



Summer 2015

Networking within your state!

PARENTS: GAM knows you need a chance to talk to other parents who have gifted children. Here is your opportunity to take part in quality workshops designed for people who are involved with gifted children! Our state conference is centrally located in Columbia, Missouri and takes place on October 24th and 25th which is during the weekend. GAM purposefully chose weekend dates so that parents could attend without having to miss work. For only \$45 (one day attendance) or \$80 (two day attendance) you can participate in sessions such as: Advocacy, Creating Biopoetry, Using Pattern Tasks to Develop Algebraic Reasoning, Organization Strategies for the Gifted and BEST Robotics.

TEACHERS: GT teachers need quality professional development to keep current in the field of gifted. For that reason, GAM invites national speakers to the ONLY annual state conference on gifted education in Missouri. Teachers attend from all over the state and this is a great networking opportunity! Dr. Bertie Kingore is this year's keynote speaker. She is an award winning author and an international consultant. Her topic will be rigor for gifted learners.

GAM also knows **classroom teachers** are given the challenge of serving the needs of gifted students every day. This workshop will give you tools to challenge those gifted children as well as high achievers. Network with other teachers who can help you brainstorm ideas for units and lessons.

COLLEGE STUDENTS: Undergraduate college students seldom have the opportunity or the funds to attend a state conference. This year undergrads get a price break! Registration is only \$45 (one day attendance) or \$80 (two day attendance). Come take part in worthwhile sessions and enjoy listening to a national speaker talk about how to increase rigor with your future students!

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS: You have gifted students in your school. Are you operating under the myth that those students will be fine on their own? Although classroom teachers try to challenge all students, they are frequently unfamiliar with the needs of gifted children. A national survey found that 65% of teachers had either very little or no training for gifted in their preparation programs. This report and others confirm what many families already know: not all teachers are able to recognize and support gifted learners. **Gifted kids deserve to have their needs met and learn something new every day. Please consider attending this weekend conference with part of your staff.** Data Resource: NACG.org

SAVE THE DATE!

The 34th Annual **GAM Conference** will be held October 24th-25th, 2015 in Columbia.



All the Good Stuff Inside!

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The GAMbit is Changing!!!

GAM is dedicated to serving the needs of gifted. It is our goal to provide the best information possible to parents, teachers, college students and administrators. In order to reach more people, the GAMbit will be ONLINE after our October state conference!

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The GAMbit is published quarterly by the Gifted Association of Missouri (GAM) to inform educators, parents, and others about the unique educational, social and emotional needs of gifted and talented children and the issues that impact their development.

Publication of information does not imply endorsement of programs or events by the Gifted Association of Missouri unless such endorsement is specifically stated.

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Submissions for publication, inquiries, and comments are encouraged. Send to Sheila_Bonner@idschools.org

You're INVITED – Calendar of Events

June 8-19, 2015 Project MEGSSS & MathJam15
(rising 7th/8th graders) Camps, Session 1

July 6-17, 2015 Project MEGSSS & MathJam15
(rising 7th/8th graders) Camps, Session 2

COLLEGE FOR KIDS 2015 DATES:

SESSION I, **GRADES 3 & 4** = JUNE 14 – 19

SESSION II, **GRADES 5 & 6** = JUNE 21 – 26

SESSION III, **GRADES 7, 8 & 9** = JULY 5 – 11

Gifted Resource Council

Kids Explore Summer Academies 2015 DATES:

JUNE 15 – 26

JUNE 29 – JULY 10

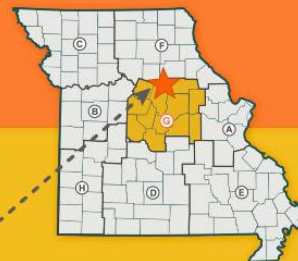
JULY 13 – 24

June 7 to June 27 - Missouri Scholars Academy

July 21 – Lindenwood Univ., St. Charles, MO – CPC and GAM Board

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Gifted Association of Missouri
P.O. Box 3252, Springfield, MO 65808



GAMbit Readers:

Thank you for your interest in this publication and gifted education. It has been a very busy seven months serving as GAM President. I would like to first say thank you to each and every member of the Board of Directors of GAM. You work diligently, often times behind the scenes to make a difference for gifted students in Missouri and beyond. In addition, thank you GAM members for your continued support of this organization.

Below are a few highlights and reminders:

- In January, the new Commissioner of Education for Missouri, Dr. Margie Vandeven started her term, GAM wrote her a letter of congratulations.
- On February 24, we had a great GAM Day at the Capitol with hundreds of students filling the Rotunda.
- In the last GAMbit, there was a letter that I wrote to Governor Nixon about releasing funds for the academies. I am happy to announce as a follow-up that he announced last week that he will be releasing the full \$750,000 for the Missouri Scholars and Fine Arts Academies. Be sure to thank his office!
- In March, Executive Vice President Lenae Lazzelle and I attended the NAGC Affiliates Conference and came away with some great resources including collaborations with our bordering states' organizations, sharing some of GAM's publications, and reaching out to our legislators at the federal level.

REMINDER!!

OUR ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE IS AT MIZZOU THIS YEAR AND WILL TAKE PLACE ON OCTOBER 24-25. Register now! <http://www.mogam.org/registration.html>

Final thoughts: They say it takes a village to raise a child, well it also takes a village to run an organization and I appreciate every effort from maintaining the website, planning the conference, increasing membership, completing a budget, and everything each board member and member does behind the scenes to promote the good of GAM, so thank you and I look forward to the continued success of this great organization.

Sincerely,
Dr. Robin E. Lady, NBCT
President, Gifted Association of Missouri

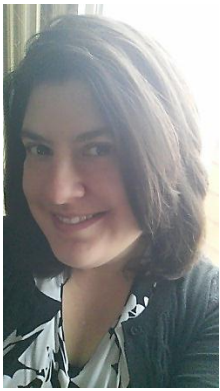
Gifted U.

*Celebrating the
Unique and Unlimited
Possibilities
of Gifted Learners*

**34TH ANNUAL
GAM
CONFERENCE**

Oct. 24–25, 2015





GAM's Top Ten List

Why You Should Become (and Stay) a Member!

By Meredith Burstin, Vice-President of Membership

I've had the wonderful opportunity to meet with teachers, parents, and students across the state in my role as membership vice-president. Inevitably I am asked, "What exactly is GAM? Why should I join when I have so many membership dues to pay to other organizations?" Below are the top ten (though certainly not the only!) reasons you should be a part of GAM:

10. GAM has an alliance with other powerful organizations such as DESE and NAGC, and we are thrilled to collaborate with the gifted associations of some of our surrounding states.
9. We offer several scholarships for teachers, students, and friends of gifted education that recognize all you do to make gifted education so great in Missouri.
8. Our presence on social media increases access to other members and to the board of directors. You can find us on our website (www.mogam.org), on Facebook (Gifted Association of Missouri) and on Twitter (@GAMgifted). We post the latest on gifted education ideas, topics, and events; as a GAM member it is easier than ever to join the conversation!
7. GAM hosts the ONLY state-wide gifted conference – and as a member you receive a discount on your conference registration. Regional district conferences hosted by GAM directors offer valuable opportunities for networking, collaboration, and more.
6. Our New Teacher Workshop provides new teachers and administrators with the information and guidance they need to start the school year off right – and that support is available to them through their first years and beyond.
5. GAM has many talented and knowledgeable members – both on and off the board – who are ready and available to provide resources, ideas, and more. We have members with all areas of expertise willing to travel the state to speak to parent groups, school boards, and other stakeholders.
4. We host Gifted Education Day at the Capitol – what better way to send our message that gifted education matters to legislators than to flood their offices with students, parents, teachers, and administrators?
3. Thanks to the lobbying efforts of our members, we have helped passed legislation to form the Gifted Advisory Council and to establish David Welch as the Coordinator of Gifted Education at DESE. We've also helped ensure that the governor releases the necessary funds for programs such as the Missouri Scholars' Academy and the Missouri Fine Arts Academy.
2. GAM dues pay for the services of our incomparable legislative consultant, Kyna Iman. Without her guidance and leadership in the area of advocacy, we would never have been as impactful as we have been. Her bill tracking updates and action alerts – emailed to all GAM members – keeps you in the know about the progress of legislation and tells you how you can help.
1. GAM believes in the power of gifted education, and so do you – being a member allows us to be a voice for all of you who believe that gifted education matters.

