

# Developing Minds

## District 51 Gifted and Talented News



January 2017

Heather Baskin, Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Programming

### Important Dates

#### Early Access Applications for 2017-18 School Year Available

January 3, 2017

Online or Pick-up at GT Office

#### Early Access Applications Due

February 28, 2017

Mail to or drop off at GT Office

#### Early Access Testing

March – April, 2017

@ TBD

### A Message From The GT Department:

D51's GT Department strives "To build capacity in recognizing, nurturing, and supporting youth with gifts and talents so they may develop their individual potentials." But what does that really mean? Let's break down each piece.

"Building capacity" means the ability to develop and strengthen skills in, processes for, and resources for everyone involved with gifted students (including themselves!). When we are working at our highest capacity, we are able to thrive and adapt over time.

"Recognizing" is defined in the dictionary as acknowledging the existence of something. This may mean a formal identification in gifted or becoming aware of the existence of gifted potential.

"Nurturing" and "supporting" include fostering, developing, and nourishing. We strive to foster the strengths within the gifted students.

"So they may develop their individual potentials" speaks to our ultimate goal. Our students should leave us with the ability to do all of the pieces above on their own. It is a process to get there, but that is the ultimate goal.

Our featured student of the month exemplifies all of these piece coming together. Check out his story in our newsletter under "The Many Faces of Gifted". Take some time to reflect. Which of the elements do feel are strong for your student? Which need more attention? Where is he/she on the continuum of needing total support or being totally independent? And, as always, let us know how we can help.

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### Early Access Applications Available

Early Access is a way for highly gifted students to enter kindergarten or 1st grade early. It is designed for students that are highly advanced cognitively and academically. Please visit our website for more information, criteria, description of the process, and to print off an application. <https://connect.d51schools.org/sites/shared/gt/Pages/earlyaccess.aspx>

# Have an idea for a story, a student poem/story/art piece to include, or question you would like answered in our newsletter?

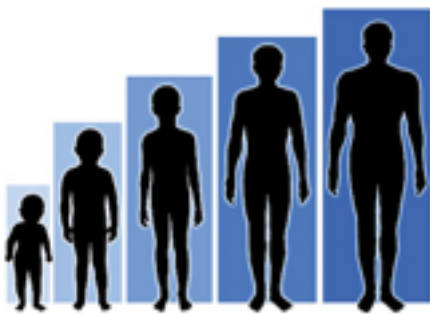
Let us know [bev.jebe@d51schools.org](mailto:bev.jebe@d51schools.org) or visit <http://tinyurl.com/D51GTIdeas>

## Did you Know

Gifted Education is mandated at the state level instead of the federal level. This means states have different laws for gifted identification and programming. Colorado has one of the highest ratings in State Policy Support for Advanced Learning according to Jack Kent Cooke Foundation ([http://www.jkcf.org/assets/1/7/JKCF\\_State\\_Report\\_Card\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.jkcf.org/assets/1/7/JKCF_State_Report_Card_Fact_Sheet.pdf)).

Our state identifies gifted students in the following categories:

- General Intellectual Ability
- Specific Academic Aptitude
- Creativity
- Leadership
- Visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor ability



A child in Colorado can be identified at any time between age five and twenty-one. An educator, parent, coach, student, or community member can refer a student for possible gifted identification.

There are currently 895 students identified in D51, and GT staff also support another 974 students in schools. This means the D51 GT Department supports 1869 students or 9.3% of the total student population.

There are 16 Full-Time Equivalent Teacher Positions dedicated to K-12 gifted education in D51. These positions are split among the elementary and middle schools in a half-time GT Teacher at each.



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# The Many Faces of Gifted

This month's featured student is Wyatt Hurt. He is a 12th grade student that started his own business, Magic Media, 2 ½ years ago. His business helps schools build professional looking newsletters (like this one), market a company/event, design websites, provide graphic design support, and provide political consulting. Check out the business website <http://www.magicmediagj.com/>.

Thank you to Wyatt for taking time to answer some questions for us...

