



Colorado River BOCES
Board of Cooperative Educational Services

Gifted and Talented Handbook

460 Stone Quarry Road
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Member School Districts

Garfield 16-Parachute
Garfield RE2-Rifle/Silt/New Castle

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Vision and Mission Statement

Vision Statement

Our vision for Gifted Education in Colorado River BOCES is to recognize and nurture the development of exceptional abilities so that all gifted students demonstrate positive self-esteem, high-level thinking, and creative productivity.

Mission Statement

Our mission for Gifted Education in Colorado River BOCES is to ensure gifted student growth and achievement through consistent systems of support, programming, and advocacy.

Definition and Policy for Gifted and Talented

The Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA) defines **gifted** children as

*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 socioeconomic, 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 12.01(16)*

ECEA defines **twice-exceptional** as

A student who is:

- *Identified as a gifted student pursuant to Section 12.01(9) of these Rules; and*
- *Identified as a child with a disability pursuant to Section 4.02 of these Rules; or*
- *A qualified individual pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C.A. §794.*

Garfield RE2 and Garfield 16 District Policy

IHBB - Gifted Education

The Board of Education is dedicated to providing comprehensive programming for the identification and education of gifted students. Gifted students are those students between the ages of four 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. The Board believes that a quality instructional program that differentiates curriculum and instruction is essential so all students can learn and grow at their level of potential.

To the extent resources are available for this purpose, the superintendent or designee* shall develop and implement programming designed to meet the particular educational needs of gifted students that:

- encourages acceleration and enrichment beyond the basic curriculum
- offers a differentiated curriculum that includes higher cognitive concepts and processes
- uses instructional strategies that accommodate the learning styles of the gifted
- fosters the individual growth of each student
- supports students in the attainment of the district's academic standards
- assists students with pre-collegiate and/or pre-advanced placement programs
- provides guidance support systems, including identifying post-secondary options.

The programming shall include early identification of gifted students who are at least 5 years of age and may include the early identification of 4- and 5-year-old highly advanced gifted students. The programming shall also include ongoing professional development of staff who administer, supervise, or teach in such programs. The programs will be regularly evaluated.

The superintendent or designee* shall submit to the Colorado Department of Education a program plan to identify and serve gifted students and may submit a program plan to serve 4 and 5-year-old highly advanced gifted students no later than April 30 of each year. The program plan shall contain elements specified by applicable State Board of Education rules so the district (or administrative unit) will be eligible for state funding for these students.

Except as otherwise required by law, the superintendent or designee* shall have the final determination regarding the placement of students in district programs for the gifted.

**The Director of Gifted Education for the BOCES is not mentioned specifically in the policy wording around gifted education in either member district, but when possible, a person highly qualified in best practices for gifted education will directly assist in Program Plan design and programming development.*

Colorado State Gifted and Talented Qualification Areas

Gifted Identification Areas

General Intellectual Ability

Students may qualify in the area of general intellectual ability with a score in the 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.

Specific Academic Aptitude

Content areas for specific academic aptitude include reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and world languages. **Two pathways** may lead to identification in the area of specific academic aptitude.

- **Pathway One: Specific Academic Aptitude (with Cognitive Measure)**

Using this pathway, a student may score in the 95th percentile or above on one or more batteries of a cognitive test and demonstrate aptitude on two *specific* academic measures. This is referred to as *Specific Academic Aptitude (with Cognitive)*.

- **Pathway Two: Specific Academic Aptitude (without Cognitive Measure)**

If a student does *not* score in the 95th percentile or above on a cognitive assessment, a second identification pathway can be utilized. The identification review team may compile a comprehensive body of evidence that demonstrates advanced academic ability. In this case, **content specific** measurement tools to meet the criteria for identification must include at **least three** or more measures from **two** of the following three areas:

- Criterion or norm-referenced achievement test
- Norm-referenced Observation Scale
- Performance Evaluation

When using the second pathway, identification in a specific academic aptitude requires an examination of **multiple data points** and **trends over time**.

Taking this pathway in the primary years requires caution. Examining measures from multiple points and trend data over time, usually two to three years, is necessary.

If at any time the team needs more time to make a determination, ongoing opportunities in the specific domain will be implemented to ensure the child's continued growth and engagement in the content area. Ultimately, a student with advanced skills in a content

area who does not have qualifying data for a formal identification may benefit from talent pool placement until a larger body of evidence can be accessed.

Talent Aptitude Identification Areas

Students may also be identified in seven different specific talent areas: Creative or Productive Thinking, Leadership, Dance, Music, Performing Arts (Theater, Speech, Debate), Psychomotor, and Visual Arts.

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

The processes between these two types of identification are quite different, especially when it comes to qualifying criteria and timeframe. Read on to learn more about these identification pathways.

Gifted Identification Procedures

Gifted Education is a strength-based model for identifying students with exceptional abilities and potential. The purpose of identification is not to label a child, but to match instruction, programming, and support systems to a student's identified area(s) of strength.

There are two main ways in which students are found for identification: universal screenings and direct referral. You can request a referral form from your student's school.

Universal Screenings

Both districts in the BOCES make use of universal screening. "Universal Screening" refers to the practice of systematically assessing all students within a grade level for the purpose of identifying students with exceptional ability or potential, especially students from traditionally underrepresented populations.

In the BOCES, all students in grades 2 and 6 are screened with the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT3) or Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). When students show high aptitude on either one of these assessments, this data can initiate the identification process.

