



## Administrative Unit

<b>Administrative Unit name:</b> Mountain BOCES - 64093	<b>Region:</b> Northwest	
<b>Name of Lead District Superintendent:</b> Allan Ward <b>Name of Gifted Education Director/Coordinator:</b> Laura Wedow	<b>Email:</b> lwedow@mtnboces.org	
<b>Director's mailing address:</b> PO Box 105, Fairplay, CO 80440	<b>Phone number:</b> 719-427-9011	<b>Fax:</b> 719-486-2109

### Number of Districts within Administrative Unit: 7

Member District	Superintendent Name
Park County RE2	Becky Minnis
Salida SD R32J	David Blackburn
Garfield SD RE2	Brent Curtice
Roaring Fork SD RE1	Rob Stein
Garfield SD 16	Dr. Ken Haptonstall
Buena Vista SD #1	Lisa Yates
Lake County SD RE1	Wendy Wyman

12.02(2) **Comprehensive Plan** “...The program plan shall be implemented by all constituent schools and districts of the AU. ... The Department shall review all program plans for completeness. An AU’s program plan shall be deemed complete if it addresses all elements specified in Section 12.02(2)(a) through 12.02(2)(l) of these Rules”

**Directions:**

Write the administrative unit’s description of how it implements each element of the Program Plan and how the AU plans to improve or enhance each element as appropriate. Write how the AU Key requirements of each section of the plan are listed as they are described in the Rules.

## Procedures for Parent, Family and Student Engagement and Communication

Mountain BOCES districts have implemented a variety of tools for communicating information about gifted services to their stakeholders (administrators, parents, teachers, community members). Formats such as web pages, brochures, booklets, blogs, newsletters, and meetings are available in many districts. Some districts have materials available in Spanish, and many of these materials are parent specific, providing resources for parenting gifted children. Resources for parenting gifted children are provided via school websites in some districts.



It is also important to engage parents in their child's education, so when students are identified, parents are included in creating the ALP and progress reporting. During parent teacher conferences, parents are given progress reports and encouraged to give input. Gifted and talented services are provided to identified students depending on their individual needs, strengths and challenges. Information on concurrent enrollment is provided to all parents through information sent home at the beginning of each school year in high school, with the counselor making recommendation for scheduling, based on their area of strengths in their ALPs and their interests. In some districts college and career planning is already taking place through counseling services and career research within classes, and in other districts this will be a target over the next couple of years. Parents are invited to participate in the school community through volunteering, advisory committees, sporting events, etc. through information sent home to parents, website information, and all-calls home.

Mountain BOCES maintains a website that contains information related to programming, identification, and other processes. There are links to each of the school districts and their gifted information pages.

#### AU Target/s:

1. All districts/Mountain BOCES will update websites annually, to reflect most current GT policies and services, professional development opportunities, and personnel. Mountain BOCES will update their website regularly, and will work with individual districts to ensure that district links are in place and functioning.
2. All districts will collaborate (through the Gifted Education Leadership Team meetings and Mountain BOCES website) and share options/ideas on communication and resources across districts.
3. Each district will provide easily accessible information to stakeholders in regards to gifted education policy, identification, programming options, transition plans across grade levels, other means for parent engagement, and link this information to the Mountain BOCES website.

## Definition of “Gifted Student”

"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 or specific intellectual ability.
- Specific academic aptitude.
- Creative or productive thinking.
- Leadership abilities.
- Visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor abilities.

The Mountain BOCES districts use this definition as the foundation and guidance for all parts of the identification process and programming.



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## Identification Procedures, Criteria for Determining Exceptional Ability (Giftedness) or Talent Pool, and Identification Portability

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All Mountain BOCES districts are implementing the revised gifted identification procedures in Colorado (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/giftedidentification>), which will ensure portability throughout the state. Some districts already have this process fully in place and others are working on the areas of art, music, theatre, dance and psychomotor skills. The process focuses on research-based assessment practices to ensure multiple pathways to identification. One assessment will not eliminate a child from being identified, as a quantitative and qualitative body of evidence of is used for ID purposes. Multiple assessments are used that measure diverse abilities, talents, and strengths that are based on current theories, models, and research, and the area of which the referring person is focusing. All districts are implementing universal screening in at least one grade K-2, and many are also screening in grade six. All districts are using the 95th percentile or above as the criteria on the quantitative data. If a performance evaluation is being used in the body of evidence for identification, it must be by a team of experts in the field. Qualitative data is also commonly used to build a learner profile for the purpose of developing appropriate programming options. The identification guidebook will be posted on the Mountain BOCES website. All districts currently identify students in the academic areas and are in various phases of development of criteria for ID in the areas of art, music, theater, dance, psychomotor, creativity or leadership.

