


# BEST PRACTICES MANUAL FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS IN IDAHO



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, semi-transparent blue shapes that form a horizontal, slightly curved band across the top of the page. The colors range from a dark blue to a light, almost white blue.

“NOT EVERY CHILD HAS AN EQUAL TALENT OR AN EQUAL ABILITY OR AN EQUAL MOTIVATION, BUT THEY SHOULD HAVE AN EQUAL RIGHT TO DEVELOP THEIR TALENT AND THEIR ABILITY AND THEIR MOTIVATION.”

-John F. Kennedy



## Superintendent's Message

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for reading the newly revised *Best Practices Manual for Gifted and Talented Programs in Idaho*. Our goal with this manual is to help districts and charter schools meet the diverse needs of gifted and talented students, tap their potential and help them maximize their learning.

This *Best Practices Manual* was originally written in 1993 and designed to help Idaho educators comply with the state's new Gifted and Talented Mandate. This edition was revised and updated in 2021 by a task force of educators with input from administrators throughout Idaho. They have my sincere gratitude.

Inside you will find best practices for gifted and talented programs, allowing local districts and charter schools to implement the services that will best support local students. Whether you're starting a new program or modifying and maintaining an existing program, you will find chapters on everything from the mandate and Idaho Code to teacher qualifications and how to identify gifted and talented students.

We aim to provide the most effective plans and services for all students in all parts of rural and urban Idaho. This includes gifted and talented students who have been historically underrepresented because of ethnicity, disability or family income level.

I know you share my commitment to helping all Idaho students succeed in school and beyond, and I hope this manual helps you in that effort.

Sincerely,

Sherri Ybarra, Ed.S.

Superintendent of Public Instruction

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# Introduction

Dear Colleagues:

The purpose of the *Best Practices Manual for Gifted and Talented Programs in Idaho* is to help districts meet the diverse needs of gifted and talented students. The manual is designed to assist districts in complying with the state’s Gifted and Talented Mandate.

The *Best Practices Manual for Gifted and Talented Programs in Idaho* was originally written in 1993 and revised in 1997, as a response to the passage of Idaho’s Gifted and Talented Mandate. This edition of the manual was revised and updated in 2021 by a task force of educators and administrators throughout Idaho.

The manual recommends best practices for gifted and talented programs, allowing for districts to implement services that will best support their students. The chapters are arranged to help districts focus on specific aspects of their program—whether initially developing the program or maintaining and modifying an existing program. The chapter topics include state mandates and emphasize administration, identification, assessment, underserved populations, program development and program evaluation.

We hope this manual will assist districts in their effort to challenge and tap the potential of their most able students.



## Chapter 1: Idaho Gifted and Talented

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Implementing a district gifted and talented (GT) program is a challenging undertaking. The *Best Practices Manual for Gifted and Talented Programs in Idaho* serves a two-fold function: to assist districts in meeting the needs of GT students in five talent areas and to reflect the research of “best practices” for GT programs. All students identified as GT in the state of Idaho have the right to an appropriate education that provides educational interventions that sustain, challenge and ensure continued growth within the school system. Idaho’s commitment toward this ideal was illustrated by the state legislature’s approval of a Gifted and Talented Mandate and endorsement. The *Best Practices Manual for Gifted and Talented Programs in Idaho* begins by presenting the following sections:

- Gifted and Talented Mandate and IDAPA Code
- Definition of Gifted and Talented Children
- Talent Areas



### Gifted and Talented Mandate

During the 1993 legislative session, Idaho’s Gifted and Talented Mandate was approved. The Gifted and Talented Mandate requires all districts in Idaho to identify and serve GT children between the ages of 5 and 18 in five talent areas.

“Each public-school district is responsible for and shall provide for the special instructional needs of gifted/talented children enrolled therein. Public school districts in the state shall provide instruction and training for children between the ages of five (5) years and eighteen (18) years who are gifted/talented as defined in this chapter and by the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education shall, through its department of education, determine eligibility criteria and assist school districts in developing a variety of flexible approaches for instruction and training that may include administrative accommodations, curriculum modifications and special programs.” (Idaho Code §33-2003)



The Idaho State Board of Education created rules related to the mandate and can be found in the IDAPA Code 08.02.03.171.

## **171. GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS.**

**01. Definitions.** The following definitions apply only to Section 171 of these rules. (4-2-08)

**a.** Department. State Department of Education. (3-30-07)

**b.** District. Local school district. (3-30-07)

**c.** Gifted/talented children. Those students who are identified as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of high performing capabilities in intellectual, creative, specific academic or leadership areas, or ability in the performing or visual arts and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities. Section 33-2001, Idaho Code. (3-30-07)

**d.** Governing gifted and talented educational requirements. Sections 33-201, 33-2001, 33-2003, Idaho Code. (3-30-07)

**02. Legal Compliance.** The State Department of Education and districts shall comply with all governing gifted and talented education requirements. (3-30-07)

**03. District Plan.** Each school district shall develop and write a plan for its gifted and talented program. The plan shall be submitted to the Department no later than October 15, 2001. The plan shall be updated and submitted every three (3) years thereafter and shall include: (3-30-07)

**a.** Philosophy statement. (3-30-07)

**b.** Definition of giftedness. (3-30-07)

**c.** Program goals. (3-30-07)

**d.** Program options. (3-30-07)

**e.** Identification procedures. (3-30-07)

**f.** Program evaluation. (3-30-07)

**04. Screening.** The district's process for identifying gifted and talented students shall include the following steps: (3-30-07)

**a.** The district shall screen all potentially gifted and talented students to ensure they have an opportunity to be considered; and (3-30-07)

**b.** The district shall assess those students meeting the screening criteria and gather additional information concerning their specific aptitudes and educational needs; and (3-30-07)

**c.** The district shall match student needs with appropriate program options. (3-30-07)

**05. Assessment.** Placement decisions shall not be determined by a single criterion (for instance, test scores, other measurement, teacher recommendation, or nomination). The district’s identification process shall use multiple indicators of giftedness with information obtained through the following methods and sources: (3-30-07)

**a.** Procedures for obtaining information about students shall include formal assessment methods, such as group and individual tests of achievement, general ability, specific aptitudes and creativity. (3-30-07)

**b.** Procedures for obtaining information about students shall also include informal assessment methods, such as checklists, rating scales, pupil product evaluations, observations, nominations, biographical data, questionnaires, interviews and grades. (3-30-07)

**c.** Information about students shall be obtained from multiple sources, such as teachers, counselors, peers, parents, community members, subject area experts, and the students themselves. (3-30-07)

**06. Administration.** The district shall designate a certificated staff person to be responsible for development, supervision, and implementation of the gifted and talented program. (3-30-07)

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## Definition of Gifted and Talented Children

The state definition of GT specifies the talent areas that need to be identified and served. The following definition is taken from Idaho Code.

“Gifted and talented children” means those students who are identified as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of high-performing capabilities in intellectual, creative, specific academic or leadership areas, or ability in the performing or visual arts and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities.”

(Idaho Code §33-2001)

The State Department of Education and districts shall comply with all governing GT education requirements. This includes completion and submission of a three-year plan that will include the district’s process for identifying GT students and how they will match those needs with appropriate program options. The district shall designate a certificated staff person to be responsible for the development, supervision and implementation of the GT program. Idaho Code §33-2003 also requires districts to submit data through the Idaho System for Educational Excellence (ISEE) database and upload the enrollment count of all GT students being served by the district.

## Talent Areas

The following section defines the five talent areas as mandated by Idaho Code. Districts may use the definitions listed in this chapter or modify them to meet the needs of their GT programs.

## Five Talent Areas for Gifted and Talented Programs

Talent Area	Definition
<b>Specific Academic</b>	Evidenced by superior ability in mastering skills and concepts in one or more curriculum areas
<b>Intellectual</b>	Evidenced by superior aptitude for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding facts, concepts, generalizations and their relationships</li> <li>• Identifying patterns</li> <li>• Verbal and nonverbal reasoning</li> <li>• Spatial perceptions</li> <li>• Developing and evaluating ideas</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	Evidenced by superior characteristics, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility</li> <li>• Rapid insight into cause-effect relationships</li> <li>• Interpersonal intuition</li> <li>• Ability to motivate performances of others</li> <li>• Self-driven</li> </ul>
<b>Creativity</b>	Evidenced by superior abilities in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical thinking</li> <li>• Divergent thinking skills</li> <li>• Problem-solving strategies</li> </ul>
<b>Visual/Performing</b>	Evidenced by superior aptitude for demonstrating, typically through exhibition or performance, aesthetic, critical, historical and production aspects of dance, music, theater or the visual arts



## Chapter 2: Administration

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This chapter explains why Idaho provides GT education and offers important administrative information about GT programs. This information will help districts write their three-year GT plans. The chapter is divided into six sections:

- Purpose of Gifted and Talented Education
- Effective Gifted and Talented Programs
- Three-Year Gifted and Talented Plan
- Program Considerations Checklist
- Tiered Services
- Gifted and Talented Teacher Qualifications

### **Purpose of Gifted and Talented Education**

The purpose of GT education is to make sure that schools provide appropriate instruction, accommodation, curricular modifications and special programs to students with gifts and talents. According to a 2019 definition of giftedness that guides best practice, written by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC):

“Students with gifts and talents perform—or have the capability to perform—at higher levels compared to others of the same age, experience, and environment in one or more domains. These students require modification(s) to their educational experience(s) to learn and realize their potential. Students with gifts and talents:

- Come from all racial, ethnic, and cultural populations, as well as all economic strata.
- Require sufficient access to appropriate learning opportunities to realize their potential.
- Can have learning and processing disorders that require specialized intervention and accommodation.
- Need support and guidance to develop socially and emotionally as well as in their areas of talent.” ([NAGC Position Statement: A Definition of Giftedness that Guides Best Practice](#))

### **Rationale for Providing Gifted and Talented Education Programs**

There are reasons for providing GT education programs beyond complying with Idaho Code. The abbreviated list below comes from [Definition and Rationale for Gifted Education](#) from the NAGC.

Regardless of the state and the varying code and rule requirements:

- Schools have a responsibility to meet the learning needs of all students. Gifted children are found in all income, cultural, and racial groups; gifted children may also have one or more disabilities. ...
- In classroom observations, most learning activities are not differentiated for gifted learners. ...

Considerations

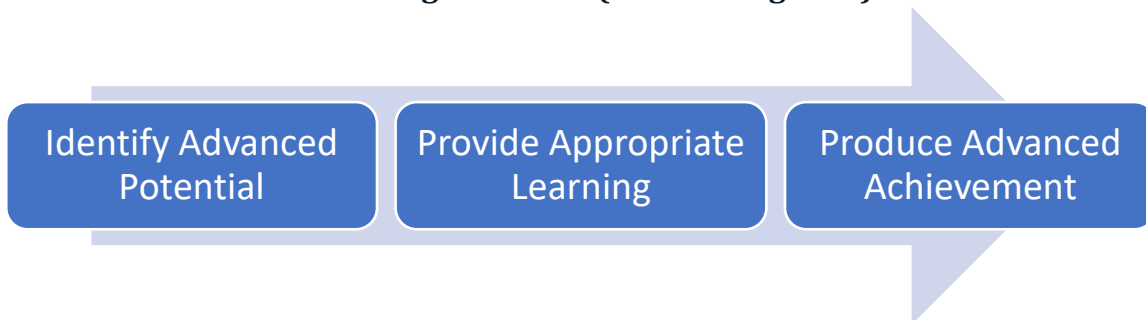
- Multifaceted systems are necessary for identification to find all students with advanced potential from all income, racial, and cultural groups to be certain we are accountable to developing their potential. ...
- Identifying students with advanced potential and providing services beginning in Kindergarten is needed or high performance from many is lost.

