



Parent Handbook Gifted Education Services in Blue Valley Schools



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Blue Valley Schools provide gifted education services for eligible students. This handbook provides information about Blue Valley's procedures, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to other resources. This handbook is accessible via the Gifted Education Program page on the Blue Valley Schools main website and via the following link.

[Gifted Education in Blue Valley Schools](#)



Contents

- Welcome 4
- Gifted Education in Kansas 4
- Gifted Education Teachers 5
- Eligibility Process..... 5
 - Process Overview..... 5
 - Steps I-III..... 6
 - General Education Interventions..... 6
 - Child Find Continuum 7
 - Initial Evaluation & Determining Eligibility 7
- Gifted Education Services in Blue Valley Schools 7
 - Elementary Gifted Education Services..... 7
 - Middle School Gifted Education Services..... 8
 - High School Gifted Education Services 8
- Gifted Education Curriculum 9
- Moving to a Blue Valley School & Gifted Education Services..... 9
- Transition Experiences..... 10
 - Elementary School to Middle School 10
 - Middle School to High School..... 11
 - Transitioning to Post-Secondary Experiences 11
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) 11
 - IEP Team..... 11
 - Developing the Draft IEP..... 12
 - IEP Goals..... 12
 - The IEP Meeting—Reviewing & Revising the Draft IEP..... 12
 - Three-Year Reevaluations 12
 - The Integrity of the IEP & Process..... 12
- Students with Twice-Exceptional Needs..... 13
- Students with a Gifted Education IEP & a Section 504 Plan..... 13
- Blue Valley Parent Advocates for Gifted Education (BVPAGE)..... 13
- Common Terms in Blue Valley & Gifted Education 14
- Frequently Asked Questions..... 16
- Available Resources..... 17
- Contact Information 18



Welcome!

When a child is initially identified as eligible for gifted education services, it is common for families to feel overwhelmed with new information, new terminology, and new faces in their child’s day, all while also feeling some relief to learn the reason behind some of the child’s characteristics, behaviors, and abilities. While many resources are available about gifted education and giftedness, this handbook is designed with Blue Valley parents and guardians in mind. Our goal is to assist you in the educational path your child will take throughout his or her time in Blue Valley Schools.

Whether you are brand new to the realm of gifted education or have already had many experiences with gifted education services, we realize there are frequently questions that arise. Blue Valley wants to ensure that parents understand the processes and procedures behind the services their students receive, and we want to answer parents’ questions.

It is very important to us that parents and guardians have the information they need about Blue Valley Schools’ Gifted Education Services, so they can actively participate in the gifted education process. We want to foster a close partnership between families and the school members of the child’s team. Where applicable in this handbook, terminology that matches required state and district processes and procedures is used.

Gifted Education in Kansas

To understand gifted education in Kansas and Blue Valley, it is helpful to understand broader information about gifted education across the country. Because there is not a federal regulation or law that governs gifted education in schools, each state determines how to approach gifted education. Within the United States, that means there are likely fifty different definitions of giftedness and fifty different approaches to students who are considered gifted in public schools. That creates great complexity! If we consider gifted education on a continuum, Kansas would be on one of the poles of the continuum (see image below).

Gifted Education not formally addressed by the state

- Gifted Education is included in Special Education
- IEPs for services
- **Kansas Approach**

Between the poles, there are myriad potential combinations of the definitions of giftedness and the approaches to gifted education services for students. Each state creates its own approach.

In Kansas, gifted education is included as part of *special education*; there are only eight states that include gifted education as part of special education. Special education services are regulated by both federal and state laws; Kansas chooses to apply many of these laws to students who need gifted education services. The state differentiates between laws that do and do not apply to students who are gifted by using these terms:

- Students with an Exceptionality—applies to students who have a disability **or** giftedness
- Students with a Disability—applies only to students who have an IEP for a disability



Students who are eligible to receive gifted education services have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) written and revised each year which guides the services the student receives.

Gifted Education Teachers

Gifted education teachers work with students who are identified as gifted. The state requires for these specialized teachers to have specific certification in gifted education. That could include an endorsement in gifted education on a teaching license or a college degree in gifted education. Blue Valley seeks to hire teachers with appropriate certification who are the best fit for each school.

