implementation
- A process that lends credibility to identification of gifted and talented learners
- Increased numbers of students identified from underserved populations
- An identified plan for state reporting

Definition

(Colorado and District #51 definition)

Gifted children means those persons between the ages of five and twenty-one whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special provisions to meet their educational needs. Children under five who qualify may also be served. Gifted students are capable of high performance in any or a combination of these areas:

General intellectual ability
Specific academic aptitude
Creative, productive thinking
Leadership and human relationship skills
Visual and performing arts

Process (CDE)

Step 1 Increase understanding of giftedness.

- Involve stakeholders
- Know characteristics of gifted learners
- Describe programming options
- Define methods and timelines

Step 2 Implement a referral process

- Communicate regarding referral and screening
- Use multiple screening sources (parents, teachers)
- Inform parents

Step 3 Implement a screening process

- Ensure cultural fairness
- Include all students
- Set clear criteria

Step 4 Develop a student information profile with a body of evidence for all referred and screened students with criteria scores

- Gather additional data
- Note strengths
- Note interests
- Note prior experiences

Step 5 Recommend services

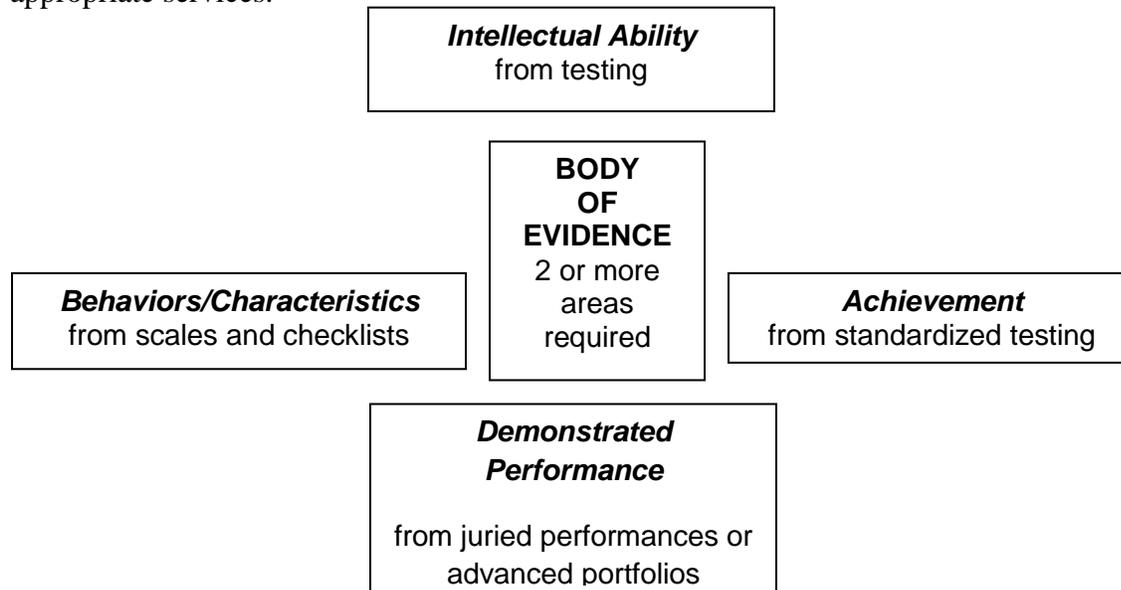
- Establish review team
- Make decisions from body of evidence
- Communicate results
- Describe appeals process

Step 6 Plan effective implementation of services

- Implement plan
- Review regularly

Creating a body of evidence

Every child identified as gifted will have a body of evidence to support instructional programming. The body of evidence will ensure that the student is known well. It will look beyond just one area for information, include a more diverse population, and match needs to appropriate services.



There are certain tests, scales, and checklists that may be used, and cutoff scores have been established for each of them in accordance with the developers' guidelines. All assessment tools used by the district have established reliability and validity and are being used for identification in well-established ways.