GAM needs your support more than ever. We are only as strong as our members, and we want to continue to do all that we can to advocate for the importance of gifted education at the local and state levels. If you are not a member, please visit our website at www.mogam.org to register. Questions on how to join or how to get more involved? Please contact Meredith Burstin at mburs10@hotmail.com or on Twitter @mburstin1. We appreciate your support!

Exciting News from GAM

Save the date for a weekend getaway! Oct. 24 & 25, 2015



Our state conference will be October 24 and 25. That is on the weekend! This means NO substitute plans for teachers and parents do not have to miss work to attend. It just makes sense. We don't want parents, teachers, college students or administrators to miss attending the **ONLY** gifted conference in the state of Missouri because of schedule demands during the week. GAM has also chosen a central location – Columbia, Missouri.

The Stoney Creek Hotel is giving GAM members a special price for the weekend that includes a hot breakfast, an indoor/outdoor pool, hot tub, and sauna. This hotel is so beautiful; you just might want to come back for a weekend visit with your family!

Look for online registration to make signing up easy

<http://www.mogam.org/registration.html>

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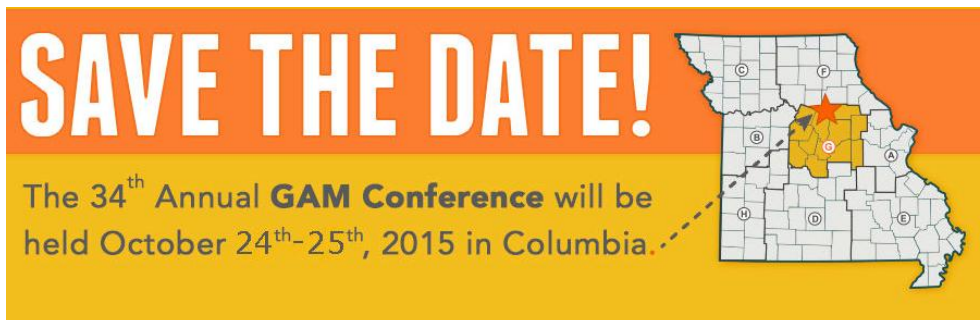
Did you know that GAM is on Social Media?

You can find us on our website (www.mogam.org)

Facebook (Gifted Association of Missouri)

Twitter (@GAMgifted).

We post the latest on gifted education ideas, topics, and events; as a GAM member it is easier than ever to join the conversation!



Don't miss out on GAM's state conference! Oct. 24-25,
Teachers, no need for sub lesson plans – it is on the weekend!
Online Registration at: <http://www.mogam.org/registration.html>

Parents, find out how
RIGOR can help your
child in school! Don't
miss this conference!

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

DR. BERTIE KINGORE

Dr. Bertie Kingore is an international consultant, a visiting professor/speaker at numerous universities, and a former classroom teacher in preschool through graduate school classrooms. She is recognized for her ready-to-use research-based applications, motivational ideas, and humorous insights. She is the award-winning author of 27 widely used publications, including *Rigor and Engagement for Growing Minds*, *Differentiation: Simplified, Realistic, and Effective*, *The Kingore Observation Inventory (KOI)*, and "High-Achievers, Gifted Learners, and Creative Thinkers." Her latest book published this year by NAGC is: *Rigor for Gifted Learners: Modifying Curriculum with Intellectual Integrity*.



Dr. Kingore has received many honors including the 2014 National Teachers' Choice Award, the 2011 TAGT President's Award, and the 2005 Legacy Award. She also received the Outstanding Alumnus Award from the University of North Texas where she earned her Ph.D. She is a past President of TAGT and was also recognized as the first Texas Gifted Educator of the Year. Her numerous award-winning materials help educators and guardians nurture young minds across the globe.

KINGORE,
Bertie, Ph.D.

District B Family Conference

By **Jennifer Medina**, GAM Assistant Regional District B Director

District B hosted their Annual Family Conference on April 18, 2015 at Oak Grove Middle School. Parents heard from our leaders in Missouri Gifted Education: President of GAM, Robin Lady; DESE Director of Gifted Education, Dr. David Welch; and Government Action Consultant for Gifted Education, Kyna Iman. All addressed issues involving Gifted Education Advocacy and networking within our gifted community to understand the needs of our children. In addition, speakers from Mid-Continent Public Library and Science Pioneers presented resources to help support our gifted learners in acceleration, enrichment, and mentorship.



Students participated in several workshops throughout the morning. Carrie Siems, from Independence Gem and Mineral Society, perked students' interest in rock study by providing several hands-on demonstrations with hydrophobic sand, diamagnetic levitation, wandering magnetic dipoles and reversals, and other geological phenomenon. Each student walked away with a piece of fluorescing Drusy Quartz collected from Farmington, Missouri. Bruce Stinemetz, also from Independence Gem and Mineral Society, brought several Geiger Counters and students were able to test the radiation levels of several rocks. The 4th through 8th graders really delighted in the opportunity to see actual uranium rocks, and test the effect of lead plates on the amount of radiation projected from the uranium rocks placed below the plates. Other workshops presented included, King Arthur's Tower, Popcorn "Pop"tivities, and Archeology.



Please share the amazing things your students are doing around our state! If we want administrators to value gifted education, we need to let them know what we are **DOING!**



Thank you Christie Puttcamp for Over 40 Years in Gifted!

By Robin Lady, GAM President

The Gifted Association of Missouri would like to officially recognize Christie J. Puttcamp on 40 plus years of service to gifted education and express our sincere appreciation for this service and dedication to gifted students. Christie is a true servant of the field of gifted education and has been making a difference longer than GAM has been in existence! Christie has been a dedicated member of the Gifted Association of Missouri, and leader in the field of gifted education locally, state-wide, and nationally. It is the champions like Christie that have helped create effective gifted programs in Missouri and beyond.

Christie (Chris) is a parent of four gifted children and has served in many capacities of gifted education including public school educator, adjunct professor, professional development leader, curriculum writer, GAM & NAGC presenter, and administrator. Early in her Career, Chris helped develop gifted programs in Nebraska and Illinois, taught in the gifted classroom, and developed curriculum for gifted programs. She has been an adjunct professor in this field since 2002. Since 1991, Chris has served in the Rockwood Gifted Program in the Rockwood School District, the largest school district in St. Louis County which houses the largest gifted program in Missouri.

For the past 21 years, she has served as the Center for Creative Learning Administrator, Rockwood's K-5 gifted center, where she oversaw building operations, teacher instruction and student learning. Her major contributions included design and implementation of gifted curriculum and assessment including the development of the Rockwood Gifted Program Curriculum Writing Manual. She has also been invaluable in chairing the building curriculum committee, assessment and professional development committees. She supported and evaluated classroom instruction and has designed/implemented the new teacher three year training. She also developed and implemented a district wide TREASURES component to find, identify and serve underrepresented gifted students.

The Gifted Association of Missouri would also like to recognize Christie's significant contributions in the area of curriculum development for gifted education, including work in the development of the model curriculum guide which was used by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as a guide for writing gifted curriculum. This guide was used by gifted programs all over the state of Missouri as a model and best practice for writing curriculum. Christie's impact in this area has reached far and wide and has truly helped implement and evolve curriculum analysis and design for this field.

On behalf of GAM and State Representative Kirk Mathews, GAM President, Dr. Robin Lady attended her retirement ceremony and presented Christie an Official Resolution from the Missouri House of Representatives. The Gifted Association of Missouri recognizes Christie J. Puttcamp's dedication to gifted education and the immeasurable difference made to gifted students and families, teachers of the gifted, and all involved with the gifted community.

