



# Gifted and Talented Parent Handbook

Adams 14  
Gifted and Talented Programming  
Student Services  
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303-853-3249



## *Site map*

*Home/Characteristics/Identification/Programming/Social & Emotional/  
Twice Exceptional/Supporting Your Child/Parents as Partners/Advocacy/Glossary/[Is It a Cheetah?](#)/A Letter to  
Gifted Children/[Gifted Children's Bill of Rights](#)*

This site is designed to provide you with the information you need to support your child and work effectively with your child's school.

***There is no better advocate for a gifted child than a knowledgeable and active parent.***

Additional information can be obtained from your school's Gifted and Talented (GT) Liaison or Cheryl Franklin-Rohr, Adams 14 Gifted and Talented Coordinator, 303-853-3249.

## **Characteristics of Gifted Children**

***“Our kids are normal. They just aren’t typical”***

***- Jim Delisle***

## **What does “gifted” mean?**

The state of Colorado provides the following definition of gifted students:

"Gifted and talented children" means those persons between the ages of four\* and twenty-one whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. Children under four who are gifted may also be provided with early childhood special educational services. Gifted students include gifted students with disabilities (i.e. twice exceptional) and students with exceptional abilities or potential from all socio-economic and ethnic, cultural populations. Gifted students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these areas of giftedness:

- General or specific intellectual ability.
- Specific academic aptitude.
- Creative or productive thinking.
- Leadership abilities.
- Visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor abilities.

\*See 2008 change in state law to allow selective Early Access.

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/qt/download/pdf/FF\\_EarlyAccess.pdf](http://www.cde.state.co.us/qt/download/pdf/FF_EarlyAccess.pdf)

## **Is my child gifted?**

Often bright students – those who are motivated, high achievers – are thought to be gifted by their parents and teachers. However, a truly gifted student will demonstrate certain unique characteristics.

Listed below are behaviors exhibited by both bright and gifted students. The majority of a bright child’s behaviors will be found in the left column while the truly gifted child will exhibit behaviors from both columns depending on the task at hand.

<b>Bright Child</b>	<b>Gifted Learner</b>
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Is attentive	Is mentally and physically involved
Has good ideas	Has wild, silly ideas
Works hard	Plays around, yet tests well
Answers the questions	Discusses in detail; elaborates
In the top groups	Functions beyond the group
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings and opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows

6-8 repetitions for mastery

Understands ideas

Enjoys peers

Grasps the meaning

Completes assignments

Is receptive to instruction

Copies accurately

Enjoys school

Absorbs information

Technician

Good at memorization

Enjoys straightforward instruction

Is alert

Is pleased with own learning

1-2 repetitions for mastery

Constructs abstractions

Prefers adults

Draw inferences

Initiates projects

Is intense

Creates a new design

Enjoys learning

Manipulates information

Inventor

Good guesser

Thrives on complexity

Is keenly observant

Is highly self-critical

By: Janice Szabo

## ***Where can I learn more about the characteristics of gifted children?***

Take a look at the following links:

<http://www.giftedkidsnetwork.com/?s=characteristics>

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/G/T/download/pdf/G/T12TraitsGiftedness.pdf>

<http://www.austega.com/gifted/characteristics.htm>

<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=956>

[CDE Gifted Guidelines, Vol. I](#)

“Myths and Realities” (Colorado Department of Education *Gifted Education Guidelines and Resources, Vol. I*, pp. 61-63)

“Distinguishing Characteristics of Gifted Learners” (same as above, pp. 69-72)

## ***I think my child is gifted – now what?***

If you think your child's behaviors match characteristics of gifted children, continue to explore this Parent Handbook and then contact the Gifted and Talented Building Liaison at your child's school.

## Identification

*“Until every gifted child can attend a school where the brightest are appropriately challenged in an environment with their intellectual peers, America can't claim that it's leaving no child behind.”*

*-Jan & Bob Davidson with Laura Vanderkam, in Genius Denied*

### **How are gifted students in Adams 14 identified?**

The Adams 14 identification process is aligned with state guidelines for identifying students eligible for gifted education and advanced learning services. These guidelines support the approach of looking at a variety of information for each student based on a “Body of Evidence.” This evidence will determine if a student needs programming beyond that offered in the regular classroom or curriculum, Gifted students usually fall within the top 3-7% of the general student population in terms of potential abilities.

### **The Body of Evidence**

In building the Body of Evidence, evidence of exceptional ability is collected in four areas: aptitude, achievement, performance, and behavior. Evidence is examined against qualifying criteria. To be formally identified in Adams 14, a student must qualify in at least three of the four areas. The four areas are listed below, along with possible data that may be collected in each. Tests listed by name are the ones most commonly used in the District.

