

THE GAMBIT

The Official Publication of the Gifted Association of Missouri



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Ready for a New Start

Hello, GAMbit readers! Hopefully you've had a relaxing summer so far and are feeling energized about the start of a new school year. This year promises to be much more comfortable than the previous, for most of us, which is certainly something to celebrate.

Of course, many of us have other things to celebrate as well. Perhaps you're beginning in a new role, are employed in a new location, are taking on exciting new responsibilities, or are finally getting a chance to implement that great idea you've been wanting to try for years. Some of you may be entirely new to gifted education and are roaring to get started after attending the recent New Teacher Workshop!

Whatever your own new start may be, GAM is here to congratulate and support you!





President's Letter

Meredith Wisniewski

I started writing this at 4:00 in the morning after my two-month-old finally decided it was time to sleep. I'm trying to remember the last time I showered, and dinner last night may have been some Oreos I managed to eat with one hand while he slept on my chest. Self-care these days looks a lot different than it used to, but it's no less important.

The end of the school year likely brought on a variety of emotions; I know it did for me. Relief, anxiety, exhaustion, gratitude -- I'm still processing it all. A recurring theme I've heard from teachers is the need to recharge. This year in particular took so much out of all of us, and our gas tanks seem to be running on fumes. Some are looking forward to unplugging entirely, while others are jumping into summer school or other obligations. We may still be unwinding from this year, but next year already seems to be looming on the horizon (as evidenced by the picture I saw on Twitter of Target's school supply aisles being set up). The feelings may be all over the place, but they are all valid. Truly, we all fall on a continuum right now and there's no right or wrong place to be.

I don't claim to be an expert in self-care, but I do know it is essential. Practicing what I preach is certainly not easy, but just as I encourage you all to take care of yourselves I will try my hardest to do the same. However, you spend your summer, I hope you include moments and activities that make you smile. For me, I always look forward to being part of GAM's New Teacher Workshop; I took so much from it when I was an attendee so many years ago, and even with so many years of gifted under my belt I leave feeling excited and energized.

What brings you positive energy? Sometimes what gives you a smile might also give a smile to someone else, so we'd love to hear from you! Sharing your upbeat moments might just be what someone else needs, so feel free to spread some summer sunshine here in the GAMbit.

Sincerely,
Meredith Wisniewski

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Nancy Gerardy

Gifted Education Program Coordinator
Special Education Department
GerardyN@missouri.edu
573-268-7766



FALL SEMESTER 2021

- Curriculum Methods for Gifted and Talented Students (SPC_ED 8391)
- Assessment and Evaluation in Gifted Education (SPC_ED 8405)
- Differentiating Instruction: Reaching Gifted, Typical and Struggling Learners (SPC_ED 8406)
- Practicum: Gifted Education (SPC_ED 8946)

SPRING SEMESTER 2022

- Research with Exceptional Children (SPC_ED 8350)
- Nature and Needs of Gifted and Talented Students (SPC_ED 8380)
- Assessment and Evaluation in Gifted Education (SPC_ED 8405)
- Differentiating Instruction: Reaching Gifted, Typical and Struggling Learners (SPC_ED 8406)
- Practicum: Gifted Education (SPC_ED 8946)

SUMMER SEMESTER 2022

- Readings in Gifted Education (SPC_ED 8085, master's program students only)
- Research with Exceptional Children (SPC_ED 8350)
- Curriculum Methods for Gifted and Talented Students (SPC_ED 8391)
- Differentiating Instruction: Reaching Gifted, Typical and Struggling Learners (SPC_ED 8406)
- Administration and Supervision of Gifted Programs (SPC_ED 8410)

LEARN MORE online.missouri.edu/GAMbit-SU21





DESE Gifted Education Update

Christine Nobbe

Director, Gifted Education

Christine.Nobbe@dese.mo.gov

573-751-7754

Summer 2021: some days are hot, some days are rainy, and some days are both. I enjoy “fair weather days” so I’ve been inside except for walks, picnics, and social events. Here are some of the projects I’ve focused on inside since my March update:

