



# Elizabeth SCHOOL DISTRICT



## Gifted Education *Parent* Handbook

### Mission Statements

#### Elizabeth School District

To provide our students with excellent and diverse learning opportunities that inspire passion for learning, develop individual potential, and prepare them for a successful future.

#### Colorado Department of Education

Ensure gifted student growth and achievement through systems of support, programming and advocacy.

*Students Are At the  of Everything We Do!*

### Contents

The Importance of Partnerships P.2
Parent Role in Gifted Education P.3-4
Gifted Programming P.5
Appendix P.5-13
Parent Resources P.14

### CHALLENGE

*The surest path to positive self esteem is to succeed at something which one perceived would be difficult.*

*Each time we steal a student's struggle, we steal the opportunity for them to build self-confidence.*

*They must learn to do hard things to feel good about themselves. – Sylvia Rimm*

# The Importance of Partnerships

Partnerships are critical in helping all students navigate the K-12 system and do so successfully. Gifted students are no exception. The district office of gifted education intentionally builds partnerships across grade levels and buildings that support parents, teachers, and students.

At the administrative level gifted services fall under the Special Services Department where the GT Coordinator oversees the gifted education program for the district.

Each building has a designated staff member that serves as the gifted liaison, working as key communicators and advocates between teachers, students, and administrative staff.

Teachers build partnerships with students and parents through the Advanced Learning Plan process that encourages input from all parties to create academic and affective student goals that are rigorous and realistic, measurable and sustainable.

Additional support staff form partnerships with gifted students when providing extended learning opportunities such as Discovery Days and STEAM camps for students in grades 3-8 and Internships at the high school level. Gifted students are often involved in school clubs and extra curricular activities related to the arts, sports, technology, etc. that result in partnerships with teachers and staff in addition to their classroom teachers.

The gifted office partners with parents in the following ways:

**Communication** through the district website, parent meetings, and newsletters.

**Identification** process includes parental input into a child's body of evidence using the parent online information form.

**Advanced Learning Plans** are written by the teachers based on student data and parent input provided through a survey. ALPs are housed on the Infinite Campus System where teachers have easy access to edit and print plans for parents.



## Gifted Support Staff 2022-2023 School Year

### District Gifted Education Office

Gifted and Talented Coordinator: Jennifer Bruns  
jbruns@esdk12.org

### Liaisons

#### Elementary

Running Creek: Sarah Siekierski  
ssiekierski@esdk12.org

Singing Hills: Jeanette Wygant  
jwygant@esdk12.org

#### Middle School

EMS: Heather Lindt  
hlindt@esdk12.org

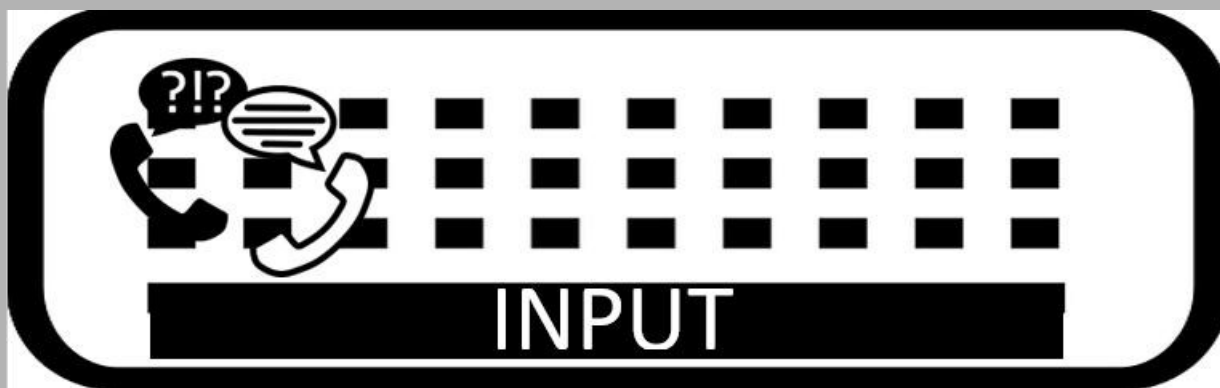
#### High School

EHS: Autumn Wendler  
awendler@esdk12.org  
Steve Beaudoin  
sbeaudoin@esdk12.org

### Additional Support Staff

Elementary Dean of Students: Patricia Kaiser  
pkaiser@esdk12.org  
HS Internship Coordinator: Steven Beaudoin  
sbeaudoin@esdk12.org

# Parents' Role in Gifted Education



Parents play a vital role in gifted education in three ways: referral, BOE input, and communication.

