



COLORADO
Department of Education

Colorado Gifted Education Review Handbook

Office of Gifted Education

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Office of Gifted Education
1560 Broadway, Suite 1100
Denver, Colorado
303-866-6694
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt>



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Colorado Gifted Education Review (CGER)

Guidance Handbook for Administrative Unit Gifted Education Coordinator/Director

Introduction

This handbook, created by the Office of Gifted Education at the Colorado Department of Education, provides guidance for the gifted education coordinator/director in an Administrative Unit when preparing for the CGER.

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 AUs with Early Access, whose 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: single 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, the CGER aligns with ECEA Rules for the Administration of Gifted Education under Section 12.07. The structure of the monitoring process for a multi-district AU or BOCES includes a few additional features specifically described in Appendix B.

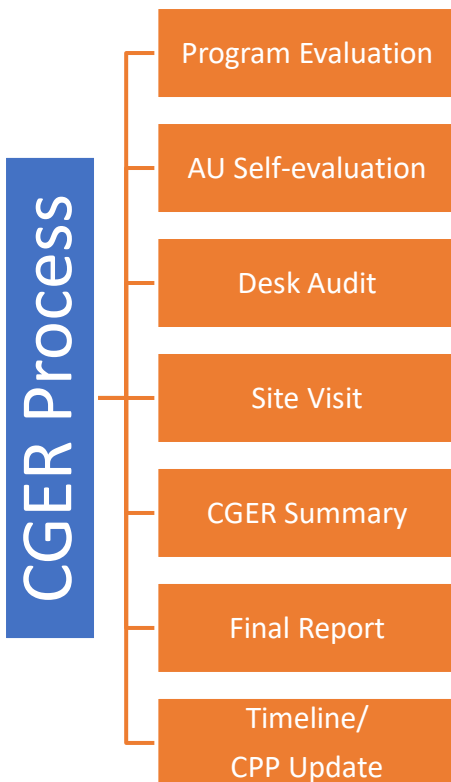
The **Gifted Education Coordinator/Director** is defined as the person the AU has assigned to facilitate gifted programming according to the ECEA Rules. In some cases, this role may be a shared responsibility; therefore, the AU will determine the personnel responsible for fulfilling the requirements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

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is committed to supporting AUs in improving outcomes for identified gifted students through technical assistance 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). This partnership increases the capacity of educators and educational systems to identify, program and be accountable for gifted learner achievement and growth.



Components of a CGER

The seven components of the CGER process guide AUs in evaluating their gifted program according to each of the primary elements of ECEA Rules. The information obtained from the review will identify priority improvements related to compliance and continued program growth and development. The implementation of the key requirements outlined in ECEA Rules ensures 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 reviews 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 three-four experts in gifted education to complete a **Desk Audit** of the AU's self-evaluation and evidence of implementation to learn about the AU's gifted program. The Gifted Education Regional Consultant (GERC) provides guidance on completing the self-evaluation and preparing for the site visit.

Upon completion of the desk audit, the CGER 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*. Each site visit includes an **AU**

Overview Presentation, collaborative discussions and for a Level II CGER, **focus group interviews**.

At the conclusion of the Site Visit, the CGER Lead will share brief highlights of initial observations in a **CGER Summary**.

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

Based on the findings of the CGER, the AU may be required to complete an **Improvement Timeline**. The timeline addresses the priority improvement targets identified in the final 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 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.

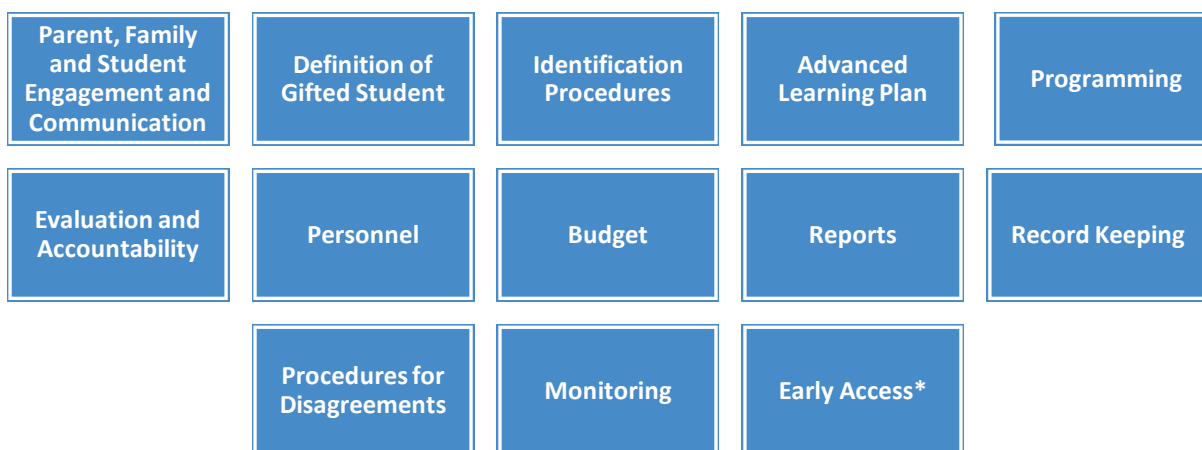
2220-R-12.00: Gifted and Talented Programming

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 the key requirements under each ECEA element. To meet conditions of law, all schools and all member districts in a BOCES or multi-district AU shall implement the AU's Gifted Program Plan. The AU is responsible to ensure that its schools and member districts are implementing the elements of ECEA. If gifted program data and/or the AU's CGER Self-evaluation indicate a specific school or member district within the AU consistently does not identify nor program for gifted students, the AU may be found in non-compliance of specific ECEA elements. The strengths of the AU and member districts in BOCES will be noted in the report, however the AU in total is out of compliance in one or more elements. The CGER Team works collaboratively with the AU to determine how the CGER process can address a school or district's non-compliance of ECEA Rules and how the AU would like to frame this in the CGER Final Report.

12.02(2) Comprehensive Plan

Administrative units shall submit to the Department a comprehensive gifted education program plan on a multiple-year cycle as declared by the Department, such cycle to be no longer than 5 years. The program plan shall be implemented by all constituent schools and districts of the AU.



*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 CGER webpage:

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

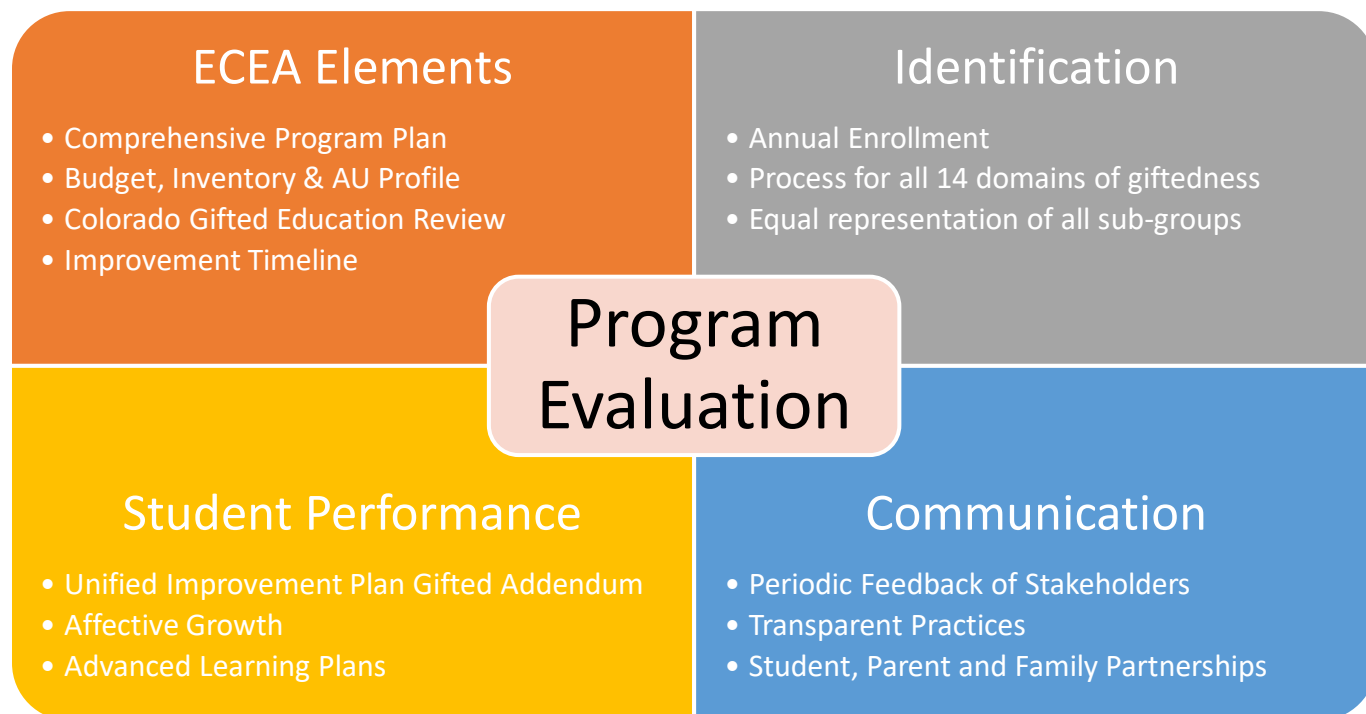
Program Evaluation

Gifted program evaluation is an essential component for continuous growth and improvement, a requirement of the Colorado Gifted Education Review (CGER) and a condition of state accreditation and reporting. Program evaluation occurs:

- Annually, as the AU analyzes expenditures to prepare the gifted education **budget reports** and the gifted student demographic data for the **October Pupil Count**;
- Bi-annually, as most districts prepare their **Unified Improvement Plan Gifted Addendum**; and
- Every five years in preparation for the AU's **CGER**.

