



## Administrative Unit

<b>Administrative Unit name:</b> Delta 50(J), Delta - 15010	<b>Region:</b> West Central	
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**Name of Superintendent:** Caryn Gibson

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

Delta County School District hosts an extensive website dedicated to information and issues surrounding Gifted Education. (<http://specialservices.deltaschools.com/gifted-talented/>) The site houses the very extensive GT Parent Handbook, a brief GT Parent Brochure, and specific pages outlining identification procedures and programming options. We have developed a graphic outlining and describing identification steps, which provides a visual reinforcing the cyclical nature and relationship between identification practices and RtI interventions with progress monitoring. The site offers several pages of resources for parents, students and educators with questions or concerns around gifted education.

A letter is mailed to all parents of identified GT students within the first 2 weeks of the school year, giving parents an overview of the program, informing them of any changes to the identification or programming plans, explaining improvement goals, and extending an invitation to participate in the GT Parent Council. This letter also discusses Information about ALP development and parent involvement in the process, as well as contact information for each school.

School-based GT Site Coordinators work directly with students and parents to develop Advanced Learning Plan goals. They meet with parents during conferences to discuss goals and monitor the students' progress, as well as occasions when questions or concerns arise.

Our GT Parent Council provides feedback to district personnel, and makes suggestions for future growth of gifted programming. In the summer of 2016, this group analyzed current gifted programming and helped to shape the Vision 2020 program plan for the district. Individual council



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members communicate with their school community in efforts to strengthen education for gifted students.

Council members have created a local Facebook page, [Delta County GT Community](#), promoting gifted education and providing a space for conversation about the needs of students and parents in the district. We hope to promote membership and leverage this space to improve communication channels. DCSD GT personnel are working with Parent Council members to conduct a needs assessment to determine topics for parent and community education outreach. Once topics are identified, we plan

to offer at least two annual events targeted to increase understanding of gifted children and their educational needs, in both affective and achievement domains.

DCSD is implementing ICAP and ALP development in Naviance. This provides secondary school students and their families access to college and post secondary planning through vocational interest surveys, academic programming options, graduation progress, etc. Students work with counselors to develop goals and portfolio entries for their Individual Career Academic Plans (ICAP). By 2018, secondary ALPs will be developed within Naviance, giving students and their families easy access to ALP goals for review and refinement. This will help the ALP to evolve into a more dynamic process, rather than a once-a-year documentation. Our high schools offer college planning informational meetings as well as Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) workshops.

PowerSchool tracks the primary home language for all students and DCSD provides written communication, as well as translation services, in the home language whenever needed. Many of our forms are available in Spanish, and community members assist with translation for Karen and Korean speakers. We are working to translate more of our frequently used documents into Spanish. Currently, we do not have access to translation services.

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## Definition of “Gifted Student”

DCSD has adopted the State of Colorado's definition of gifted children.

"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 may have disabilities (i.e. twice exceptional) and come from all socio-economic, ethnic and 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.

In the past two years, DCSD has worked diligently to align academic identification tools and processes to meet and support this definition. We are currently developing tools and procedures for identifying students in the arts, creativity, leadership and psychomotor areas. We expect to have these defined by the end of 2018 and implemented by 2020.

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

DCSD has updated the gifted identification procedures to align with ECEA law. All 2nd grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students participate in Universal Screening, using the Cognitive Abilities Test, (CogAT form 7). This measure of critical reasoning gives educators and parents an overview of a child's strengths and relative challenges across the Verbal, Quantitative and Non-Verbal domains. This updated form 7 is



more accessible to second language students, as well as other to under-represented populations, since the problems are less language loaded than past versions.

Anyone may nominate a student for gifted identification, at any time in their school career. Once a student is "on our radar", we gather the available body of evidence within 30 days of nomination. This evidence consists of cognitive measures, academic achievement record and analysis of behaviors typical of gifted children. Once the data is gathered, a school level committee (including a gifted specialist) meets to determine whether there is sufficient data indicating a need for gifted services, identify specific areas of giftedness and discuss appropriate education plans.

