



COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT SERVICES UNIT
1560 Broadway, Suite 1175 • Denver, Colorado 80202-5149
303.866.6600 • 303.866.6694 • www.cde.state.co.us

Robert K. Hammond
Commissioner of Education

Keith Owen, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner

December 11, 2013

Patrick Sanchez
Superintendent, Adams 14
5291E. 60th Avenue
Commerce City, CO 80022



Dear Mr. Sanchez:

Thank you for hosting the Colorado Gifted Education Review team in your district on October 22-23. A copy of the team's report is included with this letter.

The review process was conducted based upon a two phase procedure. The first phase is a review of district program plans and programming elements, reports and gifted student performance and demographic data. The second phase is an on-site visit that collects evidence of programming elements provided to gifted students and families in your district. Phase II was a collaboration between the District's Coordinator of Gifted Education and review team staff. The joint planning efforts were appreciated.

As a result of the review, the district must develop an improvement plan indicating how the District proposes to address each of the top two improvement priority areas: Programming and Evaluation/Accountability. A template for the improvement plan is on the CDE Office of Gifted Education website and will be available to the Coordinator.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with your staff. We look forward to the continued improvement efforts targeted for gifted students and families.

Sincerely,

Randy Boyer
Interim Assistant Commissioner

Jacquelin Medina
Director, Gifted Education

cc:

Dr. Kandy Steel, Deputy Superintendent
Renee Bauer, Director of Elementary Instruction
Cheryl Franklin-Rohr, Gifted Education Program Coordinator
Deborah Rothenberg, Metro GERC
Betsey Krill, Southwest-West GERC



COLORADO DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

Colorado-Gifted Education Review

Adams County School District 14

Submitted to:

Patrick Sánchez, Superintendent

By:

Betsey Krill, West Southwest

Shari Aggson, West Central

Coleen Matthews, North Central

Jennifer Gottschalk, Cherry Creek Schools

October 22-23, 2013

Office of Gifted Education
1560 Broadway, Suite 1175
Denver CO 80202
303-866-6794
rolfe_t@cde.state.co.us

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3

Introduction 5

Indicators 6

Communication

Definition

Identification

Programming

Evaluation and Accountability

Personnel

Budget

Reporting

Record Keeping

Dispute Resolution

Monitoring

Conclusion 13

Improvement Target Areas

Executive Summary

The team wishes to express its appreciation to Cheryl Franklin-Rohr, Gifted Education Coordinator, for her professional preparation of documentation to support the Adams 14 Colorado Gifted Education Review (C-GER). The hospitality arranged for the team members by the Administrative Unit (AU) was welcoming and helpful. Visits with administration and staff at Central, Kemp and Rose Hill Elementary Schools, along with productive conversations with students, staff and administrators at Adams City High School and focus group discussions with parents and Gifted and Talented (GT) Building Liaisons, provided the team with insight and perspective.

Strengths and Progress

- Staff members interviewed were caring and dedicated to their students.
- Stakeholders are positive about changes currently being implemented. They appreciate the new assessment program and data focus to improve academic growth and achievement for all groups of students.
- The Gifted Education Coordinator is to be commended for her expertise, dedication and passion for gifted students.
- Since their last C-GER, the district has:
 - Significantly increased proportionality of gifted students from under-represented groups in all areas of giftedness in the definition
 - Prioritized the establishment of a culture that supports student success
 - Aligned gifted student progress monitoring and goal setting with district programs and initiatives to increase student achievement.
 - Added an Early Access Process
 - Increased support for Cluster Grouping
 - Established a review team for the identification process
 - Engaged in extensive data analysis of gifted student achievement and growth
 - Incorporated Colorado Growth Model as a vehicle to monitor gifted student performance data and set goals
 - Added to the Middle School level honors language arts and math classes
 - Established Advanced Placement classes at the high school to increase access to rigorous programming for high potential and advanced gifted students.

Next Steps

Programming:

- Include gifted instruction best practices that align with culturally responsive classrooms (e.g., differentiation, flexible grouping, tiered lessons, Problem-Based Learning) in the demonstration classrooms.
- Gather data and create systems for guidance and support for social-emotional needs of gifted students in a culturally responsive classroom.
- Develop a continuum of GT services K-12 in all areas of gifted identification. Prioritize communication to all stakeholder groups.

- Collaborate with students, parents and teachers K-12 when developing and revising Advanced Learning Plans (ALP) and/or Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP) making it a meaningful and living document.

Evaluation and Accountability:

- Improve accessibility and increase collaboration in the development and monitoring of ALPs for parents, teachers and students.
- Include affective growth goals for all identified students to include social-emotional and/or career-guidance goals. When appropriate, consider using Colorado Academic Standards in areas such as Speaking and Listening, Perseverance and Problem-Solving.
- Align with the District UIP Performance Challenge strategies and the targets for gifted student growth set by CDE where appropriate.
- Investigate gifted student dropout rate.