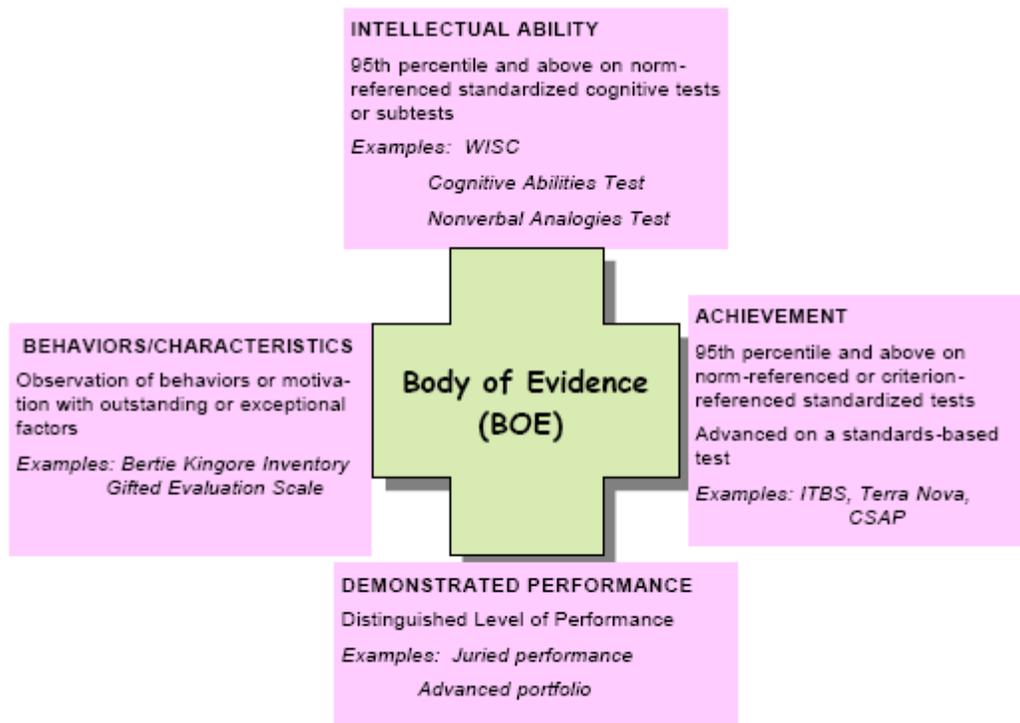
- Aptitude: Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), Naglieri Non-Verbal Ability Test (NNAT2), Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (K-BIT) and others at the advanced level.
- Achievement: Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), Northwest Educational Assessments (NWEA), and others at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile and higher
- Demonstrated Performance or Portfolio: portfolios, student products, contests and competitions, and/or performance tasks judged by experts in that field
- Behaviors and Characteristics: Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS); Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS; also referred to as the Renzulli or Renzulli-Hartman scales, after their chief author/s) , and others

For more detailed information on identification procedures, go to the gifted and talented website on CDE's and look at the identification publication at : <http://www.cde.state.co.us/G/T/publications.htm>.

For short descriptions of the tests and instruments mentioned above, find the website for the publisher of the test by typing the name of the test into your search engine.

### **State of Colorado Body of Evidence Chart**

In the state [Gifted Education Guidelines and Resources, Vol. I](#), the following visual shows sample evidence collected in the four areas. Please note that Adams 14 data collection instruments may differ from these, listed as examples by the Colorado Department of Education on their website.



### ***Can I be involved in the identification process?***

Yes, parent input is very important. In the initial stages of identification, parents may be asked to fill out an inventory of gifted behaviors they observe at home. Parents are also asked to give permission for specific tests to be given. After testing is completed, parents can request to review the results with the GT Building Liaison.

### ***When does the identification process begin?***

Teachers and staff are trained to recognize gifted behaviors and student strengths and to refer students of all grade levels, PK-12. This referral is one way to begin the process, although parents may also initiate a referral by contacting their child's school. In addition, all students are given an intellectual screening test (the Naglieri Non-Verbal Ability Test at the first grade and the Cognitive Abilities Test at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade). For students who score above a threshold, a body of evidence is collected, including achievement data, parent, and teacher behavioral checklists.

### ***If my child isn't identified in 1<sup>st</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade, can he/she be identified in another grade?***

Yes, there is no “window” for identifying gifted behaviors. Identification for gifted and talented services is an ongoing process using multiple criteria. **No single factor can eliminate a student from consideration.** Teachers review assessment results and other data throughout the year to get a complete picture of students’ strengths, needs, and abilities. There are several types of evidence that may be used to identify a student.

### ***My child has a disability. Can he/she be identified as gifted?***

Yes, a student can be twice-exceptional – that is, identified as eligible for special services in more than one area.

See *Twice-Exceptional Students*

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/download/pdf/TwiceExceptionalResourceHandbook.pdf>

### ***Does Adams 14 consider areas of giftedness other than academic (e.g., creativity, leadership)?***

Yes, all learners are considered regardless of academic achievement. Parents are invited to provide evidence of student strengths and talents in areas like art, music, creativity, and leadership. Teachers also may recognize these strengths and talents and may refer students based on their observations.

### ***My child participated in gifted education in another school district. Will he/she continue to be served in Adams 14?***

If you are coming to our area from out of state, your former district should be able to provide official documentation of eligibility and the criteria/testing that were used in the identification process. Information should also include the student’s areas of strength and the nature of the programming services provided to the child in the former district. If this documentation and criteria align with Colorado and District Adams 14 guidelines, it will be included in the child’s Body of Evidence. Keep in mind, additional testing or other assessments to complete a Body of Evidence may be required to meet state guidelines.

If your child comes from another Colorado public school district with complete identification, he/she is identified according to state rules and regulations. Your child’s Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) from the former district will be recognized and followed in District 14, although ALPs often look different from district to district.

# Programming

*“What is necessary and sufficient for the nongifted is necessary but insufficient for the gifted, who need more and different learning experiences to match their potentials.”*

*- A.J. Tannenbaum*

## ***Why Highly Capable Students Need Something Different***

<http://www.nagc.org/commonmyths.aspx>

### ***What is an ALP?***

ALP is an acronym for Advanced Learning Plan, which is required in Colorado for every identified gifted child. The ALP is a planning guide for making instructional decisions, an accountability record, and a tool for monitoring students with outstanding potential. The ALP is part of your child's cumulative folder and will follow him/her from grade to grade, school to school.

