



# Davidson Institute eNews-Update

"Supporting our Nation's Brightest Young People"

**July 2015**

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## What's New in Gifted Education

### Google Global Science Fair at the Forefront of Scientific Innovation

Twenty-five Americans comprise 90 of the Regional Finalists for the [Google Global Science Fair](#). The finalists' projects address a number of crucial, timely issues, including: A [novel solution](#) to improve cancer detection and diagnosis through cell segmentation and artificial intelligence techniques; an [innovative model](#) to assist hand movements, grip and tremor; and an [inventive system](#) for removing multiple classes of toxins from water. Google will announce the 15 Global Finalists Aug. 4.



### 2015 Class of Thiel Fellows – Crafting the Future of Higher Education



The 2015 class of [Thiel Fellows](#) comprised of 20 young entrepreneurs was recently announced. Thiel Fellowships consist of separate grants of \$100,000 during two years to 20 young people per year so that recipients can leave the classroom and pursue innovation. In addition to the financial support, Thiel Fellows are mentored by hundreds of highly accomplished entrepreneurs, scientists, investors, thinkers and innovators. In exchange, Thiel Fellows agree to take a two-year hiatus from the classroom and so they can focus their energy and attention on creating innovative startups, technologies and nonprofits. [Click here](#) to read about the 2015 class. Sources: [Business Insider](#), [The Next Web](#)

### "The Benefits and Pressures of Being a Young Genius"

*The New York Times* recently published a series of op-eds detailing "[The Benefits and Pressures of Being a Young Genius](#)," with topics that include how to challenge highly talented children, balancing normal life and special talent, the difficult transition to adult genius and more.

# The New York Times

## Davidson News

### Davidson Academy of Nevada

A free public school, the [Davidson Academy of Nevada](#) encourages and supports the abilities, strengths and interests of profoundly gifted middle and high school students. If you are interested in applying to the Davidson Academy for the 2016-2017 school year, the application will be posted next month. Meanwhile, please visit the [How to Apply](#) and the [Application Review Process](#) pages for more information. Prospective students interested in receiving email updates about the Academy can subscribe to the [Davidson Academy eNewsletter](#) by [clicking here](#).



### Upcoming Tours for Prospective Students

Each month during the school year, the Davidson Academy hosts a tour for prospective students and their parents. At these tours, visitors meet current Academy students, parents, faculty and staff, and ask specific questions about the school. Our upcoming school tours will be held on the following Fridays: **Sept. 18, Oct. 23, Nov. 20** and **Dec. 11**. RSVPs are required. For additional details and to RSVP, please visit the [Tours](#) page.

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## Davidson Young Scholars - Updated Qualification Criteria

Recent updates have been made to the [Young Scholars](#) program application [Qualification Criteria](#). Applicants are now only required to submit one test [from this list](#) of accepted tests, instead of two. Standard scores on specific sections of individually administered tests must continue to meet or exceed 145 or above; please carefully review the minimum score guidelines on the Qualification Criteria page for details on these and other tests. Additional supplemental information, including academic portfolio items, is now considered optional. The Young Scholars application process continues to have a rolling application deadline of the first of each month and students can apply until the age of 16.



Please see the [FAQs page](#) for additional information and, to begin the application process, visit the [How to Apply](#) page after reviewing the [Qualification Criteria](#). Please know that we are unable to determine whether or not an applicant will qualify for the Young Scholars program outside the context of a complete application. The national [Davidson Young Scholars](#) program offers free support services for profoundly gifted students ranging in age from 5 to 18 in early college, educational advocacy, talent and interest development, and peer connections. Consulting services for parents and a great sense of community are some of the major benefits for families accepted into the program.

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## 2015 Davidson Fellows Scholarship

The Davidson Institute offers \$10,000, \$25,000 and \$50,000 [Davidson Fellows](#) scholarships to students 18 and under whose projects have the potential to benefit society, and are at the college graduate level. Application categories are in the STEM fields, humanities and outside the box. The 2015 class of Davidson Fellows will be announced in August.



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## Educators Guild

The Davidson Institute's [Educators Guild](#) is a FREE national service for active elementary, secondary and post-secondary educators, as well as other professionals who are committed to meeting the unique academic needs of gifted students. You can become a member of this free online community by subscribing [here](#). There is also an Educators Guild [discussion group on Facebook](#) - join today!



