

Gifted Education

The Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA) requires the Ute Pass BOCES, and its member districts (Cripple Creek-Victor, Manitou Springs, Woodland Park) to identify and serve students between the ages of five 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.

A student may be identified in **one or more** of these domains (areas):

General or Specific Intellectual Ability

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

Specific Academic Aptitude

Specific academic aptitude is exceptional capability or potential in an academic content area(s) (e.g., a strong knowledge base or the ability to ask insightful, pertinent questions within the discipline). All academic areas should be considered.

Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Musical, Dance or Psychomotor Abilities (Talent Aptitudes)

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

Creative or Productive

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

Leadership Abilities

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, and a sense of responsibility).

Portability

Portability means that a student's identification in one or more categories of giftedness transfers to any district in the state. Gifted programming must continue according to the receiving district's programming options. Portability of identification is a part of the student's permanent record and Advanced Learning Plan and will be transferred with entire student file when requested from another school. When a file is received for a student that transferred into a school within AU, the school will notify their respective gifted educator as soon as possible.

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

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children created legislation to ease school-to-school transfers for military children. The intent of the Compact is to minimize the disruption in education when a military child is forced to move as a result of a transfer or deployment. The Compact states:

The receiving state school shall initially honor placement of the student in educational programs based on current educational assessments conducted at the school in the sending state or participation/placement in like programs in the sending state. Such programs include, but are not limited to: 1) gifted and talented programs; and 2) English as a second language (ESL). This does not preclude the school in the receiving state from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement of the student.

Assessment

Assessment is the process of gathering information using appropriate tests, instruments and techniques. The information is gathered for a specific purpose such as screening, classification or selection, curriculum planning or diagnosis, program planning and progress evaluation.

The purpose of assessment is to gather information relevant to making a decision. The gifted identification process focuses on research-based assessment practices to ensure multiple pathways to identification are available. Not all gifted students demonstrate the same profile of potential and/or ability. Gifted abilities are manifested in a variety of ways; therefore, multiple pathways to identification must be explored through the use of a variety of types and sources of assessment.

Assessment means methods, tools, and data collected as a **body of evidence** (BOE) for use in identification and programming. [C.R.S. 22-20- 202(5)]

Body of Evidence

A body of evidence should consist of quantitative and qualitative measures to determine if a student meets the criteria for gifted identification and to build a student profile of strengths and interests. Quantitative assessment provides numerical scores or ratings that can be analyzed or quantified. Qualitative assessment provides interpretive and descriptive information about certain attributes, characteristics, behaviors or performances. The former is considered objective, while the latter is considered subjective.

Quantitative

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

Qualitative

- Rubric
- Performance
- Observation
- Checklist
- Interview

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

Criteria are the rules for evaluating a level of exceptionality for identification assessment. The 95th percentile ranking and above describes the rule for demonstration of exceptionality on a standardized, nationally-normed test or observation tool. A performance assessment that indicates exceptionality compared to age mates includes a rating that exceeds expectations or demonstrates distinguished/advanced command. Performance indicators may include criterion-referenced tests, portfolio or observation. Criterion-referenced data may be used as qualifying evidence if the student's performance level exceeds grade-level expectations or if "up-level" assessments are used.

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

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

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

A body of evidence may consist of the following assessments:

Cognitive Tests

Cognitive tests are designed to measure a student's **general intellectual ability**. Such tests do not measure specific **academic** aptitude in various content areas such as reading or math. Many general intelligence tests and checklists include items that assess both fluid reasoning, such as analogies, block designs, and pattern arrangements, and crystalized abilities, such as mathematics problems, vocabulary, and comprehension of reading passages. In the AU's, all 2nd grade students are screened in the Spring of that year and all 6th grade students are screened in the fall of that year. Any students that transfer into the schools grade 3-8 will be screened. The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) is the AU's tool for initial screening. Additional cognitive measures may be used if the data obtained is not clear or there is a need for additional data.