When the initial data is not conclusive, the committee will create a plan to gather additional data, provide learning challenges, monitor the child's progress, and adapt the plan to best fit the child's learning needs through the Response to Intervention (RtI) process. Students who respond positively to challenges will remain in a "talent pool" and continue to receive interventions. Educators will meet again to determine whether formal identification is appropriate, based on this information.

Once the committee has made a determination, parents are notified of the outcome, whether the student was identified and under which category(s), or that the student will be in the talent pool and receive RtI services.

When a child transfers out of the district, recent ALP goals and portable Body of Evidence data are submitted to the requesting district along with other school records.

When a child transfers into the district and the school is notified that he or she has received GT services or has been in a talent pool, we will request and review supporting data and goals from the prior district within 45 days, build an appropriate ALP with goals, and notify parents of the new goals and programming within 60 days.

In the past year, DCSD board policy has broadened the gifted identification process from 3rd grade and older, to include students over 5 years of age. DCSD has purchased appropriate assessment tools and will identify young students based on the portable body of evidence as defined by the Colorado Department of Education and the Exceptional Children's Education Act.

Analysis of our demographic data indicates an imbalance in our gifted population relative to our populations of English Language Learners and students from lower income homes.

Over the next 3 years, we will implement initiatives to give students from these under-represented populations a chance to interact with high-level problem-solving, critical and productive thinking skills, prior to taking the CogAT assessment in 2nd grade. In year one, we will introduce 2nd grade classroom teachers to DISCOVER Process problem-solving activities and train them on the observation protocols. Students will then participate in 3 structured activities designed to build critical and productive thinking. Although this intervention will be targeted to those schools with large ELL and low SES populations, all elementary schools will be invited to participate.

In years two and three, we hope to expand this intervention to include 1st grade classrooms. Our long-range goal will be to broaden the 2nd grade intervention to include standards-aligned, high-level science activities drawn from Project USTARS. These activities will be accompanied by the Harrison Scale observation protocol, which accounts for gifted behaviors often shown by students from under-represented populations.

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## Advanced Learning Plan Content, Procedures and Responsibilities

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This year, DCSD Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs) are more accessible to parents, housed in the SchoolNet database. These new plans are streamlined and contain a student profile, body of evidence for gifted identification, other assessment data, at least one SMART achievement goal, at least one SMART Affective goal, along with a listing of strategies the school is using to support those goals. Students are coached through the goal-setting process by teachers, counselors, parents and GT Site Coordinators. The finalized goals will be shared with parents and students, and these contacts are included in the record. Classroom teachers and gifted personnel will track and record the



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student's progress toward meeting the goals, with evidence of progress entered by the end of the school year.

DCSD is moving toward student-managed ALPs at the secondary levels, with increasing student ownership and responsibility as children progress through the grades and demonstrate appropriate capabilities. This goal will be achieved through the Naviance platform and will be aligned with formalized ICAP development. The process will be overseen by school-based GT Site Coordinators, and supported by school counselors and ICAP teachers. Students will have direct access to edit their own goal documents, share them with parents through student-led conferences, and will reflect and monitor their own progress over time. As we progress, students will receive coaching to identify affective goals which align with NAGC standards.

ALPs are managed within the school cumulative record system, either SchoolNet or Naviance. Site Coordinators keep hard copies, which are transferred between grades and school level, to ensure smooth transitions.

School -base GT Site Coordinators are tasked with record keeping and assisting in the development of ALP goals. They will ensure that all required components are included in each student's record. They work closely with students, teachers and parents to set goals that are meaningful to the student and set up strategic plans to support the attainment of the goals. The district-level GT Coordinator provides training and support in ALP development, crafting SMART goals, as well as performing periodic audits to ensure compliance with state law.

