

The GAMbit

An official publication of the Gifted Association of Missouri

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A Letter from the President

by Heather Tomicich

The end of the school year is fast approaching and as we wrap up the 2024-2025 calendar year, it is time to reflect on all the things that we have accomplished and endured this school year. From the students' perspectives, they have tackled new curriculum, standardized assessments, meeting new people, AMI/Snow Days & MAP testing to name a few things.

Our teacher perspectives vary a little though. Some of the items we have tackled are: incorporating the Portrait of a Gifted Learner MO-GLOs into our teaching, identifying more underrepresented gifted populations, exploring new technologies (AI and ChatGPT), besides all the other things that you do on a daily basis. We tend to wear many hats during the

President's Letter

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week and our plates are always full. I don't know about you, but there is always an unfinished checklist of to-do items waiting to be completed. It never seems to get smaller; just continually crossing off items to then add a few more new items to the list.

Speaking of to-do lists, you definitely need to add some upcoming dates to your list that you won't want to miss. If you are a new gifted teacher, you will want to check out GAM's New Teacher to Gifted workshop on July 21-22, 2025 in St. Louis, MO. This is an amazing opportunity for you to hear from several gifted teachers and experts around the state, who will give you a lot of "gifted tools" for the start of your school year.

Another date to mark down is our annual GAM conference, which will be on October 17-18th, 2025 at MO State University in Springfield, MO. We are still accepting conference proposals at this time until May 23rd and would love to learn from you. Mark your calendar now & use up the last of your PD funds from this calendar year. If the funds are gone for this year, you could start planning to use your PD funds at the beginning of the year for these wonderful learning opportunities. Please check out the GAM website for more information. www.mogam.org

As you are receiving this issue, Teacher Appreciation Week is May 5th-9th this year. I want to take this opportunity to say how appreciated you are by your students, your parents, your community and the GAM organization. We truly thank you for all of your support, donations, and volunteering that you do to help our gifted students across Missouri. Please remember that you are making a difference in the lives of gifted students each and every day!

Enjoy the rest of your school year and make some time to relax and recharge this summer.

Best,
Heather Tomicich
Executive President



GAM Awards!

Fill out a nomination form [HERE](#).

Dede Smith Friend of Gifted Award

Named for GAM founder and former president Dede Smith, who helped establish the Missouri Scholars Academy and led Drury's Center for Gifted Education until her passing in 1991.

This award honors individuals who have significantly contributed to gifted education in Missouri. Nominees may include administrators, counselors, teachers, media professionals, business leaders, mentors, advocates, legislators, or other community members.

Requirements: One nomination letter (can be co-written and signed by multiple people).

Delma Johnson Outstanding Educator of Gifted Award

Delma Johnson, a GAM founder and 1988 DESE Pioneer in Education Award recipient, inspired generations of gifted educators.

This award recognizes exceptional educators in gifted education, including gifted teachers, program coordinators, or college professors directly involved with gifted students. Nominees must be GAM members.

Requirements: Two nomination letters—one from a supervisor, one from another professional (colleague, mentor, or professor).

Norine Kerber Parent of Gifted Award

Named in honor of Norine Kerber, a dedicated GAM and NAGC volunteer.

This award recognizes Missouri parents, step-parents, or guardians who have made outstanding contributions to gifted education.

Requirements: One nomination letter (can be co-written and signed by multiple people).

GAM Awards!

Fill out a nomination form [HERE](#).

Bob Roach Scholarship for New Teachers

Established in 1999 and renamed in 2007 to honor Bob Roach, a lifelong gifted educator, this \$250 scholarship supports new teachers pursuing gifted certification.

Applicants must be in their first or second year of teaching gifted, be working toward certification, and be GAM members.

Requirements:

- One-page personal statement on their passion for teaching gifted students
- Letter of reference from a supervisor or university professor

Vicky Bennett Distinguished Student Award

Named for beloved gifted and art teacher Vicky Bennett, this \$250 scholarship honors one outstanding Missouri student (grades 3–8) each year for excellence in academics, leadership, and/or the arts.

Requirements:

- Letter of recommendation (non-family member)
- Recent photo
- Signed parent/guardian release form
- 750-word student essay addressing:
 - The nominated activity or interest
 - How they became involved
 - Its impact on them and others
 - Future plans and goals related to it

GAMbit Call For Articles!

Whether you are a parent, educator, administrator, or play another role in gifted education, GAM would love to hear from YOU! Potential article topics could be parent involvement, teacher tips, best practices in gifted education, and so much more!

ARTICLE REQUIREMENTS

- 250-500 Words
- Related to Gifted and Talented Education
- Times New Roman, Size 12 Font
- Double Spaced
- Submitted via Word or Google Docs
- Includes 3-4 photos of author and/or related to topic

**2025
DUE
DATES**

SPRING: FEBRUARY 1, 2025

SUMMER: APRIL 1, 2025

FALL: SEPTEMBER 1, 2025

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Exceptional Learners: Outsider Within Experiences in Schools

By Kathryn Fishman-Weaver, PhD.