The Blue Valley Gifted Education Eligibility Process

Process Overview

Because gifted education is included in special education, many of the laws that govern the processes and procedures for special education eligibility apply to students being considered for gifted education, too. Blue Valley has developed a three-step gifted education eligibility process that reflects these laws and requirements. Gifted education eligibility is an evaluation process to identify students who need the services; gifted education is not intended to be programming for which students practice until they qualify. Each school has a group of staff members who work through the eligibility process. This is the problem-solving team, but the school may call the team the SIT (student intervention team), SAT (student achievement team), or Mustang Team (school mascot). This team includes several school staff members: general education teachers, special education teachers, gifted education teachers, school psychologists, counselors, social workers, and administrators. The team gathers data to answer two questions, which are the same for special education for disabilities or giftedness:

1. Does the child have an exceptionality?
2. Because of an exceptionality, does the child need services that are not offered in the general education curriculum?

The team determines their answers to these questions by following the requirements of the eligibility process and gathering data. Anyone with knowledge of a student's performance can recommend a student's name to the problem-solving team for consideration for gifted education eligibility. When a student's name is first referred to the problem-solving team, the team has to consider whether they will initiate the eligibility process; they may or may not recommend that first step. Teams could choose not to consider a student for eligibility if they have data to substantiate that choice. Parents and school staff members are most frequently the people to recommend students' names to the problem-solving team to for potential eligibility consideration. When the process is started by the team, they work through the following steps during the gifted education eligibility process. The team meets at the end of each step to discuss the data collected and to determine whether to move to the next step or stop the process; the process may be stopped before moving through all three steps if it is determined that the student's needs are being met:



Step I

- Team members gather data based on the student's performance with class-wide general education interventions intended to challenge all students in the class at a variety of levels of complexity. The classroom teacher records the performance with these interventions for any students who are in the gifted education eligibility process.
- The school psychologist and gifted education teacher analyze the student's educational records to discern performance trends or other critical information.
- There is no set timeframe or number of interventions that must be used; teams should continue with Step I activities until the classroom teacher feels comfortable speaking about the student's performance and ability within the curriculum.

Step II

- Teams gather data on the student's performance with individualized general education interventions in order to challenge the student on a personalized level. The classroom teacher records the student's performance on these strategies.
- After completing the interventions, the teacher submits surveys that detail the student's performance with the strategies for Steps I and II and the characteristics of giftedness that the student demonstrates on a consistent basis.
- The gifted education teacher will send a survey to the student's parents to gain their impressions about their child's demonstrated characteristics of giftedness at home.
- During this step, there may be "child find" experience included for the student (see below for clarification of "child find" experiences).

Step III

- Step III of the gifted education eligibility process is considered the "evaluation phase" of the process; the previous problem-solving team becomes the evaluation team.
- The school psychologist will request parent consent to evaluate the student.
- Once consent is received from the student's parents or guardians, the school psychologist will conduct intelligence testing and either achievement testing or an achievement work product. It is the team's discretion which achievement element to implement.
- The tests are individualized assessments for which students must NOT prepare; they are intended to measure student performance and ability, not test preparedness.
- Blue Valley Schools has targets of 98th percentile for intelligence and 98th percentile for achievement.
- This step has a sixty school-day limit from the date the school psychologist receives the signed consent to evaluate.

General Education Interventions

The state of Kansas requires problem-solving teams to exhaust the general education interventions in order to attempt to meet a student's needs. For gifted education, these interventions include a variety of learning experiences with differentiated strategies used. Classroom teachers are the general education curriculum content experts who make the decisions about the interventions to implement. Gifted education teachers



may recommend specific differentiation instructional strategies or resources when needed. Past MAP test data does not indicate cognitive ability, so it is not included as part of the gifted education eligibility process or used as a screening tool.

Child Find Continuum

As part of the eligibility process, students may have experiences with gifted education through the concept of “child find.” This is the phrase used to describe public schools’ duty to find the students that need services via special education. In Blue Valley Schools, these experiences could include any of the following: observations while the student works in the general education classroom, gifted education teacher supplied materials provided for the student within the regular classroom, gifted education teacher engagement with the individual student, gifted education teacher engagement with a small group of students in the eligibility process, or student inclusion in a group of students already identified for gifted education services. These options provide additional opportunities to gather data on student performance, achievement, and attributes of giftedness.