Accepted tools or assessments and criteria for their use are as follows:

Intellectual ability

- Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales (RIAS) – standard score 124 or above (95th percentile or higher)
- Ravens Progressive Matrices – 95th percentile or higher
- Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) – 95th percentile or higher on any battery
- Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children III or IV (WISC III/IV) – 95th percentile or higher on full-scale IQ or, if a statistically significant discrepancy exists between the indices (as determined by a school psychologist), the highest individual index is used

Other measures of intellectual ability from other districts/states or from private testing may be examined and used if deemed appropriate. Some examples include:

- Differential Ability Scales (DAS) – 95th percentile or higher
- Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test (UNIT) – 95th percentile or higher
- Stanford-Binet IQ Test – 95th percentile or higher (see guidelines for the WISC)
- Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test – 95th percentile or higher

*No test score may be used that is more than 2 years old, except for WISC scores, which are good for 3 years.

Behaviors and Characteristics

- Kingore Observation Inventory (KOI) – used with an entire class or group by a classroom teacher or, in instances where a student’s gifted behaviors have not been demonstrated except in a specialized setting, such as a music classroom, by that teacher; administered a minimum of two times; procedures and criteria for identification are described in the manual; separate inventories are available for K-3 and 4-8
- Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (Renzulli-Hartman Scales) – individual scales for Learning, Motivation, Creativity, Leadership, Art, and Music are available to be filled out by the teacher most familiar with the child’s best work in that area; nationally normed cutoff scores will be used until local norms have been developed, in accordance with the developers’ recommendations; valid for grades 3 and up. Ratings above the cutoff score are necessary on only one Renzulli scale in order for the criterion of this category to be met.

Other ratings scales such as the Gifted Evaluation Scale (GES-II) and Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scales (GATES) will be used if they are available. Norms will be applied.

*No checklist or ratings scale may be used that is more than 2 years old.

Achievement

- NWEA – any test in the 95th percentile or above
- CSAP – any test in the Advanced category
- Woodcock Johnson-Revised Tests of Achievement or Woodcock-Johnson III – 95th percentile or higher on Passage Comprehension, Applied Problems, or Writing Samples/Written Expression

Other norm-referenced, standardized achievement tests or state achievement tests will be used if performance is at comparable levels.

*No test score may be used that is more than 2 years old.

Demonstrated Performance

- Juried performance – in art or music competitions; in academic competitions such as Math Counts, science fairs, or essay contests judged by highly-trained professionals
- Advanced portfolio – body of consistent work in a content area that is judged by two or more educators reaching consensus to be two or more grade levels above the child’s actual grade; most likely to be used in social studies or science where little testing data are available, or in writing when uncommon talent and creativity are present that may not be judged adequately by testing, or in the arts

CDE identification components: Explanations and implications

Component 1: Define the gifted learner

- Stakeholders (parents, teachers, administrators, students, community members) read and understand the state/district definition of giftedness
- Stakeholder groups understand how the definition influences identification procedures and service options
- Definition is continuously communicated and viewed as the foundation for other program elements

Implications for future work:

1. Creation and dissemination of an identification handbook for educators clearly spelling out procedures and guidelines
2. Parent handbook that includes identification
3. Yearly staff meetings about gifted characteristics (already in District guidelines – will be implemented at every school beginning Fall, 2007) – GT teacher delivers at elementary and middle level; GT Coordinator will deliver at all high schools

Component 2: Provide equitable access to screening

- Proportionate representation of underserved populations in the district is strived for in the gifted identification process
- A study committee has reviewed the literature to identify possible reasons for the underserved status
- A culture-fair screening for all district learners is in place
- Parents of special populations are informed about G/T programming options and encouraged to refer learners
- Teachers, parents, and learners of the majority culture are informed of the reasons and strategies used to seek a more representative population among G/T learners

Implications for future work:

1. Continued search for a reliable, valid Spanish-language screening tool
2. Parent meetings in all schools to provide information about gifted characteristics and identification procedures (will begin Fall, 2007)