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment must be modified to meet the needs of gifted learners.

## Effective Gifted and Talented Programs

### A. Critical Content of Gifted and Talented Education Programs

#### Educating the Gifted (Three Categories)



Adapted from *An Introduction to Gifted Education: The Complete Kit for Facilitators, Coordinators and In-Service Training Professionals* by Kristie Speirs Neumeister, Ph.D., and Virginia H. Burney, Ph.D., 2010, Prufrock Press.

Below are some of the indicators (adapted from NAGC's [Administrator Toolbox](#)) within each category shown in the figure above; for a more in-depth list, see the NAGC resource [Critical Content of Gifted Education for K-12 Schools factsheet](#).

## **Identify Advanced Potential**

- Check state code and rules to find domains of giftedness required to be identified and served (e.g., general intellectual, specific academic, visual and performing arts, creativity).
- District-level identification ensures consistent, fair practices and implementation.
- The purpose of identifying gifted children is to provide them with specific services to develop their advanced potential in a particular domain, not to identify them for the sake of a label.
- A multifaceted identification system includes measures of performance (achievement), measures of potential (ability/aptitude) and qualitative data (descriptive data specific to the domain being served).
- Fair and defensible identification systems will make services more reflective of the district.
- Unless the state requires otherwise, different norms (local and subgroup), rather than different measures, will help find students from traditionally underrepresented populations.
- Screening procedures are designed to include all students at targeted points in the school sequence.

## **Provide Appropriate Environment and Differentiated Learning Experiences**

- Gifted students show greater achievement gains when they have opportunities to learn together. Ability grouping for the gifted is an evidence-based practice.
- Grouping must be accompanied by more in-depth curriculum and more rigorous instructional methods for gains to occur.
- Gifted students benefit from opportunities to pursue individual interests in depth.
- Gifted learners respond well to a faster pace of instruction with more complex and in-depth content.
- Quality instruction increases content knowledge and develops critical and creative thinking.
- All gifted students will need additional and ongoing support to be successful.
- Gifted students benefit from differentiated guidance and counseling services and deliberate cultivation of intrapersonal skills that support a commitment to high achievement.

## Produce Advanced Achievement and Program Effectiveness

- Statewide and district assessments allow for above-grade achievement and individual growth.
- Some gifted students need additional opportunities for above-level work, such as taking high school courses in middle school or doing college-level work while in high school.
- Evidence of advanced performance is collected and used for decision making across each domain included in a talent development framework.
- Evaluating program effectiveness includes analyzing outcomes, soliciting feedback, looking for program coherence and providing direction for future improvements based upon data.

### B. Increasing Equity in Gifted and Talented Programs

Ensuring equitable access to rigorous coursework and gifted education programs and services at every grade level for all students who would benefit from the challenge, combined with equitable identification procedures, would reduce the underrepresentation of diverse learners in gifted education programs and put more learners from every population in a position to increase their achievement and maximize their potential. More information can be found on the NAGC website, [Increasing Equity in Gifted Education Programs and Services](#), and is addressed in more detail in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5.

### C. Pre-K to Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards

Standards provide a basis for policies, rules and procedures that are essential for providing systematic programs and services to students. While standards may be addressed and implemented in a variety of ways, they provide important direction and focus to designing and developing options for gifted learners at the local level. The gifted programming standards focus on diversity and collaboration—two powerful principles that guide high-quality programs and services. Because these standards are grounded in theory, research and practice paradigms, they provide an important base for all efforts on behalf of gifted learners at all stages of development. They also help structure effective GT programs.

Below is a summary of the six Gifted Education Programming Standards developed in 2019 by NAGC. You can find the [Pre-K to Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards](#) on the NAGC website.

## The Six Gifted Education Programming Standards

### Learning and Development

Educators understand the variations in learning and development in cognitive, affective, and psychosocial areas between and among individuals with gifts and talents, creating learning environments that encourage awareness and understanding of interest, strengths, and needs; cognitive growth, social and emotional, and psychosocial skill development in school, home, and community settings.

### Assessment

Assessments provide information about identification and learning progress for students with gifts and talents.

### Curriculum & Instruction

Educators apply evidence-based models of curriculum and instruction related to students with gifts and talents and respond to their needs by planning, selecting, adapting, and creating curriculum that is responsive to diversity. Educators use a repertoire of instructional strategies to ensure specific student outcomes and measurable growth.

### Learning Environments

Learning environments foster a love for learning, personal and social responsibility, multicultural competence, and interpersonal and technical communication skills for leadership to ensure specific student outcomes.

### Programming

Educators use evidence-based practices to promote (a) the cognitive, social-emotional, and psychosocial skill development of students with gifts and talents and (b) programming that meets their interests, strengths, and needs. Educators make use of expertise systematically and collaboratively to develop, implement, manage, and evaluate services for students with a variety of gifts and talents to ensure specific student outcomes.

### Professional Learning

Educators frequently assess their professional learning needs related to the standards, develop and monitor their professional learning plans, systematically engage in coaching and learning to meet their identified needs, and align outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards. Administrators assure educators have access to sustained, intensive collaborative, job-embedded, and data-driven learning and assure adequate resources to provide for release time, fund continuing education, and offer substitute support. The effectiveness of professional learning is assessed through relevant student outcomes.



## Three-Year Gifted and Talented Plan

### A. Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the GT plan is to communicate each district's GT program. The three-year GT plans are approved by the State. The [Three-Year GT Plan Template](#) is available on the Gifted and Talented page of the Idaho State Department of Education under Program Information.

According to IDAPA Code 08.02.03.17171.03:

*Each school district shall develop and write a plan for its gifted and talented program. The plan shall be submitted to the Department no later than October 15. The plan shall be updated and submitted every three (3) years thereafter and shall include:*

- a. Philosophy statement*
- b. Definition of giftedness*
- c. Program goals*
- d. Program options*
- e. Identification procedures*
- f. Program evaluation*

The district shall designate a certificated staff person to be responsible for development, supervision, and implementation of the gifted and talented program.

### B. Preparing to Develop the Plan

#### ***Program Review/Needs Assessment***

Before the three-year GT plan is written, a school district may decide to conduct a needs assessment to gather information on the district's current program to inform improvements to the three-year plan. A committee could be formed to achieve this objective. The committee could include administrators, GT facilitators, classroom teachers, counselors, parents of GT students and GT students. If this is your first time writing a plan for your district or your district does not have a plan, begin with the Six (6) Gifted Education Programming Standards summarized in the previous section.

The committee formulates questions to guide the program review/needs assessment. The members gather information using focus groups, interviews, surveys, documents, artifacts, research, etc., with the intent of capturing data that will help develop the new three-year plan. [A Checklist of Gifted Program Elements for Self-Assessment](#) created by NAGC, may be a useful resource for conducting a program review/needs assessment.

## C. Plan Components

- 1. *Philosophy Statement:*** Each school district should have a philosophy governing its GT program. A statement of philosophy expresses a rationale or basis for a district's program. A philosophy may be explicitly stated, or more usually, is only implied. The following is an example of a philosophy statement: *The school district recognizes that students with identified gifts and talents may require differentiated instruction and opportunities. Facilitators and teachers will work together to ensure that the educational needs of GT students are met in the regular classroom and in specialized learning settings.*
- 2. *Definition of Giftedness:*** The definition of giftedness according to Idaho Code 33-2001 can be found in Chapter 1 of this manual. Each school district should have a definition of giftedness that captures their GT program. The definition statement would most likely reflect Idaho's Gifted and Talented Mandate (see Chapter 1) and emphasize the need to identify and serve GT students in five talent areas. Districts may choose to describe each of the talent areas as part of their definition.
- 3. *Program Goals:*** Program goals are general statements of what the program intends to accomplish. Program goals are statements of long-range intended outcomes of the program and curriculum. They describe learning outcomes and concepts in general terms. They describe the knowledge, skills and values expected and should be consistent with the mission of the district and the mission of the program. Program goals provide the framework and the blueprint for implementation and should clearly state the intentions of a program. See Chapter 6 of this manual for more information and examples.
- 4. *Program Options:*** The term *programming* refers to a continuum of services that address the interests, strengths and needs of students with gifts and talents in all settings. Educators use a variety of programming and strategies to enhance students' performance cognitively and in their talent development pathways (NAGC, Programming Standard 5). Program development should include deciding how identified students are to be served, the personnel responsible for providing services, the different types of programming to be offered and how to differentiate curriculum to meet student needs. For more information on Program Options, refer to Chapter 6.
- 5. *Identification Procedures:*** In general, curriculum and experiences designed for typical learners are not sufficiently complex to develop advanced potential. Therefore, it is the responsibility of school districts to identify students with advanced potential and provide them with appropriately differentiated experiences that provide opportunity and challenge to develop a particular talent into outstanding performance. For specific guidance on identifying students for GT programs, refer to Chapter 3.

- 6. Program Evaluation:** It is important to evaluate the district’s GT program for effectiveness and adjust one or more of the programming components so that student performance is improved through their participation in a GT program. Students identified with gifts and talents should show significant learning progress as a result of improving components of gifted education programming. The program evaluation may include the quantity, quality, and appropriateness of the programming and services by reviewing assessment and yearly progress data. More information on program evaluation can be found in Chapter 7.

## Program Considerations Checklist

Districts may want to use this checklist to develop a new program or enhance the quality of their existing program.