- The [Gifted Education](#) and [Gifted Advisory Council](#) websites have been updated. Madelyn Doyle, DESE Administrative Assistant, created the webpages and I wrote the copy. Look for new sections on the Academies and Records Retention!
- I completed the annual desk audits and determined withholdings based on a decrease in gifted program enrollment of twenty percent or more from the previous school year. The annual review looks at the Core Data submitted by districts to ensure that districts have an approved identification process, have certified gifted education teachers, and are providing the appropriate services for the students. If you are seeing a decrease in students, please contact me so we can make a plan.
- As I wrapped up the spring semester *Gifted and Talented Tuesdays*, I prepared for summer workshops and next year’s *Gifted and Talented Tuesdays*. The summer workshops are going well. The MO-GLO participants are drafting gifted learner outcomes that school systems **may** adapt and adopt. The four strands are: Creative and Innovative Thinking; Critical Thinking, Systems Thinking, and Decision Making; Problem Solving; and Social Emotional

Learning. The SEL workshop runs for three weeks in July. The [August “Small and Mighty” workshops](#) are still open for registration. I have a plan for G/T Tuesdays for the fall, running from September 14 to December 14, 2021. Watch for a flier!

- I wrote proposals to present on gifted education at several state conferences and am getting booked for school year professional development.
- I created an “end of school year” checklist for gifted education specialists to use, provided informally via the [gifted education listserv](#). This led me to work on a “Missouri Gifted Education Self-Assessment Tool” which will help school system professionals self-assess their gifted education services.
- In the summer of 2019 I created a [Gifted Learner handout](#), in 2020 a handout on [Social-Emotional Learning](#), and am currently working on one about identifying gifted students. These are designed to be used with parents, educators, and administrators.
- The Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children is working on several projects: a survey, data analysis, and modules for school administrators. These projects will be detailed in the 2021 biennial report to the State Board of Education.

Thank you for your dedication to gifted education! Wonderful teachers, coordinators, administrators, parents, and friends of the gifted inspire and lead in our communities and at the state level. In particular, I’d like to thank the people who made comments last summer during a rule review. Of the 55 comments, 36 were on gifted programs! Read more in the June [State Board of Education documents](#).

Read with links: bit.ly/July21DESEupdate
(bit.ly link is case sensitive)

-Christine

GIFTED AND TALENTED TUESDAYS

More information: Christine.Nobbe@dese.mo.gov

EVENTS FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND COORDINATORS/ADMINISTRATORS

Tuesdays beginning September 14, 2021

You are invited to join Missouri's gifted and talented community for discussion and inspiration every Tuesday, September 14 – December 14, 2021. Log in 15 minutes early to network.



First Tuesdays, 9:00 – 9:30 AM w/ Q/A until 10:00 – Space Exploration Talks for Gifted Learners of All Ages

- October 5 – Moon, Mars, and More (the latest news)
- November 2 – Return to the Moon...To Stay!
- December 7 – The Next Frontier: Living on the Moon

Second Tuesdays, 9:00 – 10:00 – Coordinating MO Gifted Education Programs for Coordinators, Directors, Principals, and Administrators

- September 14 – Kickoff! Sarah Young, Gifted Ed Programming
- October 12
- November 9
- December 14

Third Tuesdays, 3:30 – 4:30 PM – for Gifted Education Specialists, Coordinators, Directors

- September 21 – Small Program with Mighty Results; Nichole Gard, guest speaker
- October 19 – Teaching Creative Problem Solving with Izzy Mamnoon; watch for registration for this limited event, 3:30 – 5:00 PM
- November 16 – Creating Equitable Gifted Education Programs; Justin Villet, guest speaker

Fourth / Fifth Tuesdays, 3:30 – 4:30 – Book Study for G/T Community; *Access Denied Report* - download free report - <https://www.education.purdue.edu/geri/new-publications/gifted-education-in-the-united-states/>

- September 28 – Executive Summary & Gifted Education in US, pages 1-11
- October 26 – Background Literature, pp 11-21
- November 23 & 30 – Analyze MO Report Card & Report Card Method

LIFE CAN GIVE EVERYTHING TO WHOEVER TRIES TO UNDERSTAND AND IS WILLING TO RECEIVE NEW KNOWLEDGE.

