



Colorado Gifted Education Review Handbook

Office of Gifted Education

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Colorado Gifted Education Review (CGER)

Guidance Handbook for Administrative Unit Gifted Education Coordinator/Director

Introduction

This Colorado Gifted Education Review (CGER) Guidance Handbook was created by the Colorado Department of Education, Office of Gifted Education, to support the gifted education coordinator/director in an Administrative Unit (AU) when preparing for the CGER process.

The Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA) requires all administrative units (AUs) in Colorado to identify and serve students between the ages of five and twenty-one, and age four in administrative units with Early Access, whose aptitude or competence in abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment in one or more domains are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. AUs include: school districts, Charter School Institute (CSI), multi-district administrative units and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). In Colorado, gifted programming is monitored at the AU level. In accordance with state statute, CGER aligns with the ECEA Rules for the Administration of Gifted Education under Section 12.07.

The **Gifted Education Coordinator/Director** is defined as the person the AU has assigned to facilitate gifted programming according to the statutes outlined in ECEA Rules. In some cases, this role may be a shared responsibility. Therefore, the AU will determine the personnel who will be responsible for fulfilling the requirements of a CGER.

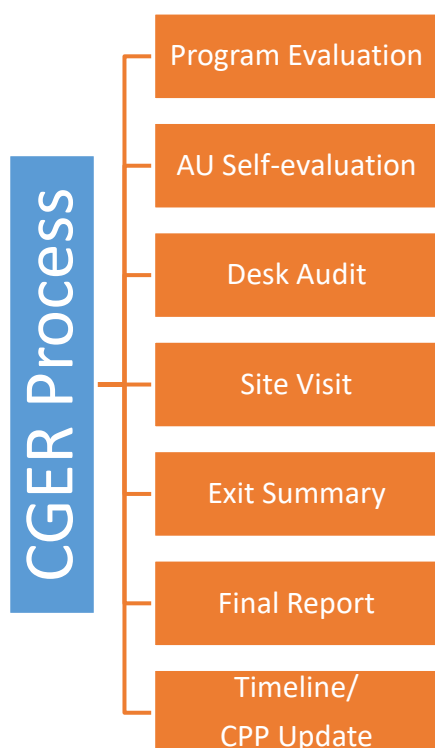
This CGER handbook provides basic information to participants in the shared monitoring process, which is tailored for the individual AU in collaboration with the CGER review team.

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is committed to customer service that supports AUs in improving outcomes for identified gifted students through technical assistance efforts and data-based decision-making. CGER is a collaborative monitoring process that is the shared responsibility of the AU, CDE and the Gifted Education Regional Consultant (GERC). The purpose of this partnership is to increase the capacity of educators and educational systems to identify, program and be accountable for gifted learner achievement and growth.



Components of a CGER

There are seven components to the comprehensive CGER process. The foundational purpose of CGER is for AUs to evaluate their gifted program plan to determine levels of implementation for each of the primary elements of ECEA Rules. The information obtained from the review will identify priority improvements for compliance and continued program growth and development. The implementation of the key requirements outlined in ECEA Rules ensure the academic and affective needs of gifted students are addressed and a program plan is developed that leads to gifted students' achievement and growth.



The AU begins by conducting a **Program Evaluation**. This includes soliciting input from stakeholders in the form of focus groups and/or surveys. Gifted demographic and performance data are analyzed. The AU conducts a self-review of designated Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs).

The AU works collaboratively to complete the three requirements of the **AU Self-evaluation** located in the Data Management System (DMS).

The CDE Office of Gifted Education assembles a team of four experts in gifted education to complete a **Desk Audit** of the AU's self-evaluation and conduct a **Site Visit**. The CGER lead and Gifted Education Regional Consultant (GERC) communicates directly with the AU to provide guidance on completing the self-evaluation and preparing for the visit. After the CGER team conducts a thorough analysis of the self-evaluation, the team will make a determination on the type of Site Visit that will take place. There are two types of visits, *Level I* and *Level II*.

At the conclusion of the Site Visit, the CGER Lead will share with the AU brief highlights of their initial observations in an **Exit Summary**.

The **Final CGER Report** is sent to the AU six-eight weeks after the Site Visit.

Based on the findings of the CGER, the AU may be required to complete an **Improvement Timeline**. An Improvement Timeline addresses the priority improvement targets identified in the report. Additionally, the information from the report is used by the AU to update and revise the **Comprehensive Program Plan**. The AU is subject to annual improvement timelines addressing priorities for out-of-compliance elements until key requirements are corrected.

Monitoring

12.07 (1) Each administrative unit shall comply with all applicable state and federal CGERs 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.

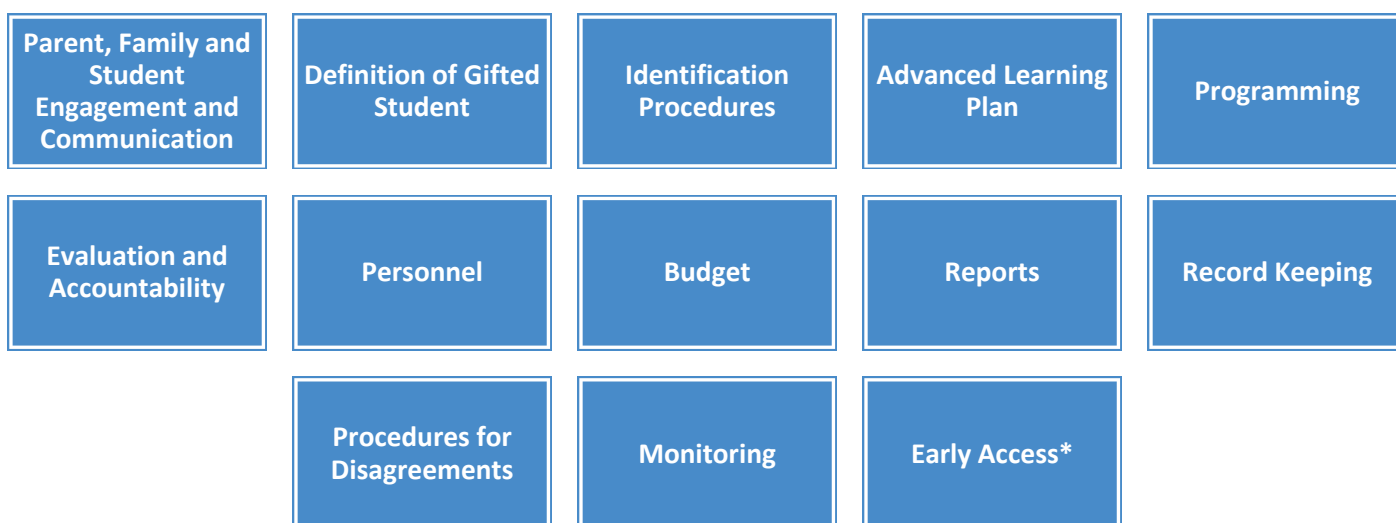
Elements of ECEA Rules: The Foundation of Gifted Programming

There are thirteen primary elements within ECEA Rules that provide the foundation of an AU's gifted program plan.

2220-R-12.00: Gifted and Talented Programming

Administrative units shall implement gifted education student programs providing programming options and services for gifted children for at least the number of days calendared for the school year by each school district.

The AU's **Comprehensive Program Plan (CPP)** provides a detailed narrative describing the AU's implementation of key requirements for each ECEA element. The CGER process provides the AU with the opportunity to reflect on the program plan and self-assess levels of implementation for each of the following program elements.



*AUs determine if Early Access is provided as a programming option. If the AU has submitted an Early Access Addendum to CDE and the plan was approved, this element will be reviewed during the CGER process. If an AU does not offer Early Access, twelve elements will be examined during the CGER.

