

1) What experience do you have with Batavia Public Schools' gifted services and what knowledge do you have about gifted education in general?

I do not have any specific personal experience with Batavia's Public School's gifted services. Although, I do have personal experience with dealing with an exceptional divergent learner, who at times has met, and at times has not met, certain undefined criteria in order to obtain certain types of services and interventions in order to obtain the education services she needs to reach her full potential. The frustrations that a parent faces in dealing with the bureaucracy that can be our public education system when a program does not have a long term vision or full funding is exasperating. I also understand that, although heredity sets the stage for a gifted or high-ability learner's success, it is clearly not the only determining factor. Brilliance alone does not guarantee success. The answer to a significant degree lies in how a child is being reared and educated. The environmental factors, such as the influence of a gifted child's parents, teachers and curriculum, contribute remarkably to their achievements. A strong gifted educational program is an ideal opportunity to understand and shape a gifted or high-ability learner's social, emotional and educational experiences in such a way as to avoid the pitfalls that potentially derail some gifted students before they hardly begin. Without a foundation and early opportunities to achieve from an early age a gifted or high-ability learner may never realize or reach what they are capable of achieving and accomplishing in and out of the classroom.

2) What is your vision for gifted education in this community?

My vision for gifted students is not entirely different than my vision for all Batavia students of all learning levels, and that is to provide programming to promote the potential of students through challenging and meaningful learning experiences so that students become responsible problem solvers and offer meaningful contributions to the 21st century. Specifically for gifted and high-ability learners it would be my vision to provide the following opportunities:

- To provide an environment that cultivates and encourages intellectual and creative abilities

- To provide students with instruction in regular curriculum and acceleration and enriched curriculum according to the students interests and learning style
- To provide a classroom environment in which students can freely and willingly communicate with their intellectual peers and teachers
- To provide the opportunity, structure and expectation which will increasingly encourage constructive independence and self-sufficiency.

3) What issues do you believe BPS101 needs to address in its academic programs and course offerings so that students can reach their full potential and be college or career ready by the end of their tenure in Batavia schools? What changes would you recommend?

A few months ago I would have quickly responded that the district needed to enhance its STEM curriculum and, in particular, its elementary science curriculum. I believe it still does, however, through the new alliance with the John C. Dunham STEM school, the district has taken a huge step forward in this area. The district also needs to continue to enhance its writing curriculum. With the focus on technology in the 21st century, teaching students how to write with clarity and depth cannot be forgotten. Students still need to graduate with the ability to write concisely, expressing clear ideas and concepts. The district also needs to expand its online and blended learning options in order to provide opportunities for courses that we would not readily be able to provide, such as other foreign languages and computer languages. We also need to continue to address high school business curriculum providing real work business experiences and environments, such as the incubator class and virtual enterprise class that were recently approved.

Specifically, to gifted and high-ability learners we need a focused philosophy and vision and direct financial resources to ensure the gifted students are receiving age appropriate differences in instruction, but those differences should be based upon what is appropriate for the gifted student. We need multiple options in our gifted programs, acceleration and enrichment- not just faster, but also increased depth of learning. A profoundly gifted child has significantly different educational needs than a high-ability learner, for example. In addition, a child may be exceptionally gifted in language arts, but not in math, or in math, but not in language arts. Multiple options are essential. Gifted students need stimulating curriculum; without it they may tune out, losing interest in school altogether. Our

curriculum must require them to stretch their minds. An important part of my platform is not only class size, but class composition and I believe this is just as important for the gifted and high-ability learners as it is for regular learners and our staff. As we increase our resources and staff development planning for our teachers we need to include training for teachers working with gifted students. Teachers trained to work with gifted and high-ability learners are much more effective and provide much more consistency for these students than those that have not. Finally, as we need for all our students, we need to have a social and emotional component tailored for our gifted and high-ability learners so they do not feel isolated or different and one way to do this is to honor and celebrate their academic talents in the same way athletic talents are honored. For example, pep rallies can be held for academics and artistic talent. Names of achievers should be celebrated and listed and announced in the same way we celebrate our sport achievers.

4) If elected, what criteria will you use to evaluate proposals to maintain or develop the existing gifted services available to students in BPS101?

The following are sample - driven questions I would use to determine whether the programs and services are actually aligned with the gifted and high-ability learner program implementation that I was evaluating.

Focus on Students

- How are gifted and high-ability learner students identified and served?
- What existing data confirm the effectiveness of the screening and identification system?
- What additional screening and identification criteria need to be considered to ensure that special populations are not being overlooked?
- What academic and behavioral characteristics differentiate gifted and talented students from regular education students?
- How is the program meeting the academic, artistic, affective, and counseling needs of individual students?
- How can program activities be used with all students to spot latent interests and talents?

Focus on Curriculum

- What curricular options are available to meet the students' academic needs?

- What data indicate the effectiveness of the curriculum?
- How is acceleration used in specific content areas?
- What is the effectiveness of the acceleration options?
- What is the impact of training in the arts?
- What units of study are developed to challenge students' abilities?
- How are advanced research skills introduced and applied by students?
- What is the quality of students' projects as a result of their program involvement?
- What new skills do students acquire due to their program involvement?
- How are the new skills being applied to other curricular areas?

Focus on Program Implementation

- How are the program goals and objectives implemented?
- What program goals and objectives need to be clarified?
- How are the program goals and objectives connected to the district's mission and philosophy statements?
- What is the impact of the programs and services on the regular education program?
- What is the effectiveness of the gifted and high-ability learner programs and services?
- What advanced training opportunities are available for all teachers?
- What are the unanticipated outcomes of the program?
- What are the reactions of students, parents, teachers, and administrators to the program implementation?
- How are formal and informal feedback used to improve program quality?
- How well do the instructional staff perform their tasks and demonstrate continual professional growth?
- What instructional strategies and curricular techniques are applied to the regular education program?
- What are the educational outcomes of students involved in the program?
- What are the long-term effects of student involvement with the program?

Focus on Service Delivery Models

- How are the curriculum approaches being implemented at various grade levels?
- How is the program organized and coordinated?
- How is the program implementation documented?

- What program resources are needed to maintain or improve the quality of the present program?
- What evidence has been gathered to judge the merit of present service delivery models?
- What additional service delivery models should be considered?

I use such evaluation strategies as an integral part of program planning and implementation as I evaluate proposals brought before me as a Board member.. Throughout all stages of the programs and service evaluation strategies asking such questions leads to decisions to advance program quality and effectiveness and seek answers to:

- What works?
- What needs improvement?
- How will possible changes in programs and services improve the educational options for students?