Program Considerations	Done?
<b>1. Funding:</b> Funding is needed during all phases of a program. It will need to be considered in your identification and evaluation process. You need to understand how the funding works and what is inclusive of your program.	Yes/No
<b>2. Program Coordinator:</b> Regardless of the size of the program, there must be a district-level staff member responsible for program development, implementation and funding.	Yes/No
<b>3. In-Service Training:</b> This could include a needs assessment survey or a committee to train teaching staff in the initial planning portion of the program. This is helpful when beginning a program to educate all staff on the value of having a program. Having such a program will open lines of communication to avoid division between program personnel and all staff. NOTE: The program will more likely succeed with an attitude of helpfulness and support among all staff.	Yes/No
<b>4. All Staff and Facility Needs:</b> Districts with multiple schools/buildings often share a GT specialist. Often this teacher functions in an itinerant role and travels between the schools. Other times a central location is established, and students are brought in.	Yes/No
<b>5. Community Resources:</b> Community involvement builds support for the entire educational system, not just the GT program. A district may consider organizing a community resource catalog of stakeholders.	Yes/No
<b>6. District Program Guide:</b> Individual districts should consider producing a comprehensive district manual or program guide describing all programs and services for GT students in grades K-12.	Yes/No

Program Considerations	Done?
<p><b>7. Acceleration Policy:</b> A district should develop policy concerning acceleration and continuity of service through grade 12.</p>	Yes/No
<p><b>8. Assignment Policy:</b> District Policy should include a statement about the classroom assignments of students participating in GT Pullout programs. Goals of GT services are to provide more appropriate learning experience, not more work. Districts should take this into consideration when developing their program.</p>	Yes/No
<p><b>9. Student Transfer Policy:</b> The GT services and identification criteria vary within Idaho and across the country. To ensure the continuation or onset of appropriate services, students identified as GT by one district, and who have transferred to a new district, should have their records reviewed by the new team.</p>	Yes/No
<p><b>10. Exits, Removals and Requests for Reviews:</b> In planning the identification process, the procedures for handling exits, removals and requests for review need to be outlined. Regular re-assessment is an important part of GT programs.</p>	Yes/No
<p><b>11. Parent Rights:</b> Parents have rights that districts must honor. For example, districts must inform parents about the identification of their children and the programs and services available. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (<a href="#">FERPA</a>) mandates several parent rights. “It is important that school districts notify parents of their rights to inspect and review their child’s educational records. Each educational agency/institution shall permit a parent or eligible student to inspect and review the educational records of the student.”</p>	Yes/No
<p><b>12. Student Files, Documentation and Record Keeping:</b> Every student who is identified as GT within the school district will have a confidential file documenting the need for services. The student’s file should include the following materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral and consent for testing</li> <li>• Summary of test results</li> <li>• Assessment documentation (e.g. checklists, nominations, test reports, anecdotal information, portfolio rating scale)</li> <li>• Decision of the GT team</li> </ul>	Yes/No

Note: The Program Considerations Checklist (Siegle, 1990; Starko, 1986; Taylor, n.d.) can be found in the first edition of the Idaho Best Practices Manual.

## Tiered Services

The Association for the Gifted, a Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, addressed the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework in gifted education. The central idea of RTI is to provide the services to build on the child's strengths and to identify the child's specific learning needs.

### Position Statement

It is the position of The Association for the Gifted of the Council for Exceptional Children that the Response to Intervention model be expanded in its implementation to include the needs of gifted children. The use of the RTI framework for gifted students would support advanced learning needs of children in terms of a faster paced, more complex, greater depth and/or breadth with respect to their curriculum and instruction. It should also be noted that students who are gifted with disabilities may need more than one level of intervention and advancement in terms of curriculum and instructional strategies.

To learn more, see the full report, [Response to Intervention for Gifted Children](http://nagc.org) (nagc.org)

The Gifted and Talented, Response to Intervention, & Intervention and Referral Services [Parent Handbook](#) is another resource for the application of RTI in gifted education.

## Gifted and Talented Teacher Qualifications

“Educators play an important role in the lives of gifted children and their families. Their primary job is to help gifted children develop their intellectual and academic potential in collaboration with the child's parents.

“Teaching gifted children is both exciting and challenging. Research shows that teachers encounter wide ranges of knowledge, skills, and abilities within their classrooms. Teachers must have the skills to differentiate their instruction to help children across the achievement spectrum to learn and grow every day.” ([Supporting Gifted Children](#), nagc.org)

The GT endorsement is not required for teachers in the state of Idaho. A person must hold a content-specific endorsement for the services being rendered. However, if a teacher is facilitating and/or overseeing the GT program for the district, or providing supplemental services to GT students, it is best practice for the person to hold the endorsement. Some districts may require that these individuals hold the endorsement.

## Resources

Siegle, Del. (1990). *Educating the gifted is a community affair*. Montana Association of Gifted and Talented Education, Inc.

Speirs Neumeister, K., & Burney, V. (2010). *An introduction to gifted education: The complete kit for facilitators, coordinators and in-service training professionals*. Prufrock Press.

Starko, A. J. (1986). *It's about time: Inservice strategies for curriculum compacting*. Creative Learning Press, Inc.

Taylor, R. (n.d.) *The gifted and the talented manual*. Educational Consulting Associates.

## Online

Gifted and Talented, Response to Intervention, and Intervention and Referral Services [Parent Handbook](#) (South Harrison Elementary School)

NAGC's [Administrator Toolbox](#)

- [Rationale for Gifted Education](#)
- [Critical Content of Gifted Education for K-12 Schools](#)

NAGC's [Position Statement on A Definition of Giftedness that Guides Best Practice](#)

NAGC's [Response to Intervention for Gifted Children](#)

NAGC's [Supporting Gifted Children](#)

## Chapter 3: Identification

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The following chapter assists school districts with the identification of GT students. The identification process aligns with national and state guidelines and should consider the district goals and program options. The identification process should also strive to mirror the demographics of the district with focus on underrepresented students and the use of local norms and context. The identification process must provide all students multiple opportunities to show their strengths and talents and consider equity inhibitors as well as the mitigation of systemic barriers. The focus of identification is not about “status” or sacrificing the needs of one group of students for another; it is about responding to the educational needs of all students. This chapter is divided into the following sections:

- Guiding Principles of Identification
- Initial Screening
- Identification Practices
- Eligibility and Placement

According to Idaho Administrative Code 08.02.03.171.03:

**District Plan**, *each school district shall develop and write a plan for its gifted and talented program. The plan submitted to the Department of Education shall be updated and submitted every three (3) years and shall include:*

***c. Identification Procedures***

Idaho Administrative Code 08.02.03.171.04 goes on to explain in further detail the screening process procedures for identifying GT students.

**04. Screening.** *The district’s process for identifying gifted and talented students shall include the following steps:*

- a. The district shall screen all potentially gifted and talented students to ensure they have an opportunity to be considered; and*
- b. The district shall assess those students meeting the screening criteria and gather additional information concerning their specific aptitudes and educational needs; and*
- c. The district shall match student needs with appropriate program options.*

## Guiding Principles of Identification

The identification of GT students should include procedures for identifying *all* students possessing demonstrated or potential abilities, or unique needs, in the following areas: specific academic, intellectual, leadership, creativity, and the arts. For more guidance on identification, see the [gifted education strategies](#) from NAGC.

- The identification of GT students should include the use of formal and informal measures obtained from many sources in a variety of settings. See Chapter 4 for assessment options.
- Identification procedures should align with the GT goals of the district and the services offered.
- Local norms and data should be used to improve equity within gifted programs.
- The identification process is ongoing and includes universal screening and fostering talent development.
- GT students should be identified as early as possible.
- GT programs should provide services that adjust to the demonstrated needs of students.
- GT programs should expand access and opportunity across all demographic groups.
- Various stakeholders need to be involved in all steps of the identification process.

## Local Norms

National norms compare a student's performance to peers from the same age or grade from across the United States. Local norms compare a student's performance to grade-level peers in the same district or school. The more specific the norm group used for comparison, the better. The use of narrowly defined comparison groups reveals which students, given similar backgrounds and circumstances, are achieving or have the potential to achieve at advanced levels. Using district, school, or local norms allows a better picture of students' advanced abilities and creates a more representative proportional sample for identifying students for gifted services, thereby helping to close the gaps. See [Local Norms for Gifted and Talented Student Identification: Everything You Need to Know](#) for a resource on how to implement local norms. For more detailed information on local norms, refer to Chapter 5.

## Initial Screening

The purpose of screening is to develop a pool of students who need further assessment and consideration. Early screening is recommended and should occur routinely. It can be targeted to certain grade levels.

- Screening tools should consider the needs and demographics of the district.
- Districts can use data from assessments already in place in their district for initial GT screening.
- Initial screeners should consider multiple domains and performance metrics.



- Screening may be conducted by classroom teachers, GT facilitators or other trained personnel.
- Group screening assessments do not require parental permission.

## **Universal Screening**

Universal screening involves assessing all students for giftedness instead of assessing only some students based on the recommendations of teachers or parents. Universal screening leads to significant increases in the number of identified students including those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and students of color. Using scores from a state test that all students already take can be part of a universal screening process. For more information on underserved students, refer to Chapter 5.

## **Identification Practices**

All school districts should use a multi-criteria-based process to identify GT students. No single formal/informal measurement or nomination can be used as a determining factor. See Chapter 4 for examples of assessments. Referrals may be made by a variety of stakeholders, and information about students can be obtained from multiple sources including teachers, counselors, peers, parents, community members, subject area experts and the students themselves. Various stakeholders should be involved during the identification process. Each school should have a committee that considers the pool of students. Suggested committee members may include the nominating teacher, the classroom teacher, parents, the GT facilitator, the school principal, the school psychologist, the special education administrator and the school counselor. Committees should have a minimum of three members. Students may qualify for and receive GT services in one or more talent areas. Identification procedures and forms for assessment must be communicated to families, and parental permission must be obtained for individual testing.

## **Eligibility and Placement**

Districts should use all relevant, available, normed data and collect new data as necessary to fill in gaps, including both formal and informal measures, when determining eligibility for GT services. It is not always necessary to collect new data.

- Data and supporting documentation should be reviewed and documented, considering the unique subgroups within the district, to ensure equity.
- Local norms and data should be used when determining eligibility in order to identify a population that is closely representative of the demographics of the district, as well as align services to student needs.
- Programing should strive to meet the unique academic, cognitive and social-emotional needs of the individual student within the district framework.

- Services that meet the needs of the qualified student should be recommended and communicated to all vested parties in a comprehensible and timely manner, but in-person meetings with parents are not required.
- Districts should monitor student progress in a manner consistent with the district GT program goals to ensure optimal development of student potential.

## **Fostering Talent Development**

Talent development refers to the deliberate cultivation of ability or giftedness in a specific domain. Talent development can also be used as a particular framework for viewing giftedness and the education of gifted students. The talent development perspective sees talent as developing over time and is viewed as a way to increase equity of access to services and quality programming. The [Call to Action: Guidebook](#) provides actionable next steps for districts to help increase equity in gifted education and to help set the foundation for a framework in talent development.

Below is a summary of the [six critical actions](#) developed in 2019 by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Advanced Learning and Gifted Education Department.

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### **Critical Actions to Realize Equity and Excellence**

#### ***Action 1: Reframe Your Lens***

By reframing our lenses, we reflect on our biases. We change the language from “at-risk” to “at-potential.” Provide opportunities to say “yes” instead of creating reasons to say “no.”

#### ***Action 2: Use Equitable Identification Practices***

Provide multiple entry points by aligning identification practices with services. Use local norms and universal screeners when possible.

#### ***Action 3: Provide a Range of Services Within the Program***

Offer a variety of services (acceleration, enrichment, differentiation) in a variety of settings.

#### ***Action 4: Foster Talent Development***

Fostering talent development allows for more opportunities of growth and experience that focuses on students’ strengths.

#### ***Action 5: Collect and Use Meaningful Data***

When developing your three-year plan, have an end in mind. With a team, formulate your school districts’ program goals and philosophy statement to determine the data to analyze.

#### ***Action 6: Provide Focused Professional Learning Opportunities***

Meaningful, focused professional learning will improve student services, practices and policy.

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## **Identifying Underserved Populations**

The following pages summarize ways of identifying underserved populations. Page numbers are included to help locate specific sections in Chapter 5. Specific professional learning (teacher in-service) focusing on culturally responsive assessment; recognizing implicit bias; learning cultural traits and norms of all populations; and creating equity-based culturally responsive classrooms and schools is recommended for all.