PRAMOEDYA ANANTA TOER (1996). "THIS EARTH OF MANKIND"

ZOOM INFORMATION

The Zoom link will be published before September 14. Watch for updates on the Gifted Education website and announcements in the Gifted Education listserv.

<https://dese.mo.gov/quality-schools/gifted-education> <https://lists.mo.gov/mailman/listinfo/gifted-ed>



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- ED 604 G**—Professional Learning: Gifted Policy, Practice, & Research
- ED 632 G**—Research: Applied Education Psychology

SPRING 2022 *online*

- ED 609 G** – Gifted Practicum
- ED 632 G** – Research: Applied Education Psychology
- ED 605 G**—Psychology of Exceptional Children

SUMMER 2022 *online*

- ED 550 G**—Introduction to Gifted and Talented
- ED 605 G**—Psychology of Exceptional Children
- ED 626G**—Creativity
- ED 650 G**—Identification of Gifted
- ED 652 G**—Affective Needs of Gifted
- ED 653 G**—Programming and Administration of Gifted



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Dr. Robin Lady, NBCT



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THE TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Big Picture: National, State and Local Policies and Procedures in Gifted Education;
- Advocacy vs. Activism;
- Professional Development and Communication;
- Current Trends in Gifted Education: Culturally Responsive Teaching, Diversity, RTI Model, etc.;
- Research; and
- Professional Networking and Question/Answers with an Expert Panel.

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The Value of Gifted Programs in Missouri: A Data-Based View

Dustin Nadler, PhD and Steve Coxon, PhD

Maryville University

Recently, the Missouri Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children (the Council) requested data from DESE on all identified gifted students in the state. The data showed that more than 8,000 of the over 30,000 identified gifted students were not being served by state gifted programs and asked the authors, social scientists at Maryville University, to analyze the data for differences between the two groups. What follows are the differences on key measures of academic performance that clearly demonstrate the value of gifted programs in Missouri.

Analysis focused on looking for differences between gifted students who are served and those who are not in ACT Composite and Subject Scores as well as Grade Point Average (GPA) Data. The data included all Missouri public school students identified as gifted, either served ($n = 21926$) or not served ($n = 8,963$) from the graduation years of 2010 – 2019. In all the sample consisted of 36,599 students: 18,376 females and 18,223 males. Attendance was similar for both groups, suggesting that they are relatively similar groups of students. Other demographic characteristics were collected; however, analysis has only focused on the gifted served and gifted not served groups' academic achievement measures to this point.

Overall findings demonstrate that gifted students who were served scored significantly higher on all ACT Subject areas (English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science) and on the ACT Composite Score. However, gifted served students also scored significantly lower than gifted not served students on GPA. Average scores for both groups on all variables are provided in the table below.

These analyses indicate that over the past decade, students who were identified as gifted and served scored significantly higher on standardized tests than those who were identified as gifted and not served. While there were also differences in GPA, it should be noted that this measure is not standardized, as grading is much more variable across districts. It is also possible, especially considering the higher ACT scores for gifted served students, that those students not served appear to be excelling only because the classes they take are less challenging than those students who are in gifted programs.

These findings are important, as ACT scores are predictive of collegiate success, retention, and graduation time and thus predictive of career success and earnings as well as other beneficial outcomes. Gifted students can be found in every district, but in Missouri only about 2 out of 5 districts identifies gifted students and serves them. As Missouri's gifted programs are concentrated in urban and suburban areas, but nearly absent in rural areas of the state, this data strongly suggests that not serving gifted students has long-term economic consequences for rural school districts without programs to develop the potential of their gifted children.

Table 1: Independent Samples t-test comparing served and not served students from 2010 – 2019.

