



## Blue Valley Parent Advocates for Gifted Education

### Parent Advocacy Tips

**Advocate:** to support or speak in favor of something; to act or intercede on behalf of another

Tips for advocating for your gifted student:

- DO talk directly to your student's classroom teacher(s).
- DON'T be confrontational and tell the teacher they are doing something wrong.
- DO set up an appointment so you and the teacher can talk privately.
- DON'T try to talk specifically about your child at class or school events (Parent Night, class parties, carnivals, etc.)
- DO talk to your school's gifted education teacher about the identification of gifted students.
- DON'T use disparaging terms regarding your child's day or class studies (example: boring, waste of time, useless).
- DO approach your teachers with proposing a partnership for success – everyone is needed to make your student successful.
- DON'T assume you have the only answer to a situation or problem.
- DO be open to trying different approaches to see what works best.
- DON'T ignore the reporting structure at your building (talk to your teacher before you talk to the principal, talk to the principal before you talk to anyone at the school district).
- DO tell your student's teacher about areas of interest that could give depth to your student's studies (example: a student who loves art could illustrate short stories from writing class, a baseball fan could apply math lessons to baseball statistics, a reader could use newspaper stories to support social studies topics).
- DON'T allow your student to skip work or not do assignments -- talk to the teacher about an alternate assignment.
- DO research the Blue Valley school website under curriculum for ideas of 'other' options in classroom assignments or reading suggestions.

- DON'T be afraid to say or hear, "I don't know" as long as it is followed by, "but I can find out" or "can you help me" or "what does my student think."
- DO ask your student their opinions, feelings, and ideas.
- DON'T promise anything to your student that you can't guarantee. Everyone (parents, teachers, school districts, and students) have limitations.
- DO tell your teachers when something is going well or a new process is working.
- DON'T compare your student to other individuals in class and or allow educators to do the same. Focus on your student's abilities and possibilities.
- DO realize that different teachers and schools do things differently. Just because something is done in another class/building does not mean it is done in your class/building.
- DON'T be afraid to bring up other success stories, you may end up bringing a new success to your class or building.
- DO invite as many teachers as you wish to your annual IEP meeting.
- DON'T be afraid to ask for what your student needs.