GAMbit
Featured
Writer



Graduation photos by Rebecca Allen Photography at the 2024 high school graduation for Mizzou Academy.

Before taking my current position in school administration, I led gifted and special education programs in our public schools, including several collaborative projects between the two programs.¹ Our collaborative work and the friendships my students developed helped make visible educational barriers and boundaries that many of my students and colleagues had not noticed before.

Jax² was a student participant in one of these collaborative projects between our Advanced Placement Language Arts class and our Community Skills class (a program for students with profound disabilities). At first, Jax worried that he might not have much in common with his peers in the community skills program. “However, this proved to be completely false,” he says, “as we spent much of the time socializing about our favorite football teams, what [we did] during the weekend, what movies we have recently seen, etc. I think all of us were surprised at the amount we had in common.”

¹ I first wrote about these partnerships in a 2013 article for the American Journal of Education Forum. Two of the student quotes in this piece are pulled from that original article.

² All student names in this article are pseudonyms.

Exceptional Learners

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What is exceptionality?

- **Etymology.** The Latin root for *exceptional* comes from *exceptio*, originally meaning an exception or restriction. In the late 14th century, *excepcioun* (from Anglo-French) meant the act of leaving out or excluding from a rule or condition.
- **Exceptional.** The form *exceptional* was first noted in 1840. Today, the word is often used as a compliment, meaning better than expected; however, it also means unusual, surprising, and outside the norm. In schools, “exceptional learners” describes students who receive gifted and/or special education services.
- **Twice-exceptional or 2E.** This term was first used in the mid-1980s (Pape, 2024). It refers to students who present with both high abilities or giftedness and disabilities, including learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and other neurodiversities. Research on twice-exceptional learners played a key role in founding the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act (Boren, 2007) to serve students traditionally underrepresented in gifted and talented programs (U.S. Department of Education).
- **Thrice-exceptional (3E).** 3E students meet the multiple identity markers in twice exceptionality and also come from historically and continuously marginalized cultural groups. As Dr. Joy Davis shares (2025), “Culturally diverse gifted students (particularly Black, Brown, low-income gifted) are also underrepresented and underserved in gifted education. In my view, this category of underrepresentation creates another group of exceptional learners.” Davis says that educators need to create a new “paradigm that provides space for attention to the needs of culturally diverse twice-exceptional learners, they have been designated as 3E.”

Outsider-within is a concept from the feminist standpoint theory. Developed by Patricia Hill Collins (1986), this concept speaks to the ways people with multiple-marginalized identities (such as Black woman physicians) are uniquely able to see and critique the systems in which they participate but aren’t truly accepted (see: Blackstock, 2024). In this paper, I argue that twice and thrice-exceptional students may have similar experiences and perspectives navigating school.

While the common interests Jax names in developing friendships with his peers in the community skills program are not specific to exceptional identities, I wonder how the shared experiences of being an *outsider-within* our school system also contributed to these new friendships.

Isaac, another participant in this project, shared that, “I would see them every day, yet know nothing about them. I refer to them as *them* instead of *we*, yet we are both students. It seems as if [students who receive] special education services go to a different school, yet the truth is they share the very same school we do.”

Jax and Isaac’s reflections map against the continued separate education of students with disabilities. As gifted educators, we have a responsibility to challenge this map. Our exceptional students are already showing us the way. I think of my students like:

- Bia, who has complex developmental and physical disabilities and led our school in an initiative to promote nonviolence;
- Karla, a profoundly gifted student who tutored in our ASD program, and in doing so, discovered another space in school where she, too, felt at home; and

Exceptional Learners

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- Travis, a 2E student who wrote his own pathway through high school, including AP classes, community internships, and an extra year to graduate.

As *outsiders-within*, these and countless other exceptional learners are helping us reimagine space, programming, and services for our schools.

The Power of Connection



Graduation photos by Rebecca Allen Photography at the 2024 high school graduation for Mizzou Academy.

Much of my teaching has centered on helping exceptional young people lean into their talents, practice leadership, and discover that they are not alone. As I began my work in school administration, I was also finishing a longitudinal study with gifted young women (Fishman-Weaver, 2018). This study followed a group of high-ability students for six years, beginning with their junior year in high school.

While preparing this article, I found a journal entry I had written near the end of that study. In the entry, I reflected on a question a friend had posed: What is the most important lesson your students learned from participating in the project?

"Learning that they were not alone. Before this project, so many of the students thought they were the only ones who struggled with anxiety, depression, stress, loneliness, or imposter syndrome. Finding out that, actually, these are shared experiences and that there are tools we can use to work through them was pretty amazing. After that, I'd say recognizing that they weren't alone in these experiences taught them that maybe there are actions we could take to bring about change. This really fueled our work around wholeheartedness."