Variable	Group	Sample Size (n)	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Effect Size (d)
<u>Grade Point Average</u>					.29
	<i>Served</i>	11761	3.54	1.07	
	<i>Not Served</i>	4328	3.90	1.64	
<u>ACT Composite Score</u>					.10
	<i>Served</i>	21072	27.76	4.56	
	<i>Not Served</i>	8453	27.29	4.43	
<u>ACT English Score</u>					.09
	<i>Served</i>	21003	28.15	5.44	
	<i>Not Served</i>	8420	27.65	5.43	
<u>ACT Mathematics Score</u>					1.2
	<i>Served</i>	21003	26.55	4.93	
	<i>Not Served</i>	8420	25.93	4.67	
<u>ACT Reading Score</u>					.06
	<i>Served</i>	21003	28.49	5.35	
	<i>Not Served</i>	8420	28.18	5.31	
<u>ACT Science Score</u>					.09
	<i>Served</i>	21003	27.23	4.95	
	<i>Not Served</i>	8420	26.77	4.83	

*All tests are significant at $p < .001$. Effect sizes (d) are evaluated based on standard expected differences, with values of .3, .5, and .8 indicating small, moderate, and large differences, respectively.

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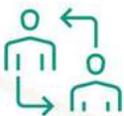
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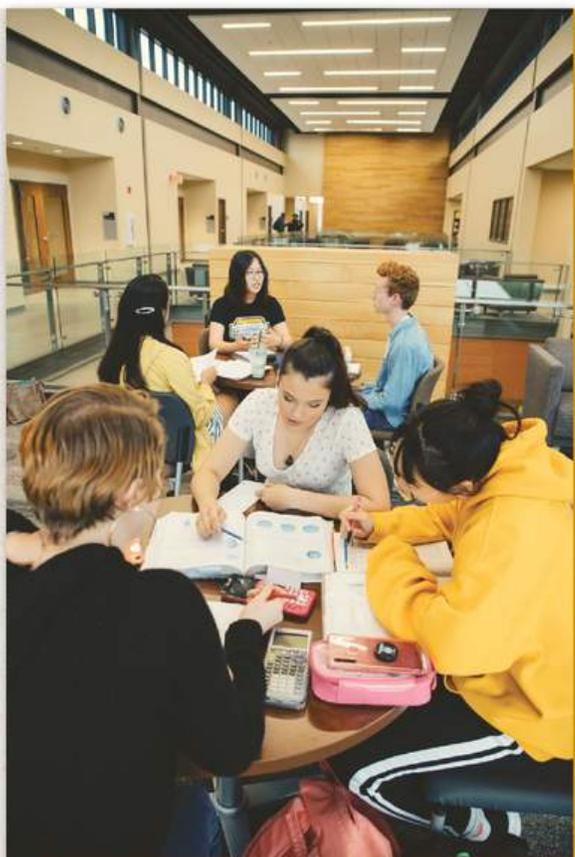
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How Missouri State Academy Impacted Me

by Andrew Mitchell

As a 2016 MSA alum, I can confidently say that the Missouri Scholars Academy is three weeks of intellectual engagement unlike any other program in the state. During my time at MSA I was able to conduct college level lab experiments, an experience that solidified my interest in chemistry and has been a major factor in my decision to pursue a career in research. However, this is not the most special part of MSA. The experience of being with so many other gifted students allowed for meaningful conversations about what it means to be gifted and how to navigate a variety of educational spaces in ways that have helped me make the best of my classes even into college. Through all this I made some amazing friends and still run into classmates from MSA frequently. MSA brings out all the best parts of being a nerd and forms an amazing community that lasts far beyond the end of its program.



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Congratulations to the Palmyra PACE Program!

The Palmyra R-1 School District's Gifted and Talented Education Program is referred to as the PACE Program. PACE stands for Pursuing Achievement, Challenge, and Excellence. This program is designed to promote academic enrichment and to help students identified as gifted and talented reach their fullest potential. The PACE students focus on self-understanding, effective communication, critical thinking, goal setting, and reasoning. These skills are developed while working independently and with peers on advanced curriculum and personalized projects.

