

Gifted Education Note Card Questions & Answers

What grade does the process start? How long does it take?

- The gifted eligibility process can happen at any grade level from Kindergarten through senior year.
- The process occurs at the pace that matches the student's performance and needs; the team wants the students to have time to show his/her capabilities and needs.
- Identification at early ages is sometimes complicated as IQ tests may not be as reliable, and the difference between the evaluated child and peers may be the result of enrichment.

What communication occurs during the process?

- When students move from Phase 1 to Phase 2, the school will communicate with parents to obtain data during Phase 2. Parents will be asked to provide feedback about the attributes of giftedness they see at home.
- Prior to starting Phase 3, the school will request permission to evaluate the student, too.
- At the end of Phase 3, the team which includes the parents will hold a meeting to review all the eligibility data and make a final decision.

How carefully are MAP scores considered during the review of records? Are the tests used for differentiation for gifted or other students? What if students aren't strong test-takers on MAP—will that keep them from gifted education consideration?

- The team may review any test scores for the student to discern trends, but MAP scores are not one of the required data points in the process.
- MAP testing provides diagnostic information about the student's performance within the standards in math and reading; they are not intelligence tests or achievement tests. Our internal data analysis has indicated that it is not possible to discern gifted students from other students from results on MAP tests.
- General education teachers use MAP testing to determine how students are performing within the standards for each discipline. MAP tests can be used by general education teachers to support instructional strategy decision making; that is not part of the gifted education program.

Why does Blue Valley use 99th percentile if KS has a 97th percentile?

- The state of Kansas offers minimum levels of eligibility for gifted education services that districts are recommended to be above, but local districts determine the actual eligibility criteria to be implemented in their districts.
- Blue Valley adheres to the state's requirements for eligibility, and multiple data points are used to make decisions about eligibility for services.
- We use the student's response to class-wide differentiation, the response to individual differentiation, teacher review of the attributes of giftedness, parent review of the attributes of giftedness, intelligence testing, and achievement testing or another achievement element.
- For the intelligence and achievement data points, the district has targets of the 99th percentile. No single piece of data either qualifies or disqualifies a student for gifted education eligibility; the team reaches a decision based on the convergence of all the data collected during the process.
- Even with the higher standard, the Blue Valley school district has more than twice the rate of identification than Kansas as a whole.

Does an administrator review the files of students who are looked at but not eligible? What follow-up is available to these students?

- The building administrator and school psychologist are part of the evaluation team, so they are part of the decision making process. In addition, district reporting provides a broad view of schools' implementation of the eligibility process; this helps to maintain consistency in the process across the district.
- Because testing protocols indicate that tests cannot be administered more than once in a calendar year for a student, Blue Valley will not reevaluate a student until a year after a previous evaluation occurred. In order to initiate an additional evaluation of a student, teams need to see that something changed in the student's performance that would be likely to bring a different outcome to the process.

Do you recommend outside of district testing? If an outside therapist has mentioned that they think your child is gifted, but you are not hearing anything from your school what should you do?

- Outside therapists only have part of the needed information for consideration. Since outside evaluators only provide the testing portion of the process, the student will still need to go through the full eligibility process, starting at Phase 1.
- Schools will consider outside evaluation results but may decide to also collect internal evaluation results.
- Kansas requires consideration of two questions for special education or gifted education eligibility: the presence of an exceptionality (giftedness); the establishment of need for services beyond what general education can offer. While outside evaluators can provide testing services for intelligence and other psychometric data, they are not involved with all the details of Blue Valley's eligibility process. Since no single data point qualifies or disqualifies students for services, outside evaluators cannot determine a student's qualification for Blue Valley's gifted program.
- Parents should communicate openly with classroom teachers to determine if their child's needs are being met. These conversations can help the team to determine if the student has a need for gifted education program consideration.

What do we do to keep our child stimulated and challenged in his gifted education without seeking to overburden him with his current regular school curriculum?

- Open communication can help teams (parents, school personnel) determine what is best for the individual child. Specific situations with student work load should be discussed with the school team in order to seek appropriate solutions.

Who supervises gifted teachers?

- School principals are the immediate supervisors of gifted education teachers. The gifted program administrator is available to assist principals if needed.

What are the benefits of a gifted child joining Mensa?

- Since Mensa has no affiliation to Blue Valley's gifted program, we have no formal knowledge of what the organization offers to members. Families would need to investigate Mensa individually to make personal decisions about involvement.