Additionally, program evaluation supports **accountability**, which includes the gathering, analyzing and reporting of data. ECEA Rules contain specific key requirements for **Evaluation and Accountability**. In addition, all other elements within the Rules support an AU's program evaluation.

Program evaluation relies on meaningful data, such as stakeholder surveys, focus group notes, gifted student performance on state and local assessments, demographic data and the monitoring of Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs). An AU is accountable for the submission of specific state reports that reflect data and evidence collected during the program evaluation. An inclusive program evaluation is comprised of **four** components.



For additional guidance on the four components of Program Evaluation, access the Office of Gifted Education [Program Evaluation webpage](https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/programevaluation):
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/programevaluation>



Program Evaluation for CGER

Soliciting **input** from stakeholders as part of program evaluation is a required component of the CGER process. Stakeholders include administrators, teachers, families and students.

Methods for self-evaluation of the gifted program including a schedule for periodic feedback and review.

12.02(2)(i)(iv)

Methods by which parents, educators, and other required persons are informed about these methods.

12.02(2)(i)(v)

AUs determine a method for collecting periodic feedback and summarize key results in the Data Management System (DMS) as part of the Self-evaluation. Surveys and focus groups are two methods frequently used by AUs to solicit stakeholder feedback. When surveying stakeholder groups, it is important that the AU's demographics are represented and that the response rate provides reliable data. If an AU chooses to solicit input through focus groups and/or a parent advocacy committee, it is important that groups reflect the AU's population and protocols are followed to elicit objective and honest feedback from participants. CDE provides guidance on development of surveys, holding focus group interviews and reporting of data.

See Appendix C for more information on conducting a Survey and reporting survey data.

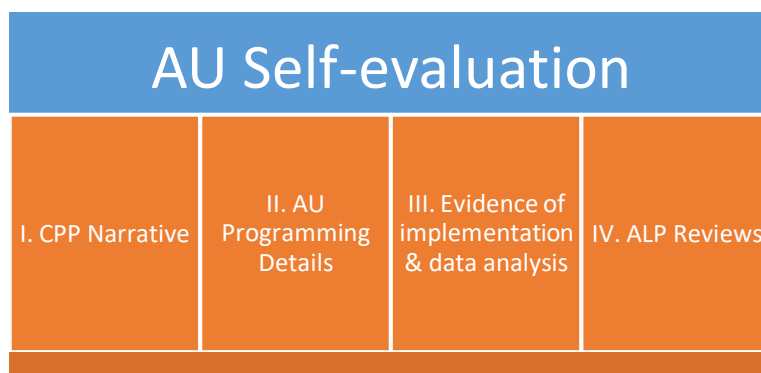
See Appendix D for more information on conducting a Focus Group.

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 to support the completion of the desk audit by the CGER team.

There are **four** requirements for the AU Self-evaluation. The DMS Self-evaluation Form, located under the "Monitoring" tab, has been created to:

- Self-check the implementation of key requirements within the comprehensive program plan;
- Guide discussion about program strengths, progress, and areas for improvement or action towards distinction;
- Facilitate collaboration among gifted education staff and other stakeholders;
- 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 narrative for each of the ECEA programming elements describing how the AU has implemented each of the key requirements. The CGER Team will carefully review the CPP as part of the Desk Audit. The CGER process provides the AU an opportunity to determine if any **new** or **revised** information should be included in the CPP since it was last published. If necessary, the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director reopens and revises the CPP prior to the CGER Team's Desk Audit. After the CPP has been revised, the AU must close the submission. 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.

For more information about the CPP, access the [Comprehensive Program Plan webpage](https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/comprehensiveprogramplan):
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/comprehensiveprogramplan>

II. AU Programming Details

The AU's Programming Details report is housed in DMS. It indicates the strategies used most commonly at each school level and for each area of giftedness, the methods of articulation through the grade-levels, methods used in the accountability process and the number of qualified personnel by school and district according to key requirements of ECEA Rules. This document is updated and revised as necessary.

III. Evidence of Implementation & Data Analysis

Three components are completed in DMS:

- i. The **AU Self-evaluation Form** indicates the key requirements for each programming element that directly align to the CPP. For each of the key requirements, the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director **describes** the type of evidence and the **location** of the evidence. The guidance in **Appendix A** will assist the AU with completion of this form to minimize the time spent on CGER preparation. For BOCES and multi-district AUs, **Appendix B** provides guidance on the information this form should also include to ensure implementation of the AUs program plan by member districts.
- ii. Within the Self-evaluation Form, 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. It is not necessary to copy and paste data charts housed in DMS into this section of the report. If the AU wants to share data not housed in DMS, charts or graphs may be included. A **written** summary of analyzed trends over time, strengths and/or areas for future growth are summarized by the AU in this text box.
- iii. Disaggregated summary data from surveys and/or focus groups are compiled in a clear and concise report and uploaded into DMS.
See Appendix C and D

IV. 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. The ALP Self-review document found in DMS aids the review. For AUs who must upload ALPS into DMS, it is critical the steps outlined in the DMS File Interchange are specifically followed. ALPs are never emailed to a CGER team nor uploaded into the general DMS site.



Directions for the DMS File Interchange can be found on the Office of Gifted Education [DMS webpage](https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/dms).
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/dms>

A complete ALP Guidance Document can be found on the Office of Gifted Education [ALP webpage](http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/alp).
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/alp>

Desk Audit

A Desk Audit is conducted by the CGER team **eight weeks** prior to the scheduled site visit and includes examination of:

1. Reports/Plans stored in DMS and at CDE;
2. Completed AU Self-evaluation;
3. Uploaded 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. CGER members are full- or part-time employees of CDE or Gifted Education Resource Consultants (GERCs).

During the Desk Audit, the CGER team examines each of the ECEA elements using a collaborative process. The team reads the narratives provided in the CPP and then examines the corresponding evidence. During the audit process, the team may have clarifying questions for the AU. Based on the team's Desk Audit, a determination is made on the **level** of site visit that will be conducted. Findings for corrective action are not made at the desk audit level. The Lead will contact the AU **4 – 5 weeks** prior to the scheduled site visit to inform the AU of the level of visit and to ask the AU if they prefer to receive the additional clarifying questions prior to the site visit or at the time of the visit. If the AU chooses to have the questions prior to the visit, the AU does **not** submit any new information or evidence until the time of the site visit.

Site Visits

There are **two** types of site visits that occur based on information presented in the AU Self-evaluation. As part of a **program evaluation**, an AU surveys stakeholders and/or conducts focus groups to solicit input. The AU uploads the results as part of the self-evaluation process. If the CGER team determines sufficient program evaluation information, including surveys and focus groups, was provided by the AU and there is not a need to visit schools or hold additional focus groups, a **Level I** visit is scheduled. If the team needs to obtain additional stakeholder information, a **Level II** visit is scheduled.

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 PROCESS

- Four- five weeks prior to the site visit, the CGER Lead will contact the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director to communicate the level of CGER visit.
- The Lead will provide the AU a choice to have CGER Team questions at the time of the collaborative site visit or have them emailed prior to the visit. In either case the AU does not provide new information in response to these questions until the site visit.
- On Day 1, the AU provides the **AU Overview** which is followed by a **collaborative 1 – 1 ½** hour discussion where the CGER team asks clarifying questions and solicits additional information. At this time the AU can provide additional evidence in response to the CGER team questions from the desk review.
- During the discussion, if an element is seen as needing corrective action, the AU may request a 30 school day improvement period in which the AU remedies the situation. This would not be called out as an area for corrective action in the report.
- At the end of the collaborative discussion, the CGER Lead will provide a verbal summary of the discussion and some of the key information the AU should expect to hear as part of the CGER Summary on Day 2.
- The CGER team returns to the hotel and meets with the remaining CGER team member(s) via Zoom to discuss additional information learned during the overview and discussion and begins to develop the CGER Summary presentation that will be shared on Day 2.
- On Day 2, the **CGER Summary** is presented to the AU. The AU will provide a meeting location that includes a computer projector for the CGER Summary presentation.

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

Sample Schedule for Level I:

Level I CGER Visit	
Day 1: 1:00 – 4:00	AU Gifted Program Overview, CGER Team collaborative discussion, technical assistance overview by GERC
Day 1: 4:30 – 9:00	CGER team meets separately
Day 2: 10:00 – 10:45	CGER Summary presented to the AU, time for questions

LEVEL II PROCESS

A Level II site visit will be scheduled if the information provided in the AU Self-evaluation was not sufficient to meet requirements of ECEA Rules and/or additional evidence 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.

