



Administrative Unit

Administrative Unit name: Morgan Re-3, Fort Morgan - 44020	Region: North Central	
Name of Gifted Education Director/Coordinator: Miranda Harper	Email: miranda.harper@morgan.k12.co.us	
Director’s mailing address: 715 West Platte Avenue, Fort Morgan, CO 80701	Phone number: 970-370-6132	Fax: 970-867-4607

Name of Superintendent: Ron Echols

12.02(2) Comprehensive Plan “...The program plan shall be implemented by all constituent schools and districts of the AU. ... The Department shall review all program plans for completeness. An AU’s program plan shall be deemed complete if it addresses all elements specified in Section 12.02(2)(a) through 12.02(2)(l) of these Rules”

Directions:

Write the administrative unit’s description of how it implements each element of the Program Plan and how the AU plans to improve or enhance each element as appropriate. Write how the AU Key requirements of each section of the plan are listed as they are described in the Rules.

Procedures for Parent, Family and Student Engagement and Communication

Access

Each year, during the annual screening process, letters are sent to parents/guardians of all 2nd and 6th grade students informing them about the purpose of the screener and how the results are managed. Following assessment, parents also receive a letter and score reports indicating that students scoring above 85%ile are given talent pool designation and monitored by their teachers and enrichment instructor and students scoring above 95%ile are further evaluated for gifted identification.

Parents can locate information about referrals in the Gifted Services Handbook located on the Gifted and Talented page on the district website or by asking individual building staff. Referral forms are also accessible on the web page and available by asking building staff.

Documents offered in both English and Spanish:

- Gifted Services Handbook
- Gifted Referral Form
- Parent surveys
- Gifted determination letters
- Kids College registration
- All other home-school correspondence



Translators available for all verbal communications as needed in Spanish and several other languages that are prevalent in our district.

Information and Education

The Gifted Services Handbook includes information regarding:

- gifted characteristics
- myths and facts about giftedness
- multiple pathways for identification
- asynchrononous development
- affective needs
- tips for supporting gifted children at home
- programming options, both academic and affective
- information about concurrent enrollment and support post secondary career interests

At least once a year, the Gifted Services department hosts a gifted education or gifted parenting expert (e.g. Ian Byrd, Lisa Van Gamert). The Gifted Coordinator has also presented on Dabrowski's overexcitabilities in the past.

Information and celebrations regarding gifted student activities and achievements are shared via district Newsline, local newspaper (Fort Morgan Times), local radio, district website, and social media.

The Gifted Coordinator is available to parents regularly via email, office phone, personal cell phone, and in person at school and community events. Given the nature of a small community, parents often approach the Gifted Coordinator regarding questions about their child's needs, behaviors, and services.

Engagement

Parents are contacted each fall in an effort to provide input on students strengths, needs, performance, and behaviors for development of the Advanced Learning Plan. As progress monitoring occurs, parents are informed of progress toward student goals at bi-annual parent teachers conferences and as needed.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer for building level parent-teacher organizations and to attend various family nights. The Gifted Services department regularly asks available parents to volunteer as coaches for Destination Imagination and encourages attendance at all academic and extra-curricular performances and competitions such as Destination Imagination, Spelling Bee, Geography Bee, Science Fair, National History Day, and more.

Targets

- Develop listserv of parent/guardian email contact information in order to better communicate upcoming events, share newsletters and e-tips, and receive feedback.

Definition of "Gifted Student"

Definition



"Gifted and talented children" means those persons between the ages of five and twenty-one whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. Children under five who are gifted may also be provided with early childhood special educational services. Gifted students include gifted students with disabilities (i.e. twice exceptional) and students with exceptional abilities or potential from all socio-economic and ethnic, cultural populations. Gifted students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these areas of giftedness:

- General or specific intellectual ability.
- Specific academic aptitude.
- Creative or productive thinking.
- Leadership abilities.
- Visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor abilities.

