

Eagle County Schools

Gifted Education

Handbook



EAGLE COUNTY SCHOOLS

Table of Contents

I: Introduction

II: Definition of Gifted

III: Program

- Goals
- Programming Options
- Response to Instruction

IV: Gifted Identification

- Procedure
- Timeline
- Pathways for Referral
- Body of Evidence
- Review Team
- Areas of Identification
- Talent Pool
- Transfer Students/Portability
- Twice Exceptional
- Appeal Process

V: Advanced Learning Plans

VI: Acceleration

- Early Access
- Single-Subject/Grade-Level Acceleration
- Appeals

VII: Declining Gifted Services

VIII: Professional Learning

IX: Program Evaluation

X: Resources

- Parent Support & Information
- Definition/Glossary

I: Introduction

The *Exceptional Children's Education Act*, which was adopted in 1976 and last amended in 1996 and the *Colorado Rules for the Administration of the Exceptional Children's Act, Gifted Student Programs*, require schools districts to identify and serve gifted students.

In response to the needs of exceptional learners, Eagle County Schools offers gifted and talented programming addressing the unique needs of advanced learners in an age-appropriate manner.

Eagle County Schools: Gifted and Talented Mission Statement

We ensure that our students are challenged to achieve their highest aptitude and that curriculum and learning opportunities are in line with their specific needs, interests, and abilities.

Beliefs:

- Gifted students have unique strengths and needs that must be addressed.
- Gifted ability exists and should be identified and served in students of all ages from all cultures, races, ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic groups.
- Every child deserves a rigorous and challenging curriculum with tiered programming and a continuum of services.
- District administration, teachers, families, and the community share the responsibility to provide relevant and challenging opportunities to develop the individual potential of advanced learners.
- Every child shares the responsibility for maximizing the learning opportunities provided.

II: Definition of Gifted

Eagle County Schools adopts the Colorado Department of Education definition for giftedness:

State Definition

"Gifted and talented children" means those persons 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. Children under the age of four who are gifted may also be provided with early childhood special educational services.

Gifted students include gifted students with disabilities (i.e. twice-exceptional) and students with exceptional abilities or potential from all socio-economic and ethnic, cultural populations. Gifted students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these **areas of giftedness**:

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

III: Program

The gifted and talented program was developed to ensure that our students are challenged to achieve their highest aptitude and that curriculum and learning opportunities are in line with specific needs, interests, and abilities.

Program Goals 2016-2020

Goal 1: Eagle County Schools will use non-verbal screening methods, ongoing formative assessment, parent / student self-referrals, and the Response to Intervention (RtI) process to identify potential in students. Further testing will build a body of evidence to support proper identification. The district will make progress toward gifted identification being a reflection of district demographics.

Goal 2: Each school in the Eagle County Schools will review gifted programming options with opportunities for teachers to share best practices, continually review options in place and adjust yearly.

Goal 3: Eagle County Schools will build parent and community partnerships through increased communication and collaboration to enhance gifted services.

- ECSD will hold parent meetings on topics of interest (ALPs, GT Programming, SENG, Building Transition Meetings).
- ECSD will continue to work with Colorado Mountain College and other post-secondary entities to provide higher education opportunities for advanced learners.

Goal 4: Eagle County Schools will provide professional learning on the characteristics and needs of gifted students, differentiation, RtI interventions and formative assessment for all staff. Educators that are involved in the gifted education program full-time will have or obtain their CDE GT Endorsement, attend the state or national conference, and participate in ongoing professional learning directly related to gifted. Schools will provide release time for gifted education specialists to collaborate.

Goal 5: A survey of gifted services will be conducted annually and will show increased satisfaction by students and parents. Teachers and administrators will be surveyed to measure their perceived level of support, needs, awareness, barriers and resources.