According to state guidelines, ALPs must include information on the student's strengths, goals related to the strengths, recommended differentiation strategies teachers may use to help the student meet his/her goals, and a place for parent, teacher, and, when appropriate, student signatures. In addition to these required elements.

### ***Do all students have ALPs?***

No. Only students formally identified as gifted have ALPs.

### ***My child has been identified as gifted. When will I see his/her ALP?***

An ALP is usually put in place by the end of the school year in which the child was identified. For students in elementary and middle school, parents should see the ALP at least once a year at parent/teacher conferences. At the high school level, the students meet with the GT Building Liaison and create their own ALPs based on their strength areas.

### ***How can I obtain a copy of my child's ALP?***

At the elementary level, the classroom teacher is responsible for communicating with you about ALPs. At the middle school, the ALPs may be shared by the classroom teacher, or the GT Building Liaison. At the high school level, you can contact the grade level GT Liaison.

### ***Can I contribute to the development of my child's ALP?***

Yes. Your child's classroom teacher (or, at middle or high school, other responsible person) will confer with both you and your child and take your thoughts into consideration in the creation of the ALP. You and, usually, your child sign the completed document.

## Does an ALP change every year?

It may. Because it is based on student strengths as observed and documented, academic and talent goals usually remain essentially the same – academic goals are directed toward growth in the area of strength or growth of the talent area each year.

At the elementary and middle levels, you, your child, and your child’s teacher and/or GT Building Liaison review it annually and make changes as needed. In high school, your student reviews his/her own ALP annually with his/her GT grade level building liaison. Your student may set new goals as his/her interests and strengths change and mature.

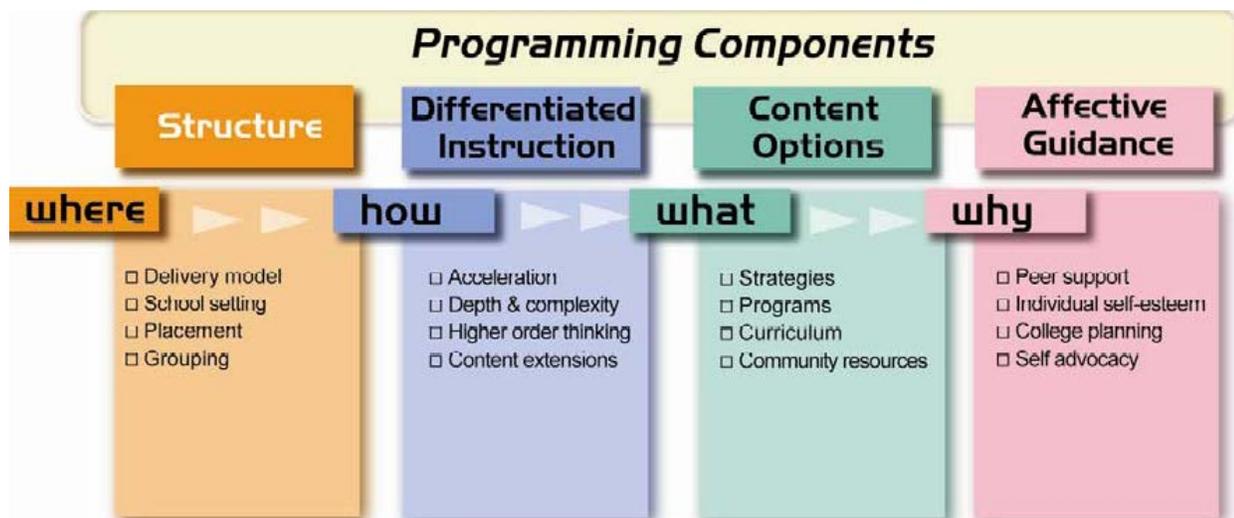
## Is there a difference between “being in a gifted program” and “receiving gifted programming?”

Yes. Although the wording may seem similar, the change from program to programming represents a major shift in how schools deal with student differences. The concept of being “in” a certain program implies that some students are also “out.” The logical extension of that thinking is that we can easily tell who should be “in” and who must stay “out,” when this is not the case. No one measurement can tell us who is “really” gifted. It is best to respond to the needs of children and youth.

As students demonstrate strengths that need nurturing, the school should respond by providing special services. Students identified as gifted have demonstrated that they need “something different” than what most other students need. A “gifted program” is often something that is fixed and pre-planned, while gifted programming is something that is built around the students and can respond to their individual needs and interests.