Exceptional Learners

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The students I reference in this article “have made creative use of their marginality—their outsider-within status (Collins, 1986).” While I am grateful for their creativity, leadership, and friendship, this work shouldn’t be our students to carry. As educators, we are responsible for reducing the marginalization that contributes to these outsider experiences. Border-crossing projects (Douglas, 2016), like those named in this article, offer an important revision to separate educational programming.

Our work with twice and thrice-exceptional learners calls on us to deepen our intersectional understanding of the identities and experiences students bring to class (Ford, Moore, and Harmon, 2005.). At the same time, we must also understand the historical systems that have contributed to these outsider and separate experiences. This work includes critically examining and speaking back to the overrepresentation of Black students and students from marginalized backgrounds in special education programs (NCLD, 2016) and the persistent underrepresentation of Black students and students from marginalized backgrounds in our gifted programs (Antonello, 2024).

As educators, we are responsible for meeting students right where they are as we also actively remove barriers to their full participation in educational programming. Yes, sometimes this work may feel exceptional, and yet this advocacy is part of what gives meaning to our work.



Kathryn Fishman-Weaver, PhD, is the Gifted Association of Missouri featured writer for 2025. She serves as the executive director of [Mizzou Academy](#) and as an associate teaching professor in school leadership and community engagement. She is a sought-after international speaker and the author of several books on education and inclusion in schools.

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[LINK TO APPLICATION HERE](#)

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- ED 650 G — Identification of Gifted**
- ED 652 G — Affective Needs of Gifted*
- ED 653 G — Programming and Administration of Gifted (1st or 2nd, 5-weeks)

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- ED 605 G — Psychology of Exceptional Children^
- ED 619 G — Gifted Internship^
- ED 633 G — Research in Gifted Education^
- ED 651 G — Curriculum for Gifted (1st or 2nd, 8-weeks)

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- ED 619 G — Gifted Internship^
- ED 626 G — Creativity*
- ED 633 G — Research in Gifted Education^
- ED 652 G — Affective Needs of Gifted**

* Offered first 8-week session

** Offered second 8-week session

^ Full semester

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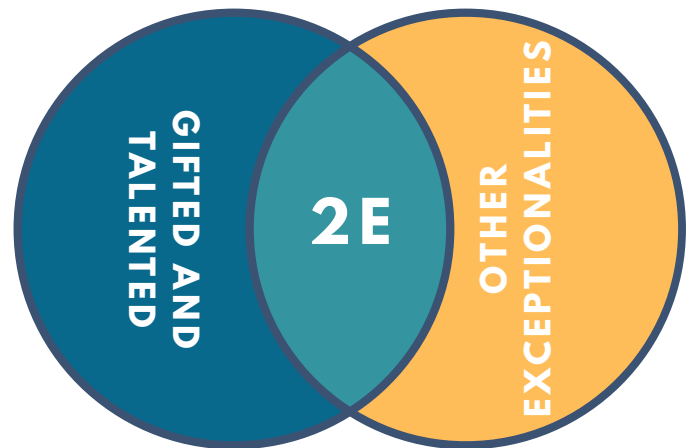


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2E Learners:

Where Giftedness Meets Exceptionalities



In this issue, we explore the realm of twice-exceptional learners from multiple angles. You'll gain valuable perspectives from professional counselors, family members, teaching staff, and 2e individuals themselves as they offer their knowledge about the twice-exceptional journey and suggest practical approaches for recognizing abilities, managing difficulties, and establishing nurturing settings where these unique learners can flourish.

Twice-exceptional students (also called 2e learners) constitute one of the most frequently overlooked and inadequately supported populations in educational environments. Moreover, these students are particularly difficult to identify because their exceptional abilities and learning challenges tend to mask one another. When appropriate educational programming is absent, twice-exceptional students' potential remains undiscovered and their talents go unrealized.

What is twice exceptional (2e)?

The term “twice exceptional” or “2e” refers to intellectually gifted children who have one or more learning disabilities such as dyslexia, ADHD, or autism spectrum disorder. Twice-exceptional children think and process information differently. Because of their unique abilities and characteristics, 2e students need a special combination of education programs and counseling support.

To learn more, check out these free resources on twice-exceptional learners:

- [GAMbit Winter Article: Twice-Exceptionality](#) (Kircher-Morris, 2024)
- [Twice Exceptional: Definition, Characteristics, & Identification](#)
- [Twice Exceptional Students: Who They Are and What They Need](#)
- [High School and Transition Experiences of Twice Exceptional Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Parents' Perspectives](#) (Madhaus et al., 2022)

Twice Exceptional: More Than a Label

By Nancy Bonn-Winkler, M.Ed., LPC (*Grit and Grace Counseling Services, LLC*)

The term twice exceptional or 2E tends to be defined as a student who has an identified “exception,” giftedness (exception one), along with another diagnosed learning or developmental challenge (exception two). For the ease of conversation, I will discuss the 2E “student;” however, please note that the exceptions impact one’s life, not just one’s school life. To serve the 2E student successfully we need accurate and comprehensive identification, a strong understanding of the exception as it relates to educational and social and emotional development, and to identify the team of individuals that will implement the appropriate supports for the student. We want to avoid traumatizing the student, which can occur from an inaccurate diagnosis, a missed diagnosis, a lack of services, a lack of understanding of the exception(s), and teaching strategies or attitudes that may harm rather than help.

