

Advanced by Design: An Overview of Gifted Education Guidelines

Colorado Department of Education
Exceptional Student Services Unit
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Advanced by Design
REACH-Out and Nurture Exceptional Abilities



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Gifted Education Values

- ✚ Shared responsibility of educators, parents, and community for the academic and affective growth of gifted and talented learners
- ✚ A climate of excellence and rigorous curricula for every child
- ✚ Differentiation in curricula, instruction, and assessment which supports a continuum of services for every gifted and talented learner
- ✚ High quality standards for professional educators who work with gifted and talented learners
- ✚ Identification of exceptional potential in all populations of race, culture, gender, or income level

Gifted Education Mission

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

Gifted Education Vision

All gifted Colorado youth, including those living in urban areas, small towns, suburban neighborhoods, rural plains, and remote mountain communities, are identified by their strength areas and needs. Educational programming is designed and implemented to match their identified needs. Student progress and achievement is monitored through on-going dynamic assessment. Teachers of gifted students participate in professional development to increase knowledge, skills and understanding of gifted students and required instruction.

CDE, State Advisory Committee, GT Directors, 2003

Superintendents Making a Difference



- Know basics about gifted education, the needs of gifted students, and Colorado Guidelines for Gifted Education
- Set a tone so that students with motivation, interest and ability will be inspired to go beyond typical expectations
- Provide policy statements that support high achievement and advanced learning opportunities for students
- Review district policy to clarify support for gifted education: identification, communication to parents, programming and professional development
- Include targets for gifted student achievement in district goals
- Advocate for each school to designate an individual to be highly knowledgeable regarding quality gifted services
- Provide opportunities for School Board Members to become knowledgeable about the needs of gifted students and how the district is addressing those needs
- Provide an annual presentation to the school board from a variety of GT sources with a variety of appropriate purposes (e.g. Gifted Coordinator – presentation of data; Students – presentation of advanced project; Parents – presentation of parent involvement projects)
- Examine gifted student data from multiple sources
- Encourage principals and teachers to look at individual gifted student achievement
- Establish gifted education as one element integral to the overall school district design and ensure alignment within the district
- Ensure that students have access to advanced classes and learning opportunities regardless of chronological age and grade placement
- Provide funding for gifted education as a component in the overall district budget
- Designate a coordinator, director or contact to oversee the appropriate implementation of services to advanced students

- Ensure that all staff receive professional development on the needs of gifted students and instructional methods to meet those needs
- Incorporate meeting the diverse needs of gifted learners into teacher evaluation expectations
- Include parents of gifted students in district committees



Advanced by Design
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Building Administrators Making a Difference

- Know basics about gifted education and needs of gifted students
- Provide leadership in establishing a learning environment where individual differences are valued and nurtured
- Gather, interpret and communicate gifted student data from multiple sources
- Establish gifted education as one element integral to the overall school design and ensure alignment with the district goals
- Provide funding for gifted education as a component in the overall school budget
- Support teachers in efforts to differentiate curriculum, instruction and assessment
- Establish support structures to ensure student success (e.g., cluster grouping practices, appropriate class schedules, counseling access, timelines for a routine identification process)
- Collaborate with staff on a routine method for advanced learning plan review and maintenance of records
- Involve parents in developing learning goals for their gifted child
- Promote and train a school level leader/s in gifted education
- Facilitate professional development for teachers of gifted students
- Incorporate meeting the diverse needs of gifted learners into teacher evaluation expectations
- Observe and provide positive feedback to teachers regarding classroom and school-wide gifted programming
- Include parents in school committees, classroom assistance needs and shared decision making processes

STATUTORY SUPPORT FOR GIFTED-EDUCATION

Exceptional Children’s Educational Act (C.R.S. 22-20-101 et seq.) adopted 8-12-76, last amended, May 1996; and Rules for the Administration of the Exceptional Children’s Education Act, Gifted Student Programs

- ✦ Defines gifted children as a category of “exceptional children;”
- ✦ Provides an educational definition of gifted children;
- ✦ Encourages high-priority consideration of the identification of gifted children who are economically disadvantaged, and culturally or ethnically diverse, or have disabilities;
- ✦ Requires an administrative unit gifted-education plan for disbursement of state gifted-education funds to the unit; requires a yearly report from the administrative unit;
- ✦ States ways gifted-education state funds may be used;
- ✦ Makes formal programs for gifted students discretionary on the part of the district;
- ✦ Encourages collaboration with institutions of higher education to provide staff development and in-service opportunities in relation to educational programs for gifted students;
- ✦ Establishes a separate line in the appropriation bill for funding programs for gifted and talented students.

Gifted and Talented Students (C.R.S. 22-26-101 et seq.) adopted June 1985

- ◆ Authorizes the Colorado Department of Education to purchase educational services to serve gifted and talented secondary students.