Programming Options

Eagle County Schools believes in tailored instruction for gifted and talented students. Each identified student has an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). This plan outlines specific programming options to meet individual needs. These programming options could include, but are not limited to the following:

Strength-Based Learning

- Academic Aptitude
 - Reading, Writing, Math, Science, Social Studies
- Talent Aptitude
 - Visual and Performing Arts, Music, Sports (skiing), Leadership
- Flexible Grouping
 - School-wide Content Flooding
 - Classroom Differentiated Grouping

Project-Based Learning

- Elementary EAGLE: aligned to ECS curriculum frameworks or an independent study
- Middle School Exploratory: passion project-based learning

Content Acceleration

- Early Access (K-1)
- Single-Subject
- Grade Level
- Advanced Placement (AP)
- Dual Enrollment
- Content Compacting
 - Middle School: Advanced Classes
 - High School: Advanced Designation & Honors

Social-Emotional Supports

- Lunch bunch
- “Friends” group
- Mindfulness groups
- Middle School EDGE group
- Building/School transition support
- College/Career/Post-secondary planning

International Baccalaureate

Avon Elementary, Eagle Valley Elementary

Multi-age/Competency Learning

Brush Creek Elementary K-1

Extracurricular Options (May include, but not limited to)

- Battle of the Books
- Robotics Competitions
- Model UN
- Science Olympiad
- Writing Contests
- Art Contests

- Project Funway
- Local Outreach Partnerships

Response to Instruction (RtI)

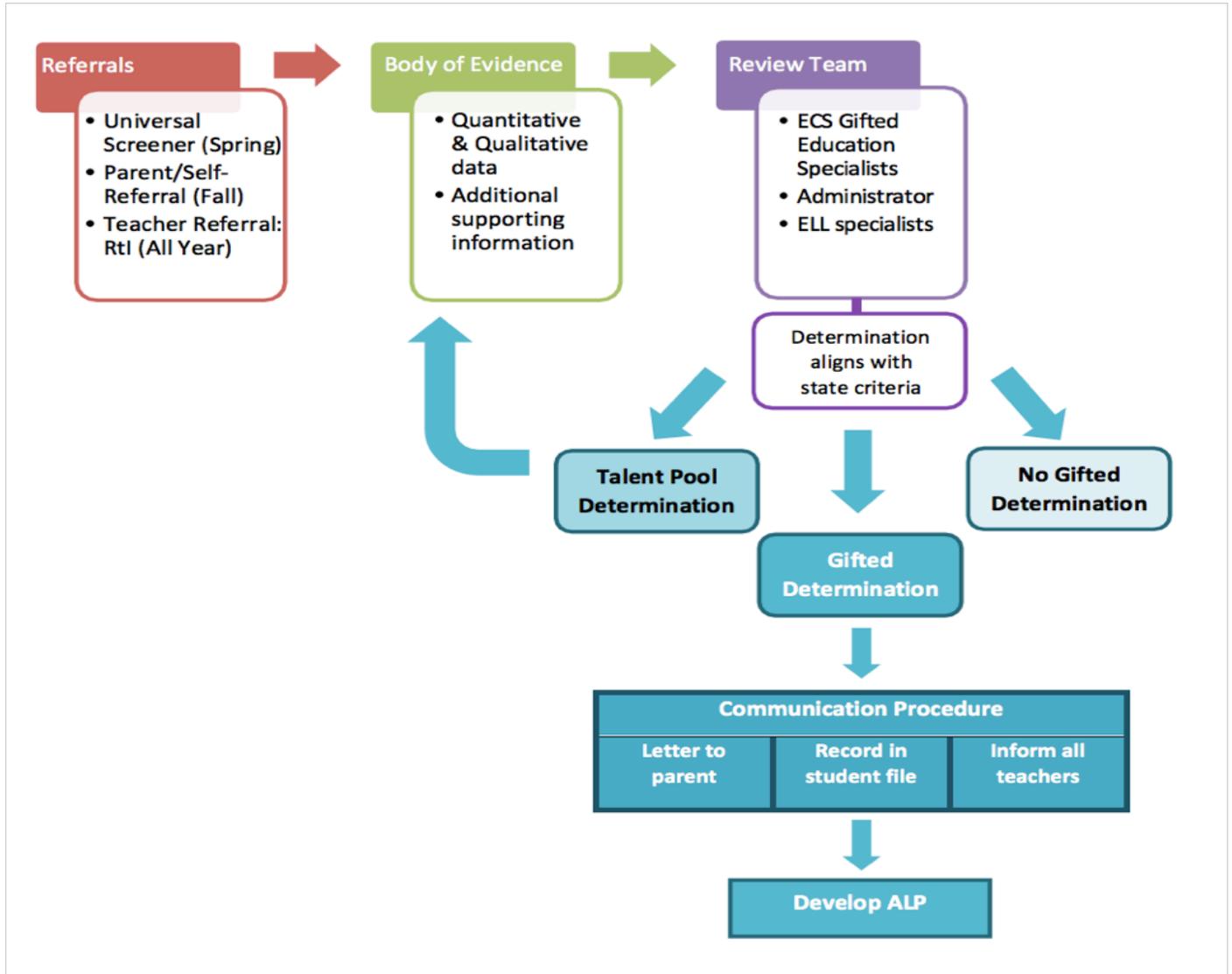
In meeting the needs of gifted learners in the classroom, Eagle County Schools follows the Response to Intervention model for gifted programming as described by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). All children receive core curriculum (Tier One) but because advanced learners may pick up this material more quickly or can demonstrate mastery of learning through pre-testing, they may need additional interventions (Tier Two). A few students may need extensive interventions (Tier Three).