There is a layer of complexity when diagnosing and trying to access support services for the 2E student. The label is the identifier. It helps us identify a “condition” and sometimes a category like gifted, attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), or a learning disability (LD). Because one exception can mask another it can be difficult to get an accurate diagnosis, and therefore the needed support services. Alternatively, a school may not recognize a student’s diagnosis based on their current school progress. This happens when the gifted student is “doing well enough” or the unidentified gifted student, is “not doing well enough.” Either way, access to services can be compromised.



2E: More than a label

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Once exceptions are identified; a plan can be developed for effective and comprehensive support. Each exception requires a deeper understanding beyond what the label suggests. For example, “gifted” is more than being “smart,” ADHD is more than struggling with attention and/or regulating behavior, autism is more than a communication and sensory issue, and a learning disability is more intricate than struggling with learning. The specialist, a crucial member of any team, cannot be the only one with an in-depth working knowledge of the exception. Teachers and counselors, at a minimum, must have a robust foundation of knowledge in the area of exception(s) so they can provide support daily, not just during the prescribed service times. This is a topic that needs more attention and backing at the state and local levels.



Lastly, it is important to develop a school team that will build an effective plan based on observations, what is known, what works and why, and what doesn't and why. The keeping and sharing of longitudinal data is an efficiency agent, assisting in meaningful growth plans and supports throughout the educational career of the student. This allows for the transfer of information from setting to setting and for the goals to be fluid throughout. With consistency and the continuance of using tools and strategies that work, we can build the 2E student's learning efficacy and their confidence as a successful lifelong learner.

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Assessment of a Twice Exceptional Experience

By Andie Belz (Rockwood High School Student)

There is a societal awareness that different individuals present with different strengths and weaknesses, but very rarely do most account for the extremified experience where a person may present with not only intellectual or cognitive gifts, but also disabilities. Such a state is labelled 'twice-exceptional' or in shorthand '2E'. As an example, myself: in a university analysis I have been labelled as 'gifted', this on account of the results of an IQ test and on account of a high percentile of vocabulary, and also in the same evaluation diagnosed with cognitive disabilities: attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as the mood disorders major depressive disorder (MDD) and generalised anxiety disorder (GAD). This paper aims to analyse the life experiences of myself as they relate to being a twice-exceptional individual.

In this instance signs were noted from early childhood; those nearby such as family commented on strong language adeptness at a young age, and meanwhile educational professionals were concerned over a strong lack of social development. This pattern of above-average linguistic capability and beneath-average social development was observed throughout much of youth.



Assessment of a 2E Experience *continued from Page 18*



I was observed to rarely attempt socialisation, especially with peers, and often did not succeed in developing lasting or intensive friendships. The reason is unknown as I did not understand why in my immature age, nor do I recall any comments from adults or teachers on why this might be, nor do I have contact with anyone who would be able to answer. From my grown perspective it appears that others already exist in, and have always existed in, solidified cliques or groups which are often difficult to enter into; this has been true across multiple settings and I do not recall a time or place in which a group was actively developing. As of today I have managed to acquire two very strong friends, though not a consistent circle.

Assessment of a 2E Experience *continued from Page 19*

As for the linguistics, they have not helped me except for in emails. They have stabbed me in the back. Due to a mindset that is very overwhelmed with facets and details and refuses to describe things without exactly the appropriate words; I overcomplicate. Despite confidence and adeptness in grammar, vocabulary, and (sometimes) ability to organise thoughts, I do not know where to cease my writing or the preparation thereof or determine what is not essential. Currently I am failing my language arts class because my thoroughness has come around to smite me; I am missing 55 of the 65 possible points available for 'reading' and 10 of the 13 available for 'writing' due to fixation on other tasks to the point where I simply neglected those ones until I forgot. What's more is that I don't enjoy writing. My field of choice is the visual arts, which I am not 'gifted' in. Yet the other issues still affect me; due to them, I struggle to limit my work in the manner of abiding by deadlines and communicating with appropriate brevity. This has caused

Editor's Note: The author has humorously chosen to demonstrate effective time management by strictly adhering to a 500-word limit, even mid-sentence.



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Executive Functioning

By Dr. Brandi Klepper (Missouri Licensed Clinical Psychologist at A Place to Grow, L.L.C.)

If you've been to this rodeo enough times, probably you know at least one gifted child who has trouble making good decisions and acts impulsively. And one who struggles with where to start amongst so many thoughts and can't keep track of what the directions are. And one who has no real sense of time and winds up spending way too long on a minor part of a task. These difficulties: with organization, prioritization, initiating tasks, managing time, inhibiting impulses, and regulating emotions are all examples of underdeveloped executive functioning skills. Further, these difficulties are more commonly found in those who are twice exceptional, particularly asynchronous, or experience significant overexcitabilities. Fortunately, there are ways to help guide these gifted students into developing better executive functioning skills.



