

Parenting and the Gifted Child:

“Things you may have wondered about Gifted Education, but were afraid to ask.”

What is gifted education and why should my child participate?

Gifted classes are designed to meet the individual needs and interests of intellectually gifted students. These classes are **in addition to and different from** the curriculum in the regular education classroom. Gifted education is project-based learning which strives to develop the Process Skills. The curriculum for gifted education is based on the Process Skills which include thinking skills, creativity, research, communication, visual and performing arts, self-directed learning, group dynamics, affective (social/emotional skills), and career/life.

Why does the gifted education classroom look like students are just “having fun?”

Others may see what we do as “playing” because we teach by a hands-on approach. Students are very involved in decision making, creativity, research, exploration, experimentation, and presentation. Students also learn more about themselves, their likes and dislikes and their strengths and weaknesses. Students learn how to develop positive character traits. The projects and activities we do help to build skills such as evaluation, analysis, creativity, problem solving, risk-taking and thinking, which will help the intellectually gifted child become a self-sufficient and productive citizen.

Should I expect my gifted child to only make all A's?

No. Everyone has certain strengths and weaknesses. Students may be much stronger in one academic area than in others. Students may have a stronger interest in one academic area than in others. According the Mississippi Department of Education Regulations for Gifted Education, “It is not reasonable to expect intellectually gifted students, artistically gifted students, and/or creatively gifted students, by virtue of having been granted one of those gifted eligibility rulings, to make all A's and B's.” However, if you know your child is capable, but not working to his or her potential, do not settle for less. If you know your child struggles in an area, be patient and accepting of his/her best effort.

Characteristics of Gifted Students

Your gifted child may exhibit some of the following characteristics:

- ◆ Read well and enjoy a wide variety of material
- ◆ Have a large vocabulary
- ◆ Have a good memory of things read or heard
- ◆ Be curious and ask probing questions
- ◆ Work independently and have lots of initiative
- ◆ Have long attention span
- ◆ Have complex thoughts and ideas
- ◆ Show good judgment and logic
- ◆ Understand relationships and comprehend meanings
- ◆ Produce original or unusual products and ideas

Van-Tassel-Basda, J. Excellence in Educating Gifted and Talented Learners. 1998 (p. 174)

Needs of Gifted Students

Longer periods of time for focused, in-depth work in a given area of interest and challenge;

Opportunities to choose areas of interest and to go into greater depth within that area;

Justice and fair play;

Acceptance of human fallibility as a natural event (no one is perfect);

Appreciation of humor in various forms and use of humor for positive and negative purposes;

Focus of attention to make best use of high energy levels; and

Realistic assessment of talent and practice to improve talent.

For further information on these and other topics, go to the Mississippi Association for Gifted Children web-site at MAGCweb.org.

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