Middle School Gifted Education in Blue Valley Schools

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Middle School Gifted Education Services
Guided Discovery Class

- Primary services delivered 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 being a student who is gifted in a non-gifted world
Middle School
Gifted Education Curriculum

Education Beyond Expectations

- Overarching Skill Strands
  - Critical Thinking Skills
  - Creative Thinking Skills
  - Problem Solving Skills
  - Research Skills
  - Technology Skills
  - Leadership Skills
  - Social & Emotional Coping 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 ideally tied to skills
- The art and craft of teaching
Middle School Sample Activities

- Experience the activities students engage in!
  - Writing 6 Word Stories
    - Critical Thinking
    - Creative Thinking
  - Toy Box Leadership
    - Leadership
    - Social-Emotional Coping
  - Design Thinking for Future Cities
    - Problem Solving
    - Research
- Share your experience with the group

Sharing the Experience

Share with the rest of the group your experiences and impressions from your table’s activity.
Writing Six-Word Stories

- Originated with Hemingway
- Fosters experimentation with language
- Requires precision in diction
- Practice in syntax of words
- Fosters creative thinking with pictures
- Leads to a larger story-telling unit
- Interest built with throwback to childhood via *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*

Toy Box Leadership

- Defining critical leadership traits
- Small group interaction
- Supports development of transferrable traits
- Replaces tendency toward bossiness in group situations
- Facilitates social and emotional skills for building meaningful relationships
- Facilitates communication and teamwork
- Part of study of *Toy Box Leadership* book
Design Thinking for Future Cities

- Development of creative thinking skills
  - Fluency—many ideas
  - Flexibility—variety of ideas
  - Originality—unique ideas
  - Elaboration—details, improving ideas
- Development of research skills
- Learning to consider innovative approaches to everyday situations from different perspectives, while focusing on human needs
- Transferrable skills to wide range of academic, social, interpersonal, career, life, and other situations
- 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 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 schedule

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,
  - 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