



Gifted Association of Missouri
P.O. Box 3252, Springfield, MO 65808
www.mogam.org

Our Purpose

1. To create an awareness among parents, educators, and the general public of the characteristics, needs, and educational requirements of the gifted and talented.
2. To support the development of funding of programs for the gifted and talented.
3. To share and disseminate information about existing local, state and federal educational programs for the gifted and talented.
4. To encourage research relating to the identification of gifted and talented children and to assist in the dissemination of the information obtained to educators and the public.

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Missouri Governor Jay Nixon
P.O. Box 720
Jefferson City, MO 65102

January 30, 2015

Dear Governor Nixon,

The Gifted Association of Missouri (GAM) has actively supported the needs of high-ability and high-potential learners in Missouri since 1980. We provide teacher training, curriculum development, parent support, regional seminars, and scholarships. GAM is the major advocate and resource for 36,000 gifted students and their parents in Missouri. GAM serves as a resource to other educational organizations to support them in their efforts to provide an appropriate education to today's bright and high potential students. Two of the most successful programs we support are the **Missouri Scholars Academy** and the **Missouri Fine Arts Academy**.

The Missouri Scholars Academy (MSA) has been serving students in the state of Missouri since 1985, with 2015 being their 30th Anniversary. This three week summer academy is held on the University of Missouri Columbia campus and provides students with a challenging and rigorous learning opportunity which incorporates all core subjects and STEM. MSA is one of the programs that will help Missouri be in the Top 10 by 20, which is DESE's mission for education in our state.

The Missouri Fine Arts Academy (MFAA) is celebrating its 19th year on the campus at Missouri State University and provides unique learning opportunities to Missouri's high school students who are talented in the areas of music, visual arts, theater, or dance. Research has proven that students who participate in the arts have more success academically and socially in school, this program supports that research.

As a professional education organization, GAM is very concerned that zero funding was recommended for these academies in your 2016 budget proposal. A line item of \$750,000 has been decreased to zero. At a time when you highlight the need for more math, science, and creative learning in our schools, we are discouraged at the lack of focus on educational initiatives that truly make a difference in the lives of Missouri students.

We respectfully recommend the release of the funding for the Missouri Scholars Academy and Missouri Fine Arts Academy for the 2015 Fiscal year, and recommend \$750,000 for the 2016 Fiscal year.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information or to set up a meeting to discuss these very important programs. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Dr. Robin E. Lady, NBCT
President, Gifted Association of Missouri