AU: Denver 1, Denver - 16010

Gifted Annual Plan

School Year 26-27

Purpose and Directions

The purpose of the Gifted Education Annual Plan is to align efforts and targets to improve gifted student achievement and growth. It fulfills the obligations for accountability as defined within the Exceptional Children Education Act (ECEA) for the Gifted Education *Annual Plan*. This plan fulfills the necessary components of the UIP Addendum for gifted and will be posted by CDE in connection with the district UIP. *An AU shall submit an annual plan no later than April 15th in order to receive AU gifted education funds for the next fiscal year.*

Directions:

To fulfill requirements set forth in ECEA, each AU must identify 1 to 3 major improvement strategies annually. BOCES or Multi-District AUs may set improvement strategies for entire AU or individual districts. Based on AU identified program elements within the CPP or through the GEM process, each year the AU will identify a priority performance challenge, develop a major improvement strategy, and establish annual target(s) identified to shift practice and improve gifted student performance. Complete plans address all key requirements for each target.

No Content

Program Element - Major Improvement Strategy 1 (Required)

Select the program element your annual plan will address.

Personnel

Provide the evidence and rationale for the selection of this program element.

This can include reflection from last year's target(s), integration of feedback from monitoring, alignment to district/BOCES priorities, measurement of success of the previous actions, data analysis, policies and procedures, and/or research, etc.

“Twice Exceptional” means a student who is: 12.01(30)(a) Identified as a gifted student pursuant to Section 12.01(9) of these Rules; and 12.01(30)(b)(1) Identified as a child with a disability pursuant to Section 4.02 of these Rules; or 12.01(30)(b)(2) A qualified individual pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C.A. §794.
Denver Public Schools has identified a need to strengthen districtwide capacity to effectively identify and support twice-exceptional students. Twice-exceptional learners often demonstrate both advanced potential and disability-related needs, requiring educators to possess specialized knowledge and skills to recognize student strengths, address barriers to learning, and provide appropriately challenging programming. Feedback from school teams, families, and district staff indicates a desire for increased guidance and professional learning related to twice-exceptional learners, particularly in the areas of identification, instructional planning, affective needs, and coordination of supports across gifted education, special education, and Section 504 services.
Denver Public Schools serves approximately 12,000 identified gifted students. Of those students, approximately 320 gifted students also receive services through an Individualized Education Program and approximately 975 gifted students have a Section 504 Plan. The district's gifted magnet schools serve the highest concentrations of gifted learners, including many students with complex learning profiles who require specialized support.
Analysis of disability data among gifted students receiving special education services demonstrates the need for increased educator expertise related to twice-exceptionality. Approximately 28 percent of gifted students with

IEPs have Autism Spectrum Disorder as their primary disability. An additional 26 percent have a primary disability of Speech Language Disorder, 24 percent have a primary disability of Other Health Impairment, and 14 percent have a primary disability of Specific Learning Disability. These disability profiles highlight the importance of ensuring that educators understand the interaction between giftedness and disability and are equipped to support both talent development and disability-related needs. The diversity of student profiles also underscores the need for ongoing professional learning related to identification, affective needs, instructional strategies, executive functioning, communication differences, and social-emotional development.
The district's strategic priorities emphasize equitable access to advanced learning opportunities, inclusive practices, and improved outcomes for historically underserved student populations. Research and practitioner experience demonstrate that twice-exceptional students are frequently underidentified or underserved due to the masking effect, misconceptions about giftedness and disability, and inconsistent understanding of best practices among educators. Increasing educator knowledge and competency is essential to ensuring these students receive services that cultivate their talents while supporting their learning needs.
To address this need, Denver Public Schools will establish a full-time Twice-Exceptional Specialist position within the Gifted and Talented Department. This position will serve as a districtwide expert and coach, supporting schools in the implementation of effective practices for twice-exceptional learners. The GT Department will also expand professional learning opportunities by increasing participation in the existing Twice-Exceptional PDU course, launching a new Psychology of Gifted Students course, and providing additional districtwide professional learning sessions focused on 2E-related topics like twice exceptional characteristics, executive functioning, affective needs, instructional strategies, and equitable identification practices. These actions directly align with 12.02(2)(j) Personnel requirements in the ECEA related to supporting the acquisition and improvement of personnel knowledge and competencies through professional development focused on instruction, programming, and counseling for gifted students.

Determine the student performance priority this program element will address.

What is the current state of student performance this plan aims to address?