Initial Evaluations & Determining Eligibility

Gifted education eligibility is determined by the evaluation team (same school staff members who discussed data throughout phases) including the parents who are part of the evaluation team. The school will schedule a meeting including the parents to review all the data collected during the eligibility process and to determine whether the student qualifies for services. Blue Valley teams seek convergence of the data to lead them to the appropriate decision; teams review the data collected related to the student’s response to the interventions, the characteristics of giftedness, intelligence, and achievement. If a team cannot reach consensus through this process, the school principal will make the decision about eligibility based on the data. If parents disagree with the decision, they can contact Blue Valley’s Special Education Administrator who oversees gifted education for assistance (contact information at the back of this handbook). When teams determine that a child does not qualify for gifted education services, the student will continue to receive appropriate differentiation in the general education classroom.

Gifted Education Services in Blue Valley Schools

Blue Valley Schools provide students identified as gifted with an array of services and experiences to meet their needs as intellectually advanced children and teens. Individual school decisions will reflect the culture and community of the specific school, so specific activities and experiences be unique among district schools.

Elementary Gifted Education Services

During elementary school, gifted education services are provided by the gifted education teacher in the school via a pull-out service delivery model.

- Students in a common grade level are pulled out of their general education classrooms to receive gifted education services with the gifted education teacher.



- The frequency and length of the service time with the gifted education teacher increases as students get older; by the time a student is in fifth grade, it is likely that he or she will spend about forty-five minutes to one hour each day with the gifted education teacher.
- Teachers work with students on their individual IEP goals and on activities and experiences related to the gifted education curriculum.
- Gifted education teachers may also provide for additional one-on-one services if needed. For example, if students are working on a specific social/emotional skill or issue related to their giftedness, they may need to do that individually.
- Elementary schools develop service schedules that fit with their overall building schedule.
- Gifted education teachers also facilitate extensions for students' learning in the gifted education classroom potentially including field trips, club experiences, activities, or competitions, and any other options to stretch students' abilities and exposure to a wide variety of topics.
- Finally, gifted education teachers support their general education colleagues by suggesting strategies for differentiation, recommending potential resources or extensions, and providing planning assistance for general education teachers. Gifted education teachers are not in a role to force general education colleagues to implement specific strategies. Questions about the general education curriculum should be directed to the classroom teacher, not the gifted education teacher.

Middle School Gifted Education Services

In middle school, gifted education services are provided by the gifted education teacher via a class titled, Guided Discovery.

- Middle school students see their gifted education teacher during their Guided Discovery class, during the Flex time, during a time frame determined by the IEP team, or through a combination of these possibilities.
- Students attend the class with small groups of their grade level peers.
- During the class, teachers work with students on their individual IEP goals and on activities and experiences related to the gifted education curriculum.
- Gifted education teachers may also provide for additional one-on-one services if needed; if students are working on a specific social/emotional skill or issue related to their giftedness, they may need to do that individually.
- Finally, gifted education teachers support their general education colleagues by suggesting strategies for differentiation, recommending potential resources or extensions, and providing planning assistance for general education teachers.

High School Gifted Education Services

During high school, gifted education services are provided by the two gifted education teachers in each high school via an elective class titled, Gifted Education.

- Students can enroll in this semester class as frequently as they choose. Students tend to find that the gifted education teacher becomes an adult they get to know very well and trust for assistance with a variety of needs.
- Students attend the class with other students from all high school grade levels; this is a valuable part of the high school class since students may benefit from the exposure to the critical tasks/activities of each grade level.



- The gifted education services in high school are very future-focused, while providing students with the time and space to engage in the kinds of activities they need and prefer for freshman through senior years.
- During the class, teachers work with students on their individual IEP goals and on activities and experiences related to the gifted education curriculum. Students have a variety of options for credit or non-credit choices for using their time in the Gifted Education class; individual choices vary.
- Gifted education teachers may also provide additional one-on-one services if needed.
- Students who cannot enroll in the class for a semester will have services provided by being pulled out of another class at a frequency and length of time that reflects their needs with as little disruption to their general education courses as possible.
- Finally, gifted education teachers support their general education colleagues by suggesting strategies for differentiation, recommending potential resources or extensions, and providing planning assistance for general education teachers.

