DEFINITION OF GIFTED

What does "gifted" mean?

The state of Colorado provides the following definition of gifted students:

"Gifted and talented children" means those persons between the ages of five and twenty-one whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. Children under 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 and ethnic, cultural populations. Gifted students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these **areas of giftedness**:

- General intellectual ability
- Specific academic aptitude: reading, writing, math, science, social studies, world languages
- Creative thinking
- Leadership abilities
- Visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor abilities

Is my child gifted?

Often bright students – those who are motivated, high achievers – are thought to be gifted by their parents and teachers. However, a truly gifted student will demonstrate certain unique characteristics. Listed below are behaviors exhibited by both bright and gifted students. The majority of a bright child's behaviors will be found in the left column while the truly gifted child will exhibit behaviors from both columns depending on the task at hand.

Bright Child	Gifted Learner
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Is attentive	Is mentally and physically involved
Has good ideas	Has wild, silly ideas
Works hard	Plays around, yet tests well
Answers the questions	Discusses in detail; elaborates
In the top groups	Functions beyond the group
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings and opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows
6-8 repetitions for mastery	1-2 repetitions for mastery
Understands ideas	Constructs abstractions
Enjoys peers	Prefers adults
Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences
Completes assignments	Initiates projects
Is receptive to instruction	Is intense
Copies accurately	Creates a new design
Enjoys school	Enjoys learning
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
Technician	Inventor
Good at memorization	Good guesser
Enjoys straightforward instruction	Thrives on complexity
Is alert	Is keenly observant
Is pleased with own learning	Is highly self-critical

By Janice Szabo

Where can I learn more about the characteristics of gifted children?

Take a look at the following links:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/G/T/download/pdf/G/T12TraitsGiftedness.pdf

http://www.austega.com/gifted/characteristics.htm

http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=956

"Myths and Realities" (Colorado Department of Education Gifted Education Guidelines and Resources, Vol. I, pp. 61-63) "Distinguishing Characteristics of Gifted Learners" (same as above, pp. 69-72)

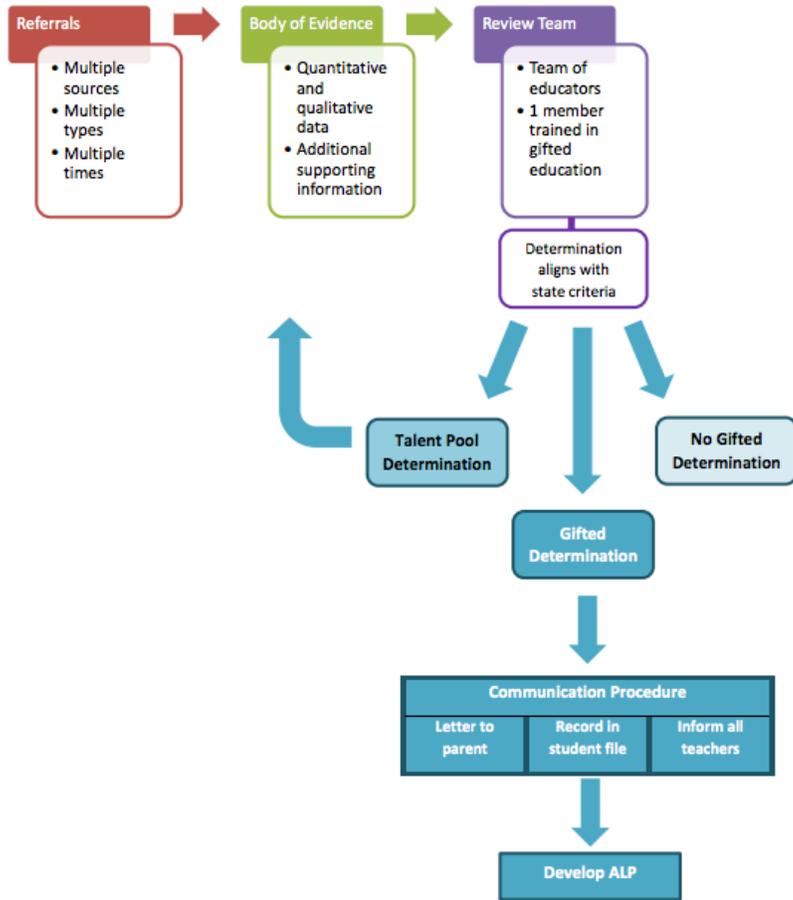## I think my child is gifted– now what?

