



Coding Brings Students Together



This semester, students from the Independence School District's IMPACT program had the chance to work with a Truman High School mentor named Ryan Muncy.

Fifth grader Jazmyn Marmon had learned the basics of HTML coding the year before and was ready to dig in deeper this year in her Makerspace class. In order to find her a more knowledgeable tutor, her teacher reached out to one of the district's high schools.

Ryan volunteered to help and received special permission to leave his high school for an hour every Friday to tutor Jazmyn in HTML

coding. He was surprised at what Jazmyn already knew. Ryan said, "It was pretty cool going back to my elementary school and see the advancements they have made in teaching young students computer science." HTML can be a more difficult type of programming than the online tutorials.

Even though there are many resources on the Internet; that cannot not replace the one on one conversations and brainstorming that comes from face to face tutoring and working together. "Jazmyn is such a hard worker. I wanted to give her the opportunity to learn more than I could teach her." Explained her IMPACT teacher. "I think any time we can bring students together with people in our community or from other schools, it makes the learning and collaboration much more powerful."

Other students joined in the coding activities and were excited to learn from a high schooler. Ryan visit the class for most of the semester and the students really looked forward to him coming. Everyone felt it was a positive experience and would take part in another mentoring program!

GAM's mission is to advocate, support and inform.

Please consider becoming a member today!

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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

Duke TIP will be at Drury University
Friday, May 26 at 11 am

Wednesday, April 26, South Tech High School (limited seating), 8:30 a.m.

Project MEGSSS Elements Testing:

Wednesday, April 26, 2017 South Tech High School
(limited seating), 8:30 a.m.

MEGSSS Summer Programs

(Full and half day available):

Mon-Fri, June 12-23, 2017

Mon-Fri, July 10-21, 2017

Duke Tip Summer CRISIS Program

Session 1 takes place June 26 to July 1

Session 2 takes place July 3-8

Session 3 takes place July 10 – 15

Washington University in St. Louis

SAVE THE DATE!
GAM Annual Conference
Friday and Saturday
October 20-21, 2017

Why are you a GAM member?



Christa Bell

I am a member of GAM because of the wonderful people it connects me with! As the sole Teacher of the Gifted at my district, this network is my primary source of help. Without GAM, I am not sure how well I would have been able to do my job when I first started 3 years ago. Many of these wonderful members allowed me to observe in their classrooms and were available by email to answer questions or provide suggestions. GAM has been an absolute necessity to my growth as a Teacher of the Gifted!



Sarah Ludlow

I am a member of GAM because I enjoy being connected to the amazing people in the organization. I know that if I need support in my career or have questions about gifted education I can contact any number of people who are willing to support me. I reach out at the district level and do not always receive the support, knowledge, or guidance that I need. I appreciate the community GAM offers.



Crystal Koenig

I am a member of GAM because I have this overwhelming drive to be more than I was yesterday. GAM provides a network of individuals who are constantly attempting to improve themselves as well as the craft of teaching. I choose to be a member of GAM for the amazing dedication and passion I feel from each of the members who are all so supportive. But mostly I am a part of this organization because of the phenomenal endeavors our members strive to achieve to help promote gifted education, make it mandatory in Missouri and provide quality services to our underserved, yet highly deserved, students.

Are you a GAM member?

GAM's mission is to inform, advocate and support gifted students, their families, GT teachers, classroom teachers and administrators. Through the GAMbit, regional workshops, our annual Gifted Conference and legislative efforts, GAM informs the people of Missouri about gifted needs and services. We are the ONLY organization that supports gifted families in our state! Our members are what make this dedicated group of people strong. We need you!

Please consider becoming a member today!

KIDS MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

GAM Student Contest Winners 2017



Winners Left to Right:

Overall Winner - Lucy Long 5th Grade, St. Clare Catholic

Division 2 – 1st Place – Ethan Brushwood, East Buchanan

Division 2 – 2nd Place – Chloe Slater 5th Grade, Home School

Division 2 – 3rd Place – Brooklynn Adams, East Buchanan

Division 2 – Honorable Mention – Gavin Downey & Alex Behlmann (not pictured) 5th Grade, Edgar Allen Elementary

Division 1 – 1st Place - Shelby Waterman, Kaitlynn Van De Weile, and Kirsten Vilcek 4th Grade, Edgar Allen Elementary

Division 1 – 2nd Place – Aidan Rhoad and Mason Brown 5th Grade, East Buchanan

Division 1 – 3rd Place – Samuel Brushwood 4th Grade, East Buchanan

Division 1 – Honorable Mention – Myles Adams 3rd Grade, East Buchanan

The GAM 2017 Student Contest was sponsored by the St. Louis Student Robotics Association, and the theme was STEAM and the maker movement. For this contest, students submitted a proposal for a booth at a local maker expo. Students created a presentation style proposal to convince the maker expo planners to choose their maker booth idea. Ideas included: Frog Operation – this idea was a hands on and technology based paper frog dissection; EV3 Mindstorm for Kids – this idea was an intro to robotics and programming; and One Team’s Trash is Another Team’s Treasure – this idea introduces the reduce, reuse, and recycle theory and includes using old computer parts to make picture frames. Stay tuned for next year’s student contest which will be released at the GAM Annual State Conference, October 20-21, 2017 at Drury University.