Blue Valley's Gifted Education Curriculum

The Blue Valley Schools Gifted Education Curriculum is a future-ready, skill-based curriculum, which focuses on skill sets that assist students in all their disciplines and classes throughout their education. The strands of the curriculum include the following:

- Critical Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Problem Solving
- Research
- Leadership
- Social & Emotional Learning

Gifted education teachers develop activities and learning experiences through content that is needed and of interest to the students in their school to develop these skill sets. Technology used to be a separate strand, but now that technology is ubiquitous and needed for most student work, it is embedded into all aspects of the curriculum. Since each group of students is different, their interests and needs will also be different; these differences will be reflected in the specific content chosen for implementation at different schools. While the topics may be different from school to school, the skills emphasized remain consistent.

Moving to a Blue Valley School & Gifted Education Services

Moving to a Blue Valley School from another state may or may not allow students to continue to receive gifted education services if they have been receiving services in their previous school district. Blue Valley Schools will honor an IEP for gifted education services from another state and start gifted education services for the student upon receipt of the most recent valid IEP from the prior district; this applies to states that include gifted education as part of special education (currently eight states in the US:

Alabama
Florida

Louisiana
New Mexico
Pennsylvania

Tennessee
West Virginia



This list is subject to changes based on changes to state approaches to gifted education). When students move to a Blue Valley school from states that do not have IEPs for gifted education, the school's problem-solving team will determine whether to initiate the gifted education eligibility process for the student; services will not be started at that time. If the team starts the process, the student would have to go through Blue Valley's gifted education eligibility process to determine eligibility; the school team can refuse to evaluate a student based on the data they have collected on the student's performance and ability.

Blue Valley cannot automatically include students in gifted education services who move into the district with gifted education experiences in a district that does not include gifted education as part of special education and/or does not have an IEP for gifted education services. This is because Kansas includes gifted education as part of special education.

When students move to a Blue Valley School from another district in Kansas with a gifted education IEP, Blue Valley schools typically honors the IEP for gifted education services and starts services for the student upon receipt of the most recent valid IEP from the other Kansas district; however, if there are concerns about the student's performance, the team may request to do a reevaluation to determine the need for services. If a reevaluation is initiated, the student would receive services during that period. Blue Valley Schools will develop a new Blue Valley IEP within nine weeks of a student starting school in Blue Valley if a reevaluation is not needed.

Transition Experiences

Support for the transitions between levels—elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to post-secondary experiences—is part of the work of gifted education teachers throughout the district. Schools plan a variety of activities to help 5th and 8th graders gain knowledge and comfort with the pending transition to the next level. Specifically, gifted education teachers also implement various activities for the students shifting levels. To assist students in these processes, it is best for parents to take a calm, confident approach to the transition in order to demonstrate assurance that the student is ready to make the shift and will be prepared for all the new experiences he or she will have at the next level. Parents can take comfort during the transitions between levels because their children are ready, and the school and gifted education team are providing needed support. Transition experiences will differ among schools since the culture and community are unique to each school.

Elementary School to Middle School

The transition from elementary school to middle school includes opportunities for students and parents to meet the gifted education teacher of the middle school. Parents and students can ask questions of the gifted education teacher during these experiences. Additionally, the school plans various activities and events to help students make beneficial course selections for 6th grade and to facilitate the student's familiarity with the new school building. In addition to gifted education teachers, school counselors can answer questions about the middle school schedule and opportunities for parents with students in 5th grade. These activities tend to take place during second semester of the school year.



Middle School to High School

Much like the transition from elementary to middle school, the transition from middle school to high school includes opportunities for students and parents to meet the gifted education teachers of the high school. Parents and students can ask questions of the gifted education teachers during these experiences. Schools plan various activities to assist 8th graders in the process of selecting a freshman year course schedule, and the high school counselors are an integral part of these activities. They can answer questions about specific high school courses and needed credits. Gifted education teachers initiate transition activities late in first semester and throughout second semester. Parents are encouraged to make independent decisions about their children after carefully considering all the information they receive from the schools and other credible sources. What is appropriate for one student may not be the best choice for another student.