## Parent Referral From Within the District

Parents can refer their child to the Special Services Office for gifted identification by filling out the parent online referral form found on the district website. Once the form is submitted, the gifted education coordinator reviews the students' cognitive and achievement data for any qualifying scores. If the child has one district/state achievement or cognitive subtest score at the 95th percentile or higher, the identification process begins. The first step is to collect a body of evidence that supports gifted identification.

## Parent Referral from Outside the District

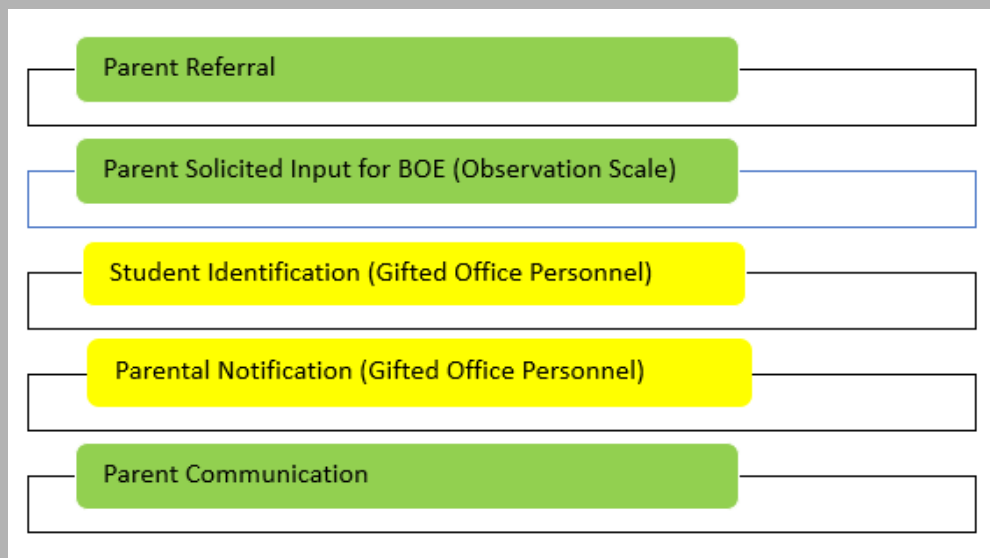
If the child has been identified as gifted in another school district and is transferring to the Elizabeth School District, the parent should send the GT Office any documents that support the identification such as test scores and an Advanced Learning Plan. If state procedures were followed, the child's identification is portable and will be honored by the district. If not, the gifted coordinator will begin to collect the necessary qualifying data to identify the student as gifted.

## Parent Solicited Input for BOE

Formal identification requires a thorough body of evidence (BOE) that includes cognitive, achievement, observation scales, and performance all at the 95th percentile, exceeds, or advance/high ranking level for performance.

- **Cognitive:** The district administers the Cognitive Abilities Test to all students in grades 2 and 6 each year. Additional testing outside those grades is done once a year. A qualifying 95th percentile cognitive score (usually CogAT) is required on at least one of the subtests (verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal). Parents can submit private IQ testing administered by a qualified professional if CogAT results do not qualify the student.
- **Achievement:** Achievement data is gathered from district and state assessments. In the identification process the team looks for several scores around the 95th percentile in the same academic area within a three year period. Sometimes students do not take these tests seriously and as a result do not show their true abilities. **If this is the case, parents can encourage their child to rest the night before the test, eat a good breakfast and lunch, concentrate, and try their very best on the test.**
- **Norm referenced observation scale:** The district uses the state approved Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS) that can be filled out by teachers and at times, parents. (A list of characteristics is on page six (6) of the Appendix for parents who are unfamiliar with the characteristics of gifted students.

# Parents' Role in Gifted Education (continued)



• **Performance:** In talent areas and some academic areas such as writing and science, performance rubrics are used to assess a student's ability to produce work two grade levels above their age peers. Qualifying scores come from judged and juried performances at the advanced level and/or a high ranking in state or national competitions are also accepted. **If a child has participated in competitions outside of school, parents should notify the school of such scores.**

**Student identification and parent notification are the responsibility of district gifted office personnel.**

The GT coordinator works to gather the required BOE by reviewing district and state assessment results throughout the year. When the body of evidence is nearly complete, parents and possibly teachers will be asked to fill out a behavioral observation form.