GAM Day at the Capitol



State Representative and former GAM President, Donna Pfautsch holding up her I SUPPORT GIFTED ED sign during her speech. Representative Pfautsch is a strong supporter of gifted education and is sponsoring HB 257 this year, which will require an acceleration policy for each school district in Missouri.

I SUPPORT GIFTED ED - #GAMDAY17

As you see here, hundreds of kids came to the Missouri State Capitol on Wednesday, March 1, 2017 in Jefferson City, MO, and all are holding up the sign that says I SUPPORT GIFTED ED - #GAMDAY17. What a great group of students we had that day, hundreds, covering the 1st and upper floor Rotunda areas in our state's capitol! After the rally in the rotunda, students visited their legislators and asked for support on our current bills:

- House Bill 257, sponsored by Representative Donna Pfautsch, requires each school district to establish an acceleration policy for any student meeting specified requirements.
- House Bill 670, sponsored by Representative Chrissy Sommer, requires any district with an approved gifted education program to have a process, which must be approved by the district's board of education, that allows parents or guardians to review the determination that their child does not qualify to receive services through the district's gifted education program.

GAM truly appreciates all of the school districts that allowed their students to come and the teachers and parents that brought them. Special guests attending included Representative Donna Pfautsch, GAM President Dr. Lenae Lazzelle, DESE Director of Gifted Education David Welch, GAM Legislative Consultant Kyna Iman, and the Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children. This day is always very special for GAM and one of the reasons I am an advocate for gifted education.

Sincerely, Dr. Robin Lady, NBCT, former GAM President, Legislative/Public Issues Chair

36th Annual Gifted Education Conference GiftED: Building a Better Tomorrow

October 20-21, 2017

Drury University, Springfield, MO



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Deadline to submit - April 21

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for additional conference information

Missouri Gifted Student Appears on the Ellen Show!

by Ginger Beard, Gifted Facilitator, Bernie R-13 Schools, Bernie, Mo. GAM District E.

Finley Watkins is a 2nd grade student in the Explore gifted class at Bernie Elementary School. Bernie is a small rural town in Southeast Missouri. Finley is an Elvis tribute artist and has performed in Memphis, TN, Las Vegas, NV, Branson, MO and Bernie, MO. He has also competed in several contests. He began playing the guitar at the age of 4. Here is his account of his visit to Los Angeles, CA and his appearance on the Ellen Degeneres Show in Burbank, CA.

“One of the first things that happened is when we got there, we immediately went to the show. I got a really cool dressing room and the staff was really nice. Then at 3:00, I went on stage while they were filming the show. I got to meet Ellen Degeneres. She was very nice and comforting because I was feeling really nervous. During the interview, I told her how I started being an Elvis tribute artist. I performed a clip of the song, Blue Suede Shoes, during my performance time. My mom and I went to the Universal City Walk area and visited shops and restaurants. We drove through Hollywood, but sadly we couldn't see the sign due to fog and rain. It was a great experience! “

You can visit YouTube to find some of his performances and EllenTube to see his visit to the Ellen Degeneres Show.



See his segment on Ellen at
<http://ellentube.com/videos/0-w67ojjow/>

Arithmetic or Mathematics: Which Should Students Practice?

By Mike Godfrey, SDE presenter, Retired educator, Gifted Intervention Specialist

A number of years ago while attending the Ohio Association for Gifted Children's annual conference, presenter Rachel McAnallen asked the attendees whether we taught arithmetic or mathematics. Her response, together with my immersion into the strategies and pedagogy utilized in Singapore, has drastically altered my approach to teaching math, especially to gifted and top achieving students who I've spent the majority of my 35 years in the profession serving.

McAnallen said, "Mathematics is questioning the answer while arithmetic is answering the question." Simply, there is a big difference between them.

In essence, arithmetic too often centers on computational abilities and following procedures and rules. Many gifted students are very strong in these areas; however, being able to compute or memorize facts and procedures rapidly doesn't make a person a mathematician. In fact, these "skills" often limit and create future issues for our gifted students who, too often, erroneously believe that speed and knowing how to do something will allow them to be successful in math.

