

# BVSD Gifted Education

Supporting exceptional learners K-12 across all content!

## Gifted education strategies work for all learners in the classroom!

TIP: When planning, design each lesson for the most advanced learners in your class(es) first, and then plan how to provide scaffolding and supports for all other learner needs. This sets the bar high for all learners. Plus, it is much easier to differentiate in one direction, than to plan for the universal learners at/near grade level standards and also having to simultaneously differentiate in two directions (supports for struggling learners and advanced learners). Planning for the most advanced learners first is a great habit and approach to develop as an educator in BVSD. (Based on *How to Differentiate Instruction in Academically Diverse Classrooms 3rd Edition* by C.A. Tomlinson and *Universal Design for Learning* by A. Meyer, D. Rose, et al.)

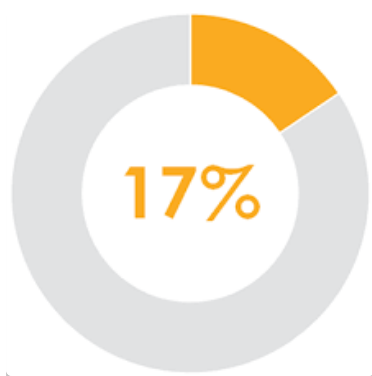


## Don't all kids have gifts and talents?

All kids have gifts... but not all kids are "gifted." This is a specific identification for students who have exceptional learning and social-emotional needs. In BVSD, we identify students as gifted based on a body of evidence that includes a variety of norm-referenced ability and achievement assessments and observation tools. A student identified as gifted has demonstrated measurable advanced cognitive ability and/or talent. These students' brains are wired differently, which allows them to learn and perform differently than same-age peers. This also means that they might have different social-emotional needs, such as challenges with perfectionism, asynchrony, intensities, and sometimes executive function. Gifted and talented students are exceptional and require differentiated learning experiences. Historically, the needs of gifted students have been misunderstood and overlooked in the classroom; however, in BVSD we are making positive changes toward providing better services for gifted students. When we make connections with them and get to understand their unique needs and challenges, gifted students can thrive in school and truly develop their talents.

## *GT services are required by BVSD, CDE, and law*

The Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA) requires that educators provide services for gifted students. Click the button above for more information.



### Will gifted students be in your class?

**Yes!** In BVSD, gifted-identified students make up the largest subpopulation at 17% (as of spring 2023). That's more than double the state average! Students who are gifted are in every part of education - in all grade levels, all content, and all service needs. There are gifted English learners, gifted students with disabilities, gifted students from every socioeconomic and demographic background, and gifted students in every school. You will have gifted students in your class, so it's important that you understand how to meet their needs.

### Who are these gifted learners?

**There are six profiles of gifted learners** (profiles of gifted learners theory by Betts & Kercher):



**Successful** - This type of gifted learner typically follows rules, does what is required to earn the grade but might not go beyond without prompting, tends to be a perfectionist, avoids risks, and needs to be challenged.

**Challenging** - This type of gifted learner typically is a creative/divergent thinker who might challenge rules and authority, have low self-esteem, and/or be defiant or uninterested if not appropriately engaged and challenged.

**Underground** - This type of gifted learner typically might conceal or deny their abilities and talents, feel withdrawn or refuse to take part, let their grades/performance plummet, struggle with insecurity, and needs patience and understanding.

**At-Risk** - This type of gifted learner typically might have poor self concept, feel angry, resentful, depressed, and/or combative, have poor attendance, get poor grades, are at risk of dropping out, and need patience and understanding.

**Twice/Multi Exceptional** - This type of gifted learner has a diagnosed learning disability (and has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 plan) and typically might feel powerless and frustrated when educators only focus on their deficits but not their strengths.

**Autonomous** - This type of gifted learner typically has a desire to learn, is internally motivated/driven,

A vertical collage of office supplies. At the top is a yellow stapler. Below it is a close-up of a white computer keyboard with keys like 'R', 'D', and 'X' visible. Under the keyboard is a piece of blue grid paper with a red tab. At the bottom are several pens in blue, red, and green, and a spiral notebook.

[Click here for more details.](#)

## ECEA Areas of Gifted Identification (multiple pathways)



## General Intellectual Ability

Exceptional ability in both verbal and non-verbal reasoning across fields of study; often characterized by advanced vocabulary, abstract/complex thinking, and/or problem solving.