If you think your child's behaviors match characteristics of gifted children, continue to explore this Handbook and then contact the gifted and talented site coordinator at your child's school, or the district gifted and talented coordinator.

TES	Kate Alagna	(970) 369-6954 kalagna@telluride.k12.co.us
TIS	Chad Terry	(970) 369-1207 cterry@telluride.k12.co.us
TMHS	Jennifer Hubbard	(970) 369-7119 jhubbard@telluride.k12.co.us
GT Coordinator	Kari Clements	(970) 369-1202 kclements@telluride.k12.co.us

IDENTIFICATION

"Until every gifted child can attend a school where the brightest are appropriately challenged in an environment with their intellectual peers, America can't claim that it's leaving no child behind." -Jan & Bob Davidson with Laura Vanderkam, in Genius Denied

How are gifted students the Telluride School District R1 identified?

Referrals
- Multiple sources
- Multiple types
- Multiple times

Body of Evidence
- Quantitative and qualitative data
- Additional supporting information

Review Team
- Team of educators
- 1 member trained in gifted education

Determination aligns with state criteria

Talent Pool Determination

No Gifted Determination

Gifted Determination

Communication Procedure

Letter to parent	Record in student file	Inform all teachers

Develop ALP

The Telluride School District identification process is aligned with state guidelines for identifying students eligible for gifted education and advanced learning services. These guidelines support the approach of looking at a variety of information for each student based on a "Body of Evidence." This evidence will determine if a student needs programming beyond that offered in the regular classroom or curriculum.

Gifted students usually fall within the top 3-7% of the general student population in terms of potential abilities.

How can parents and community members be involved in the identification process?

Yes, parent input is very important. In the initial stages of identification, parents may be asked to fill out an inventory of gifted behaviors they observe at home. Parents are also asked to give permission for specific tests to be given. After testing is completed, parents review the results with the gifted and talented teacher.

When does the identification process begin?

Performance & Observations

Checklists

Test Data

Anecdotal Records

MTSS/RtI

Questionnaires

Universal Screening

Referral

Interviews

Teachers and staff are trained to recognize gifted behaviors and student strengths and use to refer students of all grade levels, K-12. They use a variety of tools such as test data, observations, and universal screeners to help seek out and refer students for further assessments and possible identification. Parents may also initiate a referral by contacting their child's classroom teacher, gifted and talented site coordinator, or district gifted and talented coordinator. In addition, all students are given an intellectual screening test (CogAT Test) in 2nd grade and 6th grade. Those who score above a threshold are referred for further evaluation and a Body of Evidence is collected.

The Body of Evidence

A body of evidence is built to determine if a student meets the criteria for gifted identification. Evidence of exceptional ability is collected in four areas: aptitude, achievement, performance, and behavior. Evidence is examined against qualifying criteria. To be formally identified in Telluride School District, a student must qualify in at least two of the four areas, and have 3 pieces of supporting data. The four areas are listed below, along with possible data that may be collected in each. Tests listed by name are the ones most commonly used in the District.

• **Aptitude**: Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT-2), Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (KABC-ll)

• **Achievement**: Partner for Assessment Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) at the exceeds expectations level, ACT, Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), PSAT, SAT

• **Demonstrated Performance or Portfolio**: portfolios, student products, contests and competitions, and/or performance tasks judged by experts in that field

• **Behaviors and Characteristics**: Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS)

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	Qualitative
• Norm-referenced test (e.g., cognitive and achievement) • Criterion-referenced test (e.g., state assessment and curriculum based measures)	• Rubric • Performance • Observation • Checklist • Interview

If a child is not identified during the 2nd grade or 6th grade screening process, can he be identified in another grade?