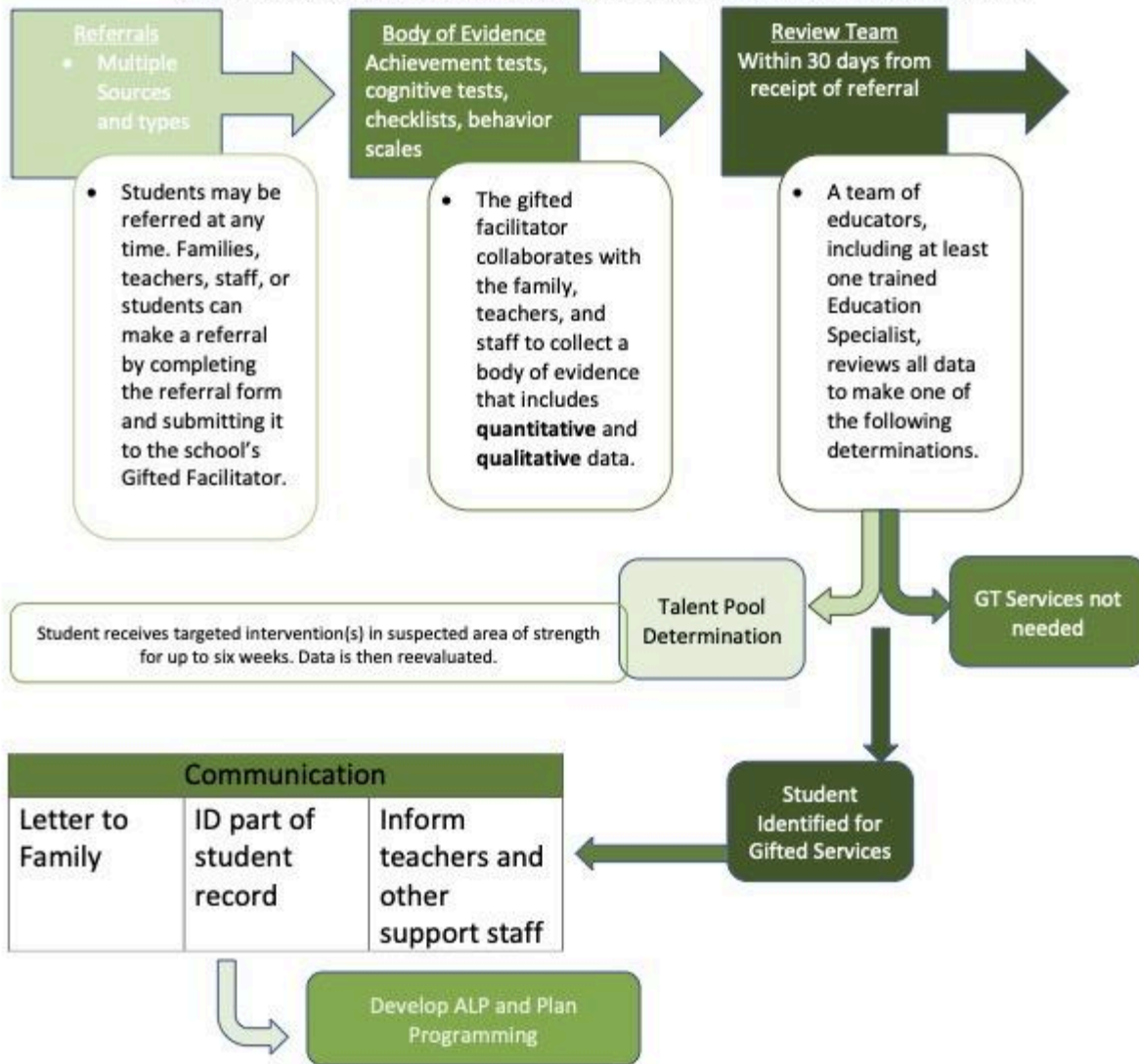
Direct Referrals

Referrals can also be made by families, teachers, and students and can be generated by a variety of other data sources, such as the scores from state assessments, local assessments, and observations from students and staff. A referral form will need to be completed and returned to the designated gifted consultant in each building to get the referral process started.

Regardless of how a referral begins, the flowchart on the next page gives an overview of what happens during the identification process. For a more comprehensive explanation of the identification process, please see CDE's [Gifted Identification Guidance Handbook](#).



Colorado River BOCES Gifted Identification Flow Chart



Body of Evidence (BOE)

Once a referral has been made, data is collected and recorded on a **Body of Evidence** form, such as the one shown [here](#) on the BOCES website, to determine if a student's data meets the criteria for gifted services.

Criteria are the rules set by the Colorado Department of Education for evaluating a level of exceptionality for identification. Scores in the 95%ile or higher in the areas of **ability**, **achievement**, and **behavior** are all determining criteria for *gifted identification*. 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 defined in the Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). Once data is collected, the team determines if criteria have been met and where placement, if any, should be made, and stakeholders are notified of the results. Regardless of the results, this document becomes part of the student's record.

Identification Review Team

The core identification review team consists of the district gifted coordinator and building liaisons, all of whom are trained in gifted identification procedures, characteristics, programming, etc. Principals, counselors, classroom teachers, and the family may also be asked to provide additional input on a case-to-case basis.

Talent Pool

Students who do not qualify for gifted services may benefit from being part of a talent pool, a group of students who demonstrate an advanced or even exceptional ability in a particular area but do not yet meet the criteria for gifted identification.

Often students in a talent pool are provided with the same advanced services as identified services. As students are presented with additional levels of challenge and rigor, increased achievement may occur, and the student may meet the criteria for gifted identification at a later date. The state does not require the implementation of a talent pool, and these students do not have an ALP. However, Colorado River BOCES member districts do provide limited programming for these students based on test scores, classroom observations, and student performance.

When these students meet all criteria within a body of evidence, they will be formally identified.