Transitioning to Post-Secondary Experiences

Gifted education teachers in high school assist students in investigating their potential future opportunities for college, career, or other post-secondary experiences, and they work diligently to ensure that students make the very best choices based on their personal needs. Additionally, they encourage students to have open communication with their parents/guardians about these topics since the transition out of high school can be stressful for parents as well as students. Gifted education teachers are knowledgeable about Naviance Family Connection, the district’s online program to facilitate college and career investigation for middle and high school students, and they may include elements of this program into their work with students in gifted education. Gifted education teachers often help students process college/scholarship interview questions, college visits, potential careers, and other potential future options.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Since gifted education in Kansas is part of special education, students identified to receive gifted education services have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to define their work within gifted education. The students are provided with specific instruction from the gifted education teacher (called “specially designed instruction”) related to the IEP goals.

IEP Team

The IEP team is the group of people who determine what services are required by the student and how best to meet his or her individual needs. In gifted education, the team typically includes the people in these roles:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Student | Guidance counselor |
| Parent/Guardian | Administrator |
| General education teacher | School Psychologist (sometimes) |
| Gifted education teacher | Anyone else with knowledge of student |

Specific IEP decisions for a student are made by that student’s IEP team during the annual meeting to review the revised draft of the IEP document. Students typically begin attending IEP meetings during 5th or 6th grade.



Developing the Draft IEP

Gifted education teachers develop drafts of the student's IEP prior to the annual meeting. A copy of this draft should be shared with parents via email or regular mail about a week before the IEP meeting. If parents have not received a copy of the IEP at least a week prior to the IEP meeting, they can request a copy of the draft from the gifted education teacher. Gifted education teachers interview the student (if appropriate due to age) in order to draft the IEP; they also incorporate feedback from general education teachers and parents into the draft IEP.

IEP Goals

The goals included in the IEP are personalized for the individual student. IEP goals are not actually a consent item that parents must agree to; they are considered the school's goals for the student. However, Blue Valley teams welcome input from parents about potential goals. For students identified as gifted, the goals should relate to their strengths and interests or social emotional needs related to giftedness. Gifted education teachers provide specially designed instruction related to the goals, so the work should be able to be completed in school. IEP goals last for the year-long life of the IEP; they may span parts of two grade levels because of this.

The IEP Meeting—Reviewing & Revising the Draft IEP

Each year, parents will be invited to a meeting to review their child's draft IEP. Since they receive a copy of the draft IEP prior to the meeting, some adjustments can be suggested prior to the actual meeting. Ideally, the team will discuss the highlights of the IEP document, the student's progress, and future needs. It is not likely that team members will read verbatim the entire IEP document. Ultimately, teams should have beneficial conversations about the student's performance and needs.

Three-Year Reevaluations

Every three years, the team will have a conversation about whether a three-year reevaluation is needed for the student. In gifted education, it is unlikely that teams would suggest retesting a student; only in a situation with a significant injury that affects a student's cognitive ability would this be recommended. The state of Kansas allows teams to waive the need to gather all existing data into a reevaluation document to reduce the paperwork of special education.

The Integrity of the IEP & the Process

Blue Valley School District is focused on maintaining the integrity of the individualized, private nature of IEPs, their development, and the services of the student. Sometimes there are very personal goals related to a student's social and emotional needs. Students need to feel free to work on these goals during their gifted education services. Because of these things, schools do not hold "showcases" or special events to highlight the work students have done on IEP goals. Additionally, IEP goals are not intended to be competitive, and such events may create unintended consequences of competition among and between students.



Students with Twice-Exceptional Needs

Occasionally, students who are identified as gifted may also be identified with a disability and receive special education services for the disability *and* giftedness. An IEP for only giftedness is focused just on intellectual giftedness and cannot include services or accommodations for potential disability needs. When teams consider whether a student identified as gifted has needs for a potential disability, they must complete a comprehensive evaluation to determine eligibility for services in a special education disability category. These students are considered to have twice-exceptional needs. Students receiving services for giftedness and a disability may have very complex needs, so teams work collaboratively to meet often divergent needs. The district expects the staff member with certified expertise to provide the services for each area of need; gifted education teachers do not provide services in disability areas for students. The IEP team will determine which staff member on the team will serve as the case manager for the student's IEP, and all others who provide services for the student via the IEP become service providers who also provide input into IEP content and goals each year.

