



# AIG Focus

**Monthly Goal: I respectfully advocate for myself as a gifted learner.**

## The Superpower of Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy is a critical skill that empowers students to speak up, set their own goals, and find support in realizing their dreams. It is defined as the process of recognizing and meeting the needs specific to your learning ability without compromising the dignity of yourself or others.

Gifted students have different educational, social, and emotional needs than those of their peers. And when things aren't going right, kids need to know what they can do to make it better. What are their options? Who do they turn to for support? What do they say?

So, where do you begin?

- **Step One:** Gather information. Your child needs to be knowledgeable about the nature of their giftedness and their personal learner profile, as well as their rights within the system and options for acceleration, enrichment, and social/emotional support.
- **Step Two:** Consider options that match your child's learner profile. Help them assess and reflect on their unique characteristics in five areas: cognitive ability,

academic strengths and challenges, interests, learning preferences, and personality traits like perfectionism, introversion, motivation, and intensities.

- **Step Three:** Create a plan for successful self-advocacy using short- or long-term goals related to something they really want to change.

Most goals fall into these four categories.

- Finding a greater challenge (ex: accelerate in math)
- Exploring an interest (ex: study Latin)
- Spending more time with like-ability peers (ex: start a writer's group)
- Adjusting/addressing personal traits (ex: become less perfectionistic)

The best way to move the plan forward is to work with your child's school advocate (a teacher, school counselor, gifted specialist, or principal).

To read the full article, go to: "[The Superpower of Self-Advocacy](#)" by Deb Douglas.

### Director's Discussion

Have you ever found that when you advocate for yourself and get something changed that others will come and thank you? So often self-advocacy ends up helping others achieve their goals too.

Self-advocacy is not about getting what I want. Rather advocacy must be focused on getting what I need. Helping our children/students understand the difference between wants and needs never really ends. Advocating for a need requires a student to be self-aware, to know what options or accommodations are available, and to be able to express it in a time and place that is appropriate.

Our gifted specialists work with our students to help them understand that it is okay to ask for modifications to assignments or the learning environment. Advocacy is an art that has to be taught and practiced. As our students get older, it becomes increasingly important that they ask what they should be preparing for and what opportunities they should participate in next.

Dr. Michael Elder,  
Director, College and Career Readiness

### A note from your specialist...

Here is a snapshot of what we are doing in the AIG pullout groups.

**Reading:** Students have been learning root words and using the meaning of a prefix to determine the meaning of a word containing the prefix/root word. Students have also been reading short stories and working on vocabulary, citing evidence from the text, and demonstrating comprehension of the story.

**Math:** Students have been working on solving algebraic expressions and equations. We will continue using our Hands-on-Equations kits to expand on these skills. Students have also been having minilessons to start class solving above grade level math skills.

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