Component 3: Use multiple sources, tools, and criteria for a body of evidence

- No student is denied eligibility for G/T services based on one achievement or aptitude test score
- IQ test scores are not used for underserved populations unless the score indicates the learners are eligible for G/T services
- Assessments are selected so that each student has his/her own best chance to reveal exceptionalities regardless of background or area of talent
- Stakeholders understand that not every child identified as gifted in the district will have identical bodies of evidence for their giftedness

Implications for understanding:

1. Students need not have aptitude or achievement scores in their bodies of evidence
2. Ability scores can be used to include but not to exclude
3. Students who fail to perform well on universal screening with the Reynolds may be given the Ravens or the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) if teachers feel the student has high potential

4. Principals and teachers need to be aware of the reliability and validity of the tools used for identification
5. Multiple-source identification allows the district to identify twice-exceptional students, underachievers, and students gifted in the arts, in creativity, or in leadership as well as academically gifted students

Component 4: Communicate about the identification process

- Training for gifted education facilitators who lead implementation of the identification process is available
- A district handbook of information to parents includes the gifted identification process and timeline
- Descriptions of the gifted identification process and parent forms are translated into primary languages, if needed
- Training for classroom teachers is available to learn observational strategies for referrals and the nature and needs of gifted learners in the classroom
- Ongoing feedback for revision is solicited from teachers and parents regarding the value of information provided about the identification process, forms, and timeline

Implications for future work:

1. Written guidelines and procedures are being standardized this year
2. Parent handbook essential; has not been completed yet
3. Reynolds letters were translated into Spanish this year; other forms and letters will be as needed
4. Joint training with GT and ELL on characteristics of high potential speakers of other languages
5. Teachers encouraged to attend introductory gifted professional development courses for renewal or college credit
6. G/T Advisory Committee develops a plan to solicit identification process feedback from other groups besides G/T teachers

Component 5: Provide an ongoing process of identification and review

- Information about learners with exceptional abilities as early as pre-school is supported by the school district
- Ongoing information is provided to students, parents, and guardians about accessibility of screening and identification process along with a timeline
- Learners who were referred and/or screened in early years may be included in the identification process at a later time in the learner's development to accommodate the "late bloomer"
- The continuum of services for gifted learners is available to students with ability, interest, and motivation to participate, and to students who may benefit from challenge and encouragement while their achievement is being monitored for formal identification

Implications for future work and for understanding:

1. Joint professional development with early childhood and kindergarten teachers should be considered

2. Identification brochures are developed in English and Spanish and are available in all schools
3. Middle school G/T teachers and high school counselors and/or progress monitors know how to refer and screen students for possible identification
4. Able, interested, and motivated students may participate in G/T (on a space-available basis and as approved by their classroom teachers), honors, or AP classes as appropriate, even without being identified
5. Students may participate while their identification is pending if their response to G/T interventions is positive (as approved by classroom teachers)

Component 6: Integrate identification with recommendations for services

- Committee members who review the body of evidence for eligibility for gifted services are trained in recognizing the characteristics and needs of gifted learners and knowledgeable about the components of identification
- Decisions about gifted status are made on the basis of a body of evidence that includes information from more than one type and source
- The exceptional range of each assessment instrument has been identified and agreed upon by all members of the review committee

Implications for future work:

1. Flex teams (or identification teams, in schools that wish to separate these functions) should be trained in identification – guidelines have been written
2. Identification review committees know cutoff scores for each assessment

Component 7: Provide professional development for identification of gifted

- A record of schools/participants involved in professional development for the identifying of gifted and talented students is maintained
- Professional development sessions about gifted identification are provided annually for new and experienced teachers
- Professional development for all staff members about the characteristics of gifted learners is embedded in the district plan
- Annual increase is noted in the number of professional staff members working with gifted learners who are enrolled in graduate course work or formal training to increase their understanding and ability to identify and meet the needs of gifted learners
- Information about the Colorado Gifted-Education Specialist endorsement is available to all educators working with gifted learners
- Special professional development is provided about identification of gifted learners in specific population groups (as in the Exceptional Children’s Educational Act) represented within the community

Implications for future work:

