



Davidson Institute eNews-Update

"Supporting our Nation's Brightest Young People"

May 2015

[What's New in Gifted Education](#) | [Davidson News](#) | [Legislative & Policy News](#) | [On the Web](#) | [In the News](#) | [In the Spotlight](#)

What's New in Gifted Education



Scientific Innovation on Display at Intel Science and Engineering Fair

More than 1,700 outstanding high school science students, representing 78 countries, exhibited their wide-ranging, groundbreaking projects at the [2015 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair \(ISEF\)](#) in Pittsburgh.

Raymond Wang of Canada (*pictured, right*) was awarded the top prize for engineering a new system for airplane cabins to improve air quality and curb disease transmission. Nicole Ticea, also of Canada, (*center*) and Karan Jerath of Texas (*left*) each received the second prize: Nicole for developing an inexpensive testing device to combat the high rate of undiagnosed HIV infection in low-income communities, and Karan for defining and testing a device that should allow an undersea oil well to rapidly and safely recover following a blowout.



Source: [Society for Science & the Public \(SSP\)](#) (Photo courtesy of SSP/L. Buitrago)

Report Finds Lack of Focus on Gifted Low-Income Students

A recent report from the [Jack Kent Cooke Foundation \(JKCF\)](#) finds that state education policies are failing gifted students, particularly those from low-income families. No state received an A on the report, with numerous states receiving D's and F's. In the report, JKCF asserted that lack of attention devoted to advanced learners in these and other policies is likely resulting in the "[excellence gap](#)"- the discrepancy between the number of low-income versus affluent students who perform at high academic levels. Sources: [Jack Kent Cooke Foundation](#), [Washington Post](#). View the full report [here](#).



Ranking America's Most Challenging High Schools

Washington Post education columnist Jay Mathews recently released his annual rankings of [America's Most Challenging High Schools](#). The schools are ranked through an index formula that is a ratio of the number of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Advanced International Certificate of Education tests given at a school each year, divided by the number of seniors who graduated that year.

Mathews also compiled a list of the nation's "[Top-performing schools with elite students](#)" that included the Davidson Academy for the fifth consecutive year. The 25 alphabetically-listed schools were excluded from the main rankings because, "despite their exceptional quality, their admission rules and standardized test scores indicate they have few or no average students." Mathews notes that [many U.S. schools still resist challenging all their students](#).

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 this summer. 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](#).



Davidson Young Scholars

The [Davidson Young Scholars](#) program provides FREE services designed to nurture and support profoundly gifted young people and their families, including talent development and educational advocacy; an online community; annual get-togethers; and the Ambassador Program. Applications are due the first of each month. For more information, visit the [How to Apply](#) and [Qualification Criteria](#) pages.



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 this August.



Gifted Issues Discussion Forum

The [Gifted Issues Discussion Forum](#) is a meeting place for all things gifted. Register and become a part of one of the most active gifted education forums on the web! With more than 8,000 registered members, this forum is a great place to share and interact with others about a wealth of gifted topics.



Legislative & Policy News

NATIONAL – Much of the [TALENT Act](#) was included in the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee's Every Child Achieves Act of 2015. Senator Chuck Grassley (IA), the lead sponsor of the TALENT Act, praised the HELP Committee for including provisions from the bill that are designed to better serve high ability students, particularly those in underserved settings. Source: [KIOW.com](#)

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) includes an explicit focus on using federal funds to train teachers in best practices in gifted education. Source: [Education Week](#)

In a memorandum to state directors of special education, the U.S. Department of Education is reminding educators not to leave behind students considered twice exceptional (2e). Source: [Disability Scoop](#)

ALABAMA – The state legislature is continuing to seek a grant program to provide additional resources for statewide gifted programs. The bill has passed the full Senate and is headed to the House for consideration. Source: [WHNT](#)

ARIZONA – Gilbert Public Schools has cut down its Accelerated Learning Program for gifted students from 27 elementary schools to 15 for the 2015-16 school year due to a budget deficit. Source: [newszap.com](#)

CALIFORNIA – The Chino Valley School District will soon use a new online assessment to test all second



graders for giftedness. The universal screening represents an effort by the district to increase the number of students identified as gifted. In the past, identification relied upon teacher or parent requests. Source: [Chino Champion](#)

