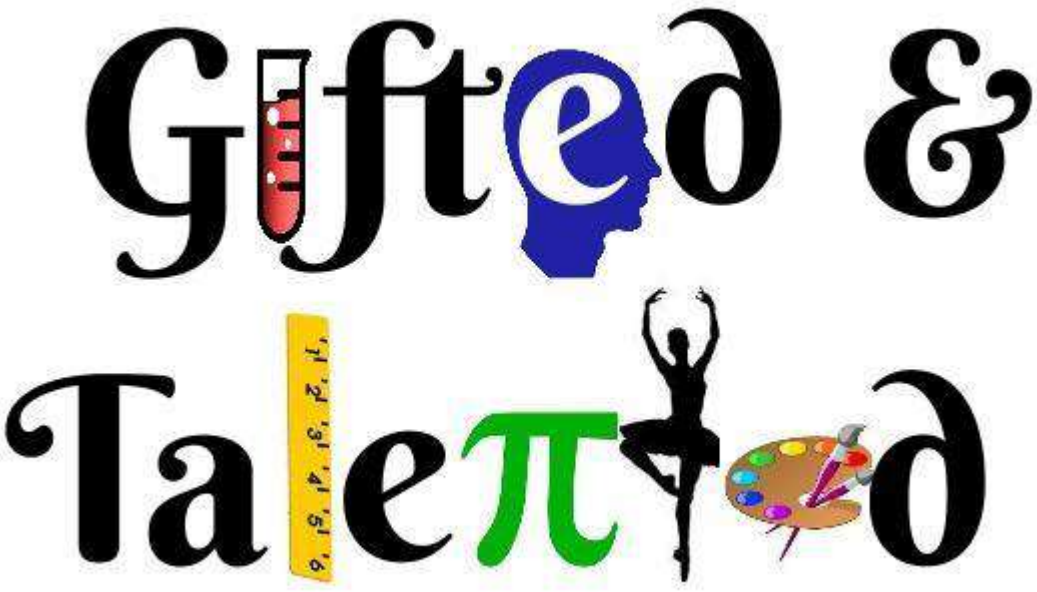
MORGAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-3
FORT MORGAN, COLORADO

Gifted Services

Handbook



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This handbook is a guide to gifted education in Morgan County School District RE-3.

District Philosophy

Morgan County School District RE-3 supports an educational program that seeks to develop the maximum learning potential of all students. It is our responsibility to discover, nurture, and develop the abilities of our total school population. Within this framework, there must be a range of specific, differentiated educational options for academically gifted students.

The learning needs of students who exhibit gifted behaviors are different from other students of their age, experience, or environment. Realizing that students exhibiting exceptional abilities exist in all ethnic, geographic, and socio-economic groups, we are committed to meeting diverse needs through providing an array of service options.

Definition of Giftedness

"Gifted and talented children" means 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.*

CDE, 2010

District Goal

It is the goal of the district to provide a quality learning experience for each and every child. These experiences will be geared to meet the unique needs of the student and allow them to develop and maximize their potential.

- *Identify the learning needs of academically gifted students to include the academic abilities of youth within culturally diverse groups who display potential for outstanding performance.*
- *Develop educational experiences which provide appropriately differentiated learning opportunities for identified students.*
- *Provide staff support and training to improve services to students.*
- *Conduct ongoing reviews of the program plan and outcomes for students to make modifications for improvement.*

District Responsibility for Gifted Services

Students identified as being gifted require differentiated educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. These services shall be outlined in an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) constructed for each student and reviewed annually by student, parents, teachers, principal, etc.

Gifted Coordinator: Role and Responsibilities

Qualifications: The district's Gifted Coordinator must hold a valid teaching licensure and an endorsement or Master's degree in gifted education. Paraprofessionals are not funded with gifted grant funds and are not sole instructional providers.

Role: The Gifted Coordinator shall be an advocate for gifted students in the school district as well as an instructional resource for educators.

Responsibilities: The Gifted Coordinator's responsibilities include but are not limited to: managing the program plan, allocating financial resources to various programs and activities, providing gifted education professional development, and maintaining proper documentation in compliance with Colorado law. Many staff members are involved in providing appropriate instruction, counseling, and programming for gifted students. While it is the coordinator's responsibility to coordinate these efforts with appropriate staff members (classroom teachers, school counselors, and enrichment instructors), delivery of these services is a collaborative effort.

Reporting

Morgan County School District has a current annual plan through the UIP Gifted Addendum on file at the Department of Education. As such, the district also complies with the requirements of accreditation with regard to gifted student achievement, identification of disparities in data, instructional goals, growth, and reporting. As part of annual reporting, Morgan County School District also submits an annual budget proposal to the Department of Education and maintains accurate records for annual reporting including information such as: number of identified students by grade, gender, ethnicity, free and reduced lunch, area(s) of giftedness, twice exceptionality, and percent of students in the district that are identified for gifted services.

Myths/Facts of Gifted Education

MYTHS	FACTS
All children are gifted.	While it is true that all children are special and unique with their own relative strengths and weaknesses, not all children are gifted. Giftedness refers to extraordinary, exceptional, beyond-the-norm abilities and talents. It refers to students who perform, or show the potential to perform, at a higher level than other children of their age, experience, or environment.
Gifted programs offer special treatment for only some students.	Gifted education is about meeting the academic and affective needs of students whose abilities and knowledge exceed what is being taught in the regular classroom.
Gifted kids are smart enough to learn by themselves.	Gifted children require the same professional education and emotional support as other children, but the support must be appropriate to their needs and at their level.
Gifted kids are usually from upper, middle class professional families.	Gifted children are found in all socioeconomic groups in proportionate numbers.
Gifted learners are enthusiastic about school and academic work.	Gifted learners may actually struggle in a school environment for various reasons: the curriculum may lack appropriate challenge, the student may have a learning difficulty or a unique learning style.

Indicators of Giftedness

BRIGHT CHILD	GIFTED LEARNER
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Is attentive	Is mentally & physically involved
Has good ideas	Has wild, silly ideas
Works hard	Plays around, yet tests well
Answers the questions	Discusses in detail, elaborates
Is in top group	Is beyond the group
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings & opinions
Requires 6-8 repetitions for mastery	Requires 1-2 repetitions for mastery
Understands ideas	Constructs abstracts
Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences
Completes assignments	Initiates projects
Is receptive	Is intense
Copies accurately	Creates a new design
Enjoys school	Enjoys learning
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
Is pleased with own learning	Is highly self-critical
Enjoys straightforward sequential presentation	Thrives on complexity

Referrals for Gifted and Talented Identification

Each year school personnel will conduct a search of all students K-12 for potential candidates for gifted services. This search is a review of available information on all students to determine who may need further assessment. Standardized test scores for all students are screened for evidence of exceptionally high levels of performance on achievement tests. Additionally, a brief screener assessment will be administered in the fall of each year to all second grade students and new students in grades 3 and 4. Students are assessed using this screener process again in 6th grade to ensure that all students have had the opportunity to demonstrate potential. This test is an ability screener used as indicator of possible giftedness. The comprehensive search will increase equity in identification, particularly for those students from diverse cultural, racial, and economic populations.

Students may be referred in grades K-12 on the basis of:

- Observation
- Performance
- Achievement
- Aptitude

Any student may be recommended for gifted assessment by:

- *Parents*
- *Teachers*
- *Counselors*
- *Administrators*
- *Peers*
- *Self*

Referrals are accepted at any time throughout the school year. A referral form can be found on the Gifted and Talented page of the district website. All referral forms should be submitted to the Gifted Coordinator. Referrals should be accompanied by evidence of above grade level performance and/or gifted characteristics/behaviors. Typically, an MTSS meeting is held to gather this evidence and confirm the need for further assessment. With each referral, a letter is sent to the student's legal guardians explaining the referral, the assessment process, and requesting formal permission to test the student.

Areas of Identification

ECEA Rules, revised in 2015, specify the areas for gifted identification in Colorado. A student maybe identified in one **or more** of these domains(areas):

General Intellectual Ability

Intellectual ability is exceptional capability or potential recognized through cognitive processes (e.g., memory, reasoning, rate of learning, spatial reasoning, ability to find and solve problems, ability to manipulate abstract ideas and make connections).