**Gifted office personnel are responsible for the identification of a gifted student.** Formal identification is a team decision that usually includes the gifted coordinator and building liaison. Depending on the circumstances, other special services personnel might be involved. Parents will have already provided their input through the referral process and/or observation

information on the gifted identification process see the Appendix pgs. 7-11.)

**All notification about gifted identification and talent pool comes from the Special Services Office.** A letter is emailed to parents notifying them of the areas in which their child has been identified and that an Advanced Learning Plan will be created and shared with them by the teachers.

## Parent Communication

**The best way for parents to support their child's education is to keep on top of communications between home and school.**

- **Provide Input for the Advanced Learning Plan.** (See Appendix 12-13 for more information on ALPs.)
- **Attend parent teacher conferences** when a copy of the ALP is given to parents and its contents can be discussed.
- **Share concerns and questions** with the classroom teacher throughout the year.
- **Regularly check email for notices from the District Office of Gifted Education,** which include invitations and permission slips to attend student extended learning opportunities; requests for parent input related to ALPs and program evaluation; invitations to parent support meetings and events.



# Gifted Programming

Programming for identified gifted and talent pool students in the Elizabeth School District is predominantly done within the regular classroom using differentiated instruction strategies such as content acceleration, and flexible cluster groups. Honors, Advanced Placement classes, concurrent enrollment, and internships are also instructional options for gifted students at the high school level.

## Differentiation Models

The district predominantly uses two models for gifted differentiation.



### Depth and Complexity Model—Sandra Kaplan

This model differentiates thinking by adding depth and complexity to programming for gifted students.

Depth in the curriculum is ensured by including: the language of the discipline, details, rules, patterns, trends, ethical issues, unanswered questions and big ideas. Complexity is created by examining multiple perspectives, changes over time and interdisciplinary links.

## VQN Differentiation

Teachers are encouraged to meet the needs of students based on the profile results from the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). The profile indicates the strengths and weaknesses of a student's verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal thinking and learning styles. Teachers are asked to consider in what ways they offer additional ways of instructing and evaluating students based on their thinking and learning strengths.

## Extensions and Enrichment Opportunities

**Secondary Students** are invited to attend the Ultimate Scavenger Hunt 3-day retreat for grades 7-12. This event brings students from Colorado's rural school districts together with experts to think about big ideas, network with gifted peers, experience team work and collaboration through physical and mental problem solving and take educated risks outside their comfort zones at mountain retreats and colleges around the state.

**High School Students** are invited to participate Legislative Day each February. This is an opportunity for gifted high school students to visit the state capital and shadow a legislator as they conduct their days.

**Elementary and Middle School Students** are encouraged to attend Discovery Days throughout the school year. These day long events include discussions and activities for the affective needs of gifted students and field trips related to various careers.

Elizabeth School District



CASE COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL EXECUTIVES

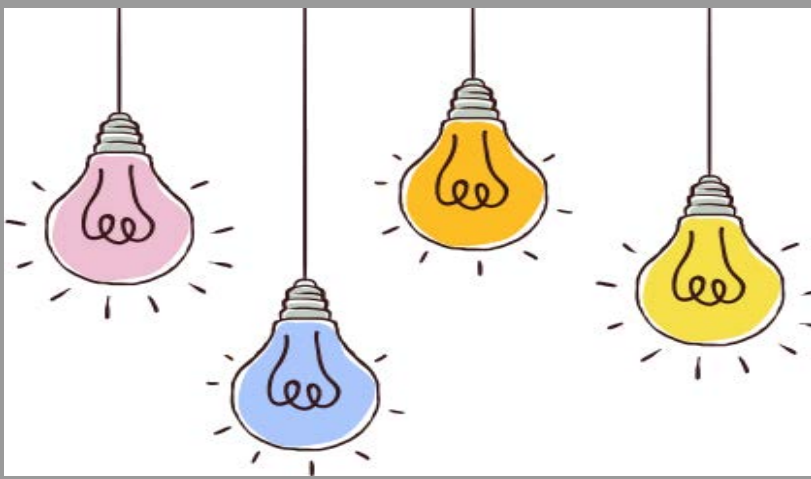
CASE Convention 2022

STEAM Camp "Goat Yoga" highlighted at CASE Convention.