KENTUCKY – The Gatton Academy recently received \$10 million in gifts and donations, which will allow the school to grow from 120 to 200 students beginning in Fall 2015. Kentucky will invest an additional \$2 million, bringing the state's total investment in the academy to \$4.8 million. Source: [Bowling Green Daily News](#)



PENNSYLVANIA – The Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (PAGE) recently made a recommendation for the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to establish a voluntary Program Endorsement Certificate for Gifted Education. The PDE just released [The Framework for Gifted Endorsement](#), which advocates hope is the first step towards requiring an endorsement for gifted. Source: [PAGE](#)

RHODE ISLAND – Rhode Island Advocates for Gifted Education (RIAGE), the state's gifted organization, is back up and running. Source: [Valley Breeze](#)

WASHINGTON – The Peninsula School District is expanding services for gifted students, including providing self-contained classrooms for second and third graders. Source: [Key Peninsula News](#)

WYOMING – Despite the Natrona County Schools' early budget excluding money for the district's gifted and talented program, current plans for expansion over the next five years should remain unaffected. Source: [Casper Star-Tribune Online](#)



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](#).

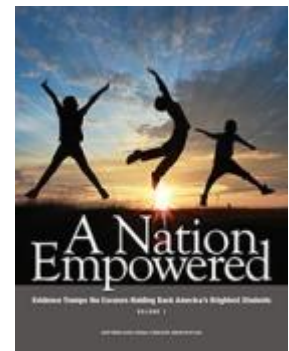
On the Web

Gifted Exchange Blog

Read Laura Vanderkam's take on all things gifted. One of her recent posts is, "*More evidence that skipping grades is OK.*" Join the [discussion](#) today!

A Nation Empowered Now Available

[A Nation Empowered: Evidence Trumps the Excuses Holding Back America's Brightest Students](#), an update to the watershed work initiated by [A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students](#), is now available. *A Nation Deceived* delved into research-based practices for challenging academically talented youth. *A Nation Empowered* tells the story of how well we have applied what we have learned. The purpose of *A Nation Empowered* is to inform educators, parents, and policymakers of current research on acceleration, how that information has been applied to educational policy throughout the nation, and how educators can use the findings to make decisions for their brightest students. Read more: [iSchoolGuide](#), [Des Moines Register](#)



Featured Articles and Resources

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

Articles

[Gifted and Dyslexic: How the Talent-centered Model Works](#) provides insight on the "talent-centered model" for twice-exceptional students. The two sides of dyslexia and differentiation of instruction are covered.

[Improving Executive Skills through Mathematics](#) provides information on enhancing executive skills through mathematics.

[Tips for Parents: Family Meetings - Why they are important and How-To \(so much more than checking-in and stating problems\)](#) provides resources, education and guidance in application of family meetings.

[Tips for Parents: Gifted . . . and Teenagers, too](#) addresses several strategies on how to address common teenage issues.

[Tips for Parents: Is Boarding School a Good Consideration for my Gifted or 2e Student?](#) addresses the many considerations a family will have when evaluating whether boarding school might be a good option for a gifted or 2e student.



Resources

[GT Carpe Diem Workshops](#) are designed to empower gifted teens to speak up for themselves through a clearer understanding of their unique needs as outliers and their rights to an appropriately challenging educational experience.

The contest, [Kid, You'll Move Mountains](#) is a five-week online summer learning challenge disguised as a massive global treasure hunt for students in grades two through eight.

[The Impulsive, Disorganized Child: Solutions for Parenting Kids with Executive Functioning Difficulties](#) helps parents pinpoint weak executive functions in their children, then learn how to help their kids overcome these deficits with practical, easy solutions.