Yes, there is no "window" for identifying gifted behaviors. Identification for gifted and talented services is an ongoing process using multiple criteria. No single factor can eliminate a student from consideration. Teachers review assessment results and other data throughout the year(s) to get a complete picture of students' strengths, needs, and abilities. There are several types of evidence that may be used to identify a student.

Can a child with a disability be identified as gifted?

Yes, a student can be twice-exceptional – that is, identified as eligible for special services in more than one area. See Twice-Exceptional Students in this Handbook.

Does Telluride School District consider areas of giftedness other than academics?

Yes, all learners are considered regardless of academic achievement. Parents are invited to provide evidence of student strengths and talents in areas like art, music, creativity, and leadership. Teachers also may recognize these strengths and talents and may refer students based on their observations.

Will students identified in another district continue to be served in Telluride School District?

The Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA) requires that a student who moves from one district in Colorado to another district in the state retains his/her gifted identification. This concept is referred to as "portability." If your child comes from another Colorado public school district with complete identification, he/she is identified according to state rules and regulations; therefore, your child's Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) from the former district will be recognized and followed in Telluride School District, although ALPs often look different from district to district.

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

PROGRAMMING

"What is necessary and sufficient for the nongifted is necessary but insufficient for the gifted, who need more and different learning experiences to match their potentials." - A.J. Tannenbaum

Why do highly capable students need something different?

https://youtu.be/MDJst-y_ptI - Video screened at the "Celebrating Gifted Education Reception" in Annapolis, MD on February 24, 2010

http://www.nagc.org/commonmyths.aspx -NAGC compiled a list of the most prevalent myths in gifted education with evidence rebutting each of them. This list was developed from a longer list of myths explored in a special of *Gifted Child Quarterly* (GCQ) in the Fall of 2009. NAGC Members can read the full issue of GCQ via the SAGE website.

What is an ALP?

The Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) is a legal document outlining programming for identified gifted and talented students and is used as a guide for educational planning and decision making. It is also an accountability method for assessing gifted student growth through progress monitoring of quantitative and qualitative goals in gifted student programming and social-emotional development. For secondary students the ALP may be blended with an ICAP (optional). The requirements of both the ALP and ICAP need to be combined on the singular portfolio system where data is collected and goals established and monitored.

Foundational Principles of an ALP

* It is a tool that drives instruction and social emotional guidance.
* It is a living document and may be revised as necessary.
* It is a communication tool between students, teachers, and parents.
* It is an individual gifted student planning document reflecting current levels of performance, curricular areas to be addressed, student goals, parent involvement, student involvement, timeline, monitoring and review process.
* It is used to measure student's progress and the effectiveness of programming by including an indicator of success, self-efficacy, and next steps.

What are the main components of an ALP?

* <u>Body of Evidence</u> (BOE) – identifies interests, strengths, and needs of the student
* <u>Academic Goal</u> – a standards based goal for the area(s) of strength
* <u>Affective Goal</u> – a goal that reflects the development of personal, social, communication, leadership, and/or social competency.
* <u>Programming Options and Strategies Matched to Strengths and Interests</u> - supplemental curriculum, activities, specific programs or coursework, specific strategies, and/or extended or expanded learning opportunities available that match a student's strength area(s) and support the goals;
* <u>Progress Monitoring</u> – ongoing and yearly
* <u>Personnel</u> – teachers, staff, community members, etc.
* <u>Parent</u> <u>Engagement</u> and <u>Input</u>

Do all students have ALPs?