School Reform: Standards-Based Education (C.R.S. 22-53-401 et seq.) adopted May, 1993

- ✦ Creates the standards-based education initiative that serves as the basis for school reform and improvement in Colorado;
- ✦ Defines gifted and talented students as a category of exceptional children;
- ✦ Requires school districts, the Department of Education, the State Board of Education, and the Standards and Assessment Development and Implementation Council that specific consideration and means be taken in all aspects of the development and implementation of standards-based education to address the special learning needs of all exceptional children, including gifted and talented students.

Fast Track Program (C.R. S. 22-34-101 et seq.) adopted 1981

- ✦ Provides for high schools to enter into cooperative agreements with institutions of higher education to allow high school seniors who have completed requirements for high school graduation to take college courses while retaining high school activity eligibility.

Post Secondary Enrollment Options (C.R.S. 22-35-101 et seq.), adopted 1989

- ✦ Provides opportunity for high school juniors and seniors to seek more appropriate academic challenges or a more appropriate educational setting by enrolling in college courses;
- ✦ Allows students to earn both high school and college credit for college courses;
- ✦ Requires school districts to pay for high school students’ tuition for up to two courses per academic term

ACCREDITATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

STATUTORY CITATIONS RELATED TO GIFTED EDUCATION 22-02-R-0.00

- 1.01 (9) “All students” means every student regardless of gender; socio-economic level; at-risk status; racial, ethnic, or cultural background; *exceptional ability*; disability; or limited English proficiency.
- 2.01 (4)(f) Goals and strategies to improve all students’ academic achievement and to identify and reduce consistent patterns of low academic achievement and discrepancies in academic achievement related to gender; socio-economic level; at-risk status; racial, ethnic, or cultural background; *exceptional ability*; disability; or limited English proficiency.
- 3.01 (1)(c) CSAP scores disaggregated by *all student groups* defined in 1.01 (9).
- 4.01 (1)(c) Achievement of district established goals for reducing learning gaps in reading, writing, and mathematics measured by disaggregated CSAP data *for all students* as defined in 1.01 (9), in accordance with house joint resolution 01-1014 concerning closing the learning gap.
- 4.01 (1)(d) The achievement of district established CSAP goals which demonstrate a minimum of one year’s increase in student achievement for each year in school for *all disaggregated groups* of students as defined in 1.01 (9). Additional department approved measures may be presented to demonstrate one year’s growth in student achievement.

Support Cited in Terms of the Purposes of Accreditation (2202-R-0.00)

- ✚ To encourage excellence by assessing student performance in relation to state standards and assessments;
- ✚ To help all schools and school districts improve academic achievement for all students in safe schools;
- ✚ To promote high standards, equal access, and educational opportunities for all students’ academic growth;
- ✚ To develop and maintain a school and community partnership for the ongoing improvement of public education;
- ✚ To enhance the public’s understanding of school and district performance by reporting on accreditation indicators in concise, specific and comparable formats.

STANDARDS FOR PERSONNEL IN GIFTED-EDUCATION

8.02 (1) (e) *Personnel who provide direct and/or indirect instructional and programming services for gifted and talented students should possess appropriate knowledge and competencies in the special education of gifted and talented students.*

...the administrative unit supports the acquisition and/or improvement of the knowledge and competencies of these and other personnel through appropriate staff development relating to the education of gifted and talented students.

Quality indicators of teachers and other support personnel who provide gifted and talented programming services:

- ✦ Display and foster positive attitudes toward gifted and talented students, reflecting pertinent knowledge and understanding of the learning principles and educational needs of these students;
- ✦ Respect creativity and imagination;
- ✦ Maintain limits with students, yet remain flexible and patient;
- ✦ Have a sense of humor, be cheerful, and make learning fun;
- ✦ Differentiate instruction according to the academic and affective needs of these students, including, but not limited to, adapting instructional pace, curricular content and materials, learning environments, and student grouping patterns;
- ✦ Consult and communicate effectively with other professionals, administrators, and parents about student needs and educational progress.

Quality indicators of administrative personnel supporting gifted-education:

- ✦ Display and foster positive attitudes and support toward gifted and talented education in general based upon knowledge and understanding of the educational needs of gifted and talented students;
- ✦ Collaborate with stakeholders in gifted-education for high achievement and personal growth of gifted students;
- ✦ Oversee and support accountability procedures related to gifted and talented education;
- ✦ Provide leadership in the development, implementation, and evaluation of programming services and instructional strategies used in gifted-education;
- ✦ Obtain and allocate material, financial, and human resources necessary to address the education needs of gifted and talented students;
- ✦ Consult and communicate with other educators and parents about all aspects of gifted-education and student needs.