In the summer elementary and middle school students are also invited to attend the Elizabeth School District's summer week long STEAM Camp for gifted and talent pool students. This usually takes place the first or second week of June.



Ultimate Celebration zipline activity



## Characteristics of ...

A High Achiever...	A Gifted Learner...	A Creative Thinker...
• Remembers the answer	• Poses unforeseen questions	• Sees exceptions
• Is interested	• Is curious	• Wonders
• Is attentive	• Is selectively mentally engaged	• Daydreams; may seem off task
• Generates advanced ideas	• Generates complex abstract ideas	• Overflows with ideas (many never developed)
• Works hard to achieve	• Knows without working hard	• Plays with ideas and concepts
• Answers the questions in detail	• Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives	• Injects new possibilities
• Performs at the top of the group	• Is beyond the group	• Is in own group
• Gets A's	• May not be motivated by grades	• Is not motivated by grades
• Learns with ease	• Already knows	• Questions: What if...
• Needs 6 to 8 repetitions to master	• Needs 1 to 3 repetitions to master	• Questions the need for mastery
• Comprehends at a high level	• Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas	• Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas
• Enjoys the company of age peers	• Prefers company of intellectual peers	• Enjoys the company of creative peers
• Understands complex, abstract humor	• Creates complex, abstract humor	• Relishes wild, off-the-wall humor
• Grasps the meaning	• Infers and connects concepts	• Makes mental leaps
• Completes assignments on time	• Initiates projects	• Initiates more projects than will be complete
• Is receptive	• Is intense	• Is independent and unconventional
• Is accurate and complete	• Is original and continually developing	• Is original and continually developing
• Enjoys school often	• Enjoys self-directed learning	• Enjoys creating
• Is a technician with expertise in a field	• Expert who abstracts beyond the field	• In an inventor and idea generator
• Memorizes well	• Guesses and infers well	• Creates and brainstorms well
• Is highly alert and observant	• Anticipates and relates observations	• Is intuitive
• Is pleased with own learning	• Is self-critical	• Is never finished with possibilities

Source: Adapted from Clark (1992) and Seago(1974)

## Characteristics shared by many gifted students ...

While it is unusual for a child to manifest all of the following behavioral characteristics, parents will see many of them even at an early age:

Possesses a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics

Shows quick mastery and recall of factual information

Has insight into cause-effect relationships

Has a ready grasp of underlying principles

Is a keen and alert observer

Exhibits advanced vocabulary for age or grade level

Reads with comprehension at an early age

Displays curiosity about many topics

Has a passionate interest area

Is intense; gets totally absorbed in activities and thoughts

Prefers complex and challenging tasks rather than "basic" work

Sees connections between apparently unconnected ideas and activities

Prefers to work independently

Prefers older companions

Is a perfectionist

Has a sophisticated sense of humor

Loves puzzles, mazes, numbers

# Identification of Gifted Students

*Hide not your talents. They for use were made. What's a sundial in the shade? – Benjamin Franklin*

Gifted Education is a strength-based model that identifies 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 their identified area(s) of strength.

## Definition

"Gifted and Talented" refers to 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, 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, music, dance and psychomotor abilities

## Identification Process

The identification process begins with a referral that may come from a variety of sources such as:

- Universal Screening at second and sixth grades using the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)
- Parent, teacher or student referrals
- Achievement measures
- Behavioral observations
- Performance indicators

Once a student has been referred for gifted identification, a body of evidence is collected that includes quantitative and qualitative data. Criteria for identification usually requires three qualifying pieces of data that meet the state criteria of 95th percentile or higher on a norm referenced approved measurement tool or an advanced or distinguished level on a criterion referenced approved measurement tool or performance rubric.

Identification is determined by a team of educators who have been trained in the gifted identification process, procedures and criteria. Once the process is completed, students, parents and teachers are notified. Students who have a body of evidence that partially meets required criteria may be placed in a talent pool for further consideration over time.