Twice-exceptional students often experience inconsistent access to educational experiences that appropriately develop their strengths while addressing their disabilities. Within Denver Public Schools, more than 1,200 gifted students receive either special education services through an Individualized Education Program or accommodations through a Section 504 Plan. The prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder, Speech Language Disorder, Other Health Impairment, and Specific Learning Disability among gifted students demonstrates the need for educators to possess specialized knowledge related to both giftedness and disability.
When educators lack expertise related to twice-exceptionality, students may be overlooked during identification processes, placed in learning environments that do not provide adequate challenge, or receive supports that focus primarily on remediating deficits rather than developing strengths. These conditions can contribute to underachievement, disengagement, unmet social-emotional needs, and reduced access to advanced learning opportunities.
This plan seeks to improve student outcomes by increasing the capacity of educators, school teams, and district staff to recognize and respond to the unique needs of twice-exceptional learners. Through enhanced professional learning, consultation, and districtwide expertise, schools will be better equipped to provide programming that supports both achievement and talent development for students with dual exceptionalities.

Set anticipated annual target(s) including action steps and timeline for implementation with specific benchmarks and dates.

By June 2027, Denver Public Schools will increase districtwide capacity to support twice-exceptional learners through the establishment of a dedicated Twice-Exceptional Specialist position and the expansion of professional learning opportunities focused on twice-exceptionality, gifted characteristics, affective needs, and advanced instructional practices.
The district will hire and onboard a full-time Twice-Exceptional Specialist by September 30, 2026. During the first semester, the specialist will establish a districtwide consultation model, define role responsibilities, and begin supporting schools with questions related to identification, programming, and alignment of Advanced Learning Plans, Individualized Education Programs, and Section 504 Plans.

The district will expand participation in the existing Twice-Exceptional PDU course and launch a new Psychology of Gifted Students course by January 2027. Throughout the 2026-2027 school year, the Gifted and Talented Department will provide a minimum of 2 districtwide professional learning sessions focused on twice-exceptionality and related topics like gifted characteristics and myths, affective needs, executive functioning, equitable identification practices, and instructional strategies for advanced learners with disabilities.
By June 2027, at least 200 educators will have participated in one or more professional learning opportunities related to twice-exceptional learners. In addition, the Twice-Exceptional Specialist will provide consultation and coaching support to school teams across the district and develop resources that support the implementation of effective practices for twice-exceptional students.

Explain how meeting this target will improve gifted student performance.

What is the desired state of student performance once this target is met?

Meeting this target will increase the capacity of educators to identify, understand, and effectively support twice-exceptional learners through evidence-based instructional practices, appropriate programming, and responsive social-emotional supports. As educators develop greater expertise in the characteristics of twice-exceptionality, they will be better equipped to recognize gifted potential that may be masked by a disability, provide rigorous learning opportunities that foster talent development, and implement accommodations and supports that reduce barriers to learning.
The desired state is that twice-exceptional students experience consistent access to high-quality gifted programming that recognizes both their strengths and their support needs. Students will demonstrate increased engagement in advanced learning opportunities, improved academic growth, stronger self-advocacy skills, and enhanced social-emotional well-being. Targeted school teams will more effectively align Advanced Learning Plans, Individualized Education Programs, and Section 504 Plans to create cohesive support systems that promote student success. By strengthening educator knowledge and districtwide systems of support, Denver Public Schools will improve educational outcomes, ensuring that twice-exceptional learners are able to fully develop their potential.

Identify who is responsible for implementing this years actions steps and the roles/decision making authority of each.

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1. **Responsible Person(s):**
2. **Accountable Person(s):**
3. **Consulted Person(s):**
4. **Informed Person(s):**

Responsible Person(s): The Director of Gifted and Talented, the GT leadership team, Twice-Exceptional Specialist, and Gifted and Talented Department Specialists are responsible for implementing the action steps. The Director of Gifted and Talented will oversee implementation, supervise the Twice-Exceptional Specialist, and ensure alignment with district priorities. The Twice-Exceptional Specialist will lead the development and delivery of professional learning, provide consultation and coaching to school teams, develop resources and guidance for educators, and collaborate with schools to strengthen supports for twice-exceptional students. Gifted and Talented Department Managers and Specialists will support professional learning, consultation, and implementation across their assigned regions.
Accountable Person(s): The Director of Gifted and Talented is accountable for successful implementation of this improvement strategy and has decision-making authority regarding staffing, resource allocation, professional learning priorities, and evaluation of outcomes. The Director is responsible for monitoring progress toward annual targets and ensuring compliance with ECEA requirements.
Consulted Person(s): Consultation will occur with the Executive Director of Exceptional Student Services, Special Education Directors, Exceptional Student Services Specialists, School Psychologists, Section 504

Coordinators, district Professional Learning staff, school leaders, Gifted Education Leads, and family representatives. These stakeholders will provide expertise to ensure alignment between gifted education, special education, Section 504 services, and district professional learning initiatives.
Informed Person(s): School leaders, teachers, Gifted Education Leads, Exceptional Student Services staff, district leadership, families of gifted and twice-exceptional students.