(Expanded from Barbara Clark)

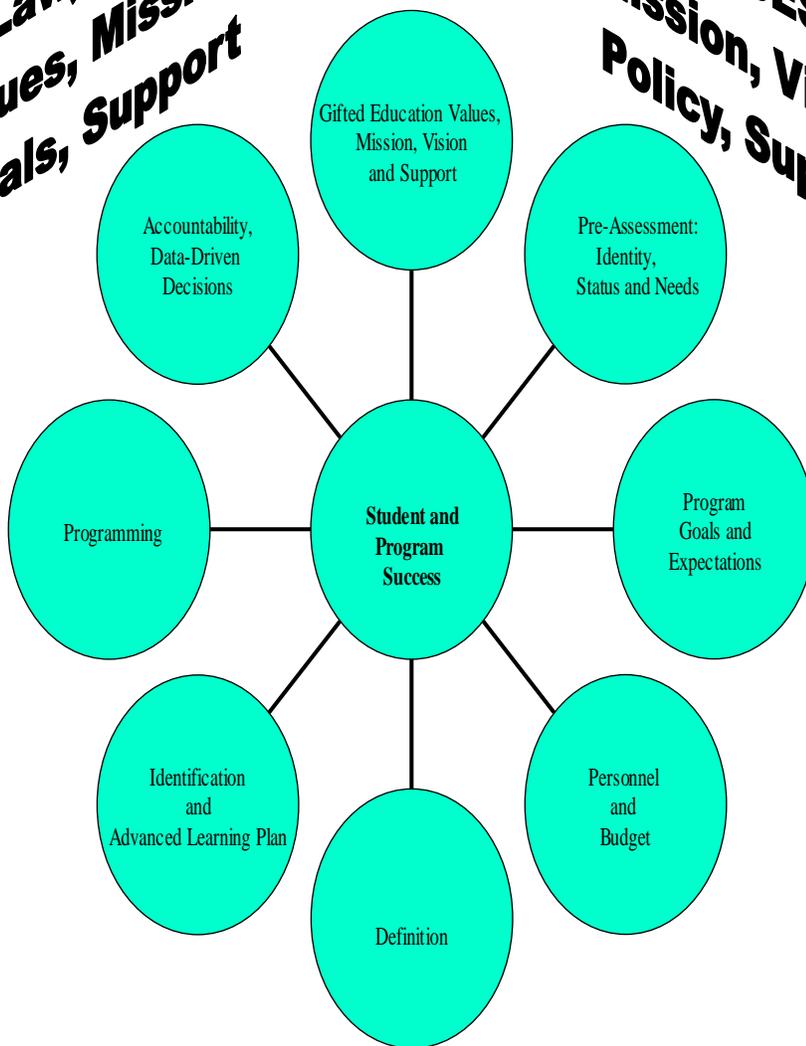
Common Questions Parents Ask, That Educators Should Be Able to Answer

- ✚ What are the advanced learning opportunities at my child's school?
- ✚ How do you identify gifted students?
- ✚ How are services decided and implemented?
- ✚ Is early entrance an option?
- ✚ How will my child benefit from gifted programming?
- ✚ My child was identified for gifted services elsewhere; is he/she automatically included in the school's gifted program?
- ✚ Will the gifted programming services mean more work for my child and not qualitatively different work?
- ✚ How do we address the non-academic exceptionalities of my child?
- ✚ In what ways can we work/communicate together?
- ✚ What are criteria for grade skipping or other forms of acceleration?
- ✚ How do I assist my child in transitions to the next level of schooling?
- ✚ What are the ways I can participate in school activities/committees?
- ✚ How is appropriate instruction provided if my child does not want to participate in a specific g/t program or magnet school?
- ✚ If my child is twice-exceptional, how will his/her needs be met?
- ✚ What kind of assessment is used to monitor my child's progress, especially if state assessment scores are weak?
- ✚ What resources or support systems are available to parents of gifted children?
- ✚ What are some ways I can support my child's strengths outside the school environment?