- Four weeks prior to the site visit, the CGER Lead will contact the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director to communicate the level of CGER visit.
- The Lead will provide the AU a choice to have CGER Team questions at the time of the collaborative site visit or have them emailed prior to the visit.
- The CGER team will arrive the evening before Day 1 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 1.
- Day 1 of the CGER will begin with the team conducting focus group interviews. The AU may choose to hold a brief "meet and greet" session at the AU's central location for the purpose of introducing team members and obtaining focus group schedules and maps. Or the AU may choose to meet the team in the afternoon for the AU Overview and collaborative discussion and email the focus group information to the Lead prior to the visit. The Lead will verify the AU's preference.
- Focus Group interviews will begin between 8:30 – 9:00 AM depending on travel and school-start times. Focus group interviews must be completed by noon, giving the CGER team a break for a quick lunch and returning to the AU's central location by 1:00 p.m.
- In the event a school or district is farther than 45 minutes from the CGER team's central location, the AU may schedule site visits using video conferencing through Zoom or distance learning platforms.
- The CGER team will return to the AU by 1:00 p.m. The team will meet privately to conduct a thirty-minute discussion about focus group findings. At approximately 1:30, the AU will provide the AU Overview presentation which is followed by a collaborative 1 – 1 ½ hour discussion where the CGER team asks clarifying questions and solicits additional information and evidence. At this time the AU can provide additional evidence in response to the CGER team questions from the desk review.
- During the discussion, if an element is seen as needing corrective action, the AU may request a 30 school day improvement period in which the AU remedies the situation. This would not be called out as an area for corrective action in the report.
- At the end of the collaborative discussion, the CGER Lead will provide a verbal summary of the discussion and some of the key information the AU should expect to hear as part of the CGER Summary on Day 2.
- On Day 2, the **CGER Summary** is presented. The AU will provide a meeting location that includes a computer projector for the CGER Summary presentation.

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 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, accommodating up to three rooms of parents. School or district personnel should not attend the parent focus group session(s) to encourage open communication among participants. Parents selected to participate should represent the AU's gifted population in terms of grades, school levels and demographics.



The AU may opt to have the CGER team 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, 4-7 parents is an appropriate group size, and the team will only have 15-20 minutes for dialogue.

School/District Site Visits

School site visits provide the team with evidence of program elements and verification of the self-evaluation. Schools are chosen by 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 know the time and 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 will meet the team at the front entrance and direct team members to the meeting location. It is helpful for 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. Site visits farther than 45 minutes from the AU's central location will typically be conducted using a virtual meeting platform.

The AU Gifted Coordinator/Director will coordinate and schedule site visits. **The team will not directly observe classes or gifted programs** during the **one-hour 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 CGER team members 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). Note: If a parent is also an employee of the district/school, it is beneficial to have this participant attend the group representing school/district personnel and encourage him/her to speak from both perspectives.

See Appendix D for information on Focus Group Interviews

Level II Sample Schedule

Evening Prior to Day One:	
5:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Parent Focus Group (The team requests to meet no later than 7:00 p.m.)
Day One:	
8:00 – 8:15	Meet and Greet CGER Team if AU chooses
8:30 – 12:00	Focus Group Interviews
8:30 – 9:30	Team 1 visits School 1 Team 2 visits School 2
9:45 – 10:45	Team 1 visits School 3 Team 2 visits School 4
11:00 – 12:00	Team 1 visits School 5 Team 2 visits with Parent Focus Group (if not done the night before) or visits with School 6 if no Parent Focus Group
12:00 – 12:45	Lunch Break (The AU is not responsible for providing the team with lunch)
1:00 – 1:30	CGER Team meets privately to review Focus Group data
1:30 – 2:00	AU Gifted Program Overview, CGER Team collaborative discussion, technical assistance overview by GERC
2:00 – 3:30	Collaborative Discussion with AU
4:00 – 9:00	CGER team meets separately
Day Two:	
8:00 – 10:30	C-GER Team meets separately
11:00 – 11:45	CGER Summary presented to the AU, time for questions



AU Overview Presentation

During the site visit for both levels, the AU gifted coordinator/director and any other appropriate personnel will provide an **Overview Presentation**. The Gifted Education Regional Consultant (GERC) attends the overview and collaborative discussion for the purpose of supporting the AU and providing suggestions for future technical assistance. The overview should **not** repeat information already presented in the AU Self-evaluation, as the team has thoroughly reviewed the AU's program plan and data via the Desk Audit. This may also be a time to respond to any of the questions the CGER Lead might have requested the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director clarify during the site visit. CDE has developed a PowerPoint resource an AU may choose to follow for this presentation. Contact your GERC for a sample template.

The AU will prepare a 30-40-minute presentation that may include the following information:

- Culture and climate of the district/AU (demographics, celebrations, challenges, etc.);
 - Progress since last CGER;
 - Program strengths; and
 - Current status of gifted education:
 - **Analysis** of gifted identification demographics over time*;
 - **Analysis** of gifted student performance and growth data over time*; and
 - **Status** on progress towards improvement targets.
- *Note:** This provides the AU an opportunity to share any new information including an analysis and synthesis of program evaluation data and how data are used for continuous improvement. It is not necessary to highlight or display the data charts housed in DMS as the CGER Team thoroughly reviews these data during the desk audit. Share any new data or how collected data demonstrate growth or future improvement targets.

Collaborative Discussion

After the Overview, 60-90 minutes is allocated for a **collaborative discussion** with the CGER Team. This time allows the team to check for understanding and learn additional information about the AU's gifted program. The Lead will share any elements that appear not meet condition of law and will ask if the AU has any other information to share that might change this initial finding or if the AU has question pertaining to the CGER team's conclusion. CGER is a professional and collaborative exchange between the AU and the team and final decisions are not made for the CGER Report until after the site visit. In many cases, an AU knows elements of non-compliance based on the self-evaluation process and dialogue with the CGER team during the AU Overview Presentation, thereby eliminating any surprises during the CGER Summary Presentation. During the discussion, if an element is seen as needing corrective action, the AU may request a 30 school day improvement period in which the AU remedies the situation. This would not be called out as an area for corrective action in the report.



Components of the discussion:

1. AU responds to CGER Team questions;
 2. CGER Lead identifies elements that appear to not meet condition of law, if any;
 3. AU asks clarifying questions and provides additional information/evidence if necessary;
 4. AU and CGER Lead discuss elements that might be corrected within 30 school days;
 5. AU and CGER Lead discuss priority improvement areas, if any; and
 6. CGER Lead summarizes general information that will be shared in the CGER Summary including programming strengths and any other points the AU requests be included;
 7. GERC works with the AU to determine the tiered level of technical assistance offered upon the conclusion of the CGER process.
-

Process for 30 School Days Improvement Period

In some cases, an element might be corrected in a relatively short amount of time. During the collaborative discussion, the AU may request 30 school days to make the appropriate corrections or adjustments. The AU will notify the GERC when the corrections have been made and provide the GERC with the appropriate evidence demonstrating the element now meets conditions of Rule. The GERC will notify the CGER Lead to apprise the team corrections were successfully implemented. The CGER Report will indicate the element complies with ECEA Rules.

Priority Improvement

Elements not meeting condition of law that cannot be corrected in 30 school days or less may be identified as priority improvement areas by the CGER Team and AU. These are elements that when corrected have the most positive and direct impact on students and families. Typically, corrective action steps will require changes or adjustments to systemic practices and therefore will take longer to correct than 30 school days.

CGER Summary

On Day 2 of the site visit, the CGER Lead will provide a **CGER Summary** to the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director and other invited personnel. The AU is encouraged to invite the superintendent/executive director, members of the school board or superintendent advisory council, and/or gifted facilitators or teachers. The CGER Lead provides a summary of programming strengths and preliminary findings of elements that do and do not meet conditions of law. The summary will include one to three priorities for continuous improvement or that require corrective action. Additionally, any elements the AU wishes to correct within 30 school days will be outlined. The CGER Summary does not include all components, information and data that will be included in the Final Report. Time is given after the summary for guests to ask clarifying questions.



Final CGER Report

After the site visit, the CGER team completes the CGER Report. If the AU has requested the 30-day correction time, the CGER report will be delivered to the AU 8 – 10 weeks after the site visit. If not using the 30-day option, the report is delivered 6 – 8 weeks after the site visit. 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 6-10 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. 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 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 a minimum of 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.



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 year one priority improvement areas but still has additional elements of non-compliance, a new timeline will be created in the DMS. 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. Failure to successfully attain improvement targets during a two-year period places the AU in jeopardy of losing state GT funding.