**If you know someone who has dedicated his/her life
to gifted, we want to highlight them in the GAMbit!**



The 5 Habits of Mind:

A Framework for Critical Thinking in the Classroom

By Seth Jaeger, GAM's Digital Director

- 1) Evidence - (How do I know what's true?)
- 2) Perspective - (Who might think differently?)
- 3) Connections - (What other areas of knowledge are connected?)
- 4) Supposition - (How might it be different if..?)
- 5) Significance - (Is this important?)

The infusion of critical thinking into a lesson is the most crucial aspect for ensuring positive educational experiences. The 5 Habits of Mind, as promoted by education activist Deborah Meier, form a framework on which the concepts and application of higher-order thought can be drawn for a 5 minute discussion or 5 lifetimes worth of contemplation. In a system which all-too-often shows a laundry line of seemingly disconnected ideas and facts to uninterested and coerced students (sorry for the strong language) the 5 Habits stand in stark contrast as universal criteria for clear thought and engagement with complex material. The questions of 1) evidence, 2) perspective, 3) connections, 4) supposition, and 5) significance are just as important to consider today as it was for Aristotle 2,400 years ago or will be for a student on the colony on Mars 240 years from now.

The purpose of the 5 Habits Daily blog (<http://5habitsdaily.blogspot.com/>) is to provide a resource for teachers at any level in any subject to incorporate critical thinking into their classroom. I will post a link from publications designed for students and then provide guiding questions for each of the 5 Habits. Possible projects or activity extensions are outlined at the end as well. The questions and exercises are not intended to be exhaustive or complete since your students will begin to generate interesting inquiries once they are primed. Questioning for complex thinking in a classroom is a skill that can be developed and I hope these postings help you in your journey. If you have suggestions or additional questions to ask or want to relate how you used these brief guides in classroom, I'd love to hear from you in the comments section.

When our goals are to help students become life-long learners and independent thinkers there can be no better time than the present to give them an environment in which to practice.

Deborah Meier on the 5 Habits

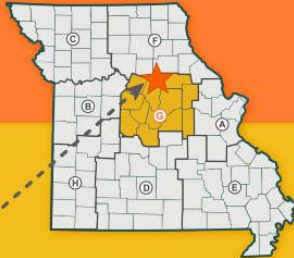
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLYoUPZx_OA

Meet Seth at the GAM Conference!

He is presenting a session called **The Five Habits of Mind: Framework for Critical Thinking!**

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Searching for ways to support your academically talented students in reaching their full potential? Duke TIP is here to help.

The Duke University Talent Identification Program (Duke TIP) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving academically talented youth worldwide. TIP will work with you to identify, recognize, nurture, and challenge your gifted students.

We offer gifted students in grades 4-12 a number of special opportunities:

- Talent searches to support gifted youth with above-level testing and formal recognition of ability.
- Dynamic residential educational programs that take place on the Duke University campus and other campuses throughout the U.S. and abroad.
- Independent and distance learning opportunities that provide unique, above-level curriculum at home or on the go.
- Resources, publications, and advisory services focused on guiding gifted students and their parents.



Our services are provided at no cost to schools. Financial aid is available to qualifying students.

Visit www.tip.duke.edu to learn more or contact Duke TIP at (919) 668-9100.

Missouri students uncover history and enhance learning through competition



More than 3,000 motivated sixth- through twelfth- graders compete in National History Day in Missouri each year. On April 25 roughly 600 students who advanced from regional competitions throughout Missouri gathered at the state competition on the University of Missouri campus to showcase their exemplary work.

Each National History Day in Missouri project is unique, a result of extensive research and creativity from an individual student or group. The program encourages young scholars to present their findings *their* way through documentaries, exhibits, papers, performances, or websites.

Members of the Mark Twain Jr/Sr High enrichment class participated in National History Day this year. Students competing in Columbia were Emma Clarkson, Tyler Hansen, Elizabeth Trower,

Cayden Hill, Jase Holtschneider, Noah Baker, Madison Jensen, Jessica Stinson, Lynsie Boling, Anna Gill, Alexis Hummell, and Landon Leake.

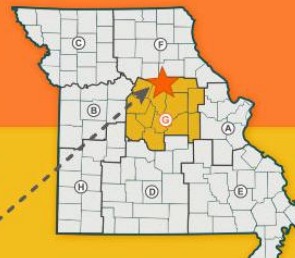
Jessica Stinson, an eighth grader at Mark Twain, won first place in the Junior Exhibit category with a project titled, "Louis Armstrong's Wonderful World." Jessica will be competing at the National History Day competition in Washington, D.C. in June.

Adria Palmer, the enrichment teacher at Mark Twain, stated that she could not be more proud of the effort shown by each of her students. "This was an amazing experience for our class, and we look forward to competing in National History Day in the future."

Please share the amazing things your students are doing in the gifted classroom! If we want administrators to value gifted education, we need to let them know what we are **DOING!**

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314-651-1185 or 573-635-2858-fax

kynaiman@earthlink.net

It's been an unprecedented final week of session. The grinding halt in the legislative process was truly unique. Between the Senate's Previous Question bomb on Right to Work, and the Speaker of the House's implosion, this has been the least productive final week of session in the history of the state.

GIFTED LEGISLATION: Due to the shut-down in the Senate during this last week, GAM's number one priority, House Bill 637, sponsored by Rep. Donna Pfautsch, failed to make it to the Governor's desk. The bill would have prohibited school districts from determining whether a child is gifted based on the child's participation in an advanced placement course or international baccalaureate course. Whether a child is gifted must be determined using the statutory definition of "gifted children" (Section 162.720, RSMo).

Also, beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, a school district will incur a reduction in funding if it experiences a decrease in its gifted program enrollment of more than 20%. If a school district experiences a decrease of 20% or more in its gifted program enrollment, an amount equal to the product of the difference between the number of students enrolled in the gifted program in the current school year and the number of students enrolled in the previous school year multiplied by \$680 must be subtracted from the school district's current year payment amount (Section 163.031).

Although the bill received unanimous support in the House Education Committee, and a 155-1 vote in the House, and unanimous support in the Senate Education Committee, it failed to get past the Senate before the filibuster shut everything down.

Senator Schaefer, sponsored the same language in the Senate – SB290. The language was amended on to several other omnibus education bills (SB172 and SB13); however, they did not make final passage either.

Rep. Chrissy Sommer, sponsored House Bill 532, another bill that GAM worked to introduce. Beginning July 1, 2016, this bill adds a weight of six-tenths for each gifted student who exceeds the school district's gifted threshold to the calculation of its weighted average daily attendance in the school foundation funding formula. A school district that is found by audit to have spent gifted funds on matters not directly related to gifted education must repay the aid and a 100% penalty if it cannot resolve the audit finding.


This bill would be an incentive for school districts to have a gifted program. Unfortunately, this bill failed.

BUDGET: The General Assembly approved \$750,000 for the Missouri Scholars Academy and the Missouri Fine Arts Academy for 2016. Governor Nixon finally released the \$750,000 for the 2015 Academies. An additional \$84 million went in the budget for K-12 education.

Meet Kyna at the GAM Conference!

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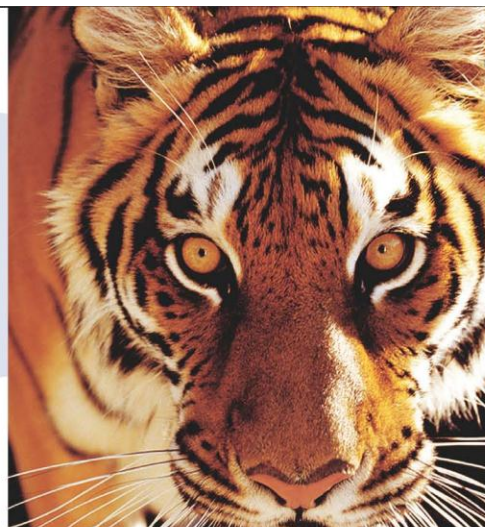




University of Missouri
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Department of Special Education

GIFTED Education Online

Master's Degree (M Ed) with an emphasis in learning and instruction and a focus in gifted education



Choose your option:

Master's Degree An online master's degree designed to enhance the process of teaching and learning in the elementary, middle or high school classroom.

Missouri Certification The necessary gifted course work to prepare for Missouri gifted education certification — available online.

