

E-SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

This year we are committed to doing long range planning to create the direction for the next five years in providing differentiated services for our top learners. Thanks to everyone who contributed ideas and experiences. We value your perspective on the following questions:

1. What experiences has your child had in our gifted/talented program that you thought were especially helpful for his/her growth and development?

I am new to the District. My son is currently taking the advanced Math in 7th grade.

He is in the ALEC Math class, which does challenge him. He is very much a hands on, and creative learner. However, so far I haven't seen any creative projects within this class.

The one program is her math class this year in 7th grade. It moves at a faster pace, not just more busy work.

Although my children have been in ALEC since third grade, I am not aware of any "gifted/talented program". I guess I do not know what the "regular program" is.

The Alec math & reading programs are good. I have also liked hearing about alternate programs offered during the summer months (and at other times as well) for gifted students.

Not enough homework in the beginning. But now getting enough and keeping her challenged. Likes the group activities (in math).

Extra assignments, projects, ability to learn more.

Being in the accelerated math program allows students to be eligible for advanced math classes in high school.

Program offers challenges for students.

Grade 4-5 don't notice a difference between regular and gifted programming.

Develop a game based on a book

Develop a business plan

Experience learning

Novel studies

Harder material and heavier workload

900 min. reading log

Faster pace

I think the curriculum, which is more challenging for him is helpful

05-06 4th grade reading was a good source of material for looking at and developing critical thinking on many different levels. Example was a historical fiction book.04-05 math had extra projects the ALEC kids did that the others in class didn't have to do. This made the ALEC kids resentful of the extra work. 05-06 Math - unclear what they did different.

2. What experiences do we need to add to our gifted/talented program offerings in the future?

His strengths are in math and science/arts. I think it would be great to have a science club and/or something offered with art too, either within school hours or after school. He needs to be challenged in this area. We have been told he is very gifted in this area but don't have anything within the school or locally outside of Lisle or Naperville to channel his ability. Unfortunately he likes familiar areas so I don't want to travel to Naperville. We have participated in Mad Science classes when it was offered in the summer. Would it be possible to offer classes from this organization after school? I know of two other Districts that have this in their after school program. It had good attendance and was successful.

My daughter attended the summer program at the Illinois Math and Science Academy. I would like to see more programs of this nature.

Not able to answer as I don't know what the gifted/talented program is

Well, I was disappointed that just as my son was about to enter Westfield, the gifted coordinator Ms. Noth, was retiring and not being replaced. Gifted students learn differently, and behave differently, and often this can be a new world to parents of gifted children. I think that ANY assistance offered to parents of gifted children would be welcome, as I believe that right now there is very little personnel or resource out there for us.

Tends to work at the level of her peers. Because she doesn't test well however, she is not in the gifted program now. Shouldn't use test scores as a measure to be in gifted program. Math program could be more challenging. In general there isn't a clear structured plan. If there was a structure, it wasn't communicated to the parents well. When out on probation, there was no plan to help her get back in the program. Would like summer programs offered by the district - parent would be willing to pay. Need accelerated program - call them academic clubs - math clubs, science clubs, etc. Need extraordinary effort from school officials to provide these things.

More enrichment activities rather than just more work.

Look into Future Problem Solvers.

More programming for all content areas. Focus more on thinking skills and less on "Busy Work" Quality vs. Quantity

Other subjects - science and social studies

Cluster gifted in order to achieve maximum benefits and stimulate thinking

More academic intrascholastic competition

More accelerated reader choices

Fine arts - more cultural experiences

Experiential learning/take apart & see how it works

Research; pick own projects, not just more work, but more engaging projects.

Logic based and creative thinking games and puzzles

Start earlier? Maybe/maybe not

Possibly start enrichment summer programs

Teacher notifies K-2 parents-may be headed for gifted education

More guidance to local opportunities Talent search thru Northwestern (take practice SAT)

Honestly, I am not sure what is out there. My son just always approached learning a bit differently. I think we have always treated him and spoke to him in a sophisticated manner. We did not work with him especially hard - he just approached learning. I would like to learn more about what I can do to help him grow.

Foreign Languages - now is the best time to learn! Science Club or visiting science speakers.
Enrichment activities that are fun so the students don't feel like they are being punished for their special gifts.

3. What local, regional, or national opportunities for gifted/talented students have you taken advantage of for your child during the year or during the summer?

Not aware of any.

Information given for programs offered in Lisle or Naperville was too far was looking for something closer. Classes offered in Roselle were at inconvenient times. Took an Art class through the park district.