Year Three of Improvement

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

Components of an Improvement Timeline

Priority Improvement Area(s):	Indicate the elements for corrective action.
Measurable Objective:	Develop targeted objectives to accomplish in one year or less. The objective is written to include how success will be measured.
Actions:	Identify the steps that will be put into place as a measure of improvement.
Resources:	Define the data, materials, research, funds, people, etc., that will be needed to successfully attain the objective.
People Responsible:	Identify personnel who will facilitate or be responsible for change.
Evidence of Change:	Upon successfully completing the objective, the AU will re-open the Improvement Timeline in DMS and describe the evidence demonstrating successful implementation of the element's key requirements.
GERC Approval	The GERC will verify the evidence and make one of the following determinations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improvement area is completed• Improvement area is not completed, and immediate action is required toward corrective action• Continue with next improvement areas and timeline from corrective action

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). 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, regional network 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

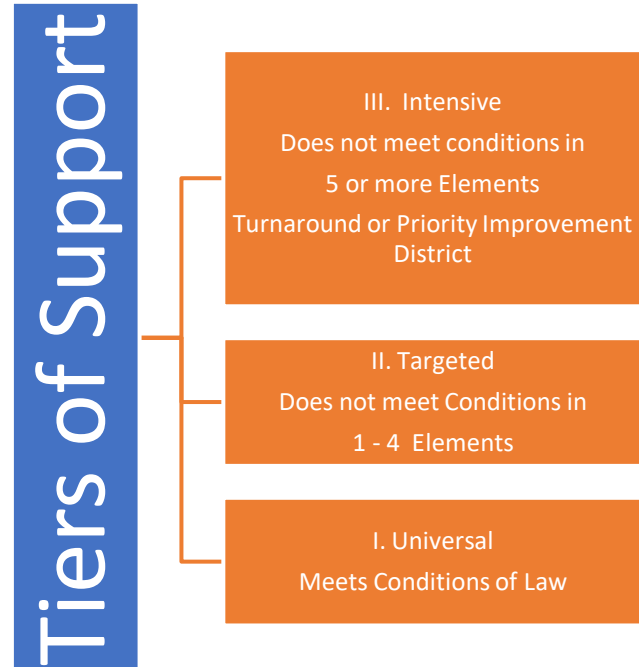
An AU at Tier II does not meet conditions of ECEA rules in 1 – 4 elements based on the findings during the CGER process. The GERC will provide targeted support to the AU. **If an AU does not meet conditions of law for gifted identification, the AU moves to a Tier III level of support**, regardless of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

An Administrative Unit's (AU's) Comprehensive Program Plan (CPP) provides a detailed narrative description of **how** the key requirements of the gifted program plan are implemented at the AU, district and/or school levels. These key requirements represent components of the Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA), Colorado's primary law for the implementation of specific **elements** and procedures for gifted education. To prepare for the Colorado Gifted Education Review (CGER) and streamline this process, the AU updates the CPP to ensure it accurately describes gifted program practices and procedures aligned to each of the ECEA elements.



EVIDENCE EMBODIES WHAT
INFORMATION IS CURRENTLY
AVAILABLE AND TRANSPARENT
TO STAKEHOLDER GROUPS
THROUGH A VARIETY OF
PLATFORMS.

The AU determines the **evidence** to include in the **Self-evaluation** that will **demonstrate** implementation of key requirements. It is not necessary to cut and paste the CPP's narrative descriptions into the Self-evaluation as each document has a different purpose. Although there are approximately 100 key requirements in ECEA Rules, the evidence that can demonstrate implementation may be contained within a few documents and/or information located on the AU website or in a gifted handbook.

The evidence an AU selects should be transparent documents and resources **currently** available to stakeholder groups and being implemented within the AU at the time of the desk review. The CGER process is not intended to be a time where an AU must create new documents and resources. Updating the CPP and completing the AU Self-evaluation can realistically be completed in 2-3 work days. If the AU is finding CGER preparation is taking an excessive amount of time, the AU is encouraged to contact the Gifted Education Regional Consultant (GERC) for direction.

The following guidance will assist the AU in determining the **types** of evidence to upload into DMS or note in the AU Self-evaluation. If evidence is not available on a website, it should be uploaded into DMS using the established naming protocol as indicated on the following page. It is not necessary to create separate platforms to upload documents such as Google Folders or LiveBinder. This creates an unnecessary step for the AU and can make it difficult for the team to access and locate documents. If the AU does not have evidence for a specific key requirement, type "*None at this time.*" The AU and CGER team will acknowledge this is an area for future growth and improvement.

While having an AU gifted website is not a requirement within ECEA Rules, many AUs find most evidence for a CGER can be accessible through a website platform. This may include transparent communication, links to helpful resources and guidance documents, educator and parent learning opportunities and announcements. Guidance handbooks, often posted on a website, can include detailed information about the AUs processes and procedures for identification, ALP development, gifted programming and procedures for disagreements. A comprehensive website and/or handbook supports communication and engagement and can fulfill key requirements for most of the ECEA elements.

Document Files: Naming Protocol

When uploading a document into DMS, please change the name of the document prior to upload. Convert the document into a **Portable Document Format** (PDF) and use the following descriptors in the first part of the file name.

Element	File Descriptor
Engagement and Communication	Comm
Definition	Def
Identification	ID
Advanced Learning Plan	ALP
Programming	Program
Evaluation and Accountability	Eval
Personnel	Person
Budget	Budget
Reports	Reports
Record Keeping	Record
Procedures for Disagreements	Disagree
Early Access	EA
Types of Documents	File Descriptor
Guidance Handbook	Handbook
Guidance Brochure	Brochure

After typing the element descriptor, type an underscore () and then a short descriptor of the document description. Although the parent determination letter aligns to a key requirement in **Identification**, this same document may also be indicated within the Engagement and Communication element for how parents are informed about the ID process. The ONE document is uploaded into DMS. It may then be referenced within other elements of the Self-evaluation. It is not necessary to rename the same document for other elements where it may apply as evidence.

Examples: ID_parentletter
 Eval_studentsurvey

If the AU has **multiple documents** that pertain to one key requirement, it is helpful for the AU to scan all the pages and create one Portable Document Format (PDF) to upload. An example of this might be the flyers an AU distributed to advertise professional development or parenting opportunities.

Examples: Person_PDFlyers
 Comm_SENG

A document such as a parent or teacher handbook may contain evidence for multiple key requirements. The handbook is only uploaded once into DMS and then page numbers/sections are noted as to where specific evidence is located.

Examples: Handbook_parent (see page 14-18)
 Handbook (see section IV)

How to describe evidence location

The **AU Self-evaluation**, located in DMS, provides text boxes that are designed for the AU to describe only **where** the evidence is located. A “**description of evidence**” simply refers to the type or platform used to convey

the information. Evidence may include a website, letter, flyer, handbook, brochure, meeting agenda, newsletter, form, etc.

There are **two** main types of evidence submitted by the AU:

Uploaded Documents	Website/webpage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type the <i>File Name (see protocol)</i> • If the document contains multiple pages, include the PAGE number(s) or section where evidence can be found. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ID_Handbook (see pages 14-18) ▪ Person_PDFlyers ▪ EA_brochure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy and paste the exact webpage where information is posted. If the AU has a website with multiple pages, provide the link of the actual page, not the home page site address.* • Include where the information is located on the webpage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example: www.sampledistrict/GT/Parents (click the Parents tab at top of page)

*Note: Check the webpage and all links provided to make sure they are active and contain specific evidence aligned to the key requirement(s).

DMS Text Boxes

In the Self-evaluation, some text boxes may specify one unique key requirement within the specific ECEA element, while other text boxes may include multiple ECEA key requirements that have been grouped together based on common traits or characteristics. If the AU has a comprehensive website and/or handbook, the AU may find it is only necessary to upload 3 – 6 additional documents for the entire CGER process, not including the uploading of ALPs/ICAP using the DMS File Interchange. Some elements will not require the AU to provide evidence as it is available within DMS, such as budget, or available on the CDE website, such as the UIP.

Additional evidence may include:

- Program Evaluation Survey/Focus Group Data – requirement of CGER process (**Note: See Appendix C & D on reporting of survey/focus group data**)
- AU-level data different from data provided in DMS or not included in the ALP (district assessment data, monitoring of achievement and affective performance and growth)
- Forms and letters (if examples are not included on website or handbook)
- Meeting Agendas
- Newsletters, flyers, brochures, emails, social media or other modes of communication
- Inventory (if applicable)



DMS Self-evaluation Examples:

Element: Procedures for Parent, Family and Student Engagement and Communication

Key Requirement:

Ways to educate parents and families about giftedness or parenting gifted students.

Description of Evidence and Location:

SENG Parent Event *(Description)*
Comm_SENGflyer *(Location)*

(Note: Evidence is described, and location is given. It is only necessary to provide one example of evidence for each requirement even if the AU has multiple examples.)

Element: Identification

Key Requirement:

Description of assessment process that meets the state definition and a student's exceptional abilities, potential, interests and needs in order to guide instruction and individualized programming

Show in the evidence that assessment process includes:

- Referrals from a variety of sources
- Screening procedures used for conducting identification assessment
- Timeline of no more than 30 school days after a referral to make a determination of formal identification, continue to collect assessment data, or move to talent pool designation
- For each category of giftedness criteria of 95th percentile or above on a standardized nationally normed test or observation tool, or a rating on a performance assessment that indicate exceptionality or distinguished ability compared to age mates
- Criteria for screening assessments is a score range less than 95th percentile, used to determine further observation, data collection and/or talent pool designation
- Not meeting criteria on a single assessment shall not prevent further data collection or consideration for identification

Description of Evidence and Location:

District Gifted Handbook: see pages 14 – 18 *(Description)*
Handbook_parent *(Location)*

(Note: Evidence is described, and location is given. In this case all information from the bullets above can be found within these pages of the handbook, with the exception of referrals.)

District Gifted Education Referrals: www.sampledistrict/gifted/referral.edu

(Note: A link to the PDF document is provided because it does not appear in the handbook referenced above)



Guiding Questions to Consider for Selecting CGER Evidence

The table below indicates the ECEA elements reviewed during the CGER process and guiding questions for the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director to consider as evidence is collected.

Engagement and Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What evidence shows how parents and families are informed about identification, parenting the gifted child, programming, concurrent enrollment and college/career planning? Is information available in the AU's primary languages? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website page PDF of parent emails sent Newsletter Handbook Scanned flyers of events Agendas from parent group meetings
Definition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What evidence shows the AU's definition of gifted students? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Handbook/Brochure
Identification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What evidence shows the AU's identification process to include: referrals, screening, timelines, and the quantitative and qualitative body of evidence to ensure portability and equal and equitable access? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Handbook/Brochure ID form/profile Section of ALP How are parents informed about identification decisions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determination letter
ALP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What evidence shows the AU's procedures and processes for ALP development? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Handbook/Brochure Section of ALP Survey data <p><i>The CGER team will examine a random sample of ALPs as established by CDE for review by the AU in DMS. See the ALP section of this handbook for directions on completing the ALP reviews.</i></p>
Programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What evidence shows the AU's programming options to match gifted students' strengths, interests, post-secondary and affective needs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Handbook Course selection catalog Newsletter Survey data What evidence shows how programming is articulated across grade- and school-levels?



