

Gifted Education – ALP, Advanced Learning Plan

What is an ALP?

An ALP, or Advanced Learning Plan, is “a written record of gifted and talented programming utilized with each gifted child and considered in educational planning and decision making.” 22-20-103 Criteria for ALPs is detailed in the Rules promulgated by the State Board of Education.

ALPs may be electronic or paper versions, and are to be reviewed annually.

What is the history of Advanced Learning Plans?

Since the early 1990’s, the Rules have required individual record keeping for gifted students *a record of gifted and talented education programming services, options, and strategies utilized with individual students shall be made part of the student’s record and shall be considered in educational planning and decision-making concerning subsequent programming for that student.*

In 2006, a change in statute provided a term for individual record keeping, *Advanced Learning Plan or ALP means a written record of gifted and talented programming utilized with each gifted child and considered in educational planning and decision making.* 22-20-103(1.2)

In what way does the ALP impact the AU’s program plan?

In July 2007, statute changed to declare that administrative units shall adopt and implement a program plan to identify and serve the characteristics and profiles of the gifted children within the AU. *A program plan adopted by an administrative unit pursuant to this section shall be consistent with the advanced learning plans of the gifted children who are identified by the administrative unit, and the program plan shall be implemented to the extent that funds are provided for such implementation.* 22-20-104.5(1)

What does “to the extent that funds are provided” mean?

The program plan that each administrative unit develops, submits and implements should utilize the local, state and community resources that are available. The plan should be feasible, given the size, location and resources of each local unit.

Why are ALPs important?

The ALP is a direct link between the student profile created during the identification process and the implementation of programming services matched to the child’s strengths and interests. ALPs are a planning guide for making instructional decisions about materials, programming options and assessments for gifted students based upon strengths, interests, and social-emotional needs. They are critical in the transition of gifted students from one level of schooling to the next and from school to school.

Is the ALP an annual or long-term planning tool?

Both, actually. While an ALP certainly contains information pertaining to the methods for programming that will be utilized in a specific year, it should also be a living and fluid document that serves as both a record and a road map for a student’s educational experience. Particularly for students who require radical acceleration, long-term planning will be essential to ensure the student is able to meet ultimate educational goals through the grades.

What are the critical components for an ALP?

The ALP should include information about the student's areas of strength and what curriculum and programming options will be provided to match these strengths at tiers 2 (targeted) and 3 (intensive). It should describe the differentiation methods to be used for acceleration, depth and complexity, higher order thinking skills and content extensions.

The ALP should include S.M.A.R.T. goals for student achievement and for affective growth.

The ALP should affix signatures of parent, teacher, GT teacher and student, date of the initial ALP conference and the date that the annual review will be scheduled.

Who writes the ALP and for whom are they written?

The State Performance Plan indicates that 100% of gifted students in the district will have advanced learning plans by December 2009. All identified gifted students, grades pre-K (if applicable) through 12 require an ALP. The district determines the process, but it is usually the student's teachers who write the ALP in collaboration with the GT teacher or consultant, parent and student, when appropriate. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the administrative unit Gifted Director or Coordinator and Superintendent to ensure that each gifted student has an ALP.

How are Advanced Learning Plans managed?

"ALPs are maintained, retained and destroyed consistent with the ongoing system of student record keeping established in the administrative unit, including its member districts"
12.05(5)

Must Charter Schools write ALPs?

Yes. Charter Schools are not exempt from the statute with regard to implementation of the program plan, as stated in 22-20-106 *...each administrative unit shall ensure that its constituent schools and school districts make available appropriate special provisions for gifted children to the extent that funds are provided for such implementation.* (see also answer to question #3 above with regard to funds)

What methods of accountability will be used to ensure that administrative units have ALPs?

The Colorado Gifted Education Review Process (C-GER) is an established process for monitoring both gifted and special educational programming. This process gathers information through record review, site visits, focus groups, program plan and End-of-Year Report data. Upon conclusion of the C-GER in an administrative unit, a report is sent to the Superintendent that details the strengths, recommendations for improvement, and citations for non-compliance. The AU has one year to correct any citations. If not completed, funds may be withheld.

How do parents participate in the ALP process?

Parents have a great deal to add to our knowledge about a child due to their insight into their child's strengths, interests and social-emotional characteristics. Educators have an obligation to seek their perspective. Thus, parents contribute to the collaborative effort of ALP development by offering information about their child and their child's advancement along the learning continuum. They, too, oversee the accountability for the ALP process.

⇒ The ALP process provides an avenue for parents to demonstrate leadership in their child's achievement and growth.

What assistance is available for writing the ALP?

The Colorado Department of Education will provide examples of goal in each strength area in the "Director's Corner" of the website <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/director.htm>. A sample Advanced Learning Plan and guide is available on the website, as well. Further assistance is available through the gifted education networks in education regions or through the Gifted Education Regional Consultant (GERC), accessible in each region.