1. Identification classes should be offered and encouraged for all staff
2. One person at each high school designated as a GT contact, attends all GT teachers’ meetings
3. More emphasis should be placed on the education and training of middle school and high school teachers who work with gifted students
4. Each year, schools should publicize the gifted endorsement process

5. A broad range of teachers should be encouraged to take classes about twice-exceptional students (gifted students with concomitant learning disabilities) and about minority gifted students, including gifted English language learners

Component 7: Align identification with services on a continuum

- Information about a continuum of services ranging from most integrated into the regular classroom to most individualized for special needs students is shared with all parents and teachers
- Each child identified as gifted has recommendations for services that are appropriate for individual needs and interests driven by his/her area/s of strength
- Gifted learners are encouraged to participate in opportunities outside and beyond the scope of services provided by the district

Implications for future work:

1. Details about the idea of a continuum of services should be incorporated into professional development for staffs and into the parent handbook
2. Service delivery options as well as specific accommodations recommended for students should match their identified potential and their interests
3. Teachers should be well-informed about community classes, contests, performances, mentoring possibilities, internships, and other opportunities for talent development – parents could assist in developing a resource book or online resource for these opportunities, as well as a list of available speakers

EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED LEARNERS

Schools are evaluated according to how well they are progressing in making the components listed below available to gifted and talented students. A plan for meeting the needs of identified gifted students in the building is turned in to the district gifted and talented office and the area director by May 1 for the following school year.

Component 1: Each school has a designated gifted and talented facilitator at a minimum of .5 FTE who will oversee each identified student's programming needs.

Indicator 1.1: The district gifted and talented coordinator participates in the selection of the designated facilitator.

Indicator 1.2: A child study team, led by the gifted and talented facilitator develops a learning plan (ALP) for each identified student, which addresses components 2-5.

Component 2: Gifted students are grouped in such a way as to spend learning time with students of similar abilities.

Indicator 2.1: Cluster grouping or regrouping for specific instruction is available for gifted students. Other options could include magnet schools and schools within schools.

Indicator 2.2: Gifted students are assigned to teachers who are most willing to accommodate for their special needs.

Indicator 2.3: Staff who work with gifted students have specialized training in differentiating curriculum and instructional strategies for the gifted.

Component 3: Acceleration is routinely used to differentiate instruction for gifted students.

Indicator 3.1: Subject area acceleration is utilized to provide appropriate instruction.

Indicator 3.2: Gifted students may enroll in advanced courses, irrespective of age or course location.

Indicator 3.3: Curriculum is routinely compacted for gifted students, with ongoing testing to assure mastery.

Indicator 3.4: Early enrollment and grade acceleration (skipping) are options for gifted students.

Indicator 3.5: Early admission, or concurrent enrollment, to college level courses is available for any student of any age whose ability requires that level or content.

EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED LEARNERS

Component 4: The regular school curriculum is extended for gifted students to provide greater depth and breadth than is typically available.

Indicator 4.1: Compacting and pacing allows more time for in-depth study of topics within the core curriculum areas and topics of the student's choice.

Indicator 4.2: Independent and small group study is used to extend curriculum for gifted students.

Indicator 4.3: Small group study may be facilitated by a regularly scheduled pull-out group at the elementary level. At the secondary level, a regularly scheduled class may be offered.

Component 5: The social and emotional development of gifted students is accommodated.

Indicator 5.1: Identified students are given a variety of experiences and opportunities to interact with each other in order to understand their own intellectual, social and emotional development.

Indicator 5.2: Gifted students and their parents or significant caregivers are provided information and support through an ongoing set of school-initiated communications and/or experiences.

Indicator 5.3: Administrators, counselors, psychologists and teachers receive training in the affective development of gifted youth and use this information in their work.

Indicator 5.4: Mentorships for gifted students are encouraged to support both academic and social development.

Indicator 5.5: Early and appropriate counseling and guidance is available to gifted students based on needs, which include, but are not limited to: at risk, twice exceptional, career awareness, ELL, gender and ethnic issues.

EFFECTIVE CURRICULUM FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED LEARNERS

Curriculum for gifted learners is an extension of the district curriculum and designed to honor the specific learning needs of high ability students. The following appropriate instructional processes are reflected in curriculum design for gifted students.

