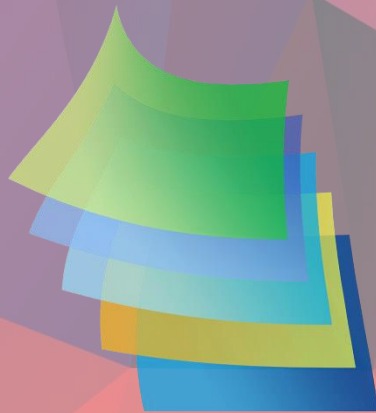


# Elementary Gifted Education in Blue Valley Schools

Kristin Asquith  
Blue Valley Schools



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# Gifted Education Eligibility

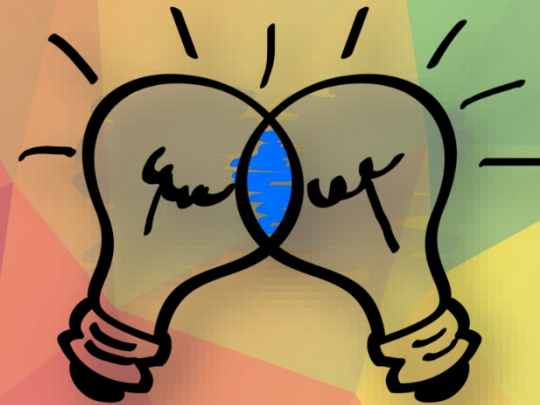


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# Gifted Education Eligibility

- Problem solving process
  - Does the child have an exceptionalality?
  - Because of an exceptionalality, does the child need services beyond 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—99<sup>th</sup> percentile
  - Achievement—98<sup>th</sup>/99<sup>th</sup> percentile
- Teams follow where the data leads
- Looking 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



# Characteristics of Giftedness

- Superior problem solving skills
- Persistent intellectual curiosity
- Initiative/originality in intellectual work
- Asks searching questions
- High level conceptual understanding
- Depth of knowledge in multiple areas
- Generates original ideas and solutions
- Persistent
- Easily masters grade-level work
- High level of critical thinking



# Characteristics of Giftedness

- High level of abstract thinking
- Concern for world problems or fairness
- High moral judgment
- Unusually high intensity or depth of feeling
- Asynchronous development
- Expresses feelings of being different
- Sets high expectations for self or others
- Highly developed sense of humor
- Requires sustained, intense support



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# 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 levels of qualification
  - 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
    - No way to discern which students were identified as gifted from MAP scores alone
  - MAP not included as part of our process







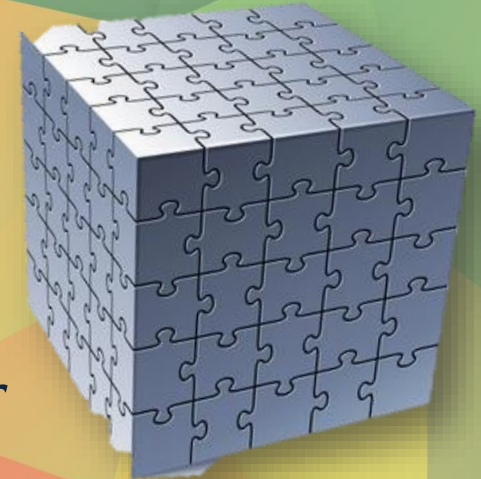
# Gifted Education Curriculum

- Overarching Skill Strands
  - Critical Thinking Skills
  - Creative Thinking Skills
  - Problem Solving Skills
  - Research Skills
  - Technology Skills
  - Leadership Skills
  - Social & Emotional Coping Skills
- Part of students' time spent on curriculum content
- 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
- Retain the art and craft of teaching



# Elementary School Sample Activities

- Experience the activities students engage in!
  - Writing with Bill Peet
    - Problem Solving
    - Critical Thinking
  - ABCs & 123s of Leadership
    - Leadership
    - Social-Emotional Coping
  - Design Thinking for Innovation
    - Creative Thinking
    - Research
- Share your experience with the group



# Writing

- Play on breakout rooms
- Students solve problems/challenges to unlock locks toward a common goal
- Clues provide direction
- Artifacts embedded in the challenges
- Critical thinking and problem solving highlighted today
- Actual skills required . . . critical thinking, problem solving, communication, teamwork, creativity, research, decision making, etc.
- Builds resilience, grit
- Can be designed for any topic, any content
- Teachers sharing challenges, resources





# ABCs & 123s of Leadership

- Identifying leadership skills
- Learning to prioritize
- Traits are often social/emotional skills
- Defining perspectives
- Small group interaction and negotiation
- Traits also represent beneficial traits in friends
- Supports development of transferrable traits
- Replaces tendency toward bossiness in group situations
- Leads to unit on leadership