ECEA Rules may be accessed at the Office of Gifted Education website:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/CGERsregs>

Program Evaluation

As required by ECEA Rules, scheduled, periodic gifted program evaluations are to occur in each AU.

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).

Gifted program evaluation is an essential component for continuous growth and improvement. Program evaluation may occur annually, bi-annually and during the CGER process. Program evaluation relies on using meaningful data, such as stakeholder survey or focus group data, the performance of identified gifted students on state and local assessments, identification demographic data and monitoring of students' Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs). An inclusive program evaluation is comprised of seven components.

Comprehensive Program Plan

The development of an AU's Comprehensive Program Plan (CPP) demonstrates commitment to identify and serve gifted students and their families in ways that fit with local district resources, data analysis and priorities. The program plan shall be implemented by all constituent schools and districts of the AU.

The AU plan describes the elements as outlined in ECEA Rules. This plan is informed by the AU's self-evaluation, stakeholder input, gifted student data and ECEA Rules. It is expected that local gifted needs assessments and student data inform Comprehensive Program Plans. The plan template is located in the Data Management System (DMS). The completed plan is accessible to stakeholders on the Colorado Department of Education Office of Gifted Education website.

Plans may be updated and revised on the Data Management System at any time during the three to five-year monitoring cycle. The narrative descriptions given in the CPP provide the basis for the CGER process. During the desk audit, the CGER team thoroughly reviews the CPP to gain an understanding of implementation procedures and practices for each of the ECEA key requirements.



Gifted UIP Addendum

The annual plan, defined as the **Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) Gifted Addendum**, serves as a means for accountability of gifted student performance. The annual plan is integrated with the district UIP as a strategy for action planning; and ideally embedded into the district UIP narratives. Through the annual plan, the AU identifies a gifted student performance challenge and an action plan for improvement.

12.02(2)(i)(i) Unified improvement plan addendum methods by which gifted student performance is monitored and measured for continual learning progress and how such methods align with the state accreditation process.

The UIP Gifted Addendum is completed either annually or bi-annually based on the size of a district and/or the district's accountability rating. In a multi-district AU, each district must submit a UIP Gifted Addendum. The Gifted Coordinator/Director supports in the development of the addendum.

The UIP Gifted Addendum is uploaded in DMS by the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director as part of the AU Self-evaluation. Under the "Evaluation and Accountability" element in the self-evaluation template, the AU will provide a narrative analysis of its multi-year progress towards identified challenges and action steps to support gifted student performance and growth.

Surveys are a classic method for data collection. They are flexible, easy to implement, and offer a nearly limitless range of data with reliable results. The data gathered during an effective survey provides a unique opportunity to obtain detailed insight into a program. Because you can gather large amounts of feedback directly from individuals who are affected by the program, surveys act as the finger on the pulse of your project and can measure its strength.

Institute for Dynamic Educational Advancement (IDEA 2015)

Surveys, Advocacy Groups & Focus Groups

Soliciting input from stakeholders is part of a continuous program evaluation process. Stakeholders can include: parents, teachers, administrators, and students. To that end, the Office of Gifted Education developed a set of questions for focus group interviews or to create a survey to solicit data about gifted programming from students, parents, teachers and administrators. These questions are on the Data Management System (DMS) for use by the AU in a questionnaire or survey. AUs have shared that an opportune time to conduct stakeholder survey or hold focus group interviews is six months to one year prior to their scheduled CGER. The feedback collected supports the AU in providing informative data for the AU Self-evaluation.

When surveying stakeholder groups, it is important that data represent the AU's demographics and that the response rate for each stakeholder group provide reliable data. A response rate of 40% is the target; however, lower percentages may be considered valid if data provides a representative sampling of the stakeholder group.

The AU will select the platform to conduct the survey. If the survey will be emailed, consider if the majority of families have access to the Internet. AUs may find it necessary to offer multiple platforms for survey completion including electronic, or paper-pencil. AUs might use a common location or scheduled meeting to create opportunities to complete the survey. After completing the survey, data should be analyzed and reported in a format that is clear and concise. This includes presenting data in charts or graphs and summarizing stakeholder

comments into categories of common themes. These data reports are uploaded into DMS as part of the evidence submitted by the AU.

Data reports should include:

- % of respondents for parents, teachers and administrators;
- % of elementary, middle and high school gifted students who responded compared to total population;
- Specific names of school/districts represented;
- Highlights of strengths, trends, and areas for improvement; and
- General summary of comments, indicating a ranking of common remarks.

If an AU chooses to solicit input through focus groups and/or a parent advocacy committee, it is important that groups are representative of the AU's population and protocols are followed to elicit objective and honest feedback from participants. CDE provides guidance on holding focus group interviews and reporting of data. Focus Group Guidelines can be found in **Appendix B**.

Gifted Enrollment

Continual analysis of gifted student enrollment within the AU is an essential component of program evaluation. AUs shall develop methods to ensure the students identified in their AU mirror the demographics of the AU, especially from traditionally underrepresented populations.

12.02(2)(c)(i) A method(s) to ensure equal and equitable access for all students. The program plan shall describe the efforts that the AU 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;

There has long been concern that high-ability students from underserved populations -- those who are limited English proficient, disabled, or from minority or low-income backgrounds -- are persistently underrepresented in advanced classes and in programs for students identified as gifted.

National Association for Gifted Children

Annually, AUs/districts submit an enrollment report to the CDE. This report includes:


12.03(2)(a-f) The number of formally identified gifted students served through gifted programming reported by: each grade level, preschool (if applicable) through 12th grade; gender and ethnicity; free and reduced lunch; area(s) of giftedness; twice exceptionality; gifted preschoolers served through early entrance per local policies and procedures, if applicable.

Annually, the Office of Gifted Education provides a comprehensive gifted enrollment data report to the AU via DMS. The report includes an indicator of whether significant disparities exist in the gifted population. These reports guide the AU in analyzing their gifted enrollment to determine subgroups that may be underrepresented and how their data compare to state percentages. This in turn may lead the AU to developing specific targets for identification within the Comprehensive Program Plan to ensure equal and equitable gifted enrollment. Under the "Identification" element in the AU Self-evaluation, the AU provides a narrative analysis of their gifted enrollment demographics.

Advanced Learning Plan Self-review

All identified gifted students must have an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). The ALP process, responsibilities and content are defined in ECEA Rule. A complete ALP Guidebook can be found on the Office of Gifted Education website. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/alp>

Annually, bi-annually or during the CGER process, the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director, as well as building administrators and teachers, review ALPs to ensure they are purposeful and meaningful and support individual student growth and achievement. The ALP Self-review document found in DMS is helpful to the AU's internal examination and monitoring of their ALPs.



The ALP Process is a collaborative effort between parents, the student and school personnel.

Six months prior to the CGER, the AU will be notified that a random selection of student identification numbers have been selected for the ALP Self-review. This "record set" informs the AU of the ALPs that should be uploaded into DMS if the AU's ALPs are not in the Frontline student information system. The AU Gifted Coordinator/Director, along with other gifted staff, will review these specific ALPs and complete the **ALP Self-review document** found under the Monitoring tab in DMS for each ALP. As part of the Desk Audit, the CGER team will also view the completed ALP Self-reviews.

During the ALP review process, the AU may find the uploaded ALPs are missing components of Rule. This is an opportunity for the AU to determine areas for future growth and improvement in terms of ALP development. Reflecting on what the AU concluded during the ALP self-review is indicated within the self-evaluation or presented during the AU Overview Presentation.