Specific Academic Aptitude

Specific academic aptitude is exceptional capability or potential in an academic content area(s) (e.g., a strong knowledge base or the ability to ask insightful, pertinent questions within the discipline). Academic areas include but are not limited to: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and World Languages.

Specific Talent Aptitude in Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Musical, Dance or Psychomotor Abilities

Visual arts, performing arts, musical, dance or psychomotor abilities are exceptional capabilities or potential in talent areas (e.g., art, drama, music, dance, body awareness, coordination, and physical skills).

Creative Ability

Creative or productive thinking is exceptional capability or potential in mental processes (e.g., critical thinking, creative problem solving,humor, independent/original thinking, and/or products).

Leadership Ability

Leadership is the exceptional capability or potential to influence and empower people (e.g., social perceptiveness, visionary ability, communication skills, problem solving, inter-/intra-personal skills, and a sense of responsibility).

Identification Process

The identification process uses a body of evidence approach to help teachers, counselors, principals, and parents make appropriate, responsible decisions about the learning needs of high-ability students. (Refer to pages 16-19.)

The program plan shall describe the assessment process used by the Administrative Unit (AU) for identifying students who meet the definition specified in ECEA, section 12.01(16) and for identifying the educational needs of gifted students.

The assessment process shall recognize a student's exceptional abilities or potential, interests, and needs in order to guide student instruction and individualized planning and programming. Students must qualify on three measures in at least two different areas of testing (Cognitive, Achievement, Behavior Characteristics, and Demonstrated Performance) to be identified as gifted and talented. Scores at the 95th percentile or above are considered within the range of giftedness. Scores within the exceptional/distinguished range are also considered within the range of giftedness. In traditionally underrepresented student groups and visual/performing arts student groups or talent pools, identification may require the collection of student information over time, using additional data points from a response to intervention approach.

Upon referrals in the talent areas, students receive documentation regarding portfolio requirements and rubrics to be used in portfolio evaluation. Identification in the talent areas is addressed via portfolio reviews by local artists and/or musicians or other experts in the field with the use of a rubric to determine advanced or distinguished ability or talent. The Gifted Services department uses rubrics supplied by the Colorado Department of Education Gifted Education Department. The identification team will also take into account top ranking at state or national contests or a distinguished juried performance. Cognitive and creativity assessments are also

administered as part of the body of evidence.

Not meeting criteria on a single assessment tool shall not prevent further data collection or consideration for gifted identification, if other indicators suggest exceptional potential as observed in a body of evidence.

All qualifying data points in a body of evidence must be regarded equally. Placing greater emphasis on a specific test or awarding more points to a test score above a specific percentile is not considered an ethical practice in gifted identification. This practice is often referred to as a "weighted matrix." This creates an opportunity for unintentional bias and is unfavorable in culturally different students (Ford, 2013). Additionally, this could be a violation of a student's civil rights. No one assessment or source of information should carry more weight than another (Johnsen, 2004).[1]

After a sufficient body of evidence has been collected, the review team, or gifted identification team, will review all assessment and observation scale scores. The review team must consist of **at least one** member who is trained in gifted identification practices and procedures. Based on guidelines as outlined on pages 16-19, the identification team will determine eligibility for gifted services. Within 30 days of the referral, parents/guardians will be notified in writing regarding a determination of their child's status.

Once a student has been identified, programming continues through graduation. Instead of eliminating gifted students who underachieve from gifted programming, efforts should be made to target the source(s) of the students' underachievement and develop individualized interventions based on this information (Rubenstein, et al., 2012).[2]

If the identification team determines that a child is not eligible for gifted services and the child's assessment scores are above 80th percentile, the child will be placed on Watch & Enrich, a talent pool designation. Students who are designated in this way will continue to be monitored and provided enrichment opportunities in regular and/or ability grouped classrooms.

[1] Johnsen, S. K. (2004). *Identifying gifted students: A practical guide*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
[2] Rubenstein, L. D., Siegle, D., Reis, S. M., McCoach, D. B., & Burton, M. G. (2012). A complex quest: The development and research on underachievement interventions for gifted students. *Psychology in Schools*, *49*, 678-694.

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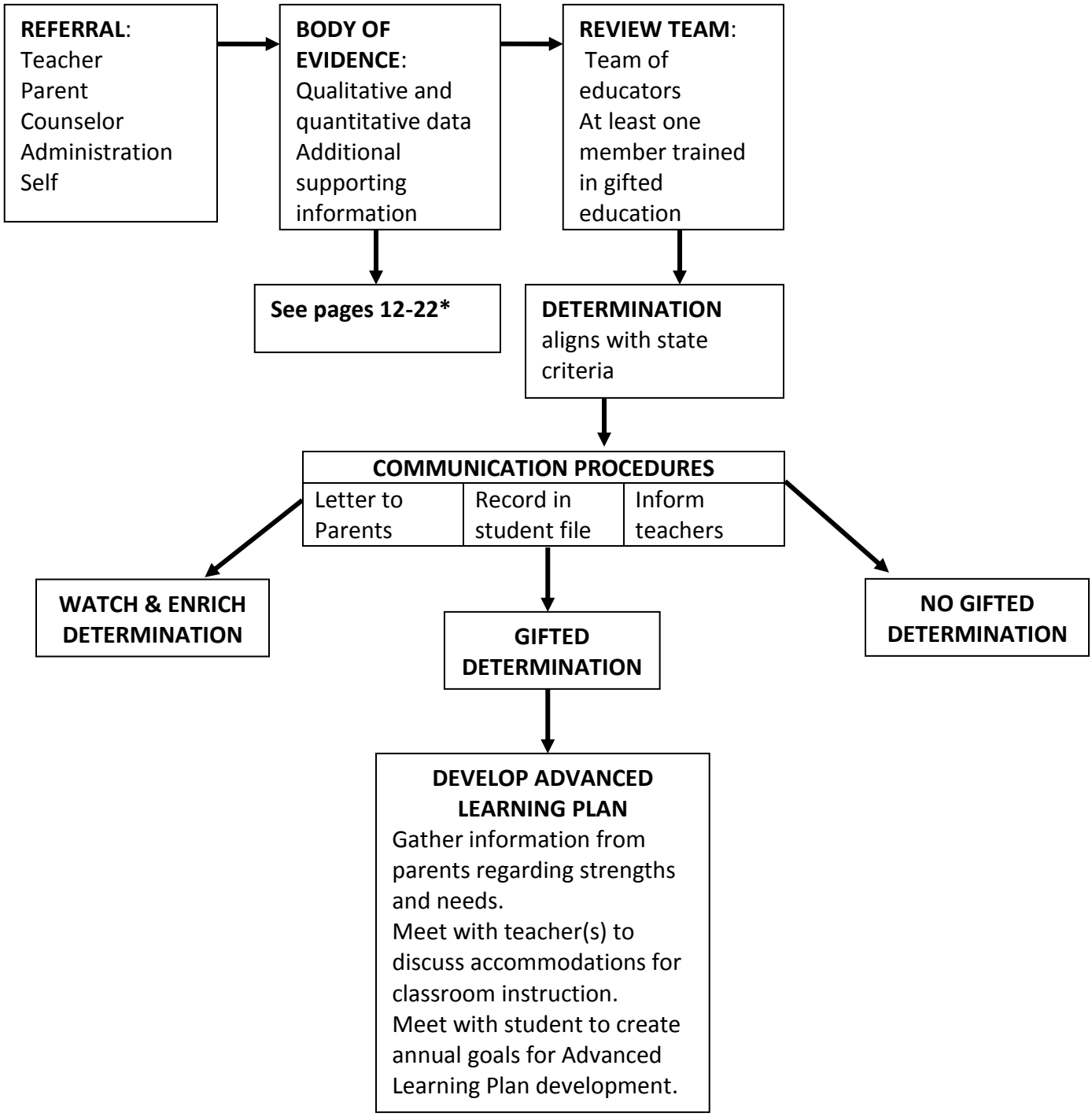


Body of Evidence

A body of evidence should consist of quantitative and qualitative measures to determine if a student meets the criteria for gifted identification **and** to build a student profile of strengths and interests.