- **Tier One:** Eagle County Schools follows a rigorous core curriculum that is aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards and includes competencies that refer to the important ideas or core processes central to a discipline, transfer to new situations, and have lasting value beyond the classroom.
- **Tier Two:** When students learn Tier One (core curriculum) material quickly or already demonstrate mastery of a concept, they may need additional challenge to expand their learning. The first level of intervention is a response to advanced learner needs.
- **Tier Three:** A few students will receive Tier Two enrichment interventions but still demonstrate a need for a faster pace or more complex learning environment. These students may need interventions that may include but are not limited to one or more of the following:
 - **Grade-level Acceleration**—Advancing a child one or more entire grade levels to expose him/her to more advanced curriculum.
 - **Single-Subject Acceleration**—Advancing a child in one or more subjects (advanced math classes, higher grade level reading groups, dual enrollment in college).
 - **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.
 - **Internships**—Students are matched with an expert in and given an opportunity to learn more about a specific topic. This works best in conjunction with an independent study and may involve job shadowing.

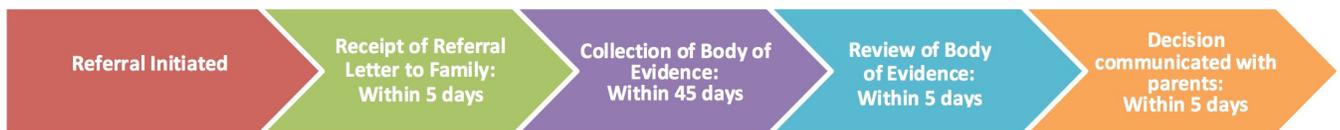
IV: Gifted Identification

Eagle County Schools aligns with Colorado Department of Education Gifted and Talented guidelines for identification.

Gifted Identification Procedure



Identification Timeline



Pathways for Referral

Screening Pathway

ECS will conduct an ability-screening event in the spring of second and sixth grades. The screening will be conducted using the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test 3 (NNAT3), a non-language based ability test, to identify potential in children without regard to gender, ethnicity, language or race. One further purpose of the screening is to identify students who, for whatever reason, are not demonstrating advanced ability in the classroom setting. Students who score at the 95th percentile or higher in the screening test, or who attain a score in the top 5% of students at his/her school, will go on to a formal to create a body of evidence for possible gifted identification.

Teacher Referral Pathway

ECS uses Response to Instruction to meet the needs of all students in the classroom. Some students need advanced interventions for their needs to be met. These interventions are put into place after teachers review classroom data, consult with the gifted education specialist, and discuss options with parents. In some cases, further intervention is needed and possible formal referral to the gifted education program. When this is the case, in partnership with the gifted education specialist, a teacher completes a formal referral for further gifted testing.

Nomination Pathway

During the second month of each school year, a two-week nomination window will allow families and students to nominate for gifted testing. The district accepts nomination applications from family members and students. An application can be found on the district website, <http://www.eagleschools.net/parents/gifted-education>, or in the school's office. Students nominated during the nomination window will have a formal referral to the program resulting in a complete body of evidence collected. The timeline on the identification process will start on the final day of the nomination window.

