

# Windsor Charter Academy Gifted and Talented Program

To support Windsor Charter Academy's vision of growing students that are "educated, empowered, and equipped to reach their highest potential," all WCA students receive consideration for gifted identification through the gifted screening process. Gifted identification ensures that appropriate programming is utilized to meet the academic and affective needs and post-secondary outcomes of identified students.

## Introduction

The Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA) requires all administrative units (AUs) in Colorado to identify and serve students between the ages of five and twenty-one, and age four in administrative units with Early Access, whose aptitude or competence in abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment in one or more domains are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs.

Administrative units include: school districts, Charter School Institute (CSI), multi-district administrative units and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). ECEA Rules specify the areas for gifted identification in Colorado.

A student may be identified in one or more of these domains (areas):

### **General or Specific Intellectual Ability**

Intellectual ability is exceptional capability or potential recognized through cognitive processes (e.g., memory, reasoning, rate of learning, spatial reasoning, ability to find and solve problems, ability to manipulate abstract ideas and make connections).

### **Specific Academic Aptitude**

Specific academic aptitude is exceptional capability or potential in an academic content area(s) (e.g., a strong knowledge base or the ability to ask insightful, pertinent questions within the discipline). All academic areas should be considered.

## Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Musical, Dance or Psychomotor Abilities

Visual arts, performing arts, musical, dance or psychomotor abilities are exceptional capabilities or potential in talent areas (e.g., art, drama, music, dance, body awareness, coordination, and physical skills).

## Creative or Productive Thinking

Creative or productive thinking is exceptional capability or potential in mental processes (e.g., critical thinking, creative problem solving, humor, independent/original thinking, and/or products).

## Leadership Abilities

Leadership is the exceptional capability or potential to influence and empower people (e.g., social perceptiveness, visionary ability, communication skills, problem solving, inter and intra-personal skills, and a sense of responsibility).

# Portability

The Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA) requires that a student who moves from one district in Colorado to another district in the state retains his/her gifted identification. This concept is referred to as portability.

Portability means that a student's identification in one or more categories of giftedness transfers to any district in the state. Gifted programming must continue according to the receiving district's programming options. Portability of identification is a part of the student's permanent record and Advanced Learning Plan.

If the receiving district's gifted review team determines the previous district identified the student using criteria not aligned to state guidelines, the rule for portability does not apply.

The rule for portability does not apply to students moving into Colorado from another state. However, the receiving school should review the student's records for evidence of giftedness, and then determine whether additional assessment is necessary to confirm if the student meets Colorado criteria for gifted identification. Districts should also be aware of the parameters within the Military Compact Agreement for identified gifted students moving to Colorado as a result of a military transfer.

The following graphic illustrates the steps for portability:



# Assessment

Assessment is the process of gathering information using appropriate tests, instruments, and techniques. The information is gathered for a specific purpose such as screening, classification or selection, curriculum planning or diagnosis, programming planning and progress evaluation.

The purpose of assessment is to gather information relevant to making a decision. The gifted identification process focuses on research-based assessment practices to ensure multiple pathways to identification are available. Not all gifted students demonstrate the same profile of potential and/or ability. Gifted abilities are manifested in a variety of ways; therefore, multiple pathways to identification must be explored through the use of a variety of types and sources of assessment.

Assessment means methods, tools, and data collected as a body of evidence (BOE) for use in identification and programming.

## Body of Evidence

A body of evidence (BOE) considers intellectual, academic, and talent areas through the use of multiple sources and types of data. The BOE should consist of quantitative and qualitative measures to determine if a student meets the criteria for gifted identification and to build a student profile of strengths and interests. Quantitative assessment provides numerical scores or ratings that can be analyzed or quantified. Qualitative assessment provides interpretive and descriptive information about certain attributes, characteristics, behaviors or performances. The former is considered objective, while the latter is considered subjective.

While some of the data in a body of evidence will be used to meet the criteria for gifted identification, other data or information may be used to build a learner profile for the purpose of developing appropriate programming options.

Criteria are the rules for evaluating level of exceptionality for identification assessment. The 95<sup>th</sup> percentile ranking and above describes the rule for demonstration of exceptionality on a standardized, nationally-normed test or observation tool. A performance assessment that indicates exceptionality compared to age mates included a rating that exceeds expectations or demonstrates distinguished/advanced command. Performance indicators may include criterion-referenced tests, portfolio or observation. Criterion-referenced data may be used as qualifying evidence if the student's performance levels exceed grade-level expectations or if 'up-level' assessments are used.

