



COLORADO
Department of Education

Colorado Gifted Education Review

San Juan BOCES

Submitted to:

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Executive Summary

The team wishes to express its appreciation to Betsey Krill, Gifted Education Coordinator, for her professional preparation of documentation to support the San Juan BOCES (SJ BOCES) Colorado Gifted Education Review (C-GER). Visits and conversations with focus groups representing administration, parents, teachers and students provided the team with insight and perspective.

Strengths and Progress

- District administration provides support to gifted education by allocating additional funds for salaries, release time for professional development and collaborative efforts to improve instruction for gifted students.
- Districts are mindful of demographics and develop talent pools to help identify students from underrepresented populations.
- The Gifted/Talented Advisory Council (GTAC) has collected information for the Programming Collaborative which describes programming continuum options and materials available in each district for gifted programming. This information is published on the San Juan BOCES website making it available for all districts to share.
- Many districts are including affective goals on Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs).
- Each district receives disaggregated student achievement data from SJ BOCES and determines their individual goals and creates their own Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) based on this data.

Next Steps:

Personnel

- Provide training for District Leadership Teams, superintendents and principals to increase knowledge of gifted student characteristics and best practices in gifted education.
- Train unendorsed gifted education staff at the district level to increase skills by taking classes and/or participating in regional professional development so they can provide leadership in their districts.
- Review rules as outlined in Exceptional Children Educational Act (ECEA) with school counselors, classroom teachers and administrators and use the Gifted Education Guidelines to implement these rules.

Programming

- Show evidence/self-evaluate that differentiation in students' areas of strength is provided daily during regular instructional periods in all content areas.
- Develop strength-based Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs) using a collaborative process among parents, students, teachers and gifted education representatives.
- Collaborate with member districts on ways to monitor ALPs within existing student reporting periods for adjusting or updating student programming.



Introduction

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Office of Gifted Education is committed to improving the outcomes for identified gifted students throughout the state. The Office of Gifted Education strives to assist all Administrative Units (AU) to be “on-target” in all elements of gifted programming and accreditation: communication, definition, identification, programming, accountability, budgeting and reporting. AUs that are distinguished in these areas will serve as models and resources in the State.

Every four years, or earlier as needed, the state conducts a C-GER Peer Review. An on-site team, made up of experts/peers in the field of gifted education, reviews documents and meets with AU stakeholders in an effort to validate the AU’s self-reporting and to provide information from alternative perspectives. This peer review process is not a comprehensive program evaluation, but rather a process designed to acknowledge the achievements and help prioritize future improvements and growth necessary to ensure gifted student learning and high achievement.

The intent of the visit and report is to help promote the process of reflection and to encourage AUs to engage in continuous improvement. The team spent many hours reviewing evidence and artifacts, listening to focus groups, and conducting school visits. Strengths, commendations and recommendations are the result of team consensus based on extensive deliberation about findings and evidence. We believe the following report may be used for future goal determination and action planning.



Communication

Description

SJ BOCES has multiple methods of communicating with stakeholders. The website provides information on all the required program elements for gifted education. Many districts have handbooks and websites as resources. Documents in Spanish are available. The GTAC facilitates communication from the SJ BOCES to the district level as well as communication among the districts. District goals for each member of the SJ BOCES are conveyed through postings on the website.

Strengths

- The SJ BOCES website is extremely comprehensive and provides all stakeholders with gifted education information.
- All districts have membership in GTAC.

Next Steps

- Due to high staff turnover, each district should provide evidence of annually communicating basic information regarding identification, programming, and Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs) with all stakeholder groups.

Communication Indicators

12.02 (1) (a) The program plan shall describe how the administrative unit will communicate to parents and educators about available gifted programming options within the administrative unit and how those options may be accessed.

Definition

Comments

SJ BOCES uses the Colorado Department of Education’s definition of gifted and talented students.

Definition

The program plan shall include a written definition that is the same as or substantially similar to the definition of “gifted and talented student” specified in section 12.01(12) of these Rules. This definition shall serve as the basis for the implementation of all other program plan elements described below.