Program Design

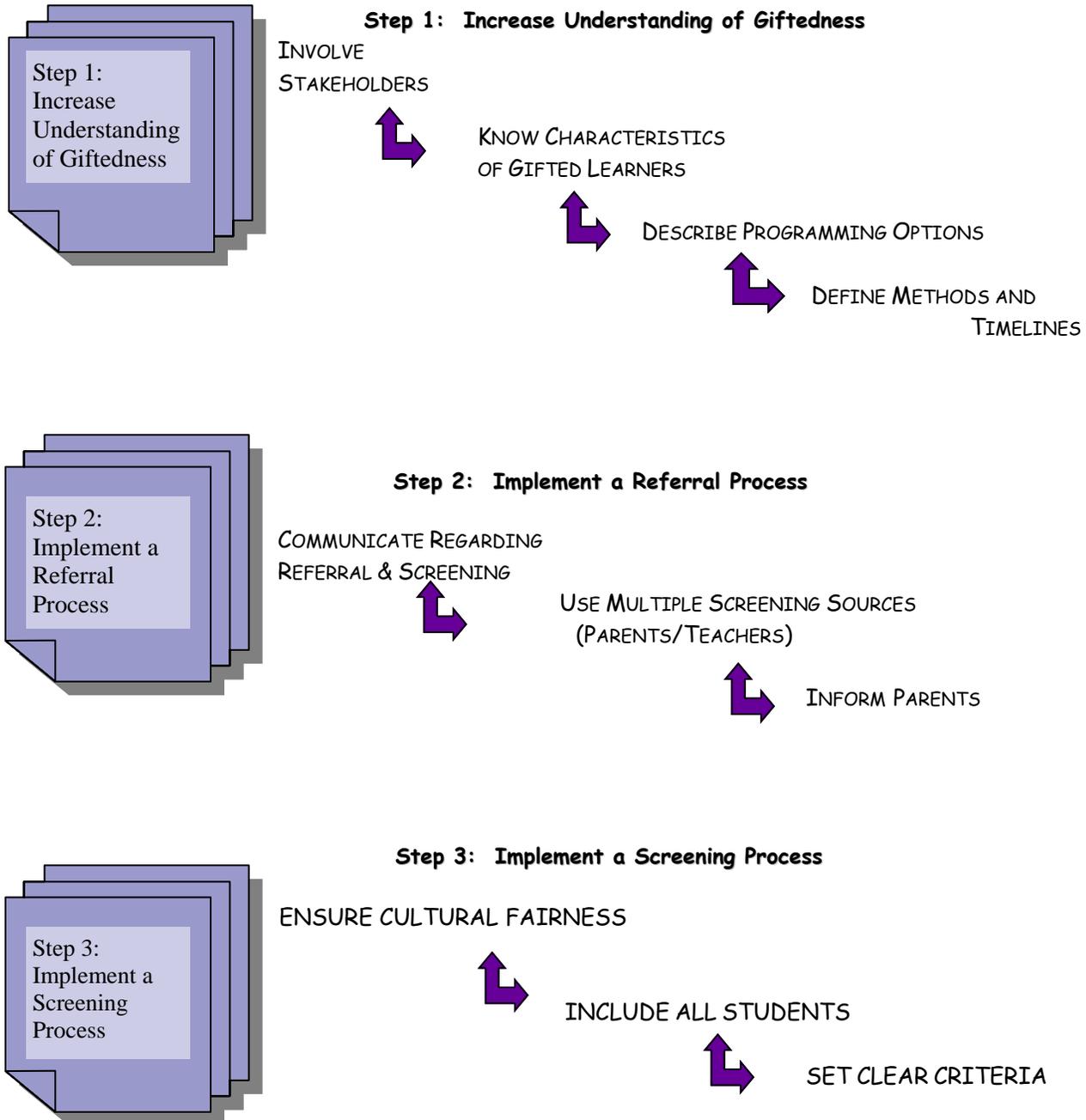
**State Law, Guidelines,
Values, Mission,
Goals, Support**

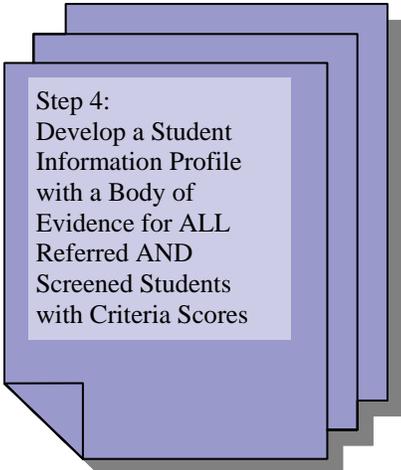
**District/BOCES Values,
Mission, Vision,
Policy, Support**



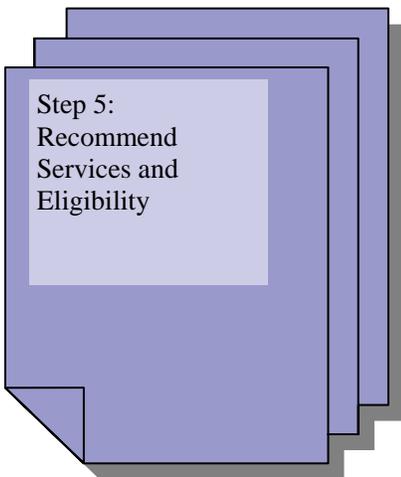
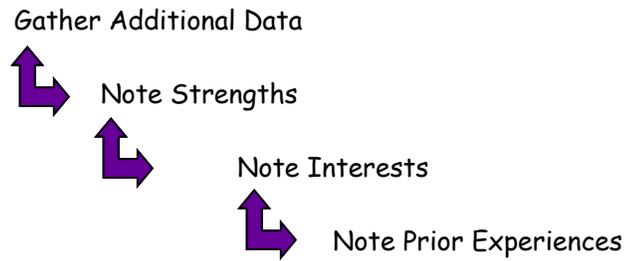
Process for Identification of Gifted and Talented Learners

Flow Chart: Steps in Gifted Identification Process

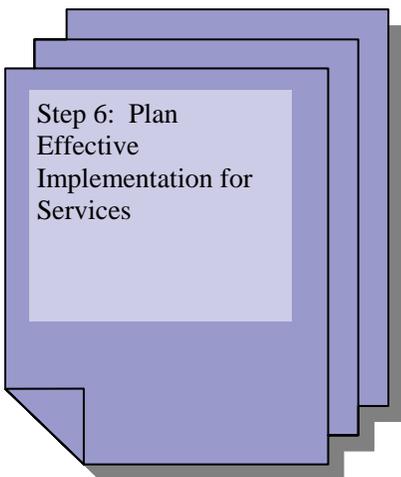




Step 4: Develop a Student Information Profile with a Body of Evidence
For ALL Referred AND Screened Students with Criteria Scores



Step 5: Recommend Services



Step 6: Plan Effective Implementation for Services



Looking At Data

In what ways are the enrollment patterns in the administrative unit the same or different from the gifted student enrollment?