## Colorado State Board of Education Rules for the Administration of the Exceptional Children's Educational Act

### 12.02(2)(d) Criteria for Determining Exceptional Ability (Giftedness) or Talent Pool

12.02(2)(d)(i) For each category of giftedness defined in 12.01 (16), criteria for exceptional ability means: 95 percentile or above on a standardized nationally normed test or observation tool, or a rating on a performance assessment that indicates exceptionality/distinguished compared to age mates.

12.02(2)(d)(ii) Not meeting criteria on a single assessment tool shall not prevent further data collection or consideration for identification, if other indicators suggest exceptional potential as observed in a body of evidence.

12.02(2)(d)(iii) Criteria for screening assessments is a score range less than the 95 percentile ranking or results on observation/performance assessment tools as determined by the AU to determine referrals, further data collection and observation, and/or formation of student talent pools.



# Four Pathways to Identification: 1

## Gifted Identification Criteria: Specific Academic Aptitude (with Cognitive)



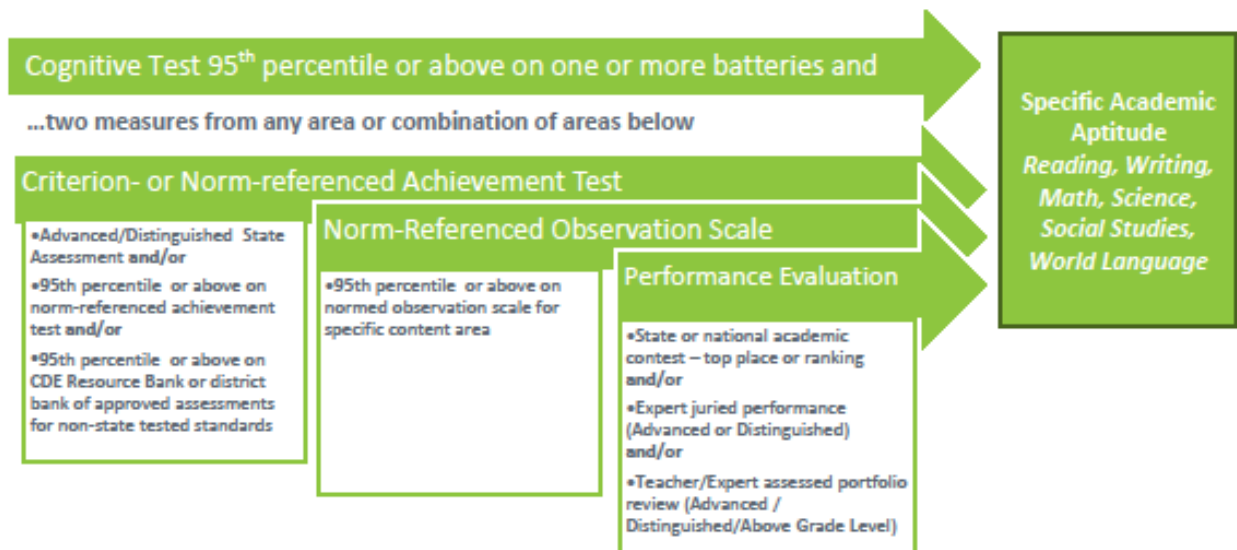
**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

### 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 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or above on one or more batteries of a cognitive test and demonstrate aptitude on two specific academic measures.





## Four Pathways to Identification: 2

### Gifted Identification Criteria: Specific Academic Aptitude (without Cognitive)



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Department of Education

#### 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 95<sup>th</sup> 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.

Three or more measures from two of the three areas below

#### Criterion- Norm-referenced Achievement Test

- Advanced/Distinguished State Assessment and/or
- 95th percentile or above on norm-referenced achievement test and/or
- 95th percentile or above on CDE Resource Bank or district bank of approved assessments for non-state tested standards

#### Norm-Referenced Observation Scale

- 95th percentile or above on normed observation scale for specific content area

#### Performance Evaluation

- State or national academic contest — top place or ranking and/or
- Expert juried performance (Advanced or Distinguished) and/or
- Teacher/Expert assessed portfolio review (Advanced / Distinguished/Above Grade Level)

Specific Academic  
Aptitude  
*Reading, Writing,  
Math, Science,  
Social Studies,  
World Language*