Before looking at a specific student (not universal screening), parents are notified and must sign a Permission to Test document, giving the district permission to review/test. After the data is collected, the districts review the data with teams consisting of teachers, an administrator, and a person trained in gifted education. Parents are included in the procedure when appropriate, with the goal of completing the process in 30 days or less. A determination letter to parents and for the student file, is prepared describing the decision of the review team. When students are identified, ALPs are created and communicated to parents, with annual reviews. No single assessment will eliminate a student from being identified. When a body of evidence is not available, a student may be put on a watch list for further consideration, may be referred for special education assessment, or receive a talent pool designation.

When students move between Colorado districts, appropriate transport of file, including body of evidence and ALP, will be followed to ensure credibility and confidentiality. If the body of evidence that shows how a student was identified is incomplete, the receiving district should consult with the former district and parents of student, to get the complete file. If the file is not complete, the receiving district may decide to reevaluate. The body of evidence must be provided to ensure portability. When a GT student transfers to a new Colorado district, review of the student's ALP will take place within 45 days of enrollment and parents will be contacted within 60 days.

### AU Target/s:

1. All districts will implement the revised identification procedures to ensure portability throughout the state.
2. The policies and procedures for identification will be easily accessible to all stakeholders through districts websites.
3. All districts will develop procedures that will include a determination notification to parents within 30 days of the start of the process. This notification may be a determination that more time for further review is needed on the formal identification process.

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## Advanced Learning Plan Content, Procedures and Responsibilities

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All districts in the Mountain BOCES AU develop ALPs for every gifted student, according to the student's strength area(s), interests, and instructional needs. Many districts are housing their ALPs on Alpine Achievement, which does include a student profile. Some districts are using School Runner to house their ALPs. Within the ALP, various components of the child's education are described such as supplemental curriculum, activities for enrichment, and specific differentiation strategies that would help a teacher extend or expand the learning in order to reach the learning goals. Affective needs have recently been added to the ALPs and the districts are in the process of refining this element to best meet the needs of the students. The ALPs are reviewed annually with the goal of initiating a smooth transition to the next grade level. Student profiles are made a part of every GT student's main file, housed in the front offices.

The initial development of the ALPs includes input from gifted resource personnel, classroom teachers, the student and the parents, with a good faith effort being made to include parents all along the way. Students write their own goals, with the help of teachers and/or gifted personnel to make the goals measurable, and to ensure curriculum alignment in the classroom. After all coordination is complete in writing the ALPs, teachers work with students and give support to help them meet their learning goals. Parents are made aware of the ALPs through various means such as parent-teacher conferences, copies sent, phone calls, etc. Many districts are reviewing their process of ALP development, with the goal of creating standards-based ALPs, as guided by CDE. In the middle and upper grades, many districts are reviewing their ALP process, and considering blending their ALPs with ICAPs to incorporate post-secondary readiness discussions and create goals for students upon completion of high school. Currently, our high school ALPs do include goals that align with post-secondary plans.

AU Target/s:

1. All districts will provide evidence of parent engagement in the ALP.
2. All districts will create measurable standards-based ALPs, and also include a minimum of one affective goal (personal, social, communication, leadership and/or cultural competencies) for the student.
3. Appropriate assessment data will be included in the ALP, to show evidence of programming options aligning with data.

Each district in the Mountain BOCES AU has developed similar procedures for implementing ALPs. Classroom teachers have access to the ALP via technology or with a copy in the student's classroom file. Teachers and gifted personnel work together to develop plans and to discuss differentiation techniques to help the student reach learning goals. Teachers support gifted students by using multiple resources to create more depth and complexity within the classroom environment. During parent-teacher conferences the ALP is reviewed and updated. Most of the districts review the ALPs annually and sometimes biannually.

AU Target/s:

1. Mountain BOCES will provide an opportunity for Depth & Complexity training and/or help find training opportunities for gifted personnel in each district, to help implement this throughout the region.
2. All districts will develop and/or provide evidence of their transition plan between grade levels that include students, teachers, and parents.