Administrative Unit Enrollment				Gifted and Talented In the Ad-Unit			
Numbers in total enrollment		Percent of the total enrollment by gender, and ethnicity		Numbers of formally identified g/t students		Percent of the total g/t enrollment by gender and ethnicity	
Total A:				Total B:			
Gender:		Gender:		Gender		Gender	
F		F		F		F	
M		M		M		M	
Ethnicity		Ethnicity		Ethnicity		Ethnicity	
Asian		Asian		Asian		Asian	
Black		Black		Black		Black	
Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic	
Nat Am		Nat Am		Nat Am		Nat Am	
White		White		White		White	
				Percent of gifted students in the total enrollment: B divided by A =			

**At the school level, in what ways are gifted students demonstrating outstanding potential?
How does that drive critical instructional decisions?**

Category of Gifted	Category of Gifted	Individual Students
<u>Specific Academics:</u> Language Arts Math Science	<u>And/or Other Ways:</u> General Ability Creativity Leadership Visual, Music, or Performing Arts	

What data is influencing instructional decisions for gifted students?

Individual	Group
Classroom Performance Advanced Learning Plan Goals	School, District, State Trend Data
Affective Goals/Tasks	Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy

Program versus Programming

Programming is a concept that embraces the broad components of what we do to address the needs of gifted students over time. Programming options include specific strategies and programs used to serve gifted student needs. Program is a specific type of content, affective or interest based curriculum. Specific programs are ONE WAY to meet the educational needs of gifted students. In the absence of these programs, differentiated instruction, acceleration, affective guidance, content enrichment and higher order thinking skills remain requirements of the gifted student's general education.

A gifted program groups like-talented students for

- 1) a set of classes of less than a school year in length offered as an alternative to general classroom or a long-term/full-time classroom setting
- 2) the teaching of more in-depth or accelerated material linked to content standards
- 3) creating an environment whereby scholarship and socialization are outcomes
- 4) support in developing high level study skills and perseverance in learning
- 5) practicing homework skills and independent learning
- 6) developing research questions and creative solutions/presentations

Programs for gifted students target specific curricular areas or interest-based topics.

The selection of students for a program is based upon criteria for success in the particular program. Gifted students should not be collectively grouped in programs that may not address individual strengths and needs. If resources limit program offering, districts are encouraged to consider short-term summer experiences or a series of classes offered in partnership with the community or higher education.

Programs are usually facilitated by the classroom teacher, gifted education resource teacher/s, counselors, or other staff members trained in gifted education strategies. In some cases, community members who specialize in an area of study (e.g., engineering, math) may offer a course to supplement the school's offerings.

Programs...

- ✚ Target rigorous, in-depth, and creative studies
- ✚ Are not simply enrichment
- ✚ Serve students with different learning styles, cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds
- ✚ As a rule of thumb cover 50% more material than general education
- ✚ Provide counseling to gifted students and families who need help with emotional and social issues often faced by gifted students
- ✚ Involve parents
- ✚ Provide a focus on career and college planning

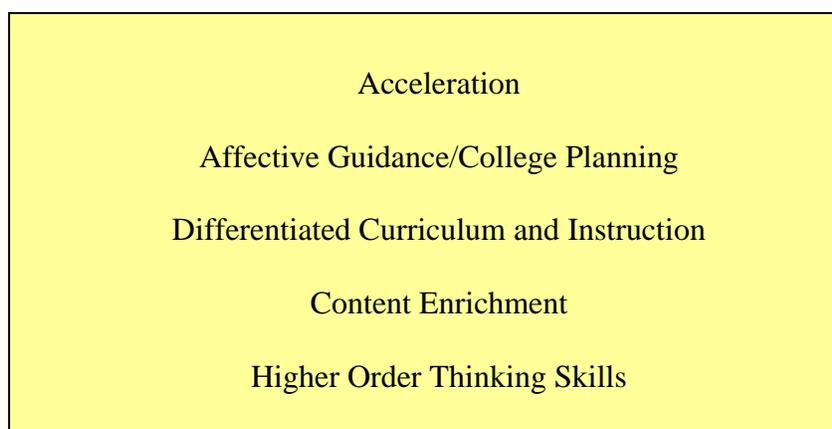
Examples of gifted programs are: Talents Unlimited, Literature Units from the College of William and Mary, Junior Great Books, Women in Engineering, Philosophy for Kids, IB, special math/science programs, and summer school two-four weeks, drama festivals, oration teams, competitions and seminars.

Synthesized from *Designing and Developing Programs for the Gifted Student* (2003)

Programming Components

Balanced programming means including the components required to provide for the educational needs of gifted and talented students. The programming components are based upon national standards, research and best practices in gifted education. Programming components address the instructional and grouping practices that promote high achievement for gifted students. It is essential that programming choices link to the student profile compiled during the identification process. Programming seeks development of the whole child so that gifted students become successful adults demonstrating self-esteem, self-efficacy and creative productivity in their own ways.