Targets

When meeting with parents and staff, other definitions of giftedness are referenced such as Joseph Renzulli's Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness, the Columbus Group definition, and Dabrowski's Gifted Overexcitabilities. These definitions are referenced in an effort to help staff and parents better understand the complexities of giftedness, both social-emotional and intellectual.

Identification Procedures, Criteria for Determining Exceptional Ability (Giftedness) or Talent Pool, and Identification Portability

Referrals for Gifted and Talented Identification

Each year school personnel will conduct a search of all students K-12 for potential candidates for GT services. This search is a review of available information on all students to determine who may need further assessment. Standardized test scores for all students are screened for evidence of exceptionally high levels of performance on achievement tests. Additionally, a brief screener assessment will be administered in the fall of each year to all second grade students and new students in grades 3 and 4. Students are assessed using this screener process again in 6th grade to ensure that all students have had the opportunity to demonstrate potential. This test is an ability screener used as indicator of possible giftedness. The comprehensive search will increase equity in identification, particularly for those students from diverse cultural, racial, and economic populations. Students who score between 85-95 percentile are given talent pool designation (Watch & Enrich) and are monitored to determine if further data collection is necessary.

Any student may be recommended for gifted assessment by:

- Parents
- Teachers
- Counselors
- Administrators
- Peers
- Self

Referrals are accepted at any time throughout the school year. A referral form can be found on the Gifted and Talented page of the district website. All referral forms should be submitted to the Gifted Coordinator. Referrals should be accompanied by evidence of above grade level performance and/or gifted characteristics/behaviors. Typically, an MTSS meeting is held to gather this evidence and



confirm the need for further assessment. With each referral, a letter is sent to the student's legal guardians explaining the referral, the assessment process, and requesting formal permission to test the student.

Assessment Process

The assessment process shall recognize a student's exceptional abilities or potential, interests, and needs in order to guide student instruction and individualized planning and programming. Students must qualify on three measures in at least two different areas of testing (Cognitive, Achievement, Behavior Characteristics, and Demonstrated Performance) to be identified as gifted and talented, with the exception of identification for General Intellectual Ability. Scores at the 95th percentile or above are considered within the range of giftedness. Scores within the exceptional/distinguished range are also considered within the range of giftedness. In traditionally underrepresented student groups and visual/performing arts student groups or talent pools, identification may require the collection of student information over time.

Upon referrals in the talent areas, students receive documentation regarding portfolio requirements and rubrics to be used in portfolio evaluation. Identification in the talent areas is addressed via portfolio reviews by local artists and/or musicians or other experts in the field with the use of a rubric to determine advanced or distinguished ability or talent. The Gifted Services department uses rubrics supplied by the Colorado Department of Education Gifted Education Department. The identification team will also take into account top ranking at state or national contests or a distinguished juried performance. Cognitive and creativity assessments are also administered as part of the body of evidence.

Not meeting criteria on a single assessment tool shall not prevent further data collection or consideration for gifted identification, if other indicators suggest exceptional potential as observed in a body of evidence.

After a sufficient body of evidence has been collected, the gifted identification team, which consists of at least one member who is trained in gifted identification procedures, will review all assessment and observation scale scores. The review team must consist of at least one member who is trained in gifted identification practices and procedures. Based on guidelines as outlined on pages 15-18 of the Gifted Services Handbook, the identification team will determine eligibility for gifted services. Within 30 days of the referral, parents/guardians will be notified in writing regarding a determination of their child's status.

Portability

The rule for gifted portability means districts shall develop identification processes that are aligned to identification procedures defined by the Colorado Department of Education. Common guidelines support a universal and consistent practice for recognizing students with exceptional ability and potential.

Morgan County School District has selected a variety of specific instruments and procedures that will be utilized for gifted identification. These assessment tools include, but are not limited to, Cognitive Abilities Test Form 7, Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement 3rd Ed., Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test 2nd Ed., Test of Mathematical Abilities 3rd Ed., Test of Written Language 4th Ed., Scales for Identifying Gifted Students. When the district receives a new student, the gifted review team reviews that student's data and determines if the previous district identified the student using



criteria aligned to state guidelines. If there is insufficient data, the Gifted Coordinator consults with the former district, parents and students to re-evaluate the identification determination.