### **Low Socio-Economic Students**

- Use local as well as national norms.
- Use a variety of informal measures.
- Use universal screening.
- Provide cultural competency professional learning for teachers.

### **Rural Students**

- Use local norms.
- Use universal screening.
- Use subtest scores to identify strengths.
- Use a variety of informal measures.
- Provide cultural competency professional learning for teachers.

### **Black/African American Students**

- Use local as well as national norms.
- Use subtest scores to identify strengths.
- Use a variety of informal measures (including referrals from community members and parents).
- Provide cultural competency professional learning for teachers.

### **Latinx/Hispanic and Multilingual Students**

- Use tests that have been translated for specific populations.
- Assess students in languages they understand.
- Use local as well as national norms.
- Use universal screening.
- Use subtest scores to identify student strengths.
- Use a variety of informal measures.
- Provide cultural competency professional learning for teachers.

### American Indian and Alaska Native Students

- Implement portfolios and performance rating scales.
- Use multiple-criteria approach to identification.
- Ensure all time limits do not affect assessment of aptitude or achievement.
- Provide cultural competency professional learning for teachers.

### Twice-Exceptional Students

- Look for evidence of above-average intelligence, creativity, and commitment to a high-interest task.
- Look for discrepancy of performance in different academic areas.
- Use multiple-criteria approach to identification.
- Ensure all time limits do not affect assessment of aptitude or achievement.
- Use neuropsychological data, if available.

## Resources

Ford, D. Y., & Milner, R. (2005). *Teaching culturally diverse students*. Prufrock Press.

Peters, S. J., Rambo-Hernandez, K., Makel, M., Matthews, M., & Plucker, J. (2019, May 14). Local norms improve equity in gifted identification. National Association for Gifted Children. <https://www.nagc.org/blog/local-norms-improve-equity-gifted-identification>

## Online

NAGC's [Education Strategies: Identification](#)

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Advanced Learning and Gifted Education's [Call to Action: Critical Actions to Realize Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education: Changing Mindsets, Policies, and Practices](#)

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Advanced Learning and Gifted Education's [Call to Action: Guidebook](#)

The following chapter assists school districts with the question for many gifted programs, “How do students qualify for services?” As you plan your program, it is worth considering what type of program(s) your district can afford to fund appropriately and what you can do well. Universal screeners can assist your district in creating a large pool of nominated students, especially in traditionally underrepresented subpopulations. However, if your assessment tools rely solely on traditional academic achievement measures, universal screeners may not close all identification gaps. The following chapter is divided into three sections:

- Types of Assessment Instruments
- How to Complete a Student Information Profile
- Assessment Types in Specific Talent Areas

### **Types of Assessment Instruments**

According to IDAPA Code 08.02.03.171.05:

*Placement decisions shall not be determined by a single criterion (for instance, test scores, other measurement, teacher recommendation, or nomination). The district’s identification process shall use multiple indicators of giftedness with information obtained through the following methods and sources:*

- a. Procedures for obtaining information about students shall include formal assessment methods, such as group and individual tests of achievement, general ability, specific aptitudes and creativity.*
- b. Procedures for obtaining information about students shall also include informal assessment methods, such as checklists, rating scales, pupil product evaluations, observations, nominations, biographical data, questionnaires, interviews and grades.*
- c. Information about students shall be obtained from multiple sources, such as teachers, counselors, peers, parents, community members, subject area experts, and the students themselves.*

As you plan assessment and dive into the results, the question we are asking is “Is there sufficient evidence to suggest that this student needs intervention in this area of giftedness?” The answer is dependent on the results of various pieces of evidence. Therefore, identification will involve administering a variety of assessments, which may include the following:

- Standardized tests (e.g., intelligence, aptitude, achievement)
- Criterion-referenced tests
- Observations by trained teachers and other personnel

- Nominations by parents, peers and staff
- Student interviews
- Evaluation of students' participation in established programs (e.g., scouting, 4-H, Decathlon)
- Portfolios
- Extracurricular activities performance

A district may choose to construct a matrix to weigh identification data or use a raw data summary to compile information. Final data, however, should be recorded on a Student Information Profile.

## **How to Complete a Student Information Profile**

The purpose of the Student Information Profile is to enable districts to identify student strengths and needs and to provide a consistent identification tool within the district. The profile can help identify GT underachievers by looking at discrepancies between intellectual ability and academic performance. The profile also communicates across the state the identification criteria used by districts to determine GT services.

The Student Information Profile identifies whether students need extra programming and, if so, the extent of their needs. The profile will rely on two forms of measures: formal and informal.

### **Formal Measures**

The formal measure section will be based on percentages or raw scores. If using local norms, scores used to qualify for services will be determined at the local level. It is worth noting that creating local norms to help find students in traditionally underrepresented populations is helpful in many formal measures. To learn more about how local norms can improve equity in gifted education, refer to Chapter 3.

When selecting nationally normed, standardized instruments for the identification of GT students, the team should consider the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the assessment?
- Is the assessment valid for its purpose?
- Is the assessment reliable?
- Does the assessment measure exceptionality?
- What is the age of the assessment?
- When was the assessment last normed?
- How large was the norming sample?

## Informal Measures/Products and Other Data

Data collected for the “informal measures” and “products and other data” portions of the profile can be plotted according to the district-established criteria. For example, the district could plot grades, teacher or parent behavioral rating scales, portfolios and other informal data. It is recommended that districts use at least two informal measures.

## Assessment Types in Specific Talent Areas

Not all screening instruments and methods are appropriate for every of GT talent area. Once a general procedure for selecting students for GT services has been determined, a committee may wish to focus on instruments and methods for locating students with superior abilities in specific talent areas. This is a vital step because it should ensure that the identification methods chosen help locate students who will benefit from the particular program being offered. As a district, you may find that one instrument is more efficient or financially appropriate.

The following methods and instruments are examples and not an exhaustive list for identifying GT students in the five talent areas. It is important to note that the following matrix is intended for informational purposes as the Idaho State Department of Education does not approve specific identification assessments. The following three charts are adapted from the [Matrix of Commonly Used Assessments for Gifted Identification](#) developed in 2020 by the office of Gifted and Talented, Colorado State Department of Education. Certain assessments from this matrix were not included because they were specific to the needs of Colorado students. These assessments are not included in the Idaho State Department of Education comprehensive assessment system, so users will have to assume cost, terms and conditions associated with the assessments if they choose to use them to identify GT students.

## Cognitive Measures

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Most cognitive assessments may be used for gifted identification purposes as long as they measure general intellectual ability and have sufficient range to provide an accurate assessment of student ability. These tests should not be used as the sole point of access to GT services, and educators need to examine their data for equity. School-level norms are still the best way to measure cognitive data.

Assessment	Content	Time	Administration	Contact
<b>Cognitive Abilities Test Full Battery Form 7 or 8 (CogAT)</b>	Reasoning and problem-solving using verbal, quantitative, nonverbal symbols	30–60 minutes per session depending on grade level	Group administered	<a href="#">Houghton</a> <a href="#">Mifflin</a> <a href="#">Harcourt</a>



Assessment	Content	Time	Administration	Contact
<b>Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children, Second Edition (KABC-II)</b>	Various cognitive abilities based on Cattell-Horn-Carroll (CHC) or Luria models	25–55 minutes (core battery, Luria model), 35–70 minutes (core battery, CHC model)	Individually administered	<a href="#">Pearson</a>
<b>Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, Second or Third Edition (NNAT2) (NNAT3)</b>	Screens for general nonverbal ability	30 minutes	Group or individually administered	<a href="#">Pearson</a>
<b>Stanford Binet Intelligence Scales, 5th Edition (SB 5)</b>	Fluid reasoning, knowledge, quantitative reasoning, visual- spatial processing	Approximately 5 minutes per subtest	Individually administered	<a href="#">Houghton Mifflin Harcourt</a>
<b>Test of Nonverbal Intelligence, Fourth Edition (TONI-4)</b>	General cognitive ability	15–20 minutes	Individually administered	<a href="#">Pearson</a>
<b>Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test Second Edition (UNIT2)</b>	Measures general cognitive ability in a completely nonverbal manner	Depends on battery given (10–45 minutes)	Individually administered	<a href="#">Houghton Mifflin Harcourt</a>
<b>Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, 5th Edition (WISC-V)</b>	Measures a child’s intellectual ability including visual-spatial and fluid reasoning	Varies depending on age, between 1 hour and 1.5 hours	Individually administered	<a href="#">Pearson</a>
<b>Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, 4<sup>th</sup></b>	General cognitive ability	Core subtests: 30–60 minutes; depending on age	Individually administered	<a href="#">Pearson</a>

Assessment	Content	Time	Administration	Contact
<b>Woodcock Johnson Tests of Cognitive Abilities Fourth Edition</b>	Verbal ability, thinking ability, cognitive efficiency	Brief intellectual ability testing time 10–15 minutes	Individually administered	<a href="#">Houghton Mifflin Harcourt</a>

Adapted from Colorado Department of Education, Office of Gifted and Talented. (2020). *Matrix of commonly used assessments for gifted identification*.

[https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/gt\\_matrixcommonmeasures](https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/gt_matrixcommonmeasures)

## Achievement Measures

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Achievement tests that may be considered as qualifying evidence contain one or more of the following attributes:

- Items that measure a broad range of skills and standards within a content domain
- Summative assessments that measure the mastery level of content skills/standards

It is important to note that when identifying a student for a specific academic aptitude, multiple assessment scores over **a period of time** can be helpful. Examining trends over time, especially for primary students, is important when reviewing qualifying data for all talent areas.

Assessment	Content	Time	Administration	Contact
<b>ACT</b>	Consists of subject area tests in English, mathematics, reading, science and optional writing	Actual testing time is 2 hours and 55 minutes (plus 30 minutes if taking the ACT Plus Writing).	Group	<a href="#">Registration</a> online Fee required
<b>iReady Diagnostic*</b>	Reading and math	Adaptive and user controlled	Group online	<a href="#">Curriculum Associates</a>
<b>Iowa Assessments Form E</b>	Comprehensive assessment of student progress in major content areas	Core: 2 hours, 35 minutes Complete: 3 hours, 55 minutes	Group, online or paper-pencil	<a href="#">Houghton Mifflin Harcourt</a>

Assessment	Content	Time	Administration	Contact
<b>NWEA-Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)</b>	Computer-adaptive interim assessment of reading, language usage, and mathematics (additional science test is available)	Untimed, but a typical student completes in under 60 minutes per subject area	Individually administered on the computer	<a href="#">Northwest Evaluation Association</a>
<b>Renaissance Learning STAR Assessments</b>	Computerized screening and progress monitoring assessment of reading and math skills	20 minutes	Individually administered on the computer	<a href="#">Renaissance Learning</a>
<b>SAT</b>	College placement test to assess critical reading, writing, and math	3–4 hours	Group SAT is administered to all 11th graders for state assessment	<a href="#">The College Board</a>

Adapted from Colorado Department of Education, Office of Gifted and Talented. (2020). *Matrix of commonly used assessments for gifted identification*.

[https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/gt\\_matrixcommonmeasures](https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/gt_matrixcommonmeasures)

## Observation Scales

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Observation scales are **qualitative** measures that depend on the observation of and judgment about student behaviors by professionals who deal with the student on a regular basis and/or the student's parents. Normed observation scales designed specifically to examine behaviors associated through best practices with giftedness may be used for identification. Talent scales developed through analysis and research of the discipline may be considered as qualifying evidence for dance, music, performing arts and visual arts.