Quantitative assessment provides numerical scores or ratings that can be analyzed or quantified. Qualitative assessment provides interpretive and descriptive information about certain attributes, characteristics, behaviors or performances. The former is considered objective, while the latter is considered subjective.

Qualitative Evidence	Quantitative Evidence
• Rubric • Performance • Observation • Checklist • Interview	• Norm-referenced test (e.g. cognitive and achievement assessments) • Criterion-referenced tests (e.g. state assessment and curriculum based measures)

While some of the data in a body of evidence will be used to meet the **criteria** for gifted identification, other data or information may be used to build a learner profile for the purpose of developing appropriate programming options.

Criteria are the rules for evaluating a level of exceptionality for identification assessment. The 95th percentile ranking and above describes the rule for demonstration of exceptionality on a norm-referenced standardized test. Distinguished/advanced performance levels may describe exceptionality on qualitative tools, portfolios, performance assessment, and criterion-referenced tests.

Criteria are not cut-off scores. Typically, cut-off score terminology is used in reference to practices that eliminate students from access to further identification assessment because a single test result or score did not provide evidence at the exceptional level. Colorado does not adhere to cut-off score practices. Review teams should continue to explore additional data to reveal student strengths.

A variety of measures are contained within a body of evidence. A measure is the tool; a metric is the numeric result of using that measure. A cognitive test is an example of a measure that assesses general intelligence. This test provides a metric to express a level of cognitive ability.

Although the criteria for identification maybe met by cognitive assessment data, a comprehensive body of evidence is still collected and examined to determine a student's strength area, affective needs and appropriate programming option

Qualifying Data	Additional Data
• Norm-referenced test • Criterion-referenced test • Norm-referenced observation scale • Performance evaluation	• Anecdotal records • Interview • Observation • Checklist

Collection of data for a body of evidence (BOE) includes, but is not limited to assessment results from multiple sources and multiple types of data (i.e., qualitative and quantitative data about achievement, cognitive ability, performance, parent and teacher input, motivation and observations of gifted characteristics/behaviors). The body of evidence contains data to identify the strength area(s) according to the **definition** of gifted children, and also determines appropriate programming services. A body of evidence may consist of the following assessments:

Cognitive Tests

Cognitive tests are designed to measure a student's general intellectual ability. Such tests do not measure specific academic aptitude in various content areas such as reading or math. Many general intelligence tests and checklists include items that assess both fluid reasoning, such as analogies, block designs, and pattern arrangements, and crystallized abilities, such as mathematics problems, vocabulary, and comprehension of reading passages (Johnsen, 2004).[3]

For example, the *Cognitive Abilities Test* (CogAT) is divided into three batteries: Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal. An exceptional score on the nonverbal battery does not mean the student should be identified gifted in the area of nonverbal. "**Nonverbal**" is not one of the categories for identification. An exceptional score on the nonverbal battery indicates a student demonstrates a strong command in general or fluid reasoning and can conceptualize at an advanced level using the format of pictures and images.

When only cognitive ability assessment data meets criteria in a body of evidence (95th percentile or above), the review team may determine that the student is identified with general or specific intellectual ability. This exception to the typical body of evidence is critical in identifying students with exceptional ability who may not yet be performing academically or demonstrating strong interests in the school environment. This student might lack motivation or have gaps in learning thereby requiring additional guidance and educational support services. Although the criteria for identification may be met by cognitive assessment data, a comprehensive body of evidence is still collected and examined to determine a student's strength area and academic and affective needs for goal setting and

[3] Johnsen, S. K. (2004). *Identifying gifted students: A practical guide*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

programming as recorded on an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). This general intellectual identification meets the condition of portability.

Creativity Tests

Assessment data from standardized, norm-referenced creativity tests are used to determine if a student demonstrates gifted ability in the area of creativity. Creative aptitude is demonstrated by a student scoring 95th percentile or above on norm-referenced creativity tests (e.g., Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking [TTCT], Profile of Creative Abilities [PCA]).

Some students who do not achieve qualifying scores on cognitive or achievement tests may still demonstrate many characteristics of giftedness. Many gifted traits and behaviors are evidence of the high level of creativity typical of many gifted students. To aid in identifying students who do not score at or above the 95th percentile on cognitive or achievement measures, creativity tests may be useful in building a body of evidence for formal identification, because these tests add validity to the observed creative characteristics.

Achievement Tests

Assessment data from standardized, criterion- and norm-referenced tests are utilized to determine if a student demonstrates gifted ability in a specific **academic** area. Specific academic aptitude areas include reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and world language. Specific talent aptitude areas include visual arts, performing arts, music and dance. Specific academic and talent aptitude is demonstrated by a student scoring at the advanced/distinguished level on criterion-referenced assessments and/or 95th percentile or above on norm-referenced achievement tests. Districts may use alternative achievement tests to determine advanced academic competence.

If a student does not demonstrate exceptional general intellectual ability from a cognitive assessment, but does demonstrate exceptional abilities in a specific academic area, best practice recommends observing and collecting data over time and not moving to formal gifted identification based on achievement data collected from just one grade level. Typically, students who are identified as gifted in the Specific Academic Aptitude area who do **not** demonstrate exceptional general intellectual ability are not identified until multiple achievement data points support the academic determination.

When a young child (kindergarten-third grade) demonstrates specific academic potential without a qualifying cognitive score, differentiated pace and depth of instruction can be used to build additional data over time to identify exceptionality. The Colorado READ Act requires that teachers assess the literacy development of all kindergarten-third grade students. Data from these reading competency tests are used to determine if a student has a significant reading deficiency and may be included in a student learning profile, but are **not** used as qualifying data for gifted identification.

Behavior Observation Scales

Gifted students often demonstrate characteristics that lead to a referral for the gifted identification

process. Through the use of these scales, educators and parents can identify outstanding talent by observing students in one or more settings that enable them to display their abilities. Characteristics such as leadership, motivation, memory, reasoning, creativity and sense of humor become a focus rather than academic aptitude measured by many of the more traditional tests students encounter in school.

Norm-referenced observation scales are used as qualifying data for gifted identification. These scales are a valid and reliable way for educators and parents to evaluate gifted behavior characteristics. Examples of qualifying measures are the *Scales for Identifying Gifted Students* (SIGS), *Gifted Evaluation Scale* (GES), and the *Gifted Rating Scales* (GRS). However, other methods of obtaining information on gifted characteristics may also be utilized to develop a student profile. Informal tools, such as an interview or questionnaire, can provide beneficial information to better understand a student's strengths and interests. These tools provide parents the opportunity to give important input about their child during the assessment process.

Districts may use quantitative and qualitative measures to collect behavioral data. Certain observation scales have been very successful in recognizing students with potential from under-represented populations. Examples of such scales are the *Kingore Observation Inventory* (KOI) or *Teacher Observation of Potential in Students* (TOPS).

Research-based practices have been created for teachers to implement when observing student behaviors during specific planned experiences. Data from these scales are used to determine students who might require additional assessments and/or to develop a talent pool. **Data collected from a KOI or TOPS provide information for the student profile but are not used as qualifying data for identification.**

It is important to note that some educators have particular stereotypical expectations of how gifted students should perform, therefore, [eliminating] certain students who do not demonstrate the more typical gifted characteristics (Johnsen, 2004)[4]. If these types of data are collected, it is important that one recognize that different genders, cultures, races, ethnicities, and social classes have different ways of communicating that may impact an observer's/ interviewer's perspective on what behaviors constitute giftedness (NAGC, 2008)[5].

Performance Evaluation

Gifted ability is often not measured on a specific assessment, but rather demonstrated through some type of performance. Identifying a student with exceptional abilities in a content area or a talent area such as art, music, dance, psychomotor, creativity or leadership requires an evaluation of performance.

[4] Johnsen, S. K. (2004). *Identifying gifted students: A practical guide*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
[5] National Association for Gifted Children. (2008). *The role of assessments in the identification of gifted students (Position statement).* Washington, DC: Author.
http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/Position%20Statement/Assessment%20Position%20Statement.pdf

There are many types of performance data that might be utilized to develop a body of evidence. These may include:

- **Juried Performance:** Students often participate in events within school or outside of school that are judged and evaluated. Students receive some type of rating based on their performance. Data from a valid and reliable juried performance may be considered as qualifying evidence if the jury consists of a team of experts in their field. An example of such a performance would be a student selected for a statewide choral group or debate team.