First and foremost, talk with these kids about executive functioning and collaborate with them on building skills such as focusing attention, building working memory, inhibiting impulses, planning and organizing, initiating tasks, regulating self, monitoring progress, and transitioning. Flesh out any of these as needed for a particular child, offering assistance with concrete and abstract aspects. Maybe it's helping them determine what study space is best suited toward their needs – quiet and minimal distractions or music on and in front of a window. Or maybe it's help practicing focus by taking four minutes each day just looking at and thinking (only) about the rock on the table. Add in information about brain development, and how challenge and repetition build stronger neural connections – a better-connected brain.

Executive Functioning

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Look to students for direction; scaffold; facilitate their progress. There are lots of verbal cues to help with their progress. So, choose what is most natural for you... and least annoying for them. Use your own words to suit your needs. Examples include the following:

What should you do next?

How's that working out for you?

What are some ways to stay focused?

Remember to remember the details.

Visualize the information.

You need a way to remember to do that.

You need a routine for that.

You seem frustrated. Might be time for a break.

How are you going to remember to do that?

What steps do you need to keep in mind?

Set a timer to help you stay focused on this section.

Which of those is most important?

What's the first step we need to take? Think about when you're going to start that.

Time to make a list of what needs to be done.

What are the smaller steps in that? If I were you, I would consider...

Time to stop and think about what happens next.

Set an alarm with enough warning to give you time to get to a stopping point.

Let's close the blinds to keep out unneeded stimuli.

What did you do the last time you had a problem like this?

What's your body doing now? Time to see if you need to course correct.

Executive Functioning

continued from Page 23

It is vital to keep expectations realistic, meeting each individual child where she is based on what she can accomplish routinely, and underscore that practice is critical. Be an apt observer and identify where his abilities fall and where they fail. Try to avoid circumstances that have historically garnered poor results and look for simple environmental modifications. Notice when the child has succeeded and try to generalize that circumstance. Celebrate progress; don't wait for success. Anything above baseline ought to be reinforced, no matter how short of the ultimate goal it is. And keep in mind that sometimes we're striving for "good enough," even if we know it could be better.

Remember, one of your biggest assets is modeling the skills the child needs. Cheesy self-talk verbalizing your own struggles and solutions is powerful. "I know I'm going to try to put this off, so I'm doing it first and then taking a break." "I'm not going to have enough time to finish this, but I am going to start." Over time, they'll internalize those lessons, whether they want to or not.

Lastly, enjoy helping them grow. Not everyone has the honor of such impact. You do.





MISSOURI

FINE ARTS

ACADEMY

Under the Surface

By Nolan Herries (Rockwood Middle School Student)

Throughout my time being identified as a twice exceptional student, I have noticed how my teachers, peers and family have perceived me as extremely bright, but some things are often overlooked about me because I am a gifted student with ADHD. Being twice exceptional means I am gifted but also have a deficit. For me, that is ADHD. They see my peers being able to sit still in class while my body and brain are always looking for more. Some of my teachers have recognized this and allowed me to walk around freely or tinker with objects around the room, allowed me to take breaks to get up and move, or gave extra reminders when I sometimes blurt out in class when it isn't my turn. Because of my ADHD, I have a hard time with extra stimulation in the classroom. I have a teacher who has recognized this and allowed me to sit at a desk that is not in a group and to work independently for projects. She has helped me by acknowledging my needs and realizing that the increased stimulation of loud groups and classrooms increases my anxiety and causes me to have outbursts. People often think that kids can't be gifted and have a deficit at the same time. I wish my teachers and peers would recognize that because of my ADHD I sometimes say things without thinking. The more my brain is in overdrive, the more I have these moments. When you are twice exceptional, you want to go above and beyond in terms of being gifted and showing intelligence but often don't have all the tools needed to balance the deficits that come along with ADHD. I wish teachers would learn more about twice-exceptional kids and understand we thrive in a gifted classroom, but it's okay if we still need extra help and support. Acknowledging these extra needs helps me feel included and be productive in the classroom.

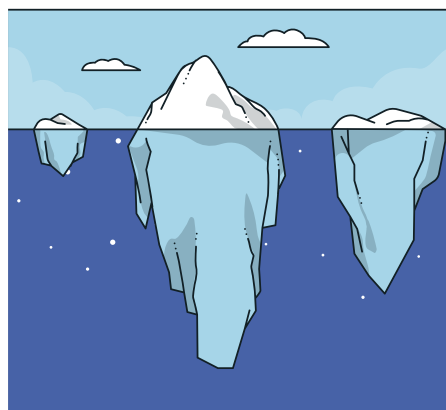
Under the Surface

continued from Page 26

At home, I find myself saying things before thinking them through, so my words are often interpreted incorrectly but my parents have done a good job creating boundaries while still understanding I may say or do something that's impulsive. We use the phrase "want to try that again?" which helps my brain reset and know I should think it over and try again. This allows us to move on in a positive way. For me, my brain goes into overdrive when I feel overwhelmed or I am in a loud, overstimulating place. While school and learning come easily for me, studying for a test often throws me overboard. My parents have realized this and work to help me balance my schedule to space out studying so I can do small sessions to not feel overwhelmed and shut down.

