

## Procedures for Parent, Family and Student Engagement and Communication

Parents in the ECBOCES region are informed about access to identification procedures through each district's Gifted Education Handbook which is posted on all district websites. The handbook includes an overview of identification procedures including referral and screening procedures, collection and team review of the body of evidence, types of evidence collected, and state criteria for identification.

Parents and families are educated about giftedness and parenting gifted students by attending parent sessions at twice yearly regional gifted education events. Professional speakers present relevant information based on the needs and requests of parents of East Central BOCES gifted children. Parents are also encouraged to visit the East Central BOCES gifted education webpage where they have access to lists of gifted organizations; general GT information; specific information on social and emotional issues; lists of recommended books, journals, and magazines for parents and students; and academic contests for gifted children.

Parents are notified when school personnel begin gathering data to determine identification. Parents are encouraged to attend a yearly ALP meeting to give input on the child's goals. In addition, parents are encouraged to attend a mid-year conference, usually in conjunction with parent teacher conferences, to discuss progress of ALP goals. Parents are informed of the best programming options that are available to fit the child's needs at the ALP meeting. Programming options are described in the Gifted Education Handbook. Many districts hold a yearly parent informational meeting to explain concurrent enrollment options. In the smallest districts, the counselor may have a meeting with a student and his/her parents to discuss concurrent enrollment and other programming options.

High school counselors or teachers provide information about concurrent enrollment opportunities to parents and students when class schedules are created. Many districts hold annual meetings to explain concurrent enrollment options to parents of high school students. In most districts, the high school counselor holds a special college and career planning information night each fall.

The East Central BOCES Gifted Education Handbook is available in Spanish. At this time, Spanish is the only primary language other than English in the East Central BOCES districts.

Parents and families of gifted children are encouraged to participate in their school communities in several ways. Most districts report high attendance at back to school nights and parent teacher conferences. Many parents also attend the parent sessions twice a year at the ECBOCES regional gifted events. Several of the member districts host yearly math, reading/writing, or science nights. Districts report that these events are well attended by parents of gifted students.

The ECBOCES GERC has a list of parents of GT students who wish to be on an email list. These parents are notified of GT student and parent events and conferences happening in the region and around the state. Articles on GT and useful websites and books are also shared.

An ECBOCES GT Advisory Committee was created in the spring of 2016. Members include parents, teachers, and administrators. The group will meet three times per year.

**Targets:**

By January 2017, all districts will have English and Spanish copies of the Gifted and Talented Handbook posted on their district websites.

By January 2017, all districts will have a link to the ECBOCES gifted education page on their district website.

By May 2017, ECBOCES will provide a sample acceleration policy to all member districts.

## Definition of “Gifted Student”

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ECBOCES has adapted the most recent state definition of “gifted student”. This definition is stated in the Gifted Education Handbook which is posted on each district’s website. The definition is also posted on the ECBOCES gifted education web page. This definition is used as the basis for the implementation of the gifted education program plan elements.

"Gifted and talented children" means those persons between the ages of four 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 Abilities  
Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Musical or Psychomotor Abilities

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

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Each school district in the ECBOCES region has one or more trained gifted education coordinators who attend up to three gifted education network meetings each year. These coordinators, with guidance and support from the ECBOCES GT Director/GERC, are responsible for following the appropriate process

and state criteria for identifying students as gifted. This process is outlined in the Gifted Education Handbook which is available to parents on each district's website.

Most districts analyze state achievement data and local district assessments, looking for students who may fit the state criteria for identification. As a result of the Universal Screening Grant, the ECBOCES districts screen all 2<sup>nd</sup> graders and all students in either 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grades each year using the full CogAT. Many member districts also administer the full CogAT to students who transfer in to their districts. When appropriate, ELL students may take the Non Verbal and Quantitative batteries, and not the Verbal battery, in order to ensure equal and equitable access.