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

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

If a student scores at the 95th percentile or above on the composite of CogAT, but does not score at the 95th percentile or above on one or more of the separate batteries, it is recommended to consider providing the student a different cognitive or intellectual assessment that is perhaps untimed, administered individually or an instrument that approves the use of a composite score to measure exceptionalality.

Creativity Tests

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

Some students who do not achieve qualifying scores on cognitive or achievement tests may still demonstrate many characteristics of giftedness. Many gifted traits and behaviors are evidence of the high level of creativity typical of many gifted students. To aid in identifying students who do not score at or above the 95th percentile on cognitive or achievement measures, creativity tests may be useful in building a body of evidence for formal identification, because these tests add validity to the observed creative characteristics. A score at the 95th percentile or above on a creativity test is not required for identification in the arts areas. These assessments will be used to build a body of evidence when a student exhibits creativity significantly above that of their peers.

Achievement Tests

Assessment data from standardized, criterion- and norm-referenced tests are utilized to determine if a student demonstrates exceptional ability in a specific **academic** area. Specific academic aptitude areas include reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and world language. Some assessments that can be used for this but not limited to: PARCC, CMAS, NWEA Maps, Star reading and math. Specific talent aptitude areas include visual arts, performing arts, music and dance. Specific academic and talent aptitude is demonstrated by a student scoring at the advanced/distinguished level on criterion-referenced assessments and/or 95th percentile or above on norm-referenced achievement tests. Districts may use alternative achievement tests to determine advanced academic competence.

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

For example: When a young child (kindergarten-third grade) demonstrates specific academic potential without a qualifying cognitive score, differentiated pace and depth of instruction can be used to build additional data over time to identify exceptionalality. The Colorado READ Act requires that teachers assess the 10 Gifted Identification Guidebook 2016 literacy development of all kindergarten-third grade students. Data from these reading competency tests are used to determine if a student has a significant reading deficiency and may be included in a student learning profile, but are not used as qualifying data for gifted identification. Assessments utilized to progress monitor student

achievement or diagnose an academic deficiency are often defined as diagnostic instruments. Diagnostic assessments or skill inventories measure proficiency of grade level foundational skills. Diagnostic and inventory assessments are not intended to measure exceptional abilities in a specific content area. Therefore, these instruments are not used as qualifying data.

Behavior Observation Scales

Gifted students often demonstrate characteristics that lead to a referral for the gifted identification process. Through the use of these norm-referenced behavior observation scales, educators and parents can identify outstanding talent by observing students in one or more settings that enable them to display their abilities. Characteristics such as leadership, motivation, memory, reasoning, creativity and sense of humor are measured in observation scales. Such measures add valuable information to the body of evidence and focus on more than the academic aptitude measured by many traditional tests students encounter in school.

Norm-referenced observation scales are used as qualifying data for gifted identification. These scales are a valid and reliable way for educators and parents to evaluate gifted behavior characteristics. Examples of qualifying measures are the Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS), Gifted Evaluation Scale (GES), and the Gifted Rating Scales (GRS). The SIGS provides a norm-referenced scale for parents to complete. The parent scale may be used as qualifying data.

Other methods of obtaining information on gifted characteristics may also be utilized to develop a student profile. Informal tools, such as an interview or checklist, can provide beneficial information to better understand a student's strengths and interests.

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

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

Performance Evaluation

Gifted ability is often not measured on a specific assessment, but rather demonstrated through some type of performance. Identifying a student with exceptional abilities in a content area or a talent area such as art, music, theater, dance, psychomotor, creativity or leadership requires an evaluation of performance. There are many types of performance data that might be utilized to develop a body of evidence. These may include:

- **Juried Performance:** Students often participate in events within school or outside of school that are judged and evaluated. Students receive some type of rating based on their performance. Data from a valid and reliable juried performance may be considered as qualifying evidence if the jury consists of a team of experts in their field. An example of such a performance would be a student selected for a statewide choral group or debate team.
- **Contest/Competition:** Many contests and competitions are available to students within school or outside of school. Top placement in a regional, state or national competition may be

considered as a qualifying measurement for gifted identification. An example of such a performance would be a student finishing first in a state science fair or Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) categorical competition.