I wish that more people understood what it was like being twice exceptional and that I am not a bad kid. I can be smart and need extra help to make my brain and body both be successful. For teachers, they should always be trying to make the best work environment for their students while also keeping it structured, maybe letting your student use headphones or let them take a walk before some tests or a 5-minute break; these things can all make a huge difference.

Remember that even some of the smallest acts of change can make a big difference in how kids learn and succeed.





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DESE Gifted Education Update
March 26, 2025
Christine Nobbe
Director of Gifted Education
Christine.Nobbe@dese.mo.gov



Reminder - Updated Gifted Program Rule & Gifted Education Program Guidelines

Due to new provisions in the state statute Section [162.720](#), MoRevisor, the gifted education rule and *Gifted Education Program Guidelines* were updated. The [amended rule](#) and updated [Gifted Education Program Guidelines](#) became effective on November 30, 2024. If your district has an Alternate Identification Plan, please review that section of the guidelines.

Gifted Program Application

Please complete the Gifted Program Application to indicate whether your school district or charter school will or will not have a gifted program in the 2025-26 school year. Only one application is needed per district – please coordinate with others in your district about who will complete the simple Wufoo form. To complete the form, go to the [DESE Gifted Education page](#) and look at the first bullet in the Quick Links.

Council Update

The Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children (the Council) is currently focusing on two topics: AI and Gifted Education and Continued Growth of Students Served in Gifted Programs.

The [Council's webpage](#) includes State Board of Education reports, meeting minutes, announcements of upcoming meetings, and an [application form](#) to serve on the Council. Applications may be submitted at any time but the due date to be considered for the 2025-26 school year is May 31.

MOSIS and Core Data – Another Reminder

Remember that accurate reporting in MOSIS on the number of gifted students being served (GS) and identified but not served (GN) is vital because the data is used in many ways. Additionally, accurately coding teachers who are teaching gifted courses is important. This arose recently when a teacher applied to have their practicum experience waived, but there was no

evidence in Core Data that the teacher taught in the gifted program. (Please note: Corrections can be made.)

Powerful Learning Conference

I know that most gifted education specialists attend the annual GAM conference, but **I would love to feature two breakout sessions at the 2026 Powerful Learning Conference focused on gifted learners.** Over half of the ~1000 attendees are K-12 classroom teachers so a session on meeting the needs of gifted learners in all classrooms would be beneficial. Ideally, gifted educators would co-present with general education teachers who are successfully working with gifted learners. The dates are February 2-3, 2026, and the call for proposals will open soon. If you are interested, please begin exploring this opportunity now and watch for an update on the [Powerful Learning Conference](#) website and in Gifted-Ed listserv messages.

Grant Application

DESE partnered with two universities and two additional state education agencies to apply for a grant through the Institute of Education Sciences. It is a competitive [five-year research grant](#). I mention this now because, **if** the grant is awarded, we will conduct research in Missouri, and I will reach out to identify partner school districts. Please watch the [Gifted-Ed listserv](#) for announcements.

Virtual Opportunities for Gifted Students

If you and your students have experience with virtual classes, field trips, competitions, or guest speakers, [please reach out and share](#) your experiences. I am interested in collecting ideas to share in the future.

Looking Forward to Summer!

Some of the best memories are made in flip flops.
– Kellie Elmore, author

I look forward to seeing you this summer, in flip flops or not, at the New Teacher Workshop, at MSA or MFAA, or at one of my virtual summer workshops. A flyer on the summer workshops is included in this GAMbit. Please feel free to reach out anytime! (Getty Image)



Gifted Education Workshops

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2025 Summer Gifted Education Workshops

 Christine Nobbe, DESE Director of Gifted Education
72 followers

Take some time this summer to reflect on your gifted program and plan for growth!


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2025 Bootcamp for Gifted Program Leaders - Afternoon
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Small & Mighty: A Workshop about Gifted Education in Small Schools - PM
Wed, Jul 30 • 1:00 PM CDT
Free



Small & Mighty: a Workshop about Gifted Programs in Small Schools-AM
Thu, Jul 31 • 10:00 AM CDT
Free



Small & Mighty: a Workshop about Gifted Programs in Small Schools - Aug
Tue, Aug 5 • 10:00 AM CDT
Free

This summer, reflect on your gifted program and plan for growth! Explore our [collection of workshops on Eventbrite](#). Click on the events you are interested in to learn more and register.

All events are hosted on Zoom, with Padlet used to share ideas, questions, and resources. For any support or questions feel free to reach out to your host and organizer, Christine Nobbe, DESE's Director of Gifted Education.