## OK, we have an ALP. How is programming designed?

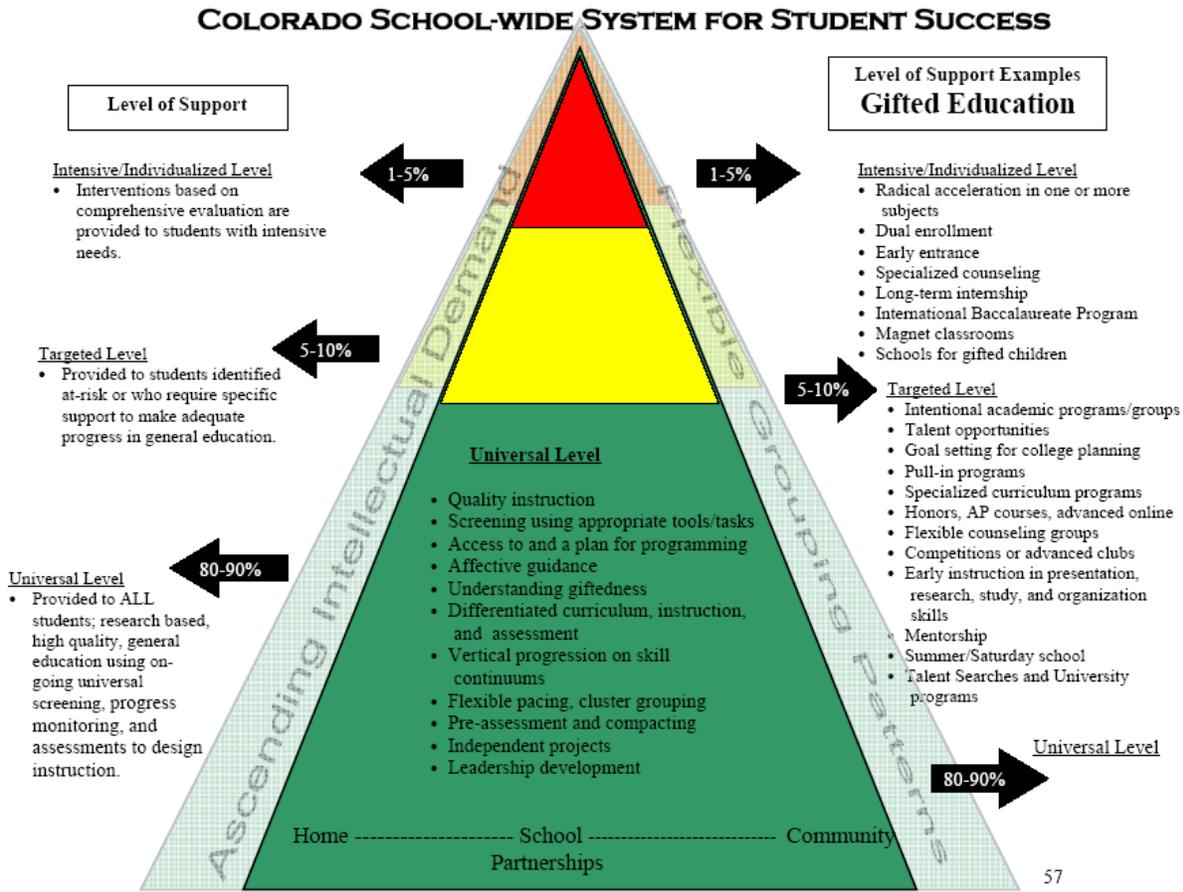
Programming components, as described by the state, include:



Programming is adaptable to the resources within different schools in Adams 14. Each school works with our district's Gifted and Talented Coordinator to determine how the programming components will be implemented to ensure measurable growth in gifted student achievement or performance.

**Do all gifted and talented students receive the same type of programming? (Rtl)**

Adams 14 uses the Adams 14 Instructional Cycle. The instructional cycle is built around the idea that students, by virtue of their differing characteristics, have different levels of need for particular interventions, including gifted and talented services. The process of determining the intensity of student needs for services, rather than first labeling a student before providing appropriate services, is called Response to Intervention (Rtl). Rtl is a nation-wide approach to serving students that differs from the old approach of reacting to labels. This diagram may help you to visualize “tiered programming.”



“Collaboration and systemic responsiveness supporting learning and growth for all students”

Colorado's 3-tier Model is based upon the following concepts:

- High quality research-based general education instruction for all students
- General education teachers who are active in students' assessment
- Universal screening of academics and behavior (All students examined for evidence of gifted behaviors)
- Research-based interventions to address a student's needs (Attempts to meet needs in regular classrooms)
- Systematic assessment of the fidelity of intervention implementation (Are teachers instructing according to the ALP?)
- Progress monitoring of intervention effectiveness (Is the student achieving?)
- Partnerships among home, school, and community that positively affect students

The goals of the 3-tiered Model are:

- Students are screened early for at-risk and strength traits.
- Strengths and difficulties direct instruction decisions.
- Alignment exists for assessment, instruction, and progress monitoring.

### ***What do the three tiers mean?***

Colorado's use of the RtI process means that programming for the strengths of students, rather than an "in" or "out" traditional gifted program, is the expectation in the state. This means that not all gifted students will be taught by the same teacher, for the same amount of time, for the same content areas, or in the same ways as others, even within the same school. A gifted student whose academic needs put him/her far beyond the level of her classmates, for example, requires different amounts and types of services and programming than does a student who is one or two years ahead of age-mates in one content area.

#### ***Green***

All gifted students receive this level of support, including differentiated instruction in the regular classroom and content extensions as needed. For most gifted students (up to 80-90%), no further support is needed for them to achieve according to their potential.

#### ***Yellow***

For some gifted students (perhaps 5-10%), other support is needed in addition to that described at the green level. This might include more time with a certain teacher, moving to another classroom for certain instruction, more independent study, more social-emotional programming, or specific extra-curricular activities.

*Red*

For a very few, perhaps 1-5% of the gifted population, intensive, individualized services are needed.

## ***What programming options can Adams 14 provide for my child?***

All of our schools provide programming aligned with the State of Colorado guidelines, but programming options and delivery differ from school to school. Read on to get a general idea of what Adams 14 has to offer at our elementary, middle and high schools.

