

Education News & Notes

Students Not Challenged At School Try Talent Search

(NAPSA)—Some students consistently find their classes to be too easy or slow-paced. As budgets for gifted education are cut, many schools have trouble meeting the needs of their bright students. Every child deserves the opportunity to be challenged at school, but sometimes parents need to take action to find appropriate resources.

Talent Searches

One way to help children maximize their academic talents is to have them participate in a talent search. Students who score very high on achievement tests such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills may benefit from taking more challenging tests that more accurately pinpoint the scope and range of their talents.

Since the early 1980s, four university-based gifted centers have administered the talent search process for students across the United States. Northwestern University's Center for Talent Development identifies academically talented third through ninth grade students through the Midwest Talent Search and Midwest Talent Search for Young Students. Thirty-two thousand elementary and middle school students each year take the EXPLORE, the PLUS, or the SAT or ACT exams to assess how far their academic talents surpass their present grade level. Following the testing, parents and educators use test scores and Midwest Talent Search follow-up materials to place students in classes more appropriate to their ability.

Katie Del Ciello, a recent Northwestern University graduate, participated in Midwest Talent Search as a seventh and eighth grader. According to Del Ciello: "Participating in a talent search pushed me to take classes that finally challenged me. I looked forward to school a lot more when I could



Talent Searches will help keep students excited about learning.

work at my own pace instead of waiting for the rest of the class to move ahead."

Other Learning Alternatives

If a district does not offer advanced courses in a student's area of talent or a student is too busy to take a particular course during the regular school day, a student can still participate in a variety of enrichment and acceleration programs. Ranging in formats from Saturday or summer programs to increasingly popular distance learning, alternative learning options are plentiful, and school districts are often willing to provide course credit for courses taken outside the school's walls.

When examining options, look for accreditation

While finding an appropriate alternative learning opportunity can take a little research, the key is to look for a program that is accredited. Talent centers at universities and otherwise designated schools generally are safe bets. Ask to see a course syllabus and share it with school administrators to ensure that your child's school will grant credit.