

Sierra Grande School

Gifted and Talented Handbook

Doing What is Best for Kids

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Sierra Grande School District R-30
Gifted and Talented Program Handbook
Doing What is Best for Kids

Definition

Gifted and talented students are those persons between the ages of five 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.

Outstanding talents are present in students 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

Mission

To assurance gifted and talented students' learning and growth is guaranteed by needed provisions and advocacy through extended learning experiences.

Philosophy

The Sierra Grande Gifted and Talented Program recognizes the right of all students to a program of educational experiences which provides opportunities to reach their full potential. Gifted and talented students need diversity in their educational experiences.

Body of Evidence (BOE) for Individual Gifted and Talented Identification

Student demonstrates exceptional ability in one or more areas of giftedness as listed in the **Definition** section of the handbook. Students have to meet the criteria for at least three prongs of the model.

The State of Colorado Four Pronged Model:

- **Intellectual Ability**
95th percentile and above on norm referenced standardized cognitive tests
 - Cognitive Ability Test - CogAT
 - Psychologist administered individual IQ

- **Achievement**
95th percentile and above on norm referenced or criterion referenced scandalized tests for more than one year in a row
 - NWEA
 - ACT
 - CSAP (middle or high Advanced)
 - Dibels

- **Demonstrated Performance**
advanced distinguished level of performance
 - Performs 2 years above grade level
 - Placing at the state level of completion more than one year in a row
 - Advanced portfolio
 - Responds to accelerated instruction with little repetition

- **Behavior/Characteristics**
observation of behavior or motivations with outstanding or exceptional factors
 - Kingore Observation Inventory
 - Parent Checklist
 - Teacher Checklist

Identification Process

The identification process must be active with both formal identification and ongoing opportunities for students to be identified as their needs are recognized. Students who demonstrate the potential for giftedness as described in the **Body of Evidence** section of the handbook are referred to the Response to Intervention (Rtl) team.

The Sierra Grande Response to Intervention (Rtl) team is the process we use to help identify our gifted students. The Rtl team is typically composed of the district G/T coordinator, school counselor, a school administrator, and classroom teacher(s).

Students may be referred for consideration by professional school staff, peers, parents or by self-nomination to the G/T coordinator. After collecting and organizing the required body of evidence the information is presented to the Rtl team. This team will review the body of evidence that has been collected and compare it to the recommended standards of the identification requirements for giftedness. Students have to meet the criteria for at least three prongs of the model. If a student's body of evidence is unclear the team may recommend the gathering of more information. The team determines if the student needs programming as a gifted student or an advanced learner.

Advance learners become part of our talent pool and will be invited to join the Learning Community known as Thinking and Learning Creatively group (TLC). Students can become part of this organization without the Rtl team at the discretion of the G/T coordinator.

Official identification of a student as gifted will be a group decision involving the Rtl team. If the student is identified as gifted they are invited to join TLC and an ALP is written by the G/T coordinator using Alpine involving teachers, parents and the students to meet their cognitive and affective needs. ALPs are reviewed and updated annually.

Community Outreach

The Sierra Grande School Gifted and Talented Program plan is available to the public. Parents are notified when their students are identified as gifted and the category of giftedness is explained along with the identification process. Parents are included in the development of the Advanced Learning Plan. Parents are encouraged to be involved with the Valley-wide parent support group to maintain networking among them and increase the availability of mentors in specific interest areas.

When appropriate, products or projects produced by gifted students are displayed in the community. Community resources such as professionals in specific fields and persons willing to serve as mentors will help provide support for identified gifted students.

Differentiated Instruction

Gifted students are included in the regular class for most of their educational experience. A tiered approach of differentiated instruction is used to help meet the needs of all learners as a general practice. The classroom teacher shall design extensions for the gifted students that provide depth and breadth to the subject and promotes critical and creative thinking.

TIER 1 – All students within the general education setting provides high quality instruction based on researched best practices. Clearly defined learning objectives, instruction appropriate to meet those targets, student engagement, and assessment for learning that gives students feedback in timely and meaningful ways.

TIER 2 – More capable students receive increased intensity of instructional support within the classroom setting. Scaffolding of instruction for individuals or groups of students. Classroom teachers may provide some learners with alternative assignments and assessments. Some students are pulled out for specific advanced instruction and small group activities. High School students have opportunities for honors classes, advanced placement in core areas, advanced online classes and autonomous learner classes.