- **Portfolio:** Over time, some students develop a portfolio of work that might be evaluated by a team of experts in the field. The advanced/distinguished rating of a portfolio may be considered as qualifying evidence for gifted identification. A valid and reliable rubric is used in the evaluation of a portfolio to ensure consistency and equal opportunity. An example would be a collection of a student's art work throughout elementary school and the portfolio being evaluated by a committee of district art teachers and local artists.
- **Classroom Performance:** Classroom teachers are often critical in providing qualitative data about a student's performance within the classroom. As the curriculum experts, teachers can identify those students working above their same-age peers. Evidence of above grade-level performance builds a student's profile. An example of this might be a fourth-grade student who has already demonstrated mastery of fourth and fifth grade math standards and has successfully completed all the pre-algebra modules from an online math program. Advanced classroom performance must be measured through examples of above grade-level work. Earning an "A" in a class does not necessarily indicate exceptional performance. Grades lack standardization and are influenced significantly by students' motivation, classroom behavior, personal appearance, and study habits. Further, teachers' knowledge of students' IQ scores, income, SES, area of residence, and family structure contribute to stereotypes by teachers that are frequently characterized by low and negative expectations (Ford, 2013).

Screening

Screening means an assessment method that uses a tool(s) to determine if the resulting data provide evidence of exceptional potential in an area of giftedness. Screening tools may be qualitative or quantitative in nature, standardized and/or normative. Screening data are part of a body of evidence for making identification and instructional decisions.

A student may enter into a screening through many different entry points.

- Identification is not just a moment in time or the use of data from one assessment. Referrals for gifted screening may include but are not limited to:
 - Universal Screening CoGat
 - MTSS/RtI
 - Test Data
 - Performance and observations
 - Checklists
 - Anecdotal Records
 - Questionnaires
 - Interview

Referrals

ECEA Rules state an identification team has a timeline of no more than 30 school days after a referral is received to determine whether a student will be formally identified or if more time is needed to continue with identification assessment. The team's decision should be communicated to the parent, student and other educators. This does not mean an identification determination must be made within 30 days; rather all stakeholders should receive information on intended next steps of the identification process within this timeline.

A referral made for possible gifted identification does not necessarily lead to the automatic administration of specific assessments. The identification team will carefully consider the referral, examine current student assessment data and determine appropriate next steps. This may or may not include administering additional tests.

If you would like to refer a student for consideration, please contact the following GT contacts at your child's school.

Kristen Kanaga
Manitou Springs Elementary
kkanaga@mssd14.org

Louisa Dick
Ute Pass Elementary
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Jennifer Trainor
Manitou Springs MS & HS
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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 defined as a group of students who demonstrate an advanced or even exceptional ability in a particular area, but at this time do not meet the criteria for gifted identification. Often students in a talent pool are provided advanced or gifted programming services. As students are presented with additional levels of challenge and rigor, increased achievement may occur. A student may meet the criteria for gifted identification at a later date.

Some students identified gifted in one domain may be part of a talent pool for a different domain. For example, a student who demonstrates a specific academic aptitude in reading as an elementary student may be included in a talent pool for mathematics. Over time, data are reevaluated to determine if this student meets the criteria for specific academic aptitude identification in the area of mathematics. Multipotentiality in gifted students often leads to identification in additional domains later in a child's educational path.

Students within the talent pool should receive appropriate programming options and/or interventions to address strength or potential areas. A review team may also consider if additional assessments need to be administered to collect additional data and/or continue to review the student's data over time to determine if gifted identification is appropriate at a later date. Gifted identification should never be just a moment in time during the educational path of a student. Identification is fluid and continuous throughout the school years.

