



Administrative Unit

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| Administrative Unit name: Larimer R-2J, Thompson - 35020 | Region: North Central | |
| Name of Gifted Education Director/Coordinator: Carol Swalley | Email: carol.swalley@thompsonschoools.org | |
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Name of Superintendent: Stan Scheer

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

The Thompson School District (TSD) maintains a website where much of the available information on gifted education is housed. <http://www.thompsonschoools.org/page/3485>. This website has information on our identification process and services provided to students, in addition to resources for parents. Several pages have been translated into Spanish, and each page has a link for translation through Google Translation Services. We also have every GT district and school personnel’s contact information posted for easy access by the public. Our application for early entrance is available to parents here from March through April in addition to paper versions at our administration building. We have a parent handbook (available online) and a staff handbook. The staff handbook has letters GT teachers can use to send home for permission to test and to inform parents of the results of the testing process. These letters have been translated into Spanish and the parent handbook is available in Spanish as well (over 90% of our non-English-speaking homes speak Spanish).

When new students are identified as gifted, parents receive a packet of information from the district Parent Liaison, which is also available online. This packet contains general information about giftedness, school and district contact information, and region and district-specific information about enrichment and activities in the area. Parents are also informed of our Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) process through the parent packet. Transfer students’ data is sent to the GT Administrator for review. If the Body of Evidence (BOE) is complete, the ID is transferred. If the BOE is not complete, GT teachers in the school follow-up with further testing as needed.



The district's Parent Liaison also manages several Parent Meet-Ups throughout the school year in which parents are invited to learn more about a topic of interest. Past topics include services and accommodations for twice-exceptional students, college planning, summer opportunities for gifted students, talking to teachers at parent conferences, and information on our services for early entrance, elementary, middle, and high school. Parents are also invited to be an integral part of the ALP development and writing process. The GT Parent Liaison also sends out a monthly newsletter which gives parents information about upcoming events as well as information about parenting gifted students. These newsletters are also available online for those who do not wish to be on our email list. Many other opportunities for parents to be involved in their school community occur throughout the year, and those opportunities vary by school. Schools also update parents on student progress throughout the year and specifically with report cards and conferences. GT parents can also choose to be involved in the local CAGT affiliate, NOCOGifted, which was formed by several TSD parents. This group supports GT advocacy in TSD and our region and provides several events each year for parents to learn about programming and services available in our region.

The Thompson School District has many options for students to be involved in concurrent enrollment or college-level classes. Information about these opportunities is available online, and high school counselors work with GT students to understand their options and available programming supports. All programming is based on students' identified strengths. Pull-out classes at the elementary level support extended learning. Secondary schools offer honors and accelerated classes for students in their strength areas. These interventions are then managed through the students' ALPs.

Additional information about concurrent enrollment can be found here:

<http://www.thompsonschoools.org/Page/6036>

AU Target/s (Future steps to develop or improve this programming element):

While we believe that we are providing many opportunities for parents to be involved and utilizing many ways for parents to receive information about gifted programming and services in our district, communication can still be improved. Many parents report not knowing about many of the unique learning opportunities offered in our district, like the multiple concurrent enrollment options and specialized programs such as E3 learning. We will utilize social media in a more targeted manner in an effort to reach more families.

Definition of "Gifted Student"

"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 and human relations abilities**
- **Visual arts, performing arts, psychomotor or musical abilities**

We identify students in all areas as defined by the state of Colorado and offer programming in each identified area. However, since the majority of our students are identified in academic areas, most programming options relate to these areas.



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

Our district identifies students in each category of giftedness outlined in the state definition. About 93% of students are identified in reading, math, or both reading and math. While our demographics for GT students do not match our district as a whole, we have been improving for years and still work to improve our process to make it more equitable for all students. TSD participated in the Twice Exceptional Project through CDE which helped us identify more twice exceptional students. We also include opportunities for students to use portfolios and performances as evidence of precocity for identification purposes so we do not rely solely on standardized tests. Anyone can refer a student at any time during the school year. Once a nomination or referral is received by the GT teacher or counselor at the school, that staff member begins the testing process. All previous data is reviewed and any new data required is obtained through testing or a portfolio submission. Teachers have 30 days to inform parents of the results of the identification process. If a student is not identified within 30 days, but there is some qualifying data, that student is placed in the talent pool to ensure ongoing monitoring. Additional testing with other assessment tools is provided.