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Website ○ Handbook ○ Form that documents this process ○ Section of ALP ○ Student Information System use by AU educators ○ Survey data
Evaluation and Accountability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence shows how the AU monitors ALP goals, performance and affective achievement and growth? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data analysis report ○ Form ○ ALP section ○ Talking points for conferences ○ Report card/progress report • What evidence shows the AU conducts program evaluation and collects feedback from all stakeholders? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey results ○ Focus group results <p><i>The CGER team will access UIPs. The AU does not need to upload this document.</i></p>
Personnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence show the AU's professional development to support the gifted program plan? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Website ○ Handbook ○ Flyers ○ Sign-in sheets ○ Survey data • What evidence shows personnel administering and supporting the gifted program plan? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HR data for qualified personnel ○ Qualified Personnel Grant ○ Gifted Budget
Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence shows the development of the AU gifted budget is a collaborative effort? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meeting agenda ○ Survey data ○ Handbook ○ Website <p><i>The CGER team will review budgets in DMS.</i></p>
Reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The CGER team will review submitted reports in DMS and to CDE.</i> <p><i>Note: The AU Gifted Lead revises/edits the AU Programming Details Report located in DMS for data to support this element.</i></p>
Record Keeping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence shows an inventory of equipment purchased with state gifted funds? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inventory document



Procedures for Disagreements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What evidence shows the AU's procedures for disagreements and where it is posted for stakeholder access?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Website○ Handbook
Monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What evidence shows how the AU monitors annual and comprehensive gifted plans, enrollment, performance, and CGER Improvement Timelines?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Website○ Handbook○ Meeting agendas○ Improvement Timeline in DMS○ AU enrollment and/or performance data (different from DMS data provided by CDE)
Early Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What evidence shows how the AU communicates the process and procedures of Early Access to include: referrals, applications, portfolio, assessments, criteria, timeframes, progress monitoring, ALP development, disagreements, state reporting, and communication.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Website○ Handbook/Brochure



Appendix B: CGER for Multi-district AUs or BOCES

The Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA) defines an administrative unit (AU) as a district, a board of cooperative education services, or the state Charter School Institute that provides educational **services** to exceptional children and is responsible for the local administration of ECEA and regulations pertaining to **gifted education**. This begins with the development of the AU's Comprehensive Program Plan (CPP), created collaboratively by the AU Gifted Coordinator/Director and representatives of member districts. With the provision of state gifted education funds, the BOCES/multi-district administration provides materials, resources and personnel to member districts to support implementation of the gifted program plan. The AU develops processes and procedures that all member districts shall follow (i.e., definition, identification process, budget reporting, etc.), while other systemic practices are primarily delivered at the district-level (i.e., assessments for identification, ALP development, programming, parent engagement, etc.). The Colorado Gifted Education Review (CGER) provides monitoring of the implementation of the AU's Comprehensive Program Plan (CPP).

Every AU is required to have personnel to administer the gifted education program. This person, called coordinator, director, or AU Lead, is responsible for the implementation of the CPP and professional development activities. AUs make a good faith effort to hire and retain, on at least a half-time basis, a qualified person to **administer** and **monitor** the implementation of the AU's gifted program. (12.02(2)(j)(i-ii)). There are legislated state grant funds to help with this personnel need called the Universal Screening and Qualified Personnel grant program.

At the BOCES or multi-district level, examples of services include conducting identification assessment, retaining a bank of assessment tools to support identification practices, providing consultation or training in gifted education and visiting member districts for needs assessment and dialogue. Some BOCES/multi-district have also provided parent events and educational opportunities for gifted students such as distance learning, extended learning field trips, camps or contests. Professional development is delivered by the BOCES/multi-district to increase capacity of educators to identify and program for gifted students and families. The ECEA also encourages that AUs increase the number of qualified personnel providing instruction to gifted students. When difficult to hire a qualified person in gifted education, the Gifted Education Regional Consultant (GERC) may support the BOCES gifted education administrator in assessing needs of member districts and coordination of professional development opportunities.

According to the AU's CPP, all member districts shall identify and serve gifted students according to Colorado law. In BOCES and multi-district AUs, each member district follows the guidance in the CPP. The AU Lead has the unique position to administer the CPP and services while supporting and respecting the individual needs of member districts. The CGER process is intended to recognize this complexity, explore AU questions and areas of need, highlight strengths, and uplift improvement priorities.

For BOCES and multi-district AUs, these conditions are of importance during the monitoring process:

- CGER teams taking time to understand the needs and complexities of the particular AU;
- AU Leads look at examples of how evidence has been gathered in other BOCES or multi-district AUs so that time and effort in preparing for a CGER are efficient and meaningful;
- Reporting results of CGER to clarify that the majority of districts are in alignment with program plan conditions when only one may be out of compliance; and

- Seeking support from CDE when the AU Lead is challenged by a member district who does not permit access to identification and programming for students and families.

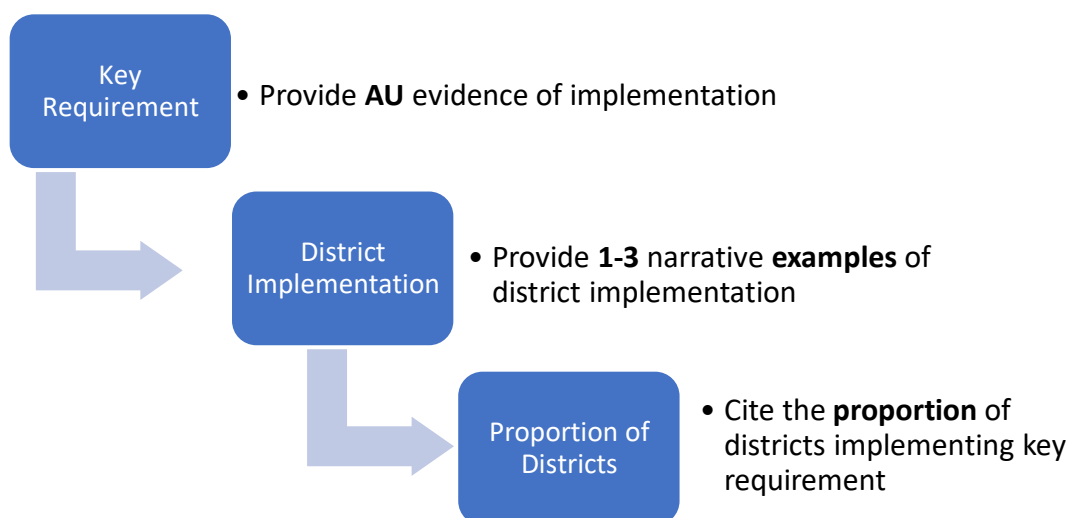
In BOCES and multi-district AUs, the following guidance supports efficiency of time and effort in preparing for the monitoring process.

AU Program Evaluation

As outlined on page 7 of the Gifted Education CGER Handbook, program evaluation is conducted by the AU in preparation of CGER. The BOCES/multi-district Lead chooses how to conduct a program evaluation to solicit input from stakeholders in **all** member districts. The BOCES/multi-district gifted Lead determines a system to discern how each member district is implementing elements of the CPP. This may include conducting a survey, holding focus groups, visiting districts or collecting information during educational meetings and events throughout the year(s). Upon completion of the program evaluation, the gifted Lead will complete **three** steps for each text box in the DMS Self-evaluation.

AU Self-evaluation Form for BOCES or Multi-district AU

As outlined on pages 7 - 9, the AU completes the Self-evaluation in the Data Management System (DMS). For each key requirement of ECEA Rules, the AU cites **evidence** of implementation. For a BOCES/multi-district AU, it is not necessary to provide evidence for each member district. Instead, the gifted Lead provides one to three narrative examples of district-level implementation and a statistical proportion of the number of districts within the BOCES who are implementing the key requirement. The AU Lead may explain why evidence is not available in any one-member district; or express the challenge of full implementation by member districts.





AU Evidence & District Implementation

Evidence constitutes a tangible document or website that demonstrates implementation of the key requirement. Documents are uploaded into DMS or accessible by an html link provided to the CGER Team. Evidence is based on methods, procedures and practices at the BOCES/Multi-district level. When gathering evidence please refer to the evidence guidance provided in **Appendix A** of this document.

Examples:

- BOCES_Handbook (see page 14-18)
- www.sampleAU/gifted.edu
- Eval_studentsurvey
- Budget_meetingagenda

Describe in sentence-form **how** a member district implements the key requirement of law. No district-level evidence needs to be provided for the AU Self-evaluation.

Examples:

- All districts provide a link on their district website to the BOCES gifted website.
- Pine District has a gifted webpage that provides a calendar of parent events.
- River and Mountain Districts provide a Saturday robotics club for gifted students.
- Prairie District provides a gifted handbook to parents and students at the time of identification that outlines the ALP process and college and career planning.