Criteria are not cut-off scores. Typically, cut-off score terminology is used in reference to practices that eliminate students from access to further identification assessments because a single test result or score did not provide evidence at the exceptional level. Windsor Charter Academy does not adhere to cut-off practices.

A variety of measures are contained within a body of evidence. A measure is the tool; a metric is the numeric result of using that measure. A cognitive test is an example of a measure that assesses general intelligence. This test provides a metric to express a level of cognitive ability.

Collection of data for a body of evidence (BOE) includes, but is not limited to assessment results from multiple sources and multiple types of data (i.e., qualitative and quantitative data about achievement, cognitive ability, performance, parent and teacher input, motivation and observations of gifted characteristics/behaviors). The body of evidence contains data to identify the strength area(s) according to the definition of gifted children, and also informs decisions about appropriate programming services.

A Body of Evidence may consist of the following assessments:

- Cognitive Tests
- Creativity Tests
- Achievement Tests
- Behavior Observation Scales
- Performance Evaluation



Body of Evidence at Windsor Charter Academy	
Quantitative	Qualitative
Achievement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● MAP- norm referenced</li> <li>● CMAS- criterion referenced</li> </ul> Intellectual Ability/Aptitude: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cognitive Ability Test (CogAT)</li> </ul>	Behavior Characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Scale for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS)</li> </ul> Demonstrated Performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Performance tasks &amp; interviews</li> <li>● Work samples &amp; portfolios</li> </ul>

## Screening

Screening means an assessment method that uses a tool(s) to determine if the resulting data provide evidence of exceptional potential in an area of giftedness. Screening tools may be qualitative or quantitative in nature, standardized and/or normative. Screening data are part of a body of evidence for making identification and instructional decisions.

A student may enter into a screening through many different entry points. AUs shall develop screening procedures that seek referrals from a variety of sources used for conducting identification assessment. Identification is not just a moment in time or the use of data from one assessment. Referrals for gifted screening may include but are not limited to

## Referrals

ECEA Rules state an identification team has a timeline of no more than 30 school days after a referral is received to determine whether a student will be formally identified or if more time is needed to continue with identification assessment. The team's decision should be communicated to the parent, student and other educators. This does not mean an identification determination must be made within 30 days; rather all stakeholders should receive information on intended next steps of the identification process within this timeline.

A referral made for possible gifted identification does not necessarily lead to the automatic administration of specific assessments. The identification team will carefully consider the referral, examine current student assessment data and determine appropriate next steps. This may or may not include administering additional tests.

Teachers and parents can refer students for gifted identification consideration. Referrals can be made at any time. Referrals must be submitted to the school's GT Coordinator. Some assessments are only given at certain times during the year, so the process might take some time.

### **Common reasons for referral:**

- Student has not taken all universal screeners.
- Student is new to the district.
- K-2 Identification
- Possible identification in Visual Arts, Music, Leadership, Creativity
-

# Universal Screening

Universal screening is one of the many different pathways from which a student might be referred.

“Universal Screening” means the systematic assessment of ALL students within a grade level for identifying students with exceptional ability or potential, especially students from traditionally underrepresented populations.

The intent of a universal screener is to find indicators of exceptionality in all student groups. A universal screener is a tool that allows students to show their ability and potential in area such as reasoning, perception, creativity, motivation and problem solving. Universal screening supports cultural fairness and non-biased testing in identification assessment.

A universal screener is not just for the specific purpose of identifying highly capable or gifted students. Data collected through a universal screener provides information to support instructional planning for:

- ALL students
- Students referred for further gifted identification assessment
- Students recommended for talent pool

There are two types of universal screening tools widely used in gifted education. One provides quantitative data collected through the use of a cognitive abilities test. The other provides qualitative data through the use of reliable and valid (proven) classroom observational tools. Tests or inventories that are considered qualitative use the results and tally of observations to describe and understand an Universal Screening 15 Gifted Identification Guidebook | 2020 individual's strengths or other characteristics. Quantitative assessments use metrics to describe and understand an individual's strengths or other characteristics (Ryser, 2004).

