

BVPAGE Meeting

4/19 7pm

“Don’t ask Alexa, Siri, or Google... Ask me!” A Student Panel by Gifted Students for Gifted Students

Q&A with 7 gifted high school students from Blue Valley High Schools and two Blue Valley graduates who are now in college

Board members present: Jeannie, Tracy, Amy, Heidi, Erin, Lisa, Patty

Attendance: 105

Q: Tell us about a passion you immersed yourself in, learned everything you could about it, and how long it lasted? – all panelists

A (summary): It’s always something, some developed early and some later, whatever they found fascinating they ran with. Often times self-started a lot of their own projects at home, some inspired by a project in school. Examples from the panel included: crossword puzzles (learning unusual words we don’t use every day), fishing (and ended up building himself a boat), Chinese (taking as many classes as possible), film (started as watching and now learning how to make them), oil painting (saw one in a restaurant and took initiative to do it on her own and now selling on her own Etsy shop), business (starting with the stock market game in middle school), interests always changing but whatever it is, always focused on it (Greek mythology, mystery novels, art (does whatever she can to expose herself to it, music), music (has been, always will be.. played all types of music on his instrument), all kinds of mythology, school spirit

Q: When did you realize you learned faster or differently than your peers? – two panelists

1: Later in elementary school when I skipped grade in math

2: 1st grade because I was such a perfectionist and it was affecting my work, I couldn’t finish my assignments on time because of it

Q: How did you feel when you were first identified as gifted?

1: Second grade. I didn’t really understand at first, it wasn’t until middle school that definitely could tell I was different and it was frustrating that classes weren’t differentiated enough.

2: Early elementary and I was excited because I wasn’t challenged enough and now I could go to another class and be creative, it was fun and exciting.

Q: Have you ever struggled or failed and what helped you when you did?

1: Making good friends who communicated well with me. But struggling through it was so validating. **I learned what a good relationship is and what I needed. Now I have a great group of friends.**

2: Finding people like me. I had an eye-opening experience and realized **you need to press on and see what the next day brings.**

Q: What helped you make connections and find your niche and your people?

1: **Finding a niche isn't hard if you're willing to try.** I found a lot of friends in band and clubs and taking a chance on sitting at a new lunch table. **Go talk to people.** Find people who love doing the same thing you do.

2: **Getting involved in clubs and activities that share my same interests who are determined like me.** Bond at outside activities. Try new things.

Q: Do you feel pressure to excel at everything? If yes, what helps you?

1: Yes. It's not necessarily external. Just stems from me. I hold myself to a higher standard. Sometimes you aren't always the best no matter how hard you work. It's difficult to get over. **You need to be proud of what you have and know you're doing the best you can.** Talking to family and friends helped me through it because it's not realistic. **It's never wrong to ask for help.**

2: I don't feel it about everything, but I feel pressure to live up to what I'm capable of it. **You need to remember that if the pressure doesn't motivate you, it's not worth the stress. Some stress is healthy, some isn't.**

Q: How do you talk to others about your successes and strengths?

1: I try to be modest and ask them about their strengths, so I can get to know them better. **Don't brag. But don't downplay your success- don't give into that pressure. You should be proud, just be modest about it.**

2: I like being right and being intelligent, but I annoy my roommates when I do this. **You need to let people see what you can do naturally. Don't make yourself seem better than anyone else.** Don't brag but don't downplay.

Q: Tell us about a time you tried something outside your comfort zone and was it worth it?

1: I spend every summer away and always with new people. Through all of that it helped me figure out who I am and who I want to be. **Taking myself out of my comfort zone helped me to be the person I want to be at home and school.**

2: I tried a new sport and it was not good. It was too much. I stuck out the season and realized I just didn't like it and it was ok. Showed me what I can and cannot handle physically and emotionally. **Find your breaking point but you don't need to stay there.**

Q: Do you ever struggle with motivation and what helps?

1: It's hard to be motivated to do school work that doesn't make me happy. If it interests me I'm motivated otherwise have trouble staying focused on it. So I think about how I can use that to further my goals... "I don't care about this class but if I get good grades I can get into a school where I can focus on what makes me happy."

2: **Focus on what motivates you and what you're passionate about. You'll get more choices in high school. Very rarely is school totally meaningless. Look at the big picture.**

Q: Have you ever felt pressure to fit in and hide your giftedness?

1: Yes, because of stereotypes that people hold. **Sometimes it can also be hard to explain being gifted without sounding arrogant or bragging. I got over it by being able to share what we do in gifted and how I've been able to pursue interests rather than the "smart" aspect.**

2: Everyone feels that. **I used to jump into trying to solve people's problems rather than just listening and showing empathy.**

Q: What advice would you give to someone to find good friends?

1: Find an activity you love and are passionate about. **Find someone in every activity you like to talk to and soon you'll have a circle of great people. But even if you don't it's ok.** Don't be obsessed with finding friends.

2: I struggled with finding true friends that are dependable. Drama happens. You need to find friends you can trust and will be there during tough times. If you're putting more effort into the relationship than they are you need to move on. I've had to do that and I'm happier for it. **Put yourself out there. Find friends in many circles.**

Q: For college students: Does being ID'd gifted affect you in college?

1: No, the term doesn't follow you but being in college there are so many other brilliant people. I'm not the top 5% anymore. I fit in with more people. Everyone else in my major is super high achieving.

2: The title means nothing, but the way you are doesn't change. **The label gets you nowhere in college but the way you are will make you stand out.**

Q: What do you wish your parents had known 10 years ago about raising a gifted kid? - 5 panelists answered

1: **My parents did a great job. They treated me not as a child but as a peer, someone they could talk to on even level and not baby me or talk down to me.** That made a big impact. We had no communication problems.