TIER 3 – Students are provided with intensified individualized level of intervention and enrichment based on the gifted student's ALP. Students may advocate for themselves alternate assignments and assessments. Gifted students are encouraged to advocate for themselves and propose alternative assignments when they feel the regular assignments do not meet their educational inquiry. Students will provide the teacher with a written description of an alternate assignment for the teacher's approval.

Enrichment activities are purposely designed to expose all students to a wide variety of experiences so that all students have opportunity to show talent and ability. The methods of delivering enrichments are abundant and may include: guest speakers, mini-courses, demonstrations, assemblies, fieldtrips, museum programs, outdoor education opportunities, performances, artistic demonstrations, etc.

Gifted and Talented Coordinator

Sierra Grande School will contract a qualified person responsible for management of the Gifted and Talented Program. The coordinator will receive a stipend.

Gifted and Talented Coordinator's Responsibilities

- Articulating requirements of the program in a written handbook and updating the information as needed.
- Administering the program as stated in the handbook.
- Planning and managing the Gifted and Talented budget.
- Preparing and filing all required reports in a timely manner.
- Serving on the Rtl Team as required by the identification process.
- Keeping informed on current issues and best practices in gifted education.
- Providing ongoing assessment to identify student strengths for the Four Pronged Model.
- Writing and updating annually Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs) for students identified as gifted.
- Planning professional development to improve and enhance the skills, knowledge and expertise of teachers and other personnel who provide instruction and support services to gifted students.
- Promoting activities that encourage opportunity for students to show giftedness.
- Supervise sponsor and organizations under the Gifted and Talented Program.

Sierra Grande Learning Community: Thinking and Learning Creatively (TLC)

Thinking and Learning Creatively (TLC) groups are designed to meet the needs of Sierra Grande's talent pool. The mission of TLC is to promote higher level thinking skills to exceptionally able students and enhance their productive learning and intellectual growth. The underserved populations are included in this process and care is taken to ensure opportunities for identification. Students will be preselected by established guidelines. Sponsor must be a certified teacher. Sponsor will receive a stipend and have program funds to use for supplies, equipment, activities, field trips, etc. Sponsor will work under the guidance and assistance of the district's Gifted and Talented Coordinator.

TLC Sponsorship Responsibilities:

- Submit a plan of action and timeline to the G/T Coordinator briefly outlining ideas for the year by October 15th.
- Plan and facilitate innovative activities that require creative thinking, problem solving and collaboration for exceptional able students.
- Find out the students' curiosities and strengths. Allow their interests and ideas to help direct the agenda. Make the program FUN and challenging.
- Meet with students a minimum of 9 times a year, preferably at least once a month. Meet with students a minimum of twenty hours outside of regular school time; after school or Fridays.
- Notify parents and students of meeting dates and times in a timely manner.
- Document meeting dates, beginning and ending time, student attendance and name of activities.
- Submit a brief summary to the G/T Coordinator of how your program went for the year by May 15th.

Criterion for participating in TLC

Students with exceptional performance in creative thinking, leadership abilities, visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor abilities can become part of this organization without the Rtl team process at the discretion of the G/T coordinator. Exemplary behavior is expected.

Students meeting the following criteria will be considered for TLC:

- Exemplary behavior in school and during meetings
- Demonstrates two or more of the following academic indicators:
 - Scores Advanced or High Proficient in one or more subjects on state test
 - Scores above the 80th percentile on NWEA in one or more subjects
 - Earns a composite score of 25 or above or a 30 or above on a single subject on ACT
 - Exhibits consistent exceptional performance in class

Affective Guidance and Counseling

Sierra Grande's counselor helps to meet students' affective needs. The counselor provides college and career planning and is available as needed to address the goals and provide support to G/T students. All classroom teachers help support goals to create consistency and foster an environment of growth. Teachers are responsible for implementing the Advanced Learning Plan for each G/T student. The G/T district coordinator will serve as a support person for gifted students offering understanding designed to address the affective needs of the students in the group. Materials are available to parents to help them better understand the unique affective and emotional needs of their gifted children.