Assessment	Content	Time	Administration	Contact
<b>Gifted Evaluation Scale, 3rd Edition (GES-3)</b>	Scales measure intellect, creativity, specific academic aptitude, leadership ability, and performing and visual arts—the motivation scale is optional.	15 minutes	Teacher rating form	<a href="#">Hawthorne Educational Services, Inc.</a>
<b>Gifted Rating Scales (GRS)</b>	Scales are designed to measure general intellectual ability, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, creativity, and leadership.	5–10 minutes	Teacher rating form	<a href="#">Pearson</a>
<b>Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS)</b>	Home Rating Scale and School Rating Scale work together to measure general intellectual ability, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, creativity, and leadership.		Home Rating Scale and Teacher Rating Form	<a href="#">Prufrock Press Inc.</a>
<b>Arts Talent ID by Dr. Haroutounian</b>	Dance, music, performing arts and visual arts	15–30 minutes	Completed by a person knowledgeable of the content areas and who works directly with the student	<a href="#">Royal Fireworks Press</a>

Assessment	Content	Time	Administration	Contact
<b>Musical Aptitude Test</b>	Seven components: tonal imagery (melody and harmony), rhythm imagery (tempo and meter) and musical sensitivity (phrasing, balance and style)	3.5 hours (50 minutes for each)	Individual or group	<a href="#">GIA Publications</a>
<b>Profile of Creative Abilities (PCA)</b>	Measure of creative ability	30–40 minutes	Individual or group	<a href="#">PRO-ED, Inc., 8700 Shoal</a>
<b>Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT)</b>	Overall measure of creativity; figural and verbal tests—examinees reflect on their life experiences	30–45 minutes depending on test	Individually administered	<a href="#">Scholastic Testing Services</a>

Adapted from Colorado Department of Education, Office of Gifted and Talented. (2020). *Matrix of commonly used assessments for gifted identification*.

[https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/gt\\_matrixcommonmeasures](https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/gt_matrixcommonmeasures)

## Other Informal Measures to Consider

Research suggests that informal pathways may introduce bias into the identification process (Grissom & Redding, 2016; McBee et al., 2016). It is important to make relevant stakeholders aware of the nomination process and provide adequate training for nominations.

- **Student Interest Inventory.** Identify a wide variety of interests including academic, some of which have been pursued in depth. Highly developed interests can serve as a useful piece of information.
- **Parent Recommendation.** Identify activities and interests that reflect ability, depth of knowledge and interest in the subjects included in the program. Identify items like those cited in the Student Interest Inventory.
- **Teacher Recommendation.** Ask for recommendations from teachers of subject areas or disciplines related to the program. Identify students who ask a variety of questions, tend to ask probing questions, have strong interests, are critical of superficial answers and demonstrate spatial perception abilities.
- **Peer Nomination.** Locate students who are sought out for answers to academic problems.
- **Checklists and Questionnaires.** Rate or check characteristics that indicate a specific academic talent, intellectual ability, creative thinking and leadership.
- **Biographical Inventory.** Highlight those activities and interests that demonstrate variety and some depth and persistence. Also identify behaviors that reflect a curiosity about the total environment.
- **Student Products/Portfolio/Audition.** Identify both originality and quality. Examine individual work or performance, looking for quality and potential. Use experts in specific visual and performing arts areas.
- **Sociometric Tests.** Identify students who have influence over others in informal situations.
- **Personal Interview.** Locate students who are willing to expend the necessary time and energy. Furthermore, because some students are not aware of the variety of opportunities available to them, the interview should also involve a description of the kinds of activities they may pursue and should encourage questions about the program.
- **Expert Recommendation.** A statement from an expert in the field can be used to document a student's exceptional ability.

## Resources

Grissom, J. A., & Redding, C. (2016). Discretion and disproportionality: Explaining the underrepresentation of high-achieving students of color in gifted programs. *AERA Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858415622175>

McBee, M. T., Peters, S. J., & Miller, E. M. (2016). The impact of the nomination stage on gifted program identification: A comprehensive psychometric analysis. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 60(4), 258–278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986216656256>

Peters, S. J., Makel, M. C., & Rambo-Hernandez, K. (2021). Local norms for gifted and talented student identification: Everything you need to know. *Gifted Child Today*, 44(2), 93–104. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217520985181>

Plucker, J. A., & Peters, S. J. (2016). *Excellence gaps in education: Expanding opportunities for talented students*. Harvard Education Press.

## Online

The Office of Gifted Education at Colorado Department of Education's [\*Matrix of Commonly Used Assessments for Gifted Identification\*](#)

## Chapter 5: Underrepresented Populations

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Students who are members of culturally diverse groups, originate from poverty or are multilingual or from other special population groups may be overlooked during the identification phase of a GT program. Often the lack of knowledge and sensitivity about certain groups hinders identification. Portions of this chapter on underrepresented populations were adapted from the [Indiana State Guide for High Ability Coordinators](#). The chapter is divided into the following sections:

- Overview
- Low Socio-Economic Students
- Rural Students
- Black/African American
- Latinx/Hispanic or Multilingual Students
- American Indian and Alaska Native Students
- Twice-Exceptional Students

### Overview

Research and practitioners have provided ample evidence of the challenges of identifying giftedness in certain student groups. Nationwide, students from culturally diverse backgrounds, those from poverty, twice-exceptional students, multilingual students and others continue to be among those least likely to be identified and served equitably in school programs for gifted students (Gentry et al., 2019). As a result of this continuing dilemma, these students are categorized as “underrepresented” populations (Ford, 2010; Gentry et al., 2019; Grissom & Redding, 2016). Classroom teachers are often ill-prepared to recognize gifted behaviors as expressed by these students who are underrepresented in gifted services nationwide (Card & Guiliano, 2016; Gentry et al., 2019).

The sections that follow discuss the characteristics and modifications that may help identify more students from these specific underrepresented populations. These include, but may not be limited to, those who are from low socio-economic families and Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, rural, highly/profoundly gifted or other students.

Districts should concentrate on better identification of those groups of students who are underrepresented in the GT program by seeking proportional representation of that group in the total school population. For instance, if Latinx/Hispanic or rural students form a major proportion of the total school population but form a much smaller proportion of the students in the GT program, targeted attempts should be made to improve the identification procedures for them to make sure that the identification process is not the cause for their relative lower representation.



## Use of Local Norms, Universal Screening and Informal Measures

As discussed in Chapter 3, the identification of GT students should include procedures for identifying *all* students possessing demonstrated or potential abilities. Using local norms and universal screening allows districts to paint a better picture of students' advanced abilities and can create more representation for identifying students for gifted services. Three different approaches have been suggested to accomplish this:

1. A number of researchers have advocated the use of tests that are less verbal in their demand and less reliant on the cultural assumptions of many standardized instruments. The "culture-fair" or "culture-free" tests yield results that show less discrepancy in performance based on socio-economic status. The difficulty with employing such measures is that they can have a lower relationship to school performance than more traditional instruments. Additionally, such tests should only be used when they are aligned with the services that will be provided and program goals.
2. Universal screening allows districts to administer assessments to entire grade levels of students in an effort to "catch" students not referred by classroom teachers who may have limited experiences with their populations or who may lack cultural competency training. Universal screening has been demonstrated to be successful in identifying students from underrepresented populations, including those from poverty and culturally diverse groups (Card & Guiliano, 2016).
3. Local norms compare a student's performance to grade-level peers in the same district or school. This approach allows administrators to identify students who perform relatively high within the local context. Local norming works well in many districts, particularly if there is little economic variability; however, in districts where substantial differences in economic status exist, this procedure by itself may be inadequate to find underrepresented GT students. Training for teachers to assist in recognizing giftedness among underserved populations is always recommended to increase the number of students referred for assessment as well as participation in elementary-level talent development programming (Ford et al., 2018).

Almost all experts in the identification of GT students agree that informal measures should be included in the battery of instruments used to identify GT minority students. Some of the most popular methods are the use of nominations, rating scales and checklists. Teacher input is particularly valuable if the teachers have been trained in culturally responsive identification strategies. Parents may be helpful in providing information on the abilities of their children, who may deliberately mask their performance in school to be accepted by their peer group.

Parent awareness and community involvement can greatly increase the likelihood of finding low socio-economic GT students. Every effort should also be made to ask economically disadvantaged parents about their children's current interests, abilities and performances. The community can furnish useful information and product samples from out-of-school programs such as scouting, 4-H, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs and other youth organizations.

Encouraging referrals by community leaders is also recommended to expand the talent pool in consideration for gifted education services.

## **Low Socio-Economic Students (or students living in poverty)**

The literature concerning low socio-economic GT students suffers from a fundamental confusion in connecting economic disadvantage with culturally different categories of GT students. This confusion often results in a tendency to identify economic disadvantage with certain ethnic or racial groups. The distinction between economic and cultural diversity (or ethnic minority) is an important one. Although many Idaho districts may have few racial or ethnic minority students, poverty is a condition that can be identified in most schools. In those districts that are enrolling substantial numbers of students from racial and ethnic minorities, efforts to increase a racial representation may ignore the additional necessity of seeking out those who come from low socio-economic populations. On cultural lines the program participants may appear to be representative of the district, but in fact the GT program may be predominately composed of students from middle-income families.

Many homes that could be classified as low socio-economic on purely economic terms provide excellent learning environments. However, poverty makes the creation of such enriched environments much more difficult, and a special effort should be made to examine students from low socio-economic backgrounds to identify the GT students hidden in this population.

Low socio-economic students may not master the linguistic and grammatical structure of the mainstream culture. Thus, students from low socio-economic backgrounds are less likely than middle- or upper-income students to score highly on standardized instruments. For low socio-economic students, poverty forms barriers to identification and participation in gifted programs (Stambaugh & Stambaugh, 2021):

- First, poverty limits opportunity. For families desperately worried about achieving minimal subsistence, it is difficult to devote energy or resources to providing the enriching experiences that are a matter of course in middle-income homes. Consequently, exposure to certain resources and experiences tend to be limited for low socio-economic students.
- Second, poverty also limits the expectation and estimation of others. Teachers often do not believe that GT students exist among the poor. Teachers may make hasty and summary judgments about ability based on the way students dress, speak or are groomed. The lack of outreach to parents and community members from low socio-economic communities also poses a barrier to the full engagement of some families in gifted programs. In-service training sessions may be used to sensitize teachers to possible biases they may have that would inhibit a student to be identified and to help increase outreach.

## **Rural Students**

Rural education is shaped by the sparsely settled nature of the countryside and the values and beliefs of its inhabitants. Rurality is a distinct identity (Chambers, Crumb, & Harris 2019).

The gap between rural and urban experiences, however, has been decreasing because of improved transportation, increased availability of internet services and the consolidation of rural schools. Even with advances, the differences between rural and urban schools and the limitations for gifted students is distinct (Davis, Ford, Moore, & Fears, 2021). A clear understanding of the strengths and challenges faced by rural gifted students can help educators better provide the support that these students need to reach their academic potential (Stambaugh & Stambaugh, 2021). Despite the increased urbanization of many rural students, many rural students' high potentials are masked by behaviors that are not typically found among GT students.