- **Contest/Competition:** Many contests and competitions are available to students within school or outside of school. Top placement in a regional, state or national competition may be considered as a qualifying measurement for gifted identification. An example of such a performance would be a student finishing first in a state science fair or Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) categorical competition.

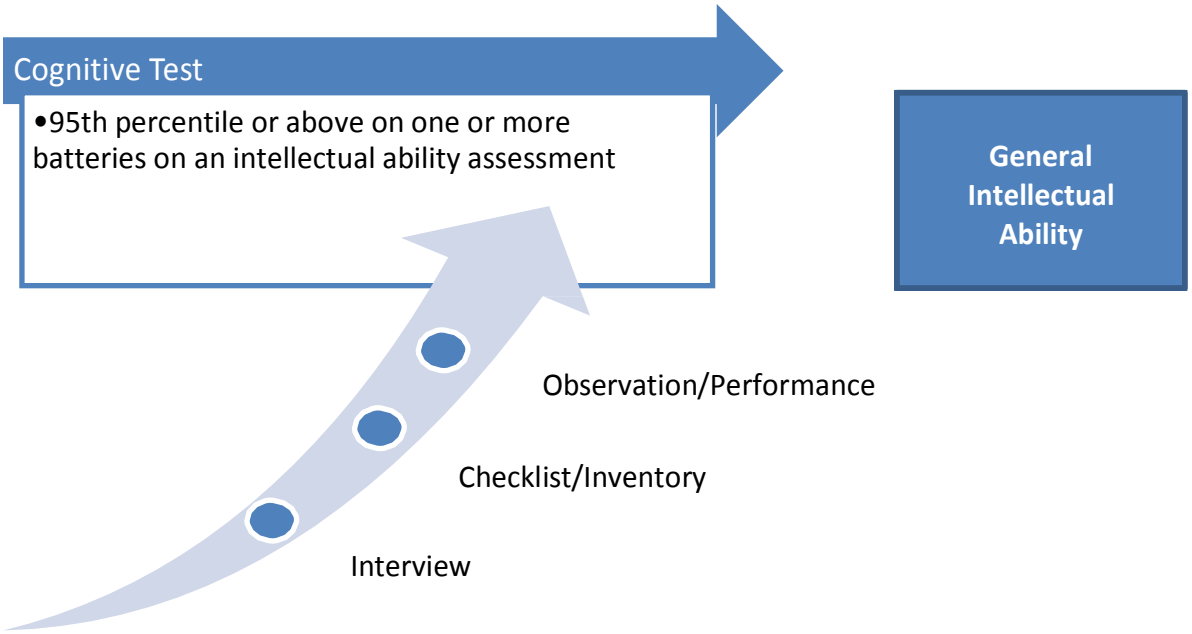
- **Portfolio:** Over time, some students develop a portfolio of work that might be evaluated by a team of experts in the field. The advanced/distinguished rating of a portfolio may be considered as qualifying evidence for gifted identification. A valid and reliable rubric is used in the evaluation of a portfolio to ensure consistency and equal opportunity. An example would be a collection of a student's art work throughout elementary school and the portfolio being evaluated by a committee of district art teachers and local artists.

- **Classroom Performance:** Classroom teachers are often critical in providing qualitative data about a student's performance within the classroom. As the curriculum experts, teachers can identify those students working above their same-age peers. Evidence of above grade-level performance builds a student's profile. An example of this might be a fourth-grade student who has already demonstrated mastery of fourth and fifth grade math standards and has successfully completed all the pre-algebra modules from an online math program. Advanced classroom performance must be measured through examples of above grade-level work. Earning an "A" in a class does not necessarily indicate exceptional performance. Grades lack standardization and are influenced significantly by students' motivation, classroom behavior, personal appearance, and study habits. Further, teachers' knowledge of students' IQ scores, income, SES, area of residence, and family structure contribute to stereotypes by teachers that are frequently characterized by low and negative expectations (Ford, 2013)[6].

[6] Ford, D. Y. (2013). *Recruiting and retaining culturally different students in gifted education.* Waco, TX: Prufrock Press

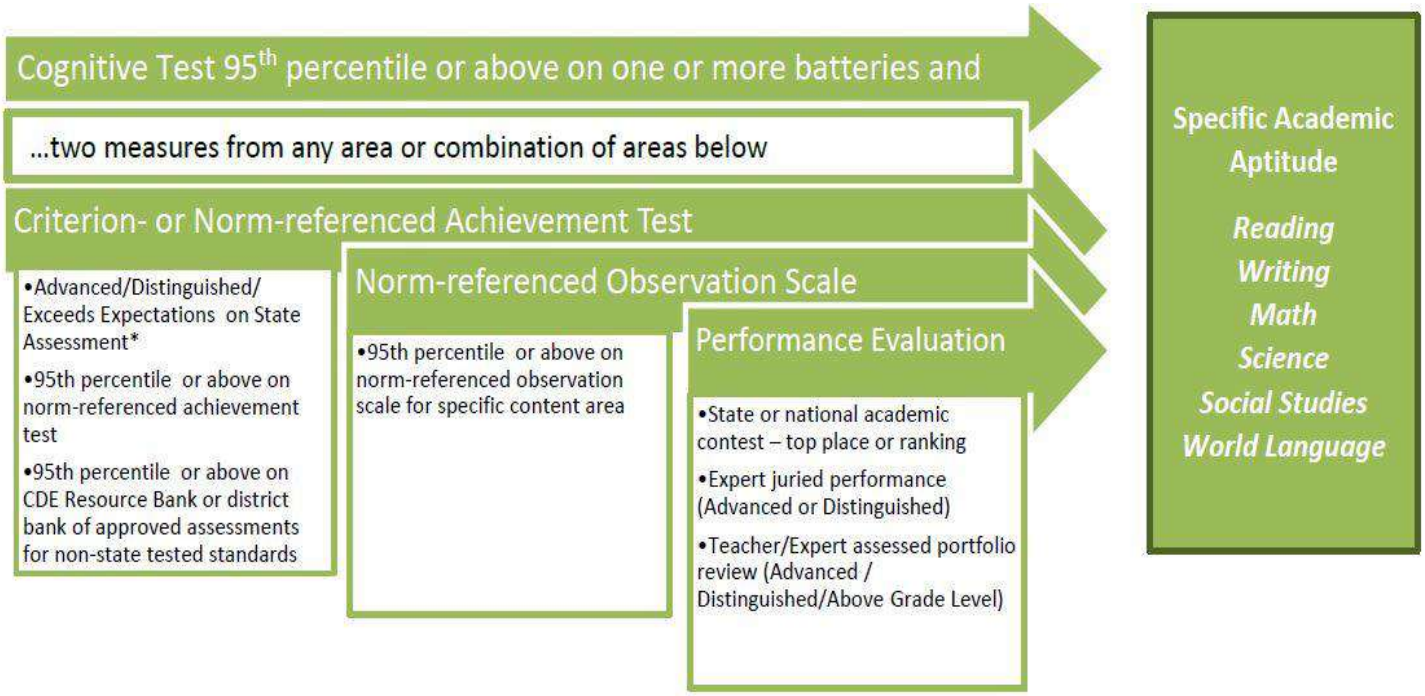
Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Ability

Students may qualify in the area of general intellectual ability with a score of 95th percentile or above on one or more batteries of a cognitive test. The determination team must collect and review additional data for the body of evidence to develop the student's learning profile. A gifted determination based solely on a cognitive assessment score, without any other qualifying data, is the **exception**. A review team should use their professional judgment to determine if identification is appropriate by examining supplemental or non-traditional information collected through interviews, observations or performances beyond the academic content areas. Students from underrepresented populations may not demonstrate gifted abilities through the use of traditional assessment data. When only cognitive ability assessment data meets criteria in a body of evidence (95th percentile or above), the review team **may** determine that the student is identified with general or specific intellectual ability. This meets portability requirements.



