



COLORADO

Department of Education

Mt. Evans BOCES - 64053

Submitted to:
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I. Introduction

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is committed to customer service that assists Administrative Units (AUs) in improving outcomes for gifted students through a continuum of supports and data-based decision making. The Colorado Gifted Education Review (CGER) is a collaborative monitoring process that is the shared responsibility of Administrative Units and CDE. The purpose of this partnership is to increase the capacity of educators and educational systems to identify, program and be accountable for gifted learner achievement and growth.

In accordance with state statute, CGER aligns with the Rules for the Administration of Gifted Education under the Exceptional Children’s Educational Act (ECEA), Rule Section 12.07. The intent of CGER is to be a support system in fulfilling the monitoring requirements. The CGER process is a positive working relationship with the administrative unit’s leadership in gifted education. It begins by conversation with the CGER team lead followed by support from the Gifted Education Regional Consultant (GERC) throughout the CGER process. The CGER process relies on meaningful data including: parent/staff survey of focus group data, the performance of gifted students on state and local assessments, enrollment data and indicators outlined in state regulations reflected in the AU’s comprehensive program plan. The AU Self-evaluation summarizes evidence of program implementation for the review team’s consideration. A desk audit by the CGER review team informs the conversation, recommendations, and setting of priorities by the AU representative and review team. The CGER process also integrates the updating of the AU’s Comprehensive Program Plan (CPP) according to findings and necessary updates determined by the AU.

The Office of Gifted Education determines the review team comprised of four external peer experts. The review team conducts a desk audit, engages in conversation with the AU’s gifted personnel and plans a site visit to verify the implementation of program plan elements, accountability requirements and progress toward the AU’s comprehensive program goals.

The CGER process is designed to acknowledge the achievements of the AU and help prioritize future improvements and growth necessary for gifted student learning and high achievement. After onsite dialogue and visits, the review team assembles a preliminary report of the team’s findings. The report is reviewed and approved by the Colorado Department of Education Director of Gifted Education and sent to the AU superintendent or BOCES executive director.

The intent of this report is to help promote the process of reflection, and to encourage AUs to engage in continuous improvement. Team members spend many hours reviewing evidence and artifacts, listening to AU representatives and sponsoring a site visit. Notation of program strengths and recommendations are the result of team consensus based on extensive deliberation about findings and evidence.

The Exceptional Children’s Education Act Rules for Gifted Education may be accessed at:
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/lawsregs>



II. AU Profile

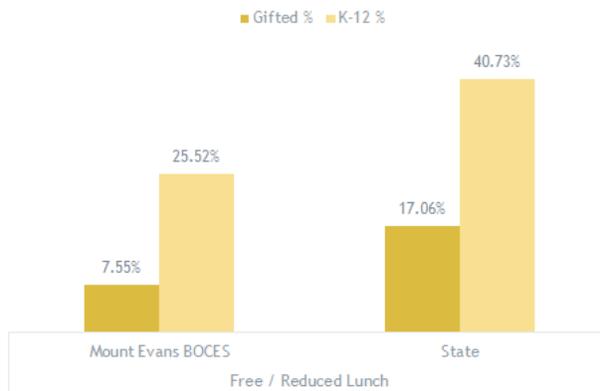
The following charts summarize:

- The demographics of the gifted enrollment in the AU;
- Content areas of giftedness in the AU’s gifted enrollment; and
- Gifted student performance on state assessments.

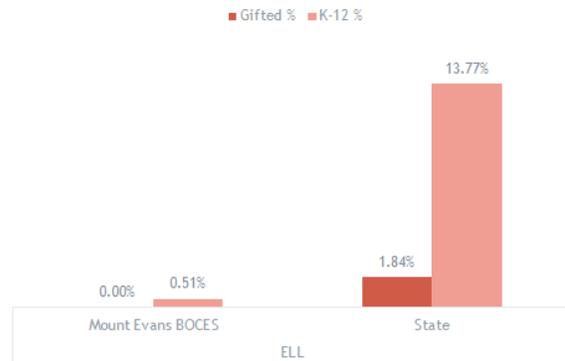
Gifted Education coordinators/directors have access to additional data about AU gifted student performance and data that compares the AU with the state and other AUs. This information is helpful when exploring areas for continuous improvement, programming, and building on strengths of student outcomes.

Demographics:

