

**Parents Needed!  
Engaging in Education and  
Advocacy for Gifted Students**



**Patti Wood, PhD**  
Alabama Association for Gifted Children

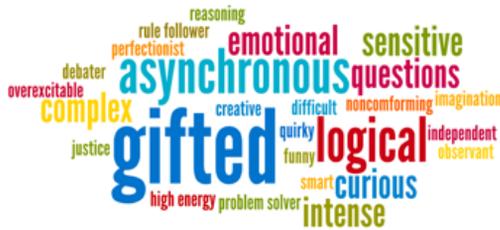
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**A HUGE Thank You to  
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2

Gifted children are complex individuals who exhibit a wide range of characteristics.



3

**Loves learning**



**Fast Thinker**



**Inquisitive**



**Creative!**



4

**Keen interests in:  
Math  
Science  
Reading**



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6



**Talented in:  
Solving Problems  
Being Creative  
Performing**



## Four Types of Gifted Children



1. **High Achievers:** academically gifted
2. **Creative/Artistic:** talented in areas such as music, poetry, dance, visual arts, drama, design
3. **Social Leaders:** leadership traits such as communication, motivation, social awareness
4. **Nonconformists:** passionate about personal interests outside of school; bored at school, disinterested in academics except for areas of interest; underachiever or unmotivated learner

7

## Flip Side of Giftedness



**Anxiety  
Boredom  
Depression  
Anger  
Social Issues  
Disengaged**



8

While most people assume superior intelligence is the key to success...



9

Overemphasis on intellect or "smartness" may cause your child to become dependent on the "gifted" label.



10

Leading to...

- feelings of failure
- fear of challenges
- perfectionism
- anxiety
- low motivation
- underachievement



(Dweck, 2008)

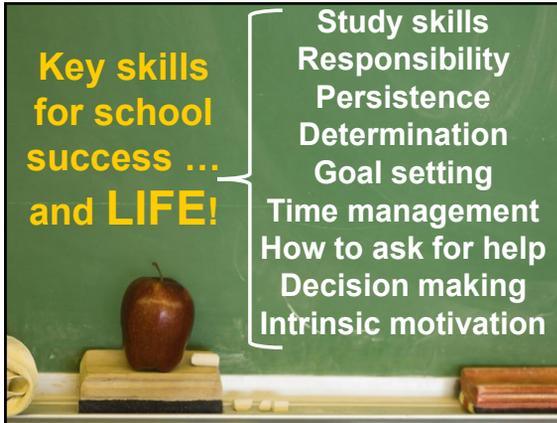
If during the first few years of school, your gifted child earns **good grades** and **high praise** without having to make much effort, what has your child **NOT** learned that most children learn by the time they reach middle school?



12

**Key skills for school success ... and LIFE!**

- Study skills
- Responsibility
- Persistence
- Determination
- Goal setting
- Time management
- How to ask for help
- Decision making
- Intrinsic motivation



13

**Focus on effort...**



**rather than intelligence**

14



Praise your child's **persistence** rather than how **smart** he or she is.

15

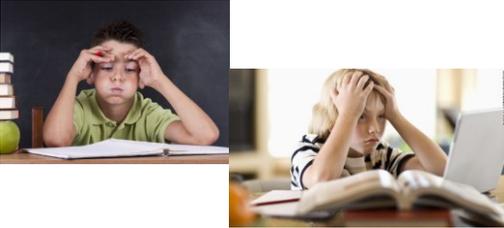
Encourage your child to **work hard**

To try things that are a **challenge**



16

Don't rescue your child from challenge or make excuses when he or she struggles or fails.



Applaud your child's diligence ...



and risk taking!

18

## Encourage your child's special **INTERESTS** and **TALENTS**



19

Get your child  
off the couch  
and  
off the screen!



20

But don't over schedule!



21

## Keys to Successful Parenting



- Develop a sense of belonging within your family
- Nurture resilience: If we don't allow our children to "fail" they will never learn how to bounce back.
- Accept and appreciate your child's uniqueness
- Help your child to like him or herself
- Teach your child self-motivation, self-discipline, and self-management

22

## You are your child's **BEST** advocate!

- Read, research, and go to parent-teacher conferences well-prepared.
- Start with a positive attitude. Establish a sense of partnership.
- Listen carefully. Be non-confrontational and tactful when talking with your child's teacher. Ask for clarification if you don't understand.
- Ask questions: "What do you see as my child's strengths? Weaknesses? What are your goals for my child this year? How can I help?"
- Be prepared to compromise.