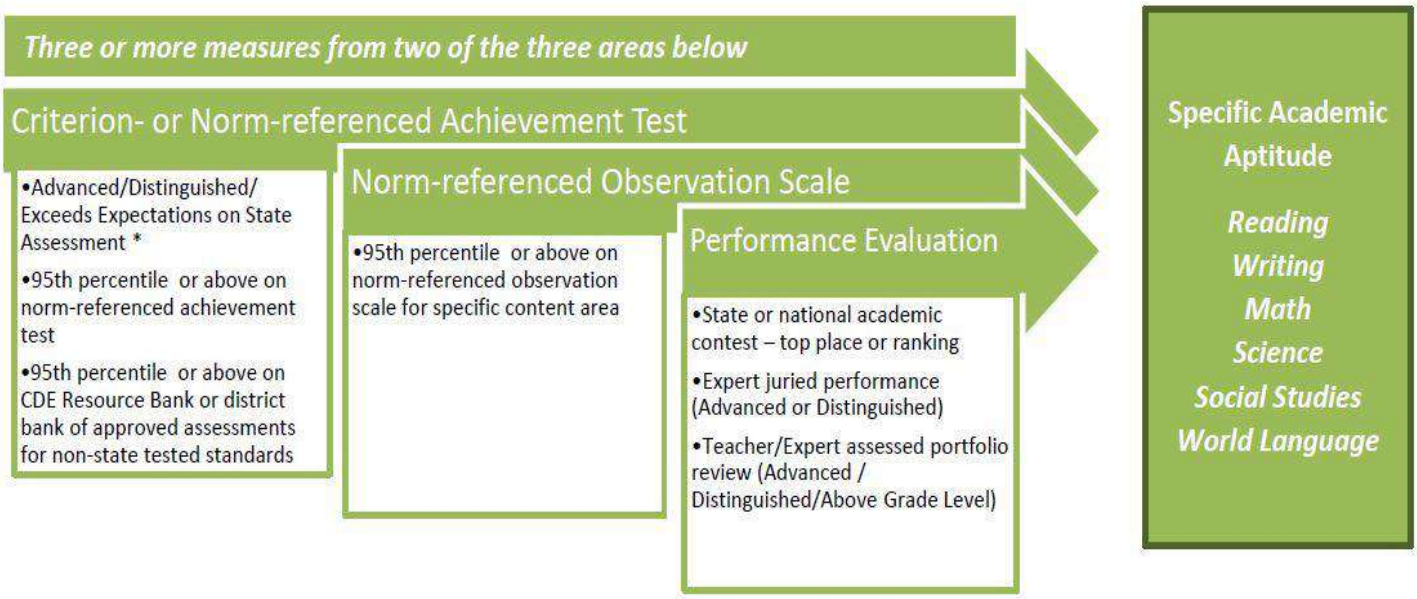
Area of Giftedness: Specific Academic Aptitude (with Cognitive)

Content areas for specific academic aptitude include: reading, writing, math, science, social studies and world language. **Two pathways may lead to identification in the area of specific academic aptitude.** First, a student may score 95th percentile or above on one or more batteries of a cognitive test and demonstrate aptitude on two specific academic measures.



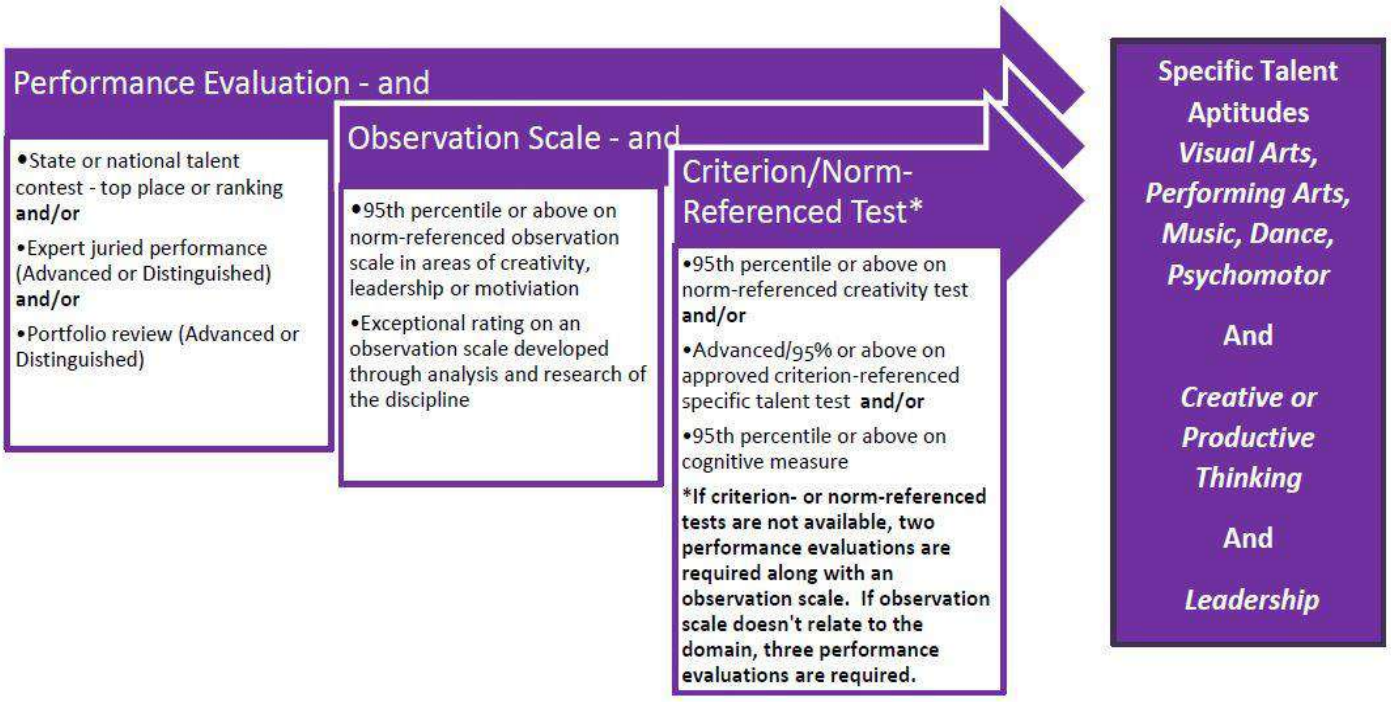
Area of Giftedness: Specific Academic Aptitude (without Cognitive)

Content areas for specific academic aptitude include: reading, writing, math, science, social studies and world language. **Two pathways may lead to identification in the area of specific academic aptitude.** Second, a student may not score 95th percentile or above on a cognitive assessment. However, a review team may determine a **comprehensive** body of evidence demonstrates gifted academic ability. Content specific measurement tools to meet criteria for identification should include at least three or more measures from two of the three areas below. When cognitive data does not meet gifted criteria, identification in a specific academic aptitude requires an examination of multiple data points and trends over time.



Area of Giftedness: Specific Talent Aptitude

Identification in the talent domains requires the examination of a variety of instruments and multiple pathways that lead to identification. Talent domains include: visual arts, performing arts, music, dance, psychomotor, creativity and leadership. Often criterion- or norm-referenced assessments are not available in a talent area; therefore performance evaluation is an important component in the body of evidence. If data from a valid and reliable test are not available to demonstrate exceptional ability, two or more indicators in the performance area may be used to meet identification criteria along with an exceptional rating on a norm-referenced observation scale. Identification in area of psychomotor is designated for national-level athletes who require programming accommodations to address the number of school days that might be missed during training and/or competitions. Districts are not required to provide or financially support athletic coaching, training or competitions for students identified in this area.



Portability of Gifted Identification

The Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA) requires that a student who moves from one district in Colorado to another district in the state retains his/her gifted identification. This concept is referred to as "portability."