IMSA programs (Illinois Mathematics & Science Academy in Aurora)

I do not consider my children as gifted/talented. Maybe because I have no base for comparison

My son attend summer wonders classes for about 3 or 4 summers. It was a pretty good program but I think there was room for improvement.

Involved child in spelling bee and math bee. Child involved in COD during summer-"bridging" from one grade to the next. Although this program was for those who didn't do well in the previous grade - so didn't work well.

SAT, algebra in COD, Kumon reading & math classes, math club

MATS - ACT testing

Summer camp. Special programming at COD, Northwestern, PSAT testing.

None - not made aware of many opportunities

Foreign language; piano

SAT

Avery Coonley School

We went to the meeting for gifted children inviting them to a trip to Australia.

Worlds of Wisdome and Wonder Math. Classes at Brookfield Zoo. Public library classes at an early age. Visits to museums in the city.

4. What avenues for communication would you desire that are not presently in place regarding your child's gifted opportunities?

I really have not had any communication from the school related to how different his curriculum is from that of the mainstream.

I really didn't know he was so bright until the CAT scores came home and teacher commented on how high they were. Aside of this, there has been no communication as to if he was going to be put in an accelerated math class again for this year. He is in that class, but a letter should have come home

communicating this. What are the qualifications for staying in that class or not?

Is there one in place now? I don't remember any kind of communication regarding gifted opportunities.

Parent group sessions, seminars, print info, and educated specialists in this field.

This forum tonight is great. Teachers could provide materials that they've read to be helpful to teach gifted students. Be part of an email list, or a blog.

Parent meetings, outside speakers, seminar's, know more about where they are standing, teacher parent communication.

Goals for gifted students

What is status of gifted program right now

Parental input regarding placement is essential. We know our children best and can help in determining placement. Occasional Gifted parent meetings would be beneficial. A newsletter and e-mails would aid in communication.

Identify gifted programs/classes on report card

Expand parent/teacher conferences to include all instructors

Any communication regarding opportunities. None really given. More ongoing throughout the year.

Newsletter through school

E-mail & website of school

Meetings like tonight.

Communication as to what additional opportunities their child is getting. It is hard to compare to regular ed.

Academic advisor

More info about state legislation and programming

Tough to compare - they don't have other children!

Teacher input critical!

Class/school rank

I would like to understand what they are doing that is different than the other kids and what I can do to foster his learning. I wished I could have attended the meeting on November 2nd. Can I gain information or reading material from that meeting?

Anything is better than the nothing we have been getting. How about a syllabus, or outline of what work will be done in the program? E-mail updates or a newsletter. (Maybe the kids could put one together?)

5. When did you first notice that your child learned differently than most other children?

When he was a toddler.

In first grade he didn't even have to even study for spelling, and some other subject tests and still did

very well or 100%. Since preschool he has always gone beyond the normal craft and math project activities we did at home, working very independently for a long time period.

At the ages of 18 months

I have always assumed they learn like any other children. Never thought of them as gifted/talented. I have to admit though; I can count with one hand the number of times they asked for help with their homework since first grade. Good or bad, I don't know.

At about the age of 3 or 4 years. Actually, one of our neighbors advised us to have our son tested; she had other children and we only had our son (no basis for comparison) and she said that he definitely had something extra-special going on. Once we had him tested and found that he was gifted, we didn't have a clue what to do next. We got him in kindergarten in early enrollment based on his ability and we THINK that was the right thing to do, but we'll never be sure - at times he is a bit immature (since he's so young). That was one decision that will always affect him, and most parents aren't equipped to make it (don't know all that they should know).

Read early on.

1st & 2nd grade

When they used to get creative with projects, and reading books at young age.

Other people questioned if child was in gifted ed

Artistically talented at young age. Taught himself to read

Variety of answers - 2 years old - child is now seeking challenges

At a young age - children always asking questions Before she was 2 Pre-K 3

1 to 2 years

3 years, preschool

Everyone always told me he was so smart, since he was 2, but I thought nothing of it until I saw his ISAT scores, and quite honestly I was amazed.

Very young age all the children had good attention spans. Good verbal skills early. Early observations of assessing situations and drawing conclusions.

6. What do you do at home to help stimulate your child's appetite for learning?

I encourage him to read and exposed him to many different cultures

I have taken him to Dupage/ Chicago Children's Museum, enrolled him in a chess class, Mad Science Classes, Art classes, put together jigsaw puzzles, play the Wheel of Fortune game with individual game/TV hook up, watch and interact with other game shows on TV, play educational board and computer games, He's also very active in one sport a season to keep his body and mind active.

