

BVPAGE Meeting 4/11 at 7p.m.

Parent Panel

“Don’t ask Alexa, Siri, or Google... Ask me!” The Parent Panel

Q&A with parents who have children in the Blue Valley School District

Board members present: Jeannie, Tracy, Amy, Erin, Lisa, Heidi, Delora, Cecilia

Attendance: 45

- I. Introduction of panelists from both Blue Valley and Olathe school districts. Kids range from elementary to college age.
- II. Prepared questions for entire panel
  - a. How do you handle “This is stupid. Why do I have to do it?”
    - i. There’s lot of things that are stupid that we have to do but we brainstorm ideas that may make it more interesting. Help them learn how to push through things.
    - ii. Try a scientific approach, you’re smart enough to know if you get a zero what happens, it doesn’t matter if you think it’s boring- you’re not in charge of it, you need to do this to make your teacher happy – people pleaser, give them information and give them a consequence and let them choose. Recommends a book The Four Tendencies by Gretchen Ruben.
    - iii. Treat bored and stupid as taboo words – encourage them not to use them. Three methods she uses when they refuse to do something: “This is expected so you need to do it”, break it down into components and each ones benefit, appeal to their ego – “it takes a special skill/person to commit to something they aren’t engaged in”- building a resiliency
  - b. What kinds of organizational strategies have you and your child tried? Did you find one that worked?
    - i. I have never seen an organized gifted child. I have two polar opposite kids and they both need strategies. With super intense child: Contracts – getting ready in the morning and consequences if not fulfilled. Homework. With perfectionist: checklists and timer. You need to be consistent.
    - ii. Use a whiteboard, organizer, calendar. Methods may only work for short term so you need to find multiple methods. Google calendar is very helpful. Kids can contribute events to it. Becoming a bit more hands off as they got older helped them- have them organize themselves.
  - c. Have you discussed with your kids how to acknowledge or celebrate accomplishments?
    - i. We try not to make a big deal. Celebrate and then move on. Don’t dwell on them.
    - ii. My child has a hard time celebrating. She thinks we’re biased. So we enlist the support of teachers to help encourage her. We also share across the extended family and they contact her to say great job. So she’s coming to acknowledge that she can be successful even though she won’t admit it. Also helps for them to see they are talented in other activities besides academics.
    - iii. My husband and I balance each other out. He’s very good at stopping and saying good job. I used to resist it but after looking closer at my own personality I

realized I needed to stop from time to time and recognize things. But I also don't think kids should be so focused on outcomes. They need to celebrate the method and process too. When they come for praise, turn it around and ask them how they feel about it? What makes you most happy about it? Reflect on it and remember it to motivate them to push through tough times. Celebrate the struggles too. They can be more important. Don't over celebrate.

- d. How did you help your child work with a teacher they didn't like or didn't respect?
  - i. My oldest had a bad connection once because he thought the teacher didn't like him and he wasn't able to accept decisions. Had to work hard to partner with that instructor knowing that this was not the best fit. Put on our adult pants to help them. Had to work with child on building perspective and how actions are perceived by adults and create strategies. Finding other parents as resources helped too.
  - ii. My daughter once looked at different work from a teacher as punishment even though the teacher was trying to push her. Had to discuss why it's important, what the teacher saw in her, what's fair. Had to help her figure out how to communicate with her teacher about it if she started to feel overwhelmed. Letting her handle it herself helped too. Also had issues where she needed to learn respect for a coach. Got books on respect – what does that look like to adults?
- e. Has your child been called bossy? How did you help them?
  - i. My oldest is always bossy to his brother. Hard for kids to see exactly bossy was – I showed him by playing a board game and acting very bossy. “but the rules say..I don't care I'm doing it my way.” So we stopped calling him bossy and instead said “you're dictating how the game works.” Bossy=dictating really helped him see.
  - ii. Sometimes bossiness can sometime be them looking for respect or validation. When we talk about what's challenging in a group, he will say they won't listen or do what I say. Then he overcompensates. We have to keep working on it with him and it's getting better. Ask them “How important is it really that they do it your way?”
- f. What did you say to your child when he/she got a bad grade due to lack of effort?
  - i. It's so important to focus on the effort and not the outcome. The hard part is the word is focused on the outcome. Begged the principal at one child's school to partner for a strategy to really challenge them to show effort – the worse the grade the better – because I was concerned about what was going to happen when they hit highschool. Didn't get what we needed so we had to show our kids ourselves that we could fail and be ok. Individual sports can help them because they have to push themselves – on team sports the team can potentially carry them.
  - ii. I tell my kids “I'm not worried about your grade, I just want to know you gave your best effort.” Use reason to show them this is their practice for life, what you put in is what you get out. Other times I use incentives.
- g. Is your child gifted in everything?
  - i. No one is gifted in everything. It's important to give kids a variety of things to see what they are and are not good at. It's humbling.