Givvin, Stigler, and Thompson (2011) reported that "in interviews with community college students, 77% believed that math was only about memorizing rules and procedures without understanding or sense making."

So, where has the American way of teaching mathematics gotten us? The answer is well behind the world leaders, like Singapore, as repeatedly found in the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) results of fourth and eighth grade students. Our gifted students are part of the dismal results of American math education. In Singapore, 43% of the students are capable of conquering advanced questions compared to just 12% of their American colleagues at those grade levels.

Mathematics, on the other hand, involves deep thinking while searching for connections and patterns, striving for conceptual understanding (which is accomplished via Jerome Bruner's concrete to pictorial to abstract theory of learning), realizing that learning why something works before learning how something works is vital, and demonstrating multiple ways to solve a problem. In short, mathematics involves thinking, problem solving, and conceptual understanding that make sense of rules and computations.

Stanford University's Jo Boaler, on page 22 of her highly recommended 2016 book *Mathematical Mindsets*, said, "Real mathematics is a subject full of uncertainty; it is about exploration, connections, and interpretations, not definitive answers." Boaler cites a 1998 study by Schwartz and Bransford that "...showed clearly that giving students problems to explore and solve before methods were given led to significantly higher levels of performance."

So, how can we help all of our students, especially our gifted students, achieve at much higher levels? A great place for parents and teachers to start is by making the following three questions/statements fixtures of our work with students. When students provide a solution, ask or say: 1) Are you sure? 2) How do you know? 3) Show me another way.



With the use of such questioning, students will begin to realize that justifying their responses, finding multiple ways to demonstrate mastery, and clearly explaining their rationale are the expectations which will lead to increased achievement and understanding. With such expectations, no longer will students be able to say they did it in their head without providing why they did it that way. Sure, we definitely want students to mentally be able to manipulate numbers; however, without the ability to justify their responses, students are clearly behind the eight ball as their “I did it in my head” solution may not work in all situations. Students who persist in believing they don’t need to explain might sarcastically be told that they need to cut off their heads and staple it to the paper so you can figure out how they came to their solution!



Gifted students need to explain and justify their responses much more than they’ve probably been asked to do in the past. We know that those who do the talking do the learning. With that knowledge, in group situations, we know that any student, especially gifted students, often end up with a better conceptual understanding of math as they explain or demonstrate to their peers multiple ways to solve the problem.

In Singapore, where it’s illegal to accelerate students, a student is considered an advanced student if they can make a physical model (using concrete manipulative) of the problem, a visual model (pictorial model) of the problem, and can provide oral and written explanations (often abstract procedures) of their solution. Finally, the student must show initiative in his/her work habits, perseverance, and risk-taking. Too often, the gifted label in America hinders students who fear that making mistakes might show they are not gifted. In reality, we now know through recent brain research that mistakes lead to more synapses being fired in the brain than occurs with correct answers. Thus, one’s brain actually grows via mistakes.

So, as teachers and parents, especially with gifted students, we need to create and harbor an environment where mistakes are welcomed, expected, and encouraged. If we are going to take our gifted math students to the levels of understanding and performance they can reach, it’s vital that mathematics, questioning the answer, not arithmetic, answering the question, becomes the norm. If not, those students and our country overall will continue to underachieve mathematically. Let’s not let history continue to repeat itself. It’s past time to embrace the methods, strategies, and expectations that allow students in other parts of the world to excel well beyond us.

Mike Godfrey is a retired Ohio educator and a math presenter for Staff Development for Educator

If you attend fantastic PD, please email the GAMbit editor at [Sheila Bonner@idschools.org](mailto:Sheila_Bonner@idschools.org). She will follow up with the speaker and ask for an article!

Students Helping Their Community!



Article by Kyle Murdy and Stephanie Brown *Clever R-V Schools*

On November 15, 2016 the 7th and 8th grade Opportunities group went to the Victory Mission warehouse in Springfield. They were looking at ways that people use their skills and talents to better their community. Afterwards, they got together to think about how to help in their own community. They decided to contribute to Care to Learn, an organization in Clever that gives school supplies, coats, food, or other necessities to kids whose parents cannot afford them. The students visited the Care to Learn storage area to see what type of items they needed.

The class came up with an idea to help get supplies. Starting Monday, January 30, the middle school had a "fun" raiser to help collect supplies. On Monday, they had a hat day if you brought in a bottle of shampoo or conditioner. Tuesday was crazy sock day if you brought in a new pair of socks. Wednesday was blackout day with a donation of \$1 or more. Thursday was pajama day if you brought in a new tube of toothpaste. Friday was sports day with a donation of easy open food items.