Informal measures may be particularly helpful in selecting students from rural populations. Parents and community leaders can supply a wealth of information about children's interests and talents in such things as oral presentations in community meetings; technical skills; special hobbies and collections; performing arts abilities; 4-H projects; and other out-of-school activities. One of the advantages of small, rural schools is the close relationship between members of the community. Counselors and teachers (particularly those who originate from the rural community) frequently know a good deal about the family situations of most students in the school. Such a person can be a great asset on the selection and review committees because he or she can provide background information about students that may not be available otherwise. Committee members can then consider this information when making placement decisions.

## **Black/African American Students**

The effects of race on identification of Black/African American students can be divided into several different factors. First, cultural differences can create effects that are unfamiliar to teachers and other personnel who originate from other ethnic groups. Many educators hold racial stereotypes that do not recognize the likelihood of high ability appearing in this group. Hence, expectations of performance are lowered, and the teacher simply overlooks evidence that the student is quite capable. Moreover, the diminished expectation may lead to diminished performance by the student. Teachers who are more sensitive to and respectful of the varied manifestations of giftedness in Black/African American gifted students are more likely to be successful and willing to refer students to gifted services (Davis, 2010).

These effects can be compounded by a misinterpretation of the behaviors of Black/African American students in the classroom (Ford & Grantham, 2003). For many Black/African American students, the kinds of behaviors reinforced in the home, at religious institutions or in interactions with peers are looked on with disfavor in school settings. Verbal creativity and humor, physical action, active participation and spontaneous interaction may be interpreted as disruptive and disrespectful by many classroom teachers.

Some evidence exists that Black/African American students are best able to solve problems with visual and auditory content, have strong memories and are adept at convergent production. When school tasks are non-relational, Black/African American students may not be as interested and not be able to demonstrate their strengths. The lack of cultural competence of educators responsible for identifying and serving these students in the

schooling environment can be a major obstacle to the identification of GT Black/African American students (Fugate, Behrens, Boswell, & Davis, 2021).

## **Latinx/Hispanic or Multilingual Students**

The terms “Latinx/Hispanic” is used to describe people with origins in Puerto Rico, Mexico, Cuba, Latin America or Spain. Some researchers in contemporary literature have opted to use “multilingual” to characterize students from these populations while emphasizing an asset-based approach to educating them (Pereira & de Oliveria, 2021). Given the diversity of backgrounds implied by these terms, educators are well advised to recognize that there exists no single, distinct model of the Latinx/multilingual family.

Historically, Latinx/Hispanic students have demonstrated a lower rate of achievement than their Anglo-American counterparts have on English standardized reading tests. Language barriers, discriminatory behaviors of ill-prepared teachers and other factors have contributed to the poor academic and standardized test performance of Latinx/Hispanic students. For the GT Latinx/Hispanic student, it has meant virtual exclusion from gifted education programs.

To make their tests more appropriate for Latinx/Hispanic students, some formal test publishers have translated their tests into Spanish. Also, making sure that the services being provided align with this practice is essential. The language barriers of bilingual Latinx/Hispanic students on formal tests make it imperative that informal measures also be used to identify GT students from this population. Parent and teacher rating scales may be especially helpful. Parents should be given questionnaires in their native language to avoid misunderstandings. Parent and teacher checklists and rating scales may be adapted, including questions related to the characteristics. As with all underrepresented populations, it is important to provide in-service training to teachers regarding the traits of Latinx/Hispanic students. For more information, see NAGC’s helpful resource on [Identifying and Serving Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Gifted Students](#).

In addition to rating scales and checklists, other types of informal measures may be helpful with other underrepresented student groups to expand the information available to school personnel making eligibility decisions. Peer nominations, product samples, auditions, interviews, biographical information and student grades all may be useful in identifying GT Latinx/Hispanic students. These measures provide qualitative information to provide a more comprehensive “picture” of the student than is possible with formal test scores alone.

## **American Indian and Alaska Native Students**

One of the first considerations when identifying GT American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) students is the use of assessments that go beyond a narrow concept of talent. A broadened concept of talent will allow assessment personnel to identify talents that reflect the culture of the AIAN population, and will allow for multiple manifestations of talent. More recent research discusses access to gifted programs and the continued marginalization of students from AIAN populations as well as the severe under-identification that results in them being underserved in programs across the nation (Gentry & Fugate, 2012).

A GT program should use reliable and valid instruments for assessing the construct of talent underlying the definition. Those who create the identification systems must examine instruments carefully to ensure reliability of the instrument within the target population (AIAN) and validity for assessing the trait under consideration. That is to say, there should be evidence that instruments yield scores that are consistent when used in assessing AIAN students, not just students in general. The assessment tools should be valid indicators of potential abilities within the population assessed. For example, a verbal test of any ability will not provide valid indicators for students who are not fluent in the language of the test being administered. Scholars working with AIAN gifted students have recommended that any assessments used for the purpose of determining whether students should be eligible for gifted services are those that take into consideration cultural traits, norms and behaviors. AIAN students are typified as being different than typical school-age children from other populations.

Portfolios and performance rating scales should be selected carefully, just as any other tool, when assessing AIAN students. The potential for cultural bias in both the rating scale and the rater is always present. The criteria that are selected as reflecting the particular talent—whether verbal/linguistic, scientific, musical ability, or any other talent from any other domain—must be expressed in ways that reduce the potential of bias for or against any particular culture. Other indicators of GT abilities may include special abilities in speech and song; abilities to acquire and know when to apply knowledge; the ability to create with hands; and the ability to empathize and give to others (Gentry & Fugate, 2012).

## **Twice-Exceptional Students**

Students who are identified as GT in one or more areas of exceptionality and also identified with one or more specific diagnosable conditions, such as learning disabilities, mental health problems, neurological disorders, or physical handicaps that may or may not impede their progress in life are twice exceptional. The effects of a learning disability can suppress a child's giftedness, and the child's giftedness can hide (or mask) his or her learning challenge. Some have been identified as gifted only, and some have been identified as having a learning challenge only. However, the majority of these students are in the regular classroom unidentified. The Idaho State Department of Education published a [twice-exceptional manual](#) in 2010 that goes into greater detail about the characteristics, identification, and best practices for twice-exceptional students. It is recommended that you review the manual to recognize and nurture the exceptional capabilities of gifted students who have disabilities and help them achieve their potential.

## Resources

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## Online

NAGC's [\*Identifying and Serving Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Gifted Students\*](#)

Indiana Department of Education's [\*High Ability Coordinator Handbook\*](#)

## Chapter 6: Program Development

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Program development addresses what a student will learn and how he or she will be taught. This chapter is divided into three sections:

- Program Goals
- Program Options
- Instruction Planning and Strategies

According to Idaho Administrative Code 08.02.03.171.03

**District Plan**, *each school district shall develop and write a plan for its gifted and talented program. The plan submitted to the Department of Education shall be updated and submitted every three (3) years and shall include:*

**c. Program goals.**

**d. Program options.**

### Program Goals

Program goals are general statements of what the program intends to accomplish. Program goals are statements of long-range intended outcomes of the program and curricula. They describe learning outcomes and concepts in general terms. They describe the knowledge, skills and values expected and should be consistent with the mission of the district and the mission of the program. Program goals provide the framework and the blueprint for implementation and should clearly state the intentions of a program.

Example goals taken from Idaho GT three-year plans:

- Students will be challenged to meet their unique learning needs and develop their maximum potential through guidance and differentiated instruction.
- Expand enrichment options for creatively and artistically gifted students to more elementary schools.
- Recognize students from all cultural and economic groups who possess exceptional academic and intellectual potential compared to others of their age, experience or environment.
- Monitor program participation against demographics to increase representation closer to representation of total demographics in the district.
- Provide professional development for GT facilitators, classroom teachers and counselors. Provide financial assistance to attend Edufest as well as other professional development opportunities.



## Program Options

Program options are needed to meet all program goals. When implemented correctly, program options develop and provide curricula to recognize the interests, strengths and needs of gifted students in all settings. Gifted academic student services should be domain specific. The ideal GT program includes many options of curricular modification that are designed to meet the assessed needs of the students. These options should include both a range of difficulty in all content areas and a strategic method of delivery. Program options must provide challenging educational experiences for these students rather than just more of the same kind of experiences. The goal of comprehensive programming is to provide appropriate educational opportunities and program flexibility.

The NAGC program standards were developed to help coordinate programs and services at the building and district level. To help develop program options that focus on student outcomes, districts can use the [Gifted Education Programming Standard 5: Programming](#) from NAGC. Districts can use the program standards to help write and implement their three-year plans. They can also use them both as mileposts for improving programs and services and as rubrics for evaluation.

### NAGC's Programming Standard 5: Programming

*Educators use evidence-based practices to promote (a) the cognitive, social-emotional, and psychosocial skill development of students with gifts and talents and (b) programming that meets their interests, strengths, and needs. Educators make use of expertise systematically and collaboratively to develop, implement, manage, and evaluate services for students with a variety of gifts and talents to ensure specific student outcomes.*

## Instruction Planning and Strategies

Educators can use NAGC's [Programming Standard 3](#) to help develop and use curriculum that will develop students' talents and ensure specific student outcomes. Curricula should always be aligned with local, state and national content standards. To dig deeper into the research behind various programming options, refer to Plucker and Callahan's (2020) article [The Evidence Base for Advanced Learning Programs](#).

The following chart showing **examples of potential service options** is meant as a reference or guide to help match individual students with specific services after being identified. The State is only making recommendations based on best practices here. Refer to Chapter 3 for identification and Chapter 7 for program evaluation. These promising practices should be aligned with the student's identified talent area(s), and available resources should be taken into consideration when choosing program options.

One or more of the service opportunities described as follows may be appropriate for a student who is identified as a GT student.

**Enrichment Opportunities**

Enrichment	Definition	Evidence-Based Practice (NAGC Program Standard)	Examples: Five Talent Areas
<b>Enrichment in regular classroom</b>	Experiences provided in regular classrooms that are more in depth and supplemental to the established curriculum. Purposefully planned with the needs, interests and capabilities of particular students in mind and are not a repetition of the material.	5.1.2. Educators use enrichment options to extend and deepen learning opportunities within and outside of the school setting.	<p><b>Academic:</b> Opportunity for content “mastery” in a specific academic area.</p> <p><b>Intellectual:</b> Allow for designing and building structures in a content project. <b>Creativity:</b> Open-ended task that solves problems or challenges existing ideas.</p> <p><b>Leadership:</b> Appoint head of committee or group project.</p> <p><b>Visual/Performing Arts:</b> Opportunity to show content knowledge through poetry, music or creative writing.</p>
<b>Mentorships</b>	A program that pairs individual students with someone who has advanced skills and experiences in a particular discipline.	5.1.4. Educators use individualized learning options such as mentorships, internships, online courses, and independent study.	<p><b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Mentor relationships with dedicated scholars, artists, scientists or business people and can help with college and career planning, priorities and long-term goals.</p>

Enrichment	Definition	Evidence-Based Practice (NAGC Program Standard)	Examples: Five Talent Areas
<b>Independent projects</b>	Research and development of a self-selected topic aligned with the student interests and advanced skill agreed upon by the teacher.	5.1.4. Educators use individualized learning options such as mentorships, internships, online courses, and independent study.	<b>Academic:</b> Research paper on the time period in a novel the class is studying. <b>Intellectual:</b> PowerPoint presentation on the plot, symbols and the mood of the novel. <b>Creativity:</b> 3-D model of a scene in the novel. <b>Leadership:</b> Bulletin board of main characters in a novel or the themes. <b>Visual/Performing Arts:</b> Skit, music or dramatic production of the climax or conflict in the novel.
<b>Summer enrichment program</b>	Enrichment classes or courses offered during the summer months.	5.1.2. Educators use enrichment options to extend and deepen learning opportunities within and outside of the school setting.	<b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Allows for learning to continue in the summer months.
<b>Interest groups</b>	A group organized from one or more classrooms on the basis of interest in a topic.	5.3.1. Educators provide professional guidance and counseling for individual students regarding their interests, strengths, challenges, needs, and values.	<b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Students with intense interest areas can be grouped together to create a learning/exploratory center for the classroom or enrichment class. Students can create a schoolwide project or volunteer in the community.

