

# The Law Behind the Label: How Legislation Shapes Gifted Education

An Exploration by the Colorado Gifted and  
Talented Student Board

# Who are we?



# Our Goals

## Mission

Our mission is to create a platform where GT students have the opportunity to be unified and are empowered to advocate for their education and academic success.

## Vision

Our vision is a cohesive educational system where GT students actively shape the policies on GT education, ensuring unique needs and gifts are recognized, understood, and enriched by educators.

# Past Work



## *Past Conferences:*

- Colorado Association of School Boards
- Colorado Association for the Gifted and Talented
- National Association for Gifted Children
- World Council for Gifted Children

## *Presented for:*

- Colorado Department of Education
- Gifted Education State Advisory Committee

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How Educators Can Impact  
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# How State Laws Are Created in GT

- There is no federal mandate for gifted education
- Dependent on state legislation
- Once legislation is passed, the Department of Education issues policies
  - Afterwards, incorporated into programs



# 01

## Learning Experiences

How State Legislation Impacts Gifted and Talented Student Learning  
and Their Experience in the Classroom



# Learning As A Gifted Student

- Gifted Students have different classroom experiences based on legislation
  - Funding and facilitator requirements largely affects this
  - Funding impacts student learning and projects
- Gifted learning is stimulated by opportunities beyond the classroom
- Opportunities for hands on learning is made possible by resources





# Being Categorized as Gifted

- Gifted Education is largely dependent on identification
  - Lacks accuracy
  - Late identification can lead to lack of motivation
    - Learning journey is shaped by identification time and manor
  - Legislation largely impacts the opportunities provided to students for their identification



# Moving Forward

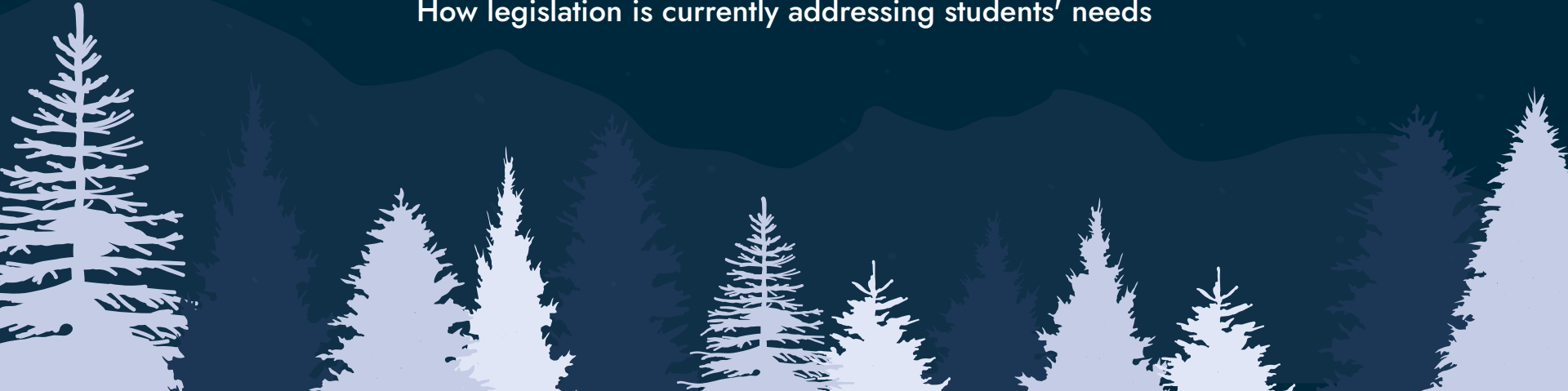
- Funding to promote hands on and engaging learning
- Facilitator requirements ensure gifted students receive adequate support
- Specific measures of identification that prevent students from slipping through the cracks
- All these changes, supported by legislation, start with student and educator advocacy