# Four Pathways to Identification: 3

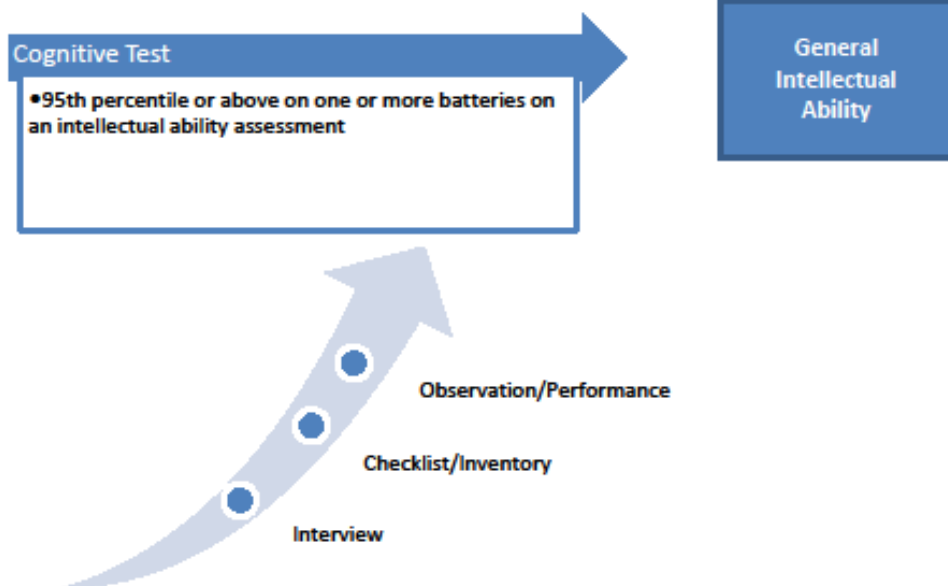
## Gifted Identification Criteria: General Intellectual Ability Department of Gifted Education



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Department of Education

### Area of Giftedness: General Intellectual Ability

Students may qualify in the area of general intellectual ability with a score of 95<sup>th</sup> 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 (95<sup>th</sup> percentile or above), the review team may determine that the student is identified with general or specific intellectual ability. This meets portability requirements.



# Four Pathways to Identification: 4

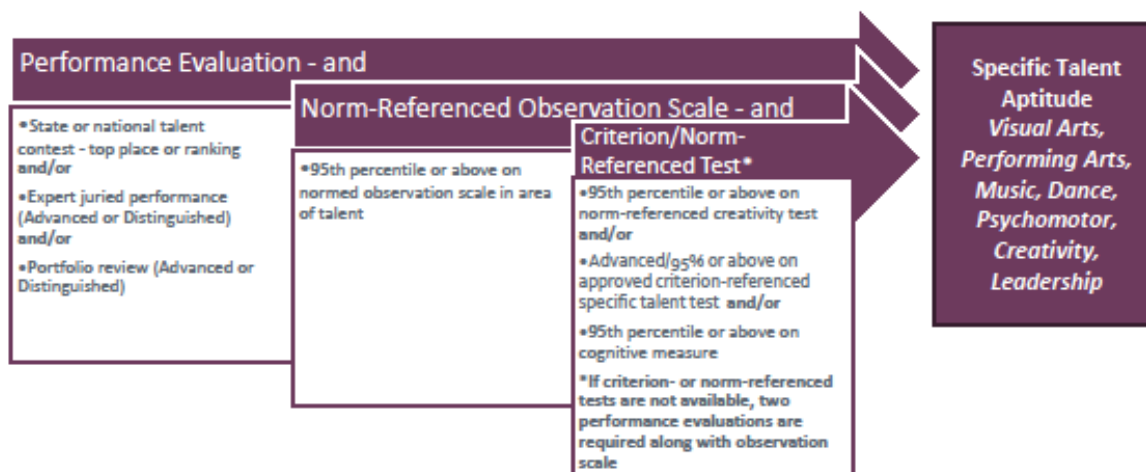
## Gifted Identification Criteria: Specific Talent Aptitude Department of Gifted Education