Christine Nobbe ♦ Christine.Nobbe@dese.mo.gov ♦ 573-751-7754



2025 Summer Gifted Education Workshops Collection on Eventbrite:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/2025-summer-gifted-education-workshops-4129153>

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Missouri State Capital Report

By Kyna Iman (GAM Governmental Affairs Consultant)

As of the date of this writing, the State Legislature is in the middle of their 2025 legislative session. The Gifted Association of Missouri had to cancel their Gifted Education Day at the Capitol, due to inclement weather in February. However, gifted students continue to come to the Capitol to advocate for continued gifted education programs in their schools.

GAM's legislative priorities this session include legislation that has been filed by Rep. Scott Miller, from St. Charles County. House Bill 1473, would include a "weight" or additional funds for schools that provide gifted programs and services for gifted students. As the legislature discusses revising the state's school foundation formula, GAM wants to ensure a seat at the table to discuss funding for gifted students be included. **Please ask your State Representative to support Rep. Miller's House Bill 1473.**



GAM also advocates for increased funding for the Missouri Scholars Academy and the Missouri Fine Arts Academy. Currently, the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, the Governor, and the House of Representatives have approved core funding for the Academies at \$850,000.00. To fully fund the academies and not have to charge participants to attend, we are requesting an additional \$150,000.00. **Therefore, please ask your State Senator to support \$1 million funding for the 2026 Missouri Scholars Academy and the Missouri Fine Arts Academy.**



GAM continues to monitor and watch other educational issues moving through the political process. Please take action when GAM forwards a request for action. Your voices are very important to our success on behalf of all gifted students.

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

2025

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Mary Potthoff, Director
Center for Gifted Education
mpotthof@drury.edu

Asynchronous Development

By Laura Edwards NBCT (Rockwood School District)

GAMbits
and Pieces

Asynchronous development is a common trait among gifted children. Often gifted learners are well beyond their years in intelligence, but either at their age or behind in social and emotional skills. As a parent of 3 gifted children, I developed a different viewpoint to asynchronous development as my children grew older.

When my older daughter was in kindergarten, she was identified for our district's gifted program; she was intellectually gifted. This ability to think about ideas and understand more complex concepts often clashed with her ability to emotionally handle the ideas. One spring day, her kindergarten teacher told me that when the kids were talking about plants and seeds, my daughter started crying because the plants would die eventually. The teacher asked me to tell my daughter not to cry about this anymore. As a first time parent, I was embarrassed to be called out, and I told my daughter maybe don't cry about plants dying. I did not really understand how asynchronous my daughter was. Looking back, I would have talked more carefully with my daughter about her feelings surrounding death and how to process those thoughts. I would have also talked with her teacher about how gifted kids feel big emotions, and her job was to help her understand how to manage those feelings, not to criticize these feelings.

I learned slowly that I needed to look at kids where they were- not where they were supposed to be. We often feel our gifted children "should be" able to do any number of skills assigned to a certain age. She should be able to sit still all day, he should be able to read all those words, she should be able to make friends with anyone. But, gifted children are still children; just because they can learn and think differently, does not mean that they can do everything when they are "supposed to". Now I look more closely at what level

Asynchrony

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of skill my children can do, and what are strategies to help make those skills better. It is a waste of time to focus on the “supposed to”; find the level and move forward. Learning is much more productive when the teacher and the learner are realistic and honest with each other.



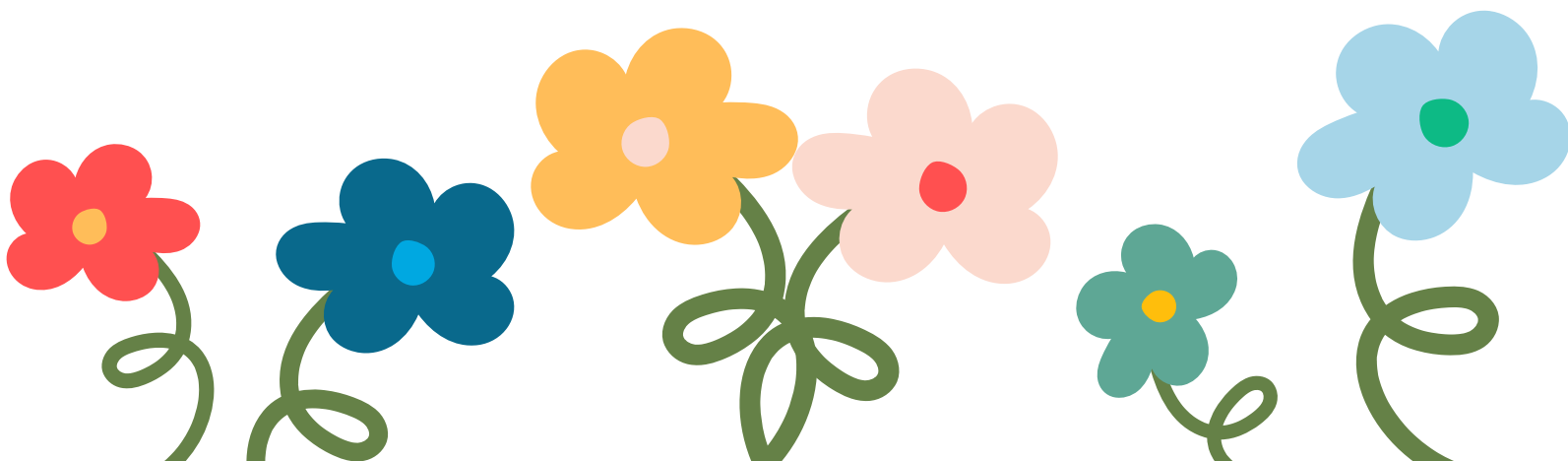
I learned to listen to my kids and think about what they could really do. In sixth grade, my daughter switched to middle school, and to a different time schedule than elementary school. Most kids this age went home to (often empty) houses on their own until parents or other older siblings arrived home. My older daughter was in no way comfortable with this. She could read at the twelve grade level and was a grade ahead in math, but being home alone for hours after school seemed overwhelmingly scary to her. Should she have been able to do this? Maybe. However, as parents we didn't want to have a stressed out child everyday after school. We arranged for her to go back to her sitter's after school for sixth grade. Our daughter was more comfortable, she helped with the younger kids at daycare, and gained confidence throughout the year. By seventh grade, she was absolutely ready to stay home alone after school, and even came to enjoy her time alone. We listened to her and decided to do what she was actually ready for- not what she “should be” ready for.