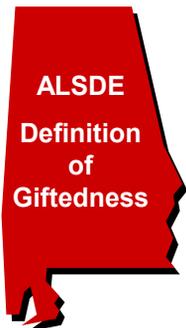
<sup>23</sup>  
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## Resources

- National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)
- Alabama Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) [alabamagifted.org](http://alabamagifted.org)
- Hoagies Gifted: Great site with links to many resources for parents, educators, and students [hoagiesgifted.org](http://hoagiesgifted.org)
- SENG: Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted [sengifted.org](http://sengifted.org)

24



**ALSDE  
Definition  
of  
Giftedness**

Intellectually gifted children and youth are those who **perform or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields** when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment.

These children and youth **require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program.**

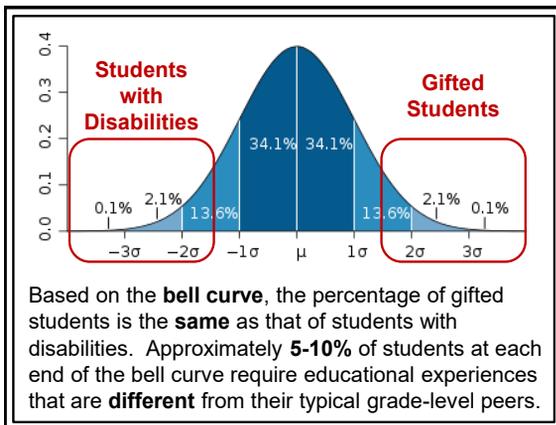
Children and youth possessing these abilities can be found in **all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.**

25

**Alabama State Dept of Education:  
Mandate for Gifted Identification (1999)**

- All second grade students will be observed as potential gifted referrals using a gifted behavior checklist provided by the State Department of Education. This is called *Child Find*.
- The purpose of *Child Find* is to ensure that all students are given the opportunity to be considered for gifted services; regardless of the population or socio-economic group; as well as students with disabilities and limited-English proficiency.

26



27

**Federal Legislation**

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (I.D.E.A.)**

Federal legislation mandates special education services for students with disabilities and provides funding to states to support those students' educational needs.

**However...**

- **NO** federal law mandating gifted education
- **NO** funds to states to support education for gifted and advanced learners

28

**Gifted Education in Alabama is an Under-funded Mandate!**

State law requires that all school districts identify and provide services for gifted children and youth.

Funding for gifted education teacher units is the responsibility of the local school districts. While "Gifted Education" is a line item in the Education Trust Fund Budget, the amount is not sufficient to fund teacher units needed for school districts.

**State Education Trust Fund: FY 2023**

Program	Amount
Gifted Education	\$9.8 million (doubled from 2022)
Prison Ed	\$15.5 million
ELL	\$16.1 million
Distance Learning	\$20.1 million
AMSTI	\$33.3 million
ARI	\$85.2 million
Pre-K Programs	\$186.2 million

Districts can use their line-item allocation to pay for teacher units, materials, technology, professional development for teachers, or classroom resources.

### Consequences of Not Attending to the Needs of our Most Promising Students

- **Achievement growth for gifted = Flat lining**  
Low achieving students are making gains whereas high achievers are slipping backward, especially gifted students in poverty.
- **Underachievement**  
Gifted students are the most underachieving of all learners. As many as 40% of gifted students underachieve, mostly due to boredom.
- **School Dropout**  
20-30% of high school drop-outs are gifted.

31

### How Full Funding of Gifted Education Will Help Alabama

- **Raise achievement**
- **Decrease** the number of students going to other states, leaving Alabama public schools for private schools or homeschooling
- **Decrease dropouts** from the gifted population
- **Increase leadership potential** in Alabama
- **Increase job creations** due to expansion of new businesses and entrepreneurial opportunities
- **Enhance innovation and creativity** in Alabama

Full funding will keep us from squandering a natural resource: **Alabama's best minds!**

32

### Recommendation: Full Funding of State Mandate for Gifted Education

- Pre-K--12 teacher units for gifted
- Universal screening for gifted identification
- Training: preservice, classroom teachers, and administrators

With **58,000 students** identified as gifted in Alabama, the number of teacher units needed to serve gifted in elementary and secondary schools would be approximately **900 teachers**. We currently have approximately **500 gifted specialists**.

**Full Funding for Gifted Education: \$70 million**

33

### What Can You Do?

- Contact your state legislators asking their support for increasing funding for gifted education.
- Go to local school board meetings and advocate for increasing gifted program services for your child and other gifted students.
- Talk with your child's school administrators and teachers about how learning opportunities are provided for your gifted child.
- Talk with other parents of gifted children about forming a parent advocacy group... power in numbers!
- And lastly....

34



## AAGC Needs YOU!

Join the Alabama Association for Gifted Children to help continue the advocacy efforts on behalf of all gifted children and youth in Alabama!

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Facebook: [AAGC group](#)  
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