Most districts have the GERC or their district coordinator provide a general GT Characteristics training to help teachers identify students in their classrooms who may benefit from a data review. Referrals are accepted from teachers and school staff, parents, and the students themselves and the identification process begins within 30 days of the referral. The ECBOCES has created a list of teachers from the region who are considered experts in the arts. These teachers have agreed to assist with identification procedures and decisions in the arts areas, and often provide professional development in arts identification at GT network meetings. In 2015, there were presentations on what types of characteristics to watch for in drama, fine arts, and music. All coordinators have access to the Specific Talent Aptitudes performance rubrics from the CDE website.

Each of the twenty school districts in the East Central BOCES region has one or more gifted education coordinators trained in the new identification rules. A review team assists the gifted education coordinator in identification decisions based on analyzing a body of evidence including multiple types and sources of both quantitative and qualitative data, using 95<sup>th</sup> percentile as qualifying criteria. However, a score below the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile on the CogAT no longer prevents the review team from continuing the process and gathering additional evidence. Examples of data used include nationally normed state and local achievement data (PARCC, CMAS, NWEA MAPS, and i-Ready); normed reference observation scales with parent scales (SIGS); and performance rubrics in the arts, creativity and leadership. All districts have a SIGS kit and access to training and support from the GERC. ECBOCES has the Torrance Test of Creativity and two gifted education personnel who have been trained in the administration and scoring of this assessment.

Once the review team has made a decision, parents, teachers, and the student are notified of the results of the data analysis. A letter explaining the student's scores and how those scores match up with the criteria for identification is placed in the child's cumulative file and sent to parents. If the child qualifies for the Talent Pool, a letter explaining that decision and next steps is sent home and placed in the child's folder. If a child qualifies to be identified as gifted, parents are notified in the letter that an ALP will be developed and that parents are expected to collaborate in the ALP.

To ensure portability, ECBOCES has created an updated ALP document that includes a body of evidence section, as well as other required sections. This ALP is kept with the student's cumulative records, to be included in the transfer of records should the child move out of district. When new students transfer into our member districts, the student's ALP is reviewed within 45 days and parents are contacted within 60 days. When there is a lack of data/evidence, former districts and parents are contacted and students may be reevaluated.

ECBOCES recognizes that the English Language Learners and Free/Reduced Lunch groups are underrepresented in our region. We are looking for solutions and welcome support and guidance from CDE in best practices in this area. The most recent data indicates that our percentage of Twice Exceptional students meets or exceeds the state percentage and this is an area we will continue to focus on. ECBOCES is in the beginning stages of assembling a team of gifted and special education personnel to join the Twice Exceptional Project offered through CDE.

**Targets:**

ECBOCES will research and implement strategies and best practices in identifying under-represented populations, specifically English Language Learners and Free/Reduced Lunch students.

By July 2017, ECBOCES will have a team of teachers, GT coordinators, and Special Education personnel complete Level 1 of the Twice Exceptional Project.

By July 2017, ECBOCES will create a Twice Exceptional Leadership Team. This team will complete Level II of the project.

## Advanced Learning Plan Content, Procedures and Responsibilities

The ECBOCES member districts are dedicated to making the shift from goals that were written around a score or a grade to standards aligned ALPs that are student driven and developed by student, parent, teacher, and GT coordinator. CDE provided a full day training at ECBOCES in the spring of 2016. Coordinators from most of the member districts attended the training. Those who were unable to attend met with the ECBOCES GERC to learn how to develop standards aligned ALPs.

**Content:**

With the passing of the updated Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA) Rules for ALP content, procedures and responsibilities, East Central BOCES created an ALP template that includes all requirements for ALPs. The CDE ALP Guidance Document created April 2016 was used as guidance in creating the sample. The member districts use the sample to create their own ALPs to be uploaded and housed in cumulative files in their district's secure site or the district's current cumulative file system.

An ALP is developed each year for every identified gifted student. The original body of evidence is recorded. A current student interest survey is administered annually and used to add information to the student's profile, as well as current academic data to help monitor the student's progress in his/her area(s) of giftedness. Parents are also notified that the ALP is being developed. Academic goals are written to match the student's strength(s) and or interest area(s). Districts provide content options to match the students' goals. These may include: differentiated instruction in the classroom using supplemental curriculum, cluster grouping, curriculum compacting, grade or content acceleration, advanced classes, and concurrent enrollment.