Portability of identification is a part of the student's permanent record and Advanced Learning Plan. Morgan County School District has a process and procedure with building clerical staff to ensure the appropriate and timely transfer of a student's Advanced Learning Plan that includes the student's gifted identification profile. The transfer process includes secure electronic file transfer or mailing of the student's record to the new district/school. The Gifted Coordinator reviews all new student Advanced Learning Plans within 45 days of enrollment into the receiving district and communicates information about programming and resources to parents/guardians within 60 days.

Targets

- Continued professional development regarding characteristics of underrepresented populations, specifically behaviors and needs
- Continued efforts to blend research regarding underrepresented populations and poverty into our understanding of giftedness in these populations; this will support the district's Right 4 Rural goal to increased gifted identification in these areas
- Continued professional development addressing Dabrowski's overexcitabilities and Neihart-Betts Six Types
- Periodic evaluation and updating of assessment tools and materials
- Continue efforts to expand identification in talent areas

Advanced Learning Plan Content, Procedures and Responsibilities

Elements of the ALP

- Area of Identification: students area of gifted identification
- Body of Evidence: includes assessments scores, observation scale scores, performance evaluations, and other qualitative and quantitative data
- Student strengths and areas of interests
- Parent input and involvement
- Goals: standards aligned academic achievement goals aligned with area of giftedness; affective goals addressing development in personal, social, communication, and/or leadership development; college/career goals (grades 9-12) addressing post-secondary plans
- Instructional Strategies and Accommodations: identifies specific curriculum, activities, strategies and/or opportunities that support the students goals
- Progress Monitoring: goals are reviewed in the fall and spring parent teacher conferences or in individual meetings with gifted coordinator.

Targets

- Improve quality of academic goals
- Increase guidance on developing strength based affective goals
- Improve procedures for more consistent progress monitoring of ALP goals

Development of the ALP

In the fall of each year and immediately after new identifications, students develop strength based goals with the support of their parents, teacher, and/or gifted coordinator. Parents also complete an initial and a yearly survey in which information is shared about their child's successes, struggles, areas of interest and hobbies, and any concerns the parents may have about their child's behavior, needs, or performance. This information is included in the ALP and updated annually. The student's



teachers are consulted annually regarding standards alignment and appropriate classroom accommodations that they will be providing throughout the school year. Goals are written and aligned with differentiated classroom instruction and supplemental or intensive programming, including extra-curricular options and contests/competitions.

Housing of the ALP and Transition

Advanced Learning Plans are accessible by teachers via the schools electronic databases, while testing records and hard copies of ALPs are housed in the Gifted Services Department. A summary sheet is included in each child's cumulative file to inform receiving schools about the student's area of giftedness and date of identification as well as the gifted coordinators contact information. Gifted education records are maintained, retained, and destroyed in a manner consistent with that of the Special Services Department. Teachers are informed at the beginning of each school year via staff meeting regarding the gifted students they will be serving in their classroom. They are invited to review the past years ALP and discuss possible accommodations at this time.

Targets

- Increase collaboration among teachers and students regarding goals in strength areas
- Increase capacity for classroom teachers to write and/or support measurable, standards-aligned ALP goals
- Improve understandings regarding shared ownership of students' ALPs
- Develop more formal procedures for student transitions between schools

Programming

In order to provide the best possible educational opportunities to gifted children, Morgan County School District advocates a variety of gifted best practices. Each of the following instructional strategies/programs is designed to promote the District goals which are to distinguish between general enrichment and gifted activities, and increase the emphasis on individualizing instruction to meet the needs of gifted students within the regular classroom's instruction and through providing special programming options for gifted learners. Instructional strategies and enrichment options are chosen for or self-selected by students based on their area(s) of identification and Advanced Learning Plan goals.