The parent and staff handbooks have information available to all stakeholders about the identification process and requirements for identification. We can begin identification of students in Kindergarten, however finding data on students in K-2 is difficult, so the vast majority of our students are not identified until about third grade. Our identification process is open year-round, so a student can be identified at any time, from elementary through high school. We screen all students beginning in second grade with the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and continue screening with PARCC, CMAS, iReady, district common assessments, and referrals through tenth grade. TSD recently added the CogAT Screener for 6th graders to help us potentially identify more students from under-represented populations. For Spanish speaking students, we are able to give the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (K-BIT) in Spanish, and the new CogAT 7 can be given in Spanish to second graders during the universal screening process. The GT Administrator and the English Language Development (ELD) Administrator work together to review ACCESS data. Students who grow more than expected are referred for testing through their ELD teacher. We consider both quantitative and qualitative data when making decisions about student placement in GT. Scores on standardized assessments must be at the 95th percentile or higher or Exceeds/Distinguished on state assessments. Advanced performance as measured by a juried performance, award, or portfolio review is also accepted as evidence for the BOE. The review team for identification includes the GT teacher, the GT coordinator, and the GT Parent Liaison. Parents and classroom teachers also provide input on nominated students, mainly through normed behavioral checklists. The GT teacher in the school collects all data for the Body of Evidence (BOE) and sends the profile form to the district office where it is reviewed by the GT coordinator. The GT coordinator approves or sends back the file for more information. If the student is approved, the GT Parent Liaison verifies and enters the data into Infinite Campus, our student information system. Parents are sent a packet with information about local resources and ALP procedures. A determination letter and the ALP (with qualifying data) are added to the student's CUM folder to facilitate portability.

The Thompson School District uses the state guidelines for identifying students. Students who transfer to our district with an identification that meets state guidelines is immediately added to our GT roster. When the BOE is incomplete, the GT teacher or counselor can gather additional data to meet state guidelines for identification. We also contact previous schools and districts to determine if eligible data was used that was not recorded on the ALP. All determinations are made within the 45 day window.



AU Target/s (Future steps to develop or improve this programming element):

TSD will continue to improve the percentage of students identified as gifted from under-represented populations through working with classroom teachers, ELD teachers, and ESS teachers to understand how to better recognize giftedness in these populations. We will also work to ensure more parents are aware of how they can refer a student for testing (their own or someone else's).

Advanced Learning Plan Content, Procedures and Responsibilities

Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs) are written for all identified students. ALPs for high school students are written and stored in Naviance as they are combined with the students' Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP). These blended plans contain all the required elements of the ALP. Standards-aligned goals are written for/by students for each identified strength area. Students also write an affective goal that represents development of personal, social, communication, leadership, and/or cultural competency; and parents write a goal for how they will support their child's growth. Differentiation strategies for the classroom and structural accommodations (such as accelerated classes) are recorded on the ALP. Progress on academic and affective goals is shared with parents during conferences and recorded on the ALP. Additional progress monitoring can be sent home with student report cards as GT teachers provide supplemental information to classroom teachers for standards-based grading. ALPs contain information on how the student was identified and current achievement data for their area of strength. The Gifted Education Department has purchased resources for classroom teachers including Jacob's Ladder, Junior Great Books, Project M3 and M2, William and Mary Units, and Ed Zaccaro Challenge Math. These resources support gifted students achieving their ALP goals. Thompson is also working to train staff in the Depth and Complexity Model to provide support in the regular classroom and in gifted classrooms.

AU Target/s (Future steps to develop or improve this programming element):

TSD will continue to improve goal writing to further align goals with state standards. TSD will also increase classroom teachers' awareness of the ALP goals.

Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs) are written for all identified students. ALPs for elementary and middle school students are written and stored in Alpine Achievement. ALPs for high school students are written and stored in Naviance as they are combined with the students' Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP). TSD practices a gradual release model for developing ALPs. In the elementary level, plans are written by GT and classroom teachers in collaboration with students and parents. At the middle school, students begin to take a more active role in ALP development; choosing goals for themselves with input from GT and classroom teachers and parents. In high school, students write their own goals to best align with their desired college and career path. ALPs are signed by parents, students, GT teachers, and classroom teachers. A signed copy is sent home with the parents, a copy is added to the student's CUM folder, and the original is stored in yellow GT folders. Progress on academic and affective goals is shared with parents during conferences and recorded on the ALP. Additional progress monitoring can be sent home with student report cards as GT teachers provide supplemental information to classroom teachers for standards-based grading. All ALPs are kept in confidential folders or in our secure online system. The Gifted Education Department has purchased resources for classroom teachers including Jacob's Ladder, Junior Great Books, Project M3 and M2, William and Mary Units, and Ed Zaccaro Challenge Math. These resources support gifted students achieving their ALP goals. Thompson is also working to train staff in the Depth and Complexity Model to provide support in the regular classroom and in gifted classrooms. Students are transitioned from one level to the next during a transition meeting that occurs each spring. GT teachers meet with each other to pass on yellow GT folders and to provide information regarding best learning environments for each identified and talent pool student. At the high school



level, GT counselors help students develop their own ALP goals that relate to post-secondary readiness. GT counselors also help students register for concurrent enrollment options as well as higher-level classes on high school campuses. TSD offers a wide range of college and career pathway opportunities for students.

AU Target/s (Future steps to develop or improve this programming element):

TSD will continue to improve goal writing to further align goals with state standards. TSD will also increase classroom teachers' awareness of the ALP goals.

Programming

Programming for gifted students varies somewhat depending upon the level of staffing at each school. All schools use differentiation within the regular classroom as their main method of meeting the needs of GT students. Additionally, at the elementary level, students can receive a pull-out class that provides support in their identified area. Instruction in these classes is Tier II or Tier III, depending on needs. The amount of time GT students are pulled out for advanced instruction varies by school according to the number of students identified at each site and the amount of GT staff that school receives (see Personnel below for more information). The district purchased advanced materials for teachers to use with these classes (Junior Great Books, William and Mary Curriculum, Jacob's Ladder, Navigator Units, and Project M³) and teachers have been trained on how to use them. Students identified in talent areas receive services in their strength area from that area's teacher, such as the music teacher or art teacher. TSD also has arts programming available through the Loveland Integrated School for the Arts (LISA) program. Students who are identified in General Intellectual Ability either work with the GT teacher in a strong, but non-identified area such as Reading or Math, or work on critical thinking. Affective needs are addressed within these pull-out classes, or sometimes with the school counselor. Middle schools use the GT teachers for some small group affective work, co-teaching, and as resource providers. Students can be pulled for individual or small group work on a specific topic for a short period of time (such as a social skills group or work on perfectionism), or GT teachers can work with classroom teachers on improving differentiation. High Schools employ GT counselors who help students with affective needs and ensure that students are planning for college and careers. We have several programs that increase rigor for students in high school, including the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme, Advanced Placement (AP) classes, and the LISA program which offers students content classes taught through an arts lens as well as increased options for elective arts classes. Students in all levels can participate in the Shadows in the Arts Program which invites talented art students to learn a specific media from a local artist. High schools also provide Pre-AP programming for students, or MYP-IB classes. TSD also offers scores of concurrent enrollment options for high school students. Our E3 program (engage. explore. expand) offers students the opportunity to re-engage in school outside of the traditional classroom. GT teachers at all levels monitor GT students' learning and growth to support students when they might be underachieving. These program options support the collaborative development of the student's ALP.

Our district uses the Iowa Acceleration Scales to determine grade-level acceleration placements. We also have a procedure in place for accelerating students in math which begins in elementary school. In middle school, students can take a telescoped pathway which will allow them to study through Algebra I in eighth grade. We also use the state law to allow highly gifted students to enter kindergarten or first grade one year early.

AU Target/s (Future steps to develop or improve this programming element):

Improve differentiation within the classroom (the most common programming option received by GT students) by offering more professional development for classroom teachers. Using the CDE approved



Depth and Complexity Model, the GT department will be able to offer more classes for teachers wanting to learn tools and strategies for improving thinking skills.

Evaluation and Accountability Procedures

GT student data is disaggregated within the district by the GT Administrator. Trends within our district are noticed and evaluated. The GT administrator shares disaggregated data with GT teachers and together they use that information to develop goals for the District Unified Improvement Plan's GT Addendum. All GT teachers in our district are working with classroom teachers to help them develop competency-based lessons to show advanced classroom performance. All student data is stored in Alpine Achievement and can be accessed in schools by the GT teacher. GT student growth (achievement and affective) are monitored on Advanced Learning Plans.