Students whose scores on a screening assessment are lower than the 95th percentile, or whose results on observation or performance assessment screening tools are not at the level to meet identification criteria, may be recommended by the review team for further data collection and observation or for inclusion in a talent pool.

Exceptional Scholars Program (ExSP)

Secondary students who do not meet the specific gifted criteria will be served in the “talent pool” through this program. In addition, any student who is highly motivated to participate in specialized programming in particular interest areas, may refer themselves for ExSP using the forms above.

Gifted Determination

The assessment process shall recognize a student’s exceptional abilities or potential, interests, and needs in order to guide student instruction and individualized planning and programming. In traditionally underrepresented student groups and visual/performing arts student groups or talent pools, identification may require the collection of student information over time, using additional data points from a response to intervention approach.

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

All qualifying data points in a body of evidence must be regarded equally. Placing greater emphasis on a specific test is not considered an ethical practice in gifted identification.

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

A gifted identification assessment should include the following components:

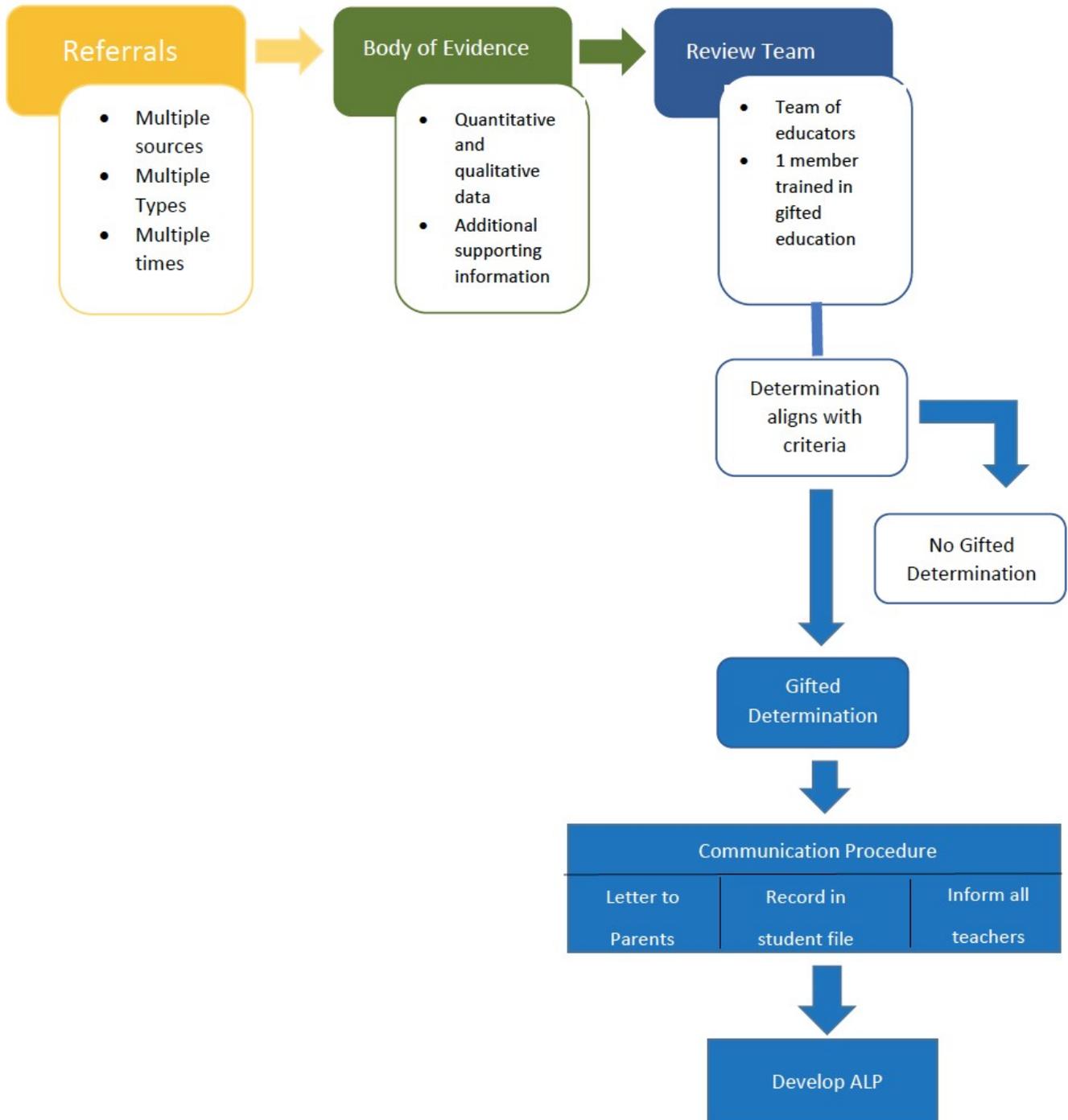


Figure 1 Identification process chart

Advanced Learning Plans

Our districts have an obligation for the implementation of individual advanced learning plans (ALPs) of gifted students, K-12. In meeting the provisions for ALPs, each district maintains a platform/format that houses a gifted student's Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) and the development of information contained within the plan pursuant to the Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA) Rules for ALP Content, Procedures and Responsibilities.

- AUs shall have a process for management of ALPs within the cumulative file system including a procedure for transferring ALPs between grade levels, school levels, and districts [12.02(2)(g)(iv)].
- Individually identifiable records of students referred, assessed, evaluated, and/or served through programming for gifted and talented students in any AU shall be held to be confidential and protected in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Student records that are collected and/or stored electronically shall be held to current state law and FERPA regulations governing the protection of personally identifiable information and the privacy interests of students [12.05(4)].
- The student's learning profile described in the body of evidence shall be subject to the AU's student records confidentiality guidelines [12.02(2)(f)].