Mrs. Nichole Gard will be starting her 3rd year as the district's Gifted and Talented Teacher this fall. She is slated to have 70 students in grades 2-12 identified as gifted. Identification begins in 1st grade, with Mrs. Gard serving as the one-and-only gifted teacher/testing coordinator for the program. She is also an Elementary Science Fair co-sponsor.

Mrs. Gard believes that a big part of her role is to let students see the opportunities that exist, no matter how far-reaching they seem, and to give them the chance to discover what they are capable of achieving. This year has been full of success for the rural program.

1. Audrey Reid, 5th grade PACE student, won the Scholastic Picture a President Drawing Contest. The contest asked students to draw a picture of a President, and Audrey chose Herbert Hoover. A nationwide winner was selected for each President, and Audrey was the only winner from Missouri. For her prize, she received a box of Presidential-themed books and her artwork was posted on the Scholastic website.



Herbert Hoover

(Audrey Reed's Winning Drawing)

2. Future Engineers and NASA announced 155 semifinalists in the Artemis Moon Pod Essay Contest, a national competition that asked K-12 students to imagine leading a one-week expedition at the Moon's South Pole. One of these semifinalists was 6th grader Livia Bross from the PACE classroom.

The essay contest was issued in collaboration with NASA's Artemis Program, which will land the first woman and the next man on the Moon. As NASA sets out to inspire a whole new

generation, the Artemis Generation, the essay contest invited students to imagine leading a one-week expedition at the Moon's South Pole and to tell NASA all about it. This included writing about their expedition's crew and technology, with an expectation of leaving their technology behind to help future astronauts explore the Moon. Approximately 14,000 essay submissions were received from K-12 students across the country and over 1,000 eligible judge volunteers comprised of educators, professionals, and space enthusiasts helped review essays.

On March 23rd, NASA held a virtual event, where contest participants had the opportunity to learn about space exploration from speakers including: NASA Astronaut, Ricky Arnold, Associate Administrator of NASA's Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate, Kathy Lueders, and Associate Administrator of NASA's Office of STEM Engagement, Mike Kincaid. At the conclusion of the event, the semifinalists were unveiled. But there was one more surprise in store for all the students who submitted an entry: NASA will fly a digital copy of all 14,000 essays around the Moon aboard Artemis I. All 5th-8th grade Palmyra PACE students participated, so they will all be able to say their writing has gone around the moon!

As a semifinalist, Livia will receive an Artemis Prize Pack filled with space-themed prizes, plus the opportunity to attend a series of virtual Artemis Explorer Sessions with NASA experts.



(Livia Bross)

3. Ashton Lovegreen has been selected as a Finalist of the 13th Annual Rubber Band Contest for Young Inventors, hosted by the Akron Global Polymer Academy in Ohio, which is a K-12 STEM Outreach Division of the University of Akron's School of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering.