Portability means that a student's identification in one or more categories of giftedness transfers to any district in the state. Gifted programming must continue according to the receiving district's programming options. Portability of identification is a part of the student's permanent record and Advanced Learning Plan. AUs will determine the process and procedure used to ensure the appropriate and timely transfer of a student's Advanced Learning Plan that includes the student's gifted identification profile (body of evidence). The transfer process may include secure electronic file transfers or mailing of the student's record to the new district/school. When a student transfers from one district to another, it is important that the sending district include gifted education records with all other student records sent to the receiving district. Names and contact information of AU Gifted Directors/ Coordinators may be found on the CDE Gifted Education website.

Administrative units are encouraged to have a process to notify the appropriate gifted educator in a district of a newly enrolled gifted student. This may occur with a review of an incoming student's records and through the registration process when parents indicate their child has a gifted identification.

The rule for gifted portability means districts shall develop identification processes that are aligned to identification procedures defined by the Colorado Department of Education. Common guidelines support a universal and consistent practice for recognizing students with exceptional ability and potential.

Districts are responsible for selecting appropriate tools that will support identification of students from underrepresented populations. Although rules require portability, districts have the autonomy to select the specific instruments and procedures that will be utilized for gifted identification. These assessment tools may vary across districts but the criteria do not vary. If the receiving district's gifted review team determines the previous district identified the student using criteria not aligned to state guidelines, the rule for portability does not apply. If this is the case, it is the responsibility of the receiving district to consult with the former district, parents and students to re-evaluate the identification determination.

The rule for portability does not apply to students moving into Colorado from another state. However, the receiving school should review the student's records for evidence of giftedness, and then determine whether additional assessment is necessary to confirm if the student meets Colorado criteria for gifted identification. Districts should also be aware of the parameters within the Military Compact Agreement for identified gifted students moving to Colorado as a result of a military transfer.

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children created legislation to ease school-to-school transfers for military children. The intent of the Compact is to minimize the disruption in education when a military child is forced to move as a result of a transfer or deployment. The Compact states: *The receiving state school shall initially honor placement of the student in educational programs based on current educational assessments conducted at the school in the sending state or participation/placement in like programs in the sending state. Such programs include, but are not limited to: 1) gifted and talented programs; and 2) English as a second language (ESL). This does not preclude the school in the receiving state from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement of the student.*

Early Recognition

Fewer students are identified as gifted in K-2 than in the upper elementary grades, but many students perform at high levels of academic achievement. These students will be tracked on a watch and enrich list through Infinite Campus. This is not an identification of giftedness. This list recognizes the potential in students and suggests to teachers to watch and nurture these students as they grow and learn.

These high potential students will be engaged in experiences and activities that enrich and challenge them primarily in the classroom by the classroom teacher. They may be invited to enrichment opportunities outside the classroom as appropriate or afterschool activities as available. Classroom teachers will save samples of work that show exceptional ability and will file them with the building coordinator. This portfolio will be updated each year and may be used as part of the body of evidence in identification.

In addition, teachers may file the results of assessments such as DIBELS, reading and math inventories and unit tests, observation checklists, etc.

Programming Strategies and Options

Advanced Learning Plan (ALP)

An Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) shall be developed for each student that meets the qualifications for gifted services through the District's referral and identification process. The ALP will include the student's strengths, interests, current performance, both academic and affective goals, and programming plans.

Development of the ALP

In the fall of each year and immediately after new identifications, students are to develop strength based goals with the support of their parents, teacher, and/or gifted coordinator. Parents also complete an initial and a yearly survey in which information is shared about their child's successes, struggles, areas of interest and hobbies, and any concerns the parents may have about their child's behavior, needs, or performance. The student's teachers are consulted regarding standards alignment and appropriate classroom accommodations that they will be providing throughout the school year.

Elements of the ALP

- Area of Identification: students area of gifted identification
- Body of Evidence: includes assessments scores, observation scale scores, performance evaluations, and other qualitative and quantitative data
- Student strengths and areas of interests
- Parent input and involvement
- Goals
    - standards aligned academic achievement goals aligned with area of giftedness
    - affective goals addressing development in personal, social, communication, and/or leadership development
    - college/career goals (grades 9-12) addressing post-secondary plans
- Instructional Strategies and Accommodations: identifies specific curriculum, activities, strategies and/or opportunities that support the students goals
- Progress Monitoring: goals are to be monitored mid-year and end-of-year by the teacher(s) in the students strength area(s)

Housing of the ALP and Transition

Advanced Learning Plans are accessible by teachers via the schools electronic databases, while testing records and hard copies of ALPs are housed in the Gifted Services Department. A summary sheet is included in each child's cumulative file to inform receiving schools about the student's area of giftedness and date of identification as well as the gifted coordinators contact information. Gifted education records are maintained, retained, and destroyed in a manner consistent with that of the Special Services Department. Teachers are informed at the beginning of each school year via staff meeting regarding the gifted students they will be serving in their classroom. They are invited to review the past years ALP and discuss possible accommodations at this time.

In order to provide the best possible educational opportunities to gifted children, Morgan County School District advocates a variety of gifted best practices. Each of the following instructional strategies/programs is designed to promote the District goals which are to distinguish between general enrichment and gifted activities, and increase the emphasis on individualizing instruction to meet the needs of gifted students within the regular classroom's instruction and through providing special programming options for gifted

learners. Instructional strategies and enrichment options are chosen for or self-selected by students based on their area(s) of identification and Advanced Learning Plan goals.

Instructional Strategies

- ***Acceleration:*** Acceleration offers standard curricular experiences to students at a younger-than-usual age or lower-than usual grade level. Acceleration includes grade-level acceleration or subject-based acceleration in which a student enters a higher grade level part of the day to receive advanced instruction in one more content areas. These determinations are made collaboratively with the student, parents, teachers, building administration, and the gifted coordinator. The Iowa Acceleration Scales are typically administered to determine if a student is a suitable candidate for grade or subject-based acceleration.

- ***Ability Grouping/Cluster Grouping:*** Ability grouping is defined as using assessment and progress monitoring scores and school records to assign same-grade children to classes or instructional groups that differ markedly in characteristics affecting school learning. Cluster grouping is a form of ability grouping in which 3 to 6 students are clustered according to their identified strength areas in a mixed-ability classroom.

- ***Curriculum Compacting:*** A systematic procedure for modifying or streamlining the regular curriculum to eliminate repetition of previously mastered material, upgrading the challenge level of the regular curriculum, and providing time for appropriate enrichment and/or acceleration activities.

- ***Differentiation:*** A means of addressing the particular characteristics and promoting the continual growth of students in an environment that is respectful of individual differences through modification of pace, depth, and complexity of curriculum and instruction.

- ***Flexible Pacing:*** A form of "acceleration" in which the pace at which material is presented and/or expected to be mastered has been sped up.

- ***Guided Independent Study:*** A process through which student and teacher identify problems or topics of interest to the student, plan a method of investigation, and identify a product to be developed.

Programming Options Across the Grades

Programming options are subject to change as budget and personnel changes. Not all buildings offer the same services and supports at all grade levels.

Elementary

- In-class differentiated instruction

- Ability grouping
- Enrichment pull-out groups
- Destination Imagination

Middle School

- In-class differentiated instruction
- Ability grouping
- Accelerated math courses
- Advanced language arts and literacy courses
- Electives in arts and technology
- Lunch bunch opportunities
- Destination Imagination

High School

- Advanced Placement: (AP) Advanced and challenging courses designed to foster the critical skills of thinking, analyzing, and problem solving. AP prepares students for specific content area examination that may award credit to be applied toward college.
- Honors Program: School-site developed courses taught at an advanced level to promote critical thinking and depth of knowledge.
- Concurrent enrollment options: Classes available through Morgan Community College.
- Variety of elective courses in business, technology, art, music, industrial arts and technology, and more.

Possible School/District Enrichment Opportunities

- Spelling Bee
- Geography Bee
- Science Fair
- Student art shows
- Musical performances/competitions
- Solo/ensemble contests
- Brain Bowl
- Knowledge Bowl
- Destination Imagination
- National History Day competition
- CAGT Legislative Day
- NJC Math and Science Competition
- UNC Math Contest
- Noetic Math Contest
- Various local, state, and national writing competitions
- Mentoring opportunities
- Summer school opportunities such as Kids College
- Guidance and career units
- Guest speakers
- Field trips
- Independent study classes
- After school enrichment

Support Structures

Not all gifted students have emotional problems, and when they do, these problems generally resemble those of their peers. Gifted children usually move through the same developmental stages of typical children, though often at a younger age. This is referred to as asynchronous development in which the child's intellectual, social and physical development occurs at varying rates. However, gifted children sometimes have special emotional needs that come simply from being intellectually advanced. Some needs and problems do appear more often among gifted children.

