

Dear State Board of Education,

With the goal of providing differentiated instruction for students who are far above the normal range in academic abilities, the Gifted Association of Missouri feels it is important to provide appropriate services for students who are two standard deviations or more from the norm. This much needed intervention has been delivered in the form of gifted programming in the past and stands in danger of being eliminated if they are not specifically called for as part of MSIP 5 and new Best Practices for Missouri schools.

Appropriate services for our high potential learners are multi-faceted depending on the age and academic potential of the student as well as the size and capabilities of local school district. However, at the most basic level, they should include regular instructional intervention by a certificated educator of the gifted. Those services are best delivered within a cohort of academic peers. The gifted educator should also aid the regular classroom teacher in making appropriate accommodations for the gifted child including curriculum compacting, independent study, and grade advancement. Many gifted students also benefit greatly from participating in advanced level competitions such as Model UN, National History Day and Math Olympiad and should be provided an advanced level of instruction to meet the needs of those gifted learners.

In the secondary setting, gifted services take the form of academic advisement, independent study, special counseling, mentorships, advanced placements courses, International Baccalaureate programs, dual enrollment classes, and early graduation when necessary.

If Missouri is to be in the *Top 10 by 20*, we need to not only focus on grade-level proficiency, but also address the unique learning needs of gifted students and those who could become high achieving with appropriate support. We need to ensure that our gifted students are also showing growth and are ready to compete and contribute in the globally competitive world that is their future.

We hope Missouri schools will support and advance the academic needs of all of our students including the high potential, gifted learners.

Thank you,

Rebecca Smith  
President  
Gifted Association of Missouri