Universal screening data enable decisions about referrals or talent pool designation in gifted identification assessment. Students who require a referral will need additional tests or information about achievement, performance, and/or behavioral characteristics for building a body of evidence. In turn, the BOE is included in a student profile that is used by a team when making identification determinations. Students identified for a talent pool will require further differentiated instruction and experiences with monitoring of progress over time to decide when and if a formal referral and comprehensive body of evidence is required for identification determinations.

Universal Screening at WCA includes:

- Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)
  - The CogAT is administered to all second graders each spring.

- Measures of Academic Process (MAP)
  - The MAP is administered to all 2nd-5th in the fall, winter, and spring.
- Colorado Measures of Academic Success
  - The CMAS is administered to all 3rd-5th graders each spring.
- In addition, other assessments may be used to determine gifted abilities.



## Partnerships with Parents

The AU's comprehensive program plan describes how parents are informed about access to identification procedures. Parents often provide valuable insight into their child's strengths, abilities and interests. Primary points for parental involvement are referral and adding important information to the body of evidence. This might include parents completing a questionnaire or checklist or participating in an interview.

## Review Team Process

Each administrative unit (AU), through its program plan, shall use identification assessment and review by a team, as described in state board rule, to identify gifted children. The team shall use a body of evidence upon which to base the determination of giftedness, which evidence must include, at a minimum, the identification assessment results, parental input and multiple types of measures and data sources.

A review team should include at least one person trained or endorsed in gifted identification and programming. Training may include work towards an endorsement or the completion of specific courses in gifted education.

The review team provides opportunities for input from all teachers working with the student and from the student's parents.

The review team examines the body of evidence and may make one or more of the following determinations:

- Move to formal gifted identification
- Identify student for a talent pool
- Select new tools to collect additional data
- Determine data do not support identification at this time
- Determine a student may need to be referred for special education assessment in addition to his/her gifted identification (twice-exceptional students)

## Talent Pool

The body of evidence for some students may not lead to formal gifted identification, but data may demonstrate the student should be included in a "talent pool."

A talent pool is defined as a group of students who demonstrate an advanced or even exceptional ability in a particular area, but at this time do not meet the criteria for gifted identification. Often students in a talent pool are provided advanced or gifted programming services. As students are presented with additional levels of challenge and rigor, increased achievement may occur. A student may meet the criteria for gifted identification at a later date.

Some students identified gifted in one domain may be part of a talent pool for a different domain. For example, a student who demonstrates a specific academic aptitude in reading as an elementary student may be included in a talent pool for mathematics. Over time, data are reevaluated to determine if this student meets the criteria for specific academic aptitude identification in the area of mathematics. Multipotentiality in gifted students often leads to identification in additional domains later in a child's educational path. Students within the talent pool should receive appropriate programming options and/or interventions to address strength or potential areas. A review team may also consider if additional assessments need to be administered to collect additional data and/or continue to review the student's data over time to determine if gifted identification is appropriate at a later

date. Gifted identification should never be just a moment in time during the educational path of a student. Identification is fluid and continuous throughout the school years.

Students whose scores on a screening assessment are lower than the 95th percentile, or whose results on observation or performance assessment screening tools are not at the level to meet identification criteria, may be recommended by the review team for further data collection and observation or for inclusion in a talent pool.

AUs may determine if a talent pool is used and the length a time in which a student participates. Selection for a talent pool is not just being included on a list for future identification assessment. Rather, it is inclusion into appropriate differentiated programming options necessary to develop an academic or talent aptitude and promote achievement and growth. Research indicates that some students talented in the arts may not have enough experience and talent development to meet criteria until middle school. This suggests that not all students will stay in the talent pool for the same amount of time.



