

**THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GIFTED STUDENTS EDUCATION  
PROGRAM IN SAUDI ARABIA WITH GIFTED STUDENTS  
EDUCATION PROGRAM IN THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE**

**Bahjah Alsulami**

University of Salem, College of Education, Special Education department

**E-mail:** [Bahjah00@hotmail.com](mailto:Bahjah00@hotmail.com)

**Abstract:**

The aim of the present research is to compare the gifted student's education program in Saudi Arabia with gifted student's education program in the Massachusetts state. This study obtains to answer three questions: what the goals of the advanced program at the Massachusetts state? how are advanced students at the Massachusetts state identified by school's district? what kinds of curricula and instructional methods are used with your advanced students? This study implemented in 17 public schools by using open-ended questions in the surveys to have more information about gifted students' program. The resulting from this study, according to the surveys and the Massachusetts education department the gifted student's programs are completely different. In Saudi Arabia, they have separated and inclusive schools, special curriculum and teachers for gifted students. In addition, they provide three services for those students: developing ideas Service, Technical Consultancy Service and International and domestic exhibitions of innovations. However, the Massachusetts state they called them "advanced students". Each school is different, and the conditions are never the same from one school to the others. Also, the advanced students they do not have additional sources inside or outside the school.

**Keywords:** gifted students', education program, Massachusetts state.

## **Introduction:**

We always in the general education focus in the regular students and students with disabilities, and we usually do not care about gifted students. We actually have misunderstood for gifted students; they can fully depend on themselves without other people helping. Also, there was a vast lack of trained professors and faculty for gifted and talented programs, along with universities that offered majors in giftedness and talented. In addition, I'd like the other people and particularly parents to know a special education is not just for students with disabilities, but also for gifted students to benefit from special education services. From my experience, I found that most of the families did not know that the special education services can provide the services for their gifted children because they thought these services just for students with disabilities.

I believe that some of the gifted students are receiving the appropriate education in the general education. In this journey, I would like to explore and benefit from the Massachusetts schools experience and I will learn different experience from Saudi Arabia.

## **Literature: Saudi Arabia**

### **The philosophy behind this program.**

The talent without attention from their family is like a small plant without care or watering. The religion and the human mind do not accept to neglect or ignore them. Therefore, all we plan our mission is to nurture and increase our attention to intensifying promises for the future and we must refine the talent that reflected on the fact and the service of religion and our country. (Abdulaziz, 2007)

The school is the best environment to provide the self-confidence and communicate with students to gather.

The school should make a sense of belonging and they are keen to integrate efforts directed to take care of the student, taking advantage of his time and what is available from the school and potential sources. (Aljgyeman, 2002)

**Goal:** The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia is seeking to raise the education of their children, and provide for the gifted in particular quality education commensurate with their abilities and talented aspires to create innovators students to lead and to serve their country. (Aljgyeman, 2002)

The curriculum for gifted students is one of the most important to achieve this goal. The professional teachers for gifted programs have to plan the curriculum to be suitable and modern depends on the education that focuses on building a creative learning for the gifted students according to their abilities and talents, not through a specific scientific content imposes it. The advantages of programs are accurately focused on the talented student from the different side of personal and social characteristics, behavior of the construction of scientific research, creative thinking, access methods to solve problems in creative ways to creative solutions and is made up of these things personally creative student. Many studies have shown that the needs of gifted students to the scientific, psychological and social different than other students. Those student's special category needs a special care commensurate with their need as other special categories. There is no doubt that this category of deprived of their rights is an injustice not only for gifted students but for the present and future of the nation. (Aljgyeman,2002)

### **Assessment:**

1- Teachers' estimates: The first way to discover the gifted students started from the teacher's estimates. The teachers estimate the students who find that they are superior to their peers who are with them in the classroom or in the school activity or teacher estimated that the student has the preparations and capabilities indicate the possibility of a talent with the nomination this student. The teacher can be noted many of the characteristics that indicate the presence of talent. He/she should observe curiosity and desire for renewal and perseverance, leadership, ambition, the ability to focus, attention, what type of books and readings those students love and hobbies. in addition, the teacher should notice the personal aspects of the students in terms of memory, imagination, artistic talents and other behavior which is characterized by a talented student than others. (Jarwan, 2013)

2- IQ test: After teachers' estimates the students are eligible to take the IQ test. This test is provided by qiyas center in Saudi Arabia. The Objectives of this test is to detect the student's potential abilities and academic skills in the fields of Language, Mathematics, Science, and some creativity aspects, given to it by a series of dimensions, sections, styles, and images. This test includes four Sections: Mental flexibility, Scientific and mechanical reasoning, Linguistic reasoning and reading comprehension and Mathematical and spatial. (Education & Training Evaluation Commission, 2017)

### **Gifted student's services:**

1- **Developing ideas Service:** these services allowed to students who have and idea of any new invention to register it. Then, some specialist will provide instructions and advice to develop and evaluate this idea. After that, they help students to register this idea in the

global invention patent office. These services have many goals such as stimulate and attract the general education student's holder's scientific ideas to present their ideas, spreading the culture of invention and innovation and support for innovators to gain access to valuable innovations and examine innovative ideas in global invention patent offices. (King Abdulaziz & his companions foundation for giftedness & creativity, 2017)