Socioeconomic



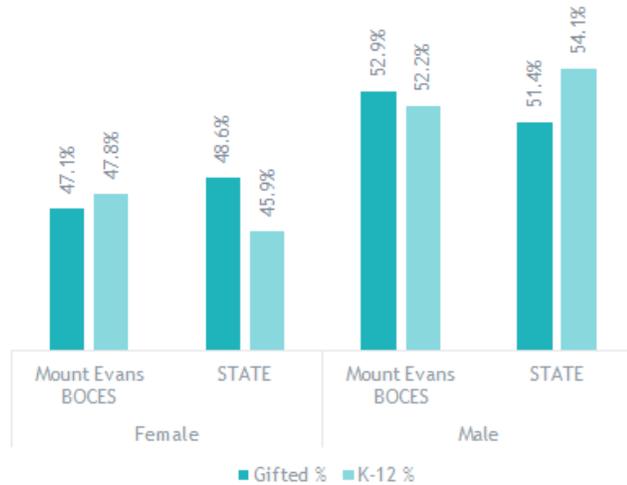
English Language Learners



Twice Exceptional Rate within Gifted



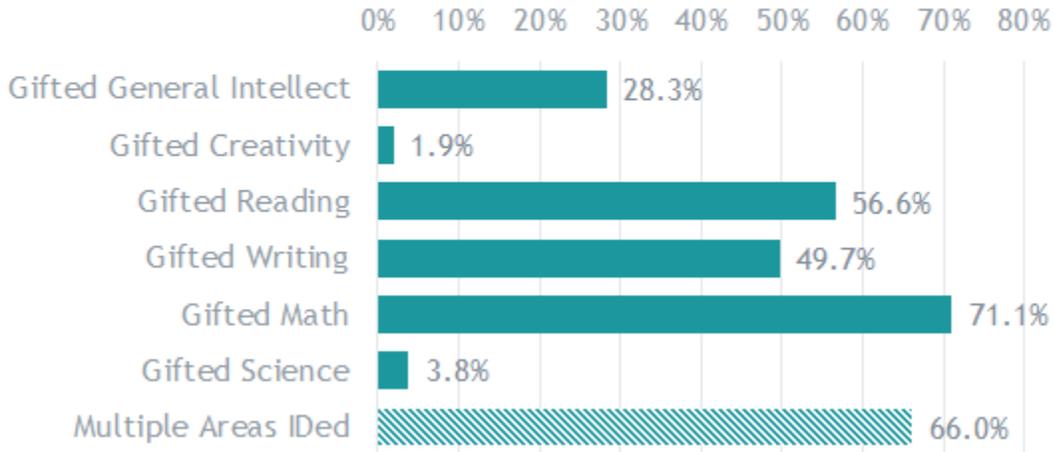
Gender



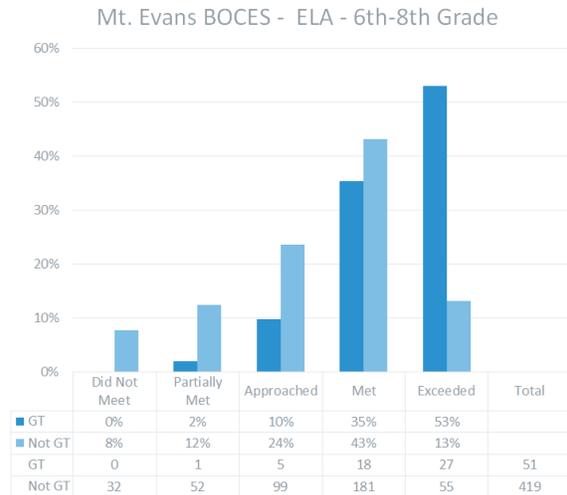
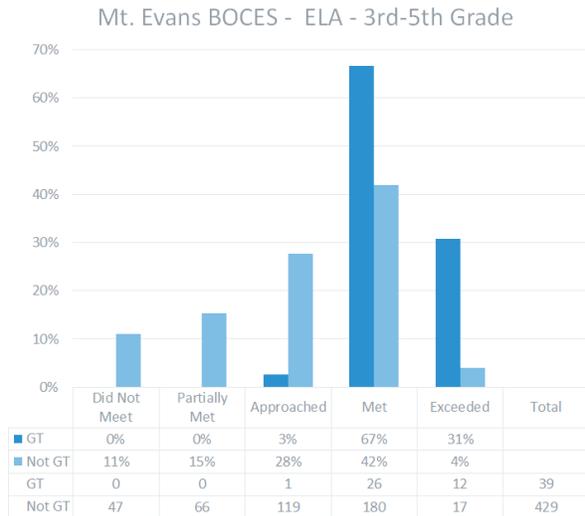
Areas of Giftedness:



MOUNT EVANS BOCES, IDAHO SPRINGS



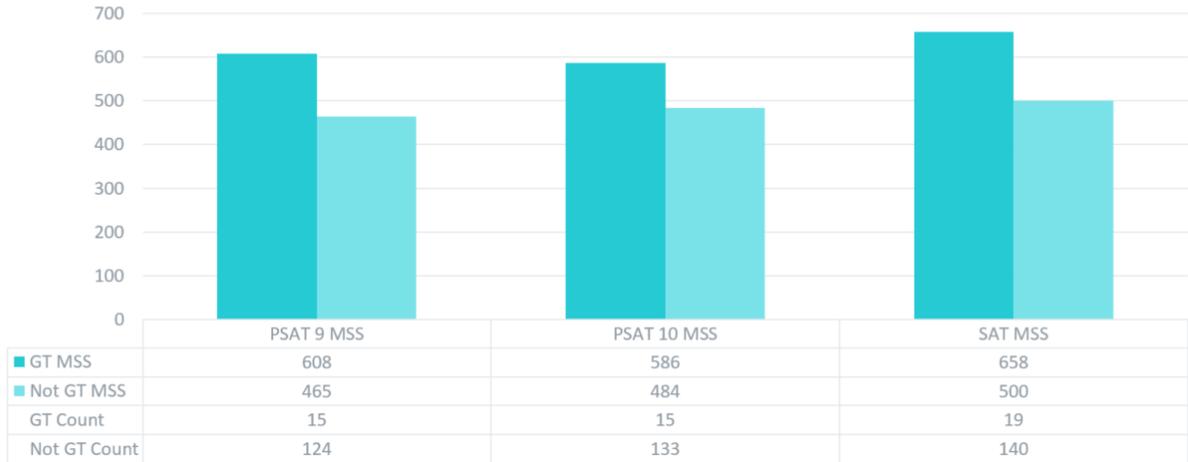
Performance:



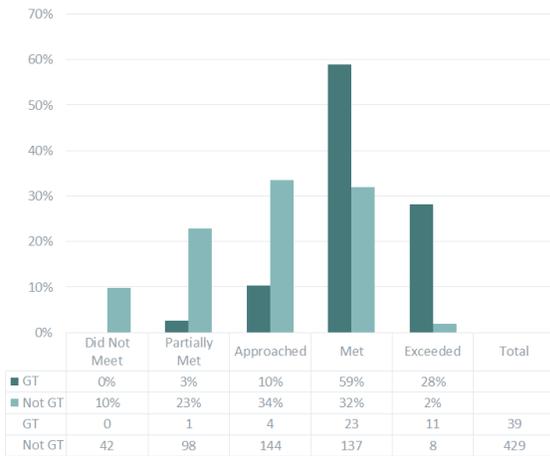


PSAT/SAT – Reading and Writing

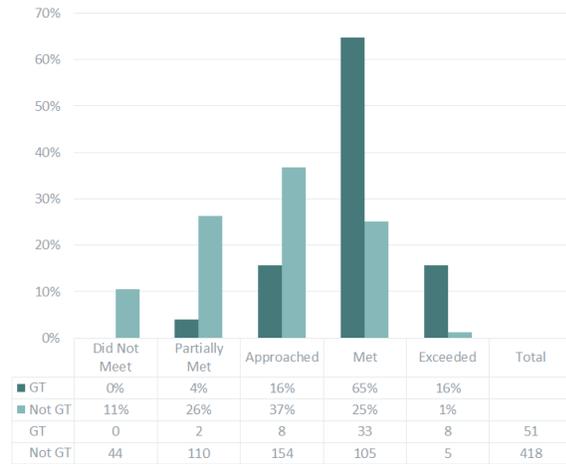
Mt. Evans BOCES - Reading and Writing



Mt. Evans BOCES - MATH - 3rd-5th Grade



Mt. Evans BOCES - MATH - Grades 6th-8th





PSAT/SAT – Math

Mt. Evans BOCES - Math





III. Executive Summary

The Colorado Gifted Education Review (CGER) team is grateful for the warm welcome and open dialogue of administrative unit personnel that supported their focused and meaningful work. These collaborative efforts spoke highly of the administrative unit's intent to serve gifted students and their families using local talent and resources.

In accordance with the Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA) this report serves as the detailed analysis of discrepancies and recommendations to correct discrepancies (C.R.S. 22-20-203(1)(c)).

The CGER report summarizes strengths, recommendations, and priorities in program improvement for each program element defined in ECEA regulations. When notated, selected corrective actions are due within one year of receiving the report. Any remaining corrective actions are due the following year(s).

It is the intent of CGER to engage stakeholders in program review and collaborative agreement for next steps in program improvement or development. With customer service and continuous improvement as foundational principles in the CGER process, the following outline briefly describes the findings of the program review.

AU's progress since last CGER:

Mt. Evans BOCES has built an identification process that includes universal screening and talent areas. There is an increased focus on professional development related to identification and programming for under served populations. All member districts use the same Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) platform, which includes all required elements. The administrative unit (AU) developed a talent pool that includes individual plans and programming for these students. There is increased programming at many levels with a continued need for additional supports at the secondary level. The AU has greatly enhanced communication among stakeholders via the website and through newsletters. An annual survey of stakeholders is conducted as a program evaluation, the results of which are used to improve the gifted education program. Each member district has qualified gifted education personnel that provide coordination of gifted education services and programming for students.

Summary of AU gifted programming strengths:

Mt. Evans BOCES has a dynamic and passionate gifted education team in place and supportive leadership at both the AU and member district levels. Member districts provide extensive enrichment opportunities including field trips, contests and after school activities. Some of the gifted education budget is used to purchase materials to use in math, reading and thinking skill development. Each district gifted education coordinator has a strong knowledge of and relationship with their students. In order to increase communication among stakeholders, the AU publishes high quality newsletters on a quarterly basis. The Advanced Learning Plans include all required elements and are updated annually for all identified students. For the identified talent pool population, individualized plans are developed and programming is provided. All member districts have a consistent alignment of gifted education processes.



IV. Indicators

Procedures for Parent, Family and Student Engagement and Communication

- ☑ How parents are informed about access to identification procedures
- ☑ Ways to educate parents and families about giftedness or parenting gifted students
- ☑ Information about involvement and progress reporting
- ☑ What programming options are available to match student strengths and challenges
- ☑ Information about concurrent enrollment
- ☑ How to be involved in college and career planning
- ☑ Communication available in primary languages in the AU
- ☑ Ways parents and families may participate in the school community
- ☑ Multi-district AU: All districts must have a plan for parent, family and student communication and engagement

***This element:* Meets conditions of law**

Description of findings and observations:

During the 2015 CGER, Parent, Family and Student Engagement and Communication was an element that did not meet conditions of law. Since that CGER the AU has updated the website to include extensive information related to gifted education. This information is easy to access and lists additional resources from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) along with national and state organizations focused on gifted education. The Assistant Director of Gifted Education provides a high quality, quarterly newsletter to all stakeholders that includes information on the AU's Gifted Program, resources and upcoming events. She also provides a quarterly update to superintendents of all member districts. In addition, monthly Padlets with specific information related to social emotional needs or academic needs are provided along with information about contests, events and competitions. All member districts have brochures available online and in hard copy to provide information regarding gifted identification and programming. Survey results indicated that 96% of parents know who to contact, 89.7% had input into their child's identification process and 70.7% said that the school regularly communicates with them and encourages their input. Regarding their child's programming options, 53.4% of parents said that their child had adequate programming options available to match their strengths and needs. Parents (62.1%) reported that there are resources available at the AU and member district levels to support their children. Counselors provide concurrent enrollment and college and career planning to students at their annual Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) meeting.

Strengths:

Communication is a key for implementing a gifted program plan that engages the student and the family throughout the process of identification, development of programming services, progress monitoring of achievement, growth and participation in systems of affective support. All stakeholders have access to information in a variety of formats to ensure equity and participation. Educators have routines and tools for recognizing exceptional potential.



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- Stakeholder surveys were conducted in school years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 with analyzed results used for improvement in gifted education programs.
 - The AU provides a variety of methods to communicate with stakeholder groups, ie. website information, brochures, quarterly newsletters, all districts linked to AU website, monthly meetings with coordinators and distribution of monthly Padlets.

