

# Frequently-Asked Questions

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| <b>IDENTIFICATION</b>  | 1. <i>What should be different in my child's education as a result of being identified as GT? What are the benefits for my child and family?</i>   | <p>A formal identification process for gifted and talented learners in Colorado is closely linked to the services needed for the child's development in his/her area/s of exceptionality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The identification process provides a body of evidence--aptitude, achievement, behaviors, and demonstration of performance--that profiles your child's area/s of exceptionality and supports instructional accommodations for your child.</li> <li>• If your family moves to another district during your child's K-12 education, the instructional and programming needs of your child will be communicated among districts. While the specific services may not appear identical, services continue to accommodate and nurture the same strengths.</li> <li>• An annual review process allows continued focus on the nurturance and development of the student's talents and strengths. The school team including parents (and student if age is appropriate) reviews progress on the learning goals.</li> </ul>  |                   |                  |                   |            |            |                   |                 |                       |  |
|  | 2. <i>What are the consequences if we identify and serve gifted students? What are the consequences of not doing so?</i>   | <p><u>Consequences of GT identification and service:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-awareness and self-determination of goals in strength area/s;</li> <li>• Teacher awareness of needs for differentiation in the classroom;</li> <li>• Access to meet with an advocate of gifted education services who understands special issues related to giftedness in the schools;</li> <li>• Longitudinal monitoring of growth in strength and talent areas;</li> <li>• Collaborative effort to develop unique services to meet the exceptional needs of learners;</li> <li>• Ongoing assessment in a school/district about needs for formal programming options—e.g., advanced classes.</li> </ul> <p><u>Consequences of failure to identify and serve gifted students:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probable regression of achievement and growth based on lack of direct instruction at the appropriate level of rigor;</li> <li>• Diminishment or development of unrealistic aspirations of future/career goals;</li> <li>• Personal sense of isolation in the regular program.</li> </ul> |                   |                  |                   |            |            |                   |                 |                       |  |
| <b>PROGRAMMING</b>   | 3. <i>What are examples of strategies that are research-based?</i>   | <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Acceleration</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Cluster Grouping</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Flexible Grouping</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Compacting</td> <td>Enrichment</td> <td>Career Counseling</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Differentiation</td> <td>Individual Goals/Plan</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with teacher who has advanced education in content area and in the nature and needs of gifted learners</li> <li>• Responsiveness to interventions with ongoing progress monitoring</li> <li>• Counseling focused on the affective learning-related needs, college and future planning</li> </ul>   | Acceleration      | Cluster Grouping | Flexible Grouping | Compacting | Enrichment | Career Counseling | Differentiation | Individual Goals/Plan |  |
|  | Acceleration   | Cluster Grouping   | Flexible Grouping |                  |                   |            |            |                   |                 |                       |  |
| Compacting   | Enrichment   | Career Counseling  |                   |                  |                   |            |            |                   |                 |                       |  |
| Differentiation  | Individual Goals/Plan  |  |                   |                  |                   |            |            |                   |                 |                       |  |
| 4. <i>What does quality differentiated instruction look like in the classroom?</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher as coach and guide;</li> <li>• Pre-assessment, clear expectations and goals;</li> <li>• Student-friendly rubrics;</li> <li>• Appropriate levels of challenge for all students;</li> <li>• Flexible groupings;</li> <li>• Constant "kid-watching" (informal assessment) and flexibility in responding to needs;</li> <li>• Reflective teaching and alternate paths for students' successes.</li> </ul> |  |                   |                  |                   |            |            |                   |                 |                       |  |