## Specific Academic Aptitudes

Advanced learning ability in specific academic content area(s): reading, writing, world language, science, social studies, and/or math.



## Specific Talent Aptitudes

Advanced learning ability in specific talent area(s):  
music, visual arts,  
performing arts (theater,  
speech, debate), dance,  
psychomotor (physical  
ability), leadership, and/or  
creative/productive thinking.

## Project Talent

Project Talent is our framework for identifying, developing, and celebrating student talents beyond the academic domains. We encourage all teachers to look for and support student strengths and talents. Click the button above to learn more.

## How do we identify gifted and talented students?

Anyone can refer any K-12 student at any time for gifted identification evaluation. The referral can come from teachers, families, counselors, administrators, paraprofessionals, community members, and even the students themselves. If you notice or suspect advanced learning ability and/or talent performance in your class, then contact your school's [Gifted & Talented Advisor \(GTA\)/GT Teacher](#).





who can get the identification process started. You may also contact the BVSD Gifted Education department (see below for contact details).

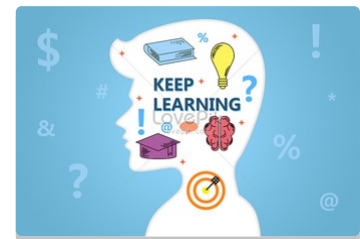
## What are Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs) and who provides services?

By law, every gifted-identified student has an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP), which requires at least one achievement goal and one affective (social-emotional) goal, updated yearly. Every educator who works with a gifted student is responsible for knowing the ALP goals and when applicable providing differentiation to support the gifted student's advanced learning needs and to help them reach their goals. The ALPs are housed in Frontline (student information platform). While most schools have a [Gifted & Talented Advisor \(GTA\)/GT Teacher](#) who oversees the ALP process, the teacher should be involved in helping to set the ALP goals as the teacher is the primary service provider.

That's right! **You are the primary gifted education service provider!** In BVSD, we have an inclusion model, which means most classrooms and content areas have various students with mixed-abilities. Know each of your gifted student's identification area(s) and provide appropriately challenging learning experiences for them in these areas.

## How do I provide advanced differentiation and a continuum of learning?

Students who are gifted have the right to learn something new everyday. If a gifted student has reached grade level standards, that's great! Be sure to keep their learning going through advanced differentiation. Every student - whether gifted-identified or not - is on a continuum of learning. A student is never done learning. Gifted and advanced learning needs are part of the BVSD Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) process and should be considered along with other students' learning needs.



### Gifted and advanced differentiation includes, but is not limited to...

- **flexible grouping** (using data to group and regroup students based on learning needs, abilities, social-emotional support, etc.) TIP: Research-backed best practices encourage grouping gifted learners together when possible so they have similar-minded/ability peers from which to learn.
- **alternate assignments and/or products** (allowing gifted students to demonstrate their learning in different ways, if the standard assignment/product is not appropriately challenging)
- **project-based learning** (designing an actively engaging, personally-meaningful, complex project throughout the learning unit - not just at the end)
- **higher stages of [Bloom's Revised Taxonomy](#)** (moving them beyond the application stage into the analyze, evaluate, and create stages)
- **[Depth & Complexity Framework](#)** (using a combination of modes of thinking icons to make any lesson/unit/learning experience appropriately challenging) TIP: Teach the students how to use the icons and they can self-differentiate their own learning experiences!
- **compacting** (condensing/modifying/streamlining the curriculum to reduce repetition and keep the learning going at a faster pace)

- **subject acceleration** (placing a student in an above-grade level course, such as accelerated math)
- **grade-level acceleration** (grade skipping)

For more information, [click here](#) and also [click here](#).

## How can I keep my own learning about gifted education going?

The BVSD Gifted Education department provides ongoing professional development opportunities throughout the year. Examples of what we offer include: monthly virtual sessions during district-led Late Start Wednesdays, online asynchronous multi-week courses for credit in the fall and winter, presentations from local and national gifted education experts, and more! We are also available to come into your school to share information during staff meetings, teacher-team meetings, and/or individual teacher coaching. We update [our website](#) frequently with opportunities and resources. And you are encouraged to join our email listserv so you can receive our newsletters and announcements. Email [Doug.Alexander@bvsd.org](mailto:Doug.Alexander@bvsd.org) to request to join the listserv.



### BVSD Gifted Education Department Team

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