Component 1: District curriculum is systematically differentiated in the regular classroom and spans grades K-12.

Indicator 1.1: Curriculum identifies and assesses appropriate goals and outcomes.

Indicator 1.2: Students are pre-assessed for prior knowledge in units of study and subsequently provided with more challenging educational opportunities that reflect the results of the pre-assessment.

Indicator 1.3: Fewer repetitions are assigned to master the standards of learning.

Indicator 1.4: Flexible grouping is used to extend curriculum for gifted students. Grouping may be based on readiness, interest, and/or learning style.

Indicator 1.5: Curriculum provides earlier opportunities to develop research, organization and communication skills, based on readiness.

Component 2: Curriculum for gifted learners is more complex.

Indicator 2.1: Curriculum develops the higher level thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Indicator 2.2: Core curriculum is expanded by addressing a greater variety of perspectives.

Indicator 2.3: Curriculum is derived from multiple resources.

Component 3: Curriculum for gifted learners is challenging and offers greater depth.

Indicator 3.1: Concept development is integral to the curriculum.

Indicator 3.2: Concepts are studied in multiple applications and across disciplines.

Indicator 3.3: Opportunities are provided for students to conduct original research and produce meaningful products.

Indicator 3.4: Students are taught how to explain their reasoning.

Component 4: Instructional pace is flexible to allow for accelerated learning.

EFFECTIVE CURRICULUM FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED LEARNERS

Component 5: Curriculum for gifted learners includes creativity.

Indicator 5.1: Students are taught and have opportunities to use the skills of fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality.

Indicator 5.2: Students are taught creative problem-solving techniques.

Indicator 5.3: Activities are provided that allow students to choose the medium of expression. This could include art, music, drama, new media, etc.

Component 6: Curriculum addresses the unique affective needs of gifted students.

Indicator 6.1: Support is provided for students as they cope with frustrations in dealing with peer relationships, perfectionism, self-concept, motivation, twice exceptionality, acceleration, etc.

Indicator 6.2: Opportunities are provided to develop leadership skills.

GIFTED AND TALENTED STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Gifted learners are entitled to be served by professionals who have specialized preparation in gifted education. On-going and comprehensive staff development programs in gifted education are necessary to enhance existing knowledge and skills.

Component 1: On-going staff development in gifted and talented education is offered for all staff.

Indicator 1.1: A minimum of two graduate-level classes on topics related to gifted and talented education will be offered each year.

Indicator 1.2: District in-service time will be used to facilitate gifted and talented staff development.

Component 2: G/T teachers are highly qualified through a district staff development plan.

Indicator 2.1: District will provide information about opportunities for training and course work in gifted education.

Indicator 2.2: G/T teachers will achieve highly qualified status within 5 years.

Component 3: All staff members working with gifted students receive training in understanding characteristics and identification of G/T students.

Indicator 3.1: District will provide necessary support.

Component 4: Differentiating instruction for gifted students will be a component of the district's differentiation training.

Indicator 4.1: District will provide necessary support.

Indicator 4.2: Differentiation training will include study of best practices in the field with resources such as Susan Winebrenner's *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom*.

Professional Standards for Gifted and Talented Teachers

Standard I: *Knowledge of Content and Learning*

- Teachers understand the uneven development typical of gifted learners
- Teachers are able to implement differentiated curriculum in core academic areas, creativity, leadership and the visual arts
- Individuals involved in gifted education programming must obtain training and experience related to the elements of differentiation.
- Teachers know how to vary rates of instruction accompanied with varied degrees of complexity of content.
- Teachers understand criteria for selecting curricular options, instructional strategies, and materials that are based on the research regarding appropriateness for gifted learners.
- Teachers attend one of the local professional development opportunities provided annually on topics related to gifted education.
- Teachers attend at least one regional or state professional development event on gifted education each year.
- Teachers with primary responsibility for teaching gifted learners demonstrate competency in differentiating curriculum and instruction.