## Gifted Determination

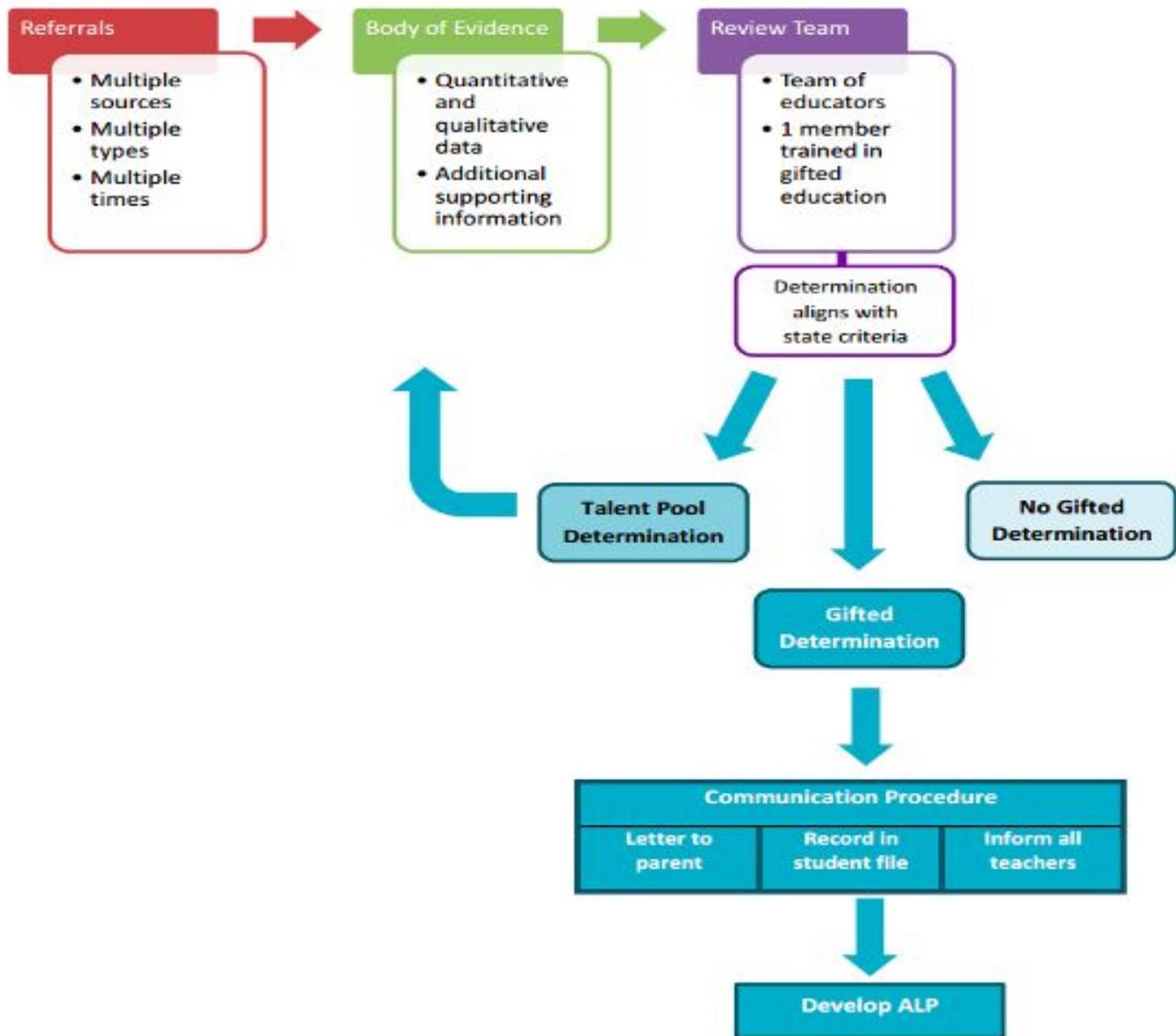
The assessment process shall recognize a student's exceptional abilities or potential, interests, and needs in order to guide student instruction and individualized planning and programming. In traditionally underrepresented student groups and visual/performing arts student groups or talent pools, identification may require the collection of student information over time, using additional data points from a response to intervention approach.

Not meeting criteria on a single assessment tool shall not prevent further data collection or consideration for gifted identification, if other indicators suggest exceptional potential as observed in a body of evidence.

All qualifying data points in a body of evidence must be regarded equally. Placing greater emphasis on a specific test or awarding more points to a test score above a specific percentile is not considered an ethical practice in gifted identification.

Once a student has been identified, programming continues through graduation. If an identified student falls below gifted and talented guidelines and expectations, effort should be made to identify the areas of underachievement and individualized interventions should be put in place to support the student.