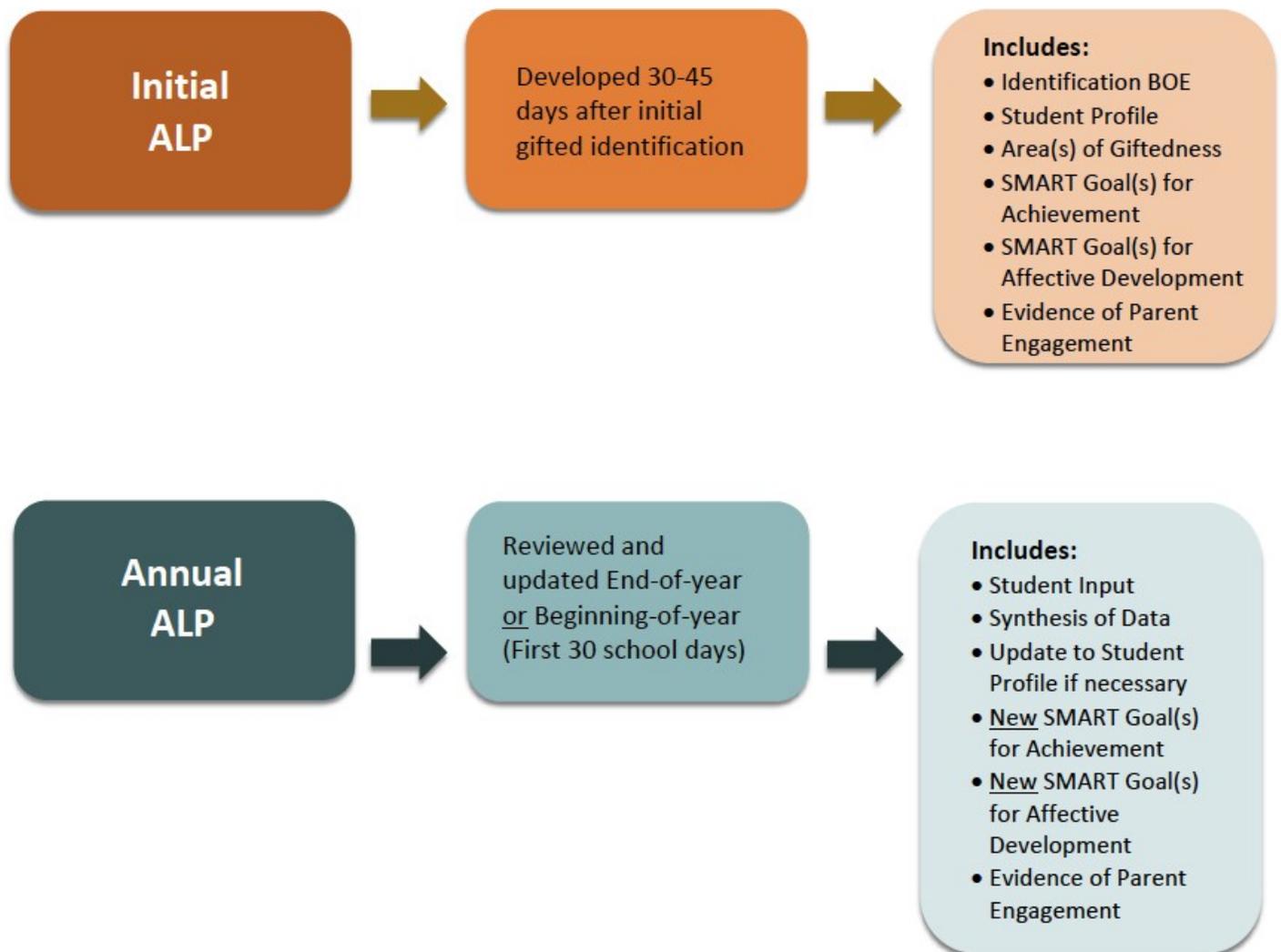