- ii. My kids are totally opposite – they struggle at what the others are good at. It’s very important to encourage your kids to work hard on the areas they need to. You will have your moment to shine if you keep working on it.
    - iii. Sometimes you have to actively look for their weaknesses because they will compensate. Keep exposing them to different things.
  - h. Did you coach your child on making and keeping friends?
    - i. We are still working on it. Some kids just have a blind spot to how their actions/words affect others. Step back and talk about “how do you think it came across?” Model what it looks like. We have to help him look at things from others perspective.
  - i. What did/do you do when your child was “bored” in class?
    - i. Depends on if your child can or will advocate for them self. If they won’t do extra work in class, we had teacher send it home.
  - j. Did you find any outside activities helpful in channeling your child’s giftedness?
    - i. Yes and it can be hard for parents to commit to it because it may not work with our schedules. Finding their happy place is important where they can put aside their stress. It makes it worth it.
    - ii. Finding a mentor can be very helpful, a tutor can turn into one where they eventually ask questions outside what they study.
- III. Questions for parents of college kids
  - a. Do you think being identified as “gifted” makes a difference to your child getting into college?
    - i. Being identified helped them because they had great resources in high school to get into college. Being gifted helped give them a leg up because their brain was wired differently to learn and they could take really challenging classes. Being gifted opened the door but they had to be the one to walk through it.
    - ii. Colleges can see gifted electives on their transcript – so then they will look at the grades to see if they applied it. Once they got in, no one gives them anything for having the label.
- IV. Open forum Q&A
  - a. Is it worth it to encourage testing of a child once they get to middle school?
    - i. It may be worth it for the value of independent learning. You have to balance with the potential disappointment of not getting in.
    - ii. Comradery with other gifted kids can be important. Talk to their teacher first because they’re good at picking up the signs and encouraging evaluation.
  - b. How do you handle the label of nerdy?
    - i. Being in gifted programs help them not feel alone.
  - c. How do you share the news of being gifted to a young child?
    - i. We didn’t make a big deal of it. That he was going to get to go with the gifted teacher because she liked him.
  - d. We meet a lot of resistance in regard to accelerating our child straight to first grade. What should we do?
    - i. It depends on the kids. It’s so important to take their social personality into consideration. She just didn’t have any peer her age. It didn’t fix everything. You need to look at the maturity of those in the next grade as well.
    - ii. At a certain age it’s ok to ask your child for their input as well.
  - e. What are some struggles/quirks your gifted child has matured out of?

- i. If you help them know their own strengths and weaknesses, they will figure out a lot on their own. The thing that makes you crazy when they're little can be a strength later – try to see that. Bossiness and attention to details can be big strengths later in life.

V. Final Speed Round

- a. What one piece of advice would you give to parents in the room? Or What one piece of advice would you give yourself 10 or 20 years ago?
  - i. Relax. Can't promise it will work out but you need to trust in them. They are great kids. Don't get caught up in the competition. If you weren't a great parent, you wouldn't be here tonight. Your kids will know you're doing your best.
  - ii. Things have a way of working out even if we don't do it right. They turn out fine. Enjoy this moment.
  - iii. Resist the temptation to be a helicopter parent. Let the kid take the lead and be responsible for their own success or failure.
  - iv. They're your kids, you know them best. Make the decisions that best fit your kid. Have open communication with teachers to see what they need.
  - v. Don't forget the pleasure of the journey. Always assume positive intent. Have a good sense of humor. We need levity.
  - vi. If you practice a faith, referring things to a higher power helps because they can't be argued with.
  - vii. Forgive yourself. Move on and start a new day with a smile.
  - viii. Listen to your child when your initial impulse is to disagree. See their perspective.