

NORTHWEST COLORADO



GIFTED EDUCATION HANDBOOK

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Member School Districts

**East Grand
Hayden
North Park
South Routt
Steamboat Springs
West Grand**

NW BOCES GT

VISION:

Our vision is to ensure that gifted children grow socially, emotionally, and academically to become well-adjusted, contributing members of society.

(adapted from Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented)

MISSION:

Our mission is to recognize and nurture the development of exceptional abilities so that all gifted students demonstrate positive self-esteem, high level thinking, and creative productivity.

(adopted from West Grand School District)

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Definition of Giftedness

*DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Colorado State Board of Education
RULES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S
EDUCATIONAL ACT*

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

Children under five who are gifted may also be provided with early childhood special educational services. Gifted students include gifted students with disabilities (i.e. twice exceptional) and students with exceptional abilities or potential from all socio-economic, ethnic, and cultural populations. Gifted students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these **areas of giftedness**:

- General or specific intellectual ability
- Specific academic aptitude
- Creative or productive thinking
- Leadership abilities
- Visual arts, Performing Arts, Musical and/or Psychomotor Abilities

Parent, Family, and Student Engagement and Communication

Access to Identification Procedures

NW BOCES is committed to engaging parents and other stakeholders in the gifted education process. District procedures have been established using a multiple criteria assessment approach, per state guidelines. This means that many sources of information are reviewed over a period of time before formally identifying a student as gifted/talented in one or more areas. Students who demonstrate certain abilities, but not enough body of evidence will be placed on a talent pool or monitor list. They may receive intervention services and support as available, but will not be formally identified unless a sufficient body of evidence is established. Identification decisions should be made based on sound reasoning and data interpretation with a team approach to identification.

Parents and other community members can access information about identification criteria and procedures by visiting their district/school website or by contacting the principal and/or gifted education representative of their school. See more information in the identification section of this document.

Education About Giftedness and Parenting Gifted Students

This section is unique to each district. Please reference your district's handbook for more information. Additional resources are available on the NW BOCES website including links to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) website and the Colorado Association of Gifted and Talented (CAGT) website.

Information About Involvement and Progress Reporting

In conjunction with school personnel, parents help their child develop appropriate academic and affective goals that are recorded in the Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). The process for developing the ALP and reporting on progress towards the goals differs by district/school but the following is standard in all schools:

1. ALPs are updated annually with input from all stakeholders including parents, students and teachers.
2. Progress toward goal attainment is monitored and reported to parents on a consistent basis.

Programming Options

Programming options vary from district to district and from school level to school level within districts. These options will be based on a student's strengths and areas of need as identified on their Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). Please reference your district's handbook and the programming section in this document for more information.

Involvement in College and Career Readiness

Individual College and Career Plans (ICAPs) are developed with secondary students. This section is unique to each district. Please reference your district's handbook for more information. In some school districts the ICAP and ALP may be combined.

Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs)

ALP Development

Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs) are developed annually. This section is unique to each district. Please reference your district's handbook for more information. See information in this document under Identification or Involvement and Progress Monitoring.

Communication in Primary Languages

Most communication is done via Google so families are able to translate the information into the language that they prefer. If another form of communication is used, an interpreter reviews the translation prior to sending it to parents. Interpreters are also available to attend and interpret at meetings upon request.

Family Participation in the School Community

Family participation at the school and district level is important and is unique to each district and school. Please reference your district's handbook for more information.

Identification

Assessment Process and Ensuring Equal/Equitable Access

For each area of giftedness, NW BOCES follows the state's Gifted Identification Criteria linked here: [Gifted Identification Pathways](#) and [Talent Flowchart](#).

Many other instruments may be used to collect qualitative and quantitative data that aligns with the suspected area(s) of giftedness. Click on this link, [NW BOCES Identification Chart](#), for a chart that indicates the instruments available and typically used in NW BOCES along with the cut points established by the state for each type of evidence.

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demonstrate certain abilities, but not enough body of evidence will be placed on a talent pool list. They may receive intervention services and support as available, but will not be formally identified unless a sufficient body of evidence is established. Identification decisions should be made based on sound reasoning and data interpretation with a team approach to identification.

Standardized test scores for all students are screened for evidence of exceptionally high levels of performance on achievement tests on an annual basis. In addition, all students are screened at one or more grade levels annually. This typically is conducted in the spring of the school year at the 2nd grade level for many member districts. Each district chooses their screening instrument and all districts use either The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) or the Naglieri Nonverbal Achievement Test (NNAT) during this screening process.

Referrals

Referrals are generated by a variety of data sources, such as scores from cognitive ability assessments, state assessments, and local assessments in addition to referrals from parents, teachers, and students. Referrals are processed within 30 days by a team that contains at least one person trained in gifted education. Stakeholders are notified of the decision by phone, mail, email, or in person.