## Programming

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Mountain BOCES districts provide a variety of programming options for gifted students from grades K-12. Some districts have dedicated FTE for gifted students and other districts have FTE that have part of their day designated for gifted education. Structure for gifted programming include pullout and push-in (including co-teaching and coaching), enrichment opportunities with diverse content options, after-school programming, summer enrichment, subject acceleration in area of strength, contests and competitions, honors and AP courses, post-secondary courses, mentor programming, and concurrent enrollment. Within the regular classroom various differentiation strategies are used such as flexible grouping, curriculum compacting, cluster grouping, independent study, content acceleration, etc. Differentiation is based on a student's area(s) of strength, ALP goals, and/or is data driven. All districts are in the process of incorporating ICAP into the student body education, with increasing pre-collegiate and/or pre-advanced placement support, and also weaving the ALP and ICAP goals.

At the elementary level, common teaching techniques are pull-out, push-in, enrichment within the classroom, flexible grouping, curriculum compacting, after-school programming and summer enrichment. In the middle school students are offered enrichment opportunities within the classroom, flexible grouping, cluster grouping, after-school programming, summer enrichment, and content acceleration. The most common form of service in the high school is cluster grouping, flexible grouping, independent study, content acceleration, concurrent enrollment and AP level courses. All levels incorporate the student ALP goals into the learning experience.

Underachievement is reflected in the affective goals of a student's ALP, with parents, counselors, teachers, and the GT Coordinator all involved.

Each year upon completion of a grade level, ALPs are reviewed and articulated to the next level of teaching staff, with the opportunity for collaboration from present staff, future staff, students, parents, counselors and gifted personnel. Affective guidance is provided by counselors, teachers, and gifted personnel, and the goal of the ALP being to help the student develop and reach goals in their area(s) of strength, with interests and learning styles considered. ALPs will be standards-based and data driven in the future, with education and training being provided by Mountain BOCES at the network meetings. Content options for students will become more diverse as Depth & Complexity becomes integrated throughout the districts.

#### AU Target/s:

1. Mountain BOCES will provide support and direction on differentiation techniques and strategies with three to four Gifted Education Leadership Team (GELT) meetings per year.
2. Mountain BOCES will provide standards-based ALP training/support for districts during network meetings each year, or during GELT meetings.
3. Districts will participate in Depth & Complexity training and help support each other via GELT meetings, network meetings, etc.

## Evaluation and Accountability Procedures

Mountain BOCES utilizes HB 16-1440 Flexibility in UIP Submission that is available to all schools, by submitting a UIP Addendum every other year when individual districts meet the required status. Each district in the AU currently prepares their own UIP addendum based on their local district data. Each district disaggregates their achievement and growth data using various methods, such as the reporting features in Alpine Achievement, etc. Data is analyzed based on the whole group, and smaller groups of gender, ethnicity, ELL, special needs, and specific areas of GT. When the numbers are below 16, districts look at individual students for evidence of growth, without reporting this to the public.



Gifted program self-evaluation is unique in each districts but includes surveys to parents, staff, and students, and GT team discussions on improvement. Reporting to stakeholders also varies but includes things like information published on websites and newspapers, and reports to school boards. Affective growth is measured with interviews during the ALP updating process. Many districts are in the process of identifying strategies and instruments for progress monitoring of affective goals.

#### AU Target/s:

1. Train teachers and administrators to conduct efficient data dialogues regarding disaggregated test data results for gifted students in order to improve instruction.
2. Train teachers and administrators to used standards-based data to measure academic growth and match student needs to programming.
3. Develop and implement tools and procedures for monitoring affective growth.
4. Implement and share processes and procedures for self-evaluation of the gifted program.

## Personnel

All of the districts provide at least one gifted education director, coordinator, and/or resource teacher to facilitate gifted programming (full or part time). Many districts have committed personnel to provide leadership, staff development, and resources to the teachers of gifted education students in each building. Some districts within the Mountain BOCES have dedicated FTE for teachers of the gifted. In specific districts, professional development and coaching are provided at many levels, from individual teachers to an entire district. Some districts provide professional development to ensure personnel are knowledgeable in the characteristics of gifted students and differentiated instructions methods, such as Depth & Complexity. In some districts, administrators evaluate teachers on their use of specific differentiation techniques that address gifted learner needs. Paraprofessionals are not funded with gifted grant funds and are not the sole instruction providers for GT students, in any district.

Mountain BOCES provides a .3 Gifted Education Director who is responsible for the AU Comprehensive Program Plan and provides gifted education professional development for district GT leaders and coordinators through GELT (gifted education leadership team) meetings. Other professional development is provided for districts through the NW PD network coordinated by the Mountain BOCES GERC (gifted education resource consultant). All districts are regularly invited to participate in this professional development network.