In addition to the Colorado Gifted Education Review (C-GER), the GT department conducts its own evaluations. The parent and teacher survey created for the C-GER will be given each year in the spring to determine customer satisfaction with our program. These results will be shared with principals, GT staff, and the Gifted and Talented Advisory Council (GTAC). GTAC meets the first Tuesday of each month beginning in October. We have representatives from each level of teaching staff (elementary, middle, and high), administration, parents, and our community. This group works on a different topic for a year or two, developing a plan for improvement in that area. Some topics have included mental health supports for GT students, math acceleration, programming for middle school, and increasing the number of students identified from under-represented populations. The council decides at the beginning of each year what the focus will be.

AU Target/s (Future steps to develop or improve this programming element):

TSD will improve its use of formative assessments to monitor and improve instruction for GT students throughout the year.

Personnel

The Thompson School District employs a GT specialist in every school. The staffing levels vary from school to school and between levels. Elementary schools are staffed at 33%, 50%, or 67%. Middle schools receive either 50% or 100%. High schools use counselors to write ALPs and work with students on college and career planning. The district gives 50% to four high schools and 100% to our largest high school. Each of these staffing allocations is devoted specifically to GT students. Additionally, the district employs a full-time Gifted Education Administrator to oversee the program for the entire district and fulfill the state reporting requirements. This staff member also evaluates GT personnel in buildings. The GT Parent Liaison works with the GT Administrator to engage parents in our schools. Altogether, the district provides a total of 16.89 FTE for GT personnel.

The Thompson School District is committed to employing qualified personnel in their gifted and talented positions. To this end, TSD requires all new GT teachers with a 50% or higher contract to become certified or endorsed in gifted education by the end of their 5th year. We work with the University of Northern Colorado to support this requirement. Also, all GT staff are certified teachers or counselors, not classified staff. The Gifted and Talented Coordinator is expected to have a Master's or Endorsement in Gifted Education and an Administrator's license.

Professional Development is offered primarily through the North Central region and CDE. TSD also works with local vendors and universities to provide specific training designed mainly for classroom teachers working with gifted students. The GT Administrator is responsible for training all new staff on the identification, programming, and record keeping tools used in the district. Using state money, the district has provided trainings on instructional materials used with gifted learners in our schools,



like Junior Great Books and Project M3. Depth and Complexity trainings will be provided with a locally trained facilitator.

AU Target/s (Future steps to develop or improve this programming element):

The Thompson School District would like to maintain its requirement for dedicated GT staff whose contract is over 50% to receive, at minimum, a certificate in Gifted Education before the end of their fifth contract year. Also, we would like to increase the number of classroom teachers receiving professional development in gifted education. This will help us meet programming needs since differentiation in the regular classroom is our primary service model.

Budget

The Thompson School District submits an annual budget to CDE. This budget includes spending for state funds as well as AU funds. The majority of AU funds support gifted education personnel in every building. State funds are used in allowable categories, with the majority spent in curricular and testing materials to support GT students, staffing for district GT personnel, and professional development for all teachers.

Reports

The Thompson School District files all required reports with CDE. This program plan, annual plans and budget reports, and accurate reporting of identified students, and number of qualified personnel are all submitted in a timely manner.

Record Keeping

The Thompson School District maintains financial records in accordance with principals of governmental accounting. The GT Administrator maintains an inventory of equipment purchased with GT state grant funds. Copies of ALPs are kept in the student's CUM file, online copies are stored in our information system, and additional hard copies are kept in internal GT files. All records are kept confidential. Records of gifted students are kept for one year after graduation, then shredded in accordance with TSD record keeping system.

Procedures for Disagreements

Our Procedures for Disagreements are posted online. A copy of the procedures are also provided to parents in the Parent Packet, given to all parents of newly identified students. Parents begin the process with the teacher, move to the principal, the GT Administrator, the Director of Elementary or Secondary Education, the Chief Academic Officer, and finally the Superintendent. The disagreement moves up the ladder until it is resolved.

<http://www.thompsonschools.org/Page/3488>

Monitoring

The Thompson School District complies with monitoring rules and laws. All required reports and plans are submitted to CDE for review. TSD has completed two Colorado Gifted Education Reviews and was found to be in compliance for both reviews.