San Luis Valley Board of Cooperative Services
Gifted Education Guidelines for Referral and Gifted Determination Process

Definition

SLV BOCES has adopted the state definition of "gifted student". This definition is stated on the SLV BOCES website as well as the Gifted Identification Handbook, which is also posted on the AU gifted website. This definition is used as the basis for the implementation of the gifted education program plan elements.

San Luis Valley Board of Cooperative Services (SLV BOCES) defines gifted students as persons between the ages of five and twenty-one whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special provisions to meet their educational needs. Children under five who qualify for Early Access may also be provided with gifted programming. Outstanding talents are present in students from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in diverse areas of human endeavor. Gifted students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these areas:

- general intellectual ability
- specific academic aptitude
- creative, productive thinking
- leadership abilities
- visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor abilities

SLV BOCES strives for representation of gifted and talented students from all groups in the local population. The districts consider the impact of poverty, ethnic/cultural diversity, multiple exceptionalities (twice-exceptional), rural demographics, and gender in the identification process.

Steps in the Gifted Determination Process

Universal Screening/Referrals

Students may be brought to the attention of the District Gifted Education Coordinator through referral by teachers, parents, self, peers, or others working closely with the student, previous school, or universal screening of all students.

San Luis Valley school districts conduct universal screening of all students in an early elementary grade level (K-2) determined by each district. The San Luis Valley BOCES recommends that each district administer another universal screening at one grade level in middle school, at the district's discretion.

The district selects the tool used for the universal screening. Quantitative tools are used by SLV districts for universal screening. These include but are not limited to the following valid and reliable tools/assessments:

- Cognitive Abilities Test Form 7 (CogAt 7)
- Naglierli Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT 3)

Gathering Information

When evidence exists from the universal screening and/or classroom observations that more evaluation should be done, the Gifted Coordinator obtains parental permission for testing and coordinates the gathering of a complete Body of Evidence (BOE) for students. The BOE 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 for the purpose of developing appropriate programming options for the student.

In the San Luis Valley the BOE for students with academic aptitudes should include:
(Examples of instruments in each category are listed. This list is not inclusive and may be extended to other valid and reliable instruments.)

- Cognitive Test
    - Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT 7)
    - Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT 3)
    - Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (K-BIT 2)
    - Standardized ability testing administered by a psychologist
- Achievement Test
    - Northwest Evaluation Association Testing (NWEA MAPS)
    - Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS)
    - Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA)
    - Renaissance Learning – STAR
    - Galileo K-12 Online – (Complete Assessment)
    - IOWA test
- Behavior Observation Scale
    - Gifted Evaluation Scale (GES-4)
    - Gifted Rating Scale (GRS-P for preschool and kindergarten GRS-S for grades 1-8)
    - Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS-2)
- Parent and Student Input
    - Questionnaires
    - Interviews
- Performance Observation
    - Results from academic competitions at the state and national level
    - Information from targeted interventions
    - Portfolio
    - ACCESS

For students whose strengths are in the talent areas additional pieces of evidence for the BOE include:

- Performance Observation or Portfolio
    - Ohio Department of Education Rubrics in the Talent Areas
    - Results from juried competitions
    - Information from targeted interventions

- Talent Ability or Creativity Tests
    - Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT)

- Profile of Creative Abilities (PCA)

Decision-Making

Each district uses identification assessment and review by a team to identify gifted children. The team uses a body of evidence upon which to base the determination of giftedness. A review team should include at least one person trained or endorsed in gifted identification and programming. The review team collects input from all educators working with the student and the student's parents.

The review team examines the body of evidence and may make one or more of the following determinations:

- move to formal gifted identification
- select new tools to collect additional data
- identify student for a talent pool with targeted interventions
- determine data does not support identification at this time
- determine a student may need to be referred for special education assessment in addition to his/her gifted identification (twice-exceptional students)

The 95th percentile ranking and above describes the criteria for demonstration of exceptionality on a norm referenced standardized test or observation scale. Students must demonstrate this criterion on a standardized nationally normed tool. Distinguished/advanced performance levels may describe exceptionality on qualitative tools, portfolios, performance assessments, and criterion-referenced tests. ACCESS scores may be used to demonstrate performance when a student has increased their overall lcore by two levels in one year. Exiting the EL program within three years of beginning the English Language acquisition process may also be considered as a performance assessment.

It is recommended that students scoring in the 80th to 85th percentile on standardized tests be considered for further review in the gifted determination process.

Using these processes ensures portability of gifted identification throughout the San Luis Valley and the state of Colorado. Students' specific areas of academic aptitude and/or talent as defined in Colorado's Exceptional Children Education Act (ECEA) 12.01 (16) is specified during the identification process.

The district has 30 school days after a referral to determine whether a student will continue with formal identification assessment or will receive talent pool designation. Results of gifted determination are reported in writing to parents and recorded in the student's cumulative file. Teachers are also notified of the determination results.

