



Kansas Effective Practices Instructional Toolkit

Essential Educational Components Professional Development

Professional Development

In order for specially designed instruction to be effective, it is necessary for both gifted education teachers and regular education teachers to be knowledgeable about gifted education, supported with continuing professional development, and involved in the program development.

Staff development should be an ongoing, systemic process. Educators enter and exit this cycle of professional development based on previous knowledge, experience, and their need for information as it relates to their role in the education of gifted learners. School districts should encourage attendance at appropriate state, regional and national gifted conferences and teleconferences. Staff development may include visitations to other districts' gifted programs. To have an effective program for the gifted students, administrators, counselors, librarians, psychologists and other support personnel must also receive training in gifted education.

Professional development should:

- Promote awareness of gifted student characteristics and learning needs;
- Include procedures for identification of the gifted;
- Increase positive attitudes toward gifted students and their unique qualities;
- Expand teachers' knowledge of content appropriate for gifted students' learning;
- Generate enthusiasm for curriculum differentiation;
- Build repertoire of teaching strategies that maximize potential for gifted behavior;
- Enhance skills for teaching and advising the very able and talented;
- Assist with the development of specially designed instruction according to IEPs;
- Promote an understanding of current research and trends affecting programming for the gifted;
- Integrate gifted education within the total school curriculum;
- Nurture a collaborative spirit and skills among professional educators, families, and community members;
- Provide to teachers information about resources for facilitating learning;
- Contribute to the overall mission of renewal and revitalization of education throughout the total school program; and
- Develop evaluation techniques for student progress and program effectiveness.

Teachers of gifted students should have ample time for preparation, teacher-to-teacher contact, IEP development, and parent conferences. When teachers are assigned to teach or direct the learning experiences for gifted students, there should be evidence that they are trained and able to fulfill this assignment. When regular education and gifted education teachers are working together, their roles need to be clearly defined. All teachers need appropriate support, reasonable schedules, adequate materials, technology assistance and appropriate training.