Directions for conducting the ALP Self-review and directions for using the ALP Interchange on the Data Management system are located on the Office of Gifted Education website. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/dms>

Budget, Inventory & Assurance Reports

According to Colorado Statute 12.02(2)(k), AUs annually submit a gifted programming **Adjusted Budget** report and an **Expended Budget** report. These reports are completed in DMS. AUs shall develop a collaborative process for determining budget allocations to support the AU's gifted program plan [12.02(2)(k)(i)]. This may include soliciting feedback or ensuring the budget process is transparent to all stakeholder groups. Annually, AUs evaluate funding expenditures to determine if adjustments need be made to better support gifted programming services and improvement efforts.

AUs also submit budget expenditure reports via the CDE data pipeline. During a CGER, CDE will generate a budget report of AU gifted expenditures from the data pipeline. This report will be compared to the expended budget the AU reported in DMS.

The CGER team will analyze the expended budget report compared to state categorical funds report and consider:

- Is there evidence budget determinations are collaborative and transparent?
- Have state funds been expended based on ECEA allowable uses?
- If the AU flows through funds to member districts, how are districts accountable for these funds?
- How does the AU supplement state funds to provide comprehensive gifted programming?

An AU shall keep an **inventory record** of all equipment purchased with state funds [12.08(2)]. The record must be maintained for the useful life of the equipment. A review of an AU's inventory list is part of the CGER process. The AU Coordinator/Director should upload the inventory list into DMS as part of the AU self-evaluation.

Annually, AU Gifted Coordinators/Directors complete an **Assurances Report** in DMS. The Office of Gifted Education collects these data for mandatory state reporting purposes. As part of the CGER process, the team reviews how information reported in the Assurances document corresponds to the CPP and evidence submitted by the AU in the Self-evaluation.

AU Self-evaluation

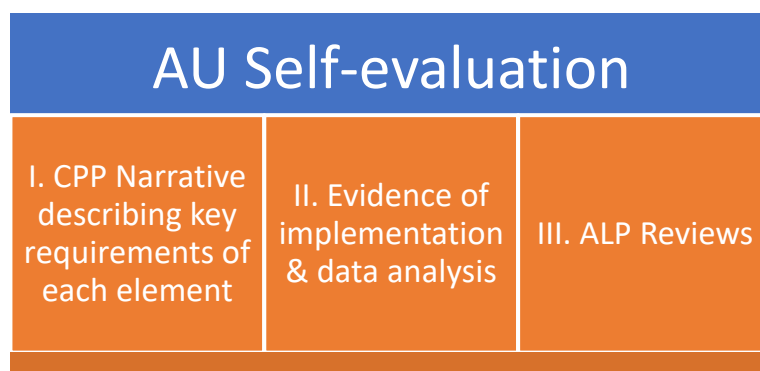
The AU completes its self-evaluation at least **eight weeks** prior to the date of the CGER site visit. It is extremely important that the AU follow this timeline in order to support the completion of the desk audit by the CGER team.

There are **three** requirements the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director or other designated personnel assigned by the AU shall complete for the AU Self-evaluation. The DMS Self-evaluation template, located under the "Monitoring" tab, has been designed as a tool to guide the appraisal of gifted program implementation based upon minimum provisions of ECEA Rules. The tool guides discussion about program strengths, progress, and areas for improvement or action toward distinction. The tool has proven to be effective when the AU collaborates among gifted education staff and other stakeholders important to the gifted program. The self-evaluation tool was created to:

- Self-check the implementation of comprehensive program plan elements;
- Show evidence of program implementation based on minimum provisions of ECEA Rules;
- Assist AUs in progress monitoring of the Comprehensive Program Plan goals; and
- Prepare for the Colorado-Gifted Education Review.

I. Comprehensive Program Plan

The AU's Comprehensive Program Plan (CPP), located under the "Profile" tab in DMS, includes a descriptive narrative for each of the ECEA programming elements. The narrative describes how the AU has implemented each of the key requirements of ECEA Rules. The beginning of the CGER process provides the AU an opportunity to examine their CPP and determine if any new information should be included since the document was last



published and posted on the CDE Office of Gifted Education website. If necessary, the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director reopens the CPP and revises or edits the CPP prior to the CGER Team’s Desk Audit. After the CPP has been revised, the AU must close the submission. The CGER Team will carefully review the CPP as part of the Desk Audit. Any time revisions are made to the CPP, the AU must request the new version be uploaded to the CDE Gifted Education website. This request is emailed to the Gifted Education Program Consultant.

II. Evidence of Implementation & Data Analysis

The AU Self-evaluation template indicates the key requirements for each programming element. For each of the key requirements, the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director will indicate where the specific evidence for that requirement is located. This might include a website link or a document uploaded by the AU.
(See Evidence of Implementation and Appendix A)

Additionally, the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director will provide a narrative data analysis for the AU’s demographics and student performance and growth within the self-evaluation template. Data from surveys and/or focus groups are compiled in a clear and concise report and uploaded into DMS.

III. ALP Self-review

As part of the self-evaluation process, the AU completes the ALP Self-review for each of the ALPs randomly selected by CDE based on the AU’s enrollment data.
(See ALP Self-review on page 9)

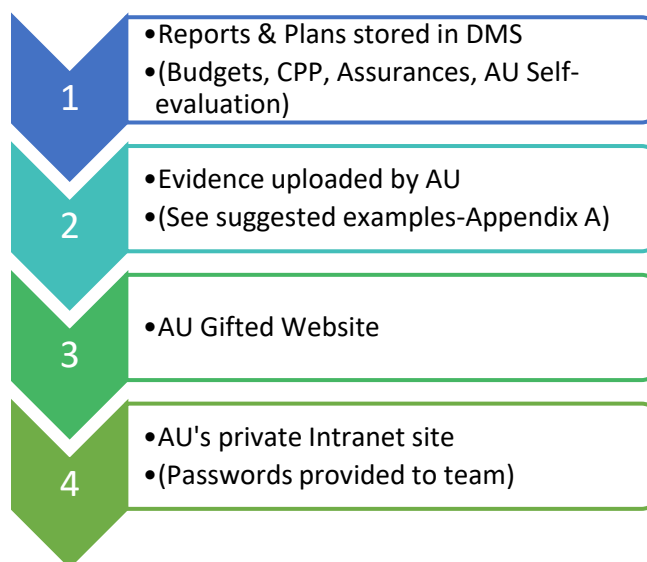
Evidence of Implementation

The AU is responsible for providing tangible evidence of **compliance** in all program elements. There may be four different types of evidence examined during the CGER process. Many of the required gifted education plans and reports that are part of the appraisal reside in DMS. These include the AU’s Comprehensive Program Plan, Budget Reports and Assurance Reports.

Documents the AU chooses to upload into DMS will be helpful in providing evidence for meeting conditions of ECEA Rules; however, there may be follow up evidence required to determine implementation of specific programming elements.

An AU’s gifted education website can provide a wide range of evidence. Although not required by Rule, many AUs find having a comprehensive website strongly supports their program plan and ensures timely and efficient communication with all stakeholders. Access to information is an essential condition of “procedures for parents, family, and student engagement and communication” (12.02(2)(a)).

Some AU’s use private Intranet sites as a location to house resources for educators in the AU. If the self-evaluation includes evidence from this electronic platform, it is essential the CGER team has access to the site during the CGER process.



The AU carefully selects the evidence that can demonstrate implementation of key requirements. The list in Appendix A serves only as examples of evidence that might be included in the self-evaluation. It is important to note, that it is not necessary to upload a copious number of documents. Most AUs find they can sufficiently demonstrate evidence of implementation through information available on their website and 5-8 documents such as survey results, inventory list, event flyers and comprehensive procedure manuals. When indicating the evidence resides on a website or within a handbook, it is important to specify **where** on the website the information is located or on what **page** specific information pertaining to the key requirement can be found in a handbook or manual.