**2- Technical Consultancy Service:** This service is concerned with providing the public consultation in the field of patents for inventors, provided by a number of specialists in order to assist in the technical aspects of the inventor to protect his patent for free. This service targets to provide technical consulted and guidance to inventors for free and facilitate and clarify the steps to apply for a patent. (King Abdulaziz & his companions foundation for giftedness & creativity, 2017)

**3- International and domestic exhibitions of innovations:** These services help the students to join to the international and domestic exhibitions to compete with other students around the world. Also, this service has many goals such as take advantage of these global gatherings in the presentation of inventions and marketing, Identify the level of national innovation among global innovations and stimulate innovators Saudis and encourage them to continue in the field of innovation. (King Abdulaziz & his companions foundation for giftedness & creativity, 2017)

### **Curriculum:**

**1- (Grade Skipping):** the gifted and talented students in the classroom always frustrate, because they understand the information very quickly unlike their peers from more than once. From this important point has been proposed this program where the student is allowed to progress in the educational ladder at a faster rate than is usual for his peers, in this case,

The school is moving in its schedule as fast and allow him to excellence through skipping some classes (Alsrora,2003)

- 2- Enrichment Programs: Make the modifications and additions in the regular curriculum until to fit with the needs of gifted students in cognitive, emotional and creative fields and the sense of mobility. This modification may be in the form of increased study materials are not given to the regular students, or increase the level of difficulty in subjects, or the depth of one or more subjects. Usually, they pull out the students during the day and they teach them this enrichment curriculum. (Jarwan, 2013)

### **Literature: Massachusetts state**

#### **The philosophy behind the program:**

While I searched for studies that focused on gifted student's situation in the Massachusetts, I found that the Massachusetts identify the "gifted students" by the terms "academically advanced students". In the history of academically advanced students in the Massachusetts state, I found that before 1996 there were no funds to support academically advanced programs (Gifted students) for Massachusetts public school students. Nonetheless, after 2001, they started to fund the services to academically advanced students. This program creates to meet the student's high achievement professional development, and these services are different from district to another district. One survey found that the students in the suburban and rural district receive the academically advance services than other students in the urban school. At the Massachusetts, the survey found that percentage of students served at the middle school in the different district in the Mass.



The Haverhill presented the highest percentage by 21% after that Chelsea and Fall River presented 14%. Then, Framingham 10%, Brockton 8%, Bedford 5% and Boston 3%. (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2017)

**Assessment:**

According to the Massachusetts department of education, there is no standardize test to measure the academically advance students. The most common way of selecting students for participation in academically advanced programs was through teacher recommendations coupled with a review of student grades or collections of student work. Also, many districts reported using diagnostic assessments, including: aptitude testing, test of cognitive skills, Differentiated Matrix, Torrance Test, reading tests, Raven’s Progressive Matrix, Naglieri Nonverbal assessment, IQ tests, Renzulli scales, SAGES, I, Education Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY), Metropolitan Writing, Orleans Hanna Math Test and school-developed assessments, including writing samples. (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2017)

**Curriculum:**

This survey presented the natural services for academically advanced students’ in the Massachusetts public school (Prek-8 school) according to the Mass education department.

Survey Component	Grade Level	Number of LEAs Reporting	Percent of responding LEAs Reporting services at these grade level
Districts reporting no current services for academically advanced students	PreK-5	48	31%
	Grads 6-8	32	20%





Substantially separate full-day advanced academic programs taught by designated staff	PreK-5	6	4%
	Grads 6-8	9	6%
Pull-out advanced academic programs taught by designated staff	PreK-5	26	17%
	Grads 6-8	15	10%
Pull-out enrichment programs	PreK-5	26	17%
	Grads 6-8	23	15%
Separate accelerated, advanced, or honors academic courses	PreK-5	N/A	N/A
	Grads 6-8	57	36%
Differentiated instruction and modification taught by the classroom teacher alone or in combination with other services	PreK-5	75	49%
	Grads 6-8	53	34%
Other services (e.g., distance	PreK-5	45	29%



learning, collaboration with community resources, after-school or summer programs)	Grads 6-8	38	24%
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Within this survey, we can see in the table the differentiated instruction and modification taught by the classroom teacher are the most popular in the Mass public schools by representing 49% and 34% for Prek-5 and grades 6-8 respectively. After that, the 31% and 20% reported by many districts they do not provide the academically advanced programs to the students in Prek-8. Also, 57 district schools provide Separate accelerated for advanced students only between 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades represented by 36%. In addition, the survey found that students are more likely to receive advanced instruction in reading and mathematics than in other subjects in PreK-8. Otherwise, it is rarely that they receive advanced instruction in foreign languages and in the arts. Additionally, the survey found that at the high school level the advanced courses are most common in mathematics and sciences more than in the other courses. After 2001," the opportunities for high school students to take Advanced Placement and college courses expanded, and the Certificate of Mastery Program provided an incentive for students to score high on MCAS in order to receive scholarships to state colleges and universities". (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2017)

### **Gifted student's services:**

According to the Mass education department, 78% of the respondent said that there was no coordinator to oversee services or provide consultation or resources to classroom teachers or parents. However, for the students there are two of the most popular programs used after school, Destination Imagination and Future Problem Solving, are competitive challenges for teams of students, often led by the parent or community volunteers as well as teachers. (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2017)

### **Research goals:**

- Comparing the gifted students education program in Saudi Arabia with gifted students education program in the Massachusetts state.