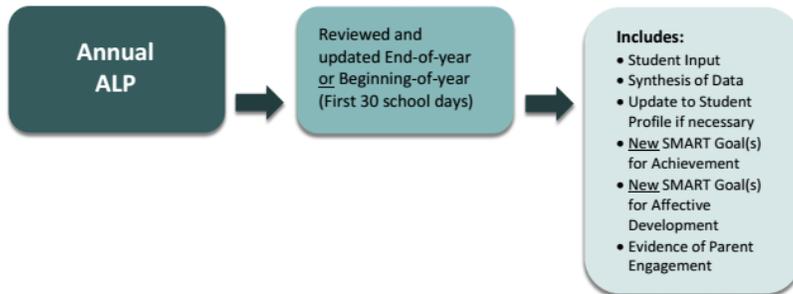No. Only students formally identified as gifted have ALPs.

Once a child has been identified as gifted, how long until the ALP should be developed?

An ALP is usually put in place within 30-45 days after which the child's identified.

Initial ALP	→	Developed 30-45 days after initial gifted identification	→	Includes: • Identification BOE • Student Profile • Area(s) of Giftedness • SMART Goal(s) for Achievement • SMART Goal(s) for Affective Development • Evidence of Parent Engagement

Does an ALP change every year?

It may. Because it is based on student strengths as observed and documented, academic and talent goals usually remain essentially the same – academic goals are directed toward growth in the area of strength or growth of the talent area each year.

Annual ALP	→	Reviewed and updated End-of-year or Beginning-of-year (First 30 school days)	→	Includes: • Student Input • Synthesis of Data • Update to Student Profile if necessary • New SMART Goal(s) for Achievement • New SMART Goal(s) for Affective Development • Evidence of Parent Engagement

At the elementary and middle levels, you, your child, and your child's gifted and talented coordinator review the ALP annually and make changes as needed. In high school, your student reviews his/her own ALP annually with a gifted and talented coordinator. Your student may set new goals as his/her interests and strengths change and mature. You will be invited to see and sign your student's ALP, annually.

Is there a difference between "being in" a gifted program and "receiving" gifted programming?

Yes. Although the wording may seem similar, the change from program to programming represents a major shift in how schools deal with student differences. The concept of being "in" a certain program implies that some students are also "out". The logical extension of that thinking is that we can easily tell who should be "in" and who must stay "out", when this is not the case. No one measurement can tell us who is "really" gifted. It is best to respond to the needs of children and youth. As students demonstrate strengths that need nurturing, the school should respond by providing special services. Students identified as gifted have demonstrated that they need "something different" than what most other students need. A "gifted program" is often something that is fixed and pre-planned, while gifted programming is something that is built around the students and can respond to their individual needs and interests.

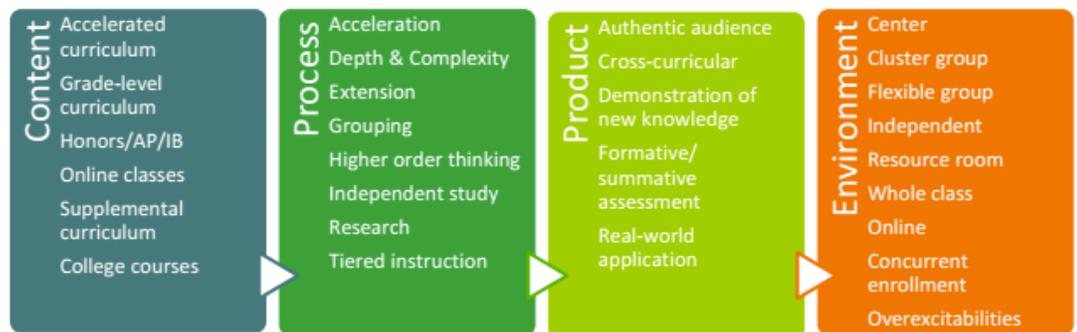## OK, we have an ALP. How is programming designed?