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

[Suggest a Resource](#)

[Suggest an Article](#)

In the News

May 12 - *U.S. News & World Report*, [Mathematician Says There's No Such Thing as a Hard Problem](#) (M. Cirincione)

May 2 - *NPR.org*, [Grade-Skippers: Where Are They Now](#) (Owen Phillips)

May 1 - *ChicagoNow*, [Helicopter parenting has positive perks for gifted and talented students](#) (Rhonda Stern)

April 30 - *NPR.org*, [Skip A Grade? Start Kindergarten Early? It's Not So Easy](#) (Owen Phillips)

April 22 - *Creativity Post*, [What Is Holding Back America's Brightest Students?](#) (Jonathan Wai)

April 21 - *WABC-TV*, [Columbia Students Use Cellos to Keep Classical Music Current](#) (Christina Zapata)

April 15 - *Farmington Daily Times*, [What kind of intelligence does your child possess?](#) (Aerial Liese)

April 14 - *Miami Herald*, [When does nurturing a gifted child's abilities become pushing?](#) (Laurie Futterman)

April 10 - *Education Week*, [Gifted Students Are Still Stepchildren](#) (Walt Gardner)

April 9 - *Yahoo Health*, [The Difference Between Being Really Smart ... And Being A Genius](#) (Jenna Birch)

April 4 - *KuzuJanakis.com*, [Unstoppable](#) (Marianne KuzuJanakis)

April 2 - *NAGC.org*, [NAGC Names Experienced Education Leader To Be Next Executive Director](#) (Staff)

March 26 - *Washington Post*, [College junior at 17 was once dubbed 'sweet, but not very smart'](#) (Petula Dvorak)

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

In the Spotlight

Parker Ruth

A Davidson Ambassador Making a Difference

Please describe your academic setting.

I have been very privileged to grow up in an environment of learning. As a homeschooler, I have enjoyed the flexibility to pursue my personal interests alongside a robust and diverse core curriculum. Central to the pedagogical philosophy of our homeschool is a dedication to fostering a love for learning, which I know will stay with me throughout my life.

What are some past and present projects you've worked on to help make a positive difference in the lives of others?

For more than four years I have enjoyed volunteering as an instructor at my Taekwondo school. Twice a week I help students of diverse ages and backgrounds to develop both physically and mentally. In addition to teaching basic martial arts techniques for self defense and physical fitness, I relish the chance to inspire my students with the passion, focus, and dedication required to achieve a black belt and accomplish any other life goal. My experience as an instructor is very rewarding and has been an integral component of my personal growth. Education continues to play a central role in many of my current projects and aspirations.



When I first developed a fascination with modern physics, I was immediately inspired to share my passion with others. I gave a talk about antimatter at my homeschool co-op, which was very positively received. After presenting my talk a second time upon request, I was asked to be a personal physics tutor for a fellow homeschooler. Realizing the paucity of approachable entry-level modern physics resources, I launched my Young Scholars Ambassador Project [Quantum Spot Academy](#) in an effort to make the more extraordinary topics of modern physics accessible to a broader audience.

What has been your experience developing *Quantum Spot Academy* and what are your future plans?

I began by creating a website for my project on which I consolidated a collection of physics books, websites, and videos. I am currently producing a series of videos introducing key ideas of modern physics, including special relativity, black holes, and quantum mechanics, among others. My hope is that these videos will inspire students to continue their exploration of physics and find some of the thrill that I have experienced in it. The enthusiastic encouragement that my project has already received is very motivating and I look forward to continuing work on my project. After finishing my video series, I would like to continue my website content development to provide an integrated environment for exploring the many fascinating concepts in modern physics and to promote curiosity for the underlying mechanics of our universe.

How has the Young Scholars program helped you to reach your goals and achieve your accomplishments?

The Young Scholars program has provided me with many terrific opportunities. Attending the annual Summit has allowed me to develop many lasting and inspiring friendships. Participating in the Young Scholars Ambassador Program has given me access to a series of engaging seminars, valuable mentorship, and a supportive community of like-minded individuals making a difference. The training I have received through the Ambassador Program helped me develop vital life skills including strategic planning, project management, interpersonal communication and public relations. In these and many other ways, the Davidson Institute has had a truly life-changing impact on me.

Closing Thought

"At stake is the vibrancy of our economy, our nation's future prosperity, the strength of our global competitiveness and basic fairness. If states were to implement these commonsense policies to close the Excellence Gap, we would unleash the potential of millions of bright young Americans whose natural talents and intelligence will shape our nation for generations to come."

~ Harold O. Levy, Executive Director, Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, speaking on the study,
[Equal Talents, Unequal Opportunities: A Report Card on State
Support for Academically Talented Low-Income Students](#)

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Davidson Institute for Talent Development

Supporting our nation's brightest young minds.

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