# Components of Gifted Identification Assessment

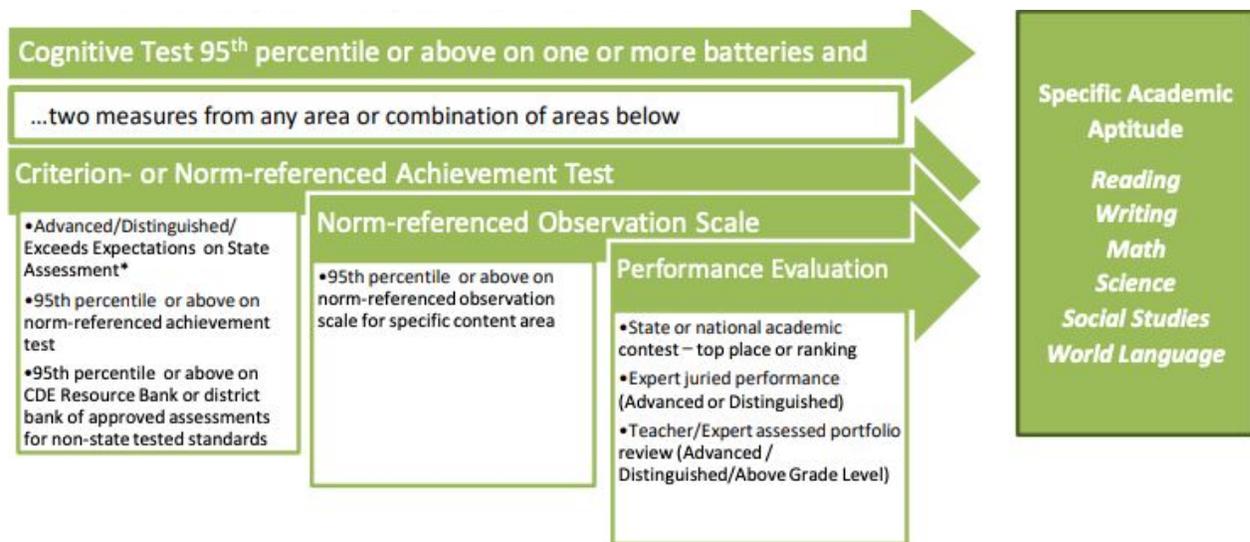


# Gifted Identification Criteria

Multiple pathways can lead to a determination of giftedness. The following models represent the criteria utilized to determine an area (domain) of gifted identification. While some qualitative and quantitative data are used as qualifying measures, additional data within the body of evidence are utilized to develop a student's learning profile of strengths and interests. This profile leads to the development of the ALP and ICAP.

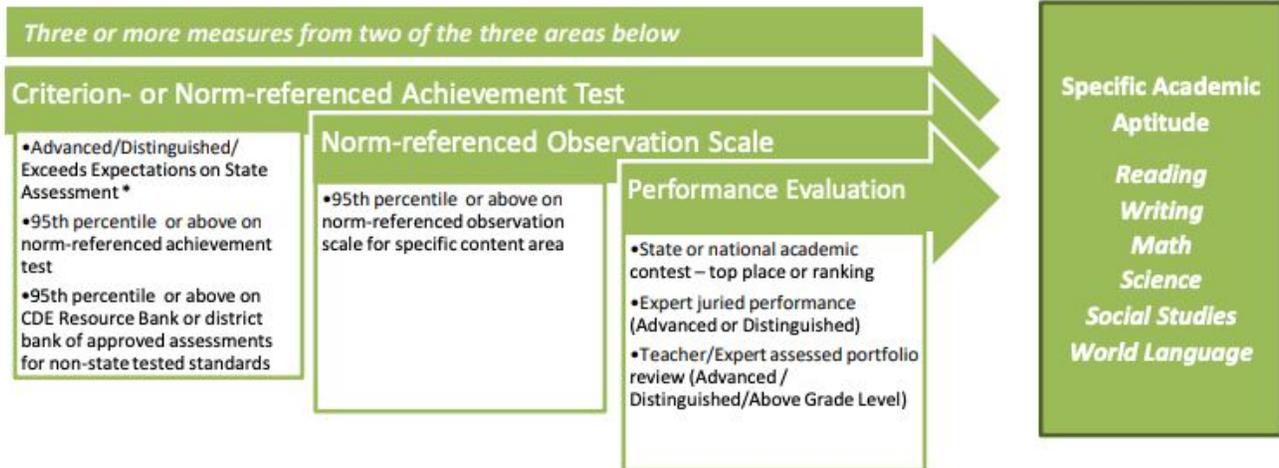
## Area of Giftedness: Specific Academic Aptitude