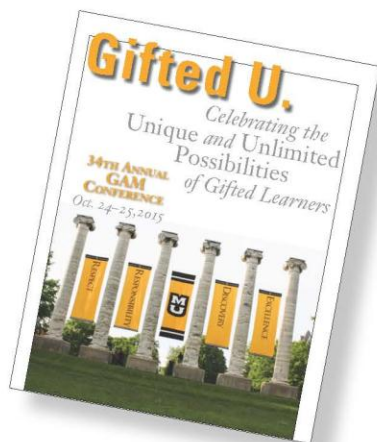
ONLINE GIFTED COURSES AVAILABLE IN 2015.

These courses can be applied toward a Masters in Education with a Focus in Gifted Education.

All courses listed meet requirements for Missouri Gifted Certification.

Teachers seeking Missouri Gifted Certification may enroll online as post-baccalaureate students without making an application to a degree program.

Courses may be taken in any order beginning in any semester.



SUMMER SEMESTER 2015

- SPC ED 8350 Research with Exceptional Children
- SPC ED 8380 Nature and Needs of Gifted and Talented Students
- SPC ED 8391 Curriculum Methods for Gifted/Talented Students
- SPC ED 8946 Practicum: Gifted Education

FALL SEMESTER 2015

- SPC ED 8406 Differentiating Instruction for Gifted, Typical and Struggling Learners
- SPC ED 8380 Nature and Needs of Gifted and Talented Students
- SPC ED 8391 Curriculum Methods for Gifted/Talented Students.
- SPC ED 8946 Practicum: Gifted Education
- SPC ED 8405 Assessment and Evaluation in Gifted Education

For more information, contact:

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online.missouri.edu/gifted



Scientifically Speaking

They have eyes, but do they see?

By Steve V. Coxon, Ph.D.

Assistant professor of gifted education, Maryville University

My 21-month old daughter has reawakened my interest in observation. As she explores the natural world on walks in our local botanical gardens or even in our own backyard, her keen interest in the world around her is infectious. Whether exclaiming “rabbit... touch rabbit” as she chases one or trying to blow dandelion seeds, her excitement with the natural world is palpable.

This interest in observing the natural world is arguably the basis of science. Whether it involves a toddler in her own backyard or Darwin observing the variety of finch beaks on the Galapagos, science is based on observation. Inquiry begins when one is curious about what is observed. Data collection requires careful observation to measure change.

Such observation becomes challenging in many circumstances. Measuring to the millimeter, determining the average amount of daylight on a window sill for a plant experiment, or distinguishing between two similar beetles can be a challenge. Developing talent in observation requires increasingly challenging experiences. Schools can be a pipeline by which young children’s natural interest in observing is expanded. Unfortunately, observation is neglected in most classrooms (Eberback & Crowley, 2009).

There are many things that teachers can do to provide increasingly challenging opportunities for observation. Among them, keeping observation notebooks and an activity that I call the Observation Game both provide engaging and challenging observational opportunities that can provide talent development.

Observation Notebooks

Observation notebooks can be done in many ways. While there are many different ways of keeping science notebooks, I don’t worry about the exact format. The guiding principles that I use are open-endedness and lots of possibilities for figures and drawings. Notebooks with fill-in-the-blank notes pages don’t create opportunity for higher order thinking. If there is an answer key, there is little the student could be learning that couldn’t be Googled in seconds with reasonable accuracy. More important for the 21st century are process skills including critical thinking, the scientific method, and observation.

Students should have a great deal of choice in terms of what and how they record their thoughts and observations. Coupled with that, opportunities to record observations and ideas by drawing are very important to student learning. Drawing, while likely beneficial for all children’s learning, is especially needed as an outlet for the thinking of spatially-able children who have tremendous potential as future scientists and engineers.

Unfortunately, drawing and other visual-thinking activities are often neglected in schools, especially as children age. Sommer (1978) decried this in terms of the lack of K-12 preparation for future engineering students: “School more than any other institution, is responsible for the downgrading of visual thinking. Most educators are not only disinterested in visualization, they are hostile toward it. They regard it as childish, primitive, and prelogical” (p. 54). But drawing is incredibly important to the sciences and engineering. Providing lots of opportunities for drawing in science is one solution, especially when students are given increasingly challenging opportunities. Have students draw their ideas for an invention before building, draw an insect discovered on the playground, and record data from experiments pictorially and numerically. Instead of focusing on a

single instance, be sure to offer praise on student progress over time, such as better drawing ability, more detail, and more accurate data collection. It's important for gifted children to see the value of hard work and improvement, not only their high ability.

The Observation Game

To give students an especially challenging observation task, I like to play what I call the Observation Game. I give each student an object that has to do with whatever we're studying, usually something natural like a leaf if we're into plants or a stone if we're doing geology. Students record a detailed observation that can include drawings; measurements including length, volume, and weight; a description of the colors, textures, and patterns (which can be verbal or part of the drawing if colored pencils or crayons are available); and even metaphors (e.g., it looks like a pizza). I have a collection of polished stones that, while all unique, are very similar and provide great challenge for this activity. Once students complete their detailed stone observations, I collect all of the stones and papers (with student names at the top), spread the stones on a large table (and add in some that weren't in the mix so no one can use a process of elimination and merely wait for their stone to remain), and then randomly redistribute the papers. Students must then find the stone someone else described and check it with the original observer. This game is very difficult, challenging students both to create a detailed description and to find the described object. It can be easily scaled up or down depending on the similarity of the objects.

Conclusion

From backyard rabbits to Darwin's finches, the world around us is filled with wonder. Children have a natural interest in observing, and schools can capitalize on this to develop talent in our future scientists. Talent development requires increasingly challenging experiences and teachers should seek to provide these using such tools as science notebooks and the Observation Game. Open-endedness will keep the natural wonder alive, and don't forget to stop and smell the dandelions!

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Sommer, R. (1978). *The mind's eye: Imagery in everyday life*. New York: Delacorte Press.

Steve V. Coxon, Ph.D. is a veteran public school teacher who now serves as assistant professor of gifted education at Maryville University in St. Louis where he directs the graduate programs in gifted education and the Maryville Summer Science and Robotics Program for High Ability Students.

Visit him on the web at <http://stevecoxon.com> and follow him on Twitter @GiftedEdStLouis.

Meet Steve at the GAM Conference!
He is presenting a session called CREST Robotics for STEM!



SIFMA Foundation and McGraw Hill Financial Announce National Winner of InvestWrite® Competition

Photo: Left Vicki Kemp , middle Student Susie Saxon, Right Representative from the Sifma Foundation LaToya Goree



Ellisville, MO, February 26, 2015 – It takes years to build up the financial savvy to navigate the markets. But Susanne Saxon is decades ahead of the game, having just won distinction as the ninth place national winner in the SIFMA Foundation's InvestWrite® essay competition with McGraw Hill Financial. Saxon, in eighth grade at Crestview Middle School, Ellisville, MO claims this recognition in the middle school division of the Fall 2014 competition.

Congrats to Sarah Zimmerman for winning the distinction as the fourth place national winner in the SIFMA Foundation's InvestWrite® essay competition with McGraw Hill Financial. Zimmerman, in eighth grade at Barnwell Middle School, St. Charles, MO claims this recognition in the middle school division of the Fall 2014 competition.



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Bragging on our BEST!

Ryan Frazee from Independence, Mo.

Ryan Frazee has been invited and has accepted membership to the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. Ryan continues to do very well at Missouri Academy at Northwest Missouri State University and maintains a 3.5 GPA. He has just earned his letter from Truman in Academics for a second time. He is preparing to

take the ACT again and anticipates applying to the following schools next year (for his junior year of college): University of Texas-Austin, Georgia Tech, University of South Florida, USC and MIT. He has changed his mind about mathematics and believes he would like to major in Chemistry, taking an engineering route.