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|                            | <p>5. <i>What should GT programming look like in high school?</i></p>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honors and advanced classes based on principles of academic rigor;</li> <li>• Honors and Advanced Placement classes taught by teachers who are aware of social-emotional as well as learning characteristics of gifted learners;</li> <li>• Guidance and counseling for affective needs of gifted learners as well as differentiated career planning;</li> <li>• Coordination of services based on a continuum by an instructional leader familiar with high school/graduation regulations in the district, state, and nation;</li> <li>• Evidence of flexibility in adapting the delivery of course content for the special needs;</li> <li>• Collaborative effort among teachers of advanced classes to address common issues associated with advanced classes and learners;</li> <br/> <li>• A four-year plan of studies and activities that provide opportunities for growth in talent and strength areas over time with consistent monitoring;</li> <li>• Provision for dual enrollment in the student's area/s of strength when the available curriculum has been outstripped;</li> <li>• Access to professional mentors who provide feedback and guidance on the development of distinguished-level performance/production;</li> <li>• Availability of any Advanced Placement course work and pre-AP work leading to superior performance on the AP Exam in the student's area/s of academic strength;.</li> <li>• Communication to all staff/teachers regarding the student's exceptionality to develop talent throughout the learning community.</li> </ul> |
| <b>SPECIAL PROGRAMMING</b> | <p>6. <i>In what ways might small schools meet the needs of GT students?</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure they are being identified;</li> <li>• Have process for creating learning plan to outline their needs;</li> <li>• Train teacher/s on how to meet the needs in regular classrooms;</li> <li>• Cluster group with a trained teacher;</li> <li>• Look for ways to support their strength areas. . .mentors, camps, competitions;</li> <li>• Investigate distance learning and advanced courses via internet;</li> <li>• Train counselors in affective needs of gifted and offer GT support groups;</li> <li>• Listen to and for the unique goals of gifted youth;</li> <li>• Acceleration is key—no additional funds are needed;</li> <li>• Early entrance; grade skipping; cross-grade placement for area/s of strength;</li> <li>• Must have administrators on board with professional development aimed at administrators;</li> <li>• Differentiation is key instructional strategy;</li> <li>• Implement long-range mentoring;</li> <li>• Maintain funding resources for rural gifted programming;</li> <li>• Put into place programming to encourage students to read widely.</li> </ul>  |
|                            | <p>7. <i>When is online instruction appropriate for GT?</i></p>                  | <p>Online instruction may be one valid service option on the full continuum of services for gifted students. Like all services, the appropriateness depends on the needs of the gifted student in his/her areas of exceptional abilities.</p> <p><u>Appropriate Considerations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online instruction may provide advanced course content that is not available in the regular school curriculum.</li> <li>• Online instruction may provide the opportunity for a student to accelerate the study/mastery of regular content areas so that additional/formal courses might be taken in the student's talent area/s.</li> <li>• Online instruction provides flexibility for students who have non-traditional schedules for schooling based on the development of their talent area/s.</li> </ul>  |

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|     |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online instruction may provide an optimal match with a student's learning preferences and need to work at his/her own pace for full understanding of material.</li> <li>• Online instruction might be one of several options considered by the content teacher/department chair, parent, student, registrar/counselor (secondary), and GT facilitator.</li> <li>• Online instruction varies in quality, cost, time commitment, and learning benefits so much that a variety of online programs might need to be reviewed to find the one best suited the student's learning needs.</li> </ul> <p><u>Appropriate Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the online course provide the most current text and materials representing best practices in the area of study?</li> <li>• Does the online program provide tutorial support/online teacher contact for questions and explanations if needed?</li> <li>• Is the online course accredited? Will it be accepted by the district as evidence of completion of existing course requirements/graduation requirements? Who in the district is in a position to answer this question?</li> <li>• Does the online instruction encourage rote memory and superficial mental engagement of the student? Or does it require complex, high-level, motivating learning opportunities?</li> <li>• In what ways would the online instruction affect the sequence of course work/topics in the district's curriculum? Does it qualify as a pre-requisite?</li> <li>• Is there evidence that the personal and learning characteristics of the student align with the study and learning requirements for successful completion of online study?</li> </ul> |
| 8.  | <p><i>What are the expectations for gifted students?</i></p>                                     | <p>Ideally, students gifted in math, writing, and reading would be performing at the advanced level on the math, writing, and reading CSAP tests. Students gifted in other content areas or in other ways (spatial, performing arts, music, visual arts, leadership, and creativity) would perform, at least, at the proficient level if not higher.</p>   |
| 9.  | <p><i>What are the consequences if gifted students do not achieve at the advanced level?</i></p> | <p>There are no negative consequences. The intent is to be proactive, plan challenging and appropriate instruction, and move an increasing number of gifted students to the advanced level of performance given motivation, area of giftedness, aspiration, and qualified teachers.</p> <p>CDE funds will not be withheld for student results. The supplemental funds should be used to assist in increasing student achievement. CDE funds could be withheld if the requirements and due dates of the administrative unit's Plan and Report are not met.</p>  |
| 10. | <p><i>Should students with outstanding potential perform at advanced levels?</i></p>             | <p>Schools will identify students with exceptional potential who may not yet have high achievement, especially in traditionally underserved populations. It would be the purpose of gifted and regular education to nurture the potential, scaffold, compact, and pace instruction that advanced performance may be realized over time.</p>  |

