

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

Adopted February 8, 2011

Defintion

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

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

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

Steps in the Identification Process

Initial Referral

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

San Luis Valley school districts conduct universal screening of all students in an early elementary grade level (K-3) determined by each district. The San Luis Valley BOCES recommends that each district administer another universal screening in grades 6-9, at the district's discretion.

The tool used for the universal screening is selected by the district. Scores that indicate the need for further talent development and/or further screening are indicated. Examples of valid and reliable tools used include:

- ❖ Northwest Evaluation Association Testing (NWEA MAP) – 85th percentile or higher
- ❖ Scantron – 85th percentile or higher
- ❖ Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) - scores in the advanced category over time
- ❖ Kingore Observation Inventory (KOI)
- ❖ Cognitive Abilities Test – 85th percentile or higher (CogAt)
- ❖ Renzulli Scales for Superior Students
- ❖ Slocumb-Payne Teacher Perception Inventory
- ❖ Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT)

Use of Targeted Interventions for Strength Development

Students demonstrating strengths on screening instruments may become part of a talent pool of students for strength development. Student profile information to help determine **appropriate targeted interventions** for these students is gathered by the Gifted Coordinator. This information includes: students' interests, educational background, and motivation. It is gathered from parents, students, and teachers using initial Response to Intervention (RtI) forms and/or through interviews.

Appropriate interventions may be determined using the RtI process or through a meeting of the Gifted Coordinator and the classroom teachers. Examples of targeted interventions appropriate for these students include:

- increase in depth (DOK), complexity, and/or novelty in curriculum and instructional tasks targeted to student's strength area(s)
- directed independent study, mentorship, or interest center in the student's area of passion
- use of advanced, supplemental curriculum targeted to students' strength area(s)
- participation in clubs or competitions in targeted area(s) of interest

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

- observational checklists
- anecdotal records
- work samples
- results from competitions

Formal Identification

Gathering Information

A solid Body of Evidence (BOE) must be on file to support formal gifted identification of gifted students. When evidence exists that more evaluation should be done, the Gifted Coordinator obtains parental permission for testing and coordinates the gathering of the BOE for students.

The BOE consists of information from one instrument in each of the following four categories. The specific tool to be used in each category is determined by each district for each student.

Category 1: Behaviors and Characteristics Common to Gifted Students

Evidence is gathered with a nationally normed instrument such as:

- ❖ Gifted Evaluation Scale (GES-3)
- ❖ Gifted Rating Scale (GRS)
- ❖ Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS)
- ❖ Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT)
- ❖ Clark's Drawing Test

Category 2: Demonstrated Performance

Examples include:

- ❖ audition
- ❖ juried exhibits (participation by qualification)
- ❖ portfolio
- ❖ participation in statewide teams, orchestras
- ❖ opinion of recognized experts in the student's area of talent
- ❖ placing in state or national competitions

Category 3: Academic Achievement

Tests of academic achievement must be valid and reliable for measuring academic achievement of gifted students.

Examples include:

- ❖ Northwest Evaluation Association Testing (NWEA MAP)
- ❖ Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)
- ❖ Scantron
- ❖ Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2)
- ❖ Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA)

Category 4: Ability*

Examples include:

- ❖ Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)
- ❖ Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT 2)
- ❖ Ravens Progressive Matrices Test
- ❖ Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT-2)

***Note:** Tests requiring administration by certified psychologists e.g. WISC-IV, K-ABC or Stanford-Binet are only given when the student is also being evaluated for special education needs. However, if these scores are available from testing in other districts or from private testing outside the school system they will be used as part of the BOE.

Decision-Making

Using the RtI process, an analysis of the gathered information is done by a professional team having understanding of the characteristics and needs of gifted students. When reviewing the BOE, team members look for a preponderance of evidence indicating giftedness.

Specific criteria for formal identification as gifted have been established for each category.

- **Category 1: Behaviors and Characteristics Common to Gifted Students**

The student must achieve a score at or above the 95th percentile on the administered assessment.

- **Category 2: Demonstrated Performance**

Documentation must provide evidence that the student was provided with the opportunity and demonstrated the ability, to achieve on continuously challenging levels of interventions. The consensus of the RTI team is that performance-based tasks show the student's performance is exceptional/outstanding when compared with age peers at the state/national level.

- **Category 3: Academic Achievement**

The student must achieve a score at or above the 95th percentile in at least one area on the administered assessment.

- **Category 4: Ability**

The student must achieve a score at or above the 95th percentile on one or more subtests of the administered assessment.

The RtI team may conclude:

- The student is identified as gifted when he/she demonstrates the criteria in 3 of the 4 categories. The student is **not** excluded from identification if all four indicators are not demonstrated. The student is identified in the area(s) designated in the definition of gifted and talented students. When the student is identified for specific academic aptitude the area(s) of aptitude is cited e.g. mathematics, reading, or science.

- Team recommendations are made about developing the student's strength using differentiation in the classroom and/or extracurricular opportunities. In some districts these are recorded in a learning plan.

Results of the RtI team's meetings are recorded in a written format and parents receive documentation of these results.

Writing an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP)

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

- student demographic information
- date of identification and area(s) of gifted identification
- ALP contact person
- student interests and goals
- extracurricular activities
- parent involvement to support giftedness
- synthesis of Body of Evidence
- programming and goals in strength or need area(s):
 - learning goals
 - learning structure
 - strategies/ interventions to increase rate of learning, depth of understanding, understanding of novelty, higher order thinking and/or complexity to meet goals
 - end of year progress towards the goal(s)
- strategies to meet social-emotional needs of gifted student
- signatures of participating parties: student, parents, classroom teachers, coordinator of the plan and others as needed

In the ALP programming options are matched to student strength areas(s). The ALP is reviewed and updated at least once a year by participants in the plan. Student eligibility for special programming and the need for an ALP are reviewed every three years or at transition points from elementary to middle school and middle to high school.

Transfer Students and Identification

When records of a transfer student contain a **complete** BOE and indicate that the student has previously been formally identified as gifted, the SLV BOCES district honors the identification and adapts the ALP to ensure programming matched to student strengths.

When the BOE of a transfer is **incomplete**, the district contacts the previous school to obtain the required information. If the required information is not available, the SLV district follows the initial referral and identification process to complete the BOE and to determine whether or not the student should be formally identified as gifted according to the SLV BOCES Gifted Identification Process.

Appeals Process

The appeals process begins when a student and/or parent are not satisfied with the decision of the team in planning the student's educational programming and when determining need for gifted education services. This process involves the reconsideration of any of the assessment processes, body of evidence data, or programming for gifted and talented services.

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

If the outcome of the conference at the building level is not to the satisfaction of the student and/or parent's satisfaction, then a written appeal must be submitted to the district superintendent. The written appeal must contain a statement of the complaint, any evidence in its support, the solution desired, the student and parent's signature, and the date the appeal is submitted. The superintendent, or his/her designee, must schedule and hold a conference with the submitting party and the SLV BOCES Gifted Education Coordinator within two weeks of receiving the written appeal. At the end of this meeting, the decision of the superintendent is final.