



## *Kansas Effective Practices Instructional Toolkit*

Gifted 101 and Beyond  
In A Pinch: Strategies, Links, References

### **Gifted Programming Options to Deliver Individualized Services**

A combination of acceleration and enrichment provides the greatest opportunity for flexible programming to meet the needs of the gifted. Even if an enrichment/pullout program is present in the school district, an individualized program must be provided. The individualized program must establish learning opportunities to insure meaningful progress. Minimal or trivial progress is not meaningful progress.

The gifted student must be provided instruction at an appropriate level of challenge and with adjustments that accommodate individual needs. The instruction must be reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and student progress.

Schools districts are free to group gifted students in ways that best serve the needs of each gifted student. However, the programming options chosen for each gifted student should be developed based on the strengths and needs identified within the IEP and must be agreed to by the IEP team.

Programming options for gifted students may be offered through a variety of settings and selections such as:

- Cluster grouping based on instructional level
- Open-ended compacted curriculum with flexible pacing
- Level, grade, and/or subject acceleration with flexible pacing
- Grade or subject "skipping"
- Advanced placement and honors courses with earlier-than-normal access
- Receiving credit for demonstrated mastery in required courses by recommendation of the IEP team (credit by examination)
- Independent study designed to meet a gifted student's long-term interests and expertise in a given area
- Specialized curriculum for gifted learners based on validated research in gifted education
- Distance learning
- Consortium, collaborative, or cooperative arrangements with other school districts
- On-line courses
- Opportunities for gifted students to work with their peers in a resource room
- Alternative scheduling (block, alternating days, etc.)
- School within a school
- Arrangement of school schedules in order that gifted students can access the fine arts
- Incorporation of appropriate outside-of-school educational experiences
- Enrichment in content areas
- Independent learning contracts
- Mentorships, apprenticeships, internships and field experiences designed to meet gifted students' performance level and career interests

Options, differentiated according to the needs of each gifted student, may be used in combination to form a comprehensive programming continuum from kindergarten through grade 12. These choices are not based on existing "canned" curricula, student scheduling, age-peer levels, age-grade levels or grouping. If a school district is unable to provide an appropriate continuum of programming options independently, a consortium approach with neighboring school districts, intermediate units, or higher education institutions is recommended. The resources of the community should also be considered in individualized programming planning for the gifted.

#### **AP and Honors Courses**

Honors courses or Advanced Placement courses provide options to meet the needs of some gifted learners. For other gifted students, modifications such as availability at earlier age, adjustment in pace or depth, or another adaptation may be needed for AP or honors courses to be considered "specially designed" instruction for gifted students.

#### **Learning Contracts – Independent Study Experience**

A learning contract can be an effective option when a teacher or qualified adult is scheduled to meet with the student, provide access to instruction/advice, and supervise the accomplishment of milestones and goal

completion. Close monitoring by teachers or mentors is an essential component for a successful independent study experience.

### **Comprehensive Programming**

Comprehensive programming for gifted students cannot be limited to enrichment alone, one academic area, one program option, or solely extracurricular activities such as Odyssey of the Mind, Future Problem Solving, Mock Trial, MATHCOUNTS or National History Day.

Each school district must decide what programming options are needed to provide specially designed instruction for each gifted student. A needs assessment survey of gifted students is a highly effective tool to guide decisions on programming changes and options. Once the needs of the students are known, the school district may utilize many types of resources, on and off campus, to provide a full continuum of services.

The scheduling of options should enhance, not penalize, the gifted student's participation. When scheduling gifted programming options requires students to miss regular education classes, the IEP should clarify the student's responsibility for completing make-up work from missed regular education classes. Make-up work may be necessary under certain circumstances, but requiring make-up work to be completed that inappropriately penalizes the student and detracts from a successful gifted education is an unintended consequence and should be avoided. The IEP is the best instrument to avoid any confusion and misunderstanding and ensure student success.