(See Appendix A for examples of evidence for key requirements)

Desk Audit

A Desk Audit is conducted by the CGER team **eight weeks** prior to the scheduled site visit. The Desk Audit includes the team examining the following:

1. Reports/Plans stored DMS;
2. Completed AU Self-Evaluation;
3. Evidence provided by the AU; and
4. ALP Self-reviews.

The CGER team will have access to the AU's DMS site for the length of the CGER process. At the conclusion of the CGER these members will no longer be able to view the AU's DMS site. CGER members are full- or part-time employees of CDE or Gifted Education Resource Consultants (GERCs).

The team will conduct a Desk Audit in a collaborative fashion which includes thoroughly examining each element. The team reads the narrative provided in the CPP and then examines the corresponding evidence. It is important to be clear and concise on where the team can find the evidence. If the team goes to the location that was specified and cannot find evidence to support implementation, the team may conclude the area does not meet conditions of law. During the audit process, the team may determine there are additional questions to submit to the AU to provide a greater level of clarity. The CGER Lead will contact the Gifted Coordinator/Director to inform him/her of any unanswered questions the team may have. The AU Gifted Coordinator/Director may be requested to submit the additional information via email, in DMS or share information during the AU Overview Presentation.

Based on the team's initial findings after the Desk Audit, a determination will be made on the level of site visit that will be conducted. The CGER Lead will contact the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director via phone and email to notify the AU of the level of site visit. The email will be sent to the Gifted Coordinator/Director and copied to the superintendent/executive director of the AU. The AU will have **4 weeks** to prepare for the site visit.

Site Visits

There are **two** types of site visits that occur during a CGER based on information presented in the AU Self-evaluation. The CGER Lead will contact the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director **four-five weeks** prior to the visit to inform the AU of the type of visit that will occur.

A **Level I** CGER is designated when the AU provides sufficient data in the self-evaluation for the team to make informed decisions about each of the programming elements. This includes providing reports from input the AU collected from stakeholder surveys and/or focus groups. However, survey and/or focus group results must be valid and demonstrate a representative sample of the AU for a Level I visit to be considered. The Level I visit is scheduled for a half-day, reducing the time and funds required for CGER, as well as creating less disruption for the AU. Additionally, this level provides more quality time for technical assistance.

A **Level II** visit is designated when the team needs additional data and information to confirm or change the CGER team's initial findings. The team conducts a two-day visit and travels to three-six designated schools to interview administrators, teachers, students and parents.

Site Visits:

12.07 (4) Monitoring activities shall include:

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

LEVEL I: HALF-DAY VISIT

The CGER Lead, the GERC and perhaps an additional CGER team member will arrive for a **half-day** visit at a predetermined time on either Day One or Day Two of the scheduled C-GER dates. **No** school site visits or focus group interviews will be conducted. The AU Gifted Coordinator/Director will be given the opportunity to provide a Gifted Program Overview and share any additional information as requested by the CGER team. This is a time to celebrate the successes of the AU programming plan. The AU is encouraged to invite other administrative personnel to this session. The CGER Lead will share identified strengths of the program and provide recommendations for possible priority improvements for continued program development.

A Level I visit does **not** necessarily mean the AU meets the conditions of Law for each ECEA element; however, ample evidence was supplied in the AU Self-evaluation for the team to determine it is not necessary to conduct a comprehensive site visit to schools or meet with focus groups.

Sample Schedule for Level I:

½ Day CGER Visit	
9:00 – 10:00	AU Gifted Program Overview
10:00 – 10:30	Questions/comments from the CGER team
10:30 – 11:00	Exit Summary presented to the AU
11:00 – 11:30	Technical assistance from GERC

LEVEL II: TWO-DAY VISIT

A Level II site visit will be scheduled if the information provided in the AU Self-evaluation did not provide sufficient evidence that the AU meets requirements of ECEA Rules and/or additional information needs to be collected by the CGER team to determine implementation of programming elements. If the AU did not solicit input from stakeholders through surveys or focus groups, or data collected did not reflect a representative sample of the AU's population, a Level II visit is required. Survey completion of 40% or more of the stakeholder's population is considered to be valid and reliable data. If the survey data does not meet this target, a Level II visit may be warranted.

The CGER team will arrive the evening before Day One of the CGER. The team uses this time to collaborate and compile focus group interview questions. The AU **may** choose to have a parent focus group interview scheduled for an hour the evening before Day One. The AU Gifted Coordinator/Director should inform the CGER Lead it intends to hold this focus group the night before the CGER.

Planning for a Parent Focus Group

Parents of gifted students represent one of the stakeholder groups the CGER team will interview during a Level II visit. This can occur during a separate meeting time at a centralized AU location either the night before the CGER or during Day One. If travel distances are a possible barrier, particularly in the case of a BOCES, a video conference can be set up with parents. If a parent focus group is held the night before Day One, schedule one hour for the session that concludes by 7:00 p.m. If a parent/advocacy group is held on Day One, the session should conclude by 4:00 p.m. To ensure all parents have an opportunity to share, it is best to limit group size to 7-10 participants per room. Three CGER team members will conduct the interviews, so schedule no more than three rooms of parents. School or district personnel should not attend the parent focus group session(s) to encourage open communication among parents. Parents selected to participate in this interview should represent the AU's gifted population in terms of grades, school levels and demographics.



Another option is for the CGER team to interview parents at each school site. School visits are only 60-75 minutes in length, and the team must allow time to interview the building administrator, students and teachers. Therefore, between 4-7 parents is an appropriate group size, and let them know the team will only have 15-20 minutes for dialogue.

Day One of the Site Visit

On Day One of the CGER, the day will begin at an AU central location where the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director will provide a **Gifted Program Overview**. The CGER team will then conduct focus group interviews at specific schools selected by CDE. The team requests that focus group interviews conclude by **4:00 p.m. on Day One**. It is not necessary for the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director or other school personnel to accompany the team on school visits.



School Site Visits

School site visits provide the team with evidence of program elements and verification of the self-evaluation. Schools are chosen by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) **4-5 weeks** prior to the site visit. All interviews are confidential. No names or groups are identified in the CGER report. Ensure all participants at the site know the time of the visit and are familiar with the purpose of the visit. Reserve a location at each site where the CGER team can privately visit with the participants. Communicate with a contact person at each site who can meet team members and direct them to where they will be meeting with focus groups. It is helpful to ask participants to wear name tags. School visits should be 60-75 minutes in length with time allocated for the team to travel to the next site location. To ensure anonymity and provide a safe environment for candid feedback, school employees are asked not to sit in on focus groups unless they are actual members of that group.

The AU Gifted Coordinator/Director will coordinate and schedule site visits. **The team will not directly observe classes or gifted programs;** however, the team would like to meet with the school's administrator and a selection of teachers and gifted students during the **one-hour** visit. If the team will be meeting with parents, schedule seventy-five minutes for the visit. Please ensure the school obtains parent permission for the team to visit with students. Advise the CGER team of the type of credentials they will need for security purposes at each school.

At the school, the team will meet in a private conference room to conduct focus group interviews with:

- Gifted Students;
- General Education and Gifted Education Teachers;
- Administrators; and
- Parents (if a separate parent focus group time is not scheduled).

See Appendix A for information on Focus Group Interviews

Day Two of the Site Visit

The CGER team will continue to debrief privately at their hotel as they prepare for the AU's Exit Summary and begin writing the CGER Report. The AU Gifted Coordinator/Director will schedule a location for the CGER team to provide the Exit Summary. The room should include a computer projector for the CGER Lead to use for a brief PowerPoint presentation. In most cases, the Exit Summary will be presented at 11:00 a.m. The AU Gifted Coordinator/Director is encouraged to invite key AU leaders to the summary presentation.