The programming components are:

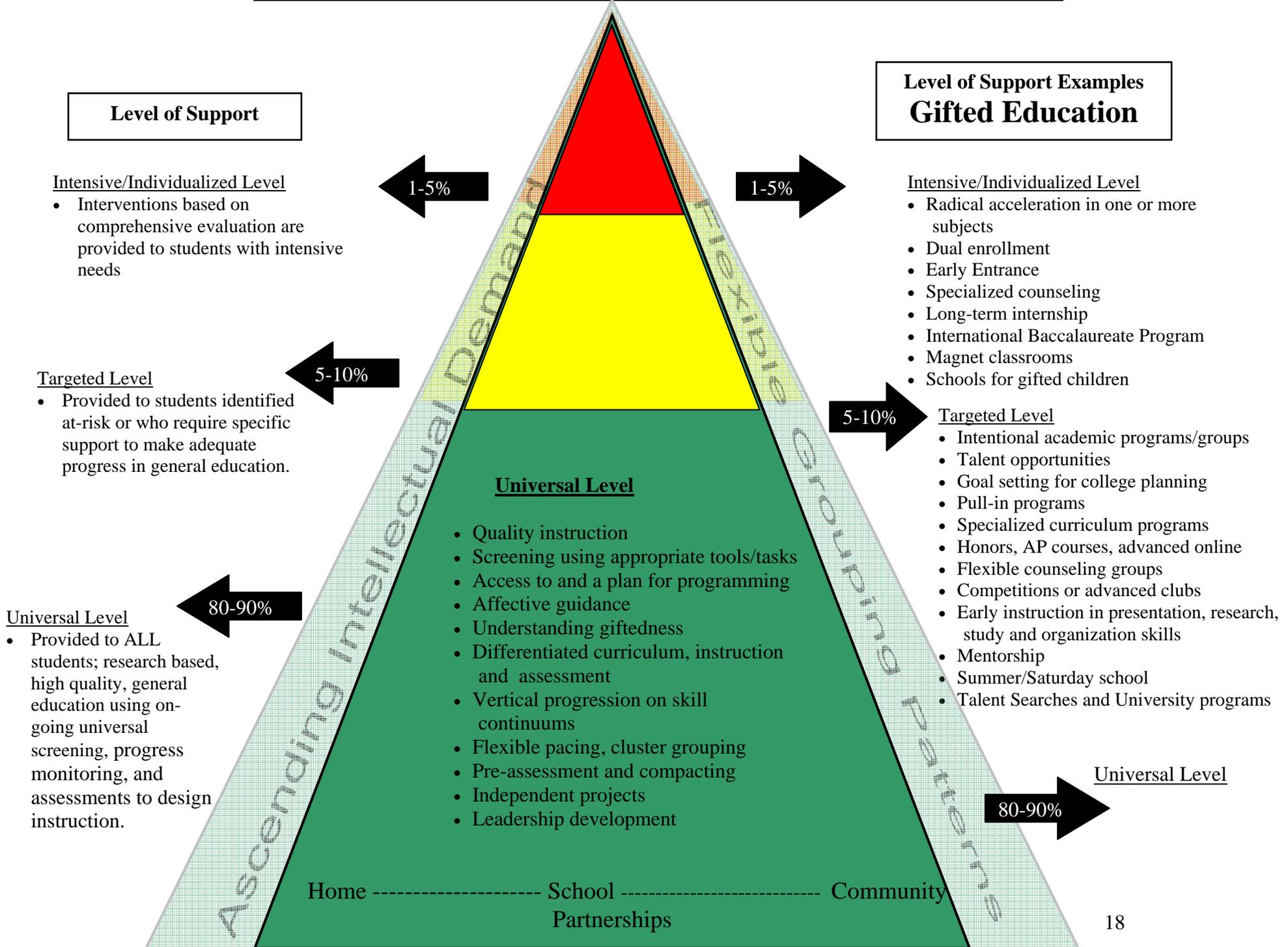


All gifted students require balanced gifted programming over time. It is the district's responsibility to ensure that programming components are accessible to gifted students through options in classroom instruction, advanced curriculum, targeted programs, community resources, or acceleration and counseling interventions.

