Middle School Gifted Education in Blue Valley Schools

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Gifted Education Eligibility
In Kansas & Nationally

- Broad views of giftedness nationally
- Giftedness not included in federal IDEA law
- Continuum of approaches across the country, determined by each state
- Kansas on one pole of the continuum (with 7 other states)
  - State mandated services
  - Included in special education
  - Students have IEPs for gifted education
- Unintended consequences
Gifted Education Eligibility

- Problem solving process
  - Does the child have an exceptionality?
  - Because of an exceptionality, does the child need services outside of what can be offered in general education?

- Problem solving team
  - General education teacher
  - Special education/gifted education teacher
  - School psychologist
  - Counselor
  - Administrator
  - Other staff members as appropriate
Gifted Education Eligibility

- Problem solving team collects multiple data points
  - Student’s response to interventions (class-wide, individualized)
  - Characteristics of giftedness consistently seen
- Intelligence
- Achievement
- Targets for testing
  - Intelligence—99th percentile
  - Achievement—98th/99th percentile
- Teams follow where the data leads
- Look for convergence of data points
- At the end of the process, the team includes parents for review of collected data, additional input, and decision making

Education Beyond Expectations
Gifted Education Eligibility

- Students considered K-12
- Blue Valley Schools’ process follows state regulations
- Districts in Kansas have freedom in some areas
  - Determine eligibility process
  - Identify standards of eligibility
  - Determine services
  - Determine service delivery methods
Gifted Education Eligibility

- What about MAP tests?
  - Demonstrate student performance with math and reading standards
  - Blue Valley’s internal study of known IQ scores and MAP scores
    - Anticipated seeing correlations
    - IQ scores of wide range of students
    - MAP scores were scattered
    - Could not discern which students identified as gifted from MAP
  - MAP data offers general education teachers valuable information about each student’s understanding of and ability with content standards
  - MAP scores are not included in the gifted education eligibility process.
Middle School Gifted Education Services
Guided Discovery Class

- Primary service delivery through Guided Discovery class
- Guided Discovery paired with Physical Education, so it meets every other day
- Unique individual needs met through other contact with gifted education teacher
- Gifted education teacher provides ideas for strategies and resources for general education teachers to use for differentiation
Middle School Services

- Gifted education curriculum small group experiences
- Personalized support for the pursuit of IEP goals
- Transition support during 6th & 8th grades
- College and career readiness support and investigation
- Passion area research direction
- Social and emotional support for needs related to giftedness
- Interaction with intellectual peers
Gifted Education Curriculum

◦ Overarching Skill Strands
  · Critical Thinking Skills
  · Creative Thinking Skills
  · Problem Solving Skills
  · Research Skills
  · Leadership Skills
  · Social & Emotional Coping Skills
  · Technology Skills

◦ Skill strands consistent across schools
◦ Activities may differ among schools
Gifted Education Curriculum

- Collaboratively developed strands, units, activities
- Individually developed strands, units, activities
- Capitalize on the interests and passions of the students each year
- Small group and individualized experiences
Gifted Education Class

- Grade level time with gifted education teacher and other students identified as gifted
- Other needs met individually
- Half of the time on IEP goals; half of the time on curriculum elements
- Goals tied to skill development
- The art and craft of teaching
Middle School Sample Activities

Six-Word Stories

- Started with Hemingway
- Students use images from *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* as inspiration for a six-word story
- Write another six-word story related to their lives
- Emphasis on diction, syntax, critical thinking, creative thinking, communication
- Leads to creative writing unit
Middle School Sample Activities

- Toy Box Leadership
  - Connects leadership traits with common childhood toys
  - Students use Legos to build a small structure
  - Discuss what it takes to make a secure structure—making connections
  - Address the importance of making connections and building relationships with the people you lead
  - Emphasis on leadership skills, social-emotional skills, communication
  - Part of study of Toy Box Leadership book
Middle School Sample Activities

Future City Planning with Design Thinking

- Generate ideas needed for solution to city problem
- Development of critical/creative thinking skills
  - Fluency—many ideas
  - Flexibility—variety of ideas
  - Originality—unique ideas
  - Elaboration—details, improving ideas
- Learning to consider innovative approaches to everyday situations from different perspectives, while focusing on empathy for human needs in the problem (design thinking)
- Emphasis on critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, research, communication, teamwork
- Part of the process for participation in Future City design competition
Potential Topics

- **Wide range of potential topics**
  - Toy Box Leadership
  - Six Word Stories
  - Future City Design
  - What If
  - Coding
  - Robotics
  - Debate
  - Communication & Listening
  - Service Learning
  - Inventions
  - How Big is Big
  - Mindsets
  - Understanding Perfectionism
  - Who Am I? Gifted Dossiers
  - Many more

- Dependent on students’ grade levels and interests
Middle School Schedules

- Guided Discovery is a class during the school day
- Students in the same grade in classes together
- Multiple sections for one grade level
- Part of the A/B school schedule
- Additional needs met individually
- Gifted education teachers attend PLCs for teams when possible
- Schedules built as part of the overall building master schedule

Education Beyond Expectations
Extracurricular Activities

- Extracurricular activities typically specific to each school
  - Student interest
  - Adult sponsorship

- Commonly seen activities
  - Battle of the Brains
  - Various “bees” (spelling, geography, etc.)
  - Robotics
  - Interest driven school clubs (chess, books, etc.)
  - Science fair
  - Math tests/competitions
  - Writing contests
  - Student Council
  - Music (band, orchestra, choir)
  - Performing Arts (theater, yearbook, newspaper)
  - Sports (basketball, football, volleyball, track, cross country, possibly others)
  - Community service

- What to do if a club/activity does not yet exist
Gifted Education IEPs and Special Education Processes
The IEP Team

- Makes decisions about the IEP
- Parents are part of the team
- Team members include:
  - Student (when old enough to participate)
  - Parents/guardians/appointed adult
  - A General education teacher
  - Special education teacher
  - Administrator (or designee)
  - School psychologist (sometimes)
The Gifted Education IEP

- Annually reviewed document
- Details aspects of student’s special education experiences
- Team decisions about content
- Document at meeting is a draft
- Parents can request a meeting anytime
  - Not all meetings have to be IEP meetings
Required Elements

◦ Statement of Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance
◦ Goals based on needs
◦ Gifted education services
◦ Parent concerns
◦ Placement conversation
More About IEP Goals

- Identify elements of PLAAFP to focus on for goal(s)
- Individually developed
- Goals written to develop skills
- Specially designed instruction of gifted education facilitates student work toward the goal
- Difference from special education for disabilities
  - Not focused on closing gaps
  - Expanding knowledge, removing ceilings, opening new interests, developing passion areas, etc.
The IEP Meeting

- Recommend teachers use an agenda
- Meeting includes required attendees
- Major areas of the IEP reviewed (not typically read verbatim)
- Parent concerns discussed
- Ideally the focus is on the conversation
The IEP Meeting

- All team members should participate actively
- Signing the IEP shows attendance
- Any consent items are included on a separate form (Prior Written Notice—PWN)
## Consent Sometimes Needed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consent Needed</th>
<th>Consent Not Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial evaluation for gifted education</td>
<td>Student goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement in gifted education (initial meeting)</td>
<td>Programs/curriculum used to act upon goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in services (change of 25% or more)</td>
<td>Specific people providing services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in placement (not location)</td>
<td>Specific people to attend meetings (required roles must be present)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reevaluation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ending services</td>
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Questions?
Contact

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