## Programming

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The district GT Coordinator provides resources and training to all levels of classroom teachers, supporting their efforts in assessing prior knowledge and compacting the curriculum in order to create time for GT students to engage in higher-level, tiered replacement activities.

DCSD is also sponsoring on-going Depth & Complexity Framework training to help teachers to develop a common language and transparently communicate structures for critical thinking with students. The long-term goals of this program are for students to develop greater ownership of the learning process and engage in metacognition. These goals are reflective of the *teacher quality evaluation system* employed by the district, so teachers receive regular feedback on their efforts. The district employs coaches to support teachers' growth in specific content areas, and these coaches help teachers locate and use higher-level academic resources designed for advanced learners.

In the next 2 years, school GT Site Coordinators will participate in professional development and committee work to improve the alignment of ALP goals with students' strengths, interests and career paths. Ultimately these goals will be measurable and relate to Colorado Academic Standards as well as Affective standards from National Association for Gifted Children. By 2020, secondary students will participate in a cohesive process to identify their own strengths, interests and career goals, review relevant academic and affective standards, set measurable goals, and monitor their progress toward those goals, through the Naviance interface. Families and the school community will support and guide the students' class choices, projects and extra-curricular activities to meet those goals.

DCSD elementary schools offer cluster-grouped activities for GT students, where they can engage in group explorations as well as independent interest projects. The annual GT Showcase provides a venue for all GT students to present and perform their work, network, and learn from their peers. Most DCSD middle schools have a specific class targeted for GT cluster group, engaging in advanced explorations across multiple disciplines. Students also have access to advanced or accelerated classes in their strength areas. Secondary students participate daily in structured activities building toward the development of an

Individualized Career & Academic Plan (ICAP). This cumulative work is housed in Naviance, which provides a platform for building a portfolio of accomplishments over the span of their secondary



activities offered through the schools and the community, which help them to explore and grow their interests.

At the high schools, an expanding range of AP and pre-AP courses are offered in many content areas, along with concurrent enrollment in college-level coursework. GT students are counseled to take advantage of the courses that will best grow their strengths, as well as to prepare them for post secondary educational opportunities.

DCSD will work to expand the opportunities for teachers to deepen their pedagogical approaches to meeting the varied needs of gifted and high-ability learners. One strategy employs; just-in-time training to small groups of teachers with a common interest within their school day through Professional Learning Community and staff meeting structures; offering Professional Development on specified release days; and developing a June Institute with a variety of mini courses supporting differentiation and other strategies that benefit all students, and particularly support gifted education.

When identified gifted students are not achieving up to their potential, or experiencing behavioral or affective issues, the district implements a Multi-tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) approach to problem-solve and support the student. This process begins at the classroom level, will progress to gather additional building level support as needed, and may draw in district level personnel such as the GT Coordinator or School Psychologists. The supports will be adjusted, increased or decreased, as the student's needs change over time.

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## Evaluation and Accountability Procedures

DCSD produces an annual gifted addendum to the Uniform Improvement Plan. This plan is updated and refined periodically to respond to available performance data indicating areas of growth among gifted students, as well as any areas where growth has stagnated.

Parents and students monitor and self-report growth toward the Affective goal identified in the ALP. By 2020, DCSD will develop more systematic methods to include teachers in the process and ensuring continual affective growth of gifted students.

Several DCSD schools boast small populations, making reporting of disaggregated growth data a bit problematic. As more effective measures become available, DCSD will use this data to improve programming and identification processes.

DCSD recently (2014) participated in a Colorado Gifted Education Review, and has completed a self-evaluation survey (2016) through the CDE Data Management System. The results have been shared with administrators, Parent Council, Site Coordinators, as well as with all parents of gifted students, through our annual letter. A special task force representing all of these stakeholders convened in the summer of 2016 to perform Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Challenges analysis of DCSD gifted education programs. The recommendations of the task force form the backbone of this 4-year plan. An important element includes periodic review and refinement of the initiatives we undertake in direct response to feedback from families, community members, teachers and students.