The Colorado rule for the implementation of the Exceptional Children's Education Act that requires attention to programming states:

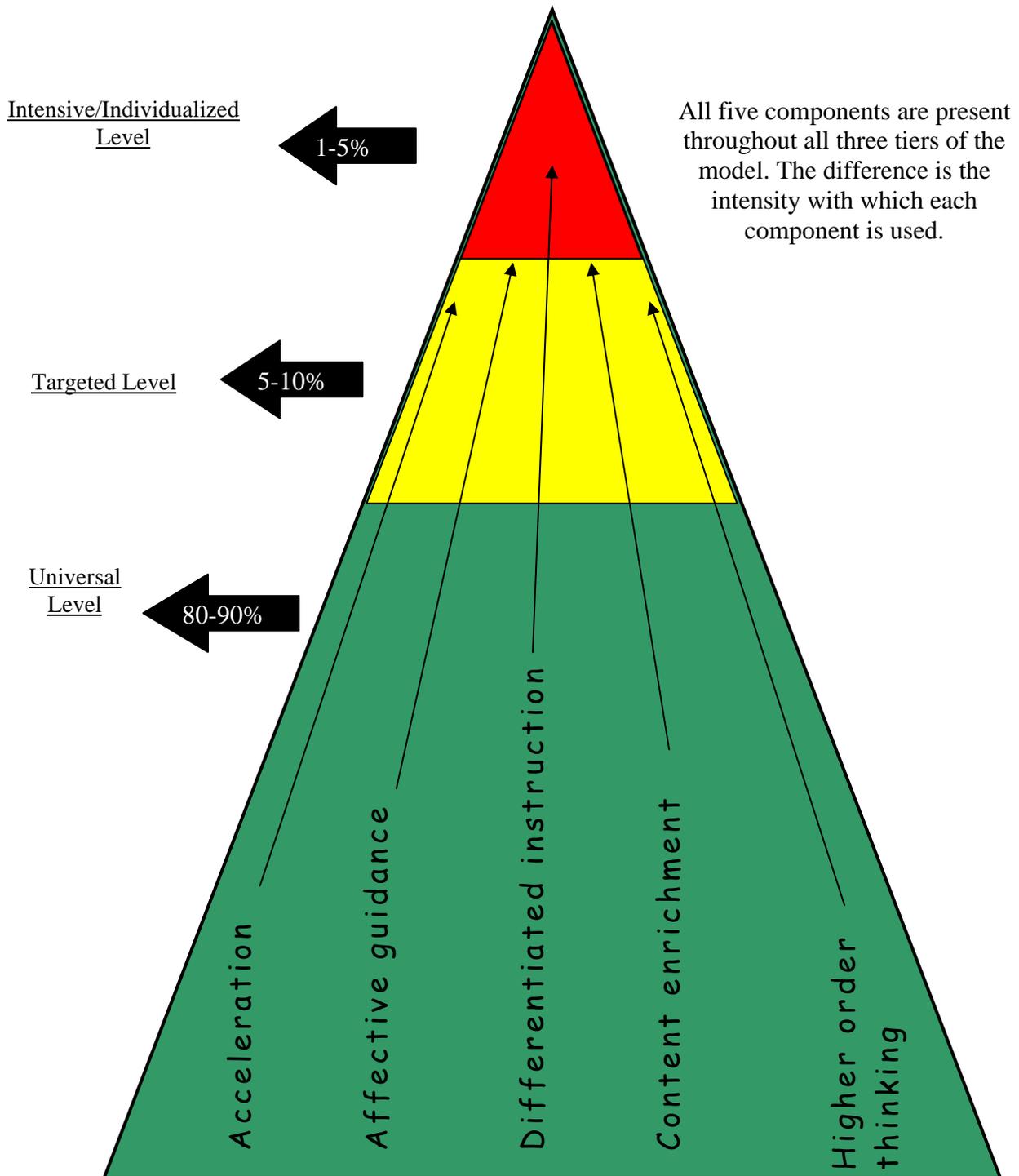
8.02(1)(c) *Programming. The plan shall describe the programming services, options, and strategies that will most commonly be implemented by the administrative unit and schools to appropriately address the educational needs of gifted and talented students. Such services, options, and strategies should include, but not necessarily be limited to, appropriate advanced/accelerated adaptations to the regular curriculum, advanced enrichment, learning-related affective needs programming, and career and future education guidance and counseling.*

Colorado School-wide System for Student Success



“Collaboration and systemic responsiveness supporting learning and growth for all students”

How Programming Components Fit Within the 3-Tiered Model for Progress Monitoring and Interventions

