

# Talented and Gifted (TAG) Parent Handbook



**ACADEMY**  
DISTRICT 20  

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The Peak of Excellence



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## Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Gifted and Talented Definition \*

" 'Gifted Children' means those persons between the ages of four and twenty-one whose aptitude or competence in abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment in one or more domains are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. Gifted children are hereafter referred to as gifted students. Children under five 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, ethnic, and 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, Dance, or Psychomotor Abilities"

*(12.01 (16) ECEA Rules, 2015)  
Colorado Rules for the Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA)  
Colorado Department of Education  
Effective: June 1, 2015*

## ASD20 Gifted Education Program Belief Statement

The Academy District 20 Gifted Education Program is dedicated to excellence by maximizing the potential and meeting the exceptional educational and affective needs of identified gifted students from diverse populations. The Academy District 20 Gifted Education Program provides gifted students opportunities for intellectual challenge, engaging enrichments, and dynamic programming resulting in maximum growth. We strive to inspire creativity, passion for learning, leadership, and social responsibility.

*Academy District 20  
Updated: October 2015*

### We believe:

- that the gifted and talented student has unique needs and strengths and, therefore, requires an education appropriate to his or her needs
- the opportunities must be provided for learners to develop self-awareness, a positive self-concept, and productive interpersonal relationships
- that for optimum intellectual development; strategies, materials, and curricula must be designed to encourage a passion for learning and the development of talents
- that programs must provide for optimum intellectual development and prepare learners for future society.

\*The CDE uses the term Gifted and Talented programming. In ASD20, we refer to programming for talented and gifted students as TAG.

## ASD20 TAG Education Goals

- To provide the home, the school and the community with an understanding of the needs of the TAG learner
- To provide additional opportunities for gifted peers to interact together outside the regular classroom context
- To provide opportunities for TAG students to develop self-direction, responsibility for self, positive self-concept, and the ability to identify and express feelings
- To provide opportunities for TAG students to recognize and develop the processes of higher-level thinking skills through the use of appropriate models, which include problem-solving techniques and critical and creative thinking strategies
- To provide opportunities for staff development for the teachers of the talented and gifted
- To provide a means of continually expanding, evaluating, and adapting our philosophy in keeping with the changing society

## ASD20 Gifted Education Program Definition

Gifted education is based upon the individual needs and characteristics of TAG students in grades K-12.

- The key to teaching the wide range of TAG students is to focus upon the student's individual needs.
- Special sub-populations, i.e., learning disabled and profoundly gifted, have unique curricular needs.
- TAG programming services range from full participation in the regular classroom to partial pull-out opportunities.
- TAG programming options include: enrichment and acceleration of the regular classroom curriculum, mentorships, independent studies, seminars, honors classes, Advanced Placement classes, and university level classes.

Academy District 20 sees the continued need for coordination among the elementary, middle, and high school TAG programs which includes:

- Staff development specific to TAG student needs
- Communication and collaboration between schools and all instructional levels
- TAG programming appropriate to each grade level

## AD20 TAG Programming

Each school is given the flexibility to deliver programming that meets TAG student needs.

- The role of the TAG coordinator is to advocate for the academic and social emotional needs of the TAG students in his/her building.
- School resources are utilized to deliver the appropriate curriculum to TAG students and to work with general education teachers as they support TAG learners in their classrooms.

## *Elementary School Talented and Gifted Programming (TAG)*

TAG programming for students in kindergarten through second grade is designed cooperatively with the classroom teacher and the TAG coordinator. Curriculum extensions taught by the TAG coordinator are offered throughout the year.

The TAG program for students in third grade is a transition between informal participation in curricular extension and formal identification for TAG services. Programming is designed for students who have demonstrated TAG related strengths as determined by the TAG coordinator, the classroom teachers and the student's successful experiences in K-2 curriculum extension classes. Selected students participate in classes in their area(s) of strength. District ability and achievement assessments administered during third grade help determine formal TAG identification.

Fourth and fifth grade students who have been formally identified for TAG services work with their classroom teacher, parents, and the TAG coordinator to develop an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) with both academic and affective goals. The ALP helps guide the types of programming implemented to serve the TAG student's individual needs.

At the completion of elementary school, TAG students are advanced to the middle school where TAG services are provided in their area(s) of strength. Each student's identification is maintained and each year new goals are collaboratively created.

