



Supporting Students with Twice-Exceptional Needs

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Blue Valley Fast Facts

- Nearly 1700 students identified with giftedness
- Nearly 2300 students identified with a disability



Blue Valley Fast Facts

- Approximately 40 students identified for twice-exceptional needs district-wide
- 2% of the population of students identified as gifted are also identified for other special education needs



What does the term twice-exceptional mean in Blue Valley?

- Students have qualified for services for both giftedness and another exceptionality
- Students receive services for all their areas of need in special education
- A different term is used for students in special education who have multiple exceptionalities (intellectual disability and autism)



Special Education Evaluation Process

- Two guiding questions (same for giftedness or disability)
 - Does the child have an exceptionality?
 - Because of the exceptionality, does the child need services beyond what can be offered in general education?
- Problem solving process
- Multiple data points



Special Education Evaluation Process

- Implementation of general education interventions
- Identifying patterns of strength and weakness
- Assessment (formal or informal)
- Problem solving team collaboration



What does the evaluation process look like?

- May evaluate for one exceptionality first or simultaneously
- Emergence of exceptionalities may be years apart
- Evaluation team could include psychologist, special education teacher, gifted education teacher, counselor, administrator
- May try some strategies as part of evaluation
- Various techniques to determine educational impact due to a potential disability



Most Frequently Seen Disabilities

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Emotional Disturbance
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Speech-Language Disorders



The Needs of Students Who Are Twice-Exceptional

- Team collaboration
- Services in diverse areas
- Accommodations/modifications based on established needs
- Careful transition planning (level to level)
- Specific needs based on exceptionalities
- Support for divergent capabilities



Multiple Service Providers

- Services from multiple providers
- School staff and/or itinerant providers
- Certified expertise determines who provides services for areas of need
- Limited services allowed by KS for students identified as only gifted.



Multiple Service Providers

- Gifted education teachers address giftedness
- Special education teachers address areas of disability
- Accommodations implemented across the curriculum (gen ed and SPED)
- Collaboration among all team members



May Be a Variety of Services

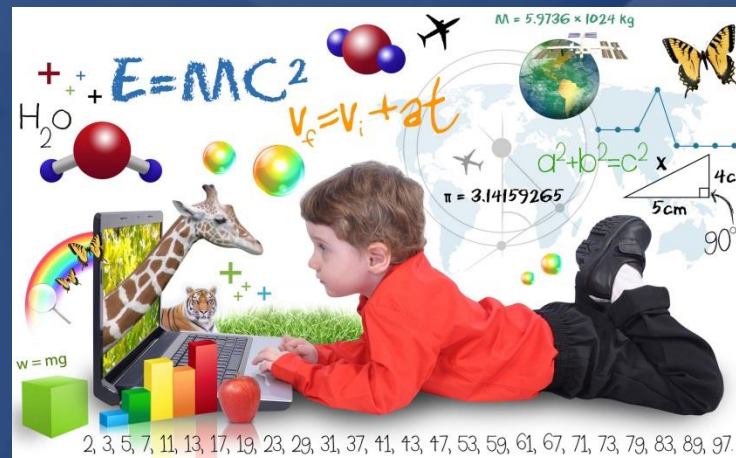
Student needs determine services

- Special education and gifted education services
- Other related services from itinerant providers
 - Speech
 - Deaf/hard of hearing/audiology
 - Vision/Braille/Interpretation
 - Physical therapy
 - Occupational therapy
 - Assistive technology
- Collaboration among service providers