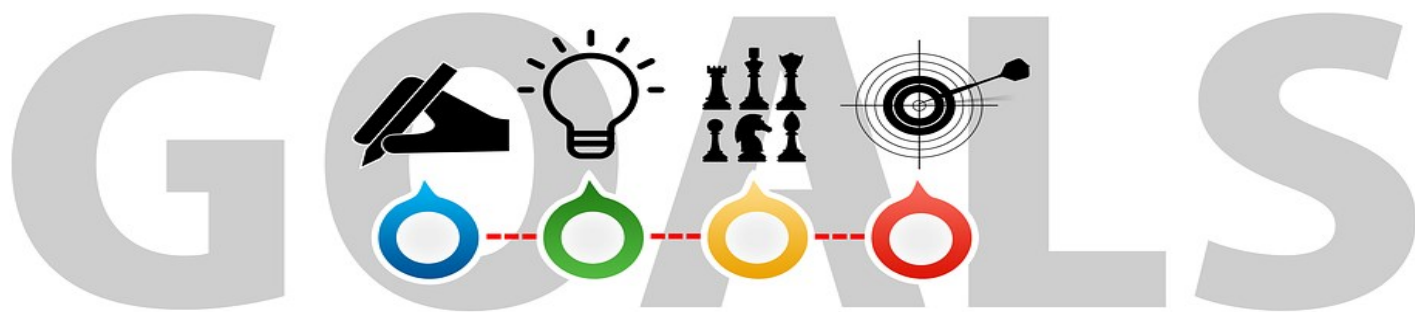


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Department of Education

### 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.





## Standards Based ALPs

### Affective

The purpose of affective goals is to assist gifted students in developing habits and skills of success. Such habits and skills align with the district's Profile of a Graduate and the National Association of Gifted and Talented standards of:

- Personal competencies
- Social competencies
- Leadership competencies
- Cultural competencies
- Communication competencies
- College and Career guidance (Affective goals dealing with college and career can be recorded and monitored through the student's Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) housed in the student's personal College in Colorado account.)

Personal competencies such as understanding what it means to be gifted including characteristics, learning styles, overexcitabilities and executive function skills are often the focus of affective standards. Some affective goals are strength based, focusing on how to improve upon their natural abilities. Other times, a student might be weak in a specific competency area that interferes with his or her personal or academic goals, so that impediment can be addressed through an ALP goal.

### Academic

Academic goals provide impetus for instruction and learning that is commensurate with the gifted student's ability and potential in his or her area(s) of identified strength. Goals are based on the Colorado Academic Content Standards that students work to master at or above grade level in the classroom. Advanced Learning Plans that include standards are directly related to what the student is learning throughout the school year as opposed to being isolated and irrelevant.

#### Best Practices in Gifted Education:

Classroom instruction that follows best practices in gifted education is important to the success of gifted students' learning and growth as measured through the advanced learning plan. Best instruction includes, but is not limited to:

- Acceleration/Grouping
- Pre-testing
- Inquiry using Depth and Complexity
- Reinforcing habits, practices and skills necessary to "become an expert"
- Facilitating the student making interdisciplinary connections
- Allowing faster instructional pacing based on the student's rate of acquisition
- Providing alternate ways to learn and perform based on verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal thinking and learning styles.





**Colorado Department of Education (CDE):** This link within the larger Colorado Department of Education is provided to assist with questions that both educators and parents may have around working with gifted and talented students.

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

**Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented (CAGT):** CAGT is a nonprofit organization of parents, educators, and others interested in promoting suitable education, including creative stimulation, for gifted and talented children, while also seeking public recognition and aid for the special needs of these children. <http://www.coloradogifted.org/>

**National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC):** NAGC is a non-profit organization of parents, teachers, educators, other professionals and community leaders who unite to address the unique needs of children and youth with demonstrated gifts and talents as well as those children who may be able to develop their talent potential with appropriate educational experiences.

<http://www.nagc.org/>

**The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRCG/T):** NRCG/T promotes and publishes research on current and emerging issues in the education of gifted and talented students.

<https://nrcgt.uconn.edu/>

**Hoagie's Kids and Teens:** This site links to contests and awards, hot topics, internet investigations, lists of movies with gifted kids as the leading characters, and much, much more! <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org>

**SENG (Social Emotional Needs of Gifted):** SENNG is dedicated to fostering the social emotional needs of gifted adults and children. At this site, current articles and conference information are available that serve to support social and emotional issues that affect the gifted population.

<http://www.sengifted.org/>

**Twice Exceptional Newsletter:** This site has articles, resources, events and book recommendations for families with twice exceptional children.

<http://2enewsletter.com>

**Davidson Institute:** Davidson Institute is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting profoundly gifted students 18 and under.

<http://www.davidsongifted.org/>

## Gifted Education Support Staff

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