Twice-Exceptional Identification

Students who have a *diagnosed disability* may also have areas of giftedness that are not immediately apparent due to "masking". This happens when a disability hides or

otherwise makes it difficult for a student to demonstrate exceptional ability. When a student has been identified with both a disability and gifted ability, they qualify as Twice Exceptional. Often, these students are referred by the Child Study Team as a result of an assessment the team has done for the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

The team works with the Gifted Education staff, families, and teachers to determine if the student qualifies for gifted services. Twice Exceptional students have an ALP to address their strength areas, as well as an IEP or 504 plan, to address their areas of need. Once again, stakeholders receive notification of the team's determination and the instructional plan.

Gifted Students Who Transfer Into the District

Districts within Colorado are expected to follow identification and ALP procedures required by statute. If student records include evidence of portability as outlined by the State of Colorado, the student's identification will be honored and they will be provided with the appropriate programming offered by Colorado River BOCES member districts.

If student records do *not* provide evidence of portability, or the student is transferring from another state that does not meet Colorado portability laws, the district will make an attempt to consult with the former district before initiating a new identification process with a referral form from the family.

If the new data meets Colorado portability requirements, an ALP will be created with the student within 45 days of enrollment and sent home to the family for review and input.

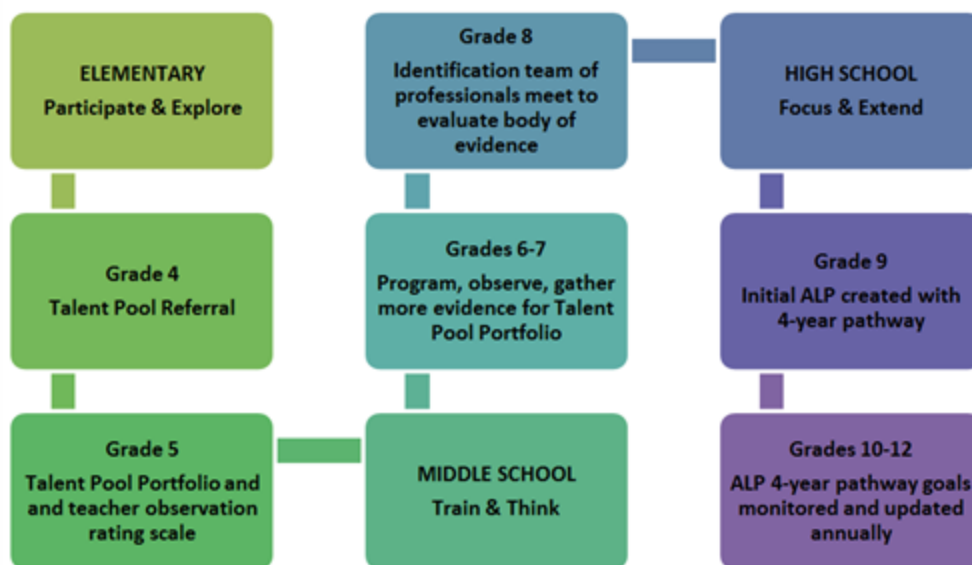
Talent Identification Pathway

Nurturing and Identifying Gifted Potential of Talent Aptitudes

Identification of specific talent aptitudes requires the examination of a variety of instruments. Talent domains include *creative or productive thinking, leadership, visual arts, performing arts, music, dance, and psychomotor abilities*. It is important that educators understand the unique and varied characteristics a student may demonstrate in the talent domains.

Talent identification does not occur within the same timeframe as gifted identification. Within these talent domains, several years of talent development may be needed before formal gifted identification can be made. Students may be included in a talent pool to foster potential over time and may require further development to build a body of evidence that supports identification.

The model of talent development over time is outlined in the timeline below. If a student has a full body of evidence for identification in a talent area prior to eighth grade, the identification process can be completed outside of the timeline.



Qualifying Evidence

For a gifted identification in a specific talent aptitude to meet state rules and thus meet conditions of portability, data in the BOE must indicate exceptionalism compared to peers

of similar age, environment, and experience from both qualitative and quantitative types of data and come from multiple sources. The following data must be included:

- A 95th percentile or higher on at least one battery of a criterion norm-referenced test*
 - 95th percentile or above on a norm-referenced creativity test, such as the Torrance Test of Creativity or the Profiles of Creative Abilities (PCA)
 - 95th percentile or above on a cognitive measure, such as CogAT or NNAT
- A robust body of evidence which must include at minimum **two** additional pieces of data demonstrating exceptional ability and the need for gifted services in the student's talent strength area
 - The BOE must include at minimum **one** qualitative piece of data demonstrating the need for gifted services in the student's talent strength area and which help identify specific programming.
 - At minimum **one** advanced level on performance talent assessment or 95th percentile or above on standardized talent test.
 - Performance evaluation
 - State or national contest/competition (top place or ranking) **and/or**
 - Expert juried performance (advanced or distinguished rating) **and/or**
 - Portfolio review (advanced or distinguished rating)
- Observation Scale
 - 95th percentile or above on a norm-referenced observation scale in the areas of creativity, leadership and motivation
 - Exceptional rating on an observation scale developed through analysis and research of the discipline (The district uses Arts Talent ID scales *Haroutounian 2014*)

*If criterion- or norm-referenced qualifying test scores are not available, two performance evaluations are required along with an observation scale.

Specific processes for each talent area are available on the Colorado River BOCES website [here](#).

Early Access

Colorado River BOCES districts follow the Early Access procedure as outlined by the Colorado Department of Education. It is important to note that Early Access enrollment is *not* recommended for the majority of children this age. This enrollment option is for the **top .1%** (*1 out of 1,000*) highly advanced gifted children under the age of six.

A full Early Access plan has been submitted to CDE and can be found here: [Early Access Plan-Colorado River BOCES](#)

Multi-Tiered System of Support for Gifted Students

Use of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) provides responsive services for *all* students. It is a process that provides high-quality, research-based instruction designed around learner needs. Needs are identified by monitoring student progress, and adjustments to instruction and interventions are based on performance and academic growth. MTSS promotes a well-integrated system, connecting general, gifted, and special education specialists with intervention and enrichment services.

