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Arriving at a new school...

Before leaving the current school, parents should request an updated copy of their child's Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). The ALP is Colorado's term for a gifted education plan. By Colorado law, every gifted student has a plan that delineates data used for identification and services provided. Parents have the right to receive a copy of this plan. Ensure your student's current ALP has the contact information of school/district gifted personnel in case the receiving school has questions about the gifted identification or services.

When a family first arrives at the new school, request to speak to the principal or the person who oversees the gifted program. Provide the school with the copy of the ALP. The school will request the formal transfer of a student's cumulative records, but the hand-carried copies may ensure the child does not have to wait to receive program services while waiting for official transcripts to arrive.

Questions for the new school:

- Are you familiar with the Military Interstate Compact Agreement?
- What are your school/district's procedures for a transferring gifted military child?
- What are your criteria for gifted identification? By examining the data from my child's ALP, will he/she qualify for gifted education in your state/district?
- What type of programming will be provided to my child to meet his/her gifted needs?
- What type of enrichment, after-school programming, contests, or camps do you provide for gifted students?
- Will my child have a formal education plan, and how will I be involved in creating this new plan?
- What additional assessments may need to be administered?



RESOURCES

Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children | <http://www.mic3.net/>
National Association of Gifted Children | <http://www.nagc.org/>
Colorado Department of Education: Gifted Education | <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/index.htm>

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It is time to PCS...

A military career is an honorable and distinguished profession; however, it also may mean multiple relocations to new states and countries. Statistics show that the average child of military parents will move six to nine times between kindergarten and twelfth grade. Each time a child leaves one school and enters another, the child may endure feelings of anticipation, concern, sadness, anxiety, and confusion. There are new schools to learn, new friends to make, new classes to take and often new and different grade-level and graduation requirements. These challenges increase resiliency and provide opportunities for children to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. An added challenge may occur when the child is receiving specific educational services and programming and has a unique and specialized education plan. Services a student receives in one state may vary or not exist in a new state.

This also applies to gifted education.



Gifted Education Guidelines

Unlike special education, identifying and serving gifted students is not required by federal law. For gifted learners, all program and service decisions are made at the state and/or local level. In the absence of federal minimum standards, there is wide variability between states and districts when it comes to gifted identification and services. The federal government allocates only three cents of every \$100 of education spending to gifted children. Therefore, meeting the needs of our most advanced learners has been left up to each state's discretion. Some states regard gifted students in the same way they do special education students. The state sets criteria that will be used for gifted education and a formal plan, called an Individualized Education Program (IEP), is created for the identified student. Other states write educational plans for gifted students; however, they vary in name, content, and thoroughness. In Colorado, gifted students have an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). Some states do not require a gifted education plan, nor is gifted education mandated by statewide legislation. This results in inconsistencies in gifted identification and programming throughout the United States. With this in mind, parents may need to advocate for their gifted child.

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Interstate Compact Agreement

The *Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children* created legislation to ease school-to-school transfers for military children. The intent of the Compact is to minimize the disruption in education when a child moves because of a parents' military transfer or deployment. Parents of an identified gifted student should be familiar with the section on Placement and Attendance in *The Interstate Commission on Educational Opportunity for Military Children Rules*. The Rules state when a gifted student moves, the new school should place the student in the same or similar program and/or courses he/she was taking in the previous school. However, the Compact allows the new school to subsequently perform a new evaluation to collect additional data to ensure the child is placed and identified appropriately according to the new school, district and/or state requirements.



Advocating for the Gifted Child

Because state criteria for gifted identification differ and programming varies dramatically, parents may need to advocate for their gifted child enrolling in a school in a new state. The new school may not be able to replicate the same level of services or the same type of classes or programs the gifted child received in a different state. For example, a child may be taking an Advanced Placement (AP) course that is not offered in a new school or had been receiving gifted pull-out services that are not available in the new school. The Compact Rules state, "The receiving state school shall initially honor placement of the student in educational programs based on current educational assessments conducted at the school in the state or participation/placement in like programs in the sending state" [5.122]. Parents are encouraged to work collaboratively with the new school to determine what placement might best mirror services the child had been receiving or what new programming options could be provided to meet the child's gifted academic and affective needs. If the new district or school requires "subsequent evaluations" to determine "appropriate placement", parents should request the child receive gifted services or be placed in similar advanced classes while waiting for the reevaluation to occur.



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