

GIFTED EDUCATION NEWS

April 2016, Gifted Education Coordinators and Communities

Featured Article:

Parenting Gifted Children: The Best Thing You Can Do

By Joseph Cardillo Ph.D.

All too often parents of gifted children are either vigorously informed that “special curriculums for gifted students are unnecessary” or pointedly asked such question as, “Haven’t you noticed there are plenty of other smart kids in their school system who are doing just fine?” These naysayers imply what should be done is not only already being done but also it is clearly enough. And, as proof, they are quick to offer examples of students who have gone on to become particle physicists or nuclear engineers, successful artists and so on. The parents of gifted children are then invited on a guilt trip when asked why they think their kids should get special treatment (and funding) when all these others are turning out just fine.

Note: The reality is, as I have said in previous articles, the population of students least likely to achieve their full potential is the gifted. In terms of funding, my own state in company with many others, at last check still offers “0” (zero) funding for gifted education.

Dr. Trevor Tebbs, Ph.D. is an expert in working with gifted and talented children across a wide spectrum of concerns. I recently had the opportunity to interview him and asked him for his thoughts on this unfortunate response to parents and advocates for gifted education. He is clearly troubled by such apparently uninformed resistance. “When I hear such stories I am saddened by what appears to be such a poor understanding of, even unwillingness to understand highly able children overall. It appears especially true that faculty are unable to differentiate between ‘smart’ and ‘gifted’ kids.”

“What makes a kid *smart*? What makes a kid *gifted*? There are very real, clear and important differences but my experience is that the term “smart” (or “bright”) is synonymous with “gifted” and serves as the cover-all. It usually implies a recognition that a child is possessed of some degree of pizzazz, is generally obedient and quiet, finishes homework accurately and on time, raises hands swiftly in class, provides the right answers, has neat writing, lots of 100s on tests and spellings that are rarely wrong, and rapidly completes worksheets filled with repetitious addition, subtraction and multiplication facts marked correct with a big red C. A long-held perception that these patterns of behavior are truly representative of a ‘gifted’ child are hard to adjust. If a quiet but brave attempt is made to provide some meaningful insight, the level of response can quickly escalate into something quite negative and decidedly unhelpful – not least to the child him or herself. ”

So what can you do if you are the parent of a gifted child and you feel that you are in gridlock with the school your child attends?

(For the rest of this article, see:

www.psychologytoday.com/blog/attention-training/201409/parenting-gifted-children-the-best-thing-you-can-do.)

Don't forget to register to attend the

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida on November 3-6, 2016!

For more information see www.NAGC.org



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Highlights from the

Districts:

Polk County Gifted Students Enjoyed a Visit from Rep. Dennis Ross

From an article published by U.S. Representative, Dennis A. Ross's office:

LAKELAND, Fla. – April 5, 2016 – U.S. Rep. Dennis A. Ross (FL-15), Senior Deputy Majority Whip, today visited Highland City Elementary and McKeel Academy of Technology to discuss with students the importance of developing personal financial skills and civic education.

This morning, Ross provided inspiration for fourth- and fifth-graders in Ms. Cynthia Kuhlman's gifted classes at Highland City Elementary who are participating in the Stock Market Game Capitol Hill Challenge. As part of the challenge, student teams throughout the U.S. manage a hypothetical \$100,000 online portfolio and invest in real stocks, bonds and mutual funds. The classroom learning portion of the challenge focuses on the dynamics of the global marketplace and the importance of long-term saving and investing. The challenge is put on by the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association, and the top 10 student teams win a trip to Washington, D.C., to meet their Members of Congress and be recognized at an awards reception on Capitol Hill.

Ross also had the pleasure to speak with about 250 high school juniors and seniors from McKeel Academy of Technology about the upcoming presidential election and the importance of participating in the electoral process and civic responsibility. A majority of the seniors participating in today's discussion will be eligible to vote for the first time this November election. Ross engaged in an informative question-and-answer dialogue with the students about ways the students could learn more about and be more involved with their communities and government.

"I was thrilled to speak today with a range of students at Highland City Elementary and McKeel Academy of Technology about the vital importance of learning personal responsibility at an early age, especially when it comes to managing finances and contributing to society," said Ross.

Summary of the FDOE Visits to Gifted Education Programs Across the State

By Kathleen Casper, FDOE Gifted Education Specialist

I have sure enjoyed traveling all over the place, meeting with administrators, educators and students in districts from coast to coast and from the top to the bottom of the state!

The districts I visited this year include: Nassau, Leon, FSUS, St. Johns, Marion, Miami-Dade, Brevard, Palm Beach, Broward, Pasco, Sarasota, Monroe, Jefferson, Collier, Escambia and Santa Rosa. I have also provided phone and email support to dozens more, as well as worked closely with parents and community members to help them find resolutions and information for their questions and concerns.

I'm so excited to see so many new projects happening to increase the social emotional support of our gifted students, and an increase in the use of acceleration and challenging programs for our high performing students. Districts are having great conversations about how to best meet the whole child needs of our gifted students and to provide additional support to families. There has been an increase in the amount of trainings being offered by districts to educators and parents, and many districts have parent advisory groups that are working with the districts to promote additional support. Seminole County has a Javits grant that is bringing in millions of dollars to increase identification and support of under-represented populations. And I'm excited about projects that I've seen that are continuing to support our underperforming and highest performing gifted students. It's been a great year. Thank you to all of you for inviting me to visit your districts and for all your great work this year!