Identification

Description

The entire SJ BOCES is using a standardized procedure for identification; this procedure is posted on the SJ BOCES website. All districts have a review team process in place. The AU has made progress in addressing the need for gifted identification to reflect district demographics. Schools are developing talent pools and “watch” lists. The AU is also making progress in identifying all areas of giftedness; some districts are identifying students with strengths in creativity, arts and leadership. The SJ BOCES is in the process of identifying multiple pathways to help identify all underrepresented populations. The identification process includes the collection of a body of evidence with quantitative and qualitative measures. The identification process is collaborative, including all stakeholders.

Strengths

- The region has focused attention and created targets related to identification recommendations from the 2010 C-GER.
- Districts are mindful of demographics and develop talent pools to help identify students from underrepresented populations.
- Some districts are identifying students in creativity, leadership and the arts.

Next Steps

- Use talent pools to address demographic gaps such as gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status in each district.
- Consider conducting universal screening at grades 2 and 6 in all districts, as supported in rules for the implementation of HB 14-1102.
- Explore the possibility of implementing an Early Access Plan in the SJ BOCES to address gifted needs of young students.

Identification Indicators

12.02 (1) (c) Identification Procedure shall describe the assessment process used by the administrative unit for identify students who meet the definition specified in section 12.01 (9) and for identifying the educational needs of gifted students. The assessment process shall recognize a student’s exceptional abilities or potential, interests, and needs in order to guide student instruction and individualized programming. The assessment process shall include, but need not be limited to:

- 12.01(1) (c) (i) A method(s) to ensure equal and equitable access for all students. The program plan shall describe the efforts the administrative unit will make to identify gifted students from all populations, including preschool (if applicable) through twelfth grade students, minority students, economically diverse students, culturally diverse students, students with limited English proficiency and children with disabilities;
- 12.01(1) (c) (ii) Referral and screening procedures;
- 12.01(1) (c) (iii) Multiple sources of data in a body of evidence (i.e. qualitative and quantitative)
- 12.01(1) (c) (iv) Criteria for determining exceptional ability or potential;
- 12.01(1) (c) (v) A review team procedure; and
- 12.01(1) (c) (vi) A communication procedure by which parents are made aware of the assessment process for the student, gifted determination, and development and review of the student’s ALP.



Programming

Description

Throughout the SJ BOCES various programming structures and content options are used to provide services for gifted students. Among these are acceleration, flexible grouping, cluster grouping, online coursework (e.g., ALEKS), Socratic seminars, concurrent enrollment, problem-based learning projects, International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP). ALPs exist for most identified students. Some districts have initiated affective programming using discussion groups and many are including affective goals on ALPs. The SJ BOCES website provides information about affective programming and examples of affective ALP goals. Transition processes to share information about gifted students moving between grade levels exist in some districts.

Strengths

- The GTAC has collected information for the Programming Collaborative which describes programming continuum options and materials available in each district for gifted programming. This information is published on the website making it available for all districts to share.

Next Steps

- Show evidence/self-evaluate that differentiation in students' areas of strength is provided daily during regular instructional periods in all content areas.
- Develop strength-based Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs) using a collaborative process among parents, students, teachers and gifted education representatives.
- Collaborate with member districts on ways to monitor ALPs within existing student reporting periods for adjusting or updating student programming.

Programming Indicators

12.02 (1) (d) Programming:
The program plan shall describe the programming components, options, and strategies that will be implemented by the administrative unit and schools to appropriately address the educational needs of gifted students. Programming shall match the strengths and interests of the gifted student. Other educational needs shall be addressed according to the individual student's profile. The program plan components, options, and strategies shall include, but need not be limited to:

- 12.02 (1) (d) (i) Alignment of assessment data to programming options in the areas of giftedness;
- 12.02 (1) (d) (ii) Structures by which gifted students are served at the different school levels (e.g., the general classroom, resource, and/or pullout);
- 12.02 (1) (d) (iii) Support in differentiated instruction and methods (e.g., acceleration, cluster grouping and higher order thinking skills);
- 12.02 (1) (d) (iv) Affective and guidance support systems (e.g., social skills training, early college and career planning);
- 12.02 (1) (d) (v) Diverse content options provided for gifted students in their areas of strength (e.g., mentorship, socratic seminars, advanced math, honors courses);
- 12.02 (1) (d) (vi) The means by which articulation for preschool (if applicable) through grade 12 is planned and implemented; Amendments - Rule 12 - Eff. 10/31/2008 108;
- 12.02 (1) (d) (vii) Pre-collegiate and/or pre-advanced placement support;
- 12.02 (1) (d) (viii) ALP development and annual review conducted through the collaborative efforts of the teacher(s), other school personnel (as needed), parents and the student (as appropriate); and
- 12.02 (1) (d) (ix) Post secondary options available to gifted students.



Evaluation and Accountability

Evaluation and Accountability Indicators

Description

Districts within the SJ BOCES use a variety of assessments to measure student progress (e.g., Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP), STAR, American College Testing (ACT) and IB.) The SJ BOCES provides a data tool for districts to use to disaggregate data for further analysis. The SJ BOCES coordinator provides data to each district and facilitates data dialogue about gifted student achievement. A survey of administrators, teachers, parents and students was conducted in spring of 2014. The results of these surveys were discussed by the GTAC to further improve gifted education in the SJ BOCES. Each district in the SJ BOCES submitted a gifted education addendum to their Unified Improvement Plan (UIP).

Strengths

- Each district receives disaggregated student achievement data from SJ BOCES and determines their own program goals and creates their own UIP based on this data.

Next Steps

- Strengthen the UIP planning process by defining performance challenges, determining root causes, setting appropriate targets, and creating and implementing a specific action plan to increase gifted student achievement monitored with interim measures.
- Define methods by which student affective growth is measured for continual development.

The administrative unit provides:

12.02 (1) (e) (i) Methods by which student achievement is monitored and measured for continual learning progress and how such methods align with the state accreditation process (e.g., intervention progress monitoring data sources, advanced learning plan goals, and performance, district, and state assessment data);

12.02 (1) (e) (ii) Methods by which student affective growth is monitored and measured for continual development (e.g., rubrics for personal journals and anecdotal data, student surveys, demonstration of self-advocacy, and student career and/or college plans);

12.02 (1) (e) (iii) Methods for ensuring that gifted student achievement and reporting are consistent with accreditation requirements (i.e., disaggregation of state assessment data for gifted students, identification of discrepancies in the data, goal setting and demonstration of growth); and

12.02 (1) (e) (iv) Methods for self-evaluation of the gifted program including a schedule for periodic feedback and review (e.g., review of gifted policy, goals, identification process, programming components, personnel, budget and reporting practices, and the impact of gifted programming on student achievement and progress); and

12.02 (1) (e) (v) Methods by which parents, educators, and other required persons are informed about the methods described in 12.02(1)(e)(i-iv) above.



Personnel

Description

The nine districts that comprise the SJ BOCES vary in gifted education staffing levels. The SJ BOCES employs a gifted education coordinator for 50 days a year. Focus groups indicated they would benefit by having the coordinator for more days. The coordinator provides professional development based on data and the Administrative Unit Program Plan’s goals. Stakeholders expressed a need for district leaders to understand and support gifted education. Students and parents reported the need for teachers who are trained in gifted differentiated instruction so that challenge and rigor are provided throughout the school day. At this time there is limited collaboration with universities and colleges for the development of qualified personnel.

Strengths

- The SJ BOCES Gifted Coordinator is endorsed in gifted education.
- Each district has a Gifted Education Coordinator.
- The SJ BOCES provides staff development opportunities for teachers and administrators in gifted education.
- Training in gifted education is part of the induction program for all new teachers and administrators.

Next Steps

- Provide training for District Leadership Teams, superintendents and principals to increase knowledge of gifted student characteristics and best practices in gifted education.
- Train unendorsed gifted education staff at the district level to increase skills by taking classes and/or participating in regional professional development so they can provide leadership in their districts.
- Review rules as outlined in Exceptional Children Educational Act (ECEA) with school counselors, classroom teachers and administrators and use the Gifted Education Guidelines to implement these rules.