Individual schools are the primary resource for information on gifted education and the front line of communication for families. Each school within the BOCES member districts focuses on providing professional development and serving as a resource to district staff.

The MTSS process addresses the academic and social and emotional needs of all students. It utilizes the tiered support model, discussed in more detail for gifted students under the next section: **Gifted Services**.

Gifted Services

Tier 1

Colorado River BOCES member districts follow a rigorous core curriculum that is aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards. These standards were developed with the end in mind and clearly define what prepared graduates need in order to be successful using 21st-century skills in our global economy. The majority of the student population successfully learns and grows at this tier of instruction.

Tier 2

When students assimilate Tier 1 (Core Curriculum) material quickly or already demonstrate mastery of a concept, they need additional challenges to expand their learning. Tier 2 services are in response to advanced learner needs and may include one or more of the following:

- **Flexible Grouping**—Putting a child with peers that share the same ability level for a unit of study.
- **Enrichment Activities**—Alternative or extension activities completed individually or in small groups. This could be done in a center or as part of a choice menu.
- **Compacting**—Pretesting a student to determine whether he/she already knows material about to be presented, then giving alternative assignments. These assignments may deepen or extend knowledge of those concepts or may involve a related concept, product, or activity.
- **Independent Study**—A child chooses to pursue a topic of intense interest. There is usually a research component and development of a product to demonstrate learning for a mentor or other expert.
- **Learning Contracts**—These are the agreed-upon alternative learning activities that a child will do when he/she tests (compacts) out of an assignment or unit.
- **Open-Ended Assignments**—When students are given flexibility and choice within guidelines for a given assignment. The student may have a choice of content (what will be studied), process (how they will gather information), and/or product (how he/she will demonstrate learning).
- **Dual Enrollment**—Allows high school students the opportunity to take college-level courses and receive high school credit at the same time they are earning college credit.

Tier 3

A few students will receive Tier 2 instructional strategies but still demonstrate a need for a faster pace or more complex learning environment. These students may need enrichment interventions that may include one or more of the following:

- **Subject Acceleration (Partial Acceleration)**—Advancing a child in one or more subjects (advanced math classes, higher grade level reading groups, dual enrollment in college), but not entirely into the next grade. (Guidelines on page 23).

- **Grade-level Acceleration**—Advancing a child one or more entire grade levels to expose them to a more advanced curriculum. (Guidelines on page 23).
- **Independent Study**—A formal independent study allows a student to research an area of passion **and** work with experts in the field to deepen knowledge and understanding. (Independent studies should *not* be done in isolation-the connection to an expert is key to the success and relevance of this strategy.)
- **Mentorships**—Students are matched with an expert and given an opportunity to learn more about a specific topic. This works best in conjunction with an independent study and usually involves job shadowing.

Programming Options

The term *programming* refers to a consistent continuum of the gifted services listed in Tier 2 and Tier 3 instructional strategies in the section above by developing, implementing, and effectively managing comprehensive services using practices such as those shown below. (From NAGC-Programming Standards)

Student Outcomes	Evidence-Based Practices
<p>5.1. Variety of Programming. Students with gifts and talents participate in a variety of evidence-based programming options that enhance performance in cognitive and affective areas.</p>	<p>5.1.1. Educators regularly use multiple alternative approaches to accelerate learning.</p> <hr/> <p>5.1.2. Educators regularly use enrichment options to extend and deepen learning opportunities within and outside of the school setting.</p> <hr/> <p>5.1.3. Educators regularly use multiple forms of grouping, including clusters, resource rooms, special classes, or special schools.</p> <hr/> <p>5.1.4. Educators regularly use individualized learning options such as mentorships, internships, online courses, and independent study.</p> <hr/>

	<p>5.1.5. Educators regularly use current technologies, including online learning options and assistive technologies to enhance access to high-level programming.</p> <hr/> <p>5.1.6. Administrators demonstrate support for gifted programs through equitable allocation of resources and demonstrated a willingness to ensure that learners with gifts and talents receive appropriate educational services.</p>
<p>5.2. Coordinated Services. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate progress as a result of the shared commitment and coordinated services of gifted education, general education, special education, and related professional services, such as school counselors, school psychologists, and social workers.</p>	<p>5.2.1. Educators in gifted, general, and special education programs, as well as those in specialized areas, collaboratively plan, develop, and implement services for learners with gifts and talents.</p>
<p>5.3. Collaboration. Students with gifts and talents are enhanced by regular collaboration among families, the community, and the school.</p>	<p>5.3.1. Educators regularly engage families and community members in planning, programming, evaluating, and advocating.</p>
<p>5.4. Resources. Students with gifts and talents participate in gifted education programming that is adequately funded to meet student needs and program goals.</p>	<p>5.4.1. Administrators track expenditures at the school level to verify appropriate and sufficient funding for gifted programming and services.</p>

<p>5.5. Comprehensiveness. Students with gifts and talents develop their potential through comprehensive, aligned programming and services.</p>	<p>5.5.1. Educators develop thoughtful, multi-year program plans in relevant student talent areas, PK-12.</p>
<p>5.6. Policies and Procedures. Students with gifts and talents participate in regular and gifted education programs that are guided by clear policies and procedures that provide for their advanced learning needs (e.g., early entrance, acceleration, credit in lieu of enrollment).</p>	<p>5.6.1. Educators create policies and procedures to guide and sustain all components of the program, including assessment, identification, acceleration practices, and grouping practices, that are built on an evidence-based foundation in gifted education.</p>
<p>5.7. Career Pathways. Students with gifts and talents identify future career goals and the talent development pathways to reach those goals.</p>	<p>5.7.1. Educators provide professional guidance and counseling for individual student strengths, interests, and values.</p> <hr/> <p>5.7.2. Educators facilitate mentorships, internships, and vocational programming experiences that match student interests and aptitudes.</p>

Acceleration Guidelines

Acceleration occurs when students move through the traditional curriculum at rates faster than average. Among the many forms of acceleration are grade-skipping, early entrance to kindergarten or college, dual-credit courses such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs, and subject-based acceleration (e.g., when a fifth-grade student takes a middle school math course). For more information about the benefits of acceleration in educational planning, refer to the NAGC website [here](#).