### ***Elementary School Academic Programming***

In general, elementary schools use a combination of three techniques to meet the needs of gifted students: (1) differentiated instruction in the classroom by the regular classroom teacher, (2) small-group instruction within the regular classroom, and (3) after school enrichment opportunities such as Spelling Bee, Destination Imagination, and other afterschool classes.

#### ***Cluster grouping***

For example, if at third grade there are 5 students identified as gifted in Language Arts, those students are “clustered”, or “grouped” into reading together. That way, the teacher can plan extensions and a more rapid pace for those students in a small group setting, and the students have a group of intellectual peers with whom to interact.

### ***Middle School Academic Programming***

Because of the way that curriculum is delivered in separate classes in middle school, pull-out is neither practical nor advisable. To address the academic needs of gifted students, middle schools use grouping strategies and advanced classes.

#### ***Middle school math placement***

All Adams 14 middle schools use the same process to place students into appropriate math classes. Math achievement is examined at three separate data points (CSAP math, NWEA math, and an end-of-grade level math test or classroom based measures). Results from these data points determine whether a student is ready for regular grade-level mathematics or mathematics at the next grade level. Students whose mathematical knowledge and skills are far above grade level take classes at the level appropriate for them. If the class they need is not offered at their middle school, these advanced students can register for classes at the high school.

### *Gifted and talented curriculum*

Middle school teachers also address affective topics. They have a district-wide goal to prepare students to take on the responsibility for their own advanced learning in high school. Middle school teachers do this by helping their students understand their own learning styles, interests, and strengths, and by increasing their skills as independent researchers and self-directed learners. By the time they continue on to high school, gifted students will have had the opportunity to rewrite their own ALP goals with help from parents and teachers.

## ***High School Academic Programming***

Gifted and talented students at the high school level have a range of options open to them, but they must be mentally and emotionally prepared to take full advantage of all the available choices. Self-advocacy is important for the gifted student wishing to navigate through the range of courses, programs, and credit options open to him or her. A knowledgeable parent can help his or her student immensely by being as informed as possible about what high schools have to offer.

### *Honors classes in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade*

There are honors classes in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. These classes will give students the opportunity to learn the academic skills necessary to be successful with Advanced Placement Classes.

### *High school Gifted and Talented Building Liaison*

Each grade level at the high school has a person on staff that has been identified as that grade level's school's G/T Building Liaison. The GT Liaison's job is to help students navigate the high school system, steer them toward resources they may need, act as a liaison when necessary between the student and a teacher or teachers, develop ALPs with student input and, in general, listen to students as they express their needs, fears, frustrations, and aspirations.

### *Electives and interest areas*

Students with strong interests and talents in visual art, vocal or instrumental music, theater, computers, or other areas have many more choices of classes in their areas of strength. Additionally, several after school clubs can match their individual interest areas.

### *Concurrent Enrollment and early graduation*

Students who advance rapidly through their coursework by being accelerated in one or more content areas may "run out" of classes to take at the high school before they have amassed enough credits to graduate. When this happens, as it does most frequently in math, the school district must pay for that student to take the appropriate class at a local college or university or online, according to state law on post-secondary options. In Adams 14, many students take the "Fast Track" option and attend Front Range Community College at the same time they are attending high school, to earn a credit in a higher level of some course that is not offered at their school.

Post-secondary options may be used to take a class not usually offered at high schools or a world language class not offered at the high school, such as Russian or Japanese. The Colorado state law on "Post-secondary options" also allows a student to take a class such as Welding, Drafting, or Video Production at Front Range Community College tuition-free if the class is not offered in the District.

Students may also graduate early if they have earned enough credits and has taken all the requirements to graduate. Most colleges accept students younger than 17 or 18 years of age, but parents and students should be sure to check on this before assuming that the college of choice will be available to them earlier than usual. The GT Liaisons and high school counselors can assist students with post-secondary planning to ensure that this process goes smoothly.

To learn more about changes to state law on post-secondary options, go to <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdegen/downloads/ConcurrentEnrollmentFactSheet%20.pdf>

## Social & Emotional

*"The natural trajectory of giftedness in childhood is not a six-figure salary, perfect happiness, and a guaranteed place in Who's Who. It is the deepening of the personality, the strengthening of one's value system, the creation of greater and greater challenges for oneself, and the development of broader avenues for expressing compassion.*

*-Dr. Linda Silverman, Counseling the Gifted and Talented*

Since a great deal of information is widely available online about the social and emotional needs and development of gifted children and adolescents, you are directed to some of the sites here and in the Supporting Your Child section of this Handbook. These sites may, in turn, have additional links for you.

### ***Do gifted children exhibit characteristics other than academic ones that parents should be aware of?***

Yes. The following links discuss the behaviors associated with Divergent Thinking, Excitability, Sensitivity, Perceptiveness, Asynchronous Development, Stress and Depression, Gender Issues and Perfectionism.

<http://www.giftedkidsnetwork.com/?s=social+and+emotional>

<http://www.sengifted.org/>

### ***How can I support the emotional needs of my child?***

All children need to be loved, nurtured, kept safe, given attention and affection and taught how to interact with other people. Gifted and talented children are no exception. As parents, it is our privilege and responsibility to do our best to provide these things for our children. It is particularly important to remember to always see your child as a child first and gifted and talented second.