Recommendations for continuous program development

- Create consistent systems for keeping all information available to stakeholders updated and current including handbooks, AU and member district websites and brochures.
 - Provide parent/family education and training on giftedness and parenting gifted children.
-



Definition

- ☑ Written definition is the same as or substantially similar to the definition of gifted student specified in section 12.01(16) of Rules
- ☑ The definition serves as the basis for the implementation of all other program plan elements of ECEA Rules

***This element:* Meets conditions of law**

Description of findings and observations:

The Mt. Evans BOCES definition is substantially similar to the definition of "gifted student" as specified in the Exceptional Children's Education Act. The definition is easily accessible to all stakeholders on the Administrative Unit website. Gifted characteristics are listed below the definition for further reference regarding identification.

Colorado recognizes that potential for giftedness is in every student group, including twice exceptional students, low socio-economic groups, and culturally linguistically different students. This attribute drives differentiation in opportunities, identification tools/procedures, and programming to meet the needs of the local community.

Strengths

- The Administrative Unit meets all key requirements in this element of the ECEA.

Recommendations for continuous program development

- Provide continued compliance with all key requirements for this element as part of the Exceptional Children's Education Act.
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In Colorado, identification assessment recognizes a student's exceptional abilities or potential, interests, and needs with the purpose to guide student instruction, individualized planning, and programming. In under-served student groups, visual/music/ performing arts student groups, and talent pools, identification may require the collection of student information over time. This may include using additional data points from a response to intervention approach, or additional observations, and assessment. Not meeting criteria on a single assessment tool shall not prevent further data collection or consideration for identification, if other indicators suggest exceptional potential as observed in a body of evidence.

Identification Procedures, Criteria for determining exceptional ability or Talent Pool, and Portability

- Description of assessment process used for identifying students who meet definition and identifying educational needs of gifted students
- An assessment process that recognizes a student's exceptional abilities, potential, interests and needs in order to guide instruction and individualized programming
- Method(s) that describe the AU's efforts to identify students of all populations to ensure equal and equitable access
- Referrals from a variety of sources
- A screening procedure used for conducting identification assessment
- Timeline of no more than 30 school days after a referral to make a determination of formal identification, continue to collect assessment data, or move to talent pool designation
- Assessments that align with identification in all domains of giftedness and in underrepresented populations
- A body of evidence that includes qualitative and quantitative data from multiple sources and multiple types
- A body of evidence that contains data to identify strength area(s) as defined in the definition of gifted children and used for developing the ALP
- A review team procedure with at least one member trained in gifted identification
- A determination letter for parents and school files describing decision of review team
- A communication procedure by which parents are made aware of the identification assessment process, the results of the determination and how to engage in the development of the ALP
- For each category of giftedness, 95th percentile or above on a standardized nationally normed test or observation tool, or a rating on a performance assessment that indicates exceptionality or distinguished ability compared to age mates
- Not meeting criteria on a single assessment shall not prevent further data

collection or consideration for identification

- Criteria for screening assessments is a score range less than 95th percentile, used to determine further observation, data collection and/or talent pool designation
- Implementation of statewide identification procedures to ensure portability
- Transfer of the body of evidence for identification and ALP to the new district
- If body of evidence is incomplete the receiving district will consultation with former district, parents and student and re-evaluate the identification determination
- Review of new student's ALP within 45 school days of start date and communication with parent within 60 days of how new district will meet the needs of the student

This element: Meets conditions of law

Description of findings and observations:

During the 2015 CGER, Identification was an element that did not meet conditions of law. At that time, the AU did not have a process for identifying students in all areas of giftedness and lacked communication resources to inform stakeholders about the AU's identification process. Since the previous CGER, the AU developed and implemented specific corrective action steps



to address the key requirements of the ECEA Rules not meeting condition of law. The AU clearly communicates the process and procedure for identification in all areas of giftedness as evident on the AU website. Based on 2018 pupil count, 7.4% of the students within the AU are identified as gifted which is slightly above the state average of 7.3%. The AU's demographic data represents an underrepresentation of Latino and Hispanic students as well as Free and Reduced Lunch students. The action steps implemented by the AU to address equal and equitable access for identification includes a universal cognitive assessment of all member districts' second graders and the universal assessment of seventh graders beginning with the 2019-20 school year. The AU stated there has been a complete rebuilding of the gifted program to include a focus on developing identification procedures for all areas of giftedness, especially in the talent domains and twice-exceptional students, providing professional development to increase teachers' awareness of gifted characteristics and purchasing tools to support improved identification assessment. The AU website contains comprehensive information on identification procedures and links to access referral forms. Once a referral is submitted, a parent receives a complete packet that thoroughly explains the identification process. Brochures located at the school sites also provide another avenue of communication for identification procedures. The program evaluation survey data indicated that 90% of the parents reported having the opportunity to provide input on their child's identification process. Since the last CGER, the AU has implemented research-based practices for talent pool identification and provides programming to talent pool students along with the development of a specific learning plan for these students. The AU reports a continued need for providing professional development for all teachers to better understand gifted identification, although they stated that finding time for this is a continued challenge. One of the member districts that is on a four-day week uses one Friday a month to provide professional development as well as use grant funds to support "Genius Fridays" giving teachers the opportunity to work collaboratively for the purpose of curriculum planning and enhancing instructional practices for gifted students.

Strengths

- The AU's gifted identification is slightly above the state average.
- The Administrative Unit has a clearly defined process for all areas of giftedness, including an emphasis on twice-exceptional students.
- Parents are provided a comprehensive referral packet detailing the identification process and receive the *Parenting Gifted Children 101* book at the time of their child's identification.

Recommendations for continuous program development

- Implement the action steps defined by the AU to address Latino/Hispanic and Free/Reduced lunch students, including universal screening for 2nd and 7th grade students and a continued focus on inclusion of talent pool students in enrichment and advanced programming opportunities.



