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What does it mean to be a gifted learner?

Those persons between the ages of four and twenty-one whose aptitude or competence in abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment in one or more domains are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. Gifted children are hereafter referred to as gifted students. 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, ethnic, and 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**

All students have equal access to the assessment process for identifying students who meet gifted definition in all domains of giftedness and in underrepresented populations.

A variety of appropriate and valid assessment measures are available in order to best determine strengths.

Nonverbal universal screening assessments are administered at 2nd and 6th grades to all students.

District GT staff and Special Education Teams collaborate on assessment selection, administration, and interpretation.

Explanation of Early Access

Students under the age of six who meet the criteria for Colorado's definition of "highly advanced gifted" are eligible for early school admittance, either as a four-year-old into kindergarten, or a 5-year-old into 1st grade. Children identified as highly advanced gifted comprise the top one to two percent of the gifted population. They exhibit exceptional ability or potential when compared to same-age children. The purpose of Early Access is to identify and serve the very few highly advanced gifted children who require comprehensive academic acceleration.



Information from the Colorado Department of Education on Early Access
http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/gt/download/pdf/ff_earlyaccess.pdf

Process for Evaluation

The multi-step process that has been established by Mountain BOCES and adopted by Garfield 16 in identifying children as "highly advanced gifted" is listed below.

- **Parent or guardian completing a packet of information (available from District GT Coordinator)**
- **Preschool teacher completing a portfolio of documents based on the grade level the child would need to access early (If the child does not attend preschool, an adult who is not a family member must complete a questionnaire)**
- **A review committee will assess the screening information to determine whether or not the child will continue with the evaluation process**
- **Further standardized testing for those applicants continuing in the evaluation process as determined by the review committee**
- **The administration of formal aptitude tests conducted by a district mental health professional**
- **An observation to assess social interactions**
- **Written notification sent to parents and schools**

A committee will determine whether screening information warrants the child continuing in the evaluation process. If continuation is deemed appropriate, a qualified member from the district's mental health team will administer all testing including a standardized test. Testing results from out-of-district resources may be shared in order to provide a more complete assessment of your child, however in-district testing is still required.

Parents will receive written notification as to whether or not the child meets all of the criteria for Early Access. The District's GT coordinator will contact parents of students who meet criteria for Early Access in order to set up a time to meet with the receiving school and district to develop a plan for the student.

Garfield 16 Gifted and Talented Referral Process



STEP 1- Making a Referral

Anyone can initiate a Gifted and Talented referral for services: parents, teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, classified staff, peers, or students. To make a referral contact the Gifted Coordinator who serves your child's school.

The entire referral process typically takes from six to eight weeks.

STEP 2- Data Collection (1-2 weeks)

The Gifted Coordinator will begin collecting information and data about each child referred for Gifted and Talented identification.

The SIGS (Scales for Identifying Gifted Students) will be sent home for parents to complete and return to school. The child's teacher will also complete a SIGS checklist.

Achievement data for each student is collected. This includes state testing (CMAS) and district achievement testing (iReady and NWEA/MAP).

STEP 3- Testing (1-2 weeks)

Students are then given the CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) screener. This tests a child's ability to reason using words (verbal), numbers (quantitative) and pictures (non-verbal). If a child scores well in any area, a full-length CogAT assessment may be given.

Sometimes, a child is given the NNAT (Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test). This is also an ability test to determine reasoning abilities. This test uses only pictures and is beneficial for ELL students.

In addition to data on a student's abilities, we collect behavior and achievement data as well. The Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS) provides us with information on student behaviors from classroom teachers and parents. We gather achievement data from the i Ready or NWEA/MAPS (Measures of Academic Progress) in reading and math, as well as data from CMAS assessments.

A child's abilities, achievement, and behavior are all considered towards identification.

Step 4- Identification (2-4 weeks)

All data will be compiled into a Body of Evidence form to determine if services are needed.

Assessments provide a body of evidence that includes qualitative and quantitative information from a variety of sources.

For each category of giftedness, 95th percentile or above and/or an exceptional/distinguished rating are used for determining exceptionality.

Not meeting criteria on a single assessment does not prevent further consideration for identification.

Educators select and use multiple assessments that measure diverse abilities, talents, and strengths that are based on current theories, models and research these may include:

- *Behavior (based on the SIGS checklists)

- *Achievement (based on the data collection from standardized, grade-level testing)

- *Ability/Cognitive (based on the CogAT and NNAT)

Referrals are accepted from multiple sources through ongoing procedures.

Communication will occur with parents to make them aware of and understand identification results and procedures.

The implementation of statewide identification procedure ensures portability within Colorado school systems.

Disagreement Procedures

Disagreement about qualification for services might occur. Anyone who disagrees with a determination of services must communicate that in writing to either the child's teacher, or directly to the Gifted Coordinator that services their student's school. Notification must be made no later than 30 days after receiving notification of qualification.

When a Review Team decision regarding gifted identification is questioned and written notification has been received, these steps (in order) will be followed by the Gifted Coordinator of your student's school:

1. Review of the Body of Evidence for accuracy in interpretation of data.
2. Review of the data with parents and clarification of identification criteria.
3. Determine if additional data is needed and can be provided.
4. A decision for the current school year will be made in regards to services.
5. A next level of appeal may be sent to the District Coordinator for Gifted and Talented for further review and final decision.



Resources available to parents:

*Jim Delisle resources such as: *The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook*, *Parenting Gifted Kids*, *The Survival Guide for Teachers of Gifted Kids*, and *When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers*. Dr. Delisle's books are enjoyable reads with practical information for parents and kids.

*Hoagies Gifted-www.hoagiesgifted.org. This is one of our favorite websites. You can find just about everything here, and it is current.

*NAGC-www.nagc.org. The National Association for Gifted Children site has many resources, including publications just for parents.

*CAGT-Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented www.coloradogifted.org. Our state organization has parent resources and information about state legislature in gifted education.

*NEAG Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development-www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt.html. This is not only a great resource for parents.

*Colorado Department of Education Gifted Education-www.cde.state.co.us/gt/parents

Please feel free to contact the Gifted and Talented Coordinator if you would like resources concerning your gifted student.



Gifted Education

Colorado River BOCES provides program oversight for gifted education for the Garfield 16 School District. Our identification process is consistent with the Colorado Department of Education. To access the Colorado River BOCES website
<http://www.crbores.org/programs/gifted-education>