Instructional Strategies

The following instructional strategies are those that are most frequently used in classrooms district-wide:

- *Acceleration:* Acceleration offers standard curricular experiences to students at a younger-than-usual age or lower-than-usual grade level. Acceleration includes grade-level acceleration or subject-based acceleration, in which a student enters a higher grade level part of the day to receive advanced instruction in one more content areas. These determinations are made collaboratively with the student, parents, teachers, building administration, and the gifted coordinator. The Iowa Acceleration Scales are typically administered to determine if a student is a suitable candidate for grade or subject-based acceleration.
- *Ability Grouping/Cluster Grouping:* Ability grouping is defined as using assessment and progress monitoring scores and school records to assign same-grade children to classes or instructional groups that differ markedly in characteristics affecting school learning. Cluster grouping



is a form of ability grouping in which 3 to 6 students are clustered according to their identified strength areas in a mixed-ability classroom.

- *Curriculum Compacting*: A systematic procedure for modifying or streamlining the regular curriculum to eliminate repetition of previously mastered material, upgrading the challenge level of the regular curriculum, and providing time for appropriate enrichment and/or acceleration activities.
- *Differentiation*: A means of addressing the particular characteristics and promoting the continual growth of students in an environment that is respectful of individual differences through modification of pace, depth, and complexity of curriculum and instruction.
- *Flexible Pacing*: A form of "acceleration" in which the pace at which material is presented and/or expected to be mastered has been sped up.
- *Guided Independent Study*: A process through which student and teacher identify problems or topics of interest to the student, plan a method of investigation, and identify a product to be developed.

Programming Options at Various Grade Levels

Elementary

- In-class differentiated instruction
- Ability grouping
- Enrichment pull-out groups
- Destination Imagination

Middle School

- In-class differentiated instruction
- Ability grouping
- Accelerated math courses
- Advanced language arts and literacy courses
- Electives in arts and technology
- Lunch bunch opportunities
- Destination Imagination

High School

- **Advanced Placement: (AP)** Advanced and challenging courses designed to foster the critical skills of thinking, analyzing, and problem solving. AP prepares students for specific content area examination that may award credit to be applied toward college.
- **Honors Program**: School-site developed courses taught at an advanced level to promote critical thinking and depth of knowledge.
- **Concurrent enrollment options**: Classes available through Morgan Community College.
- **Variety of elective courses** in business, technology, art, music, industrial arts and technology, and more.

Enrichment Offerings and Opportunities

- Spelling Bee
- Geography Bee



-
- Science Fair
 - Student art shows
 - Musical performances
 - Solo/ensemble contests
 - Brain Bowl
 - Knowledge Bowl
 - Destination Imagination
 - National History Day competition
 - CAGT Legislative Day
 - NJC Math and Science Competition
 - UNC Math Contest
 - Noetic Math Contest
 - Various local, state, and national writing competitions
 - Mentoring opportunities
 - Summer school opportunities such as Kids College
 - Guest speakers
 - Field trips
 - Independent study classes
 - After school enrichment

Affective Guidance and Support

Morgan County School District provides affective support through personalized learning goals, targeted small group instruction, and individualized attention. Gifted children tend to develop asynchronously and therefore require different support structures at different times. Gifted children are also highly diverse in their interests and needs, including twice-exceptional students, English language learners, low income students, and profoundly gifted students. The following are a selection of most commonly used practices to address affective needs of gifted students.