Enrichment	Definition	Evidence-Based Practice (NAGC Program Standard)	Examples: Five Talent Areas
<p><b><a href="#">Social-emotional learning</a></b> (for more information on social-emotional learning, select the link or see this chapter's resources)</p>	<p>Classes that provide opportunities where students apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions.</p>	<p>5.3.1. Educators provide professional guidance and counseling for individual students regarding their interests, strengths, challenges, needs, and values.</p>	<p><b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Planned activities, sessions and policies that assist GT students in planning their academic career before, during and after high school, and that also address specific social-emotional needs of GT students.</p>
<p><b>Seminars</b></p>	<p>Special short-term sessions where students focus on one area of study.</p>	<p>5.1.2. Educators use enrichment options to extend and deepen learning opportunities within and outside of the school setting.</p>	<p><b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Students explore topics of interests in small groups. Students can create their own agendas outlining the activities they will be responsible for completing and the skills they will be expected to develop within a certain time frame.</p>
<p><b>Competitions</b></p>	<p>Organized opportunities for students to enter local, regional, state or national contests in a variety of areas.</p>	<p>5.1.2. Educators use enrichment options to extend and deepen learning opportunities within and outside of the school setting.</p>	<p><b>Five Talent Areas:</b> List of Academic Competitions for Gifted Students from the <a href="#">Davidson Institute</a>.</p>

Enrichment	Definition	Evidence-Based Practice (NAGC Program Standard)	Examples: Five Talent Areas
<b>Differentiated curriculum</b>	Curriculum designed to meet the needs of high-ability students and differentiated according to content, process and product.	5.2.3. Educators plan coordinated learning activities within and across a specific grade level, content area, course, class, and/or programming option.	<p><b>Academic:</b> “Most Difficult First”— students who successfully complete five problems are excused from that homework. <b>Intellectual:</b> “Choice boards” offer eight ways that students can demonstrate knowledge. <b>Creativity:</b> “Da Vinci books”— students keep notebooks where they can try creative exercises. <b>Leadership:</b> Show examples of leaders and talk about the quality of leadership in your subject matter(s). <b>Visual/Performing Arts:</b> Discover patterns in music that relate to the Fibonacci sequence or graph wavelengths in relation to pitch.</p>
<b>Learning/ exploratory centers</b>	A designated area or portable center designed to enrich, accelerate or introduce students to interests in a given content area.	5.2.3. Educators plan coordinated learning activities within and across a specific grade level, content area, course, class, and/or programming option.	<b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Create learning centers with task cards or folders of ideas that the students can choose. Have a checklist for students to document what they have completed.

**Special Classes**

<b>Special Classes</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Evidence-Based Practice (NAGC Program Standard)</b>	<b>Examples: Five Talent Areas</b>
<b>Honors class</b>	Differentiated curriculum and accelerated content designed for able students. These classes need not be limited to identified gifted students.	5.1.3. Educators use multiple forms of evidence-based grouping, including clusters, resource rooms, special classes, or special schools.	<b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Honors classes require more independent work and more work outside of class. The courses often move at a faster pace and delve more deeply into subject matter.
<b>Virtual/online courses</b>	Courses providing content and/or pace appropriate for GT students.	5.1.5. Educators leverage technology to increase access to high-level programming by providing digital learning options and assistive technologies.	<b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Virtual courses allow for flexibility and student-centered learning and help with differentiating instruction including but not limited to 21st century skills such as inquiry and critical thinking.
<b>Dual enrollment</b>	Qualified students may take college courses concurrently while in high school or in two or more levels of learning at the same time.	5.1.1. Educators use multiple approaches to accelerate learning within and outside of the school setting.	<b>Five Talent Areas:</b> The Dual Credit Program allows high school students to enroll in college courses prior to high school graduation, giving them enrichment opportunities and experience with college-level work. At the elementary level, students attend different schools for different classes, such as social studies at the elementary school but math at the middle school.

Special Classes	Definition	Evidence-Based Practice (NAGC Program Standard)	Examples: Five Talent Areas
<b>Enrichment classes and pullout</b>	A group organized from one or more classrooms that meets on a regular basis to provide experiences beyond the established curriculum led by a teacher trained in gifted education.	5.1.2. Educators use enrichment options to extend and deepen learning opportunities within and outside of the school setting.	<b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Students engage in subject-specific enrichment of the grade-level curriculum, based on their identified talents or on more generalized exercises related to critical thinking or problem solving.
<b>Independent Study</b>	Individually contracted in-depth study of a topic where the student selects a topic of interest and then the student and teacher work out the parameters.	5.1.4. Educators use individualized learning options such as mentorships, internships, online courses, and independent study.	<b>Example: Inventions Independent Study</b> (Essential question: Inventions reflect man’s attempt to meet the needs of the century. What are the needs of this century and how can they be met?) Academic: 100% recyclable car made entirely from recyclable materials. Intellectual: Kinetic adaptable telescope—an unmanned, retrievable telescope for deep space. Creativity: The Brain-o-Graph device that allows pet owners to know what their pets are thinking. Leadership: Healing tissue—fabric that aids in the healing process. Visual/Performing Arts: Recycled chic clothing—affordable, recyclable clothing of the future.

<b>Special Classes</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Evidence-Based Practice (NAGC Program Standard)</b>	<b>Examples: Five Talent Areas</b>
<b>Self-contained class</b>	Emphasis is on acceleration and more in-depth coverage of curriculum.	5.1.3. Educators use multiple forms of evidence-based grouping, including clusters, resource rooms, special classes, or special schools.	<b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Allows for academic and intellectual depth and the pace that gifted students need. Self-contained classrooms provide academic acceleration while students stay at their grade level.
<b>Interdisciplinary studies</b>	Classes that provide opportunities for the acquisition of a broad base of knowledge through the study of a wide range of subjects.	5.2.3. Educators plan coordinated learning activities within and across a specific grade level, content area, course, class, and/or programming option.	Content is organized around themes and broad-based issues. Example: Egypt unit— Using a project-based learning approach, the overarching theme can include math (geometry of pyramids), language arts (folktales/myths), physical education (games), science (mummification), arts (hieroglyphics/papyrus), social studies (hierarchy).

### *Flexible Pacing*

<b>Flexible Pacing</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Evidence-Based Practice (NAGC Program Standard)</b>	<b>Examples: Five Talent Areas</b>
<b>Curriculum compacting</b>	The content and pacing of curriculum and instruction are matched to students' abilities and needs.	5.1.1. Educators use multiple approaches to accelerate learning within and outside of the school setting.	<b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Students remain in the general classroom setting, but work at an independent pace and volume. For example, a student may get through two years of math curriculum in one year.



Flexible Pacing	Definition	Evidence-Based Practice (NAGC Program Standard)	Examples: Five Talent Areas
<p><b>Whole-grade acceleration</b>  <a href="#">(for more information on acceleration, select the link or see this chapter’s resources)</a></p>	<p>Administrative practices designed to allow students to progress through the curriculum and/or grade levels at a rate faster than the average.</p>	<p>5.1.1. Educators use multiple approaches to accelerate learning within and outside of the school setting.</p>	<p><b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Subject acceleration occurs when students are given the opportunity to work at advanced levels in a particular subject or subjects without removing them entirely from their age-related peer group.</p>
<p><b>Cluster grouping</b></p>	<p>Any classroom with a group of identified GT students purposefully organized to provide planned differentiated instruction with a specially trained GT teacher.</p>	<p>5.1.3. Educators use multiple forms of evidence-based grouping, including clusters, resource rooms, special classes, or special schools.</p>	<p><b>Five Talent Areas:</b> This type of grouping allows the possibility for a school to provide a full-time, cost-effective program for gifted students, because their exceptional learning needs are more likely to be met when they are grouped together with a specially trained teacher.</p>
<p><b>Cross-grade grouping</b></p>	<p>Opportunity for a student to work in an advanced grade-level setting with one or more students sharing a similar readiness for the learning task and performance expectations.</p>	<p>5.1.3. Educators use multiple forms of evidence-based grouping, including clusters, resource rooms, special classes, or special schools.</p>	<p><b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Grouping that allows for students to cross between grade levels when participating in field trips, special area performances, interest groups, speaker presentations, tutoring programs, social service projects or subjects.</p>

Flexible Pacing	Definition	Evidence-Based Practice (NAGC Program Standard)	Examples: Five Talent Areas
<b>Credit by examination</b>	Credit given toward high school graduation based on an examination covering the content ordinarily included in the subject.	5.6.1. School policy-makers create and approve evidence-based policies and procedures to guide and sustain all components of the program, including assessment, identification, acceleration, and grouping practices.	<b>Five Talent Areas:</b> Similar to placement tests, schools can offer examinations whereby students can skip one or more courses by performing well on a test of the material. A score above 80% is often considered sufficient demonstration that a student has mastery of the subject.
<b>Individualized Education Program (IEP)</b>	A program designed to meet the particular needs of an individual student.	5.2.2. Educators develop a Pre-K through grade 12 continuum of programming and services in relevant student talent areas that is responsive to students' different levels of need for intervention.	<b>Five Talent Areas:</b> In some cases, it may be advisable to develop an IEP to provide the GT student with an education appropriate to needs and abilities, requiring current level of performance to be determined, goals be identified, and measures of future performance be instituted.

## Resources

Dixson, D., Peters, S., Makel, M., Jolly, J., Matthews, M., Miller, E., Rambo-Hernandez, K., Rinn, A., Robins, J., & Wilson, H. (2020). A call to reframe gifted education as maximizing learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 102(4), 22–25.

Plucker, J., & Callahan, C. (2020). The evidence base for advanced learning programs. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 102(4) 14–21.

Steenbergen-Hu, S., Makel, M., & Olszewski-Kubilius, P. (2016). What one hundred years of research says about the effects of ability grouping and acceleration on K-12 students' academic achievement: Findings of two second-order meta-analyses. *Review of Educational Research* 86(4), 849–899. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316675417>

## Online

NAGC's [Programming Standard 3: Curriculum Planning and Instruction](#)

NAGC's [Programming Standard 5: Programming](#)

Acceleration Institute at the Belin-Blank Center's [20 Types of Acceleration](#)

[Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#) (CASEL)

## Chapter 7: Program Evaluation

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Conducting a program evaluation is essential to learn how a GT program works, how effective a program is, and how to raise a program's standard of quality. Although a program evaluation examines the overall effectiveness of the program and provides an opportunity to receive feedback from stakeholders, the primary reason for the evaluation is to give administrators guidance for future directions in how to refine their programs to better meet the needs of gifted learners. The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance regarding the execution of an effective program evaluation.