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| <b>CSAP and CREATIVITY</b>      | <p>11. <i>Does CSAP focus impair creativity?</i></p>  | <p>No. Another reflective question might be: Does instruction impair creativity?</p> <p>Creativity is strength for discovery, future inventions, and self-efficacy to solve problems. It is difficult to imagine quality teaching without the attribute of creativity. The teaching and learning cycles should have one result whereby individual students may express and/or demonstrate the learning in more than one way—as simple or as complex as driven by student talent and initiative.</p> <p>Qualified teachers and quality instruction develop creativity in all students. Cognitive, artistic, and problem solving creativity are results of lessons that allow for critical and creative thinking, perspectives, opinions, humor, inquiry, the merging of ideas and actions, and varied/alternative student products that exemplify the learning.</p> <p>Test-taking skills including knowing question formats are important for CSAP success, but are not foundational for learning. Concept and standards-based instruction weave the content and process skills for advanced/proficient CSAP levels into daily, standards-based instruction characterized by ongoing assessment that provides for continuous learning on a continuum of learning for all students.</p> |
| <b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b> | <p>12. <i>What are the resources I can access to know more about giftedness?</i></p>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NAGC website</li> <li>• Books in regional lending libraries (e.g., Centennial BOCES)</li> <li>• Master’s programs at UNC/DU</li> <li>• GT conferences like CAGT, NAGC, Beyond Giftedness, Kay Law, Roger Taylor, etc.</li> <li>• Boulder Valley School District’s GT website</li> <li>• CDE List serve</li> <li>• Colorado Guidelines and Resources</li> <li>• Regional networking</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | <p>13. <i>What is the differences between the Gifted-Education Specialist and Highly Qualified Teacher in CO?</i></p> | <p>Colorado licensure program provides for an endorsement for Gifted-Education Specialist and a process for a Highly Qualified Teacher in Gifted-Education. School districts may require teachers of gifted students, especially in gifted resource assignments or magnet/special/GT programs, to be endorsed or highly qualified in gifted-education.</p> <p>Teachers with a Bachelor’s degree or higher and licensed with a content endorsement, who complete an approved preparatory program and passed the exam for the Gifted-Education Specialist may apply for the endorsement.</p> <p>Teachers with a Master’s or Certificate in Gifted-Education may apply for endorsement which will include a written exam and the submission of at least 24 semester credit hours in gifted-education for review and approval by CDE. The courses will need to fulfill requirements of the Standards for Gifted-Education Specialist.</p>  |
|                                 | <p>14. <i>What should we know about giftedness to better meet the children’s needs?</i></p>                           | <p>Understand the types of giftedness and specific strategies and interventions for meeting needs. Be aware of the struggles of “being different.” Look for ways to support their quest for “following a passion,” finding resources and (if needed) mentors. Understand and apply different strategies for meeting individual needs. Keep in mind the “three R’s” . . . Rigor, Relationships, Relevance.</p>  |