Affective goals are written to support the student's strength(s) or need(s) in the areas of personal, social, communication, leadership, and/or cultural competency. The content, process, product, and

environment for each goal are described in the ALP, and include how goals are aligned with tiered instruction or other supplemental or intensive instruction. Signatures are gathered on the form from each person involved in developing the ALP goals. Most member districts do not blend the goals with the ICAP, but do develop academic and affective goals that can be used in planning for post-secondary readiness.

### **Procedures and Responsibilities:**

Districts finalize ALP goals at or before the fall parent teacher conferences. At a minimum, most member districts progress monitor the goals mid-year. GT coordinators and the student's teacher share this information with parents at winter parent teacher conferences. There is a space on the sample ALP to document the date of progress monitoring. The sample ALP document includes an area to write a transition plan for the next grade level and the ALP is transferred between building levels as the student moves up.

The ECBOCES GERC will continue to provide ongoing on-site support and guidance with ALPs as needed. Developing standards aligned ALPs was the focus of the September 2016 GT network meeting. After gathering current data and interest surveys, coordinators worked together and with the support of the GERC to create sample goals. From this work, a resource bank of sample goals will be created for coordinators to use as guidance in working with the team of student, parents, and teachers in developing appropriate goals for each individual student.

The ECBOCES Advisory committee determined that the priority goal of the committee for 2016-2017 will be to support districts in writing standards aligned ALP goals.

### **Targets:**

By October 2016, each district will show the GERC one completed standards aligned ALP.

By May 2017, create a resource bank of **sample** standards aligned ALP goals.

By January 2018, each district will have a specific transition plan in writing.

## **Programming**

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The ECBOCES districts are working toward improvement in programming for GT students. The first step has been to ensure that student programming and instruction align with the students' area(s) of identification and interest. Student survey results indicated that there was not enough rigor and challenge in their classes, other than concurrent enrollment courses. Districts are using an updated ALP form and are using a collaborative process to develop ALP goals that align with standards, as well as the students' strength areas.

ECBOCES sponsored a Depth & Complexity training in June 2016. Sixty-five teachers representing grades Kdg-12 attended. Three of the four ECBOCES Impact Team coaches also attended in order to support

the teachers on their Impact Teams with implementation. Next steps involve follow-up support to teachers who attended and additional trainings in districts.

The ECBOCES GERC offers support and professional development in differentiated instruction. Some teachers participate in the online modules for gifted learners.

In the elementary schools, the most common types of programming include differentiation in the classroom using supplemental materials like Jacob's ladder, Jr. Great Books, Navigators, M2M3 Math, and Math Menus. Some districts use individual online programs like ALEKS.

The majority of our districts house Kdg-12<sup>th</sup> grades in one building. Therefore, content acceleration is a common form of programming in the elementary and middle school grades. Cluster grouping and pretesting with curriculum compacting are also used at both levels. Several middle schools offer advanced math, science, and language arts classes and some districts have pull-out or after school classes for GT students. Some upper elementary and middle school students are involved in book studies to address their social-emotional needs. The GERC purchased the book, *From Worrier to Warrior*, for all districts to use as a book study with students. One district piloted the book study in the spring of 2016 and many plan to use it in the 2016-2017 school year.

Career and college planning including personal strengths and interests, decision-making, goal setting, time management, and study skills starts in the middle schools and continues through high school. Arts programming at the middle and high school levels includes direct instruction in domain skill development; select choir, band, orchestra, ensemble; competitions; and coaching by a skilled artist/performer. Leadership programming includes direct instruction in leadership skills, student council leadership, leadership camps/conferences, debate, specialized curriculum, and community resources. In the high schools, the most common and effective methods of programming include advanced courses and concurrent enrollment.

Many districts have competitions like Spelling Bee, Geography Bee, Knowledge Bowl, and Destination Imagination. Some have enrichment activities like, Chess, Computer and Foreign Language clubs.