Body of Evidence

Eagle County Schools collects a body of evidence (BOE) for review and identification into the gifted education program. A body of evidence considers intellectual, academic, and talent areas through use of multiple sources and types of data. It consists of quantitative and qualitative measures to determine if a student meets the criteria for gifted identification and to build a student profile of strengths and interests. Quantitative assessment provides numerical scores or ratings that can be analyzed or quantified. Qualitative assessment provides interpretive and descriptive information about certain attributes, characteristics, behaviors or performances.

Quantitative Measures

- Norm-referenced test (e.g., cognitive and achievement)
- Criterion-referenced test (e.g., state assessment and curriculum based measures)

Qualitative Measures

- Rubric
- Performance
- Observation
- Checklist
- Interview

Review Team

Data in the body of evidence (BOE) is examined by a review team to determine if a student meets the criteria for gifted identification. All data is considered, and not meeting the criteria on a single assessment tool does not prevent further data collection or consideration for gifted identification. The Eagle County Schools BOE review team consists of gifted education specialists, a district administrator, and an English Language Learner specialist. The review team provides opportunity for input from all teachers working with the student and as well as from student's families. The review team examines the body of evidence and may make one or more of the following determinations:

- Move to formal gifted identification
- Identify student for a talent pool to collect additional data
- Determine data does not support identification at this time
- Determine a student may need to be referred for special education assessment in addition to his/her gifted identification (twice-exceptional students)

Areas of Identification

A variety of criteria are used to determine an area of gifted identification. Students may be identified in one of the following areas:

- General Intellectual Ability
- Specific Academic Aptitude (reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, world language)
- Specific Talent Aptitude (visual arts, performing arts, music, dance, psychomotor)
- Creative or Productive Thinking
- Leadership

Talent Pool

The body of evidence for some students may not lead to formal gifted identification, but data may demonstrate the student should be included in a "talent pool." A talent pool is a group of students who demonstrate an advanced ability in a particular area, but at this time do not meet the criteria for gifted identification. Students within the talent pool receive appropriate programming options and/or interventions to address areas of strength or potential. As students are presented with additional levels of challenge and rigor, increased achievement may occur. A student may or may not meet the criteria for gifted identification at a later date. Not all students will stay in the talent pool for the same amount of time.

Portability & Transfer Students

Portability means that a student's identification in one or more categories of giftedness transfers to any district in the state of Colorado. Gifted programming must continue according to the receiving district's programming options. Portability of identification is a part of the student's permanent record and Advanced Learning Plan.

ECS process for reviewing students transferring into the district:

- Family contacts the school's office to notify gifted education department of their child's identification.
- Gifted education department contacts family to ensure receipt of all documents.
- Gifted education department reviews all documents and determines next steps according to student's needs.

The rule for portability does not apply to students moving into Colorado from another state. However, the receiving district will review the student's records for evidence of giftedness, and then determine whether additional assessment is necessary to confirm if the student meets Colorado criteria for gifted identification.

Timeline for Portability & Transfer Reviews



Twice Exceptional Learners

ECS believes twice-exceptional students engage in their learning and demonstrate growth in both their strength and deficit area(s). Through tailored strength based programming and support, ECS students who are twice exceptional develop social emotional skills such as, self-advocacy, perseverance, and managing relationships and grow within their strength and deficit area(s). The ALP for twice-exceptional learners focuses on strength based programming. Gifted education specialists attend the Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings or 504 plan meetings to ensure the strengths of the student are considered in all areas of the student's programming plan. ECS has a Twice Exceptional Task force focusing on articulating clear identification procedures and communications, defining a continuum of services and providing professional development to multiple stakeholders.