Standard II: *Assessment*

- Special populations of gifted learners are screened, such as students with dual exceptionalities or students who are underachieving.
- The selection and use of assessment instruments take into consideration the language in which the student is most fluent.
- Assessment instruments and procedures available in a child's native language are used when available and appropriate. An interpreter is used if the administrator for the assessment is not fluent in the child's language.
- Alternative assessments used for measuring intellectual and academic aptitudes, as well as performances used in the visual and performing arts are consistent with the expression of giftedness indicative of a given culture.
- Assessments are conducted to identify targeted student needs and to align those needs with optimal student placement in available services.

Standard III: *Communication*

- The GT teacher will work with staff from general education to plan educational programming for gifted learners that is integrated with the core school curricula, but is appropriately differentiated.

- Counselors and GT teachers meet routinely with parents of gifted learners to develop good rapport so that they can work together more effectively if a student's achievement drops.
- Staff who work in specialized programming service areas, such as special education, should be provided information about gifted learners they might encounter, such as students with dual exceptionalities.
- GT teachers share information with all appropriate staff members (i.e., teachers, counselors, administrators) annually to disseminate information regarding student nomination procedures, characteristics of gifted students, and gifted education services. Information regarding the characteristics and behaviors associated with giftedness includes specific examples that will enable informed nominations.

Standard IV: *Diversity*

- Teachers help provide specialized programs for advanced studies and career development to economically disadvantaged gifted learners.
- Gifted learners from at-risk populations who are not performing well academically because of factors other than intellectual ability receive assistance from teachers to strengthen those areas that prevent them from performing at higher levels.
- Counselors and teachers advocate for a school policy that allows underachieving gifted learners to be retained, rather than removed from gifted education programming.

Standard V: *Professional Responsibilities*

- Teachers offer counseling that specifically helps gifted learners in understanding and accepting their particular developmental differences.
- Upon initial involvement in gifted education programming, teachers help gifted learners participate in activities designed to help them understand themselves as gifted persons.
- Teachers teach gifted learners how to advocate for themselves and solve some of their own academic and socio-emotional problems.
- Teachers provide an in-service on the nature of giftedness and accompanying educational and psychological needs to *all* staff members annually.
- Prior to the implementation of system-wide student identification procedures, teachers provide the staff at their school staff development activities related to understanding and recognizing giftedness in the student population.

Documentation: Standards for Teachers of Gifted Students

Standard 1 – **Content**

- Evidence of advanced knowledge (i.e. transcript).
- Lesson plans or curriculum units that provide evidence of acceleration or extension materials.
- Student products that reflect evidence of extended learning.
- Student products that reflect evidence of broad-based issues and themes.
- Evidence of understanding needs of the diverse/underserved gifted learner.

Standard 2 – **Instruction**

- Evidence of instructional planning that differentiates for gifted learners.
- Implementation of strategies to differentiate for gifted learners.
- Evidence that professional development has influenced classroom practice.

Standard 3 – **Relationships**

- Documentation of collaborative efforts (letters, memos or other documents) with other teachers, parents and administration to meet the needs of gifted and talented learners.
- Documentation of collaborative efforts with other specialists in the field to provide services and/or develop understanding.
- Evidence of collaboration with other teachers and/or parents to provide services and/or understanding of the diverse/underserved gifted learner.

Standard 4 – **Professional Growth**

- Evidence of personal philosophy of gifted and talented learners.
- Written goal statements related to the education of gifted and talented learners.
- Professional Development (course syllabus, workshop overview, transcripts, professional growth log, etc.)
- Documentation of self-assessment

Standard 5 – **Assessment**

- Evaluation of student assessments for identification and performance.
- Professional development related to assessment.
- Educator or parent written commentary
- Evidence of the use of assessment data

Standard 6 – **Professional Conduct and Leadership**

- Membership in a professional organization related to gifted education.
- Professional development
- Participation in professional activities related to gifted education (committee membership, task force membership, parent activities.)
- Documentation that educational practices are based on research and/or current literature (e.g. lesson plans, curriculum plans, assessments, products, parent communications.)

- Participation in the development, implementation and/or revision of district policies and GT programming.