

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
and Change GT Education

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 manner
 - 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">• Expectations• Anonymous Reflections• Encourage Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting social, emotional & intellectual needs• Opportunities for teamwork and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexibility• Discussions, projects, specific assignments• Advanced ≠ more work

Questions?



Thanks!

Reach out to us!

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