Introduction

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Office of Gifted Education is committed to improving the outcomes for identified gifted students throughout the state. The Office of Gifted Education strives to assist all Administrative Units (AU) to be “on-target” in all elements of gifted programming and accreditation: communication, definition, identification, programming, accountability, budgeting and reporting. AUs that are distinguished in these areas will serve as models and resources in the State.

Every four years, or earlier as needed, the state conducts a C-GER Peer Review. An on-site team, made up of experts/peers in the field of gifted education, reviews documents and meets with AU stakeholders in an effort to validate the AU’s self-reporting and provide information from alternative perspectives. This peer review process is not a comprehensive program evaluation, but rather a process designed to acknowledge the achievements and help prioritize future improvements and growth necessary to ensure gifted student learning and high achievement.

The intent of the visit and report is to help promote the process of reflection, and to encourage AUs to engage in continuous improvement. The team spent many hours reviewing evidence and artifacts, listening to focus groups, and conducting school visits. Strengths, commendations and recommendations are the result of team consensus based on extensive deliberation about findings and evidence. We believe the following report may be used for future goal determination and action planning.

Communication

Description

The Gifted Education Coordinator has a packet to give to parents of newly identified students. The packet contains information about gifted education in the district. Information, letters and other programming information is available in Spanish. Interpreters are provided for informational meetings as needed.

Parents interviewed expressed a desire for periodic newsletters to be sent home about available gifted education programming options and which GT personnel to contact at their school.

Strengths

- The Gifted and Talented Parent Handbook, available on the district website and also available in Spanish, offers a comprehensive explanation of gifted education processes and procedures.
- Vertical articulation between school levels about who is identified gifted and their advanced learning needs has improved in the past two years.

Next Steps

- Take advantage of existing communication structures, such as the electronic principal newsletter, to share information about gifted education, (e.g., upcoming parent nights, informational meetings).
- When creating the new platform for the district web page include information that is easy to access regarding building and district personnel, Gifted and Talented (GT) Liaisons, budget, a continuum of programming options available through the grades, referral process, and the difference between “watch-group” and identified students.

Definition

Comments

The definition of “gifted and talented students” used by the district is the same or substantially similar to the definition of gifted and talented as specified in the rules.

Identification

Description

Administrators expressed appreciation for the wide-net screening affording equitable access for all students. Currently students are screened at the first and fourth grade level. One elementary school is planning to adopt Using Science, Talents, and Abilities to Recognize Students Plus (U-STARS Plus) as an additional screening tool to identify high potential students next year.

The district has an Early Access Policy that is shared with preschool teachers and is available on the district website in English and Spanish. A GT review team evaluates referrals and the body of evidence required for identification.

The District’s UIP states a goal “to improve overall identification of gifted students specifically among ELL.”

Strengths

- Wide-net screening at two grade levels has enabled the district to increase overall membership in gifted education.
- Increased screening efforts afford equity of access and have resulted in increased proportionality that better represents the demographics of the total student population.
- A review team is in place to examine the body of evidence for identification.
- Some schools are using the RtI process, monitoring how students respond to targeted instruction, to assist with the identification process.

Next Steps

- Continue efforts to increase proportionality of gifted students from less-represented groups.
- Collaboratively review and develop identification practices for K-2, twice-exceptional students and in the arts.
- Expand the identification process to include middle and high school students.

Programming

Description

Cluster grouping is in place in some schools. Data illustrate that cluster grouping is effective when supported by administration with consistent professional development. The GT Summer Enrichment Program has significantly increased in enrollment and is thought of highly by parents and students. High school students reported, "It was the best thing that's happened." High quality supplemental and/or replacement curriculum materials are available for use at all levels such as Jacob's Ladder, William and Mary Curriculum for High Ability Language Arts and Social Studies, and Thinking Maps.

Honors and advanced classes are offered at the middle and high schools. Advanced Placement (AP) and post-secondary options are available at the high school level. The district has begun using demonstration classrooms as a model for instruction in reading and writing.

Parents, students and staff request clarity regarding a continuum of services in all areas of giftedness K-12. Stakeholders are unclear about content options, especially for those students who are non-traditional gifted learners.

Strengths

- The Summer Enrichment Program is a powerful component of the district's options for high potential, advanced, and gifted students.
- The development of the Secondary Academy at the high school will provide for more intensive concentration of students with common strengths and interests.
- Advanced options are available at the middle and high school level.
- Some staff and coaches reported that instruction is adjusted based on student performance data.

Next Steps

- Include gifted instruction best practices that align with culturally responsive classrooms (e.g., differentiation, flexible grouping, tiered lessons, Problem-Based Learning,) in the demonstration classrooms.
- Gather data and create systems for guidance and support for social-emotional needs of gifted students in a culturally responsive classroom.
- Develop a continuum of GT services K-12 in all areas of gifted identification. Prioritize communication to all stakeholder groups.
- Collaborate with students, parents and teachers K-12 when developing and revising ALPs and/or ICAPs making it a meaningful and living document.

Evaluation and Accountability

Description

As recommended in the 2011 C-GER, the district is using the Colorado Growth Model to monitor improvements in the gifted program. These targets represent collaboration between the District GT Coordinator and the Assessment Director. Gifted student performance data is disaggregated. The district uses “District Data Dashboard” to improve focus on academic growth and achievement for all groups of students.