Gifted identification should never be just a moment in time during the educational career path of a student. Identification is fluid and continuous throughout the school years as students may not have enough experience or talent development to meet identification criteria at the same point in time.

Writing an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP)

After formal gifted identification, an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) is developed in partnership with parents, educators, and students, when age appropriate. The ALP includes:

- student demographic information

- date of identification and area(s) of gifted identification
- ALP contact person
- student interests and goals
- extracurricular activities
- parent involvement to support giftedness
- synthesis of Body of Evidence
- programming and goals in strength or need area(s) to include at least one goal in academic/talent area and one in the social emotional/career development area
    - standards-based learning goals, academic and affective goals
    - learning structure
    - strategies/ interventions to increase rate of learning, depth and complexity of knowledge, and social-emotional development to meet goals
    - progress-monitoring of strategies/interventions' effectiveness
    - end of year progress towards the goal(s)
- signatures of participating parties: student, parents, classroom teachers, coordinator of the plan and others as needed.

In the ALP programming options are matched to student strength areas(s). The ALP is reviewed and updated at least once a year by participants of the plan. From grade level to grade level and at transition points, such as elementary to middle school and middle to high school, the student's need for programming must be clearly defined.

Use of Targeted Interventions for Strength Development

Those students demonstrating strengths on screening instruments or through referrals become part of a talent pool for strength development. A talent pool is defined as a group of students who demonstrate an advanced or even exceptional ability in a particular area, but at this time do not meet the criteria for gifted identification. Students in a talent pool are provided advanced and/or gifted programming services. As students are presented with additional levels of challenge and rigor, increased achievement may occur. A student may meet the criteria for gifted identification or extension of the identification into additional areas at a later date. Districts may determine the length a time in which a student participates in the talent pool.

Student profile information to help determine appropriate targeted interventions for these students is gathered by the District Gifted Coordinator. This information includes: students' interests, educational background, and motivation. It is gathered from parents, students, and teachers using initial Response to Intervention (RtI)/ Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) process.

Appropriate interventions may be determined using RtI/MTSS or through a meeting of the District Gifted Coordinator and the classroom teacher(s). Examples of targeted interventions in student's strength areas include:

- increase in depth and complexity of knowledge in curriculum and instructional tasks
- directed independent study, mentorship, or interest center in the student's area of passion
- use of advanced, supplemental curriculum
- participation in clubs or competitions.

Targeted interventions are provided to these students through differentiation in their classrooms or through other structures: e.g. pull out, push in, extracurricular programming. Students' responses to the targeted interventions are monitored and recorded using tools such as:

- observational checklists
- anecdotal records
- work samples
- results from competitions and/or performances

Portability of Identification for Transfer Students

When records of a transfer student contain a complete Body of Evidence (BOE) and indicate that the student has previously been formally identified as gifted in Colorado, the SLV BOCES districts honor the identification and rewrite the ALP to ensure programming matched to student strengths as available in their district.

The rule for portability does not apply to students moving into Colorado from another state. The receiving school reviews the student's records for evidence of giftedness within 45 school days of start date, and then determines whether additional assessment is necessary to confirm if the student meets Colorado criteria for gifted identification. When the BOE of a transfer is incomplete, the district contacts the previous school to obtain the required information. If the required information is not available, the SLV district completes the BOE and then determines whether or not the student should be formally identified as gifted according to the SLV BOCES Gifted Identification Process. The school district will communicate to parents within 60 school days of start date about how it will meet the needs outlined in the student's ALP.

Districts should also be aware of the parameters within the Military Compact Agreement for identified gifted students moving to Colorado as a result of a military transfer.

Procedures for Disagreement

The appeals process begins when a student and/or parent are not satisfied with the decision of the team in planning the student's educational programming and/or when determining the need for gifted education services. This process involves the reconsideration of identification process, programming for gifted services and/or creation of Advanced Learning Plans.

Before a formal appeal, an attempt should be made at the building level to resolve the disagreement. The student or parent shall request a conference with the District Gifted Education Coordinator and/or building principal and the SLV BOCES Gifted Education Coordinator in order to review the student's body of evidence and to obtain a thorough explanation of the screening process and its purpose. This meeting should occur within 30 school days of the request.

If the outcome of the conference at the building level is not to the satisfaction of the student and/or parent's satisfaction, then a written appeal must be submitted to the district superintendent. The written

appeal must contain a statement of the complaint, any evidence in its support, the solution desired, the student and parent's signature, and the date the appeal is submitted. The superintendent, or his/her designee, must schedule and hold a conference with the submitting party and the SLV BOCES Gifted Education Coordinator within 10 school days of receiving the written appeal. At the end of this meeting, the decision of the superintendent is final.