

What is a Gifted Student Worth?

Alabama NEEDS to invest in our gifted and talented youth, not only because they deserve an appropriate education but because the state NEEDS their gifts and talents in order to remain competitive and prosperous.

- **The primary value of a gifted student is his/her brain power and creativity.** These are commodities we cannot manufacture. Investing in the education of our most promising young people has a societal return on that investment.

According to The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), \$1 invested in a college graduate in 1985 would yield an unadjusted \$15.06 in 2011 while \$1 invested in the S&P 500 in 1985 would only yield an unadjusted \$7.00. Education is the **best** investment! (OECD, 2011)

- **Higher levels of educational attainment lead to higher levels of income.** Gifted and high ability learners who complete college and post baccalaureate education have the capacity to earn significantly more than those with high school diplomas or less. This translates into more money funneled into the state and local economies.
- **Highly educated individuals are arrested less, are healthier, live in better equipped homes and provide better support for the education of their children.** (US Census Bureau, 2011 Annual Social and Economic Supplement)

Consequences of Failing to Meet the Needs of Gifted Students

When gifted and high-ability students are not challenged, they begin to think that being smart means that they don't have to work hard. This may lead to poor learning skills and eventually underachievement and even failure in school. Some families concerned about the availability of challenging content and rigorous instruction seek alternate options such as private schools or home schooling. Students from poverty, however, are dependent on Alabama's public schools to meet their educational needs, meaning they may not be able to reach their true potential without appropriate gifted services from their school (National Association for Gifted Children, 2012).

Factors to Consider:

- The "Excellence Gap" is growing between groups of students achieving the advanced level on the NAEP exam. For example, in grade 4 Math, the percentage of white students scoring at the advanced level increased by 5% between 1998 and 2007; the percentage of Black and Hispanic students increased by only 1%.
- Fewer than 1 in 4 teachers (23%) say that the needs of advanced students are a top priority at their school; 32% say that they are a low priority.
- Only 56% of children from low socio-economic backgrounds who are considered high achieving when they enter school remain high achieving by the end of 5th grade. (Plucker, Burroughs, & Song, 2010)