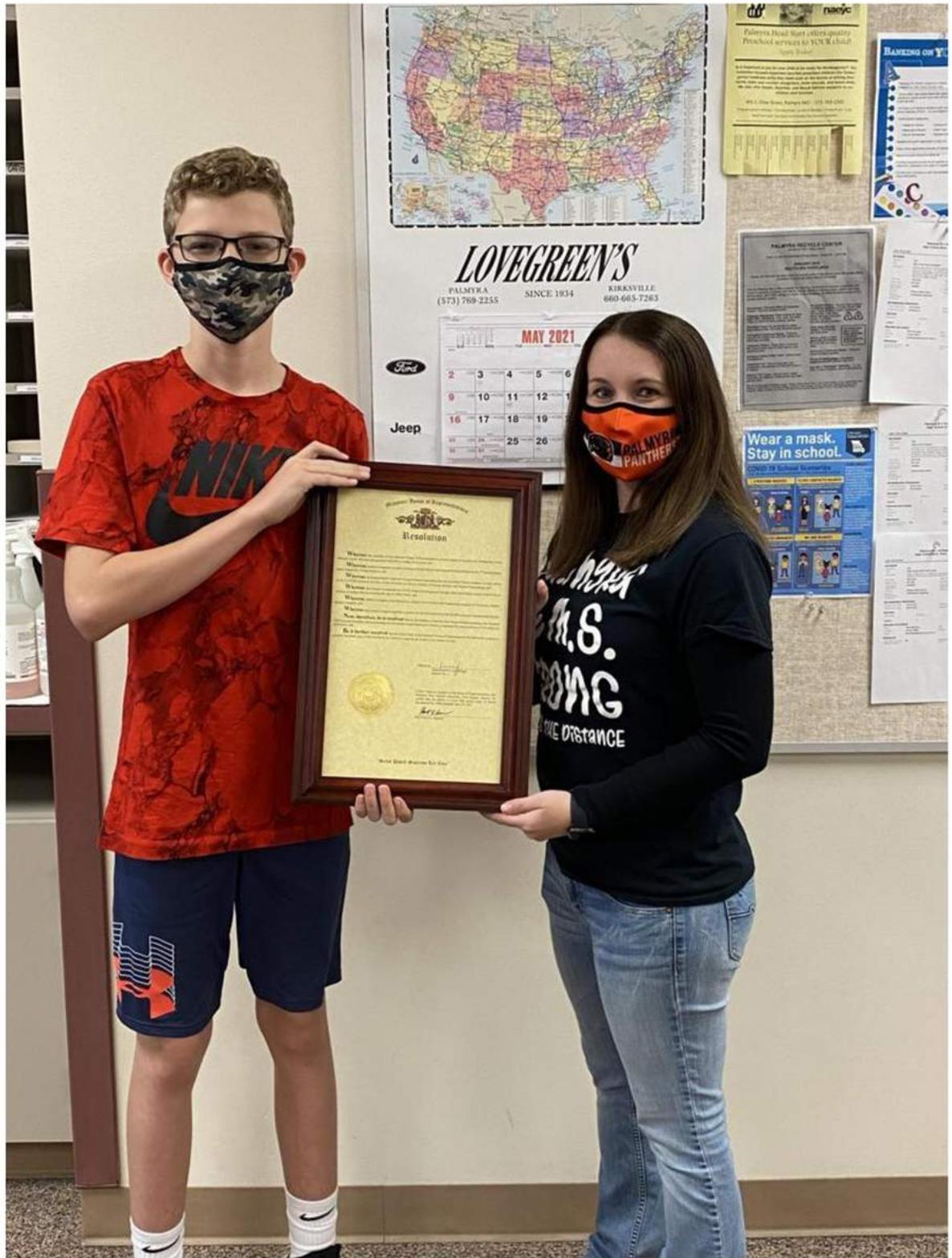
The contest, completed as a PACE classroom assignment with Mrs. Gard, was to create a work or art or working invention that incorporated rubber bands. Six finalists were selected in each category: Art & Leisure AND Science & Engineering. Ashton was selected as a finalist in the Science & Engineering category for his project: Rubber Rocket Launcher. He had to send his working invention to the Akron Global Polymer Academy. The inventions were evaluated by a final panel of judges made up of scientists, engineers, and artists from the University of Akron.

Ashton received a check for \$75.00, a t-shirt, and a finalist ribbon. He also received a framed certificate from the Missouri House of Representatives to congratulate him on his success.

All 5th-8th grade PACE students participated, and they all received certificates of participation for their efforts. The PACE classroom received a \$200 donation for being one of the top 8 schools with the most entries.



(Ashton Lovegreen and his Rubber Rocket Launcher)



(Ashton Lovegreen and Mrs. Nichole Gard)

Mrs. Gard has also won her fair share of grants this year: Missouri Retired Teacher Foundation, General Mills, CF Industries, and the Dollar General Summer Reading Grant. Grant money has been used to purchase two 3-D printers, LEGO motor kits, whiteboard tables, and other great items for the students to use.