2: Your child picks up school work faster but that doesn't mean they will pick up everything faster. Don't think they need to join all these clubs to get into the right college. Steer your kid toward what they want to do. **Push them but don't shove them.**

3: A lot of times I've been engrossed in school work and I've gotten so stressed, but **my parents have done a good job telling me just breathe that it's not life or death. Take time to have fun and enjoy yourself and high school.**

4: **When your kids share a big idea or plan take it seriously, don't dismiss it.** They've probably thought about it a lot.

5: **Don't put assumptions on your kid.** "I can't imagine you going in state, I can't imagine you being an engineer." Made me want to fight them.

Q: What are some of the ways you have found to be happy? – for 4 panelists

1: **Follow your passion. It makes you feel good about yourself and that you're doing something good in the world.**

2: Finding a way to fit into the community. Clubs, activities, where I find people who have the same passions. I took a lot of personality surveys to help me discover interests.

3: Pursue your passion as much as you want. If it makes it happy do it as much as possible. It's worth it. **You don't have to be a doctor or engineer. You can do whatever you want.**

4: **Go for it. Explore. You don't have to make yourself a huge success story. Find where you are happy and people you want to be around.**

Questions from the audience:

Q: If you asked for help, were you told "you're supposed to be the smart kid?"

A: It can be hard to have the label but **you won't always be the best. Be confident in yourself. Trust your abilities.**

Q: When you get a C on a test, how did it feel?

A: You get a feeling in your stomach knowing it's not as good as someone else. It's rough. What you'll realize is in elementary or middle school it's not a big impact. **In high school there's a whole range of subjects and you can't be the best at all of them. You may have to work harder and that's ok. Talk to your teacher and parents and get help.**

Q: What do you do if you're feeling confident but then you take the test and your confidence goes down?

A: It's ok. You can try harder next time. **You're not going to remember this test in a few years. If you work hard you will make up for that one test.**

Q: Do people ever ask you, "What do you do in gifted? Play board games?"

A: I tell them gifted is about finding something you want to do and learning as much as you can about it.

Q: What happens when you think you've found a good friend, but they throw you under the bus?

A: You can always go find a better friend out there. **You have to find people who are dependable. You will find yourself happier if you move away from those who aren't.** People do mess up sometimes so give them a second chance but not if there's a pattern.

Q: Would you rather work with someone at your pace or someone who's slower and you can teach them?

A: **If you can teach someone else it means you have an even better grasp what you know.**

Q: Is pressure good, bad, or both?

A: It depends. Pressure sometimes reminds you that you care. It can be good or bad depending on how you react. It can motivate you to do your best, but it can become too much. It's not there to make you do worse. **Pressure to do your best can be good but pressure to be perfect can put too much stress on you.**

Q: Has anyone ever called you bossy? What did you do about it?

A: I've taken over a project and told people what to do because we had a big deadline. I got a D on peer review because team didn't like the way I handled it. **It's not great to be bossy but then there are times to step up and be a leader.**

Q: How many of you got gifted from first grade? - 2 of them

Q: I've had trouble understanding my peers and vice versa? Do you have advice?

A: My parents didn't let me play video games, so I couldn't relate to friends. It's frustrating but **as you have more kids at your school, it's easier to find people who are similar. It may just take more time.**

Q: Do you find it easier to make friends with other people who are gifted?

A: Not necessarily. Sometimes it very compatible and sometimes very incompatible. It's about being able to communicate on the same wavelength.

Q: When you get wrong answers in a test, how do you react?

A: When I do more poorly than I thought, I remind myself that failing just gives another opportunity to work harder on the next one. **You're going to fail so you need to learn to overcome them.**

Q: Have extracurricular activities ever interfered with school work?

A: Being an athlete and being involved in a lot can be hard. You have to find a balance. **You love your activities but school you don't always love so it's difficult to prioritize. It comes with maturity and learning how to balance.** There are things you need to do, like school, in order to do the things you love. The high school gifted program has really helped me manage my time.

Q: Has anyone ever called you a human calculator?

A: Yes. **Try to laugh that stuff off. Remind them you aren't perfect.**

Q: Have you ever used the gifted program to your advantage?

A: **I might not have graduated high school if I wasn't in gifted. It's so valuable to help you be more effective and get advice to help you.** They help with college applications.

Q: How do you join into a conversation?

A: **You don't have to be the star of every conversation. It gives you the chance to learn. It's important because you can hear what other students are interested in. Listen in and learn. If you don't have anything to add, don't feel like you have to talk.** Being uncomfortable it's always bad.

Q: Does being gifted make you feel more stressed?

A: No, because I can pursue what I like. I like the gifted time during my day to have a break.

Q: IS it easier to make friends in the higher graders or lower?

A: Higher because there are more people to meet. It's less awkward as you get older and you start to figure out who you really are.

Last question:

Q: What one tip would you give to all the gifted kids in the room? – for all panelists

A: **Don't let gifted put you in a box. You're not all the same. You don't have to be perfect. Stuff that seems big now won't be big later. It will pass. Things will get better. Be open to what the future has to offer and experiences you may not expect. Try new things, you may find your next big passion. Go for it. You never know something can motivate you. Talk to everyone you can, you learn so much from others. Get out of your comfort zone. Follow what you're passionate about.**

Don't let the fear of failure stop you or what others think about it. Don't wonder "what if." Use your time in gifted especially as you're given more time to pursue interests. If you have a healthy mindset it will make you so much happier. Don't look down on other interests. Do what makes you happy. Don't change yourself to make friends. Don't pretend to like something so someone will like you. You'll find friends who will be with you for you. The worst thing someone can say is no, so take a chance. It may hurt initially but in the end you'll live so much better that you don't have that regret. Always try.