**PARENTS**

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|  | <p>15. <i>How do I support appropriate programming as a parent?</i></p>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware of your child’s strengths and needs and what options are available and/or being provided for your child.</li> <li>• Ask how your child’s strengths were “discovered” and inquire into the process for services.</li> <li>• Find out how needs are being met in the regular classroom, as well.</li> <li>• If there is a need that is not able to be met within the school structure, brainstorm with the GT-referral team as to how services and support might be provided; e.g., after-school lessons, classes, alternative scheduling, on-line courses, etc.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <p>16. <i>What can I do as a parent to support my child at school and home?</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggest materials and activities aimed above the child’s tested level of performance in order to promote growth and learning;</li> <li>• Provide opportunities that move the child from concrete to abstract conceptual experiences;</li> <li>• Find experiences that provide relevant applications (“real-world”) and creative responses;</li> <li>• Make sure that work of greater complexity and challenge is introduced and available;</li> <li>• Ensure the child experiences a curriculum that reflects a world-view of areas to be studied (global interdependence, multiple perspectives);</li> <li>• Encourage child to develop a depth of understanding of a particular topic or concept;</li> <li>• Use projects and performances to expand critical and creative thinking;</li> <li>• Provide required and optional work opportunities;</li> <li>• Allow regular work opportunities that are both collaborative and individual;</li> <li>• Clearly communicate expectations on assessments that are fair and appropriately challenging;</li> <li>• Promote integration of key ideas, processes, themes, and underlying skills in all areas of study;</li> <li>• Make available work that is beyond the standards (level and scope).</li> </ul> |
|  | <p>17. <i>What can I do at home to support my child who is gifted?</i></p>          | <p>Take time to listen, to spend quality time with your child, supporting and extending his/her interests and passions. Have the child plan special outings, research topics. Involve the child in activities with age-level and “mental” peers. Allow the child to struggle but do not withhold help or insist on perfection. This will be helpful to build perseverance and self-confidence. Provide opportunities for the child to attend special camps or in-depth, specialized courses. Realize that emotional support is of utmost importance.</p>  |

**STATE EXPECTATIONS**

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| <p>18. <i>In what ways is GT mandated by the state? What is the law that supports GT programming?</i></p>            | <p>Some states have specific legislation designed to require gifted-education services in all districts and for all formally identified gifted students. Colorado does not. Instead, and perhaps more effectively, the ensurance of quality educational services for gifted students is embedded in several key Colorado state documents.</p> <p>Exceptional Children's Education Act (C.R.S. 22-20-101et seq.) adopted 8-12-76, last amended, May 1996 and Rules for the Administration of the Exceptional Children's Education Act, Gifted Student Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• defines gifted children as a category of "exceptional children;"</li> <li>• provides an educational definition of gifted education;</li> <li>• encourages high-priority consideration of the identification of gifted children who are economically disadvantaged, and culturally or ethnically diverse, or have disabilities;</li> <li>• requires an administrative unit gifted-education plan for disbursement of state gifted-education funds to the unit; requires a year report from the administrative unit;</li> <li>• states ways gifted-education state funds may be used;</li> <li>• makes formal programs for gifted students discretionary on the part of the district;</li> <li>• encourages collaboration with institutions of higher education to provide staff development and in-service opportunities for education programs for gifted students;</li> <li>• establishes a separate line in the appropriation bill for funding programs for gifted and talented students.</li> </ul> |
| <p>19. <i>What is required of a district or administrative unit to receive state funds for gifted-education?</i></p> | <p>A plan submitted by May 30<sup>th</sup> of each year describes for the district or AU each of five components—identification, programming, personnel, budget, and accountability—with assessment by rubrics to indicate level of development. Each component will have guidelines, resources, and training provided by CDE to support increasing effectiveness for these components.</p> <p>A year-end report submitted in September accounts for the services, students served, and expenditure of state and matching local funds used for the education of gifted students.</p>  |