Identify the measures used to assess the success of the proposed action(s).

Quantitative and qualitative measurements, including progress monitoring along the way, Some measurements can be about completing tasks, but also include measurements that show impact.

Success will be measured through a combination of implementation, participation, and impact measures. Progress will be monitored quarterly throughout the 2026–2027 school year.
Implementation measures will include hiring and onboarding a full-time Twice-Exceptional Specialist by September 30, 2026, establishing the specialist's districtwide consultation model and annual work plan, developing guidance documents and resources for schools, launching the new Psychology of Gifted Students PDU course, and offering a minimum of 2 districtwide professional learning sessions focused on twice-exceptionality and related topics.
Participation measures will include an increase in enrollment and successful completion of the existing Twice-Exceptional PDU course, enrollment and completion of the new Psychology of Gifted Students PDU course, attendance at district professional learning sessions, and the number of schools receiving consultation and coaching from the Twice-Exceptional Specialist. Participant evaluations will be collected following each professional learning opportunity to measure educator satisfaction and perceived increases in knowledge and confidence.
Impact measures will include pre and post professional learning surveys demonstrating increased educator knowledge and confidence in identifying and supporting twice-exceptional learners. The district will also monitor the number of gifted students identified with an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Plan, trends in referrals and identification of twice-exceptional students, and evidence of improved alignment between Advanced Learning Plans, Individualized Education Programs, and Section 504 Plans. Feedback from school leaders, educators, and families will be collected to assess the effectiveness of consultation services and the extent to which professional learning has improved programming and supports for twice-exceptional students across the district.

Determine Alignment to district/BOCES priorities.

In what ways is this work convergent with other priorities within district/BOCES? If this work is divergent, what opportunities are there to connect with other work/departments/priorities so it isn’t a stand-alone initiative?

This work is directly aligned with Denver Public Schools' strategic priorities of ensuring every learner thrives through equitable access to high-quality instruction, inclusive educational practices, and strong systems of support. Increasing educator capacity to serve twice-exceptional students advances the district's commitment to meeting the needs of the whole child by recognizing and developing students' strengths while providing appropriate accommodations and specialized services.
The initiative is intentionally integrated with the work of Exceptional Student Services, Section 504 Services, Professional Learning, and school-based instructional leadership. The Twice-Exceptional Specialist will collaborate across departments to strengthen alignment among Advanced Learning Plans, Individualized Education Programs, and Section 504 Plans, ensuring that gifted education and disability services function as complementary systems rather than separate initiatives. Professional learning opportunities will support educators in implementing evidence-based instructional strategies, addressing the affective needs of gifted learners, and improving equitable identification practices for students whose giftedness may be masked by disability or whose disabilities may be overlooked because of advanced ability.
This work also supports the district's priorities related to educational equity and culturally responsive practices by increasing access to gifted programming for historically underserved student populations and reducing

barriers to identification and participation for twice-exceptional learners. By embedding this work within existing district professional learning structures and fostering ongoing collaboration among central office departments and school teams, Denver Public Schools will build sustainable systems that improve outcomes for twice-exceptional students and strengthen services for all gifted learners.

Program Element - Major Improvement Strategy 2 (Optional)

No Content

Program Element - Major Improvement Strategy 3 (Optional)

No Content

Assurances

Annual Plan Assurances

In accordance with the Exceptional Children's Education Act, the AU shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations regarding the gifted education annual plan.

Assurances for Administrative Units (AUs) regarding submission of annual plans for gifted education:

- Administrative Units (AUs) are required to submit an annual plan to the Department, which serves as an addendum to the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) specifically tailored to gifted education.
- The annual plan shall include a detailed action plan outlining specific strategies geared towards achieving predefined targets for improving gifted student performance.
- Administrative Unit Gifted Education Directors of Record are responsible for submitting the Gifted Education annual plan.
- The annual plan must be submitted no later than April 15 each year.
- District UIP teams have different timelines and deadlines. Therefore, coordinating services and resources requires collaboration between the district UIP team and AU Gifted Director of record in order to be aligned with improvement planning practices to meet state board rule.
- AUs must submit the annual plan before receiving gifted education funds.
- In alignment with state board rule improvement planning requirements, the Gifted Education Annual plans will be posted publicly in conjunction with district Unified Improvement Plans.
- Personally Identifiable Identification (PII) is not included in any part of the annual plan.

I, as the Gifted Education Director of Record, acknowledge I have read and understand the above assurances.

No Content

AU Gifted Education Director of Record Name

Meryl Faulkner

Action Required

No Content