



## DEAR MS. M

Gifted Education Questions Answered

Dear Ms. M,

**What are some effective ways our school districts provide gifted education supports to empower our secondary gifted education students in New Mexico?**

As students grow in their educational journeys, it is crucial to provide specialized support for gifted and talented individuals. Many school districts across the New Mexico and the United States are adopting innovative strategies to nurture the unique abilities of gifted secondary students. These approaches not only challenge gifted learners, but also enrich their overall educational experience.

One of the key strategies employed by schools is differentiated curriculum and instruction. Teachers are trained to create learning experiences that cater to the diverse needs of all students, including gifted learners. This means providing opportunities for gifted students to engage with material at their own pace and depth. Techniques such as flexible grouping, tiered assignments, and compacted curricula allow gifted students to explore subjects more thoroughly while ensuring that every student has access to the essential content. My school district is piloting a partnership with ASU Digital Prep Academy that allows the secondary education students to curriculum compact and accelerate.

To further challenge gifted students, many school systems are expanding access to advanced courses. These include honors classes, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, and dual enrollment opportunities. Enrolling in these rigorous classes not only stimulates gifted learners but also allows them to earn college credits while still in high school. These advanced offerings prepare them for future academic success and personal growth. Some districts have developed specialized programs designed specifically for gifted secondary students. These can take the form of magnet schools, STEM-focused academies, or other specialized high schools. Such immersive environments are tailored to foster intellectual growth and provide gifted students with the chance to learn alongside peers who share their interests and abilities. This peer interaction can enhance their learning experiences and encourage collaborative projects.

Beyond the classroom, school districts are investing in extracurricular activities that complement the academic experience of gifted learners. Opportunities such as academic competition teams, leadership development initiatives, and enrichment clubs allow gifted students to dive deeper into subjects like engineering, entrepreneurship, or creative writing. These activities not only promote academic growth but also help build essential life skills, such as teamwork and problem-solving.

To promote the social-emotional well-being of gifted learners, many schools offer individualized support through gifted education teachers, counselors, and social workers. This support can include counseling services, mentorship programs, and specialized courses focused on managing stress and perfectionism. Recognizing that gifted students may face unique challenges, schools aim to provide a holistic approach to their development.

By implementing these comprehensive strategies, school districts are empowering gifted secondary students to achieve their full potential. Through differentiated learning, advanced coursework, specialized programs, extracurricular enrichment, and individualized support, educators are fostering the next generation of innovators, leaders, and change-makers. Supporting gifted learners ensures that they can thrive academically and personally, paving the way for a brighter future for all.

If you are looking for different ideas and models of gifted education for secondary education students, please check out the following programs across the United States:

1. Renzulli Academy, Hartford Public Schools, Connecticut  
(<https://www.hartfordschools.org/o/Renzulli>)
2. Fairfax County Public Schools Gifted & Talented Program, Virginia  
(<https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/advanced-academic-programs>)
3. Talented and Gifted (TAG) Program, Portland Public Schools, Oregon  
(<https://www.pps.net/TAG>)

### **Kate Morris, MEd Gifted Education**

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