Identification Appeal Process

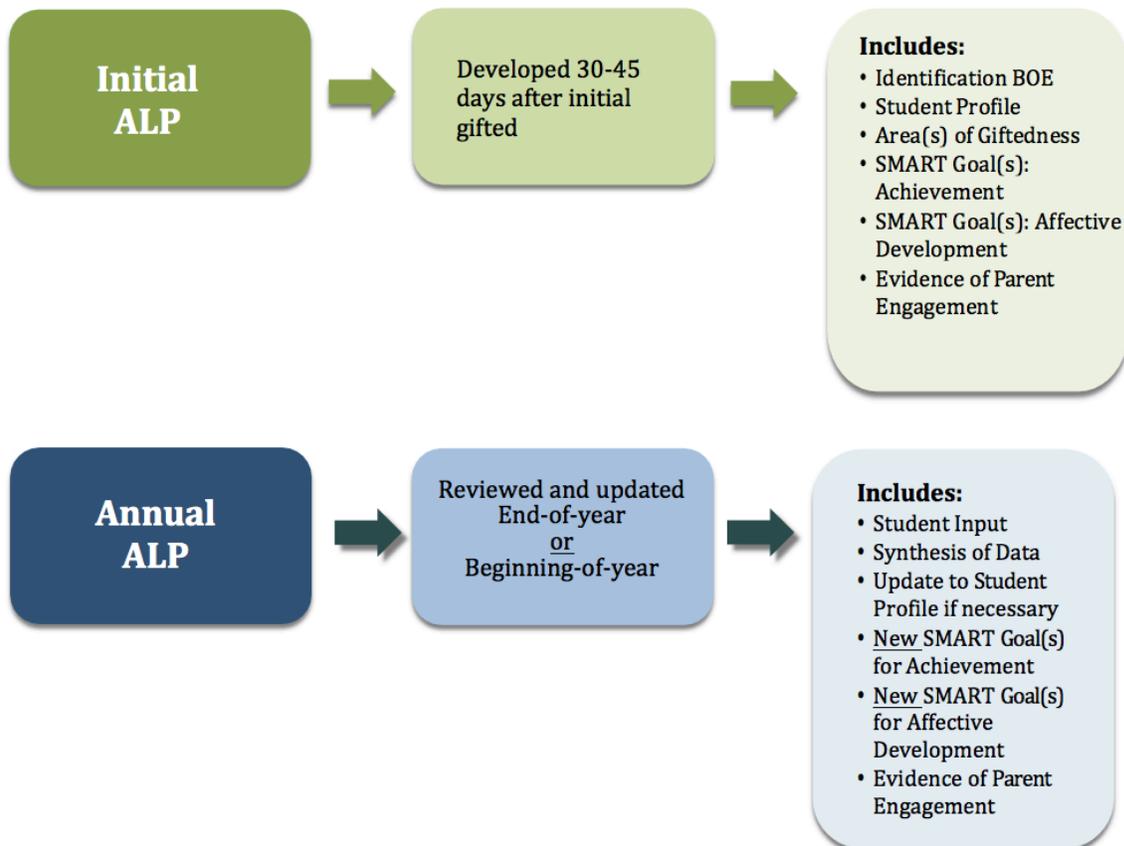
In the event that a parent or teacher feels that an error has been made in the identification process, appeals shall be made in the following order:

1. Teacher (for parent appeals)
2. Principal/building GT committee or student support team
3. Assistant Director of Exceptional Student Services
4. Director of Exceptional Student Services
5. Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services
6. Superintendent
7. Board of Trustees

V: Advanced Learning Plans (ALP)

The Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) is a legal document [22-20-R-12.00, C.R.S.] outlining programming for identified gifted students and is used as a guide for educational planning and decision-making. The Exceptional Children's Educational Act states that there will be ALP content and procedures set in Rule for statewide implementation; and that goals in the ALP are standards-based. Sections 12.02(2)(f) – 12.02(2)(g)(vi) of the Rules clarify ALP content, procedures and responsibilities. For high school students the ALP may be blended with an Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) if all contents of the ALP are inclusive in the ICAP, including achievement and affective goals.

ALPs are dynamic documents developed by the student, parent, and educators to address the exceptional ability and potential of gifted students in any one or more areas of giftedness. ALPs are well articulated throughout the school system. In consultation with parents, students, and teachers, Eagle County Schools work to develop academic and affective goals within the student's strength areas. The gifted specialist reviews state and local testing data, collaborates with the regular classroom teacher, consults with parents and facilitates student goal setting to develop a plan maximizing the gifted student's educational experience by delineating programming and goals for success. ALPs are kept electronically in a district database and are available to all educators working with the student. Parents are encouraged to participate in the process through interest surveys, teacher meetings, progress monitoring updates, and conferences.