Content areas for specific academic aptitude include: reading, writing, math, science, social studies and world language. **Two pathways may lead to identification in the area of specific academic aptitude.**



First, a student may score 95th percentile or above on one or more batteries of a cognitive test and demonstrate aptitude on **two** specific academic measures. A performance level of Exceeds Expectations on the ELA state assessment is qualifying evidence for identification in both reading and writing. If a student has a qualifying ELA state assessment score and a cognitive score of a 95th percentile or above on one or more batteries of a cognitive assessment, one additional reading measure would be needed to make a determination for Specific Academic Aptitude in the content area of reading. Likewise, one additional writing measure would be needed for a writing determin

Second, a student may not score 95th percentile or above on a cognitive test. However, a review team may determine a comprehensive body of evidence demonstrating gifted academic ability. Content specific measurement tools to meet criteria for identification should include at least three or more measures from two of the three areas below. When cognitive data do not meet gifted criteria, identification in a specific academic aptitude requires an examination of multiple data points and trends over time.



Using this pathway in the primary years requires caution and sufficient data from multiple data points. At any time when the team needs more time to make a determination, ongoing opportunities in the specific domain are needed to ensure the child's continued growth and engagement in the content area. Additionally, continued examination of multiple data points and trend data over time, three years or less, may be necessary.

A performance level of Exceeds Expectations on the ELA state assessment is qualifying evidence for identification in both reading and writing. If a student has a qualifying ELA state assessment score and does not have a qualifying cognitive score, two additional reading measures would be required to make a determination for Specific Academic Aptitude in the content area of reading. Likewise, two additional writing measures would be needed for a writing determination.

### **Area of Giftedness: Creative or Productive Thinking, Leadership and Specific Talent Aptitudes**

Identification in creative and productive thinking, leadership and specific talent aptitudes requires the examination of a variety of instruments and the multiple pathways that lead to identification. Talent domains include visual arts, performing arts, music, dance and psychomotor. It is important educators understand the unique and varied characteristics a student may demonstrate in the talent domains. Within these areas, several years of talent

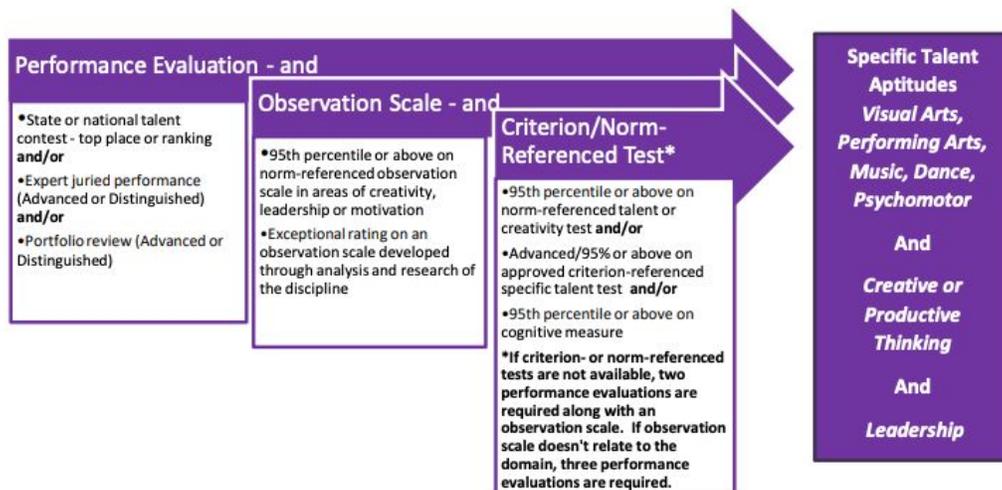
development may be needed before formal gifted identification can be made. Students may be included in a talent pool to foster potential over time. The student may require further development to build a body of evidence that supports identification.

