

Gifted Education Specialist Endorsement

What are requirements for the endorsement?

(1 CCR 301-37 2260.5.R-7.02 Additional Endorsements)

The gifted education specialist endorsement requires 24 semester hours of graduate credit from a regionally accredited university or college's approved program or may be acquired through one of two other routes demonstrating competency:

1. *Completion of an approved program* of preparation at an approved institution of higher education which includes completion of field experiences, student teaching or practicum or internship
2. *Credit and assessment which may include work experience, and professional development*
A candidate may combine academic semester credits (minimum, 15 semester hours), relevant work experience (maximum, 6 years), professional development (maximum, 9 semester hours equivalent to 135 contact hours) and passing the PLACE exam. This currently available option will expire June 30, 2012. At that time, criteria will change to 24 semester credit hours which may include work experience or professional development up to 6 semester hours/years.
3. *Assessment* If a candidate holds an existing license and wishes only to add the endorsement, s/he may do so by taking and receiving a passing score on the PLACE exam in gifted education.

NOTE: A district may require a condition of employment for specific positions.

Example: A district may require that in order to work in a particular gifted education program or position, the educator must earn the gifted education specialist endorsement through credit and assessment (minimally), or through an approved program, not by assessment only.

Where is more information about the credit and assessment method?

The following link provides an Evaluation Worksheet for planning courses, work experience and/or professional development for the endorsement:
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/endorsements.htm>.

How do I apply?

The office of Professional Services and Licensing has extensive information about the application process and fees for endorsements. Application for the gifted education specialist is an online process.
http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_license.htm.

What are areas of focus in the endorsement?

Gifted Education Specialist Endorsement comprises six areas for developing knowledge, skill and application: foundations, nature and needs, identification/assessment, instructional strategies, curriculum methods and leadership in gifted programs and evaluation.

What primary statute is supported through this endorsement? *Colorado School Law: Title 22, Article 20 (1 CCR 301-8 12.02(1)(f))*

ECEA: Exceptional Children's Education Act
In 2007, administrative units were required to identify and program for gifted students. Each administrative unit (AU) must ensure that its constituent schools or districts implement the AU's Program Plan in Gifted Education.

Personnel regulations require the administrator of a gifted program to work toward increasing the capacity of educators to serve gifted students and increasing the number of educators with an endorsement or higher degree in gifted education. Regulations also state that it is preferred that qualified personnel with an endorsement or higher degree serve gifted students in programs or classrooms consisting mainly of gifted students.

In what ways will this endorsement support teacher performance standards?

Performance Standards for Colorado Teachers adopted for the licensing of all teachers include instructional requirements for exceptional learners and the application of individualized plans (advanced learning plans).

1 CCR 307-37 2260.5-R 5.06

The Colorado Professional Standards for Teachers adopted as indicators in teacher effectiveness require that *teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of all students, including those with special needs across the range of ability levels...Teachers collaborate with a range of support specialists to develop and use appropriate strategies and resources to adapt to the learning needs of various groups of students including....gifted and talented learners.*

In what ways will the endorsement support principal performance standards?

Performance Standards for Colorado Principals adopted for licensing of all principals include the requirement *to provide teachers with a wide range of instructional methods and individual education techniques, which match the intellectual, emotional, physical, social levels and learning styles of all students in each classroom – including...those who are identified or recognized as gifted.*

(1 CCR 2260.5-R 6.05)

Why should educators seek an endorsement in gifted education?

- Teachers who have coursework/training in gifted education have a greater impact on academic gain of gifted students.
- An endorsement is a professional licensure enhancement for the benefit of the employee and the students served. The endorsement provides an avenue for leadership in meeting the needs of gifted students in schools and classrooms.
- The endorsement provides a pathway to advanced degrees and expertise in serving gifted students and their families.
- In some districts, the endorsement offers opportunities for salary advancement or specialized district positions in gifted education.

How many gifted students are in Colorado?

In 2011, there were 59,647 gifted students in Colorado. This represented about 7% of the student enrollment. In recent years, the percentage remains stable within the 6-7% range.

Gifted students are from every ethnic and gender category and live in every setting across the state.

Why should educators in small districts or rural settings acquire an endorsement when there are few gifted students in the local schools?

Teachers with an endorsement have the potential to be instructional leaders for all high performing students, including gifted students. There tend to be fewer educators with expertise in gifted education in smaller districts. Collectively districts within a BOCES, a small district or a rural setting could benefit from sharing common resources, coursework, and collaborating with other local experts in the field of gifted education for growth of their gifted students.

The attributes of quality instruction, high expectations, instructional rigor, and acceleration methods benefit a range of students. Typically, teachers with an endorsement understand learning and affective needs of gifted students as well as the implementation of evidence based instructional practices for high- ability students.

Where are approved graduate programs?

The following Colorado universities offer approved programs in gifted education for the endorsement, Master 's or Doctorate degrees: Regis University, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, University of Denver and University of Northern Colorado. For details: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/endorsements.htm>.

Other colleges or universities, including Adams State College, University of Colorado at Denver, and Mesa University, offer selected courses that may be used toward endorsement.

The Colorado Department of Education offers one-semester professional development modules that may be used toward endorsement. For details go to Trainings at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/index.htm>.