Please submit "Bragging on our BEST"
applicants to Sheila_Bonner@isdschools.org



SPRING SEMESTER 2015

EDU 51300 Online Survey of the Gifted (Gismegian)
EDU 52000 Online Curriculum Analysis and Design for Gifted (Bacon)
EDU 52400 Online Assessment of Intellectual Skills (Hutcheson)
EDU 53000 Online Survey of Learning Styles (Tomicich)
EDU 54200 Online Administration of Gifted Programs (Tomicich)
EDU 54400 Online Meeting the Affective Needs of the Gifted (Gismegian)
EDU 54900 Online Practicum Gifted (Gismegian)
EDU 57000 Online Educational Research (Orlando)

SUMMER SEMESTER 2015

EDU 51300 Online Survey of the Gifted (Gismegian)
EDU 52000 Online Curriculum Analysis and Design for Gifted (Bacon)
EDU 52400 Online Assessment of Intellectual Skills (Hutcheson)
EDU 54400 Online Meeting the Affective Needs of the Gifted (Gismegian)
EDU 54900 Online Practicum Gifted (Tomicich/Gismegian)
EDU 57000 Online Educational Research (Orlando)

Summer STEM Camp for Gifted Learners

Camp Invention - June 29 - July 2, 2015

Scholarships are available

EDU 54900 Online Practicum Gifted (Tomicich/Gismegian)

Contact Professor Mary Gismegian mgismegian@lindenwood.edu

Adjunct Professor Heather Tomicich htomicich@lindenwood.edu

Summer 2015 NTW

New Teacher's to Gifted Workshop - July 20-21, 2015

Lindenwood University in the Spellmann Center

Contact Adjunct Professor Heather Tomicich htomicich@lindenwood.edu

- **Lindenwood Online Facebook:** www.facebook.com/lindenwoodonline
- **Lindenwood Online Twitter:** [@lindenwoodonline](https://twitter.com/lindenwoodonline)
- **Lindenwood Online YouTube:** www.youtube.com/user/lindenwoodonline

Name _____ Date _____ Day _____

My Trip to Jefferson City!

Using Google Earth

You will be leaving Independence at 8:34 am and arriving in Jefferson City at 11:18 am. How long will you be on the train?

Show your math on the back!

The Amtrak station is EAST of the Capitol building. How far do we have to walk to reach the Capitol building?

_____ (measure?)

Find five different places you would like to visit while we are in Jefferson City. Each place cannot be more than 2 miles away from the last place. Write down the place and how far it is to walk in the chart below.

What were the total miles you walked that day?

_____ (distance)

Decide how you will show what you learned! No matter which product you decide on, it must include the following:

Place	Miles

- ☐ Information about each location – you must have 5 locations
- ☐ How much it costs to go there
- ☐ How far it is to walk there from the last location
- ☐ Train info – how long the trip is and how much it costs

Student Products Menu

Pitch Your Own Idea!	Brochure	Rebus Story	Poster
Mind Map	Map with Legend	Letter	Crossword Puzzle
Project Cube	Questionnaire	Editorial	Poem
Mystery	Diorama	Detailed Illustration	Comic Strip

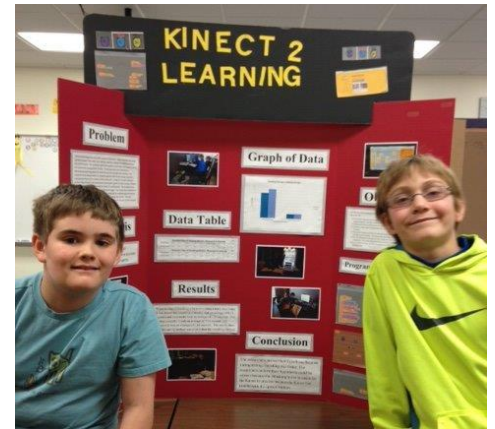
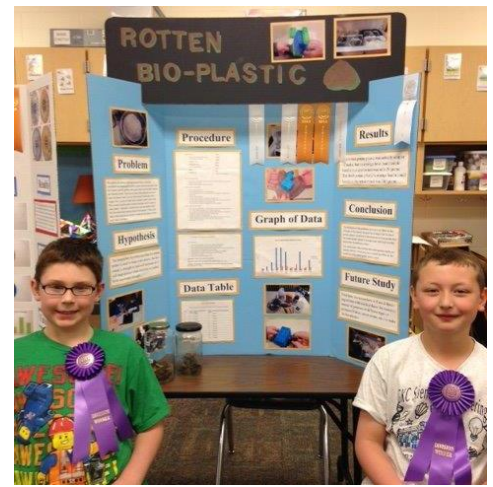
Blue Springs Elementary Gifted Program Produces Innovative Young Scientists

By Jennifer Medina, GAM Assistant Regional District B Director

Every spring, 4th grade students in Ms. Medina's STRETCH program enter projects into the Greater Kansas City Science Fair. Students work for months on developing testable questions, designing valid experiments, and collecting and analyzing their data. Ms. Medina melds creativity lessons with scientific investigations to help her students come up with novel ideas to test. Her rule: "If you can google the answer to your testable question, then we need to dig deeper. What is UNKNOWN about your topic of interest? What would you like to discover?"

After picking an area of study (microbiology, medicine, chemistry, computer science, physics, botany, etc.), students spend weeks researching and compiling background info until they pinpoint the exact area they want to investigate. For Blair Van Biber and Lance Wilyard, that digging lead the team to potato bioplastic. The discovery of creating plastics from bio material was fascinating to the duo, and they worked diligently to come up with an experiment that was unique. In the end, they decided to test the effectiveness of using rotten potatoes versus fresh potatoes in the production of bioplastic. Could rotten potatoes produce plastic that was just as strong as the fresh potato? Lance and Blair wrote, "There are so many plants that one can use to make bio-plastic; but if you use fresh food it would add to the hunger crisis. Access to fresh food is limited in part of the world. Why would scientists want to utilize food that could be eaten to make plastic? Shouldn't scientists try to use non-edible foods? Will this rotten food work as a base for bio-plastic? What is the effect of the freshness of a potato to make the bio-plastic on how much load it can take?" Unfortunately, after 15 trials, the boys found that the fresh potato produced much stronger plastic, but they got several students and scientists discussing the idea. Perhaps with further development, the idea of using rotten food to create plastic we use every day could take flight. The boys won several awards for their experiment, including the Top Division Winner Award, 1st Place from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Green Building Council Award, and the Air Force Award.

Two other notable projects in Ms. Medina's class included a study of the Effect of Chlorophyll on Aluminum Absorption and Kinect 2 Scratch Video Game Design. Kelsea Kilmer, Olivia Johnson, Alyssa Schreiner became the class experts on the dangers of aluminum absorption in the bloodstream. They were very concerned about this danger and discovered that some sources stated that ingesting chlorophyll may reverse the effects. For months, they grew aluminum crystals in their house and tested the effect of the growth of these crystals when they added different amounts of chlorophyll drops to each group of crystals. In the end, they were ecstatic to find that the chlorophyll worked and the crystal growth was dramatically slowed by the addition. Their investigations were awarded 1st Place in the Division of Medical Science. Another group, Andrew Smith and John Bellinghausen, took their love for the MIT Scratch program and decided to develop a game using the Xbox Kinect for young students. The boys wanted to give kindergartners a chance to get up and move around while learning so they programmed a game that allowed kids to create greater than or less than signs with their arms in order to correctly identify the number relationship. This project was chosen to be on display at the Linda Hall Library on the UMKC Campus for the month of April.





Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children

On May 19, the Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children made a presentation to the State Board of Education. The presentation summarized the findings and recommendations included in the Council's first annual report. State board members asked both pertinent and probing questions, and expressed appreciation for the work that was done to study and provide direction on gifted education in Missouri. Many words of support were expressed for gifted education and gifted students by members of the board. The presentation, originally scheduled for 30 minutes, lasted more than an hour.

The Advisory Council's 10 recommendations are included in this GAMbit. For a copy of the full report and two related powerpoints, go to www.dese.mo.gov/gifted-advisory-council (see Council Annual Reports).

Purpose of the Advisory Council

The Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children was established by the Missouri legislature in 2013 to provide advice to the Commissioner of Education regarding all rules and policies to be adopted by the State Board of Education relating to the education of gifted and talented children. The legislation governing the Council is Chapter 161 of the Missouri Revised Statutes, Section 161.249.