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- Increase awareness of talent identification in order to better identify this population.
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Advanced Learning Plan Content & ALP Procedures and Responsibilities

- ☑ ALP is developed for every gifted student according to the student's determined area(s) of giftedness, interests, and instructional and affective needs
- ☑ ALP is considered in planning for post-secondary readiness and decision-making of subsequent programming
- ☑ If ALP is blended into ICAP, gifted achievement and affective goals are included
- ☑ ALP articulates a transition process when students move to next schooling level
- ☑ ALP includes a student profile described in the body of evidence
- ☑ Annual, measurable and attainable achievement goal. Achievement goals are standards-based statements in a student's strength area(s).
- ☑ Annual, measurable and attainable affective goal. Affective goals reflect development of personal, social, communication, leadership, and/or cultural competency.
- ☑ Description or delineation of supplemental curriculum, activities, specific strategies and extended or expanded opportunities that support goals
- ☑ Progress reports that align with the AU's or member district's schedule for parent-reporting and/or conferences about student progress
- ☑ Personnel involved in ALP development, progress report meetings or conferences
- ☑ Parents, teachers and the student are notified about ALP development
- ☑ Personnel assigned with the responsibility for ALP development and monitoring
- ☑ Parents, students and classroom teachers should be familiar with the ALP goals
- ☑ Gifted resource personnel may assist with writing of goals, but are not sole custodian of ALP
- ☑ Goals are written and aligned with tiered classroom instruction and expanded learning opportunities for supplemental or intensive programming
- ☑ A method to develop student awareness and active participation in the ALP process
- ☑ A process of management of the ALPs in the school cumulative file system, including transferring between grades and school levels
- ☑ An ALP progress reporting timeline • Evidence of parent engagement in the ALP

Colorado law requires every identified gifted student to have an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) developed according to the student's identified area(s) of giftedness, interests, and instructional and affective needs. The ALP process is a dynamic, annual process that is collaborative and engaging for the student, teachers and family members. The focus of ALP targets is relevant to the student's academic standards for learning. The requirements for ALP content development are described in the ECEA Rules.

This element: Meets conditions of law

Description of findings and observations:

During the 2015 CGER, the Advanced Learning Plan was an element not meeting condition of law based on the 2014 Exceptional Children Education Act Rule revisions. The CGER Report noted the AU was making progress towards implementation of the new key requirements to ensure that ALP goals are written to a student's strength area(s), ALP goals are monitored for progress, and there is participation in the ALP process by all stakeholders. Currently, the three member districts within the AU use the same student information system for ALPs. The personal education plan is comprehensive and includes the key requirements for an ALP as defined in ECEA Rules. As reported by the AU and evident in survey data, the AU has provided in-depth training on writing standards-based ALPs that not only meet conditions of law, but are also meaningful and purposeful to teachers, students and parents. The ALP includes the body of evidence used for identification, standards-based achievement and affective goals to include specific instructional strategies, progress monitoring data and



evidence of parent and teacher involvement. Parents reported on survey results that they are involved in the ALP process and can complete a survey, checklist or phone call prior to the ALP meeting. In addition they indicated that they are invited to attend the ALP meeting. A random review of ALPs by the CGER team indicated goals are aligned to a student's strength area(s), the plan includes all stakeholders who provide input in the plan and a progress monitoring addendum is attached to the plan at the end of quarter two and four. Member districts report providing transition meetings from one level of schooling to the next level. The AU stated member districts are beginning the process of merging ALP and Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) for secondary students. While ALPs meet condition of law, the AU indicated this continues to be an area of continued focus to ensure plans and programming directly support student growth and achievement. The AU stated a challenge to completing quality plans is "classroom teacher buy-in" to provide input in ALP development and time for gifted facilitators to complete plans by the end of first quarter.

Strengths

- Advanced Learning Plans are thorough and provide comprehensive information to clearly articulate a student's individualized instructional program to address strength areas.
- Plans reviewed by the CGER team represent an ALP that is an exemplar in Colorado.
- AU and district-level leadership emphasize the importance of the ALP to ensure quality documents are created to guide teacher instruction and define individualized instructional strategies aligned to student growth and achievement.

Recommendations for continuous program development

- Build a culture and climate where gifted students are a shared responsibility of classroom teachers and gifted facilitators in the development and implementation of the ALP.
 - Develop programming options aligned to ALP achievement and affective goals that support students' strength areas and build affective competencies.
-



Programming includes student outcomes, strategies and options to accomplish them, and procedures for assessing and evaluating these over time. Programming considers delivery of service including flexible or cluster grouping for direct instruction, and options for time with like-peers. Acceleration in varied forms is an evidence-based practice. Programming shall match the academic strengths and interests of the gifted student. Other educational or affective needs are addressed according to the individual student's profile.

Programming

- Program plan describes the programming components, options and strategies that will be implemented to appropriately address the educational needs of gifted students
 - Programming shall match the academic strength(s) and interests of the student
 - Affective needs shall be addressed based on the student's profile
 - Programming alignment to student's assessment data and ALP goals in area(s) of giftedness
 - Structures or type of delivery by which students are served at different school levels
 - Support in differentiated instruction and methods
 - Affective and guidance support systems
 - Diverse content options in strength area(s)
 - Programming is articulated across grade levels
 - Pre-collegiate and/or pre-advanced placement support
 - Collaborative efforts for ALP development and reviews of the teacher, support staff, student and parents
 - Post-secondary options to students
- Concurrent enrollment opportunities if indicated in ALP or ICAP
- Problem solving process when a gifted student is underachieving

***This element:* Meets conditions of law**

Description of findings and observations:

During the 2015 CGER the area of programming was reported as not meeting conditions of law based on the ECEA Rules. The Administrative Unit has made significant progress in improving their programming options for identified students in all member districts. These options are described on the AU and member district websites. The member districts place a strong emphasis on a wide variety of enrichment activities. Although they are small rural communities, they are in close proximity to a large metropolitan area that provides their students with distinct advantages. Examples of highlighted enrichment activities are field trips, Fun Fridays, Science Olympiad, Japanese Club and Robotics. Some of these activities are provided during the school day and others are after school. They use their short distance to the metro area to have students participate in Legislative Day and visit the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. For specific daily programming, member districts use pullout small groups and benchmark tests to check for student progress. For the 2019-2020 school year the AU reported they will focus on differentiating instruction and providing improved programming at the high school level. Another reported area of focus was to increase pre and post testing to provide better benchmarks for student performance, and to increase the use of curriculum compacting. Mt. Evans BOCES uses a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process for underachieving students. The member districts provide an affective curriculum for grades 2-3, 4-8 and 9-12. A scope and sequence for this curriculum is provided to parents through the



quarterly newsletter. The gifted students complete a "Balance Your Life" document that helps them establish and prioritize their affective goals. Concurrent enrollment is in place through Red Rocks Community College. Gifted education coordinators meet individually with secondary students to discuss their goals and classes on a consistent basis. Some member district high schools use a college planning checklist for grades 9-12. On the recent survey parents reported that support is provided to their students as they transition to a new grade or building level. Students reported the need for more challenge in their academic program. The use of differentiated instruction was reported by 78.6% of educators regarding programming provided for their identified students.

Strengths

- All member districts provide a variety of gifted education programming options for identified and talent pool students.
- Member districts provide a "Develop Your Strengths" document to increase the knowledge of identified students on what it means to be gifted and how to utilize their strengths in school programming.
- Gifted education coordinators are very knowledgeable about their small rural communities and have strong, individual relationships with their students.

Recommendations for continuous program development

- Provide a continued focus on increased programming options at the high school level.
 - Build capacity at the classroom level to deliver rigorous programming and differentiated instruction for all identified students.
 - Provide educators with professional development on instructional strategies to support gifted students, such as Depth and Complexity.
-



Evaluation and Accountability

- ☑ Unified improvement plan addendum methods by which gifted student performance is monitored and measured for continual learning progress and how methods align with state accreditation process
- ☑ UIP to include performance target(s) and action plan
- ☑ Method by which a student's affective growth is monitored and measured to ensure continual development
- ☑ Methods for ensuring that gifted student performance are consistent with state accreditation and accountability
- ☑ Self-evaluation includes periodic feedback and review from stakeholders
- ☑ Methods by which stakeholders are informed about program evaluation

***This element:* Meets conditions of law**

Description of findings and observations:

The Administrative Unit requested a 30-day correction period to make appropriate adjustments for this element in order to meet the ECEA conditions of law, and they successfully completed all requirements. All AU member districts have either completed a Gifted Education Addendum or integrated gifted education in their Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) with appropriate targets and action plans. In general, the member districts are high achieving. Two out of the three districts have received a ranking of accredited with distinction and one district is ranked in the top eight in the state. The AU conducts an annual survey of gifted education to all stakeholders including teachers, students, parents and administrators. Student growth and progress is monitored regularly as part of the Advanced Learning Plan procedures.

Strengths

- Student progress is monitored regularly and included in the Advanced Learning Plan document.
- Surveys to all stakeholder groups were conducted in school years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

Recommendations for continuous program development

- Provide continued support and training to member districts in the Unified Improvement Plan process to address all of the required elements for gifted student achievement and growth in these plans.
- Inform stakeholders of the results of the annual program evaluation survey and how these outcomes will positively impact improvement in gifted education programming.

Gifted program evaluation is an essential component for continuous growth and improvement. Program evaluation may occur annually, bi-annually and during the CGER process. Program evaluation relies on using meaningful data, such as stakeholder survey or focus group data, the performance of identified gifted students on state and local assessments, identification demographic data and monitoring of students' Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs). The Unified Improvement Gifted Education Addendum demonstrates accountability for a gifted student performance target(s).



The ECEA statute:

- Requires that each administrative unit make a good faith effort to hire and retain qualified personnel to administer and implement the AU's gifted program; and
- Strongly encourages each administrative unit to establish and maintain a local advisory committee to assist in implementing its program plan and providing services to gifted students.

Personnel

- Describe personnel who provide instruction, counseling, coordination and other programming for gifted students
- Personnel shall be knowledgeable in the characteristics, differentiated instructional methods and competencies in the special education of gifted students
- A designated person within the AU is responsible for: Management of the AU's Comprehensive and Annual Program Plans
- A designated person within the AU is responsible for: Facilitating/providing gifted education professional development opportunities
- A good faith effort by the AU is made to have at least a half-time qualified person monitoring and administering the gifted program and employing sufficient personnel for supporting gifted programming
- Personnel instructing gifted students in the core academic areas meet federal requirements for highly qualified teachers
- Paraprofessionals are not funded with state gifted grant funds and are not sole instructional providers of gifted students
- Professional development relates to the improvement and acquisition of knowledge related to the needs of gifted students

***This element:* Meets conditions of law**

Description of findings and observations:

Mount Evans BOCES commits a .5 full-time employee (FTE) to administer the gifted program plan. The AU gifted coordinator has a Colorado gifted education endorsement. Each member district employs a gifted endorsed educator to facilitate and implement the AU gifted program plan on a .5, .6 and 1.0 FTE basis. The AU reports the team works collaboratively to support students, and all members are passionate and dedicated about gifted education. The gifted team meets monthly to review data, support identification, develop ALPs and create gifted programming options. Staff turn-over continues to be a challenge for continued growth and improvement of the gifted program plan. The AU shared multiple examples of professional development provided to the gifted facilitators and general education teachers since the last CGER. In one district, all teachers have participated in Depth and Complexity workshops provided by the gifted facilitator. AU funds support educators attending state-level conferences and other professional learning opportunities. The AU gifted administrator creates an informative quarterly newsletter that includes resources for continued professional growth and developing an understanding of gifted students and research-based instructional practices.