Mrs. Stephanie Brown said "I am so pleased with this project because it was completely student generated. The students identified the need, came up with a fun way to help, and did all the work themselves to put the project into action. They spoke to classes, made posters and flyers, collected items, and counted all the donated items."

During the week, they collected 378 bottles of shampoo and conditioner, 754 pairs of socks, \$584.50 in donations, 320 tubes of toothpaste, 623 toothbrushes, and 508 cans of food. All of these items will be donated to Care to Learn to help students in the Clever School District.

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MANY CONNECTIONS. ONE U.



Scientifically Speaking

Making a Makerspace

By Steve V. Coxon, Ph.D., Maryville University

With humble beginnings, as a means by which adults would rent workshop space and chip in together to afford expensive tools, makerspaces are now making their way into schools. I recently toured five makerspaces in my region geared at kids and am excited by the possibilities they afford for STEM learning. In makerspaces, technology and engineering are often naturally incorporated. Teachers can provide structure to purposefully incorporate math and science.

The makerspaces for children that I visited were all quite different: 1) A spare classroom at an elementary school, 2) a section of a middle school library, 3) a dedicated classroom in an inner city charter high school, 4) a swank space in a private school showcased behind floor-to-ceiling windows near the school's entryway, and 5) within a children's museum. Some spaces had a dedicated staff member, while others could be used by any teacher in the building with their own planning. Some spaces were very high tech with 3-D printers, Arduino, and wind tunnels. Others focused on recyclables and craft materials. Most had a combination of both high and low tech materials. Some things they all had in common: lots of table space for students to work, great organization, a wealth of age-appropriate tools, and exciting, unique student work.

What a makerspace is... and isn't

A makerspace is for open-ended creating, not teacher-led projects. It could be with LEGO robotics, computer hardware, or cardboard, but as an easy test: student products should not look the same in the end. This doesn't mean that students won't decide to use online resources such as those listed below, but the decisions should be theirs and the resources, including online instructions, are generally just jumping off points for unique creations. Teacher-led activities, projects or crafts with single answers, and step-by-step instructions followed by every student aren't makerspace.

Tying in science

When possible, it is ideal if students come up with their own problems for which they create novel solutions. However, this can be within specific content areas. Makerspace ties in well with many science objectives. Providing a problem statement, as in problem-based learning, is ideal here. These can be complex problem stories or as simple as: "we need to find good ways to float 20 pennies in this water tub for at least 5 minutes." In that case, young students can learn about sinking and floating through a wealth of materials such as notecards, cardboard, plastic wrap, balloons, foil, tape, and more. (Bump it up for older students with a great deal more weight, such as a brick.)

Biology can be incorporated as students may be asked to create a newly-discovered animal with behavioral and structural adaptations to capture prey and avoid predators, for example. Students should have access to an area of materials from scissors and tape to pipe cleaners, paper towel rolls, googly eyes, and much more.

As a final example, electricity concepts can be incorporated, such as open and closed circuits, by having students build vehicles with on and off switches run by small motors with wires and batteries as well as cardboard, dowels, and various craft materials to vehicles.

As a rule, I find it best to use vague language: vehicle instead of car, floatation device instead of boat, airborne object instead of plane or parachute. This helps to skirt around students' preconceived notions of what they'll build, leading to more creativity. A car is perceived as having 4 wheels, but a vehicle is much more open-ended.

What to stock in your makerspace

The most important things are storage space to keep materials organized and big student tables. Storage systems are nice, especially when everything is visible easily to students. However, I saw one makerspace where everything was stored in cardboard boxes. This method worked very well. Keeping things organized is a high priority, but it does not need to be expensive.

Makerspace tools for kids should include scissors, markers, hot glue guns, a sewing machine, LEGO robotics kits, pipe cleaners, batteries, computers, tape, video cameras, Arduino and Makey Makey, to name just a few. Recyclables such as cardboard, wood, and plastic bottles can be very useful in student projects. Our area has a teacher recycling center where large amounts of these consumable materials can be purchased for minimal cost.

Conclusion

Makerspaces offer innovative STEM opportunities for high ability students. They give students real-world, hands-on learning. Happy making!

What makes a Maker?

- Makers believe that if you can imagine it, you can make it.
- Makers seek out opportunities to learn to do new things.
- Makers comprise a community of creative and technical people that help one another do better.
- Makers sometimes start businesses.
- Makers celebrate each other.