Often criterion- or norm-referenced assessments are not available in these areas; therefore performance evaluation is an important component in the body of evidence. If data from a valid and reliable test are not available to demonstrate exceptional ability, two or more indicators in the performance area may be used to meet identification criteria along with an exceptional rating on an observation. In some cases, a norm-referenced scale may not provide an appropriate measure for certain talent domains. An observation scale that has been developed through analysis and research of the discipline may be used to provide qualifying evidence for talent identification only. Observation scales and performance evaluation scales should contain content and construct validity.

Identification in the area of psychomotor is designated for state- or national-level elite athletes who have received this ranking from the sport's national governing body. These athletes may require a gifted determination to address the interventions necessary as a result of the amount of time the student is out of school or to earn credits for specific courses. Districts are not required to provide or financially support athletic coaching, training or competitions for students identified in this area.

The body of evidence for psychomotor identification would include three of the following four indicators:

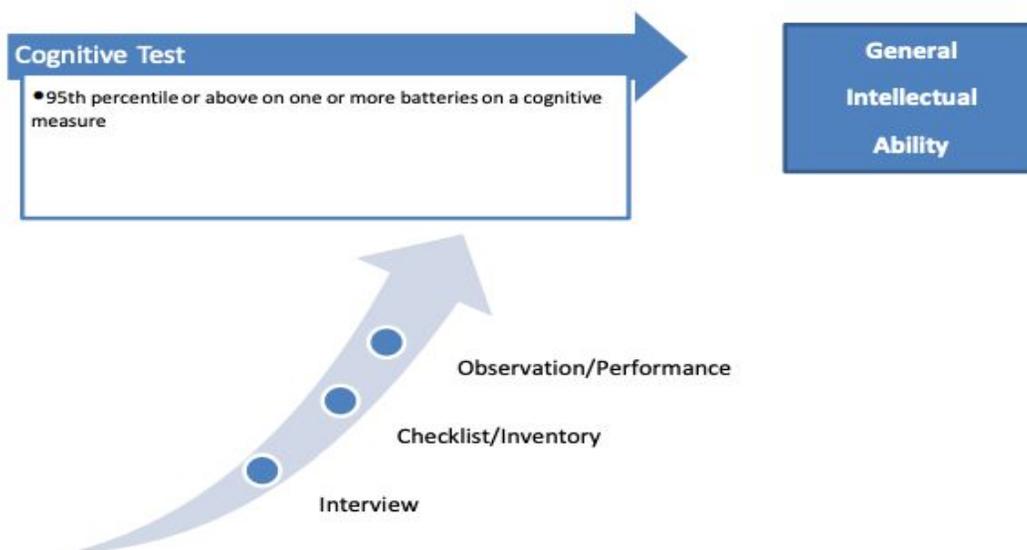
- 95th percentile or above on the Gifted Evaluation Scale (GES) for motivation;
- Portfolio that chronicles the student's exceptional performance;
- Top state or national ranking as determined by the sport's national governing body;
- Student or team receiving a top placement or ranking in a multi-state or national competition



## Areas of Giftedness: General Intellectual Ability

Students may qualify in the area of general intellectual ability with a score of 95th percentile or above on one or more batteries of a cognitive test. The determination team must collect and review additional data for the body of evidence to develop the student's learning profile.

A gifted determination based solely on a cognitive assessment score, without any other qualifying data, is the **exception**. A review team should use their professional judgment to determine if identification is appropriate by examining supplemental or non-traditional information collected through interviews, observations or performances beyond the academic content areas. Students from underrepresented populations may not demonstrate gifted abilities through the use of traditional achievement data. When only cognitive ability assessment data meet criteria in a body of evidence (95th percentile or above), the review team **may** determine that the student is identified with general or specific intellectual ability. This meets portability requirements.



## Summary

The identification assessment is a comprehensive process set by the local administrative unit that encompasses procedures, materials, and personnel for successful identification practices across schools and student groups.

The result of identification is programming. Knowing the student's profile of strengths and interests is the backdrop for developing the individual advanced learning plan

(ALP). Through the ALP, relevant academic and affective goals set the stage for developing academic and talent aptitude over time. The ultimate outcome of identification is that all gifted students attain postsecondary career and college goals, act with self-esteem and self-advocacy, and are creative, productive members of society.

## Resources

Resource: Colorado Department of Education Gifted Identification Guidance Handbook. Retrieved from: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/idguidebook>