Level II Sample Schedule

Evening Prior to Day One:	
5:00 – 6:00 p.m. or 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Parent Focus Group (The team requests to meet no later than 7:00 p.m.)
Day One:	
8:30 – 9:30	AU Gifted Program Overview
9:30 – 10:00	Questions from the C-GER Team
10:30 – 11:30	Team 1 visits School 1 Team 2 visits School 2
11:30 – 12:30	Lunch Break (The AU is not responsible for providing the team with lunch)
12:45 – 1:45	Team 1 visits School 3 Team 2 visits School 4
2:15 – 3:15	Team 1 visits School 5 Team 2 visits with Parent Focus Group (if not done the night before) Team 2 visits with School 6 if no Parent Focus Group
Day Two:	
8:00 – 11:00	C-GER Team debriefs privately
11:30 – 12:00	Exit Summary presented to the AU

AU Overview Presentation

During the site visit for both levels, the AU will provide an Overview Presentation. This presentation should **not** repeat information already presented in the AU Self-evaluation. Instead, this is a time to give an individualized touch to the CGER process in order for the team to get to know the culture and climate of the AU. The team has thoroughly reviewed the AU's program plan via the Desk Audit so this is a time to get to know the AU personally. It is an opportunity for the AU to share the celebrations and strengths of the program plan. It is a time to share any challenges and the targeted action steps the AU is taking to address any areas of concern. Additionally, it is a time to respond to any of the questions the CGER Lead might have requested the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director review during the site visit.

The overview is presented by the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director and/or any other district/AU personnel deemed appropriate. The presentation is delivered to the CGER team, and it is not appropriate for other stakeholder groups, such as parents and/or students, to attend. While the AU may wish to share successful programming options offered to gifted students, it is not necessary to ask students to present this information during the overview. The team does not want to cause a disruption to student learning.

The AU will prepare a 45-60 minute presentation to provide the team with the following information:

- Culture and climate of the district/AU (demographics, celebrations, challenges, etc.); and
- Progress since last CGER.
- Status of gifted education, to include:
 - Analysis of gifted identification demographics;

- Analysis of gifted student performance and growth data; and
 - Status on progress towards improvement targets.
- For a Level II visit:
 - The schedule for the day and the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director contact information for additional questions that may arise; and
 - Specific requests the AU would like the team to focus on during the visits.

Please allow **30 minutes** after your presentation for the team to ask any clarifying questions. Contact your GERC for a sample of the AU Overview Presentation format.

Exit Summary

At the end of the site visit, the CGER Lead will provide an **Exit Summary** to the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director and other invited personnel. Invitations to the AU's superintendent/executive director, members of the school board and other key administrators are strongly encouraged. Based on the thorough and comprehensive analysis of the evidence examined during the Desk Audit and during focus group interviews for a Level II visit, the team lead provides their preliminary findings and identifies one to three priorities for continuous improvement or that require corrective action. The GERC, who will attend in person or via video conferencing, listens to the results of the CGER to determine the tiered level of technical assistances that will be offered to the AU upon the conclusion of the CGER process. The Exit Summary does not represent all components, information and data that will be included in the Final Report.

The AU Gifted Coordinator/Director will schedule a location for the CGER team to provide the Exit Summary. The room should include a computer projector for the CGER Lead to use for a brief PowerPoint presentation. The summary is typically delivered at 11:00 or 11:30 a.m. on day one for a Level I or day two for a Level II.

Final CGER Report

After the site visit, the CGER team continues their collaborations to complete the CGER Report. The report is submitted to the Director of Gifted Education and Executive Director of Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU) who will finalize and approve the report. CDE will send the AU a hard copy of the official, signed report 6-8 weeks after the CGER. Single AU superintendents will receive a hard copy of the report. For multi-district AU's, every superintendent and the BOCES executive director will receive a hard copy. Several days after the hard copy is mailed, the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director and GERC will receive an electronic copy. The report will also be uploaded by CDE into the AU's DMS site. The AU may choose how to share the report with their stakeholders.

The CGER Report will include the following information:

- Executive Summary:
 - Progress since last CGER;
 - Summary of AU's programming strengths; and
 - One-three priority improvement targets to meet condition of law, or for AU's meeting compliance of all programming elements, recommendations for continuous program development.

- For each programming element:
 - Check boxes will be marked for areas of compliance and not marked for areas on non-compliance;
 - An indicator the element MEETS or DOES NOT MEET conditions of Law;
 - A description of the major findings and observations;
 - Programming strengths;
 - To meet conditions of law, corrective action needed; or
 - Recommendations for continuous development if an element meets conditions of law.
- Conclusion:
 - Summary of elements compliant or non-compliant; and
 - Next steps for completing an Improvement Timeline if required.

Improvement Timeline

Those AUs that are found to have elements not meeting condition of law in any of the twelve-thirteen program elements **must** complete an Improvement Timeline in DMS within six weeks of receiving the CGER Report. If the AU did not have any elements of non-compliance, it is not necessary to complete a timeline.

Year One of Improvement Timeline

The AU will have **one year** to successfully complete the corrective actions designated in the CGER Report to ensure the element meets condition of law. The GERC will communicate with the AU at minimum two times during the year to offer technical assistance. The AU will record progress monitoring updates within the Improvement Timeline **four** and **eight** months after the initial submission. At the end of the year, the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director and GERC will review the Improvement Timeline and evidence to demonstrate the element meets condition of law. The GERC will contact CDE to notify the Director of Gifted Education the AU has successfully completed their Improvement Timeline. A letter of commendation will be sent to the AU superintendent(s) and BOCES executive director. If the AU had any secondary elements of focus, a new timeline for year two will be submitted in DMS.

At the end of year one, if the AU and GERC determine progress has been made on the improvements but the objective has not successfully been attained, the AU will create a Year Two Improvement Timeline in DMS. A letter from CDE will be sent to the AU superintendent(s) and BOCES executive director indicating immediate attention is required to address non-compliance of law.

Year Two of Improvement Timeline

When the AU successfully completes the priority improvement areas but still has additional elements of non-compliance a new timeline will be created in the DMS to address the additional elements not meeting conditions of law. CDE will send a letter to the superintendent(s) indicating the new timeline status. At the end of year two, the AU and GERC will determine if an additional Improvement Timeline will be required for year three corrections.

Year Three of Improvement

Some AUs may have elements that are part of a three-year cycle for improvement.

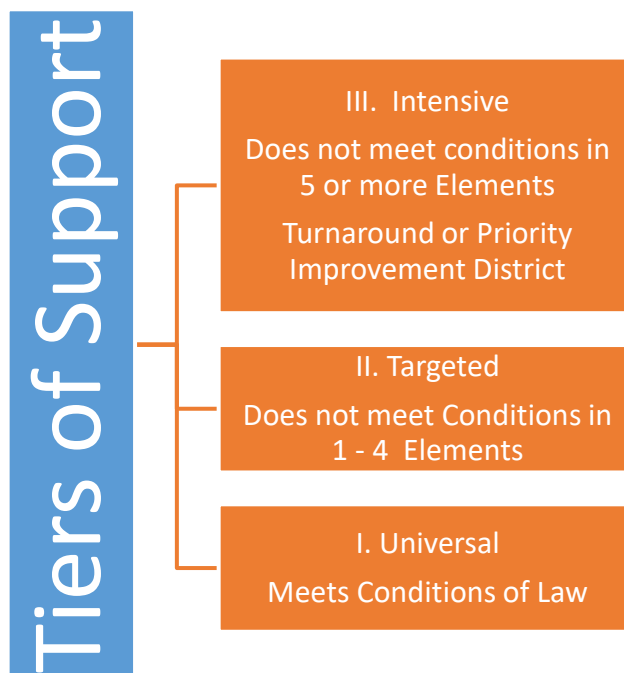
Components of an Improvement Timeline

Measurable Objective:	What is/are the objective(s) to accomplish in one year or less
Actions:	What are the steps that will be put into place as a means of improvement
Resources:	What data, materials, research, funds, people, etc. will be needed
Personnel Responsible:	Who will facilitate or is responsible for change
Evidence of Change:	How will change be measured
GERC Approval	GERC reviews evidence and approves timeline completion

Layered Continuum of Supports

Gifted education is supported in the state through eleven (11) regional support systems. Gifted Education Regional Consultants (GERCs) serve as leaders and facilitators of technical assistance and professional development for successful implementation of the AU's program plan and districts' Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) Gifted Education Addendums.