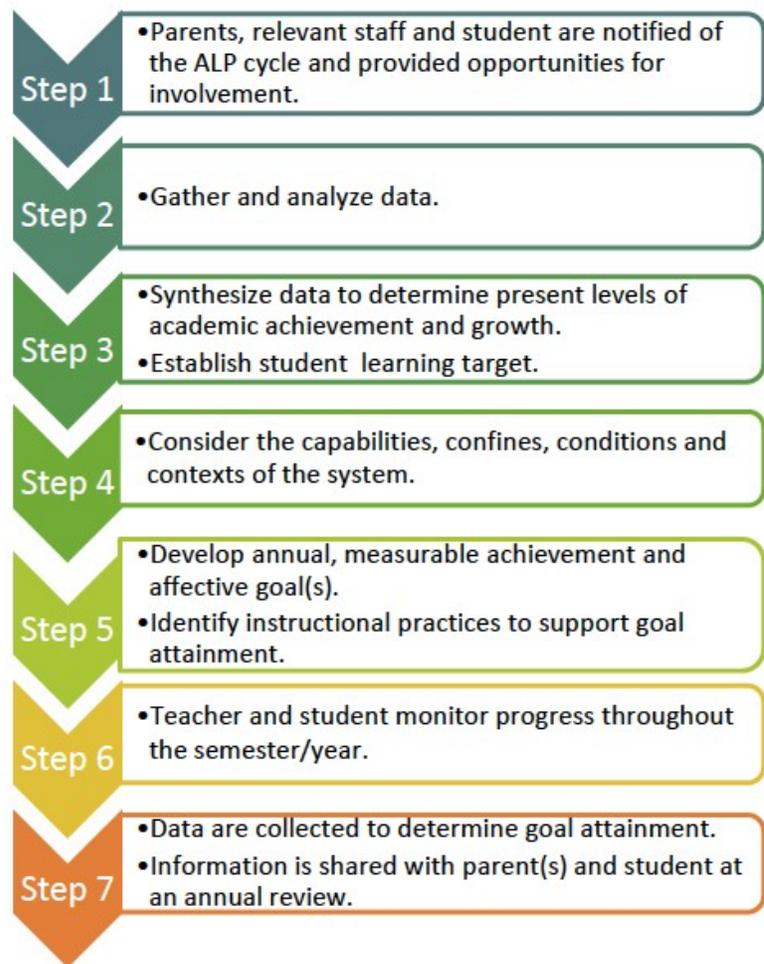