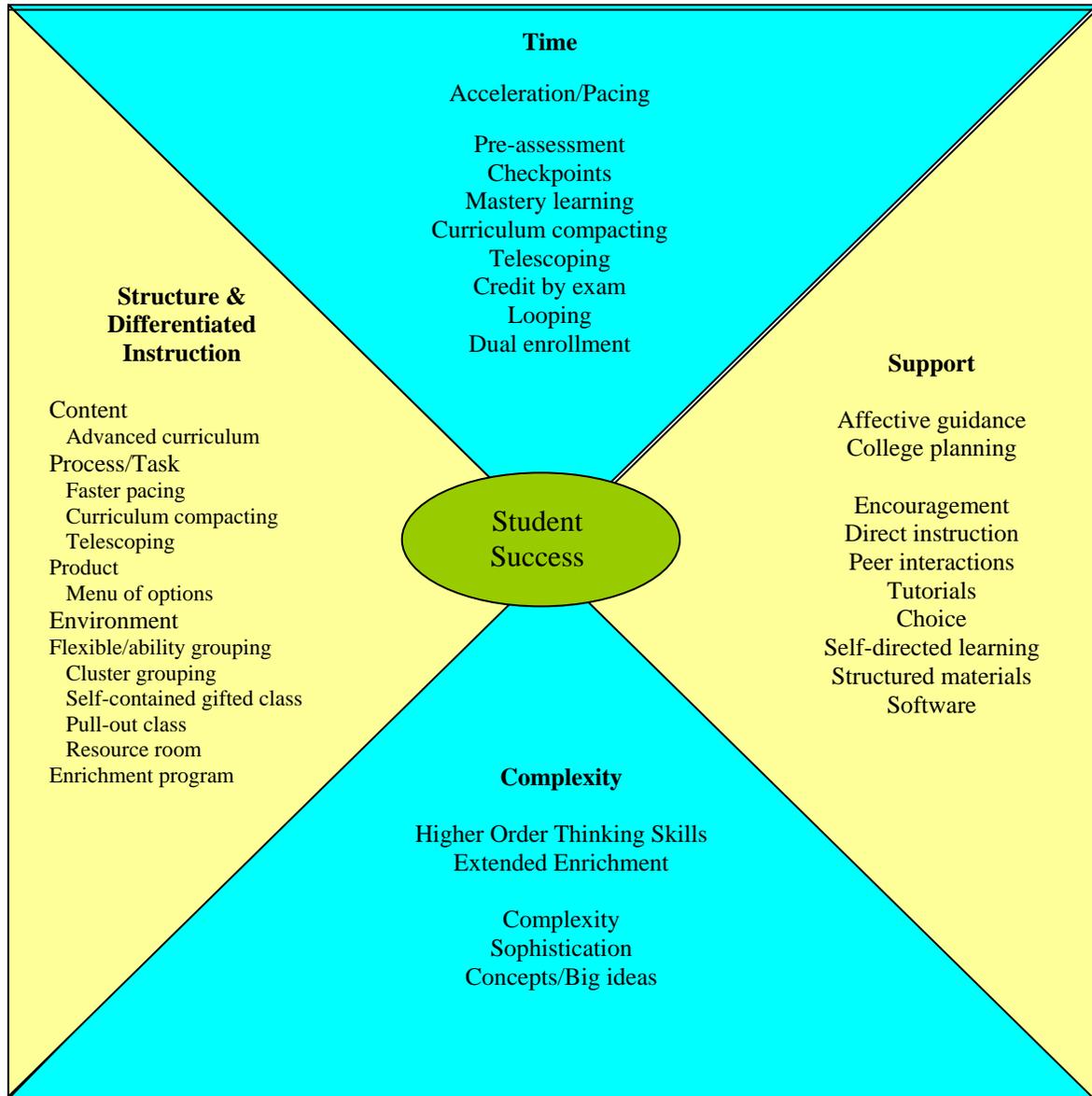


Record Keeping through Advanced Learning Plans (ALP)

8.05(3)(a) *A record of gifted and talented education programming services, options, and strategies utilized with individual students shall be made part of the student's record and shall be considered in educational planning and decision-making concerning subsequent programming for that student.*

- ❖ An accountability record providing evidence of monitoring gifted interventions and student progress through the grades as a condition for gifted funding and accreditation goals.
- ❖ A direct link between the student profile created during the identification process and the implementation of programming services matched to the child's strengths and interests.
- ❖ A planning guide for making instructional decisions about materials, programming options and assessments for gifted and talented students based upon strengths, interests, learning characteristics and social-emotional needs.
- ❖ A document across grades that includes indication of at least one identified strength area, goal for instruction, interventions/programming services, results of achievement and goal activities and the responsible participants (personnel, parent, student)
- ❖ A tool for monitoring students with outstanding potential and for planning the necessary steps and instruction for students to gain exceptional skills in their area of strength.
- ❖ Data for the ALP is collected from regular classroom, district, and state assessments and/or identified gifted programming options. It is a part of regular cumulative folder record keeping systems. Some districts use a colored folder within the cumulative folder; other districts implement an electronic learning plan system.
- ❖ Considerations for success include structure and instruction, time, support and complexity. See ALP Variables on the next page.
- ❖ A document reviewed with parents and the gifted student once a year. A systemic routine needs to be established according to the settings of elementary, middle and high school.
Examples:
At the elementary level, the ALP is attached to the report card and reviewed at the regular parent-teacher conference.
At the middle school level, the ALP is attached to the report card and reviewed at the regular parent-teacher conference; or, staff meet with all ALP students and parents; or the ALP is mailed home.
At the high school level, the ALP is student-directed. As a part of the regular counseling process, the student annually discusses career plans, course selection and cluster grouping opportunities with other gifted students based upon strengths and interests.
- ❖ A document that is critical in the transition of gifted students from one level of schooling to the next and from school to school. The ALP information must be transferred during regular registration procedures established in the district. It is advisable to include a question about gifted identification and/or previous gifted services on intake registration materials.

Advanced Learning Plans Variables



*Adapted from **Four Variables for Success**, Mary Ruth Coleman, Ph.D., Gifted Child Today, Winter 2003, Vol. 26, No. 1.*