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## Legislative & Policy News

**CALIFORNIA** – The San Diego Unified School District is overhauling its system for testing students for entrance into the Gifted and Talented Education program, transitioning to the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). Source: [NBC 7 San Diego](#)

Revo Academy, a gifted learner school for students in grades K-8 in the Conejo Valley Unified School District, will open this fall. Revo was founded by educators with experience in gifted education. Source: [Thousand Oaks Acorn](#)

The Las Virgenes Unified School District Gifted and Talented Education program recently expanded to include seventh graders. Next year, it will expand to eighth grade. Source: [Agoura Hills Acorn](#)

**FLORIDA** – The self-contained gifted program at Pine View Middle School in the Pasco County school district will discontinue, despite the efforts of parents and advocates. The school has disbanded to become an accredited International Baccalaureate program. Source: [TBO.com](#)

**MASSACHUSETTS** – The Leominster Public School District reversed course on a decision to eliminate the Leominster Educational Acceleration Program (LEAP), which is designed to provide specialized teaching for academically gifted students. Source: [Lowell Sun](#)

**MISSOURI** – After 15 months of study, Missouri's Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children recently submitted an [annual report](#) listing 10 recommendations to improve the identification of gifted children and help develop programs in every Missouri school. Sources: [Columbia Missourian](#), [STLtoday.com](#)

**NEW YORK** – Despite scoring high enough on this year's exam, nearly 20 percent of New York City's 4-year-olds who applied to gifted and talented programs were left without seats. Source: [DNAinfo](#)

**OHIO** – Akron Public Schools recently voted to expand services for gifted students through identification and teacher training. Source: [Akron.com](#)

**PENNSYLVANIA** – The Grayson School, which plans to open this fall in Broomall and serve gifted students in grades K-6, will be the first private school for gifted students in the state. Source: [Philly.com](#)

**SOUTH CAROLINA** – The Cherokee County School District recently received a \$10,000 grant to fund a new career exploration program for gifted middle school students. Source: [Gaffney Ledger](#)

**TEXAS** – To allow for an easier transition into second grade, the Midland school district's Carver Center will begin accepting gifted first graders starting in the 2015-2016 school year. Source: [Midland Reporter-Telegram](#)

**VIRGINIA** – The Petersburg school district will open a new program for gifted students this fall. The goal is to challenge high-achieving students and prepare them for high school or college. Source: [WRIC](#)

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The Washington, D.C. school district is introducing a number of gifted programs in its neighborhood schools, hoping to attract gifted students who may have otherwise fled to suburbs for an appropriate education. Source: [Washington Post](#)

**WISCONSIN** – The Sun Prairie Area School District's Talented and Gifted Program will undergo a number of changes next year, including a broader range of measures of giftedness as well as a greater emphasis on in-classroom teaching. Source: [Sun Prairie Star](#)





How gifted-friendly is your state? Find out on the Davidson Gifted Database State Policy Map. If you know of new legislation, please contact the [Communications Team](#).

## On the Web

### Gifted Exchange Blog

Read Laura Vanderkam's take on all things gifted. One of her recent posts is, "*New methods of school discipline - and how it might affect gifted kids.*" Join the [discussion](#) today!

### World Science Festival

The [World Science Festival](#) brings together great minds in science and the arts to produce live and digital content that present scientific discovery to a broad general audience. The Festival's flagship live event is an annual weeklong celebration and exploration of science in New York City.



### Featured Articles and Resources

The Davidson Gifted Database at [www.DavidsonGifted.org/DB](http://www.DavidsonGifted.org/DB) is a gateway to resources for and about gifted students. [See what's new!](#)

### Articles

[Follow the Fear: Anticipating Missteps in Learning to Write](#) provides information on overcoming the fear of writing.

[This interview](#) with Janette Boazman is on character development and the differences in cognitive development between boys and girls.

[Tips for Parents: Recipes and Habits for Fast-Moving Families on the Go](#) provides 10 simple strategies for busy families.

[Tips for Parents: Twice exceptional students - Who are they and what do they need?](#) addresses the needs of 2e students.

### Resources

[Adventures of the Mind](#) is a mentoring camp for promising high school students across the country. Mentors include astronauts, artists, athletes, economists, entrepreneurs and more.

The National Engineers Week [Future City Competition](#) provides an educational engineering program for seventh- and eighth-grade students, combining a stimulating engineering challenge with a 'hands-on' application to present their vision of a city of the future.

[Homeschool Tracker](#) is a flexible, all-in-one online tool for planning, organizing and managing a homeschool plan. This software is suited for groups and co-ops as it allows sharing of lesson plans with other users.



The [2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter](#) provides the latest news and articles on twice-exceptional children.