- *Ability grouping/Cluster grouping:* Ability grouping or cluster grouping allows for accelerative learning experiences as well as time to learn with peers of similar ability. Students are able to connect daily with others who can relate and appreciate their gifts.
- *Bibliotherapy:* A group of invited students read the same book and meeting over the course of several weeks with an adult facilitator to discuss the book. Books may include fictional accounts of gifted people, biographies of famous gifted people, or nonfiction books written for gifted students.
- *Lunch Bunch:* support group for gifted children in which the students meet monthly for discussion about topics that are unique to gifted children.
- *Smart Girls/Cool Dudes:* Smart Girls and Cool Dudes programs mission is to empower adolescents to make better choices, increase self esteem, and become more self-reliant. While these programs are not specifically for gifted individuals, many gifted students can benefit from the program's curriculum.
- *Individual Counseling:* Individual counseling services are available for gifted children. The therapeutic nature of school counseling is intended to help students become more aware of themselves and others, learn coping skills, establish goals and plans of action, and ultimately become more effective and efficient learners.



Targets

- Enhance accelerated and post-secondary options for students.
- Identify additional content options for the arts.
- Increase opportunities and content options for social studies.
- Increase capacity for teachers to more successfully compact curriculum and increase instructional pacing.
- Continued professional development opportunities for teachers specific to instructional strategies, increasing rigor and engagement, and developing curriculum and pacing for honors classes.
- Increase capacity of teachers and counselors regarding affective needs of gifted students.

Evaluation and Accountability Procedures

The Gifted Services Unified Improvement Plan Addendum is submitted on same timeline as the District's.

Affective goals are monitored by student reflection/self-evaluation during an interview conducted by the students teacher, the gifted coordinator, or the enrichment instructor.

Student achievement and growth data are monitored at the building level via progress monitoring and at the department level in the fall in order to review state assessment scores and progress and again as part of the UIP process. Data is disaggregated by grade, school, gender, ethnicity, and income.

The Gifted Coordinator attempts to maintain close contact with parents of gifted students by being available through multiple means of contact. Parents provide regular input regarding programming options via email and telephone communication. As of 2017, a more formal procedure has been implemented to survey all stakeholders. This procedure will be conducted annually during 4th quarter.

Targets

- Continue implementing surveys to all stakeholders.
- Increase transparency by sharing disaggregated student data with relevant teachers and principals.
- Share program improvement targets in the fall of every year with all stakeholders.

Personnel

Gifted Coordinator: Qualifications, Role, and Responsibilities

Qualifications: The district's Gifted Coordinator must hold a valid teaching licensure and an endorsement or Master's degree in gifted education. Paraprofessionals are not funded with gifted grant funds and are not sole instructional providers.

Role: The Gifted Coordinator shall be an advocate for gifted students in the school district as well as an instructional resource for educators.



Responsibilities: The Gifted Coordinator's responsibilities include but are not limited to: managing the program plan, allocating financial resources to various programs and activities, providing gifted education professional development, and maintaining proper documentation in compliance with Colorado law. Many staff members are involved in providing appropriate instruction, counseling, and programming for gifted students. While it is the coordinator's responsibility to coordinate these efforts with appropriate staff members (classroom teachers, school counselors, and enrichment instructors), delivery of these services is a collaborative effort.

Professional Development

Morgan County School District provides in-service, staff development opportunities, and other educational opportunities to assist staff in gaining strategies relative to curriculum compacting, differentiating classroom instruction, and meeting the needs of academically gifted and talented students. Morgan County School District complies with state law with regards to employment of highly-qualified personal in all core content areas.

Professional development is regularly provided by the Gifted Services department and/or regional or state Gifted Education Services. The options include but are not limited to instruction and support during Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), during district professional development days, via online book studies and/or courses, induction meetings, and individual support. Parent nights, which primarily deal with social-emotional concerns and support are open to certified staff as well.

Occasionally opportunities arise for certified teachers to earn graduate credit through Adams State by participating in professional development addressing gifted students and services. Teachers are also informed annually regarding Master's degree programs in gifted education provided by local state universities, namely the University of Northern Colorado and the University of Denver.

Targets

- Continued professional development and support aligned with Right 4 Rural objectives including Depth & Complexity, Depth of Knowledge, and Content Extensions.
- Increased professional development regarding students in poverty using tools and resources aligned with theories and teachings of Eric Jensen.
- Continued access to Jacob K. Javits online modules regarding gifted needs using a local, in-district facilitator.
- Continue offering extended professional development for buildings and optional book studies.