In addition, the secondary schools offer a variety of activities in which highly able students participate, including Legislative Day, Student Senate, National Honor Society, Athletics, Debate & Forensics, and Journalism.

Well attended regional GT events are held each year and provide programming that supports both the academic and social-emotional needs of GT students. There is an event in the fall for 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> grade GT and Talent Pool students. The 7<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> graders attend a three day event in late May.

ECBOCES has implemented Impact Teams in nineteen of the twenty ECBOCES districts. Coaches from ECBOCES work once or twice per month with teams of teachers to create formative assessments and plan units based on the Common Core standards. Teams look at student work to determine next steps for students who have already met the grade level standards. In most cases, the students are accelerated to the next grade level's standard or use a more complex content with the same standard.

The Iowa Acceleration Scale is used in conjunction with a fact finding document when whole grade acceleration decisions need to be made. This is a team decision.

**Targets:**

By January 2018, ECBOCES districts will use a problem solving process (RtI) when a gifted student is underachieving.

By October 2017, ECBOCES will increase the number of teachers participating in the online modules for gifted learners.

ECBOCES will continue to provide training and support in Depth & Complexity.

## Evaluation and Accountability Procedures

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ECBOCES districts use many assessments to measure student progress. The majority of the districts use NWEA MAPS three times per year. Some use i-Ready three times per year. All districts participate in PARCC/CMAS testing, but several districts have had high opt-out rates in 2015 and 2016. One district had 100% opt out in the spring of 2016.

Gifted education coordinators meet yearly with the ECBOCES GERC to analyze and disaggregate gifted student data from across the region. When looking at TCAPP and PARCC data, the most obvious trend over the past three years is the decline in student achievement in secondary math identified gifted students, especially in the Free/Reduced lunch population. This is a priority focus and has been the goal in the gifted addendum until last year, when PARCC data was not an effective measurement of this goal. ECBOCES will continue to provide professional development, support, and resources to help GT identified math secondary students make growth.

Results from parent, student, and teachers surveys, as well as focus group interviews, indicate that there is a lack of progress monitoring and measurement of affective ALP goals. All districts are working toward implementing a structure to measure and monitor affective and academic goals. Most districts will discuss progress toward ALP goals with parents at the winter parent teacher conferences.

The program plan and C-GER report and timeline are posted on the ECBOCES gifted education website page.

**Targets:**

By October 2017, districts will put a structure in place to measure affective and academic progress of ALP goals.

Beginning in the spring of 2017, ECBOCES will complete a self-evaluation yearly.

Beginning in the spring of 2017, ECBOCES will administer a survey to stakeholders every other year.

## Personnel

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ECBOCES employs an endorsed GERC/GT Director to coordinate the AU gifted program and to provide support, guidance, and gifted education professional development to all member districts. The GERC position is supported by the superintendents. Each district has one or more gifted coordinators who are highly qualified teachers. The coordinators assist with communication between students, teachers, parents, and administrators and with identification and programming for students. Coordinators are also responsible for assembling a team for identification decisions and ALP development. These teachers attend three GT network meetings per year and some attend state gifted education conferences.

The ECBOCES GERC created a series of study sessions to support coordinators in preparing for the PLACE. As a result, the number of endorsed coordinators has grown from four to ten in the past year and a half. There will continue to be a focus on encouraging and supporting teachers and administrators in furthering their gifted education knowledge.

The ECBOCES GT handbook was created in part, to increase the sustainability of the GT program in each district. Other documents that support sustainability include the Gifted Education Identification Handbook for Coordinators, and the ECBOCES sample ALP document. The documents are easily accessed by coordinators on the ECBOCES GT web page.

There is a moderate yearly turnover rate of gifted coordinators. Each year the ECBOCES GERC provides a training webinar for new coordinators, along with support throughout the year. There is a professional development piece at each network meeting and a large training, like Depth & Complexity or Richard Cash, offered to all teachers and administrators each year.

Target:

By May 2017, increase the number of endorsed GT personnel from 10 to 12.

By May 2017, provide three, 90 minute Depth & Complexity trainings to a model district.