### **Research questions:**

- What the goals of the advanced program at the Massachusetts state
- How are advanced students at the Massachusetts state identified by school's district
- What kinds of curricula and instructional methods are used with your advanced students?

### **Research setting:**

This study will be implemented in 17 public schools. I have chosen those schools because they provide an advanced program for their gifted students (advanced students), and they allowed me to access to the advanced program in the school as well.

## **Data collection**

The focus group will be given the same survey of questions on the advanced program in their school. The sample of those surveys are included in my appendices, and the surveys will be used to find what the goals of the gifted program, how are gifted students identified by school's district and what kinds of curricula and instructional methods are used with the advanced students.

## **Data analysis**

After administering the surveys of 17 schools. I will be able to find a common service that provides to gifted or advanced students at Massachusetts state and how they provide this services for them based off of the responses from the advanced students' teachers and I might follow up with interviews.

## **Validity**

In order to ensure the validity of research findings, I will be using a number of different strategies. Before conducting surveys, I will ask my professor and my colleagues to revise my research question to make sure they are not leading or biased. After that, the surveys, I will ask my professor to look across of what is the similar or different answer in the surveys. All surveys being conducted will be written down by the advanced students' teachers. Any conflict will be reanalyzed. I understand that I will have to be clear with the advanced students' teachers that their responses will not influence in their job. I will scrutinize the gathered data in order to reach a conclusion, keeping in mind to ignore all prior assumptions and biases. In Saudi Arabia, they have a separate and inclusive school for gifted students. My bias, it will open that how the Massachusetts schools dealing with the gifted students.

## Implications

In this research, I found that the gifted student's programs are completely different than from Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabia, they have separated school, special curriculum and teachers for gifted students. However, the Massachusetts state they called them “advanced students”. Each school is different and the conditions are never the same from one school to the others. Taking one urban school from the schools that response to the survey. In this school, they have only acceleration program for advanced students in math. They have this program for students that like to be challenged beyond the curriculum. This school identifies the advanced students by using the LOWA test score, placement test, and teacher recommendation. Taking other two schools that response to the survey. They have only Enrichment program for the students who are above the average benchmark level. One of them identifies the advanced students by using a progress monitoring test and formative assessment. The other one is using placement test and IQ test such as WASI to identify those students. Both schools are using the small group instruction of higher level content and enrichment activities. In addition, I found that the curriculum for advanced students designed by the department head and the teachers can add anything to enrich their students. The curriculum design is similar to what they have in Saudi Arabia, but the assessment that they have provides by Qiyas center. This center uses many tests such as Wechsler, Stanford Pena and Renzulli test to assess the students in the 3rd grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and our assessment also starts by teacher's recommendation.

According to the surveys and the Massachusetts education department, the advanced students they do not have additional sources inside or outside the school.

However, In Saudi Arabia, they have three services for those students as mention in the literature: developing ideas Service, Technical Consultancy Service and International and domestic exhibitions of innovations.

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## Appendix

Dear Respondent,

I am conducting a survey for a Master's degree from Salem State University. This questionnaire is intended for teachers of advanced students and other people who work with the advanced students at the state of Massachusetts. I would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to fill out this survey.

Name(optional): .....

Position or connection to advanced student: .....

1. Do you have an advanced program in your school/ organization?

\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_ No

2. If you have this program in your school/ organization, what kind of services does the advanced program include?

Enrichment

Acceleration such as subject grade skipping, or whole grade skipping

Other .....

3. If it's not what do you have instead for those students?

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4. Why do you have this program?

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5. How does your school/organization identify the advanced students for this program? Are there any standardized tests involved in the identification process?

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6. What kinds of curricula and instructional methods are used with your advanced students?

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7. Who is responsible for designing and implementing the curriculum for advanced students?.....

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8. Are there any other additional resources for advanced students in the school or outside the school? If yes, please explain it?

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Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out in this survey. Your participation is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Bahjah Alsulami  
Masters Degree Student  
University of Salem State



### Permission letter

Dear,

I am conducting an interview for my research (Comparative study between gifted students in Saudi Arabia and gifted students in the Massachusetts state) from Salem State University. This interview is intended for teachers of advanced students. I would appreciate it if I get the permit for your interview, being the part of my research at Salem State University, it is being a mandatory assignment for me to submit a report based on “the interview teacher for advanced student’s”

Eventually you will raise my fortune if you could permit for the same. It could be my pleasure getting it schedule for around 10-15 minutes.

Sincerely,

Bahjah Alsulami  
Masters Degree Student  
University of Salem State

Teacher name.....  
Signature.....  
Date.....