



Administrative Unit

Administrative Unit name: Northwest Colorado BOCES - 64123	Region: Northwest	
Name of Executive Director: Paul McCarty Name of Lead District Gifted Education Director: Vera Turner	Email: vera.turner@nwboces.org	
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Number of Districts within Administrative Unit:	
Member District	Superintendent Name
East Grand School District	Frank Reeves
Hayden School District	Phil Kasper
North Park School District	Robert Fulton
South Routt School District	Darci Mohr
Steamboat Springs School District	Brad Meeks
West Grand School District	Mike Page

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

Family Partnership

Communicating with families regarding the gifted education of their children is of utmost importance. Many of the districts use district or NW BOCES websites to provide helpful information about the identification process, programming options, Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs), student achievement, and how to be involved in post-secondary planning. One district has an electronic handbook attached to their site. Since websites are electronic, they can be translated into many languages to help meet the diverse needs of our area’s families. Many districts use an electronic system that can translate ALPs into a myriad of languages, as well.



Programming is determined using a tiered system of support in order to individually match the students needs with instruction and opportunities. Districts have a range of programming options including Advanced Placement courses, concurrent enrollment courses, independent study opportunities, STEM and STEAM options, online opportunities, and various contests.

ALP meetings are held annually and usually in person. At that time, students, parents, teachers, and gifted education personnel meet to develop annual goals, discuss programming options, and review student achievement. Periodically, such as at Parent-Teacher Conferences or via report cards, parents are updated on their child's progress toward these goals.

Some of the districts have gifted education parent groups that are already in progress or are planning to start. Districts provide translators for the most common languages within their community so that all parents can participate in these groups. These meetings provide a conduit for parent education about giftedness, concurrent enrollment, and post-secondary opportunities.

In addition to parent group meetings, most of the districts have College Fairs where families can speak with representatives from colleges, get information, and ask questions. College and career options are addressed with parents and students during each year's registration process, as well.

Next Steps: As NW BOCES moves forward, we will strive establish parent groups and gifted education handbooks in all districts.

Definition of “Gifted Student”

NW BOCES uses the state's definition of giftedness. **This definition as the cornerstone for all other program elements in this plan.**

Definition of Gifted

Gifted Children means those persons between the ages of four and twenty-one whose aptitude or competence in abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment in one or more domains are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. Gifted children are hereafter referred to as gifted students. Children under five who are gifted may also be provided with early childhood special educational services.

Gifted students include gifted students with disabilities (i.e. twice-exceptional) and students with exceptional abilities or potential from all socio-economic 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*

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

Properly identifying students from all demographic groups, such as low socio-economic, twice-exceptional, and English Language Learners, in all areas of giftedness is a priority for NW BOCES.

The first step in the identification process is the referral. We have several referral strategies in place to help uncover gifted potential.



One referral strategy that districts use is a universal cognitive screening process. This screener is usually administered at two grade levels each year. To enable students who are in traditionally underserved populations to express their potential, screeners include a non-verbal section that helps to level the playing field. **Students who score at or near the 95th percentile are then considered for further evaluation.**

In addition to a universal screener, districts monitor data on qualifying assessments in order to find students who are scoring at or near the gifted range: **95th percentile or above and/or an exceptional rating; however, not meeting criteria on a single assessment does not prevent further consideration for identification.** As with the cognitive screener, students who score in this range are then considered for further evaluation. Other referral methods include teacher, parent, and student referrals. **A determination of eligibility is rendered within 30 days of a referral. Parents are contacted via email, mail, or phone call**

Qualification is based on the state's criteria in order to ensure portability and equity within Colorado. A body of evidence that includes qualitative and quantitative data is collected from teachers, parents, and the student before a determination is made. **Districts use assessments, such as observation scales, academic tests, cognitive ability assessments and performance rubrics, that align with all areas of giftedness. Districts also administer non-verbal assessments that help reduce the factors that can negatively impact underrepresented populations.**

A team that includes gifted education personnel reviews the data and determines if the student qualifies in one or more areas. Notification of final determination is provided to stakeholders as quickly as possible and next steps are determined. Students who did not qualify are monitored for future identification. **Students who qualified begin the ALP process which includes a meeting to help parents understand how their child met the state's criteria, to develop the initial ALP, and to discuss how the ALP will be reviewed.**

When students who have been identified as gifted in other districts enroll in one of our districts, their plan and data are reviewed per the state guidelines, i.e. reevaluation or acceptance of the former district's determination. **If the body of evidence is incomplete, the receiving district consults with the sending district, parents, and the student regarding reevaluation. Parents are notified of the determination within 60 days. Likewise, when a student leaves one of our districts, the qualifying evidence is transferred to the new district.**

Next Steps: One of the areas for improvement for the state as well as for NW BOCES is to improve our identification process so that 1) the demographics of gifted students more closely match the demographics of the general education population, and 2) students are being identified in all areas of giftedness. Currently, identification is mostly in academic areas and we intend to expand the process to find students who are gifted in the talent areas, as well.