*Evaluation should always be directed toward bold action that hopefully will result in the improvement of services to [gifted and talented] students through the continuation, modification, or elimination of conditions which affect learning*

(Renzulli, 1995, p. 38).

[Idaho Code](#) requires that school districts submit a GT plan every three years. As articulated in the code, a process for program evaluation must be included in the development and monitoring of each plan. The evaluation of a program's effectiveness should include a process for ensuring that the program conforms to the regulations articulated in the code, meets the local plan's stated goals and outcomes and is aligned to best practices.

Idaho Administrative Code 08.02.03.171.03

**District Plan**, each school district shall develop and write a plan for its gifted and talented program. The plan submitted to the Department of Education shall be updated and submitted every three (3) years and shall include:

***e. Program Evaluation***

### Best Practices for Evaluating a Gifted and Talented Program

In 2019, The NAGC updated the [Gifted and Talented Education Standards for Programming](#) for pre-K through grade 12 to assist districts in examining the quality of their programs for gifted learners. These standards provide important direction and focus for designing and developing programming for gifted learners at the local level.

The program evaluation should be used to systematically and collaboratively develop, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the services provided. The following practices support an effective program evaluation.

☑ **Document the requirements outlined in [Idaho Code](#):** The GT three-year plan should serve as documentation of the local program's philosophy, definition of giftedness, program goals, screening and identification procedures, and process for program evaluation.

☑ **Assess and report whether the program goals have been met:** Were learning outcomes met? Did you meet the intentions of the program and, if not, do you need to change your program goals?

☑ **Monitor representation:** Ensure the GT three-year plan includes a process to monitor the representation, performance and retention of underrepresented populations in the program, including students who are culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice exceptional.

☑ **Use multiple sources of data:** The process for evaluation should include multiple sources of data. The data sources that are most useful will vary based on the goals of the specific program. NAGC Program Standard 5.7.2 says “Educators ensure that the assessments used in program evaluation are reliable and valid for the purposes for which they are being used.” As you begin your evaluation, you can use sample questions from the [Master List of Structured Interview Questions](#).

☑ **Elicit feedback from stakeholders:** The evaluation should include feedback from students, parents/families, teachers, principals and other stakeholders regarding implementation effectiveness. This may include interviews, surveys, etc. Sample surveys include:

- [Sample Program Parent Survey](#)
- [Sample Program Teacher Survey](#)
- [Sample Program Student Survey](#)

☑ **Review finances:** Ensure available state and local funds are used in accordance with state policy and meet local needs as identified and prioritized in the written GT three-year plan.

☑ **Implement results:** Develop processes to communicate the results and implement areas identified for improvement.

## Program Evaluation Resources

The [Idaho Self-Assessment for Gifted and Talented Program Evaluation](#) (see below) can be used to ensure the local GT program and three-year plan are aligned to Idaho Code and best practices.

As noted above, the NAGC standards may be used for the purpose of evaluation. The student outcomes and evidence-based practices in the programming standards may serve as the criteria on which to make informed judgments about the quality and effectiveness of their programming. Program evaluation can be used by school leaders to establish benchmarks or set goals and timelines to ensure they are on track to achieving the desired student outcomes. The table may be used to ensure the programming is aligned to NAGC standards and best practices. The student outcomes and evidence-based practices in the programming standards may serve as the criteria on which to make informed judgments about the quality and effectiveness of their programming.

**Idaho Self-Assessment for Gifted and Talented Program Evaluation: Program Design**

Program Design Items	No Evidence	Some Evidence	In Place	Evidence/ Comments
<p>1. There is a written philosophy statement related to students with gifts and talents.</p> <p><b>Idaho Three-Year Plan Section A IDAPA 08.02.03.171.03.a</b></p>				
<p>2. There is a written definition of which students the LEA considers to have what particular needs that require specialized gifted and talented services.</p> <p><b>Section 33-2001, Idaho Code IDAPA 08.02.03.171.03.b</b></p>				
<p>3. There are written goals and objectives for these services. At the end of three years, the program goals have been met.</p> <p><b>Idaho Three-Year Plan Section C IDAPA 08.02.03.171.03.c</b></p>				
<p>4. There is a written description of the services to be provided for the described students at each grade level and in each area served.</p> <p><b>Idaho Three-Year Plan Section D IDAPA 08.02.03.171.03.d</b></p>				
<p>5. Services provided align with how giftedness is defined.</p> <p><b>Idaho Three-Year Plan Section A:d IDAPA 08.02.03.171.04.c</b></p>				

Program Design Items	No Evidence	Some Evidence	In Place	Evidence/ Comments
<p>6. Gifted students are grouped together for instruction in their area(s) of talent.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>7. Services are constructed so that there is a continuum of services to meet the broad range of needs of individual GT students.</p> <p><b>Idaho Three-Year Plan Section D</b></p>				
<p>8. Policies are in place to allow early entrance, grade skipping, subject skipping, early credit, and early graduation according to individual student need.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>9. The roles of personnel at the district, the building and the classroom are clearly defined.</p> <p><b>IDAPA 08.02.03.171.06</b></p>				
<p>10. A district-wide stakeholder group exists and meets on a regular basis to review the district services for students with gifts and talents.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				

Checklist is modified from Speirs Neumeister, K. & Burney, V. (2012). *Gifted program evaluation: A handbook for administrators & coordinators*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

**Idaho Self-Assessment for Gifted and Talented Program Evaluation: Identification**

Identification Items	No Evidence	Some Evidence	In Place	Comments
<p>1. The district uses a norm referenced measure of ability in each of the areas for which program services are offered (i.e. math, language arts).</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>2. The district uses an assessment in each area for which services are offered (e.g., math, language arts) aligned with the talent area, service to be provided, and with adequate ceiling to assess performance above grade level.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>3. The district uses qualitative indicators in each of the areas for which program services are offered.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b> <i>IDAPA 08.02.03.171.05.b</i></p>				
<p>4. The procedures ensure that all students have an opportunity to be included or nominated for screening by publicizing the process and receiving nominations from all stakeholder groups.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>5. Students are identified in all grade levels for which services are provided.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				



Identification Items	No Evidence	Some Evidence	In Place	Comments
<p>6. The formal identification process is repeated at targeted grade levels including (but not limited to) kindergarten, 2nd grade, prior to placement for middle school, and prior to placement in high school.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>7. The appeals process is publicized.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>8. The appeals process allows for students to take alternative ability, achievement, and/or qualitative measures at no cost to the family.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>9. The exit procedure includes a period of intervention no less than one grading period to determine if student can be successful in the program with supports.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				

Checklist is modified from Speirs Neumeister, K. & Burney, V. (2012). *Gifted program evaluation: A handbook for administrators & coordinators*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

**Idaho Self-Assessment for Gifted and Talented Program Evaluation: Curriculum and Instruction**

Curriculum and Instruction Items	No Evidence	Some Evidence	In Place	Comments
<p>1. There is a written curriculum in core subject areas and other areas served by the district that is specific to students identified as high-ability K-12.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>2. Student learning goals are clear, and evidence of how the learning will be demonstrated is clearly stated.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>3. The written curriculum has clear evidence of vertical articulation from grade to grade and K-12.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>4. There is clear evidence of acceleration of curriculum in areas served.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>5. There is clear evidence of enrichment of curriculum in areas served.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>6. Instruction and learning experiences are clearly differentiated to focus on higher-order thinking.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>7. There is evidence of teaching of communication, collaboration, research, critical thinking, problem solving.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>8. The pace of instruction is appropriate for GT students.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>9. There is evidence of student use of technology for creating content, learning content, and communicating content.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				

Curriculum and Instruction Items	No Evidence	Some Evidence	In Place	Comments
10. There is evidence of alignment of curriculum with Idaho's Content Standards but including further differentiation for students with gifts and talents in the specific domain(s). <b>NAGC Best Practice</b>				
11. Assessments are aligned to curriculum goals. <b>NAGC Best Practice</b>				
12. Pre-assessment is used to determine individual instructional plans. <b>NAGC Best Practice</b>				
13. Post-assessment is used to demonstrate student growth and attainment of stated learning goals. <b>NAGC Best Practice</b>				

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**Idaho Self-Assessment for Gifted and Talented Program Evaluation: Affective Needs**

Affective Needs Items	No Evidence	Some Evidence	In Place	Comments
<p>1. A written, differentiated, affective curriculum is available and used by teachers that addresses social-emotional needs of students with gifts and talents.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>2. Affective curriculum teaches students about social-emotional characteristics as well as potential issues they may face.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>3. Documentation of differentiated college guidance for high-ability students is available (e.g., field trips, independent study projects, speakers, or shadowing experiences pertaining to college exploration).</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>4. Documentation of differentiated career guidance for high-ability students is available (e.g., field trips, independent study projects, mentors, speakers, or shadowing experiences pertaining to college exploration).</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				

Checklist is modified from Speirs Neumeister, K. & Burney, V. (2012). *Gifted program evaluation: A handbook for administrators & coordinators*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

**Idaho Self-Assessment for Gifted and Talented Program Evaluation: Professional Development**

Professional Development Items	No Evidence	Some Evidence	In Place	Comments
1. Personnel working with GT students are provided with opportunities for continuing professional development in the area of GT education.  <b>IDAPA 08.02.03.171.06</b>				
2. Parents of students with gifts and talents are provided with opportunities for professional development about the characteristics and needs of this population.  <b>NAGC Best Practice</b>				

Checklist is modified from Speirs Neumeister, K. & Burney, V. (2012). *Gifted program evaluation: A handbook for administrators & coordinators*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

**Idaho Self-Assessment for Gifted and Talented Program Evaluation: Program Evaluation**

<b>Program Evaluation Items</b>	<b>No Evidence</b>	<b>Some Evidence</b>	<b>In Place</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<p>1. The LEA uses multiple strategies to assess GT students' performance and growth.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>2. All components of the GT program are periodically reviewed by individuals knowledgeable about GT learners and who have competence in the evaluation process. The results are used for continuing program improvement.</p> <p><b>IDAPA 08.02.03.171.06. f</b></p>				
<p>3. The evaluation report for all educational services involving GT students includes both strengths and areas of challenge of the program and is accompanied by a plan with implications for improvement and renewal over time.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				
<p>4. The results of the program evaluation are presented to the local school board and the stakeholder group, and accessible to all constituencies of the program.</p> <p><b>NAGC Best Practice</b></p>				

Checklist is modified from Speirs Neumeister, K. & Burney, V. (2012). *Gifted program evaluation: A handbook for administrators & coordinators*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

## Resources

Renzulli, J. S. (1995). *A guidebook for evaluating programs for the gifted and talented*. National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and Talented.

Speirs Neumeister, K., & Burney, V. (2012). *Gifted program evaluation: A handbook for administrators & coordinators*. Prufrock Press.

## Online

NAGC's [Programming Standard 5: Programming](#)