Procedures Regarding Subject and Grade Acceleration

1. Referring party (teacher, family, school staff) completes and submits an application for acceleration, such as the one [here](#) to the principal of the child's current school.
2. The principal will assemble a child study team that includes themselves, the district gifted coordinator, the school psychologist, the student's current teacher, and the family. If the acceleration requires a building change, the principal and or the teacher of the receiving school should also be included on the team. The BOCES Gifted Director may also be part of the team as needed.
3. Using the [Integrated Acceleration System \(IAS\)](#), (previously called the Iowa Acceleration Scale) as a guide, student data will be gathered in the areas of ability, aptitude, and achievement. School, academic, and developmental factors will also be evaluated, resulting in a scale score that indicates the confidence with which acceleration can be made.
4. After all data has been collected and the IAS completed, the principal will assemble the child study team to review information gathered through the IAS process and make a determination and outline how the student's needs will be met. The plan will consist of either:
 - a. A transition plan that addresses academic and social/emotional support if the student is assigned to a higher grade.
 - b. A plan with alternative options for students who are not good candidates for acceleration.
5. Determination results and the instructional plan will be shared with the family within 30 days of application.

It is important to note that while it is common for the acceleration process to originate with the gifted department, identification of giftedness is not a requirement for acceleration. This process is open to *all* student populations and is comprehensive, fair, objective, and systematic.

Standards-Aligned Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs)

The Advanced Learning Plan is a legal document. It is updated annually and works as a record of programming options and strategies utilized with individual students, and shall be part of the student's official record.

The ALP shall be considered in educational planning and decision making concerning subsequent programming for that student and will be used in the articulation process, preschool (if applicable) through grade 12.

The ALP includes a body of evidence that supports the student's gifted identification determination. Qualifying evidence and other information are carried forward from previous years and new information is added to reflect current standings. This helps to ensure portability in the event that a student moves to a different district within Colorado.

The plan also includes academic and affective goals. Academic goals address the student's area(s) of giftedness. Affective goals address areas of need or strength in a variety of areas such as leadership, communication, and social skills.

Families and classroom teachers help students develop their goals with assistance from the gifted education specialist. Both academic and affective goals are based on standards, such as standards designed by NAGC, the Colorado Academic Standards, or professional standards, and, as a result, are aligned with classroom instruction and/or professional guidelines.

For more information on how to write strength-based academic and affective goals, refer to ALP guidance from CDE [here](#).

Transitions and Portability

When gifted students move from the elementary level to the middle school level or from the middle school level to the high school, member districts work to make that transition as smooth as possible.

Elementary School to Middle School:

Each spring, the current fifth graders in the district are taken on a "special" field trip. The goal of the trip is three-fold:

- Students are given the opportunity to meet and get to know other gifted students around the district with whom they will be going on to middle school in the fall.
- They are also given the opportunity to meet the middle school gifted and talented specialists and ask questions about how gifted services work at the middle school level.
- The students are rewarded with a fun learning experience for their hard work at the elementary level.

Middle School to High School:

By the end of eighth grade, students are ready for the next challenge of high school. The process begins in the spring of the eighth-grade year with the building of the class schedule for the fall semester. Our middle school providers attend these meetings with the GT students and introduce them to the high school provider. This opportunity allows for the students to put a face with a name and begin working directly with the high school provider to ensure appropriate class placement and collaboration through the transition.

*All Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs) are updated and passed along to the middle school (or high school) classroom teachers who then have an opportunity to get to know their upcoming students before class begins. Teachers can use the ALP and other available data to share with teachers at the next level to help ensure a seamless transition for the student.

Portability

“Portability” means that a student’s state-approved identification in one or more categories of giftedness transfers to any district in the state. Gifted programming for incoming students must continue but may change according to the receiving district’s programming options. Portability of identification is a part of the student’s permanent record and advanced learning plan. C.C.R. 12.01(21) Portability applies to in-state transfers. In-state transfers must meet provisions of Colorado law as determined by our district.

Colorado River BOCES members follow the identification procedures outlined by the state of Colorado to ensure portability for gifted students. Each student’s cumulative record will house the necessary information for portability.

Common Characteristics of Gifted Individuals

No gifted individuals are exactly the same. Everyone has their own unique patterns and traits. There are many traits that gifted individuals have in common, but no gifted learner exhibits traits in every area.

Cognitive	Creative	Affective	Behavioral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keen power of abstraction Interest in problem-solving and applying concepts Voracious and early reader Large vocabulary Intellectual curiosity Power of critical thinking, skepticism, self-criticism Persistent, goal-directed behavior Independence in work and study Diversity of interests and abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creativeness and inventiveness Keen sense of humor Ability for fantasy Openness to stimuli, wide interests Intuitiveness Independence in attitude and social behavior Self-acceptance and unconcern for social norms Radicalism Aesthetic and moral commitment to self-selected work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unusual emotional depth and intensity Sensitivity or empathy to the feelings of others High expectations of self and others, often leading to feelings of frustration Heightened self-awareness, accompanied by feelings of being different Easily wounded, need for emotional support Need for consistency between abstract values and personal actions Advanced levels of moral judgement Idealism and sense of justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spontaneity Boundless enthusiasm Intensely focused on passions-resists changing activities when engrossed in own interests Highly energetic-needs little sleep or down time Constantly questions Insatiably curiosity Impulsive, eager and spirited Perseverance-strong determination in areas of importance High levels of frustration, particularly when having difficulty meeting standards of performance (either imposed by self or others) Volatile temper, especially related to perceptions of failure Non-stop talking/chattering

Social-Emotional Needs of Gifted Students

The gifted and talented professionals in Colorado River BOCES member districts take the social-emotional needs of gifted learners very seriously. It is important to each of us that gifted learners feel safe in our schools, have the opportunities to express their feelings, and are encouraged and taught to respect themselves and others.