Personnel Indicators

12.02 (1) (f) (i) The program plan shall describe the personnel who provide instruction, counseling, coordination and other programming for gifted students. Personnel shall be knowledgeable in the characteristics, differentiated instructional methods and competencies in the special education of gifted students. Qualified personnel with endorsement or an advanced degree in gifted education are preferred in specific programs and classrooms consisting of mainly gifted students. Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, every administrative unit shall employ or contract with a person who is responsible for:

12.02 (1) (f) (i) (A) Management of the program plan; and

12.02 (1) (f) (i) (B) Professional development activities, the purposes of which are:

12.02 (1) (f) (i) (B) (I) To improve and enhance the skills, knowledge and expertise of teachers and other personnel who provide instruction and other supportive services to gifted students, and

12.02 (1) (f) (i) (B) (II) To increase, to the extent practicable, the number of qualified personnel providing instruction to gifted students.

12.02 (1) (f) (ii) Administrative units are highly encouraged to collaborate with universities and colleges for the development of qualified personnel.

12.02 (1) (f) (iii) Personnel responsible for the instruction and learning of gifted students in core academic areas must meet the requirements under federal law for highly qualified teachers.



Budget

Description

SJ BOCES distributes monies to each district from the state funding in a flow-through process. The individual districts decide how the budget is allocated for their gifted program. Most districts use the majority of their funding for salary purposes.

Strengths:

- In the 2013-2014 budget, districts provided three times the amount of the current gifted education allocation from their local funds.
- District administration provides support to gifted education by allocating additional funds for salaries, release time for professional development and collaborative efforts to improve instruction for gifted students.
- The SJ BOCES funds staff development opportunities for all the districts in the BOCES.

Next Steps:

- Provide evidence of district accountability for gifted monies, ensuring that their funding is aligned to ALP and UIP Gifted Education Addendum goals and is within allowed categories.

Budget Indicators

Funds requested from the Department may be used for:

- 12.02 (1) (g) (i) salaries for appropriately certified, endorsed, or licensed personnel serving primarily gifted students (e.g., gifted education directors, coordinators, resource teachers, counselors and teacher of gifted classrooms);
- 12.02 (1) (g) (ii) professional development and training related to gifted education;
- 12.02 (1) (g) (iii) activities associated with gifted programming options specific to gifted students and their advanced learning plans;
- 12.02 (1) (g) (iv) supplies and materials used in instructional programming for gifted education; and
- 12.02 (1) (g) (v) technology and equipment necessary for the education of gifted students, not to exceed twenty-five percent of the total amount requested from the Department.



Reporting

Comments

All reports from the SJ BOCES have been filed in a timely and complete manner.

Reporting Indicators

12.03 Reports.

Any AU receiving funding under the provision of Section 12.00 shall submit to the Department by September 30 a report for the prior fiscal year, including:

12.03 (1) a detailed report of financial income and expenditures;

12.03 (2) the number of formally identified gifted students served through gifted student programming reported by:

12.03 (2) (a) each grade level, preschool (if applicable) through grade 12;

12.03 (2) (b) gender and ethnicity;

12.03 (2) (c) twice exceptional; and

12.03 (2) (d) gifted preschoolers served through early entrance per local policies and procedures, if applicable;

12.03 (3) the number of non-identified students served through gifted student programming;

12.03 (4) the percent of students in the AU who have been identified as gifted and talented through a formal identification procedure;

12.03 (5) the number of qualified personnel;

12.03 (6) the types of programming strategies utilized most commonly at each school level to address the needs of gifted students reported by:

12.03 (6) (a) programming options for each area of giftedness as specified in 12.01(12) of these Rules;

12.03 (6) (b) methods of articulation through the grades; and

12.03 (6) (c) methods and tools used in accountability to monitor gifted student achievement and commensurate growth related to the implementation of the programming components; and

12.03 (7) administrative units and their member districts, if any, shall comply with the requirements of accreditation, pursuant to Article 11 of Title 22, C.R.S., with regard to gifted student achievement, identification of disparities in the data, instructional goals, growth and reporting.