(Abridged from MakerSpace Play Book: School Edition, 2013)

Resources

There's a wealth of makerspace information on the Web. Here are some favorites for teachers:

1. Edutopia's Designing a School Makerspace website: <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/designing-a-school-makerspace-jennifer-cooper>
2. MAKE magazine: <http://makezine.com/>
3. The MakerSpace Play Book: School Edition. (2013): <http://makered.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Makerspace-Playbook-Feb-2013.pdf>

Biography

Steve V. Coxon, Ph.D. is a veteran public school teacher who now serves as associate professor of gifted education at Maryville University of St. Louis where he directs the programs in gifted education including the graduate program, the Maryville Young Scholars Program to increase diversity in gifted programs, the Maryville Summer Science and Robotics Program for High Ability Students, and the CREST-M math and robotics curriculum development program. Visit him on the web at <http://stevecoxon.com> and follow him on Twitter @GiftedEdStLouis.

Summer 2017



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And Robotics Program



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When: June 26-27, 2017

Where: University of Missouri Campus

For more information contact:

Nancy Gerardy, Teacher Education Committee, Chair

gerardyn@missouri.edu

573-268-7766

Escaping with Help from Holmes

By Christa Bell, RISE teacher, GAM District B Director

First semester Lafayette County C-1 Middle Schoolers dove into the mind of Sherlock Holmes. The Jan Stauber Grant from the Beacon Society challenged educators to develop a unit that centered on Sherlock Holmes. We were awarded the grant which allowed us to purchase materials for the unit. I see students twice a week so we worked on our Crime Scene Detective Theft Unit one day a week and the other day we read one of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Our crime scene unit entailed learning some basics and then each student becoming an expert on a topic and taught the class about it. In 6th grade the topics taught were: blood analysis, ballistics, bombs, and DNA. In my 7th/8th grade group the topics covered were: fingerprints, ballistics, DNA, and etymology. After reading each adventure we had a class discussion. After reading all 12 Adventures, students were asked to select an essay topic to write about. We talked a lot about inductive and deductive reasoning during this unit.



A local man who is on the local police force along with the county homicide task force and the crime scene unit came and spoke to students near the beginning of December. He was very informative and answered a lot of questions that students had about the job he does.

During the unit, students also played the 221B Baker Street Game (they found this very difficult), completed a hands on breakout in the classroom about area and perimeter (both groups were successful), and played the Escape the Room: Mystery at the StarGazer's Manor Board Game (one group was successful). We also utilized the digital breakouts on Breakout.edu.

On December 14th we went to the 221B Baker Street room at Union Station's Escape Room. Our group of 8 students and 2 adults broke out with a little less than 3 minutes left!

In January, we were able to get many detectives from the Lafayette County Crime Scene Unit to set up mock scenes that students were able to analyze. They were able to use the same tools that detectives use when analyzing a scene.

This unit was very popular and I plan to do it again in three years when I have a new set of students in Middle School.



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GIFTED ASSOCIATION OF MISSOURI

2017 State Advocacy Agenda

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

FUNDING FOR GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Support legislation to increase funding for gifted education programs.

- 1) Support legislation that 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 state approved gifted education program by June first for the immediately preceding academic year.
- 2) Support legislation that mandates every school in Missouri provide state approved gifted education programs for students identified as "gifted" under section 162.675 and that all program services are provided by teachers with a valid certification in gifted education.
- 3) Support legislation that requires all Missouri school 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.

MISSOURI SCHOLARS ACADEMY & MISSOURI FINE ARTS ACADEMY

Support state funding for the Missouri Scholars Academy and Missouri Fine Arts Academy for June, 2018. The State Legislature & Governor appropriated \$750,000 for the June, 2017 academies.

- 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 \$3.7 billion 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. There were 295 school districts with state approved gifted programs. In FY2007, this amount was rolled into the new foundation formula. Without this line item providing earmarked funding for state approved gifted programs, those funds can be spent on other programs, and there are now only 211 school districts offering state approved gifted programs.

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

Paleontology Unites Gifted Elementary and Westminster College

BY JIM MALVEN

Having the chance to excavate a gigantic, 35-million-year-old skull and help elementary-school students learn about paleontology are just some of the unique opportunities offered by Westminster's young Geology Department.

The Thunder Beast

While searching for fossils in Nebraska's [Oglala National Grassland](#) during the summer of 2015, Associate Professor of Environmental Science Dr. David Schmidt and a team of students discovered what Schmidt called "probably the most exciting thing [he has] ever seen in the field."

The brisk winds of the Nebraska plains had partially exposed a large, round fossil that Schmidt guessed was either a skull or a hip bone. Unfortunately for the group, the fossil lay about 10 meters outside their land permit.

However, Schmidt applied for and received an addendum from the [U.S. Forest Service](#), granting them access to the specimen.