Because gifted children demonstrate greater maturity in some domains over others, they may be at greater risk for specific kinds of social-emotional difficulties if their needs are not met. These aspects may include

1. Overexcitabilities: Gifted students can have “intensities” that may manifest themselves in one or more of these areas (Dabrowski’s Theory):

- Intellectual intentness and focus on a particular topic.
- Greater sensitivity to their environment (appreciation for music or art, sensitivity to loud noises or bright lights, more allergies, etc.).
- Surplus of physical energy
- Vivid imagination and creativity
- Heightened emotional sensitivity (reaction to criticism, perfectionism, empathy, attachment).

2. Asynchronous Development: The same child may be at different places physically, cognitively, and emotionally.

- Adults, accustomed to advanced verbal reasoning from the child, may fail to understand emotional outbursts more typical of their chronological age.
- The child may find it difficult to communicate with peers of the same age who are considerably below their intellectual level, even if they are at the same level emotionally.

3. Perfectionism: This aspect is often valued by educators, resulting in severe anxiety from students. High-ability students place unrealistically high standards for performance on themselves, resulting in anxiety, frustration, or self-blame for less-than-perfect performance.

- Feel as though others (families or teachers) have unrealistically high expectations. This may result in fear of failure, avoidance of challenges, depression, and connection of self-worth to performance.
- Develop unrealistically high standards for the performance of others.

4. Self-Esteem/Identity: High-ability students may experience difficulty constructing their identities, which may lead to lowered self-esteem. Difficulty with identity development may result from any of the following:

- Lack of understanding of higher abilities and their implications
- Feeling different from one’s same-age peers
- Behaviors inconsistent with gender role expectations (e.g., sensitivity in gifted boys, assertiveness in gifted girls)
- Being identified as learning disabled as well as having high abilities

In general, the greater the level of ability, the greater the discrepancies the child may exhibit or experience.

For more information, check out SENG <http://sengifted.org/>

Adult Advocates for Gifted Children

Gifted children have needs that require special support as they grow, develop, and reach for their personal best. These children need advocates working in homes, schools, and communities to ensure their needs are met. In addition to advocating for day-to-day programming and well-being, it is important to advocate for laws and policies that create a supportive learning environment for gifted children.

Advocate for Quality Programming for Your Gifted Child

Families often wonder when and how to approach their child's teacher if their child seems unhappy or not challenged in the classroom. Even though there is no single recipe for how families should work with their child's teacher and school, there are some effective success strategies that work.

How Families Can Advocate on Their Child's Behalf

- Start with the teacher. Find out as much as possible about the teacher's perspective. If your child has been tested, gather information from the school psychologist, and/or other specialists. If your child would benefit from testing, insist on it. With understanding comes a change in perspective.
- Get informed. Learn as much as possible from sites such as NAGC and SENGifted. The [NAGC advocacy toolkit](#) is a must-read with excellent advice.
- Pursue additional channels. If you hit a roadblock with the teacher, you may need to speak with the principal, gifted specialist, director of curriculum, BOCES Gifted Director, or other administrators. We really are all on the same team, but not all of us can initiate meaningful change within a system.
- Form a gifted children's advocacy group with other families. There is strength in numbers, and each parent can provide a wealth of ideas that may propel the group to implement changes in the schools.
- Consider broader advocacy for gifted children. In addition to advocating for your child, consider lending a hand so that all gifted children can benefit. This may be as simple as speaking up to correct misinformation about giftedness in casual conversation, or as involved as advocacy on a state or national level.

Self-Advocacy for Gifted Students

Are you having a problem with a class or an assignment? Can you see room for improvement in how a subject is presented? Do you have an idea for a special project or term paper? Don't just tell your friends. Talk to the teacher! Many students don't know how to go about doing this. The following suggestions will make communication easier and more effective.

- Make an appointment to meet and talk. This shows the teacher that you're serious and you have some understanding of their busy schedule. Tell the teacher about how much time you'll need, be flexible, and be on time.
- If you know other students who feel the same way you do, consider approaching the teacher together. There's strength in numbers. If a teacher hears the same thing from four or five people, they are more open to doing something different.
- Think through what you want to say before you go into your meeting with the teacher. Write down your questions or concerns. Make a list of the items you want to cover. You may even want to copy your list for the teacher so both of you can consult it during your meeting.
- Choose your words carefully. For example, instead of saying, "I hate doing reports; they're boring and a waste of time," try, "Is there some other way I could satisfy this requirement? Could I do a video instead?" Strike the word "boring" from your vocabulary. It's a word that is too vague and not helpful for teachers.
- Don't expect the teacher to do all of the work or propose all of the answers. Be prepared to make suggestions, offer solutions, and even recommend resources. The teacher will appreciate that you took the initiative.
- Be diplomatic, tactful, and respectful. Teachers have feelings, too, and their job is challenging. They're more likely to be responsive if you remember that the purpose of your meeting is a conversation, not a confrontation.
- Focus on what you need, not on what you think the teacher is doing wrong. The more the teacher learns about you, the more they will be able to help. The more defensive the teacher feels, the less they will want to help.
- Don't forget to listen. Strange but true, many students need practice in this essential skill! The purpose of your meeting isn't just to hear yourself talk.