Data: Indicate Proportion of Districts that Implemented Key Requirement

The BOCES/Multi-district will report the statistical **proportion** of member districts implementing the key requirement. The gifted Lead can choose to report this data as a numerical representation, or specifically **name** districts in terms of describing strengths or areas of concern.

Examples:

- 4 of the 5 districts follow the AU procedure for identification.
- Pine District does not follow the AU procedures for identification and has not identified gifted students in six years.
- All districts have increased the percentage of identified students from underrepresented populations, and River District has had a 54% increase in two years.

DMS Self-evaluation Examples:

Example #1:

Key Requirement:

Ways to educate parents and families about giftedness or parenting gifted students

Description of Evidence and Location

BOCES gifted website: Parent Resources Link www.sampleboces/gifted/parent.edu
(Note: Evidence is described, and location is given.)

District Examples: *(Note: Evidence is not required for every member district)*

Prairie and Meadows Districts offered a gifted parent night Fall of 2018.

Mountain district offers a SENG group each year.

Each district has a link to the BOCES website or has its own link for parental access and resources.

Data: 4 of the 5 districts provide a link on the district website to the BOCES parent webpage. The other district provides a parent SENG group.

Example #2:

Key Requirement:

Description of assessment process that meets the state definition and a student's exceptional abilities, potential, interests and needs in order to guide instruction and individualized programming

Show in the evidence that assessment process includes:

- Referrals from a variety of sources
- Screening procedures used for conducting identification assessment
- Timeline of no more than 30 school days after a referral to make a determination of formal identification, continue to collect assessment data, or move to talent pool designation
- For each category of giftedness criteria of 95th percentile or above on a standardized nationally normed test or observation tool, or a rating on a performance assessment that indicate exceptionality or distinguished ability compared to age mates
- Criteria for screening assessments is a score range less than 95th percentile, used to determine further observation, data collection and/or talent pool designation
- Not meeting criteria on a single assessment shall not prevent further data collection or consideration for identification

Description of Evidence and Location

BOCES Gifted Education Handbook: see pages 14 - 18

BOCES_Handbook

(Note: Evidence is described, and location is given. In this case all information from the bullets above can be found within these pages of the handbook, with the exception of referrals.)

BOCES Gifted Education Referral: www.sampleboces/gifted/referral.edu

(Note: A link to the PDF document is provided because it does not appear in the handbook referenced above)

District Examples:

Based on enrollment data, Big Sky District has not identified gifted students for three years and a district representative did not attend the AU identification training this year. Currently, Prairie District does not have students identified; however, enrollment is only 42 and the district actively participates in universal screening and has conducted an identification training for all teachers.

(Note: The BOCES determines if specific districts will be identified. The BOCES will inform the CGER Team if the district's name should or should not be identified in the Final CGER Report.)

Data: Big Sky District has not implemented the AU's process for identification. All other districts follow the BOCES identification process.

Guiding Questions to Consider

Element	AU Evidence	District Examples & Data
Communication and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the AU support parents' understanding of gifted education in terms of ID procedures, parenting the gifted child, college-career planning, community events and AU gifted programming? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many districts have a gifted website? Which districts provide parent events? What are examples of district-level communication and engagement practices? How do districts monitor and communicate student progress?
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where and how is the AU's definition communicated to stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many districts follow the AU's definition? Where do districts communicate the definition?
Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What identification processes and procedures for all areas of giftedness have been develop at the AU level? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How have specific districts' demographics changed over time? What assessments are used at the district level? Which districts participate in universal screening?
ALP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the AU support district-level ALP development? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What type of process do districts use to develop ALPS?



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What resources/PD does the AU provide to support ALP development? • How does the AU monitor ALPs? • Does the AU provide professional development regarding ALP development and the writing of standards based student goals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did the ALP self-review indicate in terms of district strengths? Areas for growth? • Which districts use ICAP to fulfill requirements of the ALP? • How do districts communicate with parents and students about ALP development?
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of programming is provided at the AU level (i.e., contests, competitions, camps, online courses, distance learning, book studies, counselor services, internships, mentorships etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the various programming options provided at the district-level to support achievement and affective needs?
Evaluation and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the AU support districts with data analysis for the purpose of monitoring student academic and affective achievement and growth and developing UIP targets? • Does the BOCES write a common UIP for member districts or do district create their own UIP with support from the BOCES gifted Lead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which districts use a common UIP developed by the AU and which districts develop their own gifted targets and action plans? • How do districts monitor achievement and affective growth? • Which districts write their own UIP?
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who in the AU administers to program plan? • How are Qualified Personnel funds and Gifted Grants funds used at the AU level? • What professional development opportunities have been provided by the AU? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What district-level personnel support the gifted program plan? • What district-level professional development has been provided?
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the budget a collaborative process? • Who is involved in the budgeting process? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What funds are contributed for the purpose of gifted education by each district? • If money is flowed through to districts, what process is used by the AU to account for expenditures?
Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the AU provide support with UIP development? • How does the AU assist districts with the collection systems for reporting student demographics? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What system is used to solicit input and data for completion or revision of AU plans and reports?
Record Keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the AU's process for maintenance of financial record? • What process does the AU use to maintain an inventory if equipment is purchased using 3150 funds? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do all districts follow the BOCES procedures for fiscal reporting and the maintenance and destruction of student records?



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Does the AU have a policy for maintenance and destruction of student records?	
Procedures for Disagreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">What is the AU's Procedures for Disagreements and how is this transparent to stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Do any districts have a different procedure and if so how is this communicated to district stakeholders?
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How will the CGER process include member districts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How will the AU collect data from each member district to prepare for CGER?
Early Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How does the AU communicate the Early Access Plan to all stakeholders and ensure personnel are trained to conduct early access assessment?What is the AU's Early Access process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How do districts ensure stakeholders are aware of the AU Early Access process?What role do districts take in the assessment process?

Appendix C: Survey Design for Program Evaluation

Surveys and focus groups are two methods frequently used by AUs to solicit stakeholder feedback in preparation for a CGER. A **survey** may be disseminated to collect feedback, and/or **focus groups** may be held to collect valuable information about the gifted program plan. If the AU chooses to use a survey, consider these best practices for survey development.

Determining the Survey Platform

There are many options an AU may consider for survey distribution. A **paper-pencil** survey can easily be developed and distributed to stakeholder groups. If you want to collect feedback at an event such as a parent night, a teacher or administrator meeting, or a gifted class, a paper-pencil survey may be disseminated. This format does not require participants to have access to a technology device and it ensures a high response rate. Collecting, tabulating, and reporting data from paper and pencil surveys may be time consuming.

Another option is to conduct a survey using an **online** platform. There are online survey tools that are free, such as Google Forms. Other companies provide added capabilities for a minimal charge, such as *SurveyMonkey* and *SurveyGizmo*. The advantages of disseminating a survey using an online platform include:

- Real-time analysis of accurate data;
- Ease of use; and
- Automatic generation of reports.

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)

If an online survey will be used, it is important to consider whether all families have access to email and the internet.

If it is determined that families may not have access to technology within the home, the AU may wish to consider the following options:

- Have a paper-pencil survey available for completion; and/or
- Provide computers at the school where parents can complete a survey while visiting the school at an open house or student conference.

In order to collect a representative sample of student responses, it is recommended that students complete the survey at school. Students could be invited to the computer lab at a specific time, or mobile computer carts can be made available during gifted classes, events or activities.

The AU should **always** obtain the superintendent or executive director's permission prior to initiating any type of survey. It is critical to follow the AU/district's protocol and procedures for collecting student input. There are specific state and federal laws pertaining to what type of student information can be collected and reported.

Survey Completion

To maximize response rate and collect valid and reliable data, consider these best-practices.

- **Choose the right time of year.** What is the best time to survey stakeholders? Early in the school year, new personnel may still be familiarizing themselves with the gifted program and getting to know their students. Students are settling into new course work and parents may not have attended an open house and/or Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) conference. The end of the school year also presents timing issues with state assessments, breaks, and end-of-year fatigue. Therefore, consider the first of November, mid-January or February for best results.
- **Set a specific due date.** Surveys that are open for extended periods of time lead to skewed results. Set and communicate a clear due date with stakeholders. Research shows that eighty percent of responses are collected in the first week after a survey is disseminated, and multiple reminders may be needed to ensure completion.
- **Communicate using multiple platforms.** If using an online survey, an email is typically sent out including a link to the survey. In addition to an email, consider placing the link on your district website, mailing a flyer through the postal service, and/or adding the information in your school/district newsletter. This correspondence may note that a paper-pencil survey is available if needed.
- **Include an introduction of purpose.** At the beginning of the survey, a short paragraph should explain the purpose of the survey and how data will be analyzed and reported.
- **Tell respondents the survey is anonymous.** It is important to tell respondents the survey is anonymous, and feedback is valued and used for continuous improvement. Anonymous surveys allow participants to be open and honest.
- **Keep it short and simple.** In the introduction, clearly indicate how long it will take to complete the survey. Most surveys should take about five minutes to complete, with ten minutes being the maximum. If a respondent wants to take longer adding narrative comments, this is his/her choice. Adding a progress bar at the bottom of the survey may help motivate respondents to complete the survey.
- **Use appropriate language.** Survey questions for parents and students should be free of educational jargon and acronyms. Make questions simple and easy to understand.
- **Field test the survey.** It is best to field test the survey with 5-10 members of each stakeholder group prior to mass dissemination. This helps to ensure questions are clear and that important topics or areas have been addressed within the survey.
- **Make sure the survey works on multiple devices.** Ensure your survey works on a computer or mobile devices, as people may use both tools.
- **Use skip logic.** Online survey software often provides the ability to design a survey with “skip logic.” This means that a respondent is asked a specific question and based on the response, additional survey questions then become available. This is more efficient than listing many questions on a survey that are not applicable to all respondents.
Example: “I am in the following grade.” After the student selects the grade level, questions pertaining to that level of school become available for him/her to answer.
- **Provide the survey in the primary languages of the AU.** To ensure equal and equitable access, the AU should determine if a survey needs to be developed in other primary languages.