Budget

The Gifted Services budget is maintained by the Gifted Coordinator, with input from the Director of Special Services. This budget includes components from the state, with additional funds from the district. Annually, the Gifted Coordinator submits an adjusted budget and an expended budget to the state which reflects state funds and matching district contribution. State funds are used to support one or more of the following: salaries for licensed or endorsed staff that primarily serve gifted students; professional development for gifted education; program options to support ALPs; materials to support gifted programming; administrative costs, technology and equipment not exceeding 20% of state funds. State funds are used to support only those allowable expenditures as outlined by the Colorado Department of Education.



The Gifted Coordinator determines expenditures based on input from parents, teachers, and administrators as well as evidence of successful student engagement in offered activities.

Occasionally, the Gifted Services Department may contract with other districts or BOCES for services to supplement gifted programming.

Targets

- Continued transparency regarding budget process and expenditures
- Continued responsiveness to needs of students and input from stakeholders

Reports

Morgan County School District has a current annual plan through the UIP Gifted Addendum on file at the Department of Education. As such, the district also complies with the requirements of accreditation with regard to gifted student achievement, identification of disparities in data, instructional goals, growth, and reporting. As part of annual reporting, Morgan County School District also submits an annual budget proposal to the Department of Education and maintains accurate records for the Data Pipeline annual reporting including information such as: number of identified students by grade, gender, ethnicity, free and reduced lunch, area(s) of giftedness, twice exceptional, and percent of students in the district that are identified for gifted services.

Morgan County School District makes a good faith effort to ensure that all personnel working with gifted students are trained and qualified educators. The district also ensures that the person responsible for gifted programming have either an endorsement or Master's degree in gifted education.

Targets

- Continue to maintain accurate records and comply with state reporting requirements.

Record Keeping

The Gifted Services department maintains financial records in accordance with principles of governmental accounting. Inventory of technology and assessments equipment is maintained and inventoried yearly or as needed.

ALPs are stored electronically on district wide data management system (Infinite Campus) as part of students' cumulative records and are accessible to all relevant personnel. Infinite Campus is password protected and FERPA compliant.

All gifted records are maintained, retained, and destroyed consistent with Morgan County School District privacy policies.

Targets

- Continued compliance with FERPA/PPI rules and regulations

Procedures for Disagreements

Procedures for Disagreements



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

It is the intent of Morgan County School District to resolve questions and concerns at the level in which they occurred. All questions and concerns regarding gifted identification and services should be brought first to the Gifted Coordinator. Students are encouraged to talk with the Gifted Coordinator to address any questions, issues, or concerns. The Gifted Coordinator will work with parents and students to resolve any questions, issues, or concerns by students or parents/guardians. New information and/or data may be introduced by the parents/guardians.

If the student and/or parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response by the Gifted Coordinator, they should then contact the building principal. Through collaboration with the student, parents/guardians, counselor, and Gifted Coordinator, the principal will resolve the questions, issues, or concerns.

If the student or parents/guardians are not satisfied with the resolution at the building level, they may appeal in writing to the superintendent within 10 school days after receiving the building level response. The superintendent will review the process and evidence and respond in writing to the student and/or parents/guardians within 10 school days of receiving the letter of appeal. The superintendent's decision is final.

Targets

- Currently, Procedures of Disagreements is available in the Gifted Services Handbook. Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, Gifted Services personnel will include the procedures with every gifted determination letter.

Monitoring

Morgan County School District complies with all state and federal laws and regulations regarding the program plan, identification and special educational services for gifted students. The District monitors annual and comprehensive plans as well as annual enrollment and performance reports. Morgan County School district participates in the Colorado Gifted Education Review as scheduled by the state. The most current will be Fall 2017.

Targets

- The Gifted Coordinator will have all necessary materials and documents prepared for upcoming CGER.
- The District will participate in follow-up activities to correct areas of non-compliance.