A year later, Schmidt and another group of students, some of them from the 2015 expedition, returned to the site to excavate the fossil. After performing some fieldwork, the group learned that the fossil was a skull and that it belonged to a member of the [brontothere](#) family, a group of large [ungulates](#) that are most closely related to the modern horse.

"In appearance, they were as large as an African elephant, and the body resembled rhinos, but instead of a horn at the end of its nose, it has a large bifurcated club," Schmidt said. He added that the name "brontothere" comes from a local indigenous term meaning "thunder beast."

The name "brontothere" comes from a local indigenous term meaning "thunder beast."

Schmidt said that brontotheres lived about 30 to 55 million years ago, during a geological period known as the [Eocene](#). He said that, according to radiometric dating techniques, the specimen he and the students collected is approximately 35 million years old.

"These brontotheres are among the largest varieties and were very abundant during this time, probably living in large herds across much of western South Dakota, western Nebraska and eastern Wyoming," Schmidt said.

As the group removed the fossil, the group wrapped it in a [plaster jacket](#) and then carried it to a van about 200 yards away. Later, they transported it to a lab room in Coulter Science Center and removed the plaster jacket.

Recently, Schmidt has been using a [micro jack](#), a small jackhammer powered by compressed air to remove the fossilized sediment surrounding the bone, known as the matrix, from the skull. He said that his ultimate goal is to identify the specimen to its highest taxonomic level and that he needs to access the skull and teeth in order to do so.

"We are preparing the skull so we can see the details in the tooth morphology (shape) and bone," Schmidt said. "To determine the taxonomic relationship of a fossil organism, the morphology of the skull and teeth retain the most information."



A group of about a dozen students recovered this brontothere skull in northwestern Nebraska this summer. PHOTO BY JIM MALVEN.

p“[The fossil] is probably the most significant find of my career,” [Schmidt] said. “You dream of that.”

Schmidt said he anticipates that the skull will be fully prepared by sometime early next school year.

“It is a very slow and tedious process,” he said, adding that several students will join him in working on the fossil after they complete other projects.

Despite the slowness, Schmidt said that the discovery, excavation and preparation of the fossil have been very exciting.

“[The fossil] is probably the most significant find of my career,” he said. “You dream of that.”

Allison Schott, '17, who participated in the 2015 and 2016 expeditions and helped excavate the brontothere skull, said that finding recovering fossils in the [Badlands](#) area has been one “of the high points of [her] college career.”

“It’s a really cool experience being out in the field, and it was almost therapeutic for me,” Schott said. “I would recommend this experience to any Westminster student, because it can change your life or it can be a really amazing experience.”

Young Paleontologists

Last month, Schmidt and Schott were joined in their Historical Geology lab by 41 elementary-school students from [Explore, Enrich, Research](#), a program for gifted students from Jefferson City Public Schools.

E.E.R. teacher Ruthie Caplinger explained that students attend classes for the program on a weekly basis and sometimes go on field trips to supplement their in-class learning. She said that 41 of her 90 students are studying [paleontology](#), or the study of fossils, while the remaining 49 are learning about the brain.

Each of the 41 students who are focused on paleontology have been studying a specific animal from the Cretaceous or Paleocene period that has been found in Nebraska and South Dakota. The students will create a poster about their animal and present their posters to Schmidt’s class on April 3. The event will be open to all members of the Westminster community.

On Jan. 23, the E.E.R. students attended Schmidt’s Historical Geology lab, to get a better understanding of paleontology. The E.E.R. students engaged in activities such as cleaning small fossils found near the brontothere skull, forming fossil molds and creating geological timelines, all with guidance from Schmidt’s students.

While scraping fossils with Westminster students, fourth grader Sydney Hartley said, “I want to go somewhere and find these,” adding that she enjoyed working with the tooth fragments the most.

Anna McDonald, also in the fourth grade, called the brontothere skull “really cool” and said that she might make a hobby out of paleontology in the future.

“I want to go somewhere and find these.” –Fourth grader Sydney Hartley

When asked about the young students’ enthusiasm, Schmidt said, “That’s another reason we do what we do; it inspires the next generation of eager scientists.”

Schmidt’s students said they enjoyed collaborating with the E.E.R. students. “Those kids were extremely intelligent, and I loved working with them. I’d say we have a bright future,” said Devin Brown, '18, who participated in the 2015 expedition. Schott commented: “Working with the kids was really cool. I’m excited to hear about the research they are doing and super jealous that they are able to have this experience so early in their education.”



E.E.R. students show off the tooth fragments they cleaned in Schmidt’s Historical Geology lab.
PHOTO BY JIM MALVEN.

