



Davidson Institute eNews Update

"Supporting our Nation's Brightest Young People"

May 2016

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What's New in Gifted Education

Intel Science and Engineering Fair – Pushing the Limits of STEM Creativity

More than 1,750 outstanding high school science students, representing more than 75 countries, exhibited their inventive, groundbreaking projects at the 2016 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) in Phoenix.



Austin Wang of Canada (*pictured, center*) was awarded the top prize for researching microbes that can turn wastes into electricity. Kathy Liu of Utah (*left*) and Syamantak Payra of Texas (*right*) each received the second prize: Kathy for developing an alternative battery component that could significantly improve performance and safety, and Syamantak for creating a low-cost electronically aided knee brace allowing for more natural walking. Source: [Society for Science & the Public \(SSP\)](#)

Belin-Blank - Conference on Academic Acceleration, July 24-26, 2016

The [Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa](#) is offering a conference focused on academic acceleration for gifted education teachers, administrators, and school counselors. Parents are also welcome to attend the conference, titled [A Nation Empowered: Research-Based Evidence about Acceleration and Gifted/Talented Students](#). Attendees will be presented with practical information about acceleration using existing research and tools to help make data-driven decisions.



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 2017-2018 school year, the application will be posted this summer. Meanwhile, please visit the [How to Apply](#) and the [Application Review Process](#) pages.



Visit our new website at DavidsonAcademy.UNR.edu!

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, see the [How to Apply](#) and [Qualification Criteria](#) pages.

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 2016 class of Davidson Fellows will be announced this August.



Gifted Issues Discussion Forum

In search of a community to discuss all things gifted? Register for the [Gifted Issues Discussion Forum](#) and become a part of one of the most active gifted education bulletin boards! With more than 9,000 registered members, it's a great place to share and interact with others about a wealth of gifted topics.

COLORADO – The Estes Park School District gifted program has undergone a number of improvements thanks to increased funding, including services and testing for expanded grade levels and an increase in programming to serve English-language learners. Source: [Estes Park Trail Gazette](#)



CONNECTICUT – A new gifted and talented program for students in grades 5-8 is being considered in Regional School District No. 6. As part of the proposal, students would not be separated from their classmates, but given more challenging material and curriculum in class. Source: [Republican American](#)

FLORIDA – The Duval County School Board recently proposed reinventing R.V. Daniels Elementary as a gifted and talented magnet school. Source: [Florida Times-Union](#)

ILLINOIS – While some school districts in the state are making strides toward increased equability, gifted black and Hispanic students in Illinois are not getting the same academic opportunities as their white and Asian peers, according to a new report by [One Chance Illinois](#). Source: [Chicago Daily Herald](#)

LOUISIANA – The Lafayette Parish School Board has closed the Youngsville Middle School gifted enrichment program in order to cut costs. Source: [The Advocate](#)

MISSOURI – School board officials have decided to close the gifted student program at Cape Girardeau Central High School due to a lack of participation and expenses. The school district will still have gifted classes for students in grades K-8 per state law. Source: [Southeastern Missourian](#)

NEW YORK – New York City is planning to open new gifted programs in the Bronx (Districts 6 and 7) and in Brooklyn (Districts 16 and 23) that will begin at the third grade level. After these programs open, every district in New York City will have a gifted program. Source: [New York Times](#)



NORTH CAROLINA – School officials in the Sampson County school district are working to improve the testing criteria for the Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) program. Source: [Sampson Independent](#)

PENNSYLVANIA – The Saucon Valley School District is seeking to revamp its gifted program through increased parent awareness and by ensuring that English-language learners are not overlooked. Source: [The Morning Call](#)

WYOMING – Teton County School District No. 1 is attempting to create a more inclusive testing method to identify gifted students. The district is seeking to screen English-language learners who need more challenges in school. Source: [Jackson Hole News & Guide](#)

How gifted-friendly is your state? Visit the Davidson Gifted Database [State Policy Database](#) to find out. If you know of new legislation, please contact us at admin@davidsongifted.org.

On the Web

Gifted Exchange Blog

Read Laura Vanderkam's take on all things gifted. One of her recent posts is, "*It isn't either/or*" Join the [discussion](#) today!

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](#). Mathews also compiled a list of the nation's "[Top-performing schools with elite students](#)" that included the Davidson Academy for the sixth 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."



Featured Articles and Resources

The [Davidson Gifted Database](#) features easy search capabilities for articles, resources and state policy pages to help students, parents and educators pinpoint gifted information. [See what's new!](#)

Articles

For students who have slow processing speed, keeping up in class, participating in discussions and staying focused can be a real challenge. [At a Glance: Classroom Accommodations for Slow Processing Speed](#) provides some strategies that may help.

[A Story of Academic Acceleration and Success](#) describes one student's successful experiences with acceleration.

[This excerpt](#) from "Forging Paths: Beyond Traditional Schooling", by Wes Beach, takes a look at a number of examples of high school transcripts.

Resources

[Atlanta Gifted Academy](#) is a school for students in grades preK-5 dedicated to providing gifted young people an advanced educational opportunity. Each student receives a Personalized Learning Plan with the goal of engaging students in learning opportunities at a pace and depth consistent with individual knowledge, skills and motivation.