Morgan County School District believes that "preventative strategies can be used to address the affective needs of gifted and talented students. Teachers can model kindness, caring, and concern for all students, and maintain high standards for positive behavior such as zero tolerance for any acts of unkindness. Teachers can also give positive feedback and recognition for appropriate behavior, and can provide experiences for students to learn problem solving and how to mediate arguments." (Reis and Renzulli, 2004)[7] Our district

[7] Reis, Sally M. and Renzulli, Joseph S. "Current Research on the Social and Emotional Development of Gifted and Talented Students: Good News and Future Possibilities." Psychology in the Schools 41 (2004): 119-130.

practices this in correlation with the Positive Behavior Support program used with all students.

Research shows “some prevention and intervention approaches have been found useful in supporting the healthy social and emotional development of gifted and talented students. Practices that facilitate positive development include (a) the support and encouragement of accelerative learning experiences; (b) time to learn with others of similar abilities, interests, and motivation; (c) engagement in areas of interest with a variety of peers; (d) mentoring and pragmatic coaching to cope with the stress, criticism, and social milieu associated with high levels of performance in any domain; (e) early presentation of career information; and (f) social-emotional curriculum approaches to help gifted children support one another.” (Reis and Renzulli, 2004)

Any of the following may be used to address these needs as noted above:

Ability grouping/Cluster grouping: Ability grouping or cluster grouping allows for accelerative learning experiences as well as time to learn with peers of similar ability. Students are able to connect daily with others who can relate and appreciate their gifts.

Bibliotherapy: A group of invited students read the same book and meeting over the course of several weeks with an adult facilitator to discuss the book. Books may include fictional accounts of gifted people, biographies of famous gifted people, or nonfiction books written for gifted students.

Lunch Bunch: support group for gifted children in which the students meet monthly for discussion about topics that are unique to gifted children.

Smart Girls/Cool Dudes: Smart Girls and Cool Dudes programs mission is to empower adolescents to make better choices, increase self esteem, and become more self-reliant. While these programs are not specifically for gifted individuals, many gifted students can benefit from the program‘s curriculum.

Individual Counseling: Individual counseling services are available for gifted children. The therapeutic nature of school counseling is intended to help students become more aware of themselves and others, learn coping skills, establish goals and plans of action, and ultimately become more effective and efficient learners.

Supporting your Gifted Child

At home:

- Read aloud routinely as a family, even when children can read themselves.
- Read the classics.
- Encourage friendships.
- Discover the nonfiction section of your library.
- Select challenging games and play them with your children.
- Encourage your child to start a collection, going beyond just gathering objects.
- Think of extra activities to enhance the collection project.
- Foster an appreciation in the arts. Visit museums and attend concerts.
- Choose a foreign language to learn as a family.
- Encourage your child to keep a journal or find a pen pal.
- Develop your children's bodies as well as their minds. Include some family fitness activities.
- Arrange for an internship for your child at a local business.
- Encourage science projects and inventions.
- Become involved in a social cause as a family.
- Encourage your child to be an entrepreneur. (dog-walking service, birdhouse business, etc.)
- Support your child's interest in construction. (skateboard ramp, dollhouse, fort, dog pen, etc.)
- Study the stock market. Purchase some stock or mutual funds and track the investment.
- Promote environmental awareness by adopting an endangered animal, planting trees, recycling, etc.
- Let your child plan his/her birthday party around a theme.
- Research recipes and have your child prepare a weekly meal.
- Dream, imagine, and have fun!

In Attitude:

- Model life-long learning.
- Encourage and model good communication with your children.
- Be a good listener.
- Be a facilitator and a guide. Share in the adventure of learning something new.
- Allow childhood to be a part of your gifted child's life.
- Don't compare your children with each other.
- Make free time a regular pastime. Don't over program your child.
- Set clear and consistent expectations and consequences. Follow through.
- Nurture the passion and interests within your child.
- Compliment your child with achievable descriptors only when deserved: kind, good thinker, rather than brilliant, genius, etc. Focus praise on your child's effort and be specific.
- Model general respect for educators. Avoid critical conversations of teachers in front of your child.

- Be a role model who reflects the values you demand of others.
- Value hard work and the satisfaction of achievement.
- Discuss effective ways to solve problems and deal with failure.
- Encourage independence through responsible behavior.
- Remember who the student is, who owns the homework, and who needs to do the learning.

Maintaining Gifted and Talented Status

Continued participation in the Gifted Program will be assured as long as the student meets the criteria and contributes to the development of his/her Advanced Learning Plan. A student's status may be re-evaluated at any time by request of the parents, teacher, or principal. After receiving parent permission to re-evaluate, the student will be reassessed using a variety of normed measures and evaluation methods. If it is determined that the student no longer qualifies for services and his/her needs are being met without advanced curriculum or support, a meeting will be held with parents, teachers, student, and Gifted Coordinator to determine next steps and discuss placement on the Watch & Enrich list. Underachievement alone is not a reason to remove a student from the gifted program.

Staff Support

Morgan County School District provides in-service, staff development opportunities**,** and other educational opportunities to assist staff in gaining strategies relative to curriculum compacting, differentiating classroom instruction, and meeting the needs of academically gifted and talented students**.**

Professional development is regularly provided by the Gifted Services department, local BOCES, regional and state Gifted Education Services. The options include but are not limited to instruction and support during Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), during district professional development days, via online book studies and/or courses, induction meetings, and individual support.

Occasionally opportunities arise for certified teachers to earn graduate credit through Adams State by participating in professional development addressing gifted students and services. Teachers are also informed annually regarding Master's degree programs in gifted education provided by local state universities.

Budget

The Gifted Services budget is maintained by the Gifted Coordinator, with input from the Director of Special Services. This budget includes components from the state with matching funds from the district. Annually, the Gifted Coordinator submits a proposed budget and an expended budget to the state which reflects state funds and matching district contribution. State funds are used to support one or more of the following: salaries for licensed or endorsed staff that primarily serve gifted students; professional development for gifted education; program options to support ALPs; materials to support gifted programming;

administrative costs, technology and equipment not to exceed collectively 20% of state funds. State funds are used to support only those allowable expenditures as outlined by the Colorado Department of Education.

Occasionally, the Gifted Services Department may contract with other districts or BOCES for services to supplement gifted programming.

Procedures for Disagreements

The appeals process begins when a student and/or parent are not satisfied with the decision of the team in planning the student's educational programming and/or when determining need for gifted education services. This process involves the reconsideration of any of the assessment processes, body of evidence data, or programming for gifted and talented services.

It is the intent of Morgan County School District to resolve questions and concerns at the level in which they occurred. All questions and concerns regarding gifted identification and services should be brought first to the Gifted Coordinator. Students are encouraged to talk with the Gifted Coordinator to address any questions, issues, or concerns. The Gifted Coordinator will work with parents and students to resolve any questions, issues, or concerns by students or parents/guardians. New information and/or data may be introduced by the parents/guardians.

If the student and/or parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response by the Gifted Coordinator, they should then contact the building principal. Through collaboration with the student, parents/guardians, counselor, and Gifted Coordinator, the principal will resolve the questions, issues, or concerns.

If the student or parents/guardians are not satisfied with the resolution at the building level, they may appeal in writing to the superintendent within 10 school days after receiving the building level response. The superintendent will review the process and evidence and respond in writing to the student and/or parents/guardians within 10 school days of receiving the letter of appeal. The superintendent's decision is final.

Resources

Books Available for Checkout at the District Support Center

A Love for Learning: Motivation and the Gifted Child – Written by Carol Strip Whitney, Ph.D. and Gretchen Hirsch - Presents concepts and techniques to counteract many de-motivating factors gifted children are susceptible to. These factors can lead to depression and academic underachievement. Also, offers helpful advice to help spark the motivation in your gifted child or student.