The following link directs you to several sites and blogs that provide thoughtful suggestions and guidelines for parenting the gifted and talented child:

[http://www.prufrock.com/client/client\\_pages/parent\\_introduction.cfm](http://www.prufrock.com/client/client_pages/parent_introduction.cfm)

## Twice-Exceptional Students

*"I am the one who is 'many times gifted,' because I have a beautiful sensitive child whose gifts lead him to see the world in creative, unexpected ways, and whose intelligence and learning disabilities help make him a sensitive and loving child, who brings me great joy and blessings."*

*- a parent of a twice-exceptional child*

### ***My child has a disability. Can he/she still qualify for gifted and talented services?***

Yes. A child who is identified as gifted and talented and also has a disability\* is termed twice-exceptional. Usually, the learning specialist and the classroom teacher work together to provide appropriate programming to help these students reach their full potential.

\*see below for a more complete description

### ***The state of Colorado provides the following definition of twice-exceptional:***

**Twice-exceptional students are:**

1. Students who are identified as gifted and talented in one or more areas of exceptionality (specific academics, general intellectual ability, creativity, leadership, visual, spatial, or performing arts); and also identified with
2. A disability defined by federal/state eligibility criteria: perceptual communicative disability (learning disability), significant identifiable emotional disability, physical disabilities, sensory disabilities, autism, or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The disability qualifies the student for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a plan under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (504 Plan).

### ***How are twice-exceptional children recognized?***

**G/T Identified First**

- Achievement noticed first

- Strengths or “gifts” often fostered through G/T programs
- Often passed over for special education support because they may be achieving at grade level

### **Disability Identified First**

- Often failing in school
- First noticed for what they cannot do
- Most “at risk” because the special education label tends to create a focus on deficits
- Often difficult for them to give themselves credit for their abilities
- Acquisition of basic skills emphasized over creative productive behavior

### **Neither G/T nor Disability Identified**

- Disability masks “gifts”
- “Gifts” mask disability
- Intellectual ability masks disability
- Often gifts emerge in specific content areas or particular learning environments where nontraditional methods are used.

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***[Where can I learn more about twice exceptional children?](#)***

[www.hoagiesgifted.org/eric/e479.html](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/eric/e479.html)

[www.hoagiesgifted.org/twice\\_exceptional.htm](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/twice_exceptional.htm)

[www.2enewsletter.com/welcome%20page.htm](http://www.2enewsletter.com/welcome%20page.htm)

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/G/T/publications.htm>

<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=973>

# Supporting Your Child

*“He never pays attention, he always knows the answer, and he can never tell you how he knows. We can’t keep thrashing him. He is a bad example to the other pupils. There’s no educating a smart boy.”*

*-Terry Pratchett, Thief of Time*

## *How can I support my child at home?*

- Nurture your child's strengths and interests.
- Share the adventure of learning something new with your child.
- Recognize and model making mistakes as an opportunity to learn, not as a mark of failure.
- Encourage safe risk-taking.
- Help set priorities.
- Seek positive peer connections.
- Avoid over-scheduling.
- Allow time for reflection.
- Pursue unfamiliar learning opportunities.
- Keep your child challenged and engaged in learning.
- Keep your sense of humor!

## *Links for parent support:*

[http://www.dukegiftedletter.com/articles/vol3no4\\_feature.html](http://www.dukegiftedletter.com/articles/vol3no4_feature.html) Parenting Principles that Work

<http://www.hoagiesgifted.com/index.htm> Hoagies Gifted, a website for all things gifted

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/javits/index.html> Jacob Javits Gifted Education Program

<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=48> National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) parents' page – many links and information on becoming a parent member, which includes a subscription to *Parenting for High Potential*

[http://www.nagc.org/uploadedFiles/PHP/PHP\\_Articles/Perils%20of%20Parenting%20\(June%2008\).pdf](http://www.nagc.org/uploadedFiles/PHP/PHP_Articles/Perils%20of%20Parenting%20(June%2008).pdf)  
*Perils of Parenting*, Nancy N. Heilbronner

<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcG/T.html> The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented

<http://www.sengifted.org/> Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted

[http://www.prufrock.com/client/client\\_pages/parent\\_introduction.cfm](http://www.prufrock.com/client/client_pages/parent_introduction.cfm) Prufrock Press (publisher of materials for gifted students) page for parents, including links to other resources and Prufrock gifted education blog

<http://resources.prufrock.com/GiftedChildInformationBlog/tabid/57/Default.aspx> blog by former gifted educator Carol Fertig, author of *Raising a Gifted Child: A Parent Success Handbook*

# Parents as Partners

*“Most teachers waste their time by asking questions which are intended to discover what a pupil does not know, whereas the true art of questioning has for its purpose to discover what the pupil knows or is capable of knowing.”*

*-Albert Einstein*

## ***How can I become involved with my child's education?***

Communication with your child's classroom teachers and the GT Building Liaison is the key. See the tips below.

## ***Common Ground for Parents and Teachers***

- Student needs
- Programming services
- Student achievement (academic growth)
- Optimal performance
- Learning goals

## ***Communicating with School: A Positive Approach***

- Request a convenient time to speak with your child's teacher.
- Provide your questions and concerns to the teacher in writing before meeting the teacher.
- Be willing to compromise and collaborate on behalf of the student's needs.
- Keep a file of communications, learning plans and testing data on your child throughout his/her PK-12 years.
- Provide both positive and negative feedback for changes in your child's learning plan, school assignments and learning activities.
- Determine reasonable timelines and methods for communicating with your child's teacher.
- Do not expect your child to provide complete or accurate descriptions of school-day experiences. Communicate directly with your child's teachers if you have questions about what is happening in the classroom.
- Celebrate excellence both for your child and for those who teach your child.
- Keep up-to-date with your school's website.

