

Gifted and Talented

Who are the gifted?

Giftedness is a collection of certain characteristics that have been displayed by remarkable adults and children past and present. Among the gifted there is great diversity; they are not a homogeneous group. Each gifted person has a different combination of characteristics and demonstrates them in different ways. Gifted people may be uneven (asynchronous) in development; a gifted individual may have extraordinary ability in several areas, but be average or even below average in other areas.

Years of research about giftedness indicate that the following traits—in some combination—are characteristic of gifted youngsters:

- keenly observant
- learns very quickly with few repetitions
- highly curious
- independent or non-conforming
- creative
- ability to retain information
- imaginative
- able to concentrate intensely
- able to develop a social conscience—sense of justice and responsibility—early
- able to set high standards for self
- intuitive
- empathetic
- persistent
- resistant to routine; prefers challenge
- interested in a wide variety of topics
- intensely involved in a topic
- able to reason abstractly and perceive relationships earlier than others
- mature, playful, or unusual sense of humor.

These characteristics may be assets or liabilities in the school setting. The gifted child may or may not finish class assignments quickly and may be either well-behaved or disruptive. Many gifted pupils are “good students” and high achievers, but others, equally gifted, are not. Because of their diversity and individuality, there is no easy formula for the identification of gifted students or for developing programming and services to meet their varying needs.

Definition of Gifted and Talented

In the Denver Public Schools, "gifted and talented children" means those students whose demonstrated abilities, talents and/or potential for accomplishment are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational needs. These students perform, or show the potential of performing, at remarkably high levels in intellectual, specific academic or creative areas when compared with others of their age and experience. Gifted and talented children are present in all student groups, regardless of gender, disability, English language proficiency, economic status, ethnic or cultural background.

Denver Public Schools' Highly Gifted Program

This program provides an educational option for students in first through eighth grades whose extraordinary educational, emotional and social needs are best met in a setting that clusters these students. This program is available for all students who qualify based on demonstrated achievement, tested potential, teacher recommendations, identifiable characteristics and/or demonstrated need. These students make up approximately 1% of the student population. A nomination form describing the program and providing information about the nomination process is produced and distributed each fall to every K-7 student in the Denver Public Schools.

How does Edison serve its gifted and highly gifted students?

At Edison, we believe in the education of the individual child. To accomplish this, we differentiate. Differentiation occurs in many ways. The data team process is used to analyze assessment which is then used to group our children in reading and math to meet their needs and abilities. We use a flooding model (see Rtl handout) to make sure that all students' needs are met. Acceleration (advanced curriculum for those showing ability beyond their grade level) is used where it is appropriate. Our students also receive enrichment in curricular subjects where they are taught to dig deeper through research and presentation. Project based learning is a great way for teachers to differentiate to meet students' needs. In project based learning, all students may be studying the same subject, but their level of resources and materials and depth of study may exceed those of other students. Identified highly gifted students are homogeneously grouped by homeroom to be with students who have similar needs. Individual teachers also differentiate for the individual child in their classroom on a daily basis.