Content Extensions

Sierra Grande School District will offer different content extensions based upon their resources and the needs of their students in any year. The District will strive to expose identified students to multiple activities that engage them further in the enjoyment of learning. Some of the possible extensions may include:

Language Arts:

- Opportunities to enroll in summer camps that will further develop their skills in writing and research
- College Level Online course work
- College Level English Courses
- Post secondary literature
- Literature circles
- Differentiated writing prompt
- Literature at advanced instruction level

Math:

- College Level Math Courses
- Post secondary math
- Competitions
- Math Projects
- Technology
- Chess Club

Science

- Science Fair
- Science Olympiad
- HS: Science explorer class, summer internship program
- San Luis Valley Area Health Center Summer Institute on Health

History and Social Studies:

- College courses
- History Fair
- Attend Legislative Day
- Historical research projects

Creativity:

- Independent art projects
- Studies of inventors

Leadership:

- MS and HS Leadership summer camp—National Youth Leadership Forum
- Student Councils
- Exchange Programs
- Knowledge Bowl
- Academic Decathlon
- Initiate organizations
- Debate and Simulation
- Peer mentorship

Performing Arts/Music/Visual Arts:

- Studies of professionals in these fields
- Develop confidence through performances
- Summer camp opportunities
- Perform in a play or community music production
- Mentorship with professionals
- Advance placement in music class
- Focused visits from musicians
- Honor Band
- Drama
- Creating original music

Advanced Learning Plan

Gifted students are asked to participate in the process of creating and reviewing their Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs). Teacher observation in classroom, achievement and ability test scores and interviews with student and parents about interest areas are all used to find appropriate match to strengths. Programming is developed in partnership with parents, student and school. ALPs include strengths, interests, concerns, and academics. Only students identified as Gifted/Talented will have an ALP.

When developing ALPs:

- The BOE is reviewed and areas of giftedness and/or deficit are noted.
- The Rtl Team determines whether more assessment is necessary in order to develop the ALP
- Resources and programs are considered by the Rtl and parents as to their potential effectiveness with the student.
- The ALP is written by District Coordinator and/or the Rtl Team in conjunction with classroom teachers, parents and students with regard to areas of interest, areas of gifted ability, and areas of deficit to be remediated.
- SMART Goals will be written for the ALPs.
- ALPs are reviewed at least annually, and changes are made when the next ALP is written.

Articulation

The district gifted/talented coordinator works with the RtI team to pass on information and programs to teachers and ensures that the ALP is followed. The needs of gifted students and programming options are articulated through the RtI process/reviews and via regular communication with parents, students and teachers. ALPs are transferred with students transitioning between schools. Sierra Grande will keep ALP information on the Alpine Achievement System.

District registration information should include an inquiry about gifted identification. When gifted students move into the district the information from their previous school is reviewed by the gifted coordinator and the child's progress is monitored in the classroom. If there is no question about the child's designation as gifted then the coordinator looks for a current ALP and modifies it or develops a new ALP that allows for the student's need to be met in the current school setting.

Record Keeping

Alpine Achievement Data System will be used to create and store the ALPs. This will help with uniformity within the Administrative Unit to facilitate record keeping for students moving from one district to another.

The district's G/T coordinator will be responsible for maintaining financial records, inventory of equipment and student records. The district coordinator will develop the budget based upon program needs. Amounts available for stipends, professional development, activities, instructional material and equipment are all dependent on the amount budgeted to Sierra Grande in any given year. A budget page is due April 30th of each year as a projection of funds available for gifted student education for the following year. The district budgets are then compiled to form the Administrative Unit budget. The district is no longer required to match or exceed the amount of money specified to Sierra Grande by the Administrative Unit. The State distributions are dependent upon annual funding allocations from the State Legislature.

Dispute Resolution

Parents will first take their concerns to district gifted education coordinator and then to the building principal. If the issue cannot be resolved at that level, it will then go to the Superintendent. Parents will be notified by letter of all final decisions. In some occasions the SLV BOCES G/T Coordinator may be consulted.

Resources

- San Luis Valley BOCES Administrative Unit
- The Colorado Department of Education
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/resources.htm>
- Body of Evidence for Gifted Identification – Four Prong Model
- Colorado School-Wide System for Student Success
- 12 Traits of Giftedness
- S.M.A.R.T. Goals
- Gifted Education Glossary
- Sierra Grande's Ongoing Assessment Schedule