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EDUC 676 A Survey of Gifted and Talented Education

EDUC 677 Curriculum and Differentiated Instruction for the Gifted

SPRING

EDUC 679 Counseling and Guidance of the Gifted

All courses are three hours of graduate credit (unless noted). Completion of all five satisfies requirements for certification in gifted education.

Contact: Dr. Laurle Edmondson, Dean
School of Education & Child Development
(417) 873-7271 - ledmondson@drury.edu

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(July 3-August 4, 2017)

ED 650G – Identification of Gifted

(3 credits) with Professor Beth Zimmermann
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ED 651G – Curriculum for Gifted

(3 credits) with Professor Kathy Nuetzel
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For More Information

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Report from the Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children

Sally Holt, Council Member, March 15, 2017

A new report from the Gifted Advisory Council is now available on DESE's website. The link to this 2017 report is <https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/qs-Gifted-Advisory-Council-Report-2017.pdf>.

The report provides new data on gifted programs and participants, an update on 2015 recommendations, and three new recommendations for consideration by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Advisory Council will present its 2017 report to the Missouri State Board of Education on May 16, 2017. The Council's three new recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation 11: DESE should be proactive in taking advantage of the new opportunities presented in the Every School Succeeds Act (ESSA) to focus on the needs of gifted students. Four specific suggestions related to ESSA are enumerated in the report.

Recommendation 12: DESE should change the Administrative rules for gifted programs to include (1) an identification appeal process for parents or guardians of students applying for gifted services; (2) a board-approved policy allowing for acceleration for students demonstrating advanced performance or potential for advanced performance and the social/emotional readiness for such acceleration and (3) a plan for annual professional development for gifted staff on educating gifted learners.

Recommendation 13: DESE should develop a document providing guidance to districts on best practice approaches for meeting the needs of gifted and talented students. This document should incorporate key elements of Response to Intervention (RtI) for gifted students and a Levels of Service (LoS) approach that identifies a wide range of services to meet the varied and complex needs of gifted learners.

An update on the status of the Council's 2015 recommendations was included in the 2017 report.

Recommendation 1: DESE should make district information related to state-approved gifted programs readily accessible to the public. *Recommendation was approved in 2015 but not yet accomplished.*

Recommendation 2: DESE should generate an annual state data report in October on gifted students and state approved gifted programs. *Recommendation was approved in 2015 but not yet accomplished.*

Recommendation 3: DESE should eliminate the practice of reporting students as gifted 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 was approved in 2015 and accomplished.*

Recommendations 4 & 5: DESE should provide a best practice model for districts to use in identifying and serving students who are traditionally underrepresented in gifted programs that are twice exceptional. *Both recommendations were approved and accomplished.* A document entitled *Identifying and Serving Traditionally Underrepresented Gifted Students: Guidance for Missouri School Districts* can be accessed from the DESE Website.

Recommendations 6-10 were not approved in 2015 but are resubmitted with a request to reconsider. These recommendations refer to acceleration, teacher education and professional development requirements, and mandating and funding gifted identification and programming in Missouri. In the years ahead, the Council looks forward to continuing its role in communicating about gifted students and programs with DESE and interested audiences around the state.

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Changes to GAM Membership!

We need the support of our members now more than ever...

By Meredith Burstin, GAM Membership Vice-President

“Why should I join GAM?” This is a question I’ve addressed in past GAMbits. Members play a crucial role in our advocacy efforts. Over the past few years our voices have been heard loud and clear by our legislators. Establishing the Gifted Advisory Council, ensuring that we have a full-time director of gifted at DESE, and more -- none of this would have been possible without GAM’s advocacy efforts. There is strength in numbers, and a strong membership communicates our collective commitment to gifted education in Missouri. These victories have long-term impacts that will benefit all gifted students, families, and teachers in our state.

GAM strives to achieve this goals, but as a non-profit organization we depend in part on revenue from membership dues. To continue our efforts in supporting gifted education, on January 1, 2017 we will be introducing a new, streamlined membership dues structure:

Individual memberships -- \$30/year
Institutional memberships -- \$100/year
Lifetime memberships -- one-time payment of \$500

These dues are tax-deductible donations to the organization that will allow us to better serve our members and fulfill our advocacy agenda. If you have any questions, please let me know at mburs10@hotmail.com Thank you again for your support!



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Requirements for Gifted Education Certification

Beginning on **8/1/2017**, new subject area requirements for all areas of certification will go into effect. These changes were approved by the State Board of Education at its January 2014 meeting. The following list provides the specific requirements approved by the State Board for the Gifted Education K-12 certificate:

(A) General Requirements—

1. A valid Missouri permanent or professional certificate of license to teach;
2. Two (2) years of classroom teaching experience; and
3. The applicant must achieve a score equal to or in excess of the qualifying score on the required exit assessment(s) as defined in 5 CSR 20-400.310 and 5CSR 20-400.440. The official score shall be submitted to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (department).

