

## U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION TO ATTEND OPENING OF NATION'S FIRST PUBLIC SCHOOL FOR PROFOUNDLY GIFTED STUDENTS

**Reno, Nev. (August 2006)** – U.S. Secretary of Education **Margaret Spellings** will be in Reno Tuesday, August 22 at Lawlor Events Center to celebrate the opening of The Davidson Academy of Nevada, on the University of Nevada, Reno campus.

The Davidson Academy, the first free public school of its kind in the nation serving profoundly gifted students, will open August 28 with an inaugural class of more than 35 students ranging in age from 10 to 16. An individualized learning plan for each student will enable the teachers to guide students through the appropriate level and pace of each curricular area. While approximately half of the students are from Reno, many of the families are moving to Reno to attend the Academy ([www.DavidsonAcademy.UNR.edu](http://www.DavidsonAcademy.UNR.edu)).

"As our world grows more competitive, we must run faster and better prepare our students to compete. That's why President Bush launched the American Competitiveness Initiative to increase academic rigor in our schools and strengthen math and science education," said **Secretary Spellings**. "The Davidson Academy is leading the way, challenging students with more advanced coursework and equipping them to succeed in college and the workforce."

Approximately half of the gifted students in the United States, an estimated 1.5 million, are underachieving because they are not challenged by their school curriculum and up to 20 percent of high school dropouts test in the gifted range, according to the *Handbook of Gifted Education*.

"The current, one-size-fits-all approach to education is not working for our brightest students," said **Bob Davidson**, co-founder of The Davidson Academy. "Davidson Academy students will be key to moving our state and nation forward with their talents and innovations while supporting our nation's position in the global economy."

To be eligible to attend The Davidson Academy, students must be at the middle or high school level across all subject areas and score in the 99.9<sup>th</sup> percentile on IQ or college entrance tests, such as the SAT or ACT.

At The Davidson Academy, if students master a semester's worth of course material in a few weeks or a month, they may move ahead at their own pace," said **Jan Davidson**, co-founder of The Davidson Academy. "We tailor learning to each student, giving them the opportunity to learn in greater depth and at a faster pace than they would in a typical, grade-based schooling situation."

Davidson Academy students will have the opportunity to proceed through undergraduate and graduate coursework at the University of Nevada and students will also be able to pursue research with professors.

"Our campus is an ideal place to nurture these bright young people," said **John Frederick**, University provost and executive vice president. "We strive for excellence from all our students and value the vast intellectual ability of this inaugural group of Davidson Academy students. It's a great

opportunity for us, and the University's faculty and student body are eager to welcome these exceptionally bright young people and provide them with new academic challenges."

The Davidson Academy is located on the University campus at 1670 N. Virginia St. in Reno and will be expanding into a permanent location on campus within the next few years.

In 1999, the Davidsons founded the Davidson Institute for Talent Development ([www.DavidsonGifted.org](http://www.DavidsonGifted.org)), a national non-profit located in Reno to support America's brightest youth. In 2004, the Davidsons co-authored *Genius Denied: How to Stop Wasting Our Brightest Young Minds*, published by Simon & Schuster ([www.GeniusDenied.com](http://www.GeniusDenied.com)).

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*Photo and Interview Opportunities: Davidson Academy students and faculty, Bob and Jan Davidson and University administrators are available. Please contact Julie Dudley if you are interested in attending the opening or to schedule an interview.*