Figure 2 Student learning profile chart

The following seven steps highlight the process utilized in the initial development, annual update and review of an ALP. Not all steps require **actions** but are part of the **thinking** required in the process.

Steps 1-3 require thinking and actions on the part of the classroom teacher(s) who will provide instructional support to the gifted student. These steps integrate with **typical instructional routines** for all students and occur prior to the writing of the actual goal(s). **Step 1** requires a resource specialist, counselor or classroom teacher to notify all stakeholders the ALP process is beginning and to solicit their input. **Steps 2 and 3** exemplify the cognitive or thinking process that occurs within the typical classroom routine of data analysis, progress monitoring and planning for data-driven instruction.



Step 4 is part of the collaboration required in the ALP process. This step might promote conversations at a district level that ensure all possible instructional options for gifted students have been fully considered. An example might be a district that has never allowed content acceleration based on past experience. A discussion about the research on the subject as well as about scheduling conflicts and K-12 articulation might open doors that had previously been closed to gifted students. Such considerations may naturally occur annually when the gifted program plan is reexamined and self-evaluated.

Step 5 includes the actual writing of ALP SMART learning goals as well as documenting the instructional practices the teacher will implement to support the student's goal attainment.

Steps 6 and 7 involve progress monitoring, the sharing of those monitoring responsibilities between teacher and student and the open communication necessary to promote goal attainment. It is highly recommended to blend progress monitoring with the reporting cycle of the school/district.

Figure 3 Process steps chart

Whereas the goal specifies what the **student** will know, understand and/or be able to do over an extended period of time, **educators** working with the student examine instructional strategies that will be implemented to support goal attainment. Differentiated strategies often include:

- Content: *What will students learn?*
- Process: *How will students learn?*
- Product: *How will students demonstrate and apply their learning?*
- Environment: *Where and when will students learn?*

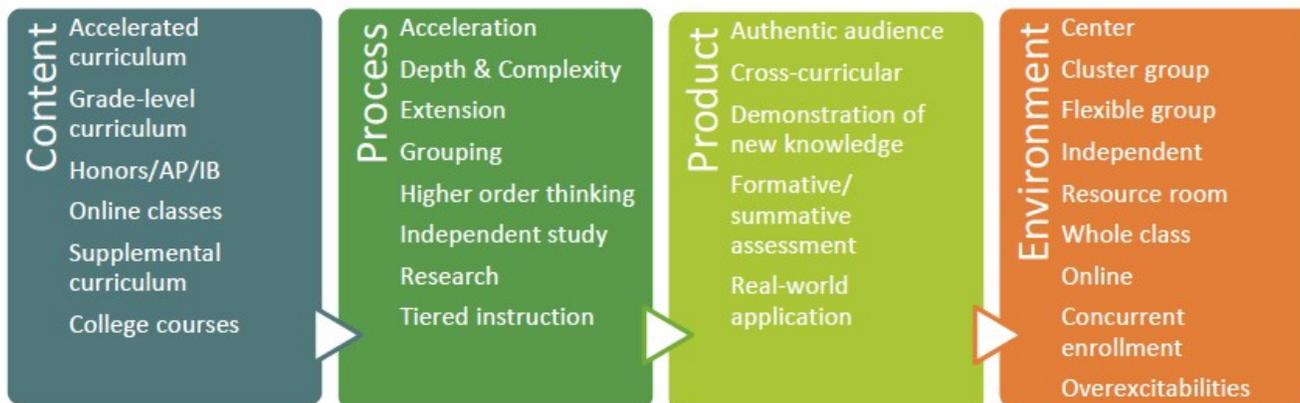


Figure 4 Process chart

Programming

The following are programming options available within our BOCES. For specific information on options available in your school contact the gifted education teacher.