Strengths

- The AU gifted coordinator and district facilitators demonstrate a level of commitment and dedication to gifted education and lead the implementation of a professional, consistent and systemic gifted program plan.
- The Administrative Unit executive director and superintendents of the member districts value gifted education and provide dedicated staff and resources to support the gifted program plan.



Recommendations for continuous program development

- Provide specific, allocated time for professional development opportunities for classroom teachers aligned to support the growth and achievement of gifted students.
 - Explore an increase in FTE to support gifted students when financially viable.
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Budget

- ☑ An annual budget plan is submitted to the state which reflects collaborative efforts of the AU and cost of implementing the program elements
- ☑ The annual budget details the funding committed by the AU and funding requested from the Department of Education
- ☑ State funds are used to support one or more of the following:
 - o Salaries for licensed or endorsed staff that primarily serve gifted students
 - o Professional development for gifted education
 - o Program options to support ALPs
 - o Materials to support gifted programming
 - o Administrative costs, technology and equipment not to exceed collectively 20% of state funds
- ☑ AUs may contract with other AUs to establish and maintain gifted programming

***This element:* Meets conditions of law**

Description of findings and observations:

During the 2015 Colorado Gifted Education Review, budget was an element that did not meet conditions of rules based on the inaccurate reporting of expended funds and the AU not having a collaborative process in place to determine expenditure of gifted funds. The desk audit for the 2019 CGER found the AU submits an annual expended budget to the Colorado Department of Education as required by the ECEA Rules. The budget reflects an accurate expenditure of funds and includes documentation of additional funds allocated by the AU. The majority of the state gifted funds are used to support the salary and benefits of the Mt. Evans BOCES Gifted Education Coordinator. As reported by the AU, the budget is a collaborative process of all member districts with superintendents voting annually on expenditure of funds. The AU did not participate in the 2018-2019 Universal Screening Qualified Personnel Grant based on the vote of superintendents. No equipment was purchased with gifted funds, therefore, an inventory was not necessary.

Strengths

- The AU allocates gifted grant funds to support a .5 FTE to administer the program plan at the BOCES level.
- The Administrative Unit determines budget expenditures based on a shared collaborative process of member districts.

Recommendations for continuous program development

- Consider applying for the Universal Screening and Qualified Personnel Grant to provide additional financial resources to the AU.

Gifted Education funds are supplemental state categorical funds appropriated through the Long Appropriation Bill. The annual budget for gifted education reflects the collaborative efforts of the AU and the cost of implementing the gifted program elements. Funds committed to gifted programming by the AU and from the Colorado Department of Education shall be described in the AU's Comprehensive Program Plan and annual budget submission.





Colorado Department of Education rules require AU's to submit annual reports detailing information relative to gifted programming. Reporting is required in order to be compliant with state accreditation and ECEA Rules. Enrollment is reported via the October Enrollment Count. Student performance data is reported via accountability procedures.

Reports

- AU has an expended budget report submitted to the Department
- Number of identified students served by gifted programming by:
 - o Grade level
 - o Gender and ethnicity
 - o Free and reduced lunch
 - o Areas of giftedness
 - o Twice exceptionality
 - o Preschool served through early access if applicable
 - o Percent of students in AU formally identified
- Qualified personnel by school level, district resource personnel and central administration
- Types of programming strategies utilized most commonly at each school level
- Methods and tools used in accountability to monitor gifted achievement and growth as defined in the UIP Gifted Addendum
- AU complies with the requirements of accreditation, pursuant to Article 11 of Title 22, C.R.S., with regard to gifted student achievement, identification of disparities in the data, instructional goals, growth and reporting

This element: Meets conditions of law

Description of findings and observations:

The Administrative Unit complies with all reports as required by the CDE. In addition the programming details report was updated as part of the Colorado Gifted Education Review process.

Strengths

- The Administrative Unit meets all key requirements in this element of the Exceptional Children's Education Act.

Recommendations for continuous program development

- Provide continued compliance with all key requirements for this element as part of the Exceptional Children's Education Act.



Record Keeping

- ☑ Financial records are kept in accordance with principles of governmental accounting
- ☑ An inventory is maintained of all equipment for which funds were received
- ☑ ALP documents are part of the student's cumulative education record
- ☑ Individually identifiable records of students referred, assessed, evaluated, and/or served through programming for gifted and talented students in any AU shall be held to be confidential and protected in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations
- ☑ Gifted student education records and ALPs shall be maintained, retained and destroyed consistent with the ongoing system of student record keeping established in the AU

Colorado rules require the maintenance of financial records, equipment inventories, and student education records (ALPs). In addition, these records are held to be confidential and comply with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations.

***This element:* Meets conditions of law**

Description of findings and observations:

Financial records are kept in accordance with principles of governmental accounting. An inventory was not needed as the AU does not purchase equipment with state gifted education funds. Advanced Learning Plans are part of a students' cumulative file and kept in locked file storage. The Administrative Unit has a policy for how ALP records should be maintained, retained and destroyed that is followed by all member districts.

Strengths

- Mt. Evans BOCES meets all key requirements in this element of the Exceptional Children's Education Act.

Recommendations for continuous program development

- Provide continued compliance with all key requirements for this element as part of the ECEA.
-



The AU's Comprehensive Program Plan describes procedures for resolving disagreements with parents/guardians, or students in regard to identification, programming, and the advanced learning plan. Procedures support open communication and guidance. These procedures must be posted and available for ease of access by all stakeholders.

Procedures for Disagreements

- Describe procedures for resolving disagreements with parents/guardians, or students in regard to identification, programming, and ALPs
- Procedure shall include method to express issues and concerns
- Procedure shall include means to discuss disagreements in a timely manner
- Procedure shall include notice of the decision giving rise to the dispute
- Procedure shall include opportunity to be heard before decision is implemented
- Procedure shall include procedures are posted for access to all stakeholders

This element: Meets conditions of law

Description of findings and observations:

- Procedures for disagreements were posted for access by all stakeholders on the AU website within the 30-day

corrective action period. A link to this information will be provided in the next quarterly newsletter.