Programming components, as described by the state, 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?

| Content	Process	Product	Environment
Accelerated curriculum	Acceleration	Authentic audience	Center
Grade-level curriculum	Depth & Complexity	Cross-curricular	Cluster group
Honors/AP/IB	Extension	Demonstration of new knowledge	Flexible group
Online classes	Grouping	Formative/ summative assessment	Independent
Supplemental curriculum	Higher order thinking	Real-world application	Resource room
College courses	Independent study		Whole class
	Research		Online
	Tiered instruction		Concurrent enrollment
			Overexcitabilities

Programming is adaptable to the resources within different schools in Telluride School District R1. Each school works to determine how the programming components will be implemented to ensure measurable growth in gifted student achievement or performance.

Do all gifted and talented students receive the same type of programming?

Telluride School District uses the Colorado School-wide Model for Student Success. The Model is built around the idea that students, by virtue of their differing characteristics, have different levels of need for particular interventions, including gifted and talented services. The process of determining the intensity of student needs for services, rather than first labeling a student before providing appropriate services, is called Response to Intervention (RtI). RtI is a nation-wide approach to serving students that differs from the old approach of reacting to labels.

This diagram may help you visualize "tiered programming." Colorado's 3-tier Model is based upon the following concepts:
• High quality research-based general education instruction for all students
• General education teachers who are active in students' assessment
• Universal screening of academics and behavior (All students examined for evidence of gifted behaviors.)
• Research-based interventions to address a student's needs (Attempts to meet needs in regular classrooms.)
• Systematic assessment of the fidelity of intervention implementation (Are teachers instructing according to the ALP?)
• Progress monitoring of intervention effectiveness (Is the student achieving?)
• Partnerships among home, school, and community that positively affect students
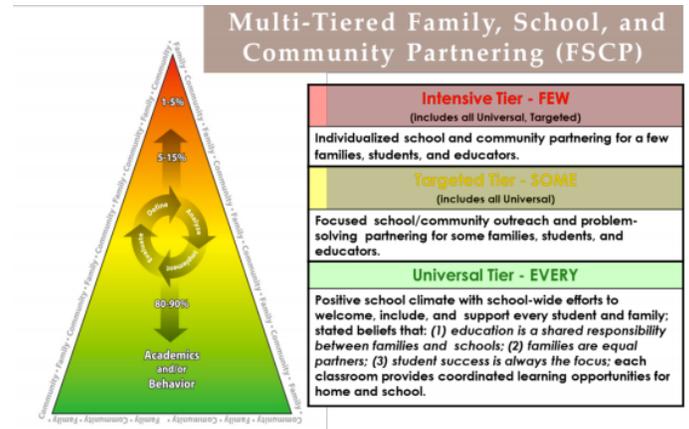
The goals of the 3-tiered Model are:
• Students are screened early for at-risk and strength traits.
• Strengths and difficulties direct instruction decisions.
• Alignment exists for assessment, instruction, and progress monitoring.

What do the three tiers mean?

Colorado's use of the RtI process means that programming for the strengths of students, rather than an "in" or "out" traditional gifted program, is the expectation in the state. A gifted student whose academic needs put him far beyond the level of his/her classmates, for example, requires different amounts and types of services and programming than does a student who is one or two years ahead of age-mates in one content area.

GREEN All gifted students receive this level of support, including differentiated instruction in the regular classroom and content extensions as needed. For most gifted students (up to 80-90%), no further support is needed for them to achieve according to their potential.

YELLOW For some gifted students (perhaps 5-10%), other support is needed in addition to that described at the green level. This might include more time with a certain teacher, moving to another classroom for certain instruction, more independent study, more social-emotional programming, or specific extra-curricular activities.

RED For a very few, perhaps 1-5% of the gifted population, intensive, individualized services are needed.

What programming options are available for my child?

All of our schools provide programming aligned with the State of Colorado guidelines, but programming options and delivery differ from school to school.

Elementary and Middle School Programming

In general, elementary and middle schools use a combination of three techniques to meet the needs of gifted students:

- Differentiated Instruction in the classroom by the regular classroom teacher
- Pull-Out instruction in strength-based small groups
- Mentorship

Pull Out Extensions

Instruction in pull-out groups can consist of extended and enriched regular curriculum that challenges gifted students. This type of instruction can also occur with the regular classroom teacher teaching different groups of students in the same classroom.