Students with a Gifted Education IEP & a Section 504 Accommodation Plan

Some students who have a gifted IEP and a disability may qualify for a 504 Accommodation Plan under Section 504 law. This is an anti-discrimination law that when applied to students in schools is intended to “level the playing field” to allow students with disabilities to access the general education curriculum. Students go through a specific evaluation process to determine qualification for a 504 Accommodation Plan, and if the student qualifies, the school and family determine needed accommodations based on the student's disability, performance, and other factors. The gifted education IEP and 504 Accommodation Plan remain separate documents and processes; however, one meeting may follow the other meeting on the same day led by different case managers (gifted education teacher for the gifted IEP and a general education staff member/counselor for the 504 Accommodation Plan).

Blue Valley Parent Advocates for Gifted Education (BVPAGE)

Parents of students identified as gifted are invited to participate in Blue Valley Parent Advocates for Gifted Education. This is a support and information group provided for parents by parents of students in gifted education. The group holds monthly meetings at which information related to gifted education and/or gifted students is shared with attendees. District employees frequently share pertinent information with the parent group. BVPAGE also hosts evening events to accommodate working parents' desire to gain additional information related to their child's/children's giftedness. As part of their offerings, BVPAGE also provides separate SENG Model Parent Groups (SENG-MPG—Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted is a national organization that developed the group model). The SENG groups meet over the course of a few months to study a book about the social emotional needs of children who are gifted and parenting for the children's needs. The group also offers student engagement opportunities including robotics camps each summer and a trivia competition for middle school students. See the Links section of this handbook to access the BVPAGE website.



Common Terminology in Blue Valley & Gifted Education

Academically Talented

Students who are academically talented may work very diligently to learn content and perform well in class; however, they may not actually be intellectually (cognitively) gifted.

Acceleration—Subject/Whole Grade

Acceleration is a general education intervention that teams can consider when students perform at exceptionally high levels in academic areas. Students do not have to be identified as gifted to be considered for subject or whole grade acceleration. Parents should contact classroom teachers, counselors, or principals to discuss the possibility of acceleration for their child. When a student is considered for whole grade acceleration, the team will consider whether gifted education eligibility should also be started if the student is not already identified as gifted.

Achievement Testing/Work Product

During Step III of the gifted education eligibility process, a student may be given an individually administered, standardized achievement test to determine the student's knowledge of common content within school subjects.

Attributes of Giftedness

The attributes of giftedness are the characteristics or traits a student displays that are commonly associated with children who are intellectually gifted. Blue Valley Schools has a set list of the attributes of giftedness to consider for gifted education eligibility.

Canvas

Teachers in Blue Valley use the learning management system, Canvas. This system allows teachers to provide digital resources and allow for students to complete/submit work online, creating a blended learning experience (blended learning is combined classroom and online learning experiences). Student grades are posted through Canvas, too. Parents still access students' PDF IEP and IEP Progress Reports via Synergy's ParentVue.

Case Manager

The case manager is the teacher who manages the student's IEP and instructs him or her in the gifted education or special education course/services. For students with twice-exceptional needs, the case manager may be a teacher in special education for disabilities.

Consent

Parents provide consent for the initial evaluation, placement in gifted education, changes to services of 25% or more, and potentially other changes to the IEP; goals on the IEP are not a consent item.

Differentiation

Differentiation is the process of developing content, instruction, or products that targets different levels of ability or readiness to learn general education content. Many instructional strategies would be considered differentiation.

Education Decision Maker

The education decision maker is the parent or guardian for a student; this is defined more in the Parent Rights in Special Education guide for parents. When a student turns 18, he/she is the legal education decision maker, and the case manager typically works directly with him/her on paperwork related to the IEP.

General Education

Any classes that are not part of special education/gifted education are considered general education classes.