- Bring your sense of humor. Not necessarily the joke-telling sense of humor, but the one that lets you laugh at yourself and your own misunderstandings and mistakes.
- If your meeting isn't successful, get help from another adult. "Successful" doesn't necessarily mean that you emerged victoriously. Even if the teacher denies your request, your meeting can still be judged successful. If you had a real conversation-if you communicated openly, listened carefully, and respected each other's point of view-then congratulate yourself on a great meeting.
- If the air crackled with tension, the meeting fell apart, and you felt disrespected (or acted disrespectfully), then it's time to bring in another adult. Suggestions: a guidance counselor, the gifted specialist, or another teacher you know and trust who seems likely to support you and advocate for you. Once you've found help, approach your teacher and try again.

Excerpted from When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers: How to Meet Their Social and Emotional Needs by Jim Delisle, Ph.D., and Judy Galbraith, M.A. © 2002

Encouraging Gifted Learners at Home

Throughout this handbook, we have given suggestions about working with and advocating for your gifted learner.

Here are some suggestions for activities to do at home for all ages.

- Encourage independence. Allow your child to help make some decisions in their day. When showing an interest in a topic, guide them with opportunities to learn more about the topic.
- Provide intellectually stimulating activities at home. Play games that will stimulate your child's talent area(s). Allow your child to participate in activities that allow the use of their strength/s; e.g., cooking, puzzles, building, etc.
- Encourage self-evaluation. Allow your child to fail. Help them accept the failure as a positive experience and help them to see what they can learn from it.
- Talk with your child. Gifted children usually have a desire to talk with adults. Ask for their opinion about things. Discuss philosophical questions.
- Consider your child's social/emotional development by embracing their talent and accepting differences from their peers. Look out for behaviors that gifted children sometimes display. Sometimes gifted children withdraw, become bossy, or pretend not to be as intelligent as they are. Encourage the child to interact with other children and cooperate with them.
- Encourage creativity. Give the child many opportunities for expression in creative ways. Establish realistic expectations. Allow your child to be a kid, but expect work to show the child's potential.
- Encourage higher-level thinking.
- Remember, children learn what they live.

Resources for Families

This list is not exhaustive by any means but may provide some additional guidance.

Books

Adderholdt, M., & Goldberg, J. (1999). [Perfectionism: What's Bad About Being Too Good?](#) (rev. ed.) Designed for gifted students who are prone toward perfectionism, this book explores some of the possible reasons for perfectionism and offers strategies for learning how to ease up and get perfectionism under control.

Berger, S. (2006). [College Planning for Gifted Students](#) (3rd ed.) Provides a detailed 6-year plan that guides the gifted student through critical college and career choices based on the student's knowledge of self and educational options. The revised second edition includes web-based resources.

Delisle, J., & Galbraith, J. (2002). [When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers: How to Meet Their Social and Emotional Needs](#) After a section devoted to identifying the gifted and the need for specialized education programs for this population, this work delves into the emotional dimensions of giftedness and how to understand gifted kids from the "inside out" through first-person stories, classroom-tested activities, guided discussions, and up-to-date resources.

Guyer, B. P. (2002). [The Pretenders: Gifted People Who Have Difficulty Learning](#) This book tells the stories of eight people with above-average to highly gifted levels of intellect, who also have significant, previously unrecognized and undiagnosed learning disabilities. Their discovery of their true abilities and gifts after years of humiliation with the educational system and the trials of daily life is detailed.

Kay, Keisa (Ed.) (2000). [Uniquely gifted: Identifying and Meeting the Needs of Twice-Exceptional Students](#) The 32 readings in this collection discuss the needs of children who are both gifted and also have special needs such as a disability ("twice exceptional"). The readings are grouped into four major sections. "Family Matters: Perspectives from Family Members," "Teaching Strategies: Learning and Leadership," "Research and Theory: Discovering Possibilities," and "Administrative Options: Working Together."

Khatena, J. (2000). [Enhancing Creativity of Gifted Children: A Guide for Parents and Teachers](#) This book on enhancing the creativity of gifted children begins with stories of gifted children, each illustrating characteristics that distinguish each child's uniqueness. It goes on to delineate the role and power of Families and teachers in bringing a child's creative potential to fruition. Specific measures of creativity that may be used to identify gifted children are

described, as are typical characteristics such as the ability to learn school subjects, lead others, and perform in the arts.

Rimm, S. B. (2001). [Keys to Parenting the Gifted Child](#) (2nd ed.). This book provides Families with guidelines on how to determine if their children are unusually gifted and how to prepare them for school. Recommendations are provided to ensure that gifted children are sufficiently challenged in the classroom while reducing emotional stresses to which intellectually gifted children are often prone.

Strip, C. A., & Hirsch, G. (2000). [Helping Gifted Children Soar: A Practical Guide for Parents and Teachers](#). Intended for families of gifted children, this book stresses the importance of positive relationships between families and teachers as they work to meet children's academic, emotional, and social needs.

Walker, S. Y. (2002). [The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids: How to Understand, Live With, and Stick up for Your Gifted Child](#) (rev. ed.). Designed for Families of gifted children, this book discusses the background and history of gifted education, characteristics that make gifted children unique, and the needs of gifted children.

2005 TAGT Legacy Book Award Winner Webb, Ph.D., James T., Gore, M. Ed., Janet L., Karnes, Ph.D., Frances A., [Grandparents' Guide to Gifted Children](#) Grandparents can play a supremely influential role in the shaping of their grandchildren's lives and wellbeing. This is especially so with bright or gifted grandchildren who will need additional emotional and intellectual support.