The district has increased the percentage of identified gifted students from 2.8% in March of 2011 to 4.6% in 2013. The discrepancy between the percentage of identified white students and the percentage of Hispanic students has been reduced significantly due to equitable identification practices.

The ALP is developed by the classroom teacher or the GT Liaison when the student is identified at the elementary level. Parents report they were not involved in the development of ALPs. The coordinator randomly selects ALPs from the schools to monitor quality. Not all randomly selected ALPs reviewed by the team included affective goals. High school students stated they filled out ALPs with the GT Liaison in the past. Personnel at the high school level reported they hadn’t seen nor were they able to access student ALPs. Cluster group teachers use Progress Monitoring Tools with identified students to track progress determined by interim assessments.

Parents and staff requested this C-GER report be made available for their review and that it be translated into Spanish.

Strengths

- GT performance targets are aligned to median growth percentiles in convergence with the district’s UIP goals.
- At the middle school level, ALP goals were aligned with the building Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) goals. The district’s focus is on growth for all students using interim assessments to drive instruction for all students.
- The district focus on “data driven instruction” and “rigor” is well articulated and was made evident to the team in all schools visited.

Next Steps

- Improve accessibility and increase collaboration in the development and monitoring of Advanced Learning Plans (ALP) for parents, teachers and students.
- Include affective growth goals for all identified students and consider Colorado Academic Standards in areas such as Speaking and Listening, Perseverance and Problem-Solving.
- Align with the District UIP Performance Challenge strategies and the targets for gifted student growth set by CDE where appropriate.
- Investigate gifted student dropout rate.

Personnel

Description

The district is in transition and there has been a lot of turnover in GT staff since the March 2011 C-GER. There is a stipend to support a GT liaison at each school.

Regular professional learning opportunities are offered to GT Liaisons and Cluster Group Teachers. Financial support is available to teachers wishing to attend gifted education conferences and workshops.

Strengths

- A concerted effort is made to maintain a GT Liaison in every building.
- Administrative support provides teachers (GT Liaisons) with the opportunity for demonstrating best practices for instruction for gifted learners.

Next Steps

- Align gifted education professional development with culturally responsive classrooms training, demonstration classrooms, and UIP goals, (e.g., differentiation strategies, data driven instruction.)
- Include gifted education information in teacher induction program.
- Increase number of endorsed GT personnel.

Budget

Description

The district provides extensive financial support towards gifted education in the form of salary, professional development and materials. The district's Foundation supports the GT enrichment week that occurs during the first week of June. Professional development and instructional materials expenditures are determined collaboratively with GT Building Liaisons.

Strengths

- The GT Coordinator seeks funds to support enrichment activities for gifted learners in the summer.
- Materials selected by the district are high quality, evidence-based curriculum to supplement or replace existing core content, (e.g., U-STARs, William and Mary Curriculum, Thinking Maps, Jacobs Ladder).

Next Steps

- Find ways within the district budget to provide continuing and reliable funding to support the Summer Enrichment Program.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to identify and document how the district's general funds might extend programming options in all areas of giftedness at all school levels.

Reporting

Comments

Reports and plans are submitted as scheduled and as requested.

The 2012-2016 Program Plan and Administrative Unit Improvement Timeline reflects the recommendations and requirements outlined during the March 2011 Colorado Gifted Education Review (C-GER).

Record Keeping

Comments

Student ALPs are stored in Infinite Campus. Identified students have “yellow” progress monitoring folders with hard copies to facilitate on-going instructional planning and communication.

Financial and student records are kept in accordance with district policies.

Dispute Resolution

Comments

Disagreements are resolved regarding gifted student identification and programming according to set guidelines in the ECEA Rules and according to Board Policy.

Consider sharing dispute resolution procedures during the identification process and when reviewing and revising ALPs.

Monitoring

Comments

The district is in compliance with all state requirements for monitoring.

The GT Coordinator provides enrollment and achievement data to monitor trends and as evidence to support instructional needs and practices.

Conclusion

The review committee finds the Adams County 14 Administrative Unit is not yet meeting all details of state regulations for gifted education. The following components of the program plan are areas for future development.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	Definition
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identification Procedure
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Programming
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Evaluation and Accountability

<input type="checkbox"/>	Personnel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Budget
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reporting
<input type="checkbox"/>	Record Keeping
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dispute Resolution

Improvement Target Areas

A time line to improve the indicators in Programming and Evaluation/Accountability is due to the Colorado Department of Education within six weeks of the receipt of the final C-GER report.

Implementation of revised expectations and procedures are required within one year of submission of the Improvement Timeline to CDE. This time line will allow the AU to plan collaboratively with stakeholders during the next school year and prepare for systemic and responsive improvements. Technical assistance and peer support are available through the gifted education regional network system. The aim is to provide guidance so the goals of the Administrative Unit improvement time line may be met.



COLORADO DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

Office of Gifted Education
1560 Broadway, Suite 1175
Denver CO 80202
303-866-6794

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gifted/index.htm>