IEP (Individualized Education Program)

The IEP is the annually reviewed document that guides the student's experiences within the gifted education program. Until after the IEP meeting each year, the document is only a draft. For parents who receive IEP paperwork electronically, the IEP is available as a PDF via Synergy ParentVue.



IEP Progress Report

Each quarter, parents are provided with an updated IEP progress report, which indicates a student's progress toward the goals of his or her IEP. For parents who receive IEP paperwork electronically, the IEP Progress Report is available as a PDF via Synergy ParentVue.

Initial Evaluation

When a child is evaluated for gifted education eligibility, this is considered an initial evaluation. This process may be repeated if teams consider a student more than once for gifted education eligibility if they do not qualify for services the first time. Teams and parents should carefully consider this question prior to initiating an evaluation for second or subsequent times: What are you seeing that makes you believe the outcome would be different this time? Because the eligibility process is a high stakes endeavor that can be stressful for the student, the needs of the whole child must be considered before repeating the eligibility process multiple times.

Intellectually Gifted

Intellectual giftedness is a term that defines the segment of the population who are at the very highest level of intellectual ability and functioning. In Blue Valley Schools, intellectual giftedness also refers to students who perform at the top 1% (99th percentile) on an individualized intelligence test.

Intelligence Test

Intelligence testing is the individualized, standardized assessment administered to a student to measure their intellectual reasoning ability. Students are NOT to be prepared for these tests; preparation in advance of testing invalidates the results of the testing and delays the process.

Interventions

Strategies implemented for students to attempt to meet their individual needs are considered interventions. Differentiation strategies are considered interventions to appropriately challenge students according to their level of ability or readiness.

Kansas Parent Rights in Special Education

The guide for parents in Kansas that explains all the rights they have within special education/gifted education is called the Kansas Parent Rights in Special Education brochure. Parents/guardians should receive a copy of these rights from the school each year or when the school seeks consent for specific special education actions and during other special education processes.

Notice of Meeting—NoM

Parents receive a form titled Notice of Meeting at least ten days prior to a meeting to discuss the child's eligibility for gifted education/special education or prior to a meeting regarding special education actions including the annual review of their IEP.

Paraeducators

Paraeducators assist middle school and high school gifted education teachers with the clerical tasks of planning for IEP meetings; they may contact parents to schedule the annual IEP meeting.

ParentVue

ParentVue is the online system through which parents have access to a variety of student information for any of their children attending Blue Valley Schools. For students with gifted education or special education IEPs, the PDF of the annual IEP and the most recent IEP progress report are both available via the special education link in the ParentVue system. **ParentVue is also the system through which parents will sign all paperwork related to the IEP.**

Problem Solving

Problem solving is the term of the process Blue Valley Schools use to determine a student's needs and the best way to provide for those needs. This may include referring the student for gifted education eligibility consideration, or it may not.

Prior Written Notice—PWN

When parent/guardian consent is needed for a special education action, the proposed action will be described on a document titled, Prior Written Notice. This document outlines what the district is proposing and whether consent is needed for the proposal. Some special education decisions do not require parent consent, so parents may only be asked to sign an acknowledgement that



they have been informed of the change and have received the Kansas Parent Rights in Special Education booklet.

School Psychologist

Each Blue Valley School has a school psychologist assigned to the special education team. This individual manages initial evaluations and reevaluations for special education services for students. The school psychologist is trained to administer standardized psycho-educational assessments and to interpret the results of those tests. They will explain the results of special education evaluations and/or individualized testing they have done to team members during meetings.

Service Provider

Any staff member who provides services to a student is considered a service provider. One member of the team is considered the case manager, and he or she leads the process of developing the draft IEP each year.

Special Education

Special education services are services provided for students who qualify based on one of numerous disability areas (or giftedness in Kansas). Special education is governed by special education laws and regulations, most notably by IDEA. However, Kansas has included giftedness in special education, and the distinctions between services for disabilities and giftedness are differentiated by the terminology used in the law or regulation (exceptionality=disability and giftedness/disability=only disability).