Websites

Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented (CAGT) <http://coloradogifted.org/>

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) <http://www.nagc.org/>

The Davidson Institute <http://www.davidsongifted.org/>

Hoagies Gifted Education Page <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>

The National Research Center on Gifted and Talented
<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt.html>

Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) <http://www.sengifted.org/>

The Association for the Gifted (TAG) <http://www.cectag.org/>

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children <https://world-gifted.org/>

Colorado Department of Education <http://www.cde.state.co.us/> (search “gifted”)

Glossary of Commonly Used GT Terms

The vast lot of words surrounding teaching gifted and talented education can be frustrating for families and others not in the field. Here is a list of key terms and what they mean.

2e: Twice-exceptional. Students who have been formally identified as gifted as well as diagnosed with a disability are considered to have two exceptionalities.

504: Section 504 is a portion of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 outlining the civil rights of persons with disabilities. Section 504 covers preschool, elementary, and secondary school policies involving the placement of children with physical and mental disabilities. 504 is separate from Special Education.

Ability Grouping: The grouping of children of high ability and/or achievement levels grouped for accelerated and/or in-depth learning. Any grouping strategy used should be flexible and inclusive.

Acceleration: An educational approach that moves a student from one level of instruction to a higher level of instruction; providing learning experiences that are usually given to older students.

Achievement: The level of student accomplishment in a particular subject area from one point to another (normally higher) point.

ALP (Advanced Learning Plan): This is a state-mandated document describing the way in which a gifted student is being served according to their talent areas.

Affective Learning: Learning through emotional responses.

Alternative Assignments: Assignments that modify the content, incorporating an in-depth focus.

Aptitude: Capability, ability, innate or acquired capacity for specific talent. Readiness or quickness in learning.

Baseline: A starting point from which activities are carried out, measured, and compared.

Cluster Grouping: Students performing at a similar ability level in a grade are grouped together to allow social and academic interaction between peers. These groups are flexible, allowing students to join or leave at any time during the school year, depending on their needs.

Contract Learning: A student and teacher jointly develop a contract to meet specific learning outcome(s); this often involves modifying regular classwork.

Creative Ability: Students who possess this ability have active imaginations and develop original approaches to tasks. They find new ideas, new implications, and novel uses of otherwise ordinary items. The versatility of intellectual response, independent thought, and freedom of expression are common characteristics of highly creative students. Behaviors include flexibility, fluency, originality, and elaboration of thought.

Cross Grade Grouping (Subject Acceleration): A student studies specific content at a higher grade level (e.g., a 3rd-grade student takes math instruction with a 4th-grade class).

Curriculum Compacting: As a result of demonstrated mastery on a pre-assessment or diagnostic assessment, a student can choose another unit of study or goes more in-depth in content.

Divergent Thinking: The ability to come up with a large number of possible and original associations or solutions to problems.

Enrichment: Curriculum modifications that allow deeper or broader study than is ordinarily available in the standard classroom offerings.

Fast Pace: Substantial increase in the tempo of content presentation and acquisition.

Grade Acceleration: Typically associated with grade skipping. For example, a first-grade student moves to second grade for his/her full day of instruction.

GRT (Gifted Resource Teacher): A staff member in each school who is responsible for identifying and providing services to gifted students and/or making sure proper services are available to these students.

Higher Level Thinking Questions: Questions used in discussions or activities based on processing that requires analysis, synthesis, evaluation, or other critical thinking

skills. Bloom's Taxonomy and Depth and Complexity are popular models that describe how to implement meaningful higher-level thinking questions.

Honors Course: A course existing in secondary and collegiate locations, providing a higher level of rigor and/or independent study opportunities.

Independent Study: This is normally a personalized learning contract where the student is largely responsible for his/her own learning, allowing a student to individually investigate an area of high interest or advance his/her knowledge. Typically the outcome is a product.

IEP (Individual Education Plan): Kids with delayed skills or other disabilities might be eligible for special services that provide individualized education programs in public schools, free of charge to families.

Interest Grouping: Students are grouped by similar interests.

Internship: A program that provides practical experience for students in an occupation or profession.

Leadership Ability: A student with this ability is successful in interpersonal relationships and can lead a group of various personalities toward achieving group goals.

Learning Style Grouping: Students are grouped by similar learning styles (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic) to complete specific tasks or activities.

Mental Age: The mental ability of a child is stated as the chronological age for which the mental ability is considered normal.

Mentorship: A one-to-one relationship between a student and an outside-of-school expert for learning purposes.

Motivation: That which drives the student to accomplish certain goals – these can be internally (personal and intrinsic) or externally (parent/teacher) driven.

Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS): This is an individual, comprehensive, student-centered, needs-based, problem-solving process. Educators employ research-based interventions to ensure student achievement and growth.

Potential: The possibility of future success in a specific talent area (closely related to aptitude).

Research: A diligent protracted investigation; to study using scientific principles, including the collection of data and the evaluation of findings. Research can be conducted to find solutions to new problems and formulate plans.

Screening: An inclusive search for specific students using a variety of assessment tools and data to help identify and meet the needs of an advanced student throughout their educational career.

Taxonomy: The branch of a subject which consists in or relates to the classification of thinking and understanding.

Telescoping Curriculum: Shortening the amount of time a student is given to progress through a year's curriculum at a specific grade level.

Tiered Products: Products at varying levels of difficulty.

Twice Exceptional: (also referred to as 2E) These students have been formally identified as gifted AND also have a 504 or IEP.

Underachiever: A student whose academic achievement trends at a level below that which is expected, based on the student's known aptitude or ability. *Underachievers are not lazy.* There are many reasons why a gifted student could be underachieving. Careful examination of the root cause(s) for a student's reluctance to participate is necessary to discover how to help a student who is not reaching their potential.

Under-developed Capacities: Capacities that have atrophied because of poor early environment, stunted language development, or emotional problems.