#### AU Target(s):

1. All districts will provide opportunities to access local professional development, such as Depth & Complexity, through GT network meetings, on-line training and webinars, and individual district trainings across districts, to support improvement and acquisition of knowledge related to the needs of gifted students.
2. All districts will increase the number of highly qualified personnel in gifted education, by supporting teacher efforts for an endorsement in gifted education or by hiring teachers with an advanced degree (or endorsement) in gifted education.

## Budget

An annual budget plan (proposed budget) is submitted to the state which reflects state funding and individual district contributions to gifted education. The state funds are only used for salaries of licensed/endorsed personnel, professional development for gifted education, programming that



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supports ALPs, materials to support gifted programming, administrative costs limiting expenditures for equipment, administrative accounting costs, and technology not to exceed collectively 20% of the annual GT budget.

AU Target(s):

1. All districts will collaborate to fund and host consultant training, professional development opportunities and network meetings with gifted education representatives from each district.
2. All districts will develop a budget based on the needs to improve and implement gifted education in the Administrative Unit.

## Reports

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Throughout the Mountain BOCES region, all districts have UIP Gifted Addendums on file with the Department of Education and meet the requirements of accreditation in regards to gifted student achievement. Within the addendum, disparities in GT data are addressed, and instructional goals are created to produce needed GT growth. Each district also reports number and percent of identified students in their district, with a break down of all the special categories such as grade level, gender and ethnicity, free and reduced lunch, twice exceptionality, with the area of giftedness identified, and GT students served through early access when applicable. This is all part of the Data Pipeline for the October count. Qualified personnel is also reported.

Mountain BOCES does have a budget proposal on file with the Department of Education in regards to gifted funds throughout the districts. This is followed by an Adjusted Budget and an Expended Budget each year, which is submitted by Mountain BOCES through the DMS (Data Management System). All funding from the state for gifted and talented services flows through Mountain BOCES with half going to the districts early in the school year and the last half being sent out, after individual districts have reported how they have spent their funds for the year. The funds are focused on salaries for appropriately certified, endorsed or licensed personnel serving gifted students, professional development related to gifted education, programming options specific to gifted students and outlined on advanced learning plans, supplies and materials used in instructional programming for gifted education, and technology and equipment necessary for the education of gifted students, not to exceed 15% of the total amount of the annual state allocation. Many of the Mountain BOCES school districts' contributions far exceed what the state contributes. This is handled separately from the Universal Screening/Personnel funds. These funds also flow through Mountain BOCES and is dispersed to individual districts after they have sent in receipts from purchasing universal screening materials. Mountain BOCES does have a .3 GT Director, with a GT endorsement, funded by the Personnel Grant.

## Record Keeping

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Mountain BOCES and all districts within do keep financial records in accordance with principals of governmental accounting. An inventory is maintained of all equipment for which funds are received. Districts report annually to Mountain BOCES on how their GT funds are spent, showing they are in accordance with appropriate use of funds.

ALP documents are part of the student's cumulative record, and all records and ALPs are maintained, retained and destroyed consistent with the ongoing system of student record keeping established in the AU. Individually identifiable student records that are collected and/or stored electronically are



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held to current state law and FERPA regulations protecting the privacy of students. Transfer of files to other districts are done in a way that ensures reliability.

## Procedures for Disagreements

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Some of the Mountain BOCES districts have a procedure in place for resolving specific GT disagreements with parents/guardians, or students in regard to identification, programming, and ALPs. The districts did collaborate to create procedures for disagreements specifically in regards to early access, which is posted on the Mountain BOCES website. It includes components such as how a parent applies for early access, timeline and requirement, and a method for dispute resolution. If a parent wishes, they may dispute a decision made on early access by filling out the Dispute Resolution Request form, which is available on the Mountain BOCES website. They are encouraged to review the Early Access Procedures, prior to submitting. Upon receipt of dispute requests, the Mountain BOCES GT Coordinator will review the complaints, and arrange a meeting with the parents and local school district personnel involved. The district has final authority in rendering a decision.

AU Target(s):

1. Mountain BOCES will collaborate to develop procedures for resolving GT disagreements which will include: a method to express issues and concerns, means to discuss disagreements in a timely manner, notice of the decision giving rise to the dispute, and opportunity to be heard before decision is implemented.
2. Each district will adopt these procedures or develop their own, and will make sure the process is easily accessible to all stakeholders.

## Monitoring

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All districts in Mountain BOCES comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations regarding the program plan, identification and special education services for gifted students, or make a good faith effort based on funding. Mountain BOCES will review the plan each year, monitor progress, and report progress, using the Colorado Gifted Education Review on the DMS. Districts will report on annual enrollment and performance, and collaborate to create annual goals or follow-up activities to correct areas of non-compliance.