Strengths

- The Administrative Unit meets all key requirements in this element of Exceptional Children's Education Act .

Recommendations for continuous program development

- Provide a link to the Procedures for Disagreement information in the next quarterly AU gifted education newsletter.
- Clarify the Procedures for Disagreement process to include the timeline for parent notification and the process for parents to be heard prior to a decision.



Monitoring

- ☑ AU complies with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations regarding the program plan, identification and special educational services for gifted students
- ☑ AU monitors annual and comprehensive plans
- ☑ AU monitors annual enrollment and performance reports
- ☑ AU is prepared to participate in the Colorado Gifted Education Review
- ☑ AU participates in follow-up activities to correct areas of non-compliance

***This element:* Meets conditions of law**

Description of findings and observations:

The AU complies with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations regarding the Comprehensive Program Plan, identification of and programming services for gifted students.

They were well prepared and fully participated in the 2018-2019 Colorado Gifted Education Review process with AU leadership and member district coordinators.

Strengths

- The Administrative Unit meets all key requirements in this element of the ECEA.

Recommendations for continuous program development

- Provide continued compliance with all key requirements for this element as part of the Exceptional Children's Education Act.

Each AU in Colorado is subject to ongoing monitoring by the Colorado Department of Education. A determination of compliance is based on all applicable state and federal laws, and an assessment of program quality based on standards established by the Department of Education.



Early Access

- ☑ AU has an approved Early Access submitted with the Department
- ☑ AU communicates information about the criteria and process for identifying highly advanced early access students
- ☑ Provides professional development to educators, or other means, to increase the understanding of highly advanced early access children and their educational needs
- ☑ Method for collaboration among preschool, general and gifted education personnel and parents
- ☑ Description of fee charged for early access assessment process and communication of the fee being waived for students eligible for a reduced-cost or free meal, and take into account the economic circumstances of the community
- ☑ An ALP developed by September 30 for any early access student in kindergarten and first grade, to include:
 - o Transition goal for the first year of early access
 - o Monitoring student performance every 5 weeks during first year of early access
- ☑ Methods of communication with the student about school success and parent-teacher communication
- ☑ Process shall include following timelines:
 - o Applications for early access due by April 1 for the following year with the AU determining when to begin accepting applications
 - o The AU may, at its discretion, decide to accept referrals after April 1, but a determination made no later than September 1 or the AU's start date, whichever is earlier
 - o Determinations made within 60 calendar days of the AU receiving the portfolio submitted by the parent
 - o An early access child shall be 4 by October 1 for kindergarten and 5 for first grade
- ☑ AU shall designate personnel to collect portfolios and data and to administer assessments
- ☑ The early access determination team shall include an AU level or school gifted resource person, a teacher in early childhood and other personnel designated by AU. Parents must accept or decline early access.
- ☑ A letter of determination of early access decision signed by parent, gifted education staff, early childhood staff, receiving teacher and building administrator
- ☑ Describe the evaluation steps to include:
 - o Screening portfolio and the information parents must collect and submit
 - o Applicant contact information
 - o Screening tool that will be completed by the parent and child's teacher
 - o Information about the performance of the child
- ☑ AU shall use following criteria for evaluation of early access students and describe the methods and tool(s) used for assessment:
 - o Aptitude score of highly advanced or levels of performance compared to age-peers or 97th percentile and above on standardized cognitive test
 - o Achievement score of highly advanced or levels of performance compared to age-peers or 97th percentile and above on standardized achievement test in reading, mathematics and writing
 - o Performance supporting early access indicated by work samples and informal parent and/or teacher data indicating ability above age peers
 - o Readiness, social behavior and motivation determined by child's ability to demonstrate the indicators necessary for kindergarten or first grade

House Bill 08-1021 created the opportunity for Colorado administrative units (AUs) to accelerate **highly advanced** gifted children under age 4 for kindergarten and/or under age 5 for first grade pursuant to CRS 22-20-204(2). The Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA) is Colorado's primary law with requirements for the implementation of specific elements and procedures for gifted education programs. ECEA Rules provide AUs guidance for the implementation of **early access** as well as clarify provisions for AUs to receive state education funds for early access children.

***This element:* Meets conditions of law**

Description of findings and observations:

The Mt. Evans BOCES Early Access process is well defined and accessible to stakeholders. Information on the referral process, portfolio requirements, assessment, time frames and criteria is provided on the AU website. There are no students identified in Early Access at this time. Specific professional development is not provided for early childhood providers but they do receive information about the process and brochures regarding the identification process.

Strengths:



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- The Administrative Unit meets all key requirements in this element of Exceptional Children's Education Act.
 - The district website contains clear and easily accessible information to all stakeholders about the Early Access process.

Recommendations for continuous program development:

- Offer focused professional development to early childhood providers regarding the characteristics of and identification process for Early Access learners.
- Provide continued compliance with all key requirements for this element as part of the ECEA.



V. Conclusion

Based on a thorough and comprehensive analysis of data presented by the AU’s Self-evaluation for the desk audit and remarks of the AU Site Visit, the CGER review team finds the following elements in compliance or non-compliance of the State Board rules for the implementation of the Exceptional Children’s Education Act.

<i>Program Elements</i>	Compliance
Procedures for Parent, Family and Student Engagement and Communication	In Compliance
Definition of “Gifted Student”	In Compliance
Identification Procedures, Criteria for determining exceptional ability or Talent Pool, and Portability	In Compliance
Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) Content, Procedures and Responsibilities	In Compliance
Programming	In Compliance
Evaluation and Accountability	In Compliance
Personnel	In Compliance
Budget	In Compliance
Reports	In Compliance
Record Keeping	In Compliance
Procedures for Disagreements	In Compliance
Monitoring	In Compliance
Early Access (if applicable)	In Compliance