Throughout the year, GERCs provide a layered continuum of supports to AUs that includes facilitation of network meetings and professional development opportunities for all AUs as well as targeted or intensive technical assistance. Additionally, GERCs are available upon request for site visits that support AU program plans and UIP Addendums. GERCs collaborate on the planning and delivery of state gifted education director meetings, conduct online workshops and participate in CGERs throughout Colorado.



Tier I - Universal

An AU at Tier I meets conditions of ECEA Rules for all elements of the program plan. At the conclusion of the CGER, the review team will identify one or two areas the AU may choose to focus on during the next CGER cycle for continuous improvement of gifted programming. The AU does **not** have to submit an **Improvement Timeline** to CDE upon receipt of the final CGER report. The GERC is available to provide any level of support or guidance the AU might request. The CDE Office of Gifted Education includes commendations to the AU Superintendent, lead district Superintendent or BOCES Executive Director for the AU's compliance status in the cover letter that accompanies the CGER report.

Tier II - Targeted

An AU at Tier II does not meet conditions of ECEA rules in 1 – 4 elements based on the findings during the CGER process. The GERC will provide targeted support to the AU. **If an AU does not meet conditions of law for gifted identification, the AU moves to a Tier III level of support**, regardless of the number of elements on non-compliance.

Tier III

Tier III offers a more in-depth level of support for those AUs not meeting the conditions of ECEA Rules in more than 5 ECEA elements. AUs not meeting conditions of law in the area of identification will be placed at this level. AUs must meet these conditions for the rule of portability to apply.

Turnaround or Priority Improvement Status

Districts on Turnaround or Priority Improvement status will receive Tier III support, regardless of CGER results. The GERC will communicate monthly with the AU to determine how gifted education is being addressed within the district's UIP Addendum targets, improvement strategies and action timeline. This information will be shared with CDE for fall, winter and spring UIP reviews. Turnaround or Priority Improvement status districts may also request technical assistance and coaching meetings with the GERC.

Through the Lens of Continuous Improvement

Approaching a CGER through the lens of continuous improvement provides the AU an opportunity to self-evaluate their programming procedures and practices. Confirming the AU's gifted program plan supports gifted student achievement and growth is the ultimate goal of the process. AUs report their CGER was invaluable in terms of receiving acknowledgement and commendations on their progress as well as providing them with helpful technical assistance to determine next steps for continued program development. Throughout your CGER process, do not hesitate to contact your GERC for guidance or support.

Appendix A: AU Self-evaluation Evidence

Listed below are **examples** of possible evidence the AU may consider defining or uploading in the Self-evaluation template for the key requirements based on ECEA Rules. Evidence can be a process or procedure described in a handbook that is accessible to specific stakeholder groups or information located on the district's website in terms of links or available documents. It is important to indicate the exact page number in a handbook or the location on a website where evidence can be found. Include the specific website link, tab and document name. AUs find it helpful to have key gifted program documents posted on their website for easy access to the CGER team and public. There will be a **limited** number of documents that will be uploaded by the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director into DMS such as survey/focus group results, UIP Gifted Addendum, an inventory list or event flyers.

Communication & Engagement	
Key Requirements	Examples of Evidence
Parent involvement in ID process beyond a referral	Parent handbook, ID brochure, website, ID form
Parenting events/opportunities	Event flyers, website, parent handbook, event feedback surveys
Progress Reporting aligned to ALP goals	Form, parent handbook, sample student report
Programming to match strengths and challenges	Parent/student handbook, website, course brochure, ALP
Information on concurrent enrollment for gifted students	Parent/student handbook, website, course brochure
Involvement with college and career planning	College night event flyer, website, planning forms, ALP
Communication in primary languages	Example of documents in other languages or website translation capabilities
Participate in school community	Parent/student handbook, website links, event flyers

Definition	
Key Requirements	Examples of Evidence
Written definition	Website, handbooks, CPP
Definition serves as basis for implementation of program plan	Website, handbooks, CPP

Identification	
Key Requirements	Examples of Evidence
Description of assessment process	Website, handbook, description of RTI or MTSS process, CPP
Assessment process that recognizes a student's exceptional abilities	Data analysis in self-evaluation, survey/focus group data, CPP
Efforts to identify students of all populations	Universal screening, data analysis, gifted student demographic analysis
Referrals from a variety of sources	Website, referral examples, survey/focus group data
A screening procedure	Website, handbook
Timeline of no more than 30 school days	Website, handbook
Assessments that align with identification in all domains of giftedness and in underrepresented populations	Website, handbook, ID procedures

Body of evidence that includes qualitative and quantitative data	Website, handbook, ID procedures/forms, ALP Self-review
Review team procedure with one member trained in gifted education	Website, handbook, ID procedures/forms
Determination letter for parents	Letter, handbook
Communication procedure by which parents are made aware of the identification assessment and ALP development	Website, handbook, ID determination letter, survey/focus group data
Criteria used for identification to ensure portability	Website, handbook, ID procedures/forms, survey/focus group data, CPP
Not meeting criteria on a single assessment shall not prevent further data collection	Website, handbook, ID procedures/forms, survey/focus group data
Review of new student's ALP within 45 school days of start date	Website, handbook, ID procedures/forms
Communication with parent within 60 days of how new AU will meet the needs of the student	Website, handbook, ID procedures/forms, letter, survey/focus group data

ALP	
Key Requirements	Examples of Evidence
ALP is developed for every gifted student	Data analysis reported in self-evaluation
ALP is considered for programming	Website, handbook, survey/focus group data
If ALP is blended into ICAP, gifted achievement and affective goals are included	ICAP example, handbook, survey/focus group data
Transition process when student moves to next school level	Website, handbook, survey/focus group data
Parents, students and classroom teachers should be familiar with the ALP goals	Survey/focus group data
A method to develop student awareness and active participation in the ALP process	Website, handbook, letters, survey/focus group data
ALP progress reporting timeline	Website, handbook, ALP document
All other key requirements are indicated by the ALP self-review	ALP Self-review

Programming	
Key Requirements	Examples of Evidence
Program plan describes the programming components	DMS Annual Profile Review Report
Programming alignment to student's assessment data and ALP goals	Website, handbook, ALP document, survey/focus group data, acceleration procedures
Support in differentiated instruction and methods	Survey/focus group data, professional development provided
Programming at all grade levels that is diverse and matches gifted student's academic and affective needs	Website, handbook, ALP document, survey/focus group data, acceleration procedures
Pre-collegiate, advanced placement, concurrent enrollment and/or post-secondary options	Website, handbook, ALP document, survey/focus group data
Problem solving process when a gifted student is underachieving	Website, handbook, RTI or MTSS process

Evaluation and Accountability	
Key Requirements	Examples of Evidence
Unified improvement plan addendum	UIP uploaded by Coordinator/Director
Method by which a student's affective growth is monitored and measured	Data analysis reported in self-evaluation, ALP Self-review
Methods for ensuring that gifted student performance are consistent with state accreditation	UIP, data analysis
Self-evaluation includes periodic feedback and review from stakeholders	Survey/focus group data
Methods by which stakeholders are informed about program evaluation	Website, letter, email, handbook