By taking advantage of all of the opportunities presented, the PACE classroom is making a name for itself within and outside of the school district. Be on the lookout for more great things from Palmyra!



(PACE Classroom Picture)

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- Silver level group thank you on GAM's social media

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OCTOBER 1-2, 2021
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE



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Changing the Gifted Identification Process to Promote Broader Equity in Access to Programming

Dr. Tracy Bednarick-Humes
Lindbergh Schools Gifted Coordinator
GAM Executive Vice-President

An unwritten philosophy of the gifted department at the district where I serve as gifted coordinator is to serve every student in our district who NEEDS gifted education. The key is to make sure we find EVERY student who qualifies for our gifted program. Dr. Donna Ford, a distinguished researcher and advocate for equity in gifted education, recommends that a district's gifted program enrollment come within 20% of the district's population for traditionally underserved demographics. For example, in 2018, 2.9% of our total student population identified as African American. Based on the 20% equity rule, 2.32% of our gifted program population should identify as African American. With only 1.5% of our gifted students identifying as African American, we did not meet this recommendation. We also had disparities in our free and reduced lunch population and our population of students with IEP's and 504's.

In an effort to more effectively find all students who need gifted education in our district, we have implemented two key components of gifted identification: Universal Screening and an Alternative (Targetted) Identification Pathway. Prior to this, gifted identification and subsequent enrollment in the program was done through parent and teacher referrals. Testing was administered by both district staff and private testers. In the Fall of 2019, we began Universal Screening. All 1st grade students are given the NNAT-3 as their screener, with students scoring in the 95th percentile moving on to IQ testing. For 2nd and 3rd grade students, we look at their Fastbridge standardized test scores. This test was already being given as part of dyslexia screening and to assess the need for reading/math support. Students who obtain a score in the 95th percentile on either math or reading, move on to IQ testing. We continue to accept referrals for testing for students in kindergarten and 4th-8th grade students. Adding Universal Screening ensures that we are no longer dependent on referrals alone, as not every student has a gifted education advocate.

To further broaden our scope, we began the Targetted Identification Pathway in the Fall of 2020 to create more accessible cut-off's for our underrepresented populations. We've identified three subgroups who have traditionally been underrepresented in our gifted program: students with

IEP's/504's, students of color, and students who qualify for free or reduced lunch. These students qualify for our Targeted Identification Pathway. For screening, students from these groups who obtain a score in the 82nd percentile (high average) move on to IQ testing. For the IQ test, students must score in the 95th percentile on one performance index and in the 82nd percentile for all other indices, indicating giftedness in one domain and above average ability in the other domains. When lowering the typical cut off's, we also need to be cognizant of the demands of the program and make sure students have strong potential for success, hence keeping the second cut off in the high average range. Our teachers are also prepared to provide more intensive transitional support to students qualifying for our program under this pathway.

Additionally, despite our population of English Language Learners being over the recommended 20% equity index, we want to ensure that limitations in English do not block qualified students from the program. We use the same modifications for our ELL students as our other demographic groups, but allow for students to score in the 50th percentile or above on the verbal performance index. Other nearby school districts make provisions to give a non-verbal IQ assessment such as the Wechsler Nonverbal Scale of Ability (WNV). While this is a possibility, we also want to pair our entrance assessments with our program. Our gifted enrichment program relies on a strong level of verbal acuity. Our teachers are prepared to provide supports to learners, but we also want to set a baseline for likely success in the program.

No identification program is perfect, but we are optimistic that the universal screening plan will broaden our scope of students and that the targeted pathway will provide more equitable access across the board. We have not yet seen significant changes in our numbers; however, the Covid Pandemic last year prevented full screening of all 1st-3rd grade students. We are optimistic that continued efforts will help us better serve all students who need gifted programming. Including multiple pathways and looking at all students three or more times during their school career should strengthen the likelihood that we catch all our students who would benefit from our gifted program.

* Ford, D.Y. (2013). Recruiting and retaining culturally different students in gifted education. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press



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