### **Elementary school opportunities may include:**

Art Exhibits and Competitions  
Chess  
Continental Math League  
Destination Imagination®  
District 20 Poetry Contest  
Dual Enrollment  
Full Grade Acceleration  
Independent Studies  
Junior Great Books

Mentorships  
MET Opera  
Opera Theatre of the Rockies  
Pull-Out Classes  
Robotics  
Subject Acceleration  
Spelling Bee  
Writing Contests  
WordMasters

## *Middle School Talented and Gifted Programming (TAG)*

The major responsibility for meeting the needs of TAG students at the middle school level is shared by the students' academic team teachers, the students, and the parents. School exploratory and enrichment classes also offer students opportunities for further talent development.

TAG identified students become a part of a middle school talent group and are offered opportunities geared to their specific strength area(s). Students new to the district are considered for TAG services upon entry into the District. All Academy District 20 6th grade students participate in universal CogAT screening.

TAG students with exceptional needs will learn self-advocacy skills through the use of an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). The TAG coordinator works with TAG identified students, and their parents and teachers, to carry out the process of developing an ALP, rich with specific academic and affective learning goals.

Mountain Ridge Middle School and Discovery Canyon Campus offer a Middle Years International Baccalaureate Program (MYP/IB) which meets the needs of many TAG identified students.

### **Exploratory and enrichment opportunities may include but are not limited to:**

AMC Math Competitions	National Geographic Geography Bee
Art Exhibits and Competitions	National Junior Honor Society
Band and Choir Performances and Competitions	Opera Theatre of the Rockies
Brain Bowl	Robotics
Chess	Rocky Mountain Talent Search
Destination Imagination®	Science Olympiad
District 20 Poetry Contest	Spelling Bee
Drama Productions	Student Council
Dual Enrollment	Subject Acceleration
Forensics	Summer School Programming
Full Grade Acceleration	Summer Science Program
Independent Studies	WordMasters
Intramural and Interscholastic Sports	World Languages
Math Counts	Writer's Club
Mentorships	Writing Contest
MET Opera	Yearbook

## *High School Talented and Gifted Programming (TAG)*

Opportunities to enroll in more rigorous and accelerated course work are offered to TAG high school students. These courses include Advanced Placement Courses, honors classes, and Dual Enrollment and Secondary Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (CEPA) course offerings. Elective and extracurricular activities provide additional avenues for TAG students with special abilities and talents.

The TAG coordinator at each high school assists TAG students in determining programming that best meets their individual needs. College counselors also assist high school students as they prepare for college. Student self-advocacy is encouraged and becomes more and more important as goals for the future are decided.

Rampart High School and Discovery Canyon Campus offer an International Baccalaureate Program (IB) which meets the needs of many TAG identified students.

### **Opportunities in High School may include, but are not limited to:**

AMC Math Competitions	Leadership Opportunities
Art Exhibits and Competitions	Mentorships and Independent Studies
Athletics	MET Opera
Band and Choir Performances and Competitions	National Honor Society
Chess	Newspaper
Computer Club	Opera Theatre of the Rockies
Destination Imagination®	Physics Bowl
District 20 Poetry Contest	Robotics
Drama Productions	Science Olympiad
Dual Enrollment	Student Council
Foreign Language Clubs	World Affairs Council
Forensics	World Languages
Independent Studies	Writing Contest
Knowledge Bowl	Yearbook