Identification and Portability

Students who meet the state's criteria for giftedness are guaranteed portability of their identification within Colorado. In order to facilitate a smooth transition for students who transfer from NW BOCES' district to a new district, qualifying data is included in the Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) and provided to the receiving district.

When a student transfers into a NW BOCES district, the team will review the identification evidence provided by the sending school and/or parents. If the evidence does not support the identification or is incomplete, the team will contact the sending school and/or retest the student to determine eligibility. Parents will be notified of the team decision within 60 days of enrollment.

Students with Disabilities

Students who have been identified with disabilities may also have areas of giftedness that are not immediately apparent due to the disability “masking” the exceptional ability. When a student has been identified as both disabled and gifted, they qualify as Twice Exceptional.

Often, these students are referred by the Child Study Team as a result of assessment the team has done for the student’s Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). The team works with the Gifted Education staff, parents, and teachers to determine if the student qualifies as gifted. Twice Exceptional students have an ALP to address their areas of giftedness as well as an IEP or 504 Plan to address their areas of disability.

Transitions

There are two types of transitions for students in the NW BOCES member districts. One transition is when students progress from their current grade level to the next grade level. Another type of transition is when students progress from one school level to the next school level. The ALP is automatically transferred regardless of the type of transition.

When students advance from one grade level to the next, their annual ALP meeting is typically held in the fall to ensure continuity of services in their new grade level.

Transferring from one school level to the next is more complex so an additional transition meeting is provided to help facilitate the process.

Components of an ALP

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

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

Parents and classroom teachers help students develop their goals with assistance from the gifted education representative. Both academic and affective goals are based on state and/or national standards and, as a result, are aligned with classroom instruction.

Progress Towards Goals

Progress towards academic and affective goals is monitored by the classroom teachers, counselors, and/or by the students. Please reference your district's handbook for more information.

Programming

Differentiation, targeted instruction, and/or subject specific acceleration can meet the needs of many gifted students. Each district has their own unique programming for gifted students that is tailored to the student strengths and areas of need. Please reference your district's handbook for more information.

Whole-Grade Acceleration

For some students whole-grade acceleration may be the right path if they are highly gifted in all academic and affective areas. Please contact your child's teacher and principal to learn more about this option.

Whole-grade acceleration is also available for highly gifted preschoolers. If a preschooler meets the acceleration criteria, the child may be a good candidate to start kindergarten or first grade a year early.

The acceleration criteria and process differ depending on the age of the student. Requests must be received prior to April 1st of the year preceding the proposed acceleration.

Parents can contact the Gifted Education Director/Coordinator, Preschool Director, or their child's principal for more information. Also, click on [Procedures for Kindergarten Early Entrance for Highly Gifted Students](#) for the Early Entrance Regulation for Kindergarten and First grade.

Dispute Resolutions

While great care is taken to ensure that a proper decision is made on behalf of all interested parties in the education of a child, parents/guardians may make a written request for dispute resolution pertaining to a decision regarding their child's Gifted Education services and/or identification.

Prior to a written request, parents/guardians must demonstrate that there was discussion with appropriate building personnel. A recommended communication procedure would include discussion with the classroom teacher and the building principal prior to a written request to the district gifted education coordinator/director and/or BOCES gifted education director.

Such request shall be made in writing and addressed to the gifted education coordinator/director within fourteen (14) calendar days of receiving a decision from the school.

The gifted education coordinator/director will collect the information used by the school to render their decision as well as information from the parents supporting their dispute. After reviewing the submitted information, the gifted education coordinator/director will determine if the decision of the school is to be upheld or if further investigation is needed. If the decision is to be upheld, the gifted education coordinator/director will inform all parties in writing within seven (7) days of receiving the requested information from the parents/guardians.

If, on the other hand, further investigation is needed, the gifted education coordinator/director will arrange a meeting with the parents/guardians and the principal at a time and date agreed upon by the parents/guardians. If parents do not attend the meeting, the courtesy of rescheduling the meeting will be extended one time.

The purpose of this meeting is to allow the parents/guardians to share their perspective. At the discretion of the parents/guardians, the child may participate in all or part of the discussion. The gifted education coordinator/director shall have the authority to alter the decision of the school based on a review of the information gathered at this meeting.

The decision of the gifted education coordinator/director shall be rendered in writing to the parents/guardians and school within seven (7) days of the meeting.

If no meeting is able to be scheduled, the gifted education coordinator/ director shall render a written decision within seven days after the proposed meeting date. The decision of the gifted education coordinator/director shall be final.

Websites

- **Center for Gifted Education**
- **Colorado Department of Education**
- **National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)**
- **Colorado Association of Gifted and Talented**
- **Ricks Center for Gifted Children at the University of Denver**
- **Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)**
 - **Belin-Blank Center**
 - **Hoagies Gifted Education Page**