# Design Thinking for Innovation

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

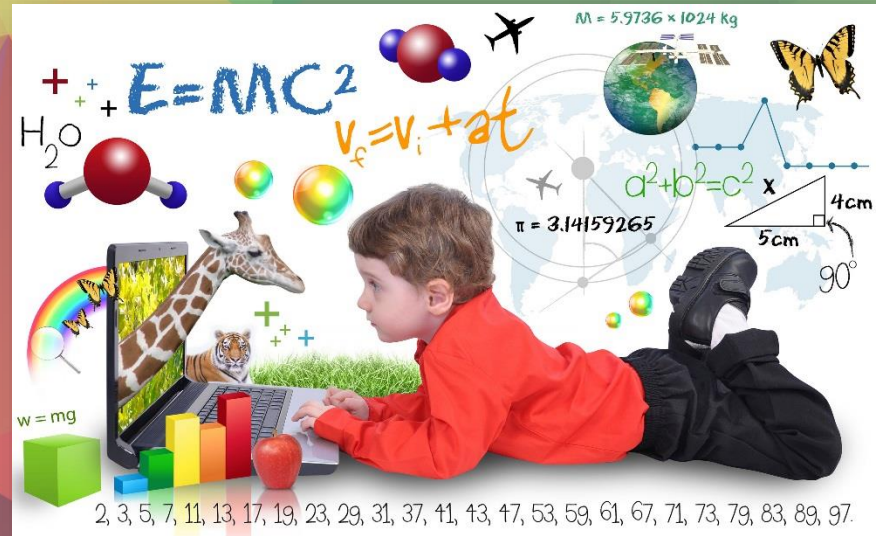


# Potential Topics

- Wide range of potential topics

- Simple Machines
- Philosophy
- Stock Market
- Skateboard Science
- Architecture
- National Treasure
- Baseball Math
- Amazing Race
- Robotics/Coding
- Mystery Disease
- Roller Coaster Physics
- Literary Studies
- Creative Writing
- History's Mysteries
- Many Others

- Dependent on students' grade levels and interests



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# Elementary Schedules

- “Pull Out” for service delivery
- Students pulled at common grade levels (i.e. all 1<sup>st</sup> graders at once)
- Time increases in frequency and duration as students get older
- By 5<sup>th</sup> grade, most students have about one hour per day in gifted education
- Additional needs met individually
- Schedules built as part of the overall building schedule



# Elementary Gifted Education Field Trips

- Gifted education field trips common across most elementary schools
  - World War I Museum
  - Ernie Miller Nature Center
  - Robotics Share Fair
- Factors impacting school/class participation
  - Engagement in topic/content
  - Timing of the trip versus timing of a unit
  - Other school events occurring
  - Others prohibitive factors
- School-specific field trips occasionally done



# Extracurricular Activities

- Extracurricular activities typically specific to each school
  - Student interest
  - Adult sponsorship
- Commonly seen activities
  - Athletics
  - Battle of the Brains
  - Various “bees” (spelling, geography, etc.)
  - Broadcasting
  - Robotics
  - Discipline-specific clubs/contests
  - Community service
- What to do if a club/activity does not yet exist





# Gifted Education IEPs and Special Education Elements

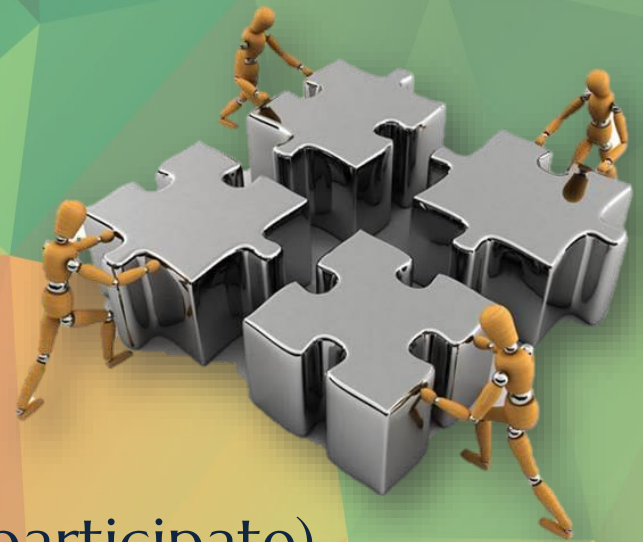


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# The IEP Team

- Makes decisions about the IEP
- Parents are part of the team
- Team members include
  - Student (when old enough to participate)
  - Parents/guardians/appointed adult
  - General education teacher(s)
  - 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
  - Some meetings may not need to be IEP meetings



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# 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
- Different from special education for disabilities
  - Not focused on closing gaps
  - Expanding knowledge/skills, removing ceilings, opening new interests, developing passion areas, etc.



# The IEP Meeting

- Recommend teachers use an agenda
- Meeting includes required attendees
- Attendees may be excused—a rare exception
- 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 (PWN)



# Consent Items

- Initial evaluation
- Placement in gifted education (initial meeting)
- Changes in services (change of 25% or more)
- Changes in placement (not location)
- Reevaluation
- Ending services



# Consent Not Needed

- Student goals
- Programs/curriculum used to act upon goals
- People providing services
- People attending meetings (required roles must be present)



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# Frequently Asked Questions

- How do teachers decide what to teach each year?

Gifted education teachers use inventories, surveys, conversations, etc. to identify topics that are new to students or topics that are of interest to the group. They often develop original content based on this information. Elementary teachers also share a wide variety of units and resources, expanding the range of all schools' possibilities.



# Frequently Asked Questions

- What if my student does not like a topic that they are covering in gifted education?

Be open minded. A child not liking a topic may stem from erroneous or underdeveloped perspectives. We want to expose students to a wide range of topics. If you have concerns about your child's interest in a topic, share that concern with the teacher to see if a solution can be found. Teachers want to ensure that students learn and have fun while learning.



Questions?



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