Giftedness
3. An explanation of the extent to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular classroom.

4. A description of the modifications in the administration of assessments needed, or exclusion from assessments and tests.

5. The date for starting services and modifications and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and modifications.

6. A statement of how progress will be measured and how parents will be regularly informed about the child's progress and the extent to which that progress is sufficient to enable the child to achieve the goals by the end of the year.

7. IEP for students 14 and older must also include information on how the child's transition from school to adult life will be supported.

Students are to receive a continuum of services. This is a flexible arrangement in which student placement can change over time. Students can be shifted between seven different levels of appropriate services (Heward & Cavanaugh, 2003):

- **Level 7**: Specialized facilities in a nonpublic setting to ensure a more protective environment and intensive teaching.

- **Level 6**: Special school along with a prescribed program from a specially trained staff.

- **Level 5**: Full-time special class. Students receive a prescribed program under the direction of a special class teacher.

- **Level 4**: Regular classroom and resource room. Students receive a prescribed program under the direction of a regular classroom teacher. In addition, the student spends part of the time in a specially staffed and equipped resource room.

- **Level 3**: Regular classroom with supplementary instruction and services. Students receive a prescribed program under the direction of the regular teacher. In addition, there is instruction for an itinerant or school-based specialist.

- **Level 2**: Regular classroom teacher with consultation from specialists. Students get a prescribed program under the direction of the regular teacher, who is supported by consulting with specialists.

- **Level 1**: Regular classroom. Students receive a prescribed program under the direction of the regular teacher.

Gifted students receive much less attention than students in other categories of exceptionality. This might be because of the misconception that gifted students do not require special assistance in order to be successful in school. However, they do need help in pacing, in procuring appropriate study materials, and in deciding what to do when they out-run the class.

One of the primary issues in gifted education is first defining what skills, along with levels of accomplishment, qualify students for involvement in the gifted program. There are no federally mandated definitions, and consequently school districts must establish their own criteria. Historically, IQ tests were used to identify these students. Now creativity tests are more commonly used along with portfolios and auditions. Yet standardized tests remain the most common way to identify giftedness (Hardman, Drew, Egan, & Wolf, 1998; Subotnik & LeBlanc, 2003). A highly disproportionate percentage of middle- and upper middle-class mainstream students are categorized as gifted when compared with lower-class students and students of color. This is because many of them have parents with the knowledge, political skills, and power to force the schools to classify their
children as gifted, which provides them with special instruction and enrichment (Sapon-Shevin, 1994).

Gifted students have (1) advanced executive skills in planning, learning, and carrying out a given task, (2) insight into novel ideas and situations, and (3) conceptual and practical decision-making skills. They are characterized by having

- An accelerated pace at which they learn
- A capacity for seeing relationships and patterns
- Intense motivation
- High expectations of themselves and others
- Impatience with lack of agility and physical development to carry out solutions to problems they can readily visualize
- Awareness of inconsistencies between the ideal and real behavior. They readily visualize hypocrisy.

Gifted students should be encouraged to see themselves as producers rather than consumers of knowledge. They should be involved in long-term projects in which they have an opportunity to make many of their own decisions and direct their own studies.

Usually, gifted programs either accelerate students, provide enrichment, or create a curriculum that consists of interdisciplinary themes. In some school districts, they attend special schools designed especially for them. In other situations, students identified as gifted are grouped into special classes. In some cases, pull-out programs are employed that involve taking students out of class periodically for special instruction. Sometimes a consulting teacher will work with gifted students in the regular classroom (Subotnik & LeBlanc, 2003).

**RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND THE SCHOOLS**

Religious differences can be very problematic for teachers. In one community, teachers may be expected to expose their students to many different perspectives, whereas in another, a good deal of censorship may be experienced. This is complicated by the fact that teachers themselves may have their own religious beliefs or strong opinions about the role of including religious perspectives in school.

Even though many communities have a large cross section of different religious denominations, some regions of this country have large majorities of one religious persuasion or another. In the Southeast, for example, students may come from conservative Southern Baptist or Pentecostal families. These religious congregations may be opposed to sex education and other value-laden subjects, and carefully scrutinize textbooks and other educational materials to ensure the content is sufficiently consistent with their beliefs. In inner-city schools of the East Coast, an entirely different problem may exist. Because many different denominations are likely present, teachers may have considerable difficulty avoiding conflicts when there are so many different viewpoints and expectations. In Utah, many communities are dominated by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons). Mormons typically are involved in church activities on weeknights as well as on Sunday. In addition, many serve in lay leadership positions in the church. At the same time, they may hold responsible positions in business, civic, and various service institutions. Although religion is not taught as part of the school curriculum, Mormon values and attitudes are reflected in school practices. Many children receive religious instruction during the school day in Mormon seminaries located adjacent to schools. Day-to-day activities of Mormons are governed by practices such as sexual morality, not smoking, and