[Suggest a Resource](#)

[Suggest an Article](#)

## In the News

July 6 - *Gifted Parenting Support*, [Finding Age Appropriate Books for Gifted Readers](#) (Lisa Conrad)  
June 30 - *The Atlantic*, [100 Percent Is Overrated](#) (James Hamblin)  
June 21 - *Washington Post*, [Why do schools slow down so many bright children?](#) (Jay Mathews)  
June 12 - *The North Texan*, [Studying gifted young people](#) (Staff)  
June 2015 - *District Administration Magazine*, [How schools maximize gifted talent](#) (Alison DeNisco)  
May 28 - *Washington Post*, [The road to a 'genius grant' often starts at lesser-known colleges](#) (Nick Anderson)  
May 27 - *ChicagoNow*, [What will tomorrow bring us?](#) (Annemarie Verweij)  
May 27 - *NewsOK.com*, [Yale, Duke courting 13-year-old Oklahoma student](#) (Steve Gust)  
May 22 - *Equities.com*, [Never Short the Geniuses](#) (Jared Dillian)  
May 20 - *Education Week*, [Poorest Students Often Miss Out on Gifted Classes](#) (Sarah D. Sparks)  
May 14 - *ChicagoNow*, [The grade skip dilemma: why your child may fare better than you expect](#) (Rhonda Stern)  
May 12 - *Education Week*, [Gifted Education Is About the Whole Child](#) (Celi Trépanier)  
May 9 - *iSchoolGuide*, [Why Doesn't Grade Skipping Happen More Often?](#) (Sara Guaglione)

Discuss these stories and more on the [Gifted Issues Discussion Forum](#).

## In the Spotlight

### Alice Zhai A 2014 Davidson Fellow Laureate Making a Difference

#### **What kind of impact can your Fellows project, "Dependency of U.S. Hurricane Loss on Maximum Wind Speed and Storm Size" have on society?**

For my project, I constructed a hurricane economic loss model using maximum wind speed and size as predictors. Traditional empirical loss models consider only wind speed and neglect storm size, so these models could not accurately predict the losses of super-sized storms, such as Hurricane Sandy in 2012. By including the storm size, my model yields more accurate loss estimates, which would be useful to insurance companies and disaster planning. People can use this model to estimate the impact of global warming on hurricane economic loss. Policy makers can decide whether to implement new building codes and limit coastal population and development to reduce the economic loss related to hurricanes or to reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions in order to mitigate global warming. My model would provide improved quantitative justifications for policies related to hurricane economic loss.



#### **What are some of your short-term and long-term plans?**

My short-term plan is just to learn as much as I can! I am currently taking a Python programming class to improve upon my data analysis skills. I will be attending California Institute of Technology in the fall, and I plan on mastering the course materials and delving into as much research as I can. My long-term plan is to combine my interest in math and science with my passion for helping others. I hope to major in applied mathematics and pursue a career in finance or business. I want to utilize my quantitative analysis skills and solve real-world problems. In the future, I also hope to travel to all the continents (including Antarctica!) and explore the world.

#### **Please describe your academic setting and some positive experiences with mentors.**

Both of my parents are research scientists, so my curiosity and love for math and science have developed at an early age. Even in elementary school, I performed small experiments, such as observing how lollipops dissolve in liquids and recording temperatures in my backyard. My high school science teacher, Ms. Patricia Compeau, motivated me to tackle a research project systematically. After joining her science institute program, I realized how much there is to be explored beyond the school curriculum. She encouraged me to make a change in my community and pursue my science interests. Ms. Compeau even bought me the

materials for my science project about bacteria transformation efficiency.

For my hurricane loss project, I collaborated with Dr. Jonathan Jiang from Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and we published a research paper that reported my findings. Although working alongside a brilliant scientist seems intimidating, the experience was inspiring. I learned not only how to use MATLAB programming, write a research paper and make effective presentations, but also how to communicate with adults and overcome challenges. Dr. Jiang motivated me to have persistence and patience; most importantly, he made me realize that a high school student has the potential to make a scientific breakthrough. I also learned from Professor Yuk Yung by taking his summer reading class and attending his lunch seminars. Without the guidance from these mentors, I would not have been successful in pursuing my science interests.

## Closing Thought

*"Knowledge about talent development suggests that gifted children thrive when given the opportunity to explore their curiosity at a pace that works for them. Accelerated coursework and enrichment programs are critical to the success of such students . . . It's a myth that gifted children would thrive no matter what their learning environment."*

~ Camilla Benbow, in the New York Times op-ed, [Challenge Highly Talented Children](#)

If you have information to include in future eNews-Updates, please email our [Communications Team](#).  
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### Davidson Institute for Talent Development

*Supporting our nation's brightest young minds.*

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