VI: Acceleration

Early Access to Kindergarten or First Grade

Eagle County Schools (ECS)-provides highly gifted students who do not meet the entrance for enrollment in kindergarten or first grade the opportunity to apply for early childhood access should the following criteria apply:

1. They are transferring from an accredited state or private kindergarten or first grade.

OR

2. They will be four years old in kindergarten or five years old in first grade by the first day of school as documented by a legal birth certificate **AND** meet the criteria for Early Access as define by CCR Section 12.08(2)(d)

Parents must fill out an application for Early Access and send it to the Department of Exceptional Student Services by April 1st. Applications may be found on the district website or you may pick one up at the elementary school your child will be attending.

Content-based/ Single-subject Acceleration/ Grade-level Acceleration

ECS recognizes that students acquire grade-level curriculum mastery at varying rates, and some at a rapid pace. A student may need acceleration in their area of mastery. This acceleration can be provided in various ways: grade-level acceleration, single-subject acceleration, curriculum compacting, dual enrollment (DE)*, credit by examination*, or advanced placement (AP)*. **Defer to the process in place at each high school for this type of acceleration.*

ECS has three pathways available for initiating an acceleration application. A parent may nominate their child, a student may self-nominate, and an educator may nominate a student by completing the application found on the ECS Gifted Education website and turning it into the principal. Each pathway will initiate a child study meeting to review the application and all available academic data. Initial data should illustrate mastery of grade-level curriculum in the subject area to be skipped.

Students in grade K-8 may be content-based/single-subject or grade-level accelerated if the following conditions are met:

1. Current classroom performance indicates mastery of the material in the current grade level.
2. The student demonstrates mastery of the content by scoring:
 - at or above the 90th percentile on a norm-referenced test for the current grade level
 - at or above 75th percentile on a norm-referenced test for the grade into which the student wishes to move
 - *i.e. if a 6th grade student wants to move into 7th grade math, the student will need to score at or above the 90th percentile on the 6th grade math test or 75th percentile of the 7th grade math test*

3. The social-emotional development of the student would not be harmed by the acceleration.
4. The parents or guardians and the student desire acceleration.
5. The principal and teacher(s) from the current school agree that acceleration is in the student's best interest.
6. If the acceleration requires a building change, the receiving school must be included in the process.

Applications for acceleration will be accepted throughout the year, but must be received by the Exceptional Student Services office by May 1st.

Acceleration Appeal Process

If the parent(s)/guardian(s) are not satisfied with the school's decision not to grant acceleration to their child, they may appeal the decision in the following order:

1. Director of Exceptional Student Services
2. Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services
3. Superintendent of Schools
4. Board of Education

VII: Declining Gifted Services

Furlough Process

Gifted students will be allowed to have a leave of absence from gifted services for specified reasons and for a specific period of time without being exited from the program. The following restrictions cannot be exceeded:

1. Students are allowed one (1) furlough for each building level.
2. After coordination and advisement with the building principal, counselor, gifted education specialist and the parent/guardian(s), a student may furlough for a specified length of time, not to exceed one school year.

Exiting

Parent/Student Initiated

A parent or student may request for the student to exit gifted services at any time. The parent and student must either meet in conference or the parent must submit a written request to the gifted specialist for that school to re-enter the program.

High School Opt Out Process

The gifted education specialist will reach out to students and families at the beginning of each year to schedule a goal-setting meeting. After three attempts to meet with a student about advanced ICAP goals with no response, the specialist will mark the student as opting out of services.

VIII: Professional Learning

Teachers that work directly with gifted students will receive professional learning and support through specialized modules that will address the unique needs of gifted learners. Delivery of professional learning may be online, face-to-face, book study or a hybrid of these models. It can be delivered through professional learning communities, faculty meetings, district professional learning days or independent professional development events. Teachers working directly with Tier 3 gifted students are required to have the Colorado Gifted Education Endorsement and will have the opportunity to attend the Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented (CAGT) conference on an annual basis.