**Tell us a little more about your company.** *I'm the owner and account executive of Magic Media, which I started in May 2014 with the help of my Principal Jody Diers and in partnership with Christy McGee. I saw that a contract was up for renewal in District 51, took the opportunity, and negotiated my way into receiving the contract. The business originally started with just that one contract to provide newsletter services to 13 District 51 schools, but has rapidly expanded since then. The business now has an employee and over 70 clients for which we provide all kinds of digital marketing services. It's been a journey with a lot of ups and downs, but I've learned a lot along the way: how to effectively budget spending, manage employees, provide excellent customer service, and (most importantly) manage time effectively!*

**What does "gifted" mean to you?** *I don't think that there's any single mold which someone who is "gifted" can fit in to. To me, it means that someone has extraordinary talents in one or more areas. A lot of people think of gifted students as being academically talented, but I think it's important to consider all forms of talents, whether that's athletics, innovation, public speaking, academics, or any other useful skill.*

**What do you see as highlights of gifted programs in D51?** *To me, the highlights of gifted programs in D51 are the people. My incredible elementary school gifted teacher, Carri Fledderjohn, opened my eyes to the world and showed me how many opportunities there were to make a difference. I attribute a lot of my success today to her. My middle school GT teachers, Ann Hanson and Tina Sleigh, also were very influential in my life.*

**If you had one wish for GT programs or GT students it would be:** *I hope that every GT student finds something they are passionate about and runs with it. As someone who's found my passion in entrepreneurship, I know that it's a life changing experience to be able to freely explore and innovate in an area that you're interested in. It takes a lot of work, but it is always worth it.*

Do you know a student that should be featured in this section? Please send your nomination to [bev.jebe@d51schools.org](mailto:bev.jebe@d51schools.org) or visit <http://tinyurl.com/D51nominate>

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If your gifted student is experiencing new or recurring challenges, we can help!

## Strengths and Next Steps for D51 Gifted Education

This information was presented at the School Board meeting on December 6, 2016. If you missed it, here is a recap... Approximately every four years, Colorado Department of Education (CDE) appoints a team to identify strengths and next steps for gifted education in each district. This is called a Colorado Gifted Education Review (CGER). The CDE team reviews evidence and artifacts, conducts focus groups, and visits schools. Their purpose is a collaborative monitoring process, data-based decision making, continuous improvement, and verifying implementation of the gifted program. D51, as part of the Mesa Administrative Unit, had a CGER in February 2013 and August 2016. Progress from one CGER to the next is outlined, strengths are uplifted, and next steps are identified. The priority next steps from 2016 include Identification and Programming. An improvement plan for these areas has been developed and submitted to CDE for completion by December 2017.

## How to Feed Curiosity

At the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) annual conference, Ian Byrd and Brian Housand presented “Curiosity: Cat Killer or Mother of Invention.” They outlined how curiosity is an essential skill for creative success and a trait that gifted students possess in abundance. However, a typical classroom can sometimes leave little space for curiosity to bloom and questions to be fostered. While inquisitive children have long been warned that “curiosity killed the cat,” it is precisely that level of incessant wonderment and investigation that fuels innovation. Ian Byrd shared his free email program titled, “A Weekly Dose of Curiosities and Puzzlements.” You can sign up for his emails sent out on Fridays to feed curiosity. You might see 3D printing included in baking geometric cakes, a drone changing a light bulb, a whistler that can harmonize with himself, stop motion art, macro-photography, metal that bounces water, and even an unbelievable sea slug. These are just the things to jump-start your wonder, creativity, conversations, and ultimately fuel innovation. Sign up at <http://puzzlements.co/>

## Heather Baskin: Administrator of the Year

Written by D51 Gifted and Talented Staff

Congratulations to Heather Baskin for being named Administrator of the Year by the Colorado Association of Gifted and Talented (CAGT), and the Office of Gifted Education at the Colorado Department of Education. Heather Baskin has been the Administrative Unit coordinator (including D51, Debeque, and Plateau Valley) since August of 2011. Heather is also a member of Gifted Education Forum, a statewide group of regional leaders that act as liaisons between CDE and the administrative units. She has presented many topics at numerous conferences for both CAGT and NAGC. Heather demonstrates leadership by aligning district practices to mirror the latest GT mandates and test practices at federal and state levels by clarifying and standardizing our processes for developing talent pools and formally identifying students. Heather advocates for appropriate instruction by assigning mentor teachers, visiting classrooms herself, and establishing active learning communities among GT teachers. She energizes staff by bringing nationally-known presenters to the Western Slope and taking staff to state and national gifted conferences. Heather always tries to include family presentations by these speakers as well, addressing topics such as student self-regulation, creativity nights, and parenting gifted children. Heather has led the vision for GT teachers writing new curriculum for gifted elementary and middle school students based on NAGC standards. This award is presented to one Colorado administrator each year for his or her work with gifted students, educators, and families. Heather was honored at the state conference for the Colorado Association of Gifted and Talented on October 10 in Loveland. We offer our congratulations to Heather for her accomplishments, and for her hard work and dedication to students.

## Want more information?

D51 GT Website <https://connect.d51schools.org/sites/shared/gt/Pages/default.aspx>

CDE's Gifted Parent's Corner <https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/parents>