Alternative topics in pull out

Pull-out programming may also address high-interest topics not included in regular curriculum, although it still is connected to similar processes, concepts, and high-level thinking skills. Whatever curriculum is offered in pull-out classes, it supports the Colorado content standards, whether it is similar in content to what is being taught in the regular classroom or not.

Independent study

Pull-out also may include independent research and study, especially for highly gifted students. Independent study builds on student's strengths and interests, to keep motivation high, while encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning.

High School Academic Programming

Gifted and talented students at the high school level have a range of options open to them, but they must be mentally and emotionally prepared to take full advantage of all the available choices. Self-advocacy is important for the gifted student wishing to navigate through the range of courses, programs, and credit options open to him or her. A knowledgeable parent can help his or her student immensely by being as informed as possible about what high schools have to offer.

ALP's in High School

The student is largely responsible for his or her own ALP during high school. A counselor generally acts as the person who advises students about their ALPs. This counselor helps students keep on-track with their ALPs. Students must meet at least once a year with their ALP counselor to review and revise goals. Parents should expect to see the ALP once a year, often at conference time. Parent input is valuable to adolescents managing their own learning plans.

Electives and Interest Areas

Students with strong interests and talents in visual art, vocal or instrumental music, theater, speech and debate, computers, or other areas have many more choices of classes in their areas of strength. In some cases, they can fulfill their requirements with alternatives in their interest areas, such as by using a journalism class for an English credit or a science elective as another science credit.

Advanced Placement (AP) classes

Advanced Placement, or AP, classes follow the same curriculum nationwide. They are offered in a variety of content areas. High schools may offer AP classes for which they have trained teachers and for which there are enough students qualified for and interested in enrolling. Any student who receives a recommendation from a teacher may enroll in an AP class. AP classes are not limited to identified gifted students.

Students who complete an AP course must take a standardized end-of-course exam. (A student need not have taken an AP course to take an AP exam. If a student feels he/she knows the material to the degree necessary to take the AP exam, he or she may ask to do so.) If exam scores are at or beyond a certain level, many colleges will extend the student credit for that class. The score at which credit is granted varies from college to college. AP exams are given for a fee, but the state of Colorado has a fee assistance program for anyone who needs and applies for it. (See your child's high school for information about AP exam fee assistance.)

Some gifted students want to take AP classes at earlier grade levels than their peers. This can usually be negotiated with the student's counselor, depending on the student's grades in that content area, motivation, and recommendation from a previous teacher.

Post secondary options, Dual enrollment, Fast Track, and early graduation

Students who advance rapidly through their coursework by being accelerated in one or more content areas may "run out" of classes to take at the high school, before they have amassed enough credits to graduate. When this happens, the school district must pay for that student to take the appropriate class at a local college or university or online, according to state law on post-secondary options. Post-secondary options may be used to take a class not usually offered at high schools or a world language class not offered at the high school, such as Russian or Japanese. The Colorado state law on "Post-secondary options" also allows a student to take a class such as Welding or Drafting. Telluride School District contracts with Western State College, Colorado Mesa University, and Delta Montrose Technical College to provide post-secondary classes for high school students. Any student that has earned enough credits and has taken all the requirements to graduate before he or she would normally, may graduate early. Most colleges accept students younger than 17 or 18 years of age, but parents and students should be sure to check on this before assuming that the college of choice will be available to them earlier than usual. To learn more about changes to state law on post-secondary options, go to CDE info on postsecondary education law.

Online Courses

Some gifted students would rather complete the requirements for a class online than by spending the entire semester in the actual classroom. This option is becoming more and more available. Gifted students and their parents should be very careful to check into the nature of online classes before enrolling, because some are intended only for credit recovery (i.e., as "make-up" for students who have previously failed that class) and may not be accepted by colleges. Any online class taken by a college-bound gifted student should be as rigorous as a regular high school or college class. As more and more online programs are developed, there will be more opportunities for students to earn credits without doing "seat time".