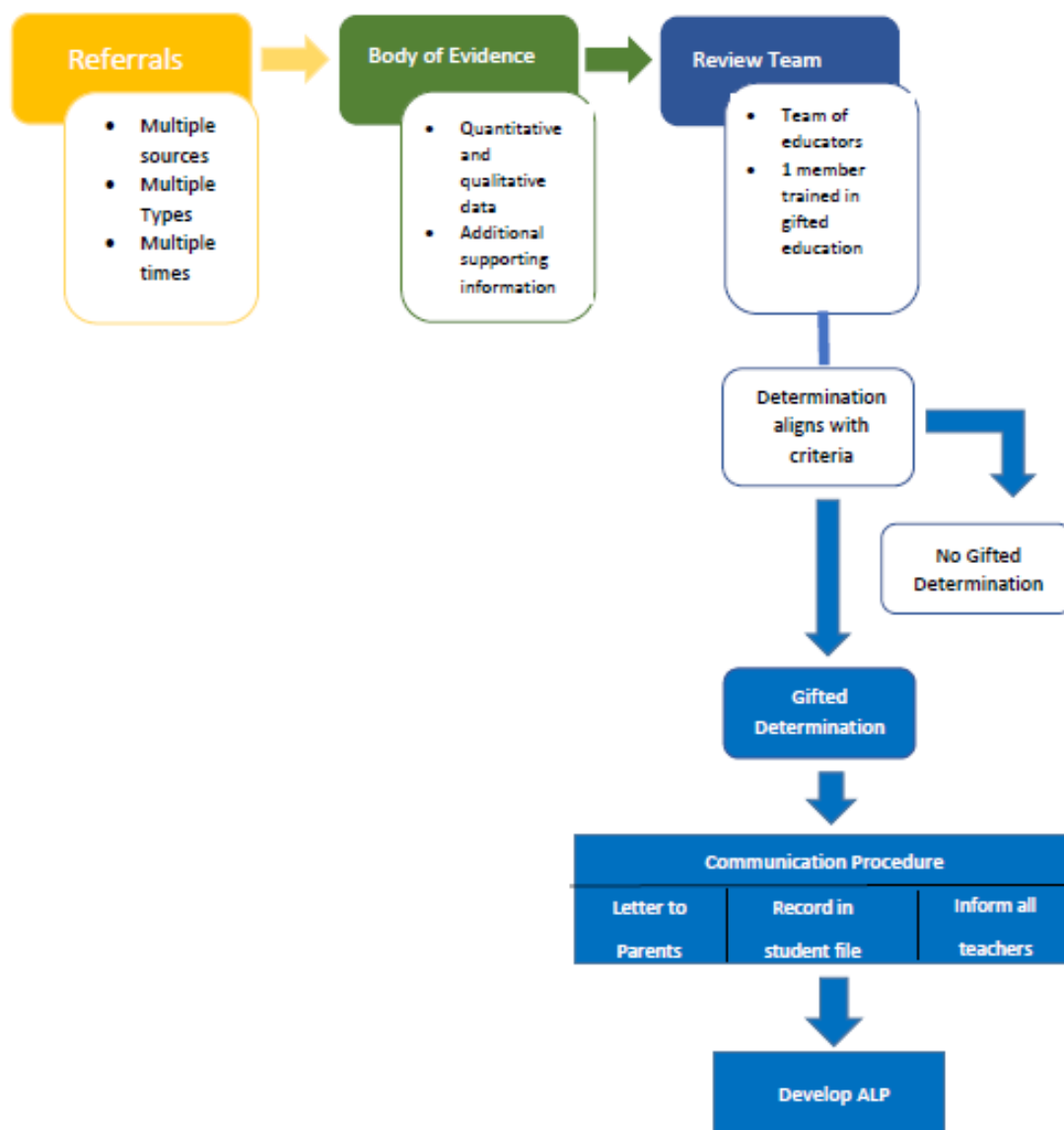
## Identification

Identification and programming for TAG students is determined based on Colorado Department of Education guidelines and the students' individual needs.

(12.01 (16) ECEA Rules, 2015)  
Colorado Rules for the Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA)  
Colorado Department of Education  
Effective: June 1, 2015

Academy District 20 uses Colorado state and nationally accepted criteria for identifying TAG students as well as a body of evidence for TAG identification, which includes multiple achievement assessments, ability assessments, student products, parent recommendations, teacher recommendations, and classroom observation of students.

*A gifted identification assessment should include the following components:*



(Colorado Department of Education p.22)

## *Potential Areas of TAG Identification*

- General or Specific Intellectual Ability
- Creative or Productive Thinking
- Leadership Abilities
- Specific Academic Aptitude
  - Reading
  - Writing
  - Mathematics
  - Social Studies
  - Science
  - World Language
- Specific Talent Aptitude
  - Visual Arts
  - Performing Arts
  - Musical
  - Dance
  - Psychomotor Abilities

## *Talent Identification Pikes Peak (TIPP)*

Area districts within the Pikes Peak region collaborate to generate a reasonable and equitable process to identify TAG students in the specific talent aptitude domains.

State criteria suggests using a body of evidence to make a formal TAG determination. Criteria includes qualifying data in at least three of these categories:

- Cognitive assessment score;
- Norm-referenced test score;
- Norm-referenced or research-based observation scale;
- Top finisher in a state/nationally sanctioned contest or competition; and/or
- “Juried” performance.

Twice a year, TIPP Assessment days are held in the Pikes Peak Region. Students who have gathered a significant body of evidence in their talent area are invited to participate in an assessment day. Students show their talents, whether through performance, improvisation or portfolio, to a professional panel. Additionally, a panel interview takes place. The professional panel uses the body of evidence to make talent identification recommendations to school districts.