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## Personnel

Delta County Schools employs a .5 district GT Coordinator who is licensed and endorsed in gifted education. Working under supervision of the Director of Exceptional Student Services, the coordinator provides professional development for educators working with gifted children, manages fiscal reporting, develops and implements improvement plans. Each school designates a school-base GT Site Coordinator, who receives training and support to implement the identification and ALP goal-



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setting processes. Two of the elementary Site Coordinators have earned GT endorsements. The vast majority of educators in Delta County schools are highly qualified in their content areas.

## Budget

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DCSD matches State funds for gifted education, complies with all CDE requirements regarding use of state funds and submits all subsequent reporting documents in a timely manner.. State and district funds are used for salaries and stipends for personnel working with gifted students, materials and professional development to support gifted programming, and for activities targeted to enriching gifted programming options.

## Reports

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In addition to the percentage of students identified GT, the Data Pipeline annual reporting of gifted education include disaggregated numbers and percentages of identified student by: Grade level, Gender and ethnicity, Free and reduced lunch, Areas of giftedness, and Twice exceptionality.

DCSD uses grant monies to fund a half-time, district-level GT Coordinator, who is endorsed in Gifted Education. The district complies with all reporting and accounting required to manage those grant funds.

## Record Keeping

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Accurate records are kept throughout the district and in accordance with FERPA and CDE requirements. Storage and transfer of records are held to current law.

## Procedures for Disagreements

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This year, DCSD adopted the following procedure for resolving

**DCSD Gifted Identification and services – Disagreement Process**

1. It is the intent of the Delta County School District to resolve questions and concerns at the level in which they occurred. All questions and concerns regarding Gifted and Talented Identification and services should be brought first to the Gifted and Talented Site Coordinator at your child's school. Students are encouraged to talk with the Gifted and Talented Site Coordinator or their classroom teacher to address any questions, issues, or concerns.
2. If the student and/or parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response from the Gifted and Talented Site Coordinator, they should contact the building principal. Through collaboration with the student, parents/guardians, and teacher, the principal will resolve the questions, issues, or concerns.
3. If the student and/or parents/guardians are not satisfied with the resolution at the building level, they may contact the district-level Gifted and Talented Coordinator. The coordinator will gather relevant information, research district policy and state rules/guidelines, then work with all parties to seek a satisfactory solution. Families can expect a response from the Coordinator within 10 school days, though thorough research into the factors and suggestions for resolution may take longer.
4. If the student and/or parents/guardians are not satisfied with the solution found by the district-level Coordinator, they may appeal in writing to the Director of Special Services, who will review the process and evidence and respond in writing to the parent/guardian within 10 school days.
5. If the student and/or parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response from the Director of Special Services, they may appeal in writing to the District Superintendent. The Superintendent or designee will review the process and evidence and respond in writing within 10 school days of receiving the letter of appeal.
6. If the disagreement stems from school district policy decisions, families may ask the Board of Education to review the relevant policy and to explore whether updates and revisions are in order.

disagreements:

## Monitoring

DCSD participated in a Colorado Gifted Education Review in 2014-15. This review highlighted areas for growth in the area of identification. In response, DCSD has revamped the identification procedures to comply with state law, has invested in more sensitive assessment tools, and has provided extensive staff development and support to GT Site Coordinators, administrators and teachers to broaden our population of identified gifted students. We continue to analyze the results of these efforts and will refine our procedures as we gain access to more disaggregated data. The district GT Coordinator attends CDE's biannual GT State Director's meetings as well as regional network meetings in order to keep current with expectations and trends in gifted education. GT personnel work closely with the Parent Council, Site Coordinators and district administration to analyze state and local performance data, continuously refining and monitoring growth targets for schools and individual students. We will continue to offer training for teachers to implement strategies which are proven to develop critical reasoning and problem-solving behaviors in students.