Survey Questions

When developing the survey format, provide both **quantitative** and **qualitative** forms of questions. Determining questions is one of the biggest challenges in survey development. To that end, the Office of Gifted Education has developed sets of questions to assist with survey creation. These questions are on the Data Management System (DMS) under the Parent and Family Engagement tab. Additionally, Drs. Neumeister and Burney have developed research-based questions for gifted program evaluation. Suggested questions can be found in their book, *Gifted Program Evaluation: A Handbook for Administrators and Coordinators*.

Qualitative survey questions provide participants an opportunity to write comments about a specific idea or topic. For example, “What are the strengths of your child’s gifted programming?” Typically, qualitative comments come at the end of survey sections. Responding to comment sections in a survey should be voluntary, although some online survey programs include a function that requires a response before moving to the next question. Open-ended comment boxes should provide ample room to allow respondents to describe their thoughts without being overwhelming. Boxes that are too small may lead to omission of important details. Field testing the survey will help in determining the appropriate size of comment boxes.

Quantitative survey questions may allow respondents to respond on a Likert scale, rank items in order, or select applicable options from a list. When reporting survey responses, these questions can be quantified and displayed in graphs and charts. When using a Likert scale, best practice suggests offering an odd number of descriptive ratings to choose from, ideally between five and seven; too many will lead to confusion and ambiguity. Limit the amount of questions that require a simple “Yes” or “No” or “Agree” or “Disagree.” It is important that rating scales also include a “Do not know” or “Not applicable” choice.

Example: Strongly Agree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree, Not Applicable

Important considerations for question design:

- **Avoid bias.** Ensure your response rate represents your district demographics and data represents all subgroups. Questions should be written in a way that promotes truthful answers and will not lead a respondent to answer in a specific way.
- **One topic.** Ensure that questions ask respondents to consider only one element or aspect at a time.
- **Avoid Leading questions.** Stay away from emotionally charged words or the use of adjectives and adverbs.
- **Use a balanced scale of responses.** If there will be five choices on a scale, make sure two represent the highest points, one is neutral, and two represent the lowest points. Having four ratings on the highest end and only one of the lowest end would skew results.
- **Use similar format and scale for all questions.** Use the same Likert scale and format for every question to prevent survey fatigue. Keep the highest points or positive ratings always listed in the same order so that respondents do not inadvertently select the wrong response. This is not a reading comprehension test!
- **Order of questions is important.** Asking simpler questions first leads to respondents being more willing to complete a survey. Asking for comments at the end will also assist with the time required to complete the survey.

Data Analysis

An AU may conduct a survey for a variety of purposes including progress monitoring of the Comprehensive Program Plan (CPP), informing programming decisions, or preparing for the Colorado Gifted Education Review (CGER). AUs will report survey and/or focus group data as part of the completion of the AU Self-Evaluation template located in the Data Management System (DMS). Communication of data findings may include reports and/or oral presentations.

Data collected through surveys represents a stakeholder's perception. Understanding these perceptions will assist the AU in determining next steps. When analyzing survey data, it is important to break down the results by different groups (e.g., by building level or stakeholder group) to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of program elements at each level.

It is important that data represent the AU's demographics and that the response rate for each stakeholder group is proportional. For the purposes of CGER, the target response rate is forty percent; however, lower percentages may be considered valid if data provides a representative sampling of the stakeholder group. CGER survey 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 tally of common remarks.

Reporting Survey Results

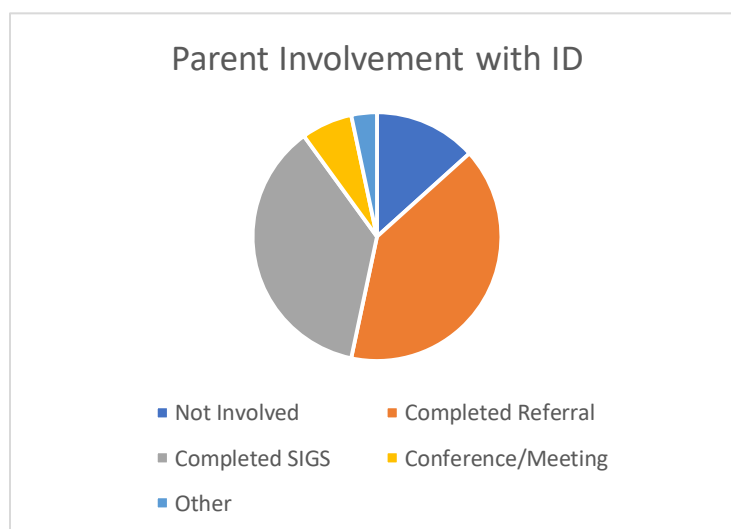
Collecting periodic stakeholder comments, via survey or focus groups, is an important component of conducting a program evaluation. In summarizing the collected data, it is important to compile the raw data (i.e., comments or rating for each question), synthesize and analyze the findings.

For example, an AU may have 30 parent comments collected from a survey or focus groups about how they were involved in their child's identification process. All 30 comments would not be presented word-for-word in the final program evaluation report for CGER documentation. Instead, the AU determines how these qualitative data are best summarized. Some may choose to identify main topics, common responses, or major themes and represent these in a pie chart or bar graph.

Others may choose to write a brief narrative summary indicating percentages or proportions of common responses.

Example of Survey and/or Focus Group Question: ***How were you part of the identification process for your child?***

Sample Report #1: Pie graph to represent the percentage of parents who reported the way they were involved in their child's identification process.



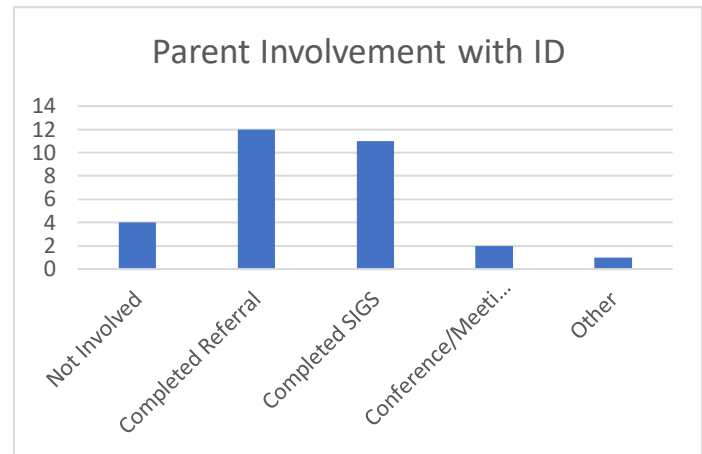
Sample Reporting #2: Bar graph to represent the number of parents who reported the way in which they were involved in their child’s identification process.

Sample Reporting #3:

12 of the 30 parents reported completing a referral, 11 reported completing a SIGS, 3 reported attending a conference and 4 reported not having any involvement.

Sample Reporting #4:

80% of the parents reported being involved in the identification process by either completing a referral or a SIGS. 13% reported having no involvement in the process.



Using Results to Develop an Action Plan

The foundational purpose of conducting a survey is to identify programming strengths and areas for future improvement. Developing an action plan to specifically address targeted areas of improvement ensure the results of the survey were meaningful and time well spent for the AU and respondents. An action plan may include:

- Target for improvement;
- Specific steps to address the target;
- Timeline;
- Personnel responsible;
- Ways to monitor progress; and
- How success will be measured and reported.

Helpful Resources

Neumeister, Kristie Spiers & Burney, Virginia H., *Gifted Program Evaluation: A Handbook for Administrators and Coordinators*, Prufrock Press, Waco, TX, 2012.

SurveyMonkey, *Surveys 101*, 2017.



Appendix D: Facilitating Focus Groups for Program Evaluation

If an AU chooses to not disseminate a survey to collect stakeholder feedback, another option to collect the required program evaluation from stakeholders is for the AU to hold focus groups. Consider these best practices for facilitating focus groups.

What is a Focus Group?

A focus group is a gathering of deliberately selected stakeholders who participate in a planned discussion to elicit perceptions about a specific topic or area of interest. A focus group includes 5-10 members who typically share common interests or characteristics. The group is brought together by a moderator who guides and observes participants in order to gain information about a specific issue. Participants interact and influence each other during the discussion and consideration of perspectives.

A focus group provides an alternative, more personal approach to obtaining information about a gifted program plan. Whereas survey data tends to be more “scientific” in terms of collected and reported data, focus groups can gather information that is more authentic, detailed and descriptive. The purpose of a focus group is not to arrive at a consensus or agreement, nor is it to make recommendations or decisions about future action steps. It is designed to identify feelings, perceptions and thinking of specific stakeholder groups. Participants are able to interact and hear responses of others. 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.

Who Participates in a Focus Group?

The quality of information obtained from a focus group is dependent on the **moderator** of the group and the **participants** who have been selected. The AU Gifted Coordinator/Director, in conjunction with AU and school Leadership, invites and schedules stakeholders to participate in the information gathering process.