## ***What Parents Want to Know from Educators (questions to ask)***

- What can you tell me about my child's academic abilities?
- When can I tell you about my child's interests and abilities outside of school?
- In school how will you...
  - challenge and encourage his/her learning?

- recognize and address his/her unique learning needs?
  - support his/her continued academic success?
  - assure appropriate placement?
- What can I do at home/school to help my child learn?
- If I am not satisfied, what should I do?

### ***What Parents Need to Share with Educators (clues for understanding my child)***

- Home activities that demonstrate ability and interest
- Attitudes about school
- Behavior at home vs. behavior at school (both positive and negative)
- Examples of how the child learns best outside of school
- Test data over time (on different testing instruments)
- Response to particular assignments
- Response to trying new things
- Response to making mistakes
- Independent work vs. group work
- Comfort level working with “peers”
- Other useful information

### ***Strategies for Success***

- Seek a good match rather than a particular teacher.
- Avoid ambiguity, vague demands, and assumptions.
- Watch your words at home.
- Remain open to possibilities vs. being right.
- Maintain a balanced perspective...seeking academic growth rather than perfect grades.
- Allow your child to take responsibility for his/her work...and the grade.
- Value a strong work ethic with high expectations.
- Model resiliency and seek solutions through collaboration.

### ***How to be a Critical Resource at Your Child’s School***

- Be a “personal resource bank” for your child’s teacher.
- Offer work/play samples of your child’s interests/strengths.
- Provide continual feedback from the home perspective.
- Discover resources/connections to enhance program options and classroom activities.
- Donate your time and talent.
- Join school and district committees that focus on academic excellence and accountability.
- Network on behalf of advanced learners.
- Celebrate excellence!
- Be a part of the solution, not a part of the problem.

## Potential Outcomes

- Improved student achievement
- Credibility as an advocate
- Mutual respect between parents and teachers
- Increased communication between home and school
- Trust
- Balance
- Increased awareness of educational issues
- Support through expanded network of resources
- Effective advocacy through positive political influence
- Constructive contributions to the school community
- Sense of purpose and accomplishment
- Becoming a mentor to other parents

## Advocacy

*"If our children do not get the opportunity to learn all they are able to learn, it is because not enough people insist on appropriate education for them. As parents we must organize to become a respected and sizable force which can make a difference."*

*-Gina Ginsberg Riggs, "A Call for Parent Advocacy,"  
Understanding Our Gifted, March/April 1996*

## How can I become involved?

Parents can be the most effective advocates for their children's education. Participate in your local, state, and national gifted advocacy groups. Such groups can influence local, state, and federal legislation that directly impacts your child. They also provide valuable information about gifted education, scholarships for students, and networking opportunities for children and adults. Visit their web sites, and join them to strengthen the voices speaking on behalf of gifted children.

Although the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) and your own state organization (Colorado Association for the Gifted and Talented) provide information to both members and legislators, you should become a part of the process. Advocacy can be as simple as using the legislative alerts issued by the state or national group as the basis of a personal appeal to your representative. Good legislators appreciate the opinions and the supporting stories of their constituents. Stay connected through your parent groups, because legislation can change quickly as compromises lead to revisions. Become known as a reliable source of information to your representative.

Effective advocacy is more than being passionate about gifted education. The effective advocate knows how to convey the message that needs to be heard – how to frame information in a manner that drives the point without alienating those who influence the decision-making process.

### ***Where do I begin?***

Begin at your child's school or even in his/her classroom. Attend the annual fall and spring parent conferences. Next, become involved with our new parent support group or the Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented. You'll learn what is new in Adams 14 and how you can influence positive change.

### ***Local, State, and National Organizations***

<http://coloradogifted.org> Colorado Association for the Gifted and Talented

<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=1052> How to Start a Parent Support Group

<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=36> NAGC Advocacy Toolkit

<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=1445> NAGC Parent & Community Network

### ***Advocacy Tips***

[http://www.nagc.org/uploadedFiles/PHP/PHP\\_Article\\_Archive/2003/March/mar03advocateyouth.pdf](http://www.nagc.org/uploadedFiles/PHP/PHP_Article_Archive/2003/March/mar03advocateyouth.pdf)

*Advocating for Talented Youth: Lessons Learned from the National Study of Local and State Advocacy in Gifted Education*

<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/advocacy.htm> Hoagies Gifted Advocacy page

# Glossary

## A Guide to Commonly-Used Words, Phrases and Acronyms in Gifted Education

Can't find the term you're looking for? Want more information on one of these terms? Try the NAGC glossary of Frequently Used Terms in Gifted Education at <http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=565>

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED

**Ability** – indicates a student's capacity or potential for intellectual reasoning and problem solving.

**Ability Grouping**- the flexible regrouping of students based on individual instructional needs

**Acceleration** – moving at a faster pace through academic content. Radical acceleration refers to skipping an entire grade level, e.g., a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade student may be permanently moved to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Subject acceleration refers to skipping the grade level in a specific subject area, e.g., a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student may take 7<sup>th</sup> grade math. Acceleration also includes early entrance into kindergarten, curriculum compacting, concurrent enrollment, advanced placement (college courses while in high school), on-line/correspondence courses, and early entrance into middle/high school and college.