By September 2017, offer the three, 90 minutes Depth & Complexity trainings to all districts.

## Budget

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ECBOCES uses a collaborative process including the GERC, executive director and the federal programs coordinator for developing the gifted budget and making decisions about how much money should be



set aside for resources and professional development needs. The GERC visits each district in the fall to determine their needs for the upcoming school year. There is a flow-through formula with a base amount plus per pupil amount for each district.

The GERC shares the CDE document with examples of allowable expenses with each district yearly. The majority of the funds go to personnel expenses (coordinator stipends), student programming, and gifted student activities. Budget reports are reviewed monthly at superintendent accountability meetings and feedback is given. The GERC compiles the budgets from the member districts and submits them to CDE as one AU budget. State funds and district contributions are reflected on the budget.

## Reports

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With collaboration and data analysis involving all district GT coordinators, East Central BOCES provides a GT addendum to the UIP. Gifted student data is analyzed to look for trends, disparities and to identify root causes before a growth goal is written. The member districts attach the gifted education addendum to their individual UIPs. East Central BOCES submits all required budgets to the department of education.

Individual districts are responsible for reporting the number and percentage of identified students and their demographic data each October. Some districts have students identified as Non-Verbal and/or Language Arts. The GERC is supporting the coordinators in those districts with finding the correct areas of identification for those students. Districts are also responsible for reporting the number of qualified personnel employed in their districts.

### **Target:**

By October 2017, all districts will have updated their students' identification labels/areas for student count submission.

## Record Keeping

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The member districts have business managers who report gifted education expenditures on an "Actual" budget spreadsheet. The ECBOCES GERC compiles these budgets into one to be submitted by the due date. Individual districts keep financial records in accordance with principles of governmental accounting. Member districts keep their own inventory of all materials and resources purchased with gifted funds. ECBOCES also keeps an inventory of resources purchased. These resources are kept in a library and checked out to districts as needed.

ALPs and other identifiable records are kept in students' cumulative files and are destroyed following an ongoing schedule established by each member district. Some districts house student evaluations and

assessment data on a password protected online data site. Other districts are working toward this goal, but due to financial restraints, are currently keeping student records in locked files.

**Target:**

By July 2018, student records shall be kept in accordance with new federal and state laws and regulations in all member districts.

## Procedures for Disagreements

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ECBOCES has a process available for member districts. Each district has adopted or adapted the process. The procedures for disagreements are explained in the Gifted Education handbooks which is posted on each district's website and printed for parents if requested. The procedures are listed below:

- 1) Parents are notified of the identification or programming decision in writing by the local school district within 5 business days of the decision.
- 2) Parents have 7 days from receipt of the notice to file a written notice of dispute with the school district Gifted & Talented Coordinator.
- 3) District gifted and talented coordinator (and teachers as needed) meet with parents to discuss dispute.
- 4) At the end of the meeting, parents receive a summary of the meeting, including any decision adjustment if made.
- 5) If parents still have disagreement with school decision, parents have seven days to request district administration (principal and/or superintendent) to review the decision.
- 6) Parents receive a written summary of the meeting within five business days, including any decision adjustment if made.
- 7) If there is still no agreement, at the parent's or district's request, the Gifted and Talented Coordinator for East Central BOCES and/or the Gifted Education Regional Consultant will review the case and may meet with parents and district representatives to assist with mediation.
- 8) Parents receive a summary of findings and of any decision made after review of district case by the East Central BOCES Coordinator and/or the Gifted Education Regional Consultant within five business days.

9) If agreement can still not be reached, parents can address the local district school board who will be responsible for final decision.

10) Parents are notified of final decision in writing by the local school board within seven days.

## Monitoring

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ECBOCES follows state rules and federal laws regarding the gifted education program plan, and identification of and programming for gifted students. Gifted education coordinators from the member districts meet yearly to analyze gifted student data, review progress on annual plan targets, create new UIP goals, and monitor progress on C-GER timeline steps. The ECBOCES districts are prepared to participate in the C-GER as needed.

## Early Access

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The East Central BOCES does not permit early access at this time.