Personnel	
Key Requirements	Examples of Evidence
Describe personnel who provide instruction, counseling, coordination and other programming for gifted students	CPP, AU personnel report
Personnel shall be knowledgeable in the characteristics, differentiated instructional methods and competencies in the special education of gifted students	AU personnel report for qualified personnel
Designated person within the AU responsible for program management	CPP, AU personnel report
Core academic area teachers meet federal requirements	CPP, AU personnel report
Paraprofessionals are not funded with state gifted grant funds	Budget reports, CPP, Human Resources employment report
Professional development on needs of gifted students	List and/or flyers for gifted education professional development options, compiled Feedback/surveys from PD event

Budget	
Key Requirement	Examples of Evidence
Proposed and Expended Budget Reports	Budget reports in DMS

Reports	
Key Requirements	Examples of Evidence
Budget and identification demographic reports	Located in DMS
Qualified personnel by school level, district resource personnel and central administration	CPP, AU personnel report
Types of programming strategies utilized	Website, handbook, Annual Profile Report, CPP
Methods and tools used in accountability to monitor gifted achievement and growth	UIP, data analysis

Record Keeping	
Key Requirements	Examples of Evidence
Financial records are kept in accordance with principles of governmental accounting	Budgets in DMS and reported via data pipeline

An inventory is maintained of all equipment for which funds were received	Inventory list uploaded into DMS, budget
ALP documents are part of the student's cumulative education record	Website, handbook, AU board policy
FERPA laws are followed for student's education records	Website, handbook, AU board policy
Education records are maintained, retained and destroyed consistent with the ongoing system of student record keeping established in the AU	Website, handbook, AU board policy, CPP

Procedures for Disagreements	
Key Requirements	Examples of Evidence
Procedures for resolving disagreements with parents/guardians, or students	Website, handbook, board policy, CPP
Procedures are posted for access to all stakeholders	Website, handbook

Monitoring	
Key Requirements	Examples of Evidence
AU complies with all applicable state and federal laws	Previous CGER Report, CPP
AU monitors annual and comprehensive plans and enrollment data	Data analysis in self-evaluation
AU participates in follow-up activities to correct areas of non-compliance	Improvement Timeline completion, previous CGER report

Early Access (If applicable)	
Key Requirements	Examples of Evidence
AU communicates information about the criteria and process	Website, brochures, letters, emails, CPP
Provides professional development to educators	Professional development opportunities
Method for collaboration among preschool, general and gifted education personnel and parents	Handbook, meeting dates
Description of fee charged	Website, handbook
Website, handbook	Website, handbook
An ALP developed by September 30	Website, handbook
Methods of communication with the student about school success	Handbook, ALP
Process to follow required timelines	Website, handbook
Early access determination team including key personnel	Handbook
Evaluation steps that includes ECEA requirements	Website, handbook

Appendix B

Preparing for Focus Groups and Interviews

Purpose and coordination

As part of the AU's **program evaluation**, information from stakeholder groups is solicited through the use of a survey or facilitating stakeholder focus groups. Stakeholders for gifted program evaluation include: parents, gifted students, teachers and district/school administrators. If the AU chooses to not conduct a survey, valuable input from stakeholders on the status of gifted education may be obtained by conducting focus group discussions. A **focus group** could be defined as a group (7-10 people) of interacting individuals having some common interest or characteristics, brought together by a moderator, who uses the group and its interaction as a way to gain information about a specific or focused issue. The Gifted Coordinator/Director, in conjunction with AU and school leadership, invites and schedules stakeholders for their participation in this information gathering process. Focus group discussions provide an opportunity for the AU to verify evidence of gifted program elements from a variety of stakeholders as seen through a specific lens.

If the AU does not conduct a survey, the survey does not provide reliable or valid participation data, or the AU does not solicit and report input from stakeholder focus groups, a **Level II** CGER visit will be scheduled. If a Level II CGER will be conducted, review the planning procedures on page 27.

The following guidance is provided for the AU to develop and plan for focus group interviews as a critical component of an AU's program evaluation.

Steps for the AU to conduct focus group interviews:

- Invite participants who include a wide array of perspectives and viewpoints. While it might be tempting to identify only those stakeholders who are active and strong supporters of the AU gifted program, it does not maximize the insights and richness of the findings that can emerge from these discussions that ultimately benefit the AU's improvement efforts.
- Stakeholders should collectively represent the following-
 - The AU's broader community: *socio-economic levels, ethnicity, regions served by the AU, etc.;*
 - Provide a range of AU viewpoints and perspectives: *strong, active supporters, critics, those who are less involved, etc.;*
 - Represent all schooling levels in the Administrative Unit: *pre-K to career/technical, if applicable;*
 - Represent all major positions in the AU: *leadership, administrative, teaching, guidance, and support;*
 - Include individuals who are knowledgeable of the AU's efforts in Gifted Education; and
 - Include individuals who can discuss the strengths and challenges the Administrative Unit wishes the team to understand.
- Provide a comfortable non-threatening setting for participants in the focus group or interview. You may consider providing bottled water and light snacks to heighten the comfort level of participants.
- Provide nametags for participants.
- A set of prepared questions have been developed to support valid and reliable gifted program evaluation. These can be found at the end of this document. The AU Gifted Coordinator/Director will prepare questions to ask that include information needed for the CGER review.
- Begin the focus group or interview by making introductions, establish the purpose and set ground rules such as the following:

- No right or wrong answer – only different points of view;
 - Only one person speaks at a time;
 - Everyone participates;
 - We will be taking notes of your responses;
 - Your names will not appear in our report; and
 - Listen respectfully to one another.
- Ask the first question and use pauses and probes to seek clarity or gather additional information.
- Keep detailed notes. It is helpful to have a co-facilitator particularly for a focus group who can provide the note taking while the facilitator conducts the session.
- Control reactions to responses by avoiding head nodding, facial expressions or verbal responses.
- Use subtle control of the group by limiting the dominant talkers and encouraging the shy participants.
- At the end of the session summarize and confirm the purpose, ask if there is any additional information to be shared and thank participants for their time and input.

Analyzing focus group or interview data

Information obtained from the focus group interviews will be reported in the AU Self-evaluation. The following guidelines are helpful as the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director analyzes the collected data and determines how the data are reported.

- As soon as possible after the focus group or interview summarize the results with your co-facilitator. Look for key points, terms, descriptions, themes, interpretations and big ideas. Use quotes whenever possible to illustrate these key concepts.
- Consider the following in your analysis:
 - Think about actual words used by participants and the meaning of those words. Do the different words used reflect the same ideas and themes or do they contradict one another?
 - Was there a triggering stimulus in a question that caused participants to react in a given way – either verbally or non-verbally? Consider the tone and intensity of an oral comment.
 - Participants will sometimes change their view or reverse their position after listening to responses from others. When a shift occurs, trace the flow of the conversation to determine clues of what might explain the change.
 - Some questions elicit more discussion than others (extensiveness). But, some comments are made more often throughout the session (frequency). Make note of questions or topics that had an extensive level of response and topics, ideas or opinions that occurred frequently during the session. Also, consider what wasn't said or didn't receive any attention.
 - Occasionally, participants talk about a topic with special intensity or depth of feeling. They may use specific words or terms to connote intensity. With session notes alone, intensity is often difficult to spot. It is important during the recording of the session the note-taker denote a tone of voice, gestures used and words that received a greater level of emphasis.
 - Responses that are specific and based on experience should be given more weight than those that are vague, based on hearsay or impersonal. Did the participant support a response by providing a specific detail or example?
 - During the final analysis of the focus group data, formulate the "big idea." Step-back from the specific questions and detailed responses and generalize the findings into a central, over-arching theme(s).
- Summarize your focus group results in a concise manner that best demonstrates the input from these groups for your AU program evaluation. Upload these compiled results into the DMS.