**Achievement** – evidence showing how a student's learning of skills and knowledge related to specific courses and standards has increased

**Affective Needs**- the social and emotional considerations of an individual

**Aptitude** – measurement of cognitive and scholastic skills with standardized tests

**Assessment tools** – instruments used to gather data on a student's learning abilities

**Asynchronous Growth** – term developed by Dr. Linda Silverman, Gifted Development Center, to describe the characteristics of gifted children. This indicates uneven development in emotional, physical and intellectual areas which may affect them with feelings of being "different" and "out of sync." For example, a five year old child may be able to read at a 6<sup>th</sup> grade level but still have difficulty typing his/her shoes.

**Auditory-Sequential** – the most common learning style among students. They are typically good listeners who do well with step-by-step presentations, process what they hear quickly, and express themselves well orally. Because most schools teach in an auditory-sequential style, these students usually do well in school.

**Body of Evidence** – collection of information about a student’s learning needs in areas, such as: ability, achievement, behavior/characteristics, and demonstrated performance. This is used as a tool to identify students as gifted, talented, and/or creative.

**Cluster Grouping** – the intentional placement of a group of similar ability students in an otherwise heterogeneous (mixed ability) classroom for a particular learning activity.

**Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)** a test often given by Gifted and Talented Specialists as a part of the identification process for students. The test assesses cognitive processes through words, mathematical understandings and through pictures.

**Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented (CAGT)** – a statewide advocacy group of educators and parents interested in promoting understanding for gifted and talented children. CAGT publishes *Kaleidoscope*, an education and parent advocacy newsletter which is published four times per year.

**Compacting** – streamlining the regular curriculum to “buy time” for enrichment, accelerated content, and independent study. Compacting usually involves pre-assessment of what students have already mastered. This differentiation strategy enable gifted students to learn at a rapid pace, avoid unnecessary drill, explore complex question, and engage in in-depth study.

**Colorado’s Definition of Giftedness** – Gifted children mean those 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 may also be served. Gifted students are capable of high performance in any or a combination of these areas:

- a) general intellectual ability
- b) specific academic aptitude
- c) creative, productive thinking
- d) leadership and human relations skills
- e) visual and performing arts

**Complex Tasks** – providing multiple-step projects for advanced knowledge and skill acquisition

**Concurrent Enrollment** – high school acceleration option in which students enroll for courses at different levels; for example, a high school student obtaining high school credit and college credit by taking a college level computer class. The class may be an option at the high school site or may be a course taken at a college site. This should be coordinated with the student’s counselor to ensure transcript credit.

**Creative Thinking Skills** – encourages more creative thought patterns, which include 1) fluency; 2) flexibility; 3) originality; and 4) elaboration

**Critical Thinking Skills** – higher order thinking skills (e.g. persuasion, analysis, reasoning, problem solving, and evaluation) that brings logical order and meaning to ideas which helps in understanding complex problems

**Differentiation** – the modification of programming and instruction based on a student’s academic need and intellectual ability. Content, process and product may be differentiated.

**Enrichment** – the enhancement of the curricular program with additional opportunities for learning

**Heterogeneous Grouping** – students are taught in mixed ability groups; the opposite of homogeneous grouping

**Higher Thinking Skills** - thinking skills based on the upper end of Bloom’s Taxonomy such as processing requiring analysis, synthesis, evaluation or other critical thinking skills

**Homogeneous Grouping** – students are taught in similar ability groups; the opposite of heterogeneous grouping

**House Bill 1244-07** – created the “mandated” gifted education program in Colorado, in May 2007. House Bill 1244-07 requires that each district provide gifted education services under the following language: “Each administrative unit (meaning Adams 14 School District) shall adopt and implement a program plan to identify and serve gifted children.

**Identification** – the result of the formal process of testing, observing, and evaluating student determine giftedness

**Interest Grouping** – grouping students of like interest on a regular basis during the school day for pursuit of advanced knowledge in a specific content area

**Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT2)** – is considered a culturally fair measure of school ability. Students rely on reasoning and problem-solving skills not on verbal, reading, or writing skills. The NNAT2 measures general ability, known as g, through pattern completion, reasoning by analogy, serial reasoning, and spatial visualization.

**Perfectionism** – seen in gifted people of all ages, and when channeled into the pursuit of excellence, can be positive as it encourages risk taking, trying new things, and persisting despite failure. Perfectionism can be negative when students feel that they can never fail, always need approval, and any failure not how slight means loss and disappointment.

**Portfolio** – a collection of student work, usually selected by the student, which provides information and can be used to garner student attitudes and motivation. Educators may use the portfolio process to teach students to critique their work, help with self-evaluation as well as document student abilities and talents.

**Twice-Exceptional Students** – students who are both gifted and/or talented in one or more areas, and who also have a learning, emotional, communication or physical disability.

**Underachievement** – a discrepancy between a student’s potential and actual school performance which may be attributed to numerous causes. As academic excellence is not valued by many students, peer pressure may result in underachievement – this is especially noticeable with gifted girls. Twice exceptional students struggle with school performance because of their disabilities. Family issues, lack of challenging curriculum, negative teacher feedback, student self-efficacy and cultural norms may also lead to underachievement.

**Visual Spatial** –a learning style found in approximately 30% of learners. It is characterized by having excellent observation skills, thinking in images, and seeing things as a whole. Visual spatial students may take a while to express themselves orally because they have to translate their images and thoughts into words. In general, visual spatial learners are attracted to professions which include artists, scientists, mechanics, technologists, computer experts, mathematicians and those who understand human relationships.