# 02

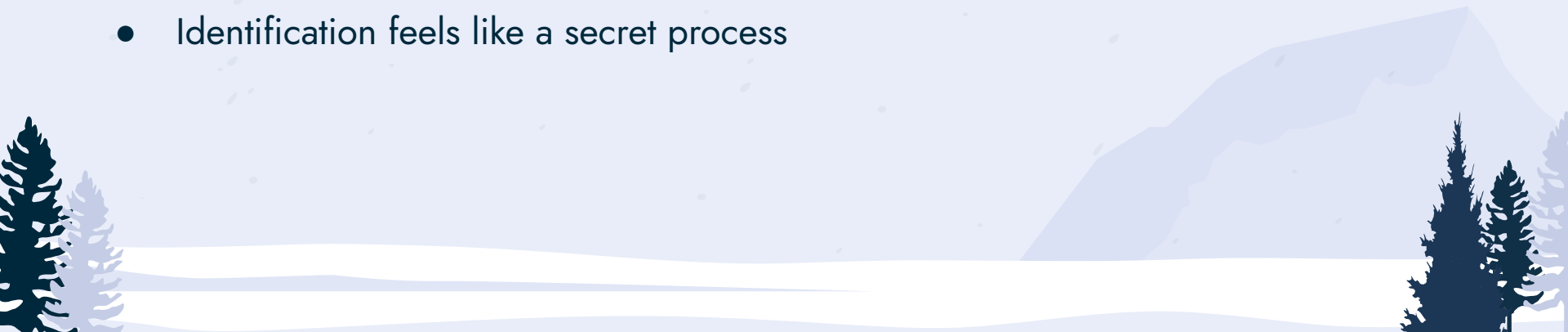
## Legislative Landscape for Gifted Students

How legislation is currently addressing students' needs



# Legislation Affects Identification

- State law requires CogAT testing at the end of second grade
  - Successful for most students but not everyone
- Underfunded schools are unable to afford testing
  - Students are prioritized in urban areas and lack resources in more rural areas
- Identification feels like a secret process



# Lack of School Resources

- Lack of GT coordinators to facilitate GT learning
- Different resources at different schools lead to varied experiences
- Little space to build a GT community
- Lack of opportunities to take rigorous course load
- No central resource hub for secondary school GT students: volunteer applications, internships, and scholarship opportunities



# Steps Moving Forward

- Different allocation of resources to improve the learning experiences of students in the Gifted and Talented Program
- More administrator and student connections allows better understanding of the experiences of GT students



# 03

## Student Led Legislative Advocacy

How Students Can Advocate for their own Legislative Needs



# What Can Students Do To Advocate?

## Exceptional Children's Educational Act

- State level documents dictate the way that the state conducts itself
- The ALP is the only resource GT students have  
GUARANTEED access to
  - Especially beneficial for districts without resources



# Steps Moving Forward

- Students can make a change through their advocacy
  - Lobbying and testifying
- Our board
  - Legislative Outreach Program
  - Working to create a bill to introduce to the legislature



# 04

## Educator Awareness

How Educators can impact Gifted and Talented legislation, both through guiding students and using their own unique perspectives.



# The Challenges #1

- **Bias**

- Over reliance on older teaching methods
  - The failure of traditional teaching methods
- Culture and socio-economic bias
  - Racial bias

- **Misunderstanding of Student's Needs**

- The unique social emotional needs of GT students
- Underestimation of challenges
  - Stereotypes of GT

# The Challenges #2

- **Limited Professional**

## **Development in GT**

- Accessible training
- Limited resources
  - Lack of state funding

- **One Size Fits All Approach**

- Teaching approaches
- Lack of opportunities available depending on environmental based factors (rural vs urban)

# Steps Moving Forward

Check Ins	GT Spaces	Effective Teaching Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expectations</li><li>• Anonymous Reflections</li><li>• Encourage Communication</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting social, emotional &amp; intellectual needs</li><li>• Opportunities for teamwork and feedback</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flexibility</li><li>• Discussions, projects, specific assignments</li><li>• Advanced ≠ more work</li></ul>

# Questions?



# Thanks!

Reach out to us!

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