## Transfer Students

*Within Academy District 20* - An ASD20 TAG identification follows a student who transfers between ASD20 schools.

*Within Colorado (Portability)* - For a TAG student transferring between Colorado districts, the ASD20 TAG Department analyzes whether the original TAG identification was based on state identification norms. If so, a determination of best programming is made based on the identified area(s) of strength and available programming. If the body of evidence used for a TAG identification in the former school district is incomplete or based on local norms, re-evaluation of the identification will take place.

*Outside Colorado* – For a student who transfers from another state with a formal TAG identification, the ASD20 TAG Department analyzes the body of evidence used to make the original TAG identification. If the TAG identification meets Colorado state norms, an ASD20 TAG identification is created and appropriate programming is implemented. If additional information is required, former districts and parents are contacted to provide that data, and/or current data may be collected at the student's new school.

*Military family transfer* – When a student from a military family transfers into ASD20 with a formal TAG identification, ASD20 will honor the identification. Programming may differ. ASD20 may also administer subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate programming and identification for the student. (Military Compact Agreement)

## Advanced Learning Plan (ALP)

Once a body of evidence is established that identifies a student as TAG, an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) is created. This is an educational plan that documents a TAG student's area(s) of strength and is used to guide teachers each year as they program and set goals for TAG students. The ALP is generated collaboratively between the student, parents and teachers. Each ALP includes at least one academic goal in the area of strength and at least one affective goal. The standards-based ALP goals are modified annually and progress monitored throughout each school year.

## Twice Exceptional Students

Twice exceptional means students are identified as TAG and identified with a documented disability according to federal/state eligibility criteria. Twice exceptional students will have a current Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan and an ALP. ASD20 recognizes the unique needs of this population.

Providing early intervention is essential for twice exceptional students, but often the learning difficulties go undetected because the giftedness often masks the disability and vice versa. Recognizing these students' talents, identifying their learning difficulties and providing services and strength-based programming will enable twice exceptional students to find success in school.

## Early Access Information

**Only the children of Academy District 20 residents will be considered for Early Access.**

Early Access is an optional educational program to include "highly gifted" underage learners in educational programs for kindergarten and first grade. The students selected must be academically, emotionally, and behaviorally ready to fully participate in all aspects of public school at the entry grade level.

**"Highly Advanced Gifted Child"** means a gifted child whose body of evidence demonstrates a profile of exceptional ability or potential compared to same-age gifted children. To meet the needs of highly advanced development, early access to educational services may be considered as a special provision. For purposes of early access into kindergarten or first grade, the highly advanced gifted child demonstrates exceptional ability and potential for accomplishment in cognitive process, academic areas, and behavior, based on nationally norm-referenced measures.

### Age Requirement

"A student shall be age 4 by October 1st for kindergarten and age 5 by October 1st for first grade (ECEA Rule 12.08 (2) (e) (i) (D))."

### Portability

Academy District 20 honors Early Access determination and portability from other Colorado districts who follow the state process, guidelines and criteria.

### Purpose for Early Access

Early Access legislation was established by the state of Colorado in 2008 to allow school districts the opportunity to include "highly gifted" underage learners into kindergarten and first grade programs to better meet the advanced educational needs of these children.

### Criteria

A child admitted under the Early Access provision must show high:

- Aptitude
- Achievement at or above the 97th percentile
- Cognitive performance at or above the 97th percentile
- Readiness for advanced placement
- Observable advanced social behavior
- Motivation to learn
- Support from parents

**The determination as to whether a student qualifies for the Academy District 20 Early Access Program is solely within the discretion of the Academy District 20 staff.**

## Parent Support

ASD20 hosts a TAG Parent Accountability Committee (PAC). Each school within the district has a parent representative who attends three TAG PAC meetings a year. The district and school TAG coordinators share current state regulations and mandates as well as district TAG happenings. Following each meeting, minutes are distributed to parents of ASD20 TAG students.

District and school TAG coordinators host TAG Parent Academies throughout the school year. Topics include TAG programming and opportunities, TAG parent tips and social/emotional needs of TAG students.

Each ASD20 school has a TAG coordinator. The TAG coordinator hosts parent meetings and conferences throughout the school year. Communication regarding individual students and additional enrichment opportunities can occur through email, Infinite Campus messaging and phone conversations.

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