IX: Program Evaluation

Program evaluation will be ongoing in nature. Building administrations, teachers, parents, and students will be given the opportunity to complete a survey on gifted programming annually. Results from this survey are communicated with building administrators, and parents through the Gifted and Talented Advisory Council meetings (GTAC). The gifted education department will work in conjunction with building administrators to make recommendations for gifted programming based on the results.

X: Resources

Parent Support and Information

- Eagle County School District's Gifted Page – We can be located off the District homepage by clicking on Departments, Learning Services, Exceptional Student Services, then Gifted Education or by using the following link www.eagleschools.net/gifted
- Colorado Association of Gifted and Talented (CAGT) - a non-profit advocacy organization with over a thirty-year history of providing leadership and support to students, parents and educators of gifted young people in Colorado. By way of affiliate members across the state, CAGT has endeavored to keep all school districts and policy makers aware of the issues surrounding gifted education. www.coloradogifted.org
- National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) - an 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. www.nagc.org
- Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) – their mission is to empower families and communities to guide gifted and talented individuals to reach their goals: intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

www.sengifted.org

- Hoagies Gifted – the all-things-gifted resource, full of resources, articles, books and links to help and support parents, teachers, and gifted children alike.
www.hoagiesgifted.org
- Davidson Institute – a national nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting profoundly gifted students under-18. www.davidsongifted.org
- Center for Bright Kids – The Regional Talent Center for the Rocky Mountain area. This seven-state region includes Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Idaho, New Mexico, Montana, and Wyoming. CBK offers K-12 enrichment and acceleration programming for high interest and high ability kids. www.centerforbrightkids.org

Definitions/Glossary

Ability Grouping: The flexible regrouping of students based on individual instructional needs

Acceleration: Moving at a faster pace through academic content by compacting the curriculum or moving up a grade level in one or more subjects. The student remains classified as the current grade level.

Acceleration (Grade-Level): A student demonstrating a need for acceleration may request testing to “skip” a grade. The student is moved up one level for all subjects and reclassified as a student in that grade.

Acceleration (Single-Subject): A student demonstrating a need for extreme acceleration may request testing to “skip” a grade in one content area. The student is moved up one level for the one subject and is not reclassified as a student in that grade.

ALP (Advanced Learning Plan): A document that reflects a student’s strengths and relative weaknesses and serves to guide for individual student programming.

BOE (Body of Evidence): a multi-criteria-based process to identify area/s of giftedness and determine the appropriate instructional accommodations or other opportunities for each student

Compacted Curriculum: Streamlining the regular curriculum to “buy time” for enrichment, accelerated content, and independent study. Usually involved pre-assessment of what the student has already mastered.

Differentiation: The modification of programming and instruction based on a student’s academic need and intellectual ability.

Enrichment: The enhancement of the curricular program with additional opportunities for learning.

Exiting the program: Permanent removal from the EAGLE program. A student is no longer coded as gifted on the school information database.

Furlough from the program: Temporary removal from the EAGLE program for a specified length of time. The student is still coded as gifted in the school information database.

Heterogeneous Grouping: Students are taught in mixed ability groups.

Homogeneous Grouping: Students are taught in similar ability groups.

Independent Study Projects: Structured projects agreed upon by the student and teacher that allow a student to individually investigate an area of high interest or to advance knowledge in an area.

Learning Contracts: Student and teacher jointly develop a contract for accomplishment of learning goals, which both sign and adhere to. Often involves a streamlining of regular class work.

Percentile Rank: a measure that tells us where a student ranks in comparison to other students his/her age by showing the percent of the total frequency that scored at or below that measure.

Progress Monitoring: The practice of quantifying student performance to track progress as compared to peers.

RTI (Response to Instruction): a framework that promotes a well-integrated system connecting general, compensatory, gifted, and special education in providing high quality, standards-based instruction and intervention that is matched to students' academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs.

Screening: the process of testing all students at one grade level as a first round of testing to see if any students need further testing.

Standards-based Education: A mechanism for which students demonstrate what they know and are able to do with regard to particular content areas.