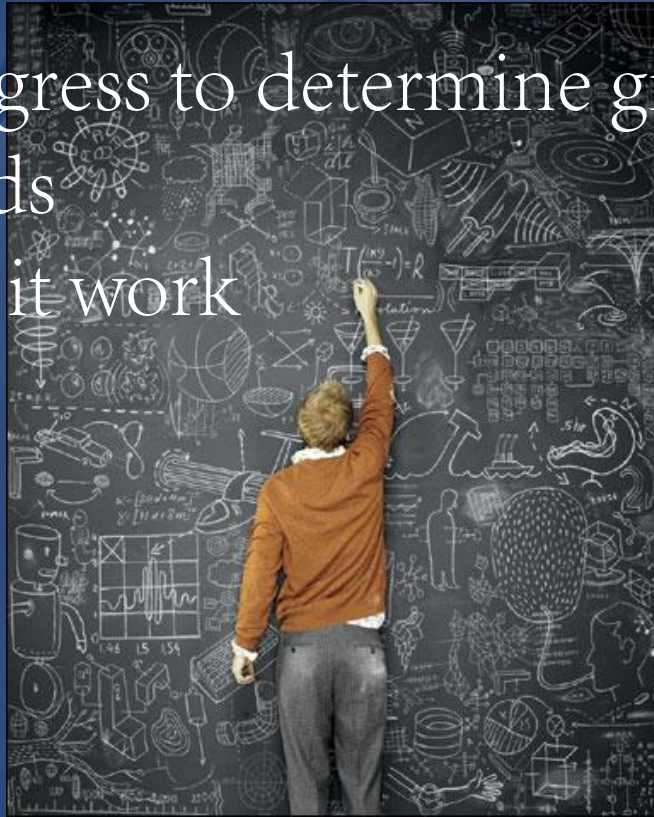
How are diverse needs met?

- Case manager is the teacher with certified expertise in the area of immediate greatest need
- ES may receive pull-out services based on needs and severity of needs
- MS, HS have time with resource teachers and gifted education teachers as classes or pull-out services



How are diverse needs met?

- May receive direct or indirect services
- Direct services could be provided in various ways
- Monitor progress to determine growth and ongoing needs
- Teams make it work



What are the greatest challenges for students who are twice-exceptional?

- Establishing social relationships
- Maintaining organization
- Academic performance
- Self-esteem
- Feeling different



What can parents do?

- Accept children as they are
- Acknowledge areas of need
- Be open to services in diverse areas
- Approach disability without stigma
- Learn about giftedness and disabilities



What can parents do?

- Praise effort, improvement
- Embrace uniqueness
- Collaborate openly with the rest of the team
- Advocate Without Alienating



Thoughts from Teachers

“Services are most effective when staff members have had the chance to work with the student personally in order to build rapport and trust.”



Thoughts from Teachers

“The potential for success on all levels is at its greatest when the student, parents, and school staff work together as a team.”



Thoughts from Teachers

“Peer interaction tends to be difficult for these students because they have the intellectual ability to work academically with their intellectual peers, but they may not have the ability to read the social nuances of those peers. This can cause them to feel alienated. In essence, their intellectual ability is “gifted,” but their social pragmatics are not at the level of even their regular peers.”



Thoughts from Teachers

“When students who are twice-exceptional feel that they are being appreciated for who they are and how they think, they tend to thrive and impress others with their intelligence and imagination.”



Thoughts from Teachers

“Parents should not be afraid for students to receive disability services when they are needed. The greatest success stories have occurred when the needed services are provided for the student. This gives students the best chance for their gifts to develop and shine.”



Thoughts from Teachers

“When students display giftedness, the challenges that the student encounters are sometimes difficult to discern or are masked by the student’s intelligence. Teams have to work closely to be sure all the needs are supported.”



Thoughts from Teachers

“When students with disabilities and students who are twice-exceptional realize that they have more in common than first thought, it is a great thing. Teams working together allows us to wrap around students in order to provide for all their needs.”



Teacher's Favorite Quote

“Children who are gifted with learning disabilities who are seen as defective, come to view themselves with shame and doubt. When those closest to them honor their strengths and believe in their ability to fulfill their dreams, they are able to mobilize their will to succeed against all odds.”

—Linda Sliverman



Questions?



For More Information

- NAGC
- KGTC
- KSDE Special Education
- Center for Exceptional Children
- Learning Disabilities Association of America
- Websites of organizations for specific disabilities

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