Advanced Learning Plan Content, Procedures and Responsibilities

ALPs are developed/updated collaboratively with teachers, students, and parents each year and include a current profile of student achievement, student interests/activities, and student involvement in the community. These meetings ensure that all stakeholders have a common understanding of available programming that will enhance students' areas of strength, interests, academic needs, and affective needs. Goals align with tiered instruction and may include differentiation, supplemental or intensive programming depending on the needs of students.

Teachers, students, and parents are given a hard copy of the ALP and/or they have access to the plan electronically and signatures serve as documentation of participation.

Many of the districts write standards-based goals for academic and affective needs and other districts are moving in that direction. Academic goals are matched to students' areas of strength and include strategies, supplemental curriculum, and activities to help achieve the goals. Affective goals



address a strength or an area of concern that is standing between the students and their potential, such as lack of leadership skills. Although the state does not have affective standards, districts use social-emotional standards from other sources such as the National Association for Gifted Children or American School Counselor Association. Most districts report on progress toward goals during parent-teacher conferences either through the progress monitoring section of the ALP or through the classroom teacher.

When applicable, transition information between school levels is either included in the ALP or provided by some other means, such as a letter or a special meeting. **ALPs are managed within each school's electronic cumulative record/data management system and are automatically transferred along with other student data at the end of each school year. As students progress from one grade level to the next or from one school level to the next, ALPs are transferred with them through this data management system.**

At the secondary level, students prepare Individual College and Academic Plans (ICAP) to help them transition to post-secondary aspirations. Although the districts do not blend the ALP with the ICAP, the two documents complement and inform each other to help students plan their futures.

Programming

Programming is chosen during the ALP development process. Programming varies among districts, school levels, and grade levels but the student is always at the heart of the process. Every effort is made to support students' interests, goals, and their areas of giftedness with appropriate affective and educational options.

At the elementary level, the most common form of support is differentiation within the general education curriculum. In some districts, differentiation is eased by cluster grouping advanced students. In addition to differentiation, all districts offer some type of extra-curricular activities such as Destination Imagination.

At the middle school level, some districts provide accelerated and/or compacting options in addition to differentiation. One district has an intervention time to work with gifted students daily in their areas of giftedness. During this intervention time, they also work on their affective needs. As at the elementary level, all districts offer extra-curricular activities, competitions, and enrichment opportunities such as clubs, competitions, and field trips. In addition to district competitions, NW BOCES hosts a Model United Nations competition for middle school students from the northwest region every year.

While differentiation continues to take place, high school students can enroll in concurrent enrollment courses, Advanced Placement courses, and even an EMT program at one school. Students can participate in many competitions, such as the Knowledge Bowl, and can join clubs, such as the National Honor Society. Students receive guidance from counselors and/or advisors on which activities would best suit their immediate and post-secondary needs.

At all districts, students receive affective needs instruction from qualified personnel in the general education setting. Some districts offer additional support for gifted students in "lunch bunch" groups or some other type of setting.

Individual schools have problem-solving teams that address student achievement gaps. Typically these teams address students whose scores fall below grade-level expectations. For students who are gifted, however, these teams address students whose scores fall below ability-based expectations. The teams contact the student, parents, and teachers in an effort to uncover the root cause of the underachievement and then put interventions in place to remedy the situation.



Evaluation and Accountability Procedures

Districts have a Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) Gifted Education Addendum either filed or in the process of being filed with the state. Student data is analyzed to find trends in academic achievement. In districts that are large enough, trends among demographic groups are also analyzed. Identified trends among the gifted students are then compared to identified trends in the general student population to determine if the trend is divergent or convergent with the district's general population.

Once this determination is made, goals are written for the divergent trends and, possibly, the convergent trends that have not been addressed in the general UIP. These goals help guide curricular decisions and they are monitored for effectiveness using embedded progress tools such as MAP assessments or classroom formative assessments.

Student affective needs are addressed during the annual ALP meetings but, on a whole, are not monitored for progress by the majority of the districts yet.

Next Steps: A systematic plan for monitoring affective needs will be an area for improvement for our districts. Another area for improvement is collection of data from stakeholders, analysis of that data, and reporting of that data back to the stakeholders. In the future, surveys - or some other type of feedback - will be sought from teachers, students, and parents annually. And, as stated previously, we will strive to form parent advisory groups within each district.

Personnel

NW BOCES employs a part time gifted education administrator (currently .3 but striving for .5) who is endorsed in gifted education to oversee the gifted education program for NW BOCES. In addition, districts have designated gifted education personnel (some of whom are endorsed in gifted education) who work directly with students and/or oversee the gifted education program within their districts/schools. Paraprofessionals are not the sole instructional provider for gifted students although they may have a support role.