504 Accommodation Plan

Occasionally, students who have a disability who do not require specially designed instruction via special education may qualify for a 504 Accommodation Plan. Students must go through an eligibility process to determine if they qualify for a 504 Accommodation Plan; the mere presence of a disability or a perceived disability does not automatically qualify a student for a 504 Accommodation Plan. Students who have an IEP for only giftedness could be evaluated for a 504 Plan if there is a need for accommodations due to a disability. Families should consult with the student's guidance counselor or principal about anything relating to 504 Accommodation Plans.

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if my student was in a gifted and talented program in another state that does not have gifted education IEPs?

Participation in a gifted and talented or enrichment program in another state does not guarantee that a student will receive gifted education services in Kansas or Blue Valley. If the state does not have IEPs for students identified as gifted, the school's problem-solving team would determine whether to evaluate the student for potential gifted education services. If the team does initiate the evaluation, the full gifted education eligibility process would be completed.

Can students who are only identified as gifted receive accommodations for a disability area?

No. To qualify to receive accommodations or services for a disability area, students must be evaluated for special education disability services. If the student requires just accommodations, the team may elect to evaluate the student for a 504 Accommodation Plan. The evaluations are required to determine if a child qualifies for either a disability IEP or a 504 Accommodation Plan; even if a student does not qualify for an IEP for a disability, that does not mean that the child will automatically qualify for the 504 Accommodation Plan.



Can my child's IEP be amended after the annual meeting?

Yes! If changes to the IEP are needed that are minimal or agreed up on by all team members, it is possible to amend an IEP after the annual meeting to review the draft IEP but before the next year's IEP meeting. Contact the gifted education teacher to discuss these options.

Why is my child's IEP meeting not always held at the beginning of the school year?

The date an IEP meeting is held corresponds with the timeline of the process of determining the student's initial eligibility for gifted education services and of the previous year's meeting date. The life of the IEP is a calendar year from the date of the meeting to review the draft IEP. The due date for the next IEP meeting is one year minus a day from the previous year's meeting. This means that IEP meetings happen throughout a school year, and teams plan for the full year of the life of the IEP. Parents may request to move an IEP meeting up; however, this is not the norm since it would not be possible or realistic for teachers to hold all IEP meetings at the beginning of each year, particularly by the time students move to high school. There are typically compelling reasons shared why such a move is needed for a student.

If my child did not qualify for gifted education services, what happens if I want my child reevaluated later?

Subsequent reevaluations are *possible* to consider gifted education eligibility; however, parents and staff members should carefully consider the potential negative impact of students being evaluated multiple times. The question that should be considered is, *What am I seeing now that makes me believe the outcome will be different this time?* Because the process can be stressful for students, the impact should be carefully considered before moving forward.

Available Resources

The following resources are provided for your assistance with gifted education/special education:

- [Gifted Education Services in Blue Valley Schools](#)
- [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#)
- [Kansas Parent Rights in Special Education](#)
- [Receiving Gifted Services in Kansas](#)
- [Blue Valley Parent Advocates for Gifted Education](#)
- [National Association for Gifted Children](#)
- [Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted](#)



Contact Information

Recommended contacts for specific questions about aspects of your child's education in Blue Valley:

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| Classroom teacher | Contact your child's classroom teacher to discuss his/her progress in the general education curriculum, instructional strategies, differentiation, etc. |
| Gifted education teacher | Contact the gifted education teacher with questions about your child's gifted education class, your child's performance in the gifted education class, the student's IEP, social/emotional needs, etc. |
| Guidance Counselor | Contact the guidance counselor for assistance with specific concerns about your child, course schedule needs, and any other counseling services offered through the school. |
| School Psychologist | Contact the school psychologist if your child is in the eligibility process, with questions about special education processes and/or procedures, problem-solving team questions, etc. |
| Principal/Administrator | Contact the school administrator with concerns about teachers, bullying, discipline issues, etc. |
| Special Education Administrator of Gifted Education | Contact the special education administrator overseeing gifted education if there are concerns that have not been resolved by the school principal. |
| Asst. Superintendent for Special Education | Contact the assistant superintendent if there are concerns that have not been resolved by the special education administrator or the school principal. |

For questions and concerns about the school's/district's gifted education services or for assistance in finding the correct contact person for specific issues, contact Kristin Asquith at district office (contact information below).

Kristin Asquith
Special Education Administrator
Gifted Education | Special Education Related Services
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