(B) Professional Requirements—

1. Psychology and/or Education of the Exceptional Child, including the Gifted (minimum of two (2) semester hours.)

(C) Content Knowledge for Teaching—

1. A Survey of Gifted and Talented Education;
2. Programming Planning and Development: An Understanding of Administration and Supervision of Gifted Programs;
3. Screening, Assessing, and Evaluating Gifted Students;
4. Curriculum and Instruction for the Gifted;
5. Meeting the Affective Needs of Gifted Students; and
6. A minimum of one (1) graduate course in research procedures.

(D) Field and Clinical Experience (three (3) semester hours)—

1. Culminating Clinical Experience. A supervised clinical experience in which candidates acquire experience in planning for and working with gifted students in various instructional settings in both elementary and secondary schools. The clinical experience should include collaboration with other educators to support student learning.

Candidates are expected to complete coursework in each of the areas cited. It should be noted that, with the exception of the exit assessment, the requirements remain essentially the same as those currently in place. To date, no exit assessment has been approved by the State Board for the area of Gifted Education.

ALERT! Requirements for gifted certification are changing! Please be sure to be informed! We need more GT teachers in education! If you need a few more hours to move on the pay scale, consider obtaining your gifted certification.

Apply for GAM Scholarships and Awards

The Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Scholarship

The Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Award is awarded to one Missouri student each year. Recipients are given a \$250 scholarship along with a Certificate of Excellence by the Gifted Association of Missouri (GAM). Students selected for the award are between grades 3 and 6 and have distinguished themselves in academic achievement, leadership, and/or the arts. Nominations, application, and parental release form for the Missouri NGDS Award must be postmarked by **June 1**.



The Bob Roach Scholarship for New Teachers

Sponsored by Drury University

In 1999, GAM created the New Teacher Scholarship to promote the certification of teachers in the field of gifted education. In 2007, the award was renamed the Bob Roach Scholarship for New Teachers in honor of the continuous dedication of gifted educator, Bob Roach. In 2010, the gifted community lost this life-long educator and friend. GAM honors Bob's passion for Gifted Education with a \$250 scholarship awarded annually at the Gifted Association of Missouri Conference. To apply, applicants must be in the process of obtaining certification in gifted education and in their first or second year of teaching gifted. **Submit by September 1.**



The DeDe Smith Friend of Gifted Award

Dede, one of GAM's founders, served as GAM president and GAMbit editor. Under her insightful guidance, the Missouri Scholars Academy was established. Dede initiated and served as Director of Drury's Center for Gifted Education until her untimely death in 1991. The Dede Smith Friend of Gifted Award is awarded by nomination. GAM invites nominations of individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the field of gifted education in Missouri. An individual who is eligible to be a recipient of this award will belong to one of the following categories: legislator or other elected official, administrator, counselor, regular classroom teacher, media person, business person or mentor. **Submit by September 1.**



The Delma Johnson Outstanding Educator of Gifted Award

The Delma Johnson Outstanding Educator of Gifted Award is for educators who have made outstanding contributions to the field of gifted education in Missouri. GAM invites eligible nominees who belong to one of the following categories to apply: teacher of gifted, coordinator of gifted programming, or college professor directly involved with gifted students or teachers of gifted. **Submit by September 1.**



The Norine Kerber Parent of Gifted Award

The Norine Kerber Parent of Gifted Award recognizes parents who have made outstanding contributions to the field of gifted education in Missouri. GAM invites nominees who belong to one of the following categories to apply: parent, step-parent, or guardian of a gifted child in the state of Missouri. Submit by September 1.

The student award must be submitted or postmarked by **June 1, 2016.**
The adult awards must be submitted or postmarked by **September 1, 2016.**

Submit nominations to:

Gifted Association of Missouri Executive Secretary – Awards & Scholarships
P.O. Box 3252, Springfield, MO 65808

Please see the GAM website for directions on how to nominate and submit information.
We look forward to recognizing those who have worked hard for GAM.



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Questions? Ready to join GAM for life? Contact Meredith Burstin at mburs10@hotmail.com to know more or to get started!

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Why join the Gifted Association of Missouri?

GAM is the only organization in the state that advocates for gifted programs and provides support and resources to gifted teachers, students, and parents. We work at the district and state level to lobby for funding for gifted programs, create networking opportunities for parents, and support teachers in the development and implementation of curriculum.

We truly cannot do this with you; your membership makes a difference!

To join, visit

www.mogam.org

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