Moderator

The AU selects a moderator who is non-biased and is not perceived as the Leader or administrator of the gifted program, school or district. Moderators are professional, non-judgmental and foster open, friendly communication. The moderator asks questions of the group and probes for a deeper level of understanding when necessary. The moderator may also find it necessary to interact with a specific member of the group who is monopolizing time or does not understand the intent or purpose of the group.

Co-facilitator/Note-taker

The AU identifies a person who will be the co-facilitator and/or note-taker. A co-facilitator does not guide or moderate the discussion but is available to welcome members and keep time. This person also takes notes during the discussion and debriefs with the moderator in order to provide an additional perspective.

The note-taker often sits away from the group and does not actively participate in the discussion. Notes should be detailed and record specific quotes from the group. Participants should know there is a note-taker, but no names will be used in the reporting of data collected during the discussion.

Sometimes AUs choose to record the group to make sure nothing is missed. However, if you intend to record the focus group, clearly indicate that in your invitation to members.

Participants

It is important that groups are representative of the AU's population and protocols are followed to elicit objective and honest feedback from participants. In order to benefit the AU's improvement efforts, consider these guiding practices when selecting participants:

- 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 that can emerge from these discussions.
- Some AUs choose to send out a general email or newsletter announcement inviting stakeholders to participate in a focus group. The AU then invites specific individuals who responded to the announcement. This can have unintended consequences if members possess strong opinions one way or another and may lead to biased results.
- 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.

How do we plan for a Focus Group?

- Send invitations to participants 2-4 weeks prior to the designated meeting time. It is helpful to confirm attendance and follow-up with a reminder one or two days prior to the meeting time.
- Obtain parent permission for students who will be participating in a focus group.
- Provide a comfortable, non-threatening setting for participants. Some AUs choose to use a community building, like a public library, rather than a school location for parent focus groups.
- Consider providing bottled water and light snacks to heighten the comfort level of participants.
- Provide nametags/name tents for all participants.
- Determine discussion norms prior to the meeting and have them printed and posted in the room.
- Arrange seating in a circle to support open communication. If participants will be seated at a table, it is preferable to have one large table where participants can see one another.
- Have a set of predetermined questions that will be asked of the group. A set of suggested questions has been developed to support reliable gifted program evaluation and can be found at the end of this document.
- Establish and communicate a designated end time. A visible clock is helpful.

Roles of the Moderator:

- Begin with making introductions.
- Share the purpose of the group.
- Set the discussion norms. Some common norms might include:
 - 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.
- 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 of the group;
 - Ask if there is any additional information to be shared;
 - Guide participants who have specific concerns to the appropriate personnel; and
 - Thank participants for their time and input.
- Debrief with moderator.

Roles of the Co-facilitator/Note-taker:

- Assist the moderator with the meeting set-up.
- Engage in purposeful interaction as participants arrive to create a warm, friendly atmosphere.
- Take detailed notes during the session.
- Operate equipment if recording the session.
- Keep time of session and provide a ten minute warning to moderator and group.
- Do not participate in discussion either verbally or non-verbally.
- Debrief with moderator.
- Give feedback for analysis and final report.

What is a suggested purpose to share with the focus group?

A moderator may choose to share the following paragraph:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in today's focus group session. You were selected for this group because of the knowledge and insight you can share about your district's/AU's gifted program. We appreciate your active participation today. We highly value your perceptions, thoughts and opinion on this important topic. Today's session will be approximately _____ minutes long. A critical component of continuous improvement is to gather information from district and school stakeholders through the use of focus groups. Today's discussion will provide our district/AU with the opportunity to verify information from your lens about the district's current gifted education program. We will take the information shared today and use it to assist us in creating our overall report of the district's/AU's gifted education program. This report will assist the district/AU to further its continuous improvement efforts. Please know that specific names will not be included in this report to protect anonymity and the confidentiality of our process.

Guidelines for moderating a discussion:

Useful probes:

- Can you talk more about that?
- Would you explain further?
- Would you give an example?
- Help me understand what you mean.

Challenging Participants:

- Self-appointed expert: “Thank you. What do other people think?”
- The dominator: “Let’s hear some other comments.”
- The rambler: Stop eye contact and look at watch or clock. “To honor our time, I am going to move us forward to the next question.”
- The shy participant: Make eye contact. Smile. Call on them. _____ would you care to share your thoughts?
- The quiet talker: “Could I ask you speak a little louder so we can all hear your response.”

Summarize or Paraphrase:

- “So what I am hearing is...”
- “Am I correct in concluding that...”
- “The multiple opinions shared include ...”
- “Your primary observation/opinion/belief is...”
- “You would best describe/explain/conclude that...”

Guidelines for taking notes:

- Consistency and clarity are essential;
- Listen for notable quotes that illustrate a point of view;
- Pay attention to key phrases;
- Use ... (3 periods) to show parts of the quote is missing or not included;
- Record key terms, descriptors or themes;
- If the same idea or opinion is repeated, use tally marks to indicate frequency;
- Record any new guiding questions that were asked that were not part of the pre-determined script;
- Make note of factors which might aid analysis;
- Note body language of participants;
- Note non-verbal activity;
- Indicate agreement of majority or minority of participants; and
- Describe the tone, mood or emotions of group/individual.

Guidelines for analyzing the data:

When analyzing the data collected during a focus group, consider the following:

- **WORDS**: 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?

- **CONTEXT:** Was there a trigger in a question that caused participants to react in a given way – either verbally or non-verbally? Consider the tone and intensity of comments.
- **INTERNAL CONSISTENCY:** Participants will sometimes change views or reverse positions after listening to others. When a shift occurs, trace the flow of the conversation to determine explanations for the change.
- **FREQUENCY OR ELABORATION:** Some questions elicit more discussion than others (elaboration) and some comments are made more often throughout the session (frequency). Make note of questions or topics that had an extensive level of response and those that occurred frequently during the session. Consider what was not said or did not receive any attention.
- **INTENSITY:** Occasionally, participants talk about a topic with intensity. With session notes alone, intensity is often difficult to spot. It is important that during the note-taker records a tone of voice, gestures and words that received a greater level of emphasis.
- **SPECIFICITY:** 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?
- **FINDING BIG IDEAS:** During the final analysis of the focus group generalize the findings into a central, over-arching theme(s) or big ideas.

Guidelines for preparing a report:

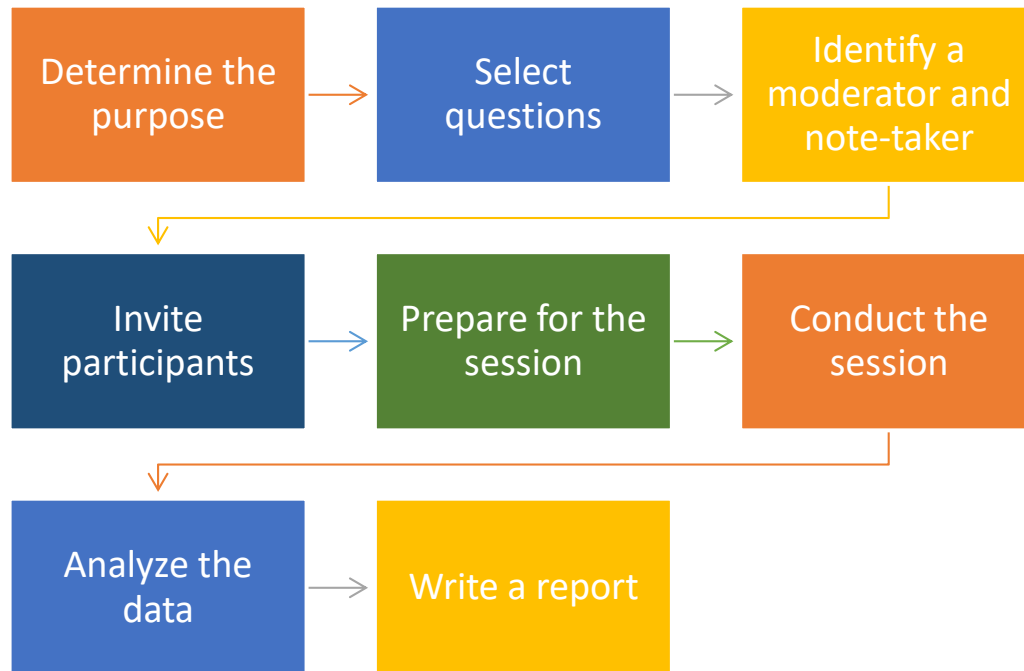
Preparing a report on a focus group requires taking the above considerations and summarizing information into a clear, succinct and concise format. Grouping responses into major themes or discussion topics may be helpful. Use specific quotes of participants when possible to illustrate key concepts or ideas. In some cases, discussion information may be quantified. For example, indicate the number of participants who responded in one way or held a certain belief. Reports are not judgmental nor do they make recommendations for future change. They objectively report the information shared during the discussion.

Based on all the responses, a report might include:

- Top 3-5 programming strengths;
- Top 3-5 issues or concerns;
- Common themes or interpretations; and/or
- Common responses.

See Appendix C for reporting guidance

Steps for conducting a Focus Group:



Possible Focus Group Questions

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 points 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 points 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>

Drs. Neumeister and Burney have developed a set of interview questions that might be used for the purpose of focus groups. These can be found in their book, *Gifted Program Evaluation: A Handbook for Administrators and Coordinators*.



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>