Counseling the Gifted and Talented—Edited by Linda Silverman. “The authors discuss specific aspects of counseling gifted students, such as teaching them how to establish positive relationships with peers, cope with their perfectionism,, develop ethical leadership skills, and make appropriate career choices.”

Critical Issues and Practices in Gifted Education: What the Research Says—Edited by Jonathan Plucker and Carolyn Callahan. This text features 50 summaries of important topics in the field of gifted education such as counseling, assessment, parenting, advocacy, and many more.

Designing A Concept-Based Curriculum for English Language Arts—Written by Lois Lanning. Concept-based curriculum brings a greater level of depth and complexity to the language arts classroom. Includes implementation guidelines and sample units.

Designing Services and Programs for High-Ability Learners—Edited by Jeanne Purcell and Rebecca Eckert. A comprehensive handbook for developing a gifted education program that address the unique needs of gifted students. Includes improvement strategies, templates, and resources.

Education of the Gifted and Talented—Edited by Gary Davis, Sylvia Rimm, and Del Siegle. A standard beginning text which addresses the key topics in gifted education such as characteristics and needs, identification, programming, social-emotional needs, creativity, program evaluation, etc.

Fostering Creativity in Gifted Students – Written by Bonnie Crammond, Ph.D**. -** Encouraging creative thinking in the classroom is an exciting component of any effective gifted education program. This guide offers basic foundations required for supporting creativity. From establishing the right classroom environment, to using creative teaching strategies, to assessing student outcomes, this book is filled with practical information.

Helping Gifted Children Soar: A Practical Guide for Parents and Teachers - Written By Carol A. Strip, Ph.D. - This book addresses issues involving gifted children such as working with schools, evaluating classroom programs, forming parent support groups, choosing appropriate curricula, and meeting the children's social and emotional needs. Issues involving gifted minority and gifted disabled children are discussed as well. The book also contains a question and answer section and an extensive appendix for additional research and support. (Available in Spanish.)

Leadership for Students: A Practical Guide for Ages 8-18 – Written by Frances A. Karnes and Suzanne M. Bean - This book is a fun and practical handbook for learning and developing leadership skills in a variety of areas. Students will find guidance and advice about moving into leadership positions at home, school, and the community in this book.

Learning Outside the Lines – Written by Jonathan Mooney and David Cole - Written by two "academic failures" – that is two academic failures who graduated from Brown University at the top of their class. They teach you how to take control of your education and find true success -- and they offer all the reasons why you should persevere.

Notes from a Scientist and Activities for Gifted Children – From the College of William and Mary - This document contains recommended activities and key resources that are useful for parents of gifted elementary students. It provides ideas to stress in teaching children science at home or in other informal contexts.

Parent Handbook: A Guide to Your Gifted Child's Emotional and Academic Success - From the College of William and Mary - This handbook provides information and insights to help parents of gifted children guide their child from elementary school to college and beyond. One portion of the book includes academic activities parents can do with their children to extend learning into the home and community. A resource list also includes books for gifted children, books about gifted children, and Internet sites for both parents and children.

Parenting Gifted Kids: Tips for Raising Happy and Successful Children – Written by James R. Delisle - Delisle puts forward 10 tips to parents of gifted children—ideas that reflect attitude and approach and allow for introspection and change, rather than quick, do-it-tonight solutions. Topics of interest include understanding a child's giftedness, working with the school system, dealing with perfectionism, and being role models for kids.

Re-Forming Gifted Education—Written by Karen Rogers. The author discusses how teachers and parents can develop programming that fits the needs of the student through a variety of acceleration and enrichment options.

Social-Emotional Curriculum with Gifted and Talented Students—Edited by Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Tracy Cross, and F. Richard Olenchak. This book features a collection of articles addressing the various social-emotional needs of gifted learners and introduces methods for developing social emotional curricula for use with gifted learners.

Some of My Best Friends Are Books – Written by Judith Halsted - Because gifted readers often intensely identify with characters, good books can provide bridges to new insights and better communication of feelings, values, and decision making, while also fostering intellectual and creative development.

Systems & Models for Developing Programs for the Gifted and Talented—Edited by Joseph Renzulli, etal. This resource features examples of theoretical, organizational, curriculum, and comprehensive models for the delivery of gifted services.

Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Meet the Academic Needs of the Gifted and Talented – Written by Susan Winebrenner - This book is a guide for meeting the learning needs of gifted students in the mixed-abilities classroom without losing control, causing resentment, or spending hours preparing extra materials.

Teaching Young Gifted Children in the Regular Classroom: Identifying, Nurturing, Challenging Ages 4-9 – Written by Joan Franklin Smutny, Sally Yahnke Walker and Elizabeth A. Meckstroth,- Written for educators and parents who believe that all children deserve the best education possible, this guide encourages and enables the viewer to identify gifted children as early as age 4 and to create a learning environment that supports all students.

The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook – Written by Galbraith, J. & Delisle, J. - For many gifted students, The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide is their first chance to explore who they are and what being gifted means. For some, it will be their first exposure to the fact that they're not alone and that they're not "weird." Written with help from hundreds of gifted teenagers, this is the ultimate guide to surviving and thriving in a world that doesn't always value, support, or understands high ability. This book gives you the tools your students need to understand their giftedness, accept it as an asset (if they haven't already), and use it to make the most of who they are. This revised edition covers topics such as dealing with the label gifted, managing perfectionism, managing unreasonable expectations, dealing with challenges at school with peers and teachers, handling complex social issues, and much more.

The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children: What Do We Know? – Edited by Maureen Neihart, Sally M. Reis, Nancy M. Robinson, Sidney M. Moon - An examination of the essential topics teachers, parents, and researchers need to know about the social and emotional development of gifted children. The book includes chapters on peer pressure and social acceptance, resilience, delinquency, and underachievement. It is concise, comprehensive, and wide-ranging in its coverage.

The Talent Development Planning Handbook—Written by Donald Treffinger, Grover Young, Carole Nassab, Edwin Selby, and Carol Wittig. This handbook offers a six stage framework for developing and improving gifted education programs. Includes CD-ROM with reproducibles, presentations, and templates.

Transitioning to Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction: How to bring content and process together—Written by H. Lynn Erickson and Lois Lanning. The authors demonstrate how concept-based curriculum brings depth, complexity, and rigor to all subjects and grade levels. Includes multiple examples and templates.

When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers: How to Meet Their Social and Emotional Needs – Written by Delisle, J & Galbraith, J - Jim Delisle and Judy Galbraith explain what giftedness means, how gifted kids are identified, and how we might improve the identification process. Then they take a close-up look at gifted kids from the inside out—their social and emotional needs. Topics include self-image and self-esteem, perfectionism, multipotential, depression, feelings of "differentness," and stress. The authors suggest ways to help gifted underachievers and those who are bored in school, and ways to encourage healthy relationships with friends, family, and other adults. The final chapter explains how teachers can make it safe to be smart by creating the gifted-friendly classroom.

Other Recommended Readings

Adderholdt, Miriam, and Jan Goldberg. Perfectionism: What's Bad about Being Too Good?. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1999.

Ford, Donna, and J. John Harris. Multicultural Gifted Education. New York: Teachers College Press, 1999.

Galbraith, Judy. The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide: For ages 10 & Under. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1999.

Greene, Rebecca. The Teenagers' Guide to School outside the Box. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 2000.

Greespon, Thomas S. Freeing Our Families from Perfectionism. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 2001.

Kerr, Barbara. Smart Girls: A New Psychology of Girls, Women and Giftedness. Scottsdale: Great Potential Press, 1997.

Kerr, Barbara and Sandford Cohn. Smart Boys: Talent, Manhood, and the Search for Meaning. Scottsdale: Great Potential Press, 2001.

Rimm, Sylvia. Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades – And What You Can Do About It. Scottsdale: Great Potential Press, 1996.

Web Sites

Colorado Department of Education: Gifted and Talented Homepage
http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt

Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented
http://www.coloradogifted.org/

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page
http://www.hoagiesgifted.org

National Association for Gifted Children
http://www.nagc.org

SENG: Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted
http://www.sengifted.org/