



## ***Kansas Effective Practices Instructional Toolkit***

### Kansas Gifted Education History Introduction and Characteristics

#### **Introduction to Gifted Education Services**

Services for students identified as eligible to receive gifted education services must be compatible with, as well as reinforce and provide support to, the general education program. Special education personnel for gifted education services are to think of themselves a part of, not separate from, general education. Special education services should be coordinated with social, rehabilitative, physical, and mental health services that may be provided to meet the needs of exceptional children. Cooperative efforts with the school community and home environments will also greatly strengthen the educational services for students identified as gifted and in need of gifted services.

Developing a plan for meeting the needs of students who are gifted that is sufficiently rigorous, challenging, and coherent is a challenging task. Appropriately differentiated curriculum produces well-educated, knowledgeable students who have worked hard, mastered a substantial body of knowledge, and can think clearly and critically about that knowledge.

#### **Characteristics of Giftedness**

Giftedness is a cultural definition. Each society defines "giftedness" to suit its own needs. In early cultures, the talents of the hunter, the warrior, or the healer were important to the survival and progress of early civilizations. In ancient Greece, the orator and artist were honored. In the ancient Roman cultures, characteristics shown in the most talented soldier or leader were considered "gifts."

How is "giftedness" defined in the 21st century? And why should society care about the future of gifted children? The answer to these questions has far-reaching implications. How these children manage in our society and in our educational system will strongly influence the quality of our future as a society.

Today's society has a more complex view of talent. Those who demonstrate strengths in intellectual ability, academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, psychomotor skills or artistic talent are viewed as "gifted." These key leaders, creators or problem solvers of our time earn our recognition through the productive use of their "gifts" toward the good of our society. We must nurture those talents.

The characteristics of giftedness are addressed throughout *Gifted Education Services* as they apply to the different needs of students in related areas, e.g. curriculum differentiation, acceleration, and social and emotional needs. In Kansas, the definition of gifted has been limited to educational needs and does not include "talents" in the broader sense. However, affective and creative talents can often be addressed through the general curriculum, (i.e. music and math are compatible, as are drama and reading, art and music, math, and history).