[Living Math](#) is a website dedicated to sharing math resources for learning, exploring and enjoying math in a dynamic and holistic manner, for all ages.

The [National Invention Convention and Entrepreneurship Expo \(NICEE\)](#) brings winners of invention and entrepreneurship education competitions from across the U.S. together to inspire their peers, meet with famous inventors and entrepreneurs, and compete for national acclaim.

[Quiet Power: The Secret Strengths of Introverts](#) speaks directly to introverted kids and teens, and to the teachers and parents in their lives.

[Reid Day School and Center for Brain Based Excellence \(Costa Mesa, CA\)](#) specializes in supporting the needs of elementary school students who have demonstrated gifted intellectual ability alongside a learning obstacle, such as a learning disability.

[Suggest a Resource](#)

[Suggest an Article](#)

In the News

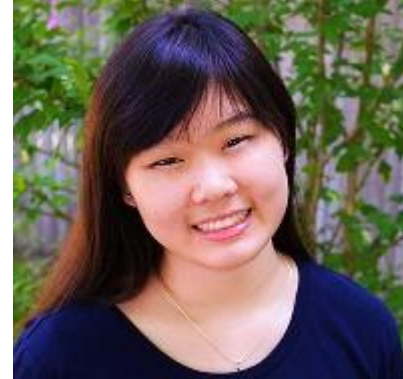
- [It's About the Abilities, Not the Deficits](#) (Education Week)
- [Understanding the Needs of Gifted Children: Tips for Raising, Motivating, and Teaching](#) (NYMetro Parents)
- [America's Report Card: We're still ignoring low-income high-achievers](#) (Thomas B. Fordham Institute)
- [Vatican host conference on stem cells, other regenerative medicine](#) (KLFY News)
- [The Minecraft Generation](#) (New York Times)
- [Top colleges put thousands of applicants in wait-list limbo, and some won't admit any](#) (Washington Post)
- [This 9-year-old wants to be the first White House child science adviser](#) (Washington Post)
- [President Obama touts robots, US ingenuity at White House Science Fair](#) (U.S. News & World Report)
- [The Rare District That Recognizes Gifted Latino Students](#) (NPR)
- [Skipping school to become tech giants](#) (CBS News)
- [Why Talented Black and Hispanic Students Can Go Undiscovered](#) (New York Times)
- [Editorial: Gifted programs should be open to all gifted students](#) (Daily Herald)
- [Gifted and Talented: We Need a Flexible Mindset](#) (Education Week)
- [Understanding gifted children's emotions](#) (Hometownlife.com)

In the Spotlight

Oriana Tang 2015 Davidson Fellow Making a Difference

What kind of impact can your Fellows project, *Wringing Tears From the Stars: A Linguistic Revitalization of Human Empathy*, have on society?

Art and literature can really define an era—how we see it, how we live it, the ways we move to change it or allow it to stagnate. Something that I noticed in a lot of the contemporary literature that I was reading up to the time of and while pulling this project together was a uniform sort of bleakness in outlook—Jennifer Egan, for instance, wrote in her introduction to *The Best American Short Stories of 2014* that “The stories I read were predominantly dark, even grim, reflecting a mood of anxiety and unease.” The problem with having a cultural repertoire of pessimism is that it subverts some of the inherent value of storytelling, which is to foster empathy and hope. I wanted to see if I could create a portfolio that challenged the trend—not necessarily by writing stories with happy endings but rather by parsing the complexities of redemption.



The ability of literature to have any impact of course depends on whether it’s being read, which brings up another issue—the devaluation of literature alongside the more “obviously applicable” STEM fields—but that’s a separate problem with its own complications.

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

Besides writing, biology has always fascinated me, so I’m currently tentatively pursuing a major in molecular biology as a freshman at Yale University. In the long term, I’d like to possibly go to graduate school or medical school—but it’s all up in the air right now. In the short term, I’m just hoping I can get enough sleep and keep reading and writing.



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

I attended a few short summer programs for creative writing when I was in middle school. In high school, my most formative experience was with an online summer mentorship program with the *Adroit Journal*, where I now work as a prose reader. The program was about seven weeks long and it completely transformed my poetry, which I didn’t have much experience with writing before. I’m still really close to my mentor, Peter LaBerge, and to Maddie Kim, one of my fellow mentees—we still share work, thoughts and book recommendations regularly. I think it’s easy to construe writing as a solitary endeavor, but I really can’t overstate how important my support networks have been to me, both the one that has been with me since I started writing

in middle school and the one that I've grown into along the way, how much they've taught me and helped me to develop and improve.

Closing Thought

"Students are a mix of potential and struggle. A career-and-technical student may also be a student who is gifted, or an ELL student may also be fascinated by fine arts or by STEM. No one size fits all . . . At-risk and gifted students need emotional and social supports to help them develop to their full potential."

~ Marcia Powell, in the Education Week article, [It's About the Abilities, Not the Deficits](#)

If you have information to include in a future newsletter, please contact us at admin@dauidsongifted.org.
If you have been forwarded this eNews-Update, and wish to receive future editions, [sign-up here](#).

Davidson Institute for Talent Development

Supporting our nation's brightest young minds.

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