Professional development in gifted education is provided by NW BOCES, CDE, and individual districts.

At least one representative from NW BOCES attends each training and is responsible for bringing the information back to the other districts during our Gifted Education Committee meetings. Recently, a group of teachers at one district became trainers in Depth and Complexity and they have developed a plan for training their district by the end of 2016-2017. Many districts send personnel and/or parents to conferences such as Colorado Association of Gifted Children or Beyond Giftedness.

The gifted education administrator shares information regarding GT endorsement opportunities and degree programs offered by Colorado universities and colleges with the GT Committee. The committee members forward the information to staff within their districts. In addition, NW BOCES procures college credit for many in-house workshops/trainings in gifted education.

In reference to the bulleted point of qualified teachers:

?Personnel instructing gifted students in the core academic areas meet federal requirements for highly qualified teachers

I'm not sure how to respond to this bullet since this federal requirement has not been in effect since July 1st, 2016.



Budget

Each district prepares an annual budget that is reported by NW BOCES. The budget includes the funds that are received through the state allocation as well as funds that are contributed by each district. The funds may be used on allowable expenses such as to pay stipends or salaries for gifted education personnel, professional development opportunities, materials to help with the education of gifted students, testing materials, some technology, and other items as appropriate. NW BOCES "flows through" the funds to individual districts. The districts then decide how to leverage the funds in a way that makes sense for their individual situations. Most districts use a collaborative process to determine how to utilize the funding by gathering feedback from gifted education personnel and sometimes from parent groups.

This comment does not seem to align with any of the Key Requirements listed above:

Comments: Elaborate on collaboration of funding between districts and NWBOCES to support gifted education.

Am I missing something?

Reports

The districts in NW BOCES update the Comprehensive Program Plan through the development of the UIP Gifted Addendum. The addendum contains an analysis of disaggregated (when the population is large enough) gifted student achievement and growth in order to identify trends that may be convergent or divergent from the general school population. These trends are monitored for improvement using formative and summative assessments.

NW BOCES also files all budget reports in a timely manner to ensure compliance with state rules and regulations **and is in compliance with with the requirements of accreditation.** Student information in the Data Pipeline is as accurate as possible and includes disaggregated information regarding students who have been identified as gifted. When applicable, the information also includes Preschool students who are being served through Early Access. NW BOCES has a designated gifted education administrator who coordinates the districts.

Record Keeping

Financial records are kept in accordance with principles of governmental accounting. If the districts purchase equipment with the allocated funds, an inventory of the equipment is maintained in accordance with principles of governmental accounting.

Records regarding gifted students are kept in accordance with governmental guidelines. **ALPs are a part of the students' electronic cumulative records.** ALP information is shared on an as-needed basis to protect the privacy of the students. ALPs are stored in a secure location and gifted student records are maintained/destroyed in accordance with the AU's system for the general student population. Individually identifiable student information is masked when ALPs are used for training purposes.

Procedures for Disagreements

NW BOCES established a process for dispute resolution for all districts:



Gifted Education Dispute Resolution Process

While great care is taken to insure that a proper decision is made on behalf of all interested parties in the education of a child, parents may make a written request for dispute resolution pertaining to a district's decision related to their student's Gifted Education request regarding programming, services, and identification. Prior to a written request, parents must demonstrate that there was discussion with appropriate building personnel. A recommended communication procedure would include discussion with the classroom teacher, district GT personnel, the building principal and the superintendent prior to a written request to the NW BOCES Executive Director. Such request shall be made in writing and addressed to the Executive Director of NW BOCES fourteen (14) calendar days after receiving a decision letter from the district.

The NW BOCES Executive Director will collect the information from the district used to render their decision and from the parents supporting their dispute.

Only if the child has met the formal requirement of a solid Body of Evidence evaluation will the Executive Director arrange a meeting with the parents and the district. The purpose of this meeting is to allow the parents to share their perspective and for the district to reconsider their decision for Gifted Education services. The participants in this meeting may include additional school personnel, but must include at a minimum, the parent(s), Executive Director, and local district gifted education director who has the authority to fully reconsider the decision.

The district has the final authority in rendering a decision. Under law, school board policy, and this procedure, the Executive Director has no authority unilaterally to order a school district to accept a child for Gifted Education services.

Monitoring

NW BOCES is in compliance with applicable state and federal laws/regulations regarding the Comprehensive Program Plan, the identification of gifted students, special education services for gifted students who also have a disability, and updating performance and enrollment information through the UIP Gifted Education Addendum filed by each district.

Next Steps: In May, 2017, NW BOCES will be reviewed by the Colorado Gifted Education Review (CGER) team. The results of the review will help determine areas in which we are out of compliance. Areas of non-compliance will be addressed through an improvement timeline developed by the Gifted Education Committee and other stakeholders.