Level II Focus Group & Interview Planning

For a **Level II CGER** the focus groups will be conducted by the CGER team. In order to facilitate a smooth focus group and interview process, the following guidelines are designed to assist the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director in organizing the team's site visits.

- Two weeks prior to the CGER site visit the CGER Team Lead will contact the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director about what type of focus groups the team will be conducting during the site visit and the schools that will be visited. The team will conduct focus groups and interviews. **Interviews** are typically more personal with questions being asked of a few participants (2-4) or an individual.
- Together, the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director and the CGER Lead will determine if a separate parent focus group will be held the night before the CGER site visit. Typically, when the CGER team conducts school site visits, the team interviews the building administrator overseeing gifted education, a representative selection of gifted students, a variety of teachers and parents if an evening parent focus group was not scheduled.
- The AU Gifted Coordinator/Director should contact the school to inform the principal the CGER team will be conducting focus groups and interviews. The Gifted Coordinator/Director and/or school personnel will begin by inviting stakeholders to be interviewed as soon as the visit schedule has been finalized (approximately two weeks prior to the visit). A sample focus group invitation letter is provided on the next page. While it might be tempting to identify only those stakeholders who are active and strong supporters of the AU gifted program, it does not maximize the insights and richness of the findings that can emerge from these discussions that ultimately benefit the AU's improvement efforts.
- Obtain parent permission for the team to interview students.
- Provide a comfortable, non-threatening setting for participants in the focus group or interview. You may consider providing bottled water and light snacks to heighten the comfort level of participants. Ensure the front office staff is aware of the visit and can show the team to the designated location.
- Provide nametags for participants.
- For the parent and school focus groups or interviews, the CGER team will meet with those groups individually and will not need AU leadership to be present during the focus group or interview time.
- The AU Gifted Coordinator/Director provides maps/directions to all site visit locations to the team the morning of Day 1. It is also helpful to provide suggestions for where the team may stop for lunch. All focus groups should conclude by 4:00 p.m. on Day 1. Consider travel time between locations when developing the schedule. If a parent group is held the night before the CGER, this group should conclude by 7:00 p.m. Schedule one hour for a parent focus group.
- School site visits are **60-75 minutes** in length. The team does not visit or observe classroom or gifted programs. A typical focus group schedule includes:
 - School administrator interview: 10 minutes
 - Gifted students: 20 minutes
 - Teachers: 20 minutes
 - Parents (if necessary): 20 minutes
- After stakeholders accept the invitation to participate in a focus group/interview, the AU sends a brief note to confirm the date, time, and location of the meeting. The note should emphasize the importance of being on time. The note should repeat some of the information from the invitation letter that highlights the purpose and activities of the team.
- Contact the GERC for questions pertaining to organizing site visits and focus groups.

Sample Invitation to Potential Focus Group/Interview Participants

Dear *<insert name>*,

You are cordially invited to participate in *<insert name of Administrative Unit>*'s upcoming Gifted Education Review by participating in a stakeholder focus group/interview.

<insert name of Administrative Unit>'s Gifted Education Review will take place *<insert dates>*. The review is led by a team of professionals from around the state. During the review, the Review Team interviews a wide range of district and school level stakeholders, examines evidence/artifacts, conducts school visits, and engages in professional deliberations to determine the Administrative Unit's compliance with state statutes as well as offering collaborative support and commendations for successful programming practices. The team shares its findings via a report. The Administrative Unit uses the findings from the team to further its continuous improvement efforts.

On *<insert day>*, the Gifted Education Review Team will be conducting focus groups/interviews with stakeholder groups. We would like the team to interview you as part of the *<insert interview group>* at *<insert time>* in *<insert location>*. The focus group/interview will last approximately *<insert allotted time for interview>* minutes. We believe that you have experience, knowledge, and insights that would enhance the team's understanding of our Administrative Unit.

Please reply to this invitation by *<insert date>*. I hope you can participate in this exciting and valuable process.

Sincerely,

<Gifted Education Director and/or Superintendent>

Focus Group Questions for Program Evaluation

Element	Parent	Student	Teacher	Administrator
Identification	<p>How did you become aware of the gifted program in your district?</p> <p>Describe the process for identifying your child as a gifted learner?</p> <p>What criteria were used?</p> <p>How were you part of the process?</p>	<p>How and when were you identified as a gifted learner?</p> <p>In what areas are you identified?</p>	<p>What is the process and criteria for gifted identification in your district/school?</p> <p>In what areas are students identified?</p>	<p>What is the process and criteria for gifted identification in your district/school?</p> <p>How are teachers and parents part of this process?</p>
ALP	<p>How have you been involved in the goal setting and monitoring of your student's Advanced Learning Plan (ALP)?</p> <p>What are your child's current goals?</p> <p>How do these goals align to your child's strength areas?</p>	<p>How were you part of the development of your ALP?</p> <p>What are your current ALP goals?</p> <p>How do you monitor your goal progress during the year?</p>	<p>How are you a part of the ALP development for your gifted students?</p> <p>How are goals created?</p> <p>What is the process for monitoring goal progress throughout the year?</p>	<p>Describe the development of the ALP?</p> <p>Who is primarily responsible for the ALPs?</p> <p>Are gifted students seen as a shared responsibility within the school?</p>
Programming	<p>Describe the type of programming options your child receives?</p> <p>How is programming matched to your child's strengths and/or interests?</p> <p>Does your child feel challenged?</p>	<p>Describe the different types of classes, activities, or projects made available to you as a result of your gifted identification.</p> <p>Do you feel challenged?</p> <p>Do the opportunities match your strength areas and interests?</p>	<p>Describe the type of programming provided to gifted students within the school/district?</p> <p>How are programming options aligned to a student's strength and interest areas?</p> <p>How are data used to develop programming options?</p>	<p>Describe the type of programming provided to gifted students within the school/district?</p> <p>How are programming options aligned to a student's strength and interest areas?</p> <p>How are data used to develop programming options?</p>

Element	Parent	Student	Teacher	Administrator
Communication	<p>How does the school/district communicate with you about your child's gifted programming and ALP and progress throughout the year? Describe what type of opportunities are available to support parents of gifted students.</p> <p>What resources are available to parents to learn more about gifted education?</p>	<p>How do you learn about different gifted opportunities available to you? How does the school communicate with you about your ALP development? If you have a question or concern about your gifted programming, do you know who to talk to in your school?</p>	<p>How do you communicate with parents about their child's progress throughout the year? How do you receive information about your district's gifted programming? What type of professional development is available to support teachers' understanding of gifted education? What resources are available to teachers to learn more about gifted education?</p>	<p>How do you communicate with parents, students and teachers about gifted programming? How does the district communicate with you about gifted education? What resources are available to administrators, teachers and parents to learn more about gifted education?</p>
Evaluation, Accountability & Budget	<p>What is the process used in your district to evaluate your gifted program? How can parents provide input in the evaluation process? In what ways are you involved in the Gifted budget process or know where to find information about the gifted budget?</p>	<p>How do you monitor your achievement and growth? How can you measure your success? Describe how you give input on your learning goals and how your education plan is meeting your gifted needs.</p>	<p>What is the process used in your district to evaluate the gifted program? How are teachers part of that process? How do you know a gifted student is achieving and growing?</p>	<p>What is the process that your school uses to self-evaluate your Gifted Program? How do you monitor student growth and achievement? In what ways are you involved with the setting of GT priorities for the budget?</p>