Council Focus

- Identify state and national issues that are relevant to the continued growth of gifted programs in Missouri.
- Become informed about best practices for gifted and talented education and gifted education's role as an integral facet of education in Missouri.
- Advise the Commissioner of Education of policies and procedures related to the administration of gifted programs, including but not limited to student identification, teacher certification, curriculum and program evaluation.
- Encourage the development and consistent implementation of comprehensive, high quality services for gifted and talented children throughout the state.
- Act as a resource to other groups interested in gifted and talented education.
- For more information, contact David Welch.
David.welch@dese.mo.gov
Phone: (573) 751-7754

Advisory Council for the Education of Gifted and Talented Children

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION – 2015

Reporting Data on Gifted Students and Programs

RECOMMENDATION 1: DESE should make district information related to state-approved gifted programs readily accessible to the public. Specifically, information available on DESE's website should include but not be limited to grade levels served, identification criteria, service delivery model by level (per DESE categories), contact minutes per week by level, number of gifted teachers by level and the student-to-teacher ratio by level.

RECOMMENDATION 2: DESE should generate an annual state data report in October on gifted students and state approved gifted programs. The report should use data from the prior school year and include but not be limited to:

- Number and percent of districts with state-approved gifted programs (state totals and disaggregated by DESE region and county)
- Number and percent of gifted students served in state-approved programs (state totals and disaggregated by DESE region and county; by grade level and as a percent of all Missouri students in grade level)
- Number and percent of gifted students identified and not served in state-approved programs (state totals and disaggregated by DESE region and county; by grade level and percent of all identified gifted students)
- Gifted teacher certification in state-approved gifted programs by level (Elementary, Middle School, High School and total)
- Gifted program types and contact minutes per week (state total by program type, level, DESE region and county; average contact minutes by level, DESE region and county)
- Gifted student demographics by DESE region (district cells merged so actual count is possible) and total
- Gifted student achievement (MAP) by grade level tested and in comparison to all students at grade levels tested

Identification of Gifted Students

RECOMMENDATION 3: DESE should eliminate the practice of reporting students as gifted based on the criterion of being enrolled in an Advanced Placement (AP) and/or International Baccalaureate (IB) course. Additionally, AP and/or IB courses should not be counted as part of a state-approved gifted program.

RECOMMENDATION 4: DESE should provide a best practice model for districts to use in identifying and serving students who are traditionally underrepresented in gifted programs, the goal being to have program participants more closely reflect the ethnic, linguistic and socio-economic diversity of individual school districts. The best practice model should include research-based recommendations on identification, interventions to scaffold learning and delivery of gifted program services.

RECOMMENDATION 5: DESE should provide a best practice model for districts to use in identifying students who are twice exceptional (students with both learning challenges due to disabilities and/or physical impairments and exceptional learning abilities).

Programming for Gifted Students

RECOMMENDATION 6: DESE should require all Missouri districts to have a policy allowing acceleration for students demonstrating advanced performance or potential for advanced performance and the social/emotional readiness for such acceleration. The policy should include subject acceleration and whole grade acceleration, among other opportunities.

Educator Preparation and Professional Development

RECOMMENDATION 7: DESE should require teacher preparation programs to include a minimum of one three-credit hour course addressing the nature and needs of gifted students and designing curriculum and instruction to meet those needs.

RECOMMENDATION 8: DESE should require all districts to provide teachers ongoing professional development addressing the nature and needs of gifted students and designing curriculum and instruction to meet those needs. Professional development may include such options as staff development, university coursework, professional conferences, workshops and web-based learning.

Requiring and Funding Gifted Education

RECOMMENDATION 9: Gifted identification and programming should be required in Missouri.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Earmarked funds should be allocated for gifted identification and programming in Missouri.



GAM Task Force Spotlight

Past President Task Force Member Susan Berti

(MY LIFE AS A GAMa GAMa GAMa)

I was never in a sorority, but I am proud to have these three letters from the Roman alphabet associated with my name – G-A-M. I joined GAM as a parent in 1987 when my daughter was a first grader in gifted programs. What a thrill to have a support system for a then unemployed mom substituting and looking for answers about her first born! Membership was invaluable to me when I was lucky enough to land the Gifted Programs Facilitator position in the Palmyra R-1 School District in August 1991. My first GAM conference was also the NAGC conference, held in 1991 in Kansas City. How lucky could a girl get?

Once I got a little experience under my belt, I spread my wings (Berti...wings, you get it, right?). I served on the Board from 1996 through 2006 as District F Alternate Director, Secretary, Vice-President, President and Specialized Programs Chair. Serving on the GAM Board was such a learning experience and a time of growth for me! The Board is comprised of dedicated volunteers who give selflessly of their time and talent. All of those who serve are truly gifted educators and strong advocates. David Welch, Director of Gifted Programs with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, who also served on the GAM Board then and now, was a steadfast advocate for gifted and talented to whom I could always turn for guidance and wisdom – and still do!

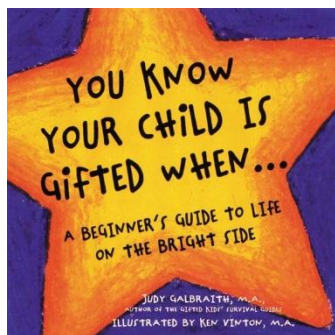
One of my favorite things to do as a GAMasite at conference was to present at BallyHoo! What a plethora of creative ideas that teachers can take back to their classrooms right after conference and USE. Since presenters always followed the conference theme in some way, I've worn everything from assorted crazy glasses to pirate garb to a Donald Duck suit (a quacking Berti).

Spreading the word about meeting the needs of the gifted outside the GAM conference, also known as “not preaching to the choir,” was an opportunity I was blessed to have in my home and neighboring school districts, at other conferences and before the Missouri State Board of Education to name a few locations. Using '60's hits as our common bond, a special education instructor and I teamed up in a session we called “Both Sides Now,” and shared hints on meeting the needs of gifted and learning disabled in the regular classroom. First presented at the Missouri At Risk Conference, we took our show on the road 'til the incense no longer burned. As GAM Vice-President at the turn of the century, I created and debuted the PowerPoint “Show Me Gifted Education in Missouri” with GAM President, Nancy Gerardy, at an NAGC Affiliates Conference in Washington D.C.

As GAM President from conference 2002 to 2004, *Realizing the Potential* of the Gifted Association of Missouri was one thing that amazed me. How effective GAM members can be in ensuring Missouri is a premiere learning environment for gifted youth: the Board of Directors, parents, educators, and institutions! I realized how important lobbying in both Washington D.C. and Jefferson City on behalf of gifted children is. I realized the value of a simple thank you: to supportive legislators, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, MSA and MFA for their contributions. And, as I lost my husband during that time period, I realized how the support of my colleagues went beyond our professional bonds to a personal level.

In 2005, when the State Board of Education held a hearing on special programs, GAM was there. I spoke not only as GAM's Specialized Program Chair but more specifically as a Gifted Facilitator with then thirteen years' experience in a Rural Gifted Program. Bringing along one of my very articulate junior-high students and letting him speak intensified the impact. At the state conference later that year a Curriculum Conversation session on the topic sparked more discussion.

It was an honor to be the recipient of the DeDe Smith Scholarship in 2007; I retired from teaching in 2009. Recognition by one's peers is both humbling and heartwarming. Though I now work for our local Chamber of Commerce, a position that gives me the opportunity to become a learner again, I continue to maintain membership in GAM and now serve on the Past-President's Task force. Thank you for the opportunity to serve – both in the past and once again. It is a cherished privilege.



You Know Your Child is Gifted When . . . A Beginner's guide to Life on the Bright Side

by Judy Galbraith and Illustrated by Ken Vinton.

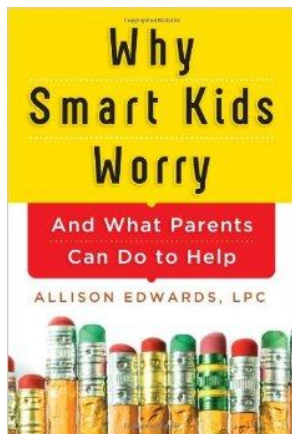
Free Spirit Publishing Inc., 2000

“What does it mean to be gifted? Is it about being smart? Creative? Talented? Or what?” If you’ve ever asked these questions, this book is for you.