Record Keeping

Comments

SJ BOCES districts follow all record keeping requirements according to Colorado state statutes. Student records, including ALPs, are stored within secure district student data management systems.

Record Keeping Indicators

12.05 Record Keeping. Amendments - Rule 12 - Eff. 10/31/2008 111 Any administrative unit receiving funding will have the following record keeping and reporting responsibilities:

12.05 (1) Financial Records.

Financial records shall be kept in accordance with generally accepted principles of governmental accounting. Recommended accounting principles are listed in the Financial Policies and Procedures Handbook.

12.05 (2) Inventory.

An inventory shall be maintained of all equipment for which funding was received. These records shall be maintained throughout the useful life of the equipment.

12.05 (3) Student Education Records.

The ALP shall record programming options, and strategies utilized with individual students and shall be part of the student's record. The ALP shall be considered in educational planning and decision-making concerning subsequent programming for that student and be used in the articulation process, preschool (if applicable) through grade 12. Gifted student records shall describe the body of evidence that identifies strengths, interests and needs, and the ongoing programming and student achievement results.

12.05 (4) Confidentiality of Student Education Records.

Individually identifiable records of students referred, assessed, evaluated, and/or served through programming for gifted and talented students in any administrative unit shall be held to be confidential and protected in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

12.05 (5) Maintenance and Destruction of Student Education Records.

Gifted student education records and ALPs shall be maintained, retained and destroyed consistent with the ongoing system of student record keeping established in the administrative unit, including its member districts or the Charter School Institute for student records, preschool (if applicable) through grade 12.



Dispute Resolution

Comments

Individual school districts have their own dispute resolution processes. Should a district require resolution at the SJ BOCES level, there is a clearly defined appeals and dispute resolution process described on the BOCES website.

Dispute Resolution Indicators

The program plan shall describe a dispute resolution process to be used for resolving disagreements about the identification and programming for gifted students. The dispute resolution process shall, at a minimum, afford the aggrieved individual notice of the decision giving rise to the dispute and an opportunity to be heard before the decision is implemented.



Monitoring

Comments

The SJ BOCES provided thorough information and data for the review process. The SJ BOCES Gifted Education Coordinator, Betsey Krill, accommodated the C-GER team by providing documentation for the desk audit as well as a schedule for focus group meetings and district visits that exceeds the requirements of a Colorado Gifted Education Review.

Monitoring Indicators

12.07 (1) Each administrative unit shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations regarding the program plan, identification and special educational services for gifted students.

12.07 (2) Each administrative unit shall be subject to ongoing monitoring by the Department concerning implementation of the program plan.

12.07 (3) Monitoring procedures shall include: Amendments - Rule 12 - Eff. 10/31/2008 112

12.07 (3) (a) A determination of compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and

12.07 (3) (b) An assessment of program quality based on the standards established by the Department of Education.

12.07 (4) Monitoring activities shall include:

12.07 (4) (a) A review of the program plan;

12.07 (4) (b) A review of the annual report;

12.07 (4) (c) A planned comprehensive on-site process integrated with the continuous improvement and monitoring process in the Department of Education; and

12.07 (4) (d) Follow-up activities including the provision of technical assistance in areas of non-compliance and verification that areas of non-compliance have been corrected.



Conclusion

The review committee finds the San Juan BOCES is not yet meeting all details of state regulations for gifted education. The following components of the program plan are areas for future development.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Communication | X | Personnel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Definition | <input type="checkbox"/> | Budget |
| X | Identification | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reporting |
| X | Programming | <input type="checkbox"/> | Record Keeping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Evaluation and Accountability | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dispute Resolution |

Improvement Target Areas

A timeline to improve the indicators in **Personnel** and **Programming** is due to the Colorado Department of Education within six weeks of the receipt of the final C-GER report.

Implementation of revised expectations and procedures are required within one year of submission of the Improvement Timeline to CDE. This timeline will allow the AU to plan collaboratively with member districts and stakeholders during the next school year and prepare for systemic and responsive improvements. Technical assistance and peer support are available through the gifted education regional network system. The aim is to provide guidance so the goals of the Administrative Unit improvement timeline may be met.