A wide variety of programming options are available to all students, and then individually designed for our gifted students. (A breakdown of these options in each district are listed below)

- As smaller districts, our teachers design appropriate programming, with students and parents, to meet the individual strength areas and interests of each student to grow their exceptionality through the ALP process annually.
- The student's body of evidence, including performance on state and local assessments, grades, goal progress, and interest inventories are reviewed each year through the ALP process, to develop new goals and align programming with their strengths and needs.
- At all levels, identified students have assigned time with the Gifted teachers to not only provide direct instruction academically and affectively, but they also coach/mentor the students to apply their skills across contents and provide guidance for their affective/emotional needs. They also monitor student's overall performance and problem-solve with them if they begin to underachieve. They coach students, based on their strengths and interests, to participate in advanced courses that will prepare them for their post-secondary goals/interests.

Type of delivery at each school level:

Elementary

- Flexible Grouping
- Cross-grade grouping
- Cluster grouping

- General Ed with Resource
- Specialized instruction to extend learning in specific academic/aptitude areas
- Curriculum Compacting
- Subject-based Acceleration
- Content Extensions across disciplines
- Targeted Critical Thinking Skills Development
- Differentiated Instructional Support to Gen Ed Teachers
- Pre-assessment for Appropriate Instructional Level
- Acceleration and Monitoring
- Problem-Solving Skills Development
- Academic/Problem-solving Competitions
- Specialized Curriculum
- Extra-curricular opportunities
- Summer opportunities
- Affective Needs Instruction

Middle

- Flexible Grouping
- Cluster Grouping
- Differentiated Instruction Supports through gifted/resource teachers and principals
- Curriculum Compacting
- Subject-based Acceleration
- Content Extensions
- Affective Needs Instruction
- Career/College Planning through Naviance
- Pre-assessment for Appropriate Instructional Level with assignment to appropriate classes
- Acceleration planning available on an individual basis (based on student's data)
- Extra curricular opportunities
- Service Learning Opportunities

High

- Flexible Grouping
- Cross-grade Grouping
- Differentiated Instruction Supports from gifted/resource teachers and administrators
- Content Extension
- Career and College Planning by counselors/gifted teachers through ICAP process and advisory
- Naviance activities to assess personal strengths/interests, decision-making, early college/career explorations, goal setting, time management, study skills)
- SAT Assessment Opportunities

- Pre-Assessment for Appropriate Instructional Level
- Advanced/Honors/AP
- Concurrent Enrollment
- Classes/Credits at Pikes Peak Community College
- Summer Enrichment/Mentoring Opportunities
- Extra curricular opportunities
- Community Resources (Colorado College Gifted Summer Program; PP Leading Edge, Kiwanis, PPCC Summer Program, UNC Summer Leadership Program)
- Student Council
- Service Learning
- Direct Instruction in Domain Skill Development
- Independent Study in areas of interest/talent

Dispute Resolution

Our goal is to resolve any disagreements through the ALP process and open, honest communication between students, teachers, principals and parents. If a resolution cannot be reached, parents may contact the gifted coordinator in each district to resolve any disputes. If agreement still cannot be reached, parents may contact the District's Assistant Superintendent and the BOCES Director to hear the dispute. Final written resolutions will be provided by the school district.

Marcy Palmer
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Eric McMartin
Assistant Superintendent
emcmartin@mssd14.org

Resources

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

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/gtlinks2assocorg>