College Readiness & the Gifted

Kristin Asquith
Gifted Program Administrator
Blue Valley Schools
Overland Park, Kansas
Fast Facts About Giftedness

- Intellectual giftedness typically 130+ IQ
- No K-12 national uniformity
- Continuum of definitions of giftedness
  - Intellectual
  - Achievement
  - Leadership
  - Creativity
  - Athleticism
  - Specific talent ability
  - Multiple Intelligences
  - Others
Fast Facts About Giftedness

- Continuum of services
  - 30+ states have a mandate for services K-12
  - Very few states have a fully funded mandate
  - 8 States include giftedness in special education
  - Eligibility and services typically determined locally
  - Some states do nothing—neither identification nor services
  - Types of services vary: gifted classes, AP/IB/honors classes, content enhancement, specialized projects, differentiation support for general education teachers, etc.
Fast Facts About Giftedness

- 1,897,902—known US students identified as gifted in 2014-15
- 15,000—students identified as gifted in Kansas
- The gifted are not always specifically counted in every state, so numbers are skewed
- 145+ IQ considered highly gifted
- 160+ IQ considered profoundly gifted
- As IQ rises, creativity and social skills tend to fall
Critical Characteristics of the Gifted

- Curious with many diverse interests
- Some topics pursued for years
- Intense focus on specific ideas/topics
- Abstract, complex thinkers
- Learn quickly, resist repetition/practice
- Perceive subtle connections, relationships
- Bossy as leaders, unless taught leadership skills
- Overshare known information
- Often deeply connected to “being smart”
- Lack common sense for book sense
- Fluent in generating, developing, adapting ideas
- Value non-conformity or uninterested in social expectations
Critical Characteristics of the Gifted

- Imaginative, wild, silly ideas
- Speak candidly without considering consequences
- Absentminded about details
- Values tied to ability rather than who a person is
- Fear losing regard if not smart
- Easily frustrated
- Seek reassurance on work
- Resist challenging work for fear it will be too hard
- Unreceptive to criticism
- Procrastinate on work
- Advanced problem solving and critical thinking skills
- High moral judgement
Pitfalls of the Gifted

- Asynchronous development
- Lacking social finesse
- Perceptions of inadequacy or superiority
- Inattentive to social mores
- Disconnected from friends/peers
- Inability to move past mistakes
- Feelings of anxiety
- Perseveration due to perfectionism
- Underachievement
Dangers of the Gifted

- Feeling disconnected from social groups
- Feeling isolated, withdrawn
- Sense of or reality of being bullied consistently
- Fatalistic view of life/opportunity
- Comorbid mental illness/emotional disturbance diagnoses
- Unresolved anger
- Unresolved conflicts with others
- Masking other illnesses/disabilities
- Alcohol/substance abuse
- Suicide ideation/Attempts
Giftedness & Mental Health

- Frequently seen mental illnesses in the gifted
  - Depression
  - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
  - Anxiety
  - Bipolar Disorder
  - Others

- Neurological conditions frequently seen in the gifted
  - Asperger’s Syndrome
  - ADHD

- Considered twice-exceptional
Common Myths of the Gifted

- Students who are gifted will take care of themselves.
- Because of their ability, students who are gifted should teach others.
- Acceleration options are socially harmful for students.
- Gifted programs/services are elitist.
- Gifted students will earn all As.
- If a student is gifted, he/she cannot have a disability/learning disability.
- It’s easy to spot the gifted.
- The gifted are teacher-pleasers.
- AP/IB/honors classes satisfy the needs of the gifted.
- All children are gifted.
- All is glossy and golden in gifted-land.
College Readiness & the Gifted

- Intellectually ready for the challenges
- May overestimate ability
- May be really unprepared for social situations
- May overthink performance
- May lack study skills
- May lack soft skills—resilience, perseverance, grit, coping
- Rate of suicidal thoughts similar to non-gifted peers (43% +)
- Big fish, small pond—small fish, bigger pond
- College is still social—if socialization was a struggle in the past, it probably will be in the future
What You Can Do

- Provide resources related to common areas of need
- Raise awareness about unique needs of the gifted
- Suggest speakers for professional learning
- Challenge dangerous assumptions
- Consider the unintended consequences
- Listen
Resources

- National Association of the Gifted (NAGC)
- Kansas Association of Gifted, Talented, & Creative (KGTC)
- Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)
- The Davidson Institute
- Hoagies Gifted (really 😊)
Kristin Asquith
Student Services Administrator
Blue Valley Schools
kasquith@bluevalleyk12.org
912.624.2852