

Identifying Students as Gifted and Talented at Campus Middle School

What is giftedness???

When defining “giftedness” it is important to understand that there is no universally agreed upon definition of this concept. Giftedness, intelligence, and talent are fluid concepts that are defined differently in different contexts and cultures.

In the Cherry Creek School District, gifted and talented students are defined as:

- Those children and youth who exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creative and/or artistic areas, who possess an unusual capacity for leadership, or who excel in specific academic fields.
- Those children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, and/or environment.

This definition is consistent with the federal definition of giftedness presented to Congress in the 1972 Marland Report. In this definition, gifted students are recognized as those “children capable of high performance” including those with “demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination:”

- General intellectual ability
- Specific academic aptitude
- Creative or productive thinking
- Leadership ability
- Visual and performing arts
- Psychomotor ability

In keeping with the Marland (1972) definition, students in Cherry Creek are identified as having gifts or talents in five different areas: 1) Reading, 2) Writing, 3) Mathematics, 4) Science and 5) Other (e.g., leadership, visual-performing arts, creative-productive thinking)

Why identify students as “gifted and talented”?

Because of their unique needs and characteristics, gifted and talented students require services beyond those normally provided in the regular classroom. This, the purpose of formally identifying students as “gifted and talented” is to ensure that this the needs of this unique population of learners are met, and that they continue to grow academically, socially and emotionally.

When/How do you identify students?

The identification process starts in elementary school and continues through high school.

To ensure consistency in the process, the Cherry Creek School District has established guidelines for identifying students eligible for gifted education and advanced learning services. These guidelines include building a “body of evidence” that will determine if a student needs targeted or intensive programming beyond the regular classroom.

What does the identification process look like?

Initial referral of students for consideration and screening for identification may come from a teacher, parent, and/or peer. Forms for referral of students by parents are available at each school.

Once a student has been recommended for identification, the GT resource teacher in each building is responsible for collecting and compiling data on that child. Both quantitative and qualitative data is collected, including information about the child’s: 1) aptitude; 2) achievement; 3) performance and 4) behavior.

Listed below are each of the four characteristics and the possible data points that may be used under each area as possible sources of exceptional ability (Please note: not all of the assessments under each characteristic may be gathered or used):

- **Aptitude:** Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (N-NAT), other.
- **Achievement:** Colorado State Assessment Plan (CSAP), Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), other.

- Performance: portfolios, student products, report cards and grades, performance tasks, other.
- Behavior: Kingore Observation Inventory, Parent Survey, Renzulli/Westberg Behavioral Rating Scales, Cherry Creek Screening Checklist, anecdotal notes, other.

Once this “body of evidence” has been collected, the GT resource teacher meets with the building principal and other relevant personnel (e.g., school psychologist, school counselor, team teachers) to determine whether formal identification of the students will be made. There are three possible outcomes to this meeting:

- The committee will decide there is sufficient data for identification of the student in a specific area(s) (e.g., .
- The committee will decide that the evidence does not support a formal identification of the student.
- The committee will decide that additional information is needed as part of this student's "Body of Evidence," in order to make the best determination of need.

Communication concerning the outcome of the student referral will be mailed directly to the child's parents or guardian.

What happens if my child is identified?

If a child is identified as gifted, a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) will be created in cooperation with that child and his/her guardians. This PLP will identify both the strengths of the students and his/her needs or areas for growth.

Once the Personalized Learning Plan has been created, the gifted and talented coordinator will meet with the child and his/her parents to discuss the services available to him/her. Keep in mind that not all services are appropriate for every child and that placement in honors or advanced level coursework is dependent upon a child’s individual needs.

For more information about these services, please refer to the handout entitled: “Overview of Gifted and Talented Services at Campus Middle School.”

What happens if my child is NOT identified?

An appeals process may be initiated by notifying the building GT resource teacher in writing. The appellant will meet with the school principal and GT resource teacher to review data. New information may be introduced to clarify inaccuracies, review decisions and decide a future course of action.

If the appellant is not satisfied with the decision reached at this meeting, a written appeal may be made to the Coordinator of Gifted Education and Advance Learning to review the decision.