I have come across several books written about characteristics of gifted kiddos but this book, by far, is the best resource I have ever found. A creative, uncomplicated resource for parents of gifted children, the author uses clever, witty illustrations to provide meaningful insight into defining characteristics of gifted children. The description of “Good Things” and “Not-So-Good Things” included about each characteristic culminates with practical, no-nonsense activities entitled “Ways to Help Your Brainy Child”. I recommend this book to everyone who request information about gifted kids. During parent/teacher conferences each fall, I share information from the book and encourage parents to acquire their own copy. I also highlight a characteristic and provide excerpts in my gifted program newsletters.

Della Cochran, Gifted Program Facilitator, EAGLES Gifted Program 1st – 5th Grade
EXCEED Gifted Program 6th – 8th Grade, Moberly School District

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Why Smart Kids Worry and What Parents Can Do to Help

Allison Edwards was a powerful read for me. Ms. Edwards wrote this book in a normal, down to earth conversational way, not like a textbook. I found it interesting and easy to understand.

I liked the way the book was divided into three basic parts. The first part gives a definition of a smart kid compared to the average kid. For example, the average child says I see a snake, while the gifted child may say, I see a boa constrictor. (Pg. 4) She goes into the Gardner's Seven Types of Intelligences and explains how these are intensified with gifted children and some ideas of how parents can help their child find outlets for their interests.

The second part of the book explains anxiety and how the brain physically reacts. She lists the 6 types of anxiety listed in the DSM, but then breaks it down into two basic parts: Object Orientated Anxiety and Relational Anxiety.(Pg 27) Ms. Edwards gives specific examples of each one and why the child is reacting a certain way.

The final part of the book gives parents suggestions of how to answer some of those really hard questions that these kids worry over and tools of how to deal with their child's anxiety. This book gives parents 15 tools that the author actually uses in her work with gifted kids to help with anxiety. Ms. Edwards understands that not all kids are the same, and parents may have some trial and error, but each tool comes with when to try it, how to implement, and what to expect for results.

This review seriously only scratches the surface of the information provided in this book. I had my 17 year old child read this and it prompted some very interesting discussions that provided me invaluable insight into a gifted child's mind.

Vicky Bennett, Hallsville Gifted Teacher, Grades 2-12
GAM Regional District G Director

Extemporé

More than 800 students from across the state competed on May 2 in Extemporé, the 18th annual state gifted competition at Ray-Pec High School. The competition included skits, scholar bowls, chess, checkers, games, and music.

Ray-Pec students competed in Division 1 (grades 2-5) and Division 2 (grades 6-8). Events were categorized into four arenas in each division.

These students received first place in the arena in which they competed within their division.



- Division 1: Team Morph - Bryce Brown, Malcolm Goswell, Audrey Huffman, Colbey Stosberg, Izzy Sullivan, and Luke Voelker.

- Division 2: Team Norm - Alexis Carver, Alyssa Harmon, Robbie Keays, Ella Schnake, Makayla Sclesky, and Larissa Wratney.

These students received second place in the arena in which they competed in their division:

- Division 1: Team Minify - Angelina Bazar, Brit Deal, Emily Feagins, Brekyn King, David Starkey, and Ty Williams.

- Division 2: Team Pattern - Taylor Hermsmeier, Nick Hime, Jillian Humke, Caden Maxwell, and Braden Zaner.

These students received third place in the arena in which they competed in their division:

Division 2: Team Nadir - Maddy Busby, Sadie Moore, Maegan Norton, Drew Settle, Bela Torres, and Leilany Zarco-Aguirre.

In addition, Colbey Stosberg placed first in the Division 1 Mancala Competition, and the team of Brit Deal, Emily Feagins, Brekyn King, and David Starkey placed first in the Division 1 Living Tournament, a human version of checkers.

The team of Nick Hime, Alisan Hoffman, Caden Maxwell, and Kerstin Randolph placed second in the Division 2 Scholar Academic Competition.

Extemporé is an academic competition that combines risk-taking, creativity, communication, problem solving, and teamwork to solve extemporaneous challenges in a competitive setting. There were 150 teams registered for the event.



The Gifted Association of Missouri is hosting a ...

New Teacher's to Gifted Workshop

Monday, July 20 and Tuesday, July 21st, 2015

At Lindenwood University in the Spellmann Center

209 S. Kingshighway Avenue, Saint Charles, MO 63301

This is a wonderful opportunity for Teachers/Administrators of the Gifted or teachers new to Gifted Education to learn new techniques to meet the needs of our gifted learners. This workshop will contain guest speakers from the field, information about the latest research in Gifted Education, and units/activities to utilize with the gifted in the classroom. Don't miss out on the chance to rejuvenate yourself and acquire new ideas for the upcoming school year.

Check out the GAM website for more information and to register.

www.mogam.org





Parents Ask!

By Dennis O'Brien, MA, LCSW

How Can We Raise a Child with Healthy Self-esteem?

Gifted children are an at-risk group precisely because they are gifted. Savvy parents who want to raise a well-rounded, durable child with healthy self-esteem face a real challenge.

Here are some strategies that will help you raise a healthy, well-rounded, confident and socially competent child.

First, acknowledge that you face a real challenge. To parent successfully, you must understand why it is so important and why it is so difficult. Here's how it works. A child with superior cognitive ability may have difficulty relating to children his own age and gravitate toward adults. As he becomes increasingly focused on pleasing adults, he loses both the ability to form healthy peer relationships and the natural support such relationships provide. Intellectual success comes easily, and soon the child's sense of self depends on his ability to outperform all those around him and gain recognition from adults for his intellectual prowess.

The result? A bright child whose fragile self-esteem is based on the narrow and ultimately untenable notion of being the best—especially in the eyes of adults.

Assess your priorities. Are you as aware as you should be of the importance of helping your child grow emotionally and socially? Do you sometimes get too caught up in what your child can learn or accomplish at the expense of her development as a well-rounded person? If so, your well-intended, though misguided, emphasis on intellectual growth at the expense of overall personal development can make it harder for your child to have real-life success and happiness.

When cognitive abilities become the center of a child's life and the primary focus of parental approval, academically talented youngsters may grow up without developing the interpersonal skills that would allow them to form nurturing friendships and be sadly lacking in experiences that teach them to cope with adversity. Certainly now what you want for your child.

Next, assess your child's situation. How well does your child interact with peers? Has he learned to cooperate? Does he have friends? How frequently does he have them over to play? Do they call him? Is he willing to do what others want to do, or does he push his own agenda? What do his teachers say about his relationships with other students? What kind of coaching and support does he need from you to improve his relationships?

Agree on priorities with your spouse. Both of you must share the same values for your child and agree on the current priorities for her personal growth so you can communicate a consistent, unambiguous message.

Make your priorities clear to your child. Let her know how important it is to get along with others and that you want her to have same-aged friends who may or may not be her intellectual equals. Other qualities matter more. Encourage her to respect others, to listen to them, to compromise and cooperate. Discuss the social aspects of her day at school: Whom did she recreate with? What did they do? How did she handle herself? Coach and role-play when you need to.

Make sure that your child is engaged in activities that teach cooperation with others such as sports, drama, Scouting or Junior Achievement. A bright child accustomed to working independently may lack the social and communication skills necessary for teamwork and emotionally satisfying participation with peers. He needs frequent opportunities to interact in situations where the focus is on teamwork, not individual performance, on cooperation, not competition. Gifted Resource Council (GRC) in St. Louis deliberately structures all its classes as team learning experiences in order to foster these social skills.

Encourage your child to become involved in activities where she will probably not be "the best" and let her know this in advance. This will help her learn that she is OK as a person, valued and valuable just for being who she is. To be resilient in life, a child needs to learn to try things, to enjoy activities without constantly grading the results, and to continue despite frustrations. Keep in mind also that a child

may be especially talented in one academic area and not so much in others. Let her know that's OK too. It's normal. We're all like that.