We just offer many different experiences. Lots of reading and discussing.

Books, internet

Any additional classes in subjects that he enjoys, we definitely look into; our son is a kid who definitely needs his downtime, and we want him to have a well-rounded childhood, so we aren't pushing anything - if his interest is there, we will find whatever we can to enhance that. We try to introduce him to anything new that we think he will enjoy.

Games

Video games

Television programming. Trips to museums

Computer software

Schoolwork is enough!

Talk about current events

Travel

Reading

Expose them to other things - arts, music, etc.

The kids are naturally curious - answer questions and introduce additional items

Teach them how to find answers on their own

Always provided learning materials. Books, "field trips/vacations"

Story problems at dinnertime

Reading novels at bedtime or anytime

We talk A LOT! We read and discuss books. He has a lot of experiences (traveling for hockey).

Read to them. Educational Computer Games. Travel and history trips. Books on tape on long car trips. Creative play, Lego's, etc. Talking to them and asking questions of how they think about a situation.

7. What resources would you like to have to support your learning about giftedness (speakers, web sites, print materials, etc.)?

University of Chicago materials (e.g., math project). I heard we currently use the U of I materials. The U of C materials is excellent and a lot of blue ribbon schools use them.

Printed material

All of those ideas sound great...speakers, web sites, printed materials. Most importantly something more local would be great.

Web sites

Any would be helpful as I have no idea what is considered "gifted/talented" versus "normal"

All of the above; and since I really believe that parents have so much to learn from each other's experiences, some type of group meetings, exchanges, etc.

Web sites

Print materials...more likely to read or print out

Speakers - it's always good to hear from experts in the field

All & anything. Speakers, written materials

Supplemental educational materials, Newsletters, speakers

Website - outlining what we are doing and print materials

www.sd13.org should've mentioned the state legislation

Updates on math groupings

I would like all of the support you mention above. I would especially like some web sites etc.

Present opportunity to all kids by assembly's, speakers, clubs, games, and teams. Kids could, compete, expose, debate, and exchange ideas with experts in the fields of Math, Science, Music, Literature and Art.

8. Other questions/suggestions:

What is considered gifted/talented? What % of students per grade is considered gifted/talented? about? 10%? 20%? 30%? are the standard set too low to be considered gifted/talented? How is the ALEC program different from normal program? How is this year ALEC program different from last year?

I would very much like to see some type of information exchange about the problems that gifted children have in learning in their special ways. Our son has such a wonderful bright mind and he thinks in such an intellectual way it amazes us. However, last year in school his problems with disorganization almost had him failing! The teachers were as helpful as they could have been -they were phenomenal - however I think a gifted coordinator or mediator of some type would have helped all of us, mostly, our son. He is a bit of an absent-minded professor, which doesn't look intelligent to the untrained eye. We have to keep a constant watch on things now so that he doesn't slip through the cracks. Like I had to explain to his teachers that even though what they SAW was a disorganized kid, that actually, our son was trying extremely hard to be organized.

How can we get the children to reach their full potential?

Provide opportunities and challenges.

Grouping gifted kids together in order to challenge each other

Weigh grades

More comprehensive report card - reflect level

More consistency

Don't force G/T to be bogged down by basics they have already mastered

How are we grouping for math?

How are they grouped for homeroom?

Is our grouping consistent district wide?

Is there more than one ALEC classroom per grade level?

Need more parent input - "we know our kids the best"

Students need enrichment ("future problem solvers") as much (or more) as acceleration (this includes

all and excludes none - engages new students)

Learning involves teaching...so students need opportunities to help others

Trailblazers tough for parents; parents can't help the day dreaming student who misses teacher instruction

4 novels a year not demanding enough; AR not the answer for all

Parents would appreciate more communication back and forth (more than the initial letter)

Foreign language is very important with younger students

More experimental learning projects (for creativity and leadership)

Teachers' "blog" sites for curriculum notes and parent feedback/dialogue

I like that the gifted kids are with the other kids. I know some friends in other districts, who have declined participation in the gifted program because they are only with other gifted kids. There will and should be a time that this takes place, however I feel that in grammar school they should target friendships with everyone.

Address special needs kids who are gifted. (Out of our table of four parents, one child has ADHD and one has Asperger's Syndrome (Higher Functioning Autism).