Asynchrony

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I understand the concept of taking calculated risks at each age, and I agreed that kids need to take risks. However, if a kid isn't ready, she will not do the task until she is ready - no matter how much you push as a parent. My younger daughter refused to ride a bike until she was 10. We tried tirelessly from age 6 on to get that kid riding. We bribed, we begged, we went to the park as a family without her to ride bikes. Nothing was going to make her ride that bike until she was ready. She is a gifted child who would not take that risk until she was ready for it. As a gifted child, all she could see was all the things that could go wrong. Her brain worked herself into a million problem situations. She was smart enough to know what would happen, but not emotionally ready to just take that risk of not falling off the bike. She eventually learned how to ride a bike, and it was her own determination and comfort level that helped her learn.

In my classroom as a gifted educator, I have come to look at my gifted students at where they are- not where they are supposed to be, and move forward from there. What good does it do to talk about and obsess over "he is supposed to be able to read a grade level above" or "he cannot even put his own clothes away at home" or "he is so afraid of thunderstorms, but he can practically explain them like a meteorologist"? My goal as a teacher is improvement. I don't focus too much on the skill level a student has coming into my classroom, but where do we need him to be and how can we get there? Gifted kids sometimes just need a slightly different timeline. Focus on how to get better, not how far behind you are right now.



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Embracing Inquiry: Creating Safe Spaces for Gifted Minds

**GAMbits
and Pieces**

By Pamela White (Nevada R-V School District; Teacher of the Gifted K-5 (20 years experience); Parent of the Gifted (21 years experience))

If you question authority on any issue, you may be seen as not being a team player, which can offend those in leadership. This dynamic becomes more intense when individuals without a gifted background have had negative experiences with identified gifted individuals. My own experiences this past year have brought me back to my school days, navigating the minefield of questioning things that truly deserve inquiry. As a child and now as an adult, this often doesn't go over well. I once again felt the sting of being disliked simply for being someone who questions and examines everything, almost instinctively. It's a fundamental part of who I am. "I overthink, therefore I over-am." My friends and I chuckle at that quote, yet it's challenging to live a life where you feel like you're too much for those around you.



I was reminded of what our students face in the classroom and how crucial it is for us to provide them with a space to be their true selves. They need an environment where they can question alongside other non-judgmental thinkers, challenging thoughts and ideas. As Ted Lasso wisely put it, we should strive "to be curious, not judgmental." Furthermore, it's vital for them to feel seen—truly and empathetically seen by others. It really does feel that bad sometimes; it can be heartbreakingly heavy. It's not "too" anything; it's just HEAVY, and that burden needs to be shared because community matters.

Embracing Inquiry

continued from Page 37

What happens when those around you constantly criticize and judge you? It impacts your self-worth. The last thing we want is for our young thinkers to let negativity seep in, leading them to judge themselves harshly and unfairly, all to smooth out their rough edges so they “fit in.” We were never meant to conform. We were meant to be the cogs that drive change and progress.



If community helps us develop our sense of identity, do we want these gifted and talented children to accept the narrative that questioning makes them stand out negatively? That it's better to lay low than to stand tall? One test does not define us, and one person's insecurities, neatly packaged in their unprocessed emotional baggage and thrust upon a child, certainly do not define that child either.

Our classrooms are vital because they serve as safe spaces for these kids to be seen—they are emotional oases. As educators, we must teach them the social skills to recognize the emotional baggage handed to them, smile, and politely decline to carry it. We must encourage them to stand firm in their own identities and callings.

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