Should you force your child to participate? If you must. Obviously it is preferable if she participates in activities that interest her, but sometimes a child who fears "not-being-the best-at-everything" must be compelled to participate. "I want you to try soccer now. If you really don't like it at the end of the season, you can switch to swimming, dance or theater," you could say. Activities like these also help your child become more well-rounded.

Praise your child for participating, not for excelling. Most children experience frustration and failure repeatedly in the normal flow of their lives and, with support from nurturing adults, learn to cope with it. But things come so easily to the gifted that they often breeze through school seemingly without effort or failure. They are so accustomed to dominating in the areas of their strengths that they tend to restrict their participation in areas where they may not excel. Learning to cope with the frustration of being average broadens their sense of self beyond the constrictions imposed by their intellectual prowess, helps them understand others who do not have their special talents, and helps develop a healthy persistence in the face of adversity.

Team sports provide wonderful opportunities for a gifted child to both experience the frustration that most of us feel at being just good enough at something, not great, and to learn about working together with others.

Take advantage of carefully designed enrichment programs such as those offered by Gifted Resource Council in St. Louis. What's available in your area? If nothing, consider doing what some other outstate parents do. They drive to St. Louis six Saturdays in the fall and six in the winter so their child can participate in GRC's Saturday enrichment activities. Usually, they make a day of it and visit other attractions like the Magic House, the Art or History Museum, the Zoo or the Science Center.

In programs like these, your child will be challenged by peers who are his intellectual equals and nurtured by master teachers specially prepared to make it a safe environment for children who may be facing this situation for the first time in their lives.

GRC instructors promote cooperation, not competition, and focus on the process of learning and discovery, not on the product. Talk to your child in advance about what to expect and what you expect from him--to cooperate, to enjoy the experience and to respect the talents of others.

"Perhaps nothing we do is more important than helping parents raise healthy, well-adjusted children," said Sue Flesch, GRC's Executive Director. "Our holistic approach provides academically talented children with challenging, hands-on learning experiences in a nongraded environment while nurturing their social and emotional development as well."

With parents setting the right priorities, gifted children can grow to be healthy, happy and extremely productive people. Gifted kids are like intellectual sharks--relentless eating machines that seek out and devour information. What they need the most help with is learning how to develop the emotional and social aspects of their lives, and to persevere when things don't come easily.

Parents who make it safe for their children to experience frustration and the "failure" of not being the best, who encourage participation in team activities and nurture the development of friendships are doing the most important things they can to help them develop the healthy self-esteem and interpersonal skills their child will need for lasting success.

Note: this article is adapted from one that appeared in the 2005 issue of *mindwonders*, the newsletter of Gifted Resource Council (GRC) in St. Louis, MO. For more information and additional resources for parents or teacher, visit www.giftedresourccouncil.org.

Dennis O'Brien, MA, LCSW, is a licensed clinical social worker, experienced educator and therapist. He has led five nonprofits, including Logos School which he founded. He has written educational materials used by Washington University School of Medicine Dept. of Psychiatry, weekly newspaper columns (St. Louis Suburban Journals/Post-Dispatch) on parenting and numerous articles for a variety of magazines and newsletters, including [Gifted Resource Council](http://www.giftedresourccouncil.org). He was honored by the Missouri Dept. of Mental Health for outstanding writing about suicide in 2010. He consults, writes grants for nonprofits and is bringing an online video [ethics program for students](#) developed by the Better Business Bureau to the St. Louis area. As a volunteer, he has played leadership roles in various groups serving nonprofits and is currently active with the [Better Business Bureau](#), the [Children's Services Coalition](#), [CHARACTERplus](#) and [Community Service Public Relations Council](#).



Remembering College for Kids

By Bailey Lawson

As a kid, my favorite time in the summer was the five and a half days that I went to College for Kids. I would start packing a week and a half in advance because I couldn't contain the excitement anymore. When my friends would ask where I was going, I would say "Nerd Camp" because it was easier to call it that than what it actually was to people who would never really understand it unless they had experienced it. "Nerd Camp" would insinuate to the normal person that it was boring, lame, no one had fun, and it was a week that your parents would drag you to. College for Kids was the complete opposite for me. I started going in third grade and I didn't know what to do the first week I was there. I was surrounded by people who were just as smart as I was, just as awkward as I was, loved to learn (even if it wasn't just learning the core subjects of math, language, and science), and were kind, good kids. There were crazy RA's everywhere, running around, with too much energy, doing weird dances to weird music about Star Trek and for some crazy reason, I wanted to be like them. I wanted to have that much fun. So the 51 weeks every year that I wasn't at camp, I passed the time learning those crazy dances and songs to keep in the College for Kids mindset. As I continued to go to College for Kids, my love grew exponentially. The campus, the RAs, the directors, my friends. They were all a part of me and a part of this magical place.

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Where Are They Now?



James Paul Skelley, a former member of the Joplin R-VIII Gifted and Enrichment Program, attended the Missouri Scholars Academy (MSA) on the University of Missouri campus in Columbia in 1998 and graduated from Joplin High School as the valedictorian of the class of 2000. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts and his Juris Doctor degree from the Boston University School of Law. James is currently practicing as a technology transactions attorney in California. He is also an illustrator and has illustrated children's books, legal texts and manuals, and legal websites.

Please submit "Where Are They Now?"
applicants to Sheila_Bonner@idschools.org

Joel Miles wins Spelling Bee for second year

He will represent Ray-Pec at County bee



Sixth grader Joel Miles (at right) won the Ray-Pec School District Spelling Bee for the second consecutive year on Jan. 29.

He was among 28 top spellers in grades 4-8 competing at the event. Eighth grader Jordan Pietschmann (at left) was the runner-up.

Joel won the Ray-Pec and Cass County spelling bees as a fifth grader in 2014, and qualified to participate in the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. He will defend his title as Cass County spelling champion when he competes at the county bee on March 4.

See more information and a list of other participants: [District Spelling Bee](#)

The GAMbit needs you!

Please share any good news you have with the editor,
Sheila_Bonner@idschools.org

“Where Are
They Now?”

Have you read a
good book lately?

**Bragging
on Our
BEST!**

Tell us about
what your
district gifted
program is
doing!

Please share the amazing things your students are doing in the gifted classroom! If we want administrators to value gifted education, we need to let them know what we are DOING!

GIFTED ASSOCIATION OF MISSOURI

2015 State Advocacy Agenda

The Gifted Association of Missouri requests your advocacy on the following issues:

ESTABLISH A “WEIGHT” FOR GIFTED FUNDING

Support legislation to increase funding for gifted education programs.

This act modifies the elementary and secondary education funding formula by adding an additional weight for gifted education. "Gifted Education Pupil Count" is defined as the number of students who qualify as "gifted" under section 162.675 and who are enrolled and have participated in a school district's gifted education program by June first for the immediately preceding academic year.

This legislation would allow schools that offer state-approved gifted programs to identify gifted students to receive additional funding under the new formula.

MISSOURI SCHOLARS ACADEMY & MISSOURI FINE ARTS ACADEMY

Support state funding for the Missouri Scholars Academy and Missouri Fine Arts Academy for June, 2016. The State Legislature & Governor appropriated \$750,000 for the June, 2015 academies. Also, urge Governor Nixon to release any funds that have been withheld.

- The Scholars Academy is a three-week residential program at MU for 330 high school juniors who are academically gifted;
- The Fine Arts Academy is a three-week residential program at MSU for 150 rising high school juniors and seniors who are gifted in the arts.

MISSOURI SCHOOL FOUNDATION FORMULA FUNDING

Support increased funding for the Missouri School Foundation Formula. Support \$3.5 million appropriation in House Bill 2 for the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education.

OTHER GIFTED FACTS & FIGURES

- \$24,870,104 was appropriated for gifted education in FY2006. In FY2007, this amount was rolled into the new foundation formula. Without this line item, there is no State Assisted Gifted Program within DESE, and those funds can be spent on other programs.
- Gifted Education is being taught in 223 school districts throughout Missouri; teaching 36,650 gifted students.

If you have questions, please contact GAM's Governmental Consultant,
Kyna Iman, at kynaiman@earthlink.net