

PACE BACK-TO-SCHOOL ISSUE **28, 2009**

Date: August

Welcome back PACE families to the 2009-10 school year! We hope you all had a great summer!! Here is the information we compiled for PACE parents in this Back-to-School issue –

1. Good News from our district – For the Medical Topics program, our school district has added 3 locations for students to intern at in addition to Rush Copley Medical Center! They are Oswego Vision, River Heights Veterinary Clinic, and Spot-4-Kids. We would like to thank our district administrators for the additional opportunities for our high school students!

2. If you have not signed up for **HomeAccess** yet, you can sign up starting **September 8** on www.oswego308.org. You can check on your child's homework, tests, quizzes, assignments, and project grades. Teachers can make errors like us rest of us, so look over all grades.

3. For interested students, PACE recommends taking the **PSAT** as many times as possible prior to their junior year. The exam is only offered once a year. This year it will be offered at OHS and OEHS on Saturday, **October 17**, and juniors who score high enough can qualify as National Merit Scholars. Taking the exam freshman and/or sophomore year helps students focus early on what they may need to improve on. It also prepares them for the format of the SAT. Midwest schools primarily focus on the ACT but selective schools especially on the east and west coast prefer the SAT.
<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html>. Please contact OHS and OEHS to register.

4. Information from our district website - Volunteers wanted for overcrowding management and facilities committee

August 28, 2009

Concerned about overcrowding at the high school level? Want to assist the district in developing a solution? Then consider completing an application to serve on the Superintendent's Advisory Committee for Overcrowding Management and Facilities.

The committee is being formed to determine an educationally sound, short-term alternative educational setting to manage overcrowding at the high school level until the completion of a third high school; as well as determine a strategy to further utilize current district facilities to maximize educational opportunities for District 308's students, families and community.

This advisory committee will be comprised of 20 members including two junior high school students, two high school students and 10 residents representing various areas of the district. Of these residents, representation is desired from parents of District 308 students currently in grades 4-7 as well as residents without children currently attending a District 308 school. Experience/knowledge in one or more of the following areas is preferred:

- Regional or community planning
- Alternative (non-traditional) educational settings
- Social/emotional adolescent characteristics

The scope of authority of the committee is advisory in nature. The committee serves at the discretion of the superintendent. The committee will meet on a regular basis and provide its first report to the superintendent in January 2010.

Details and an application are available at http://www.oswego308.org/assets/5/news/Supt_Committee_application.pdf or by calling 630.636.3084. Applications will be accepted throughout September 2009.

[Here is information on several upcoming events –](#)

[5. Open House – Argonne National Laboratory](#)



Argonne National Laboratory, near Darien, is one of the U.S. Department of Energy's oldest and largest national laboratories for science and engineering research. It is opening its gates to the community this **Saturday, Aug. 29**, from **9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** — rain or shine.

Nearly 100 engaging exhibits, demonstrations, tours and presentations are being planned for a day of fun and education for the entire family. Tours include the Advanced Photon Source, the Western Hemisphere's most brilliant source of X-rays for research; the Center for Nanoscale Materials; ATLAS, the Argonne Tandem-Linac Accelerator System; and the Argonne Wakefield Accelerator. You can even take pictures and videos! How cool is that!

Come and enjoy the beautiful campus and learn more about exciting new research in:

- Energy
- Environment
- Safety
- Chemistry
- Computing
- Engineering
- Biology

[6. Splash! at University of Chicago](#)

Starting on **September 1**, High School students can register to take free classes at University of Chicago through the Splash! Program. Splash! is a one day program offered on October 3, 2010, Saturday, on the University of Chicago campus. Space is limited, so sign up soon at <http://uchicago-splash.mit.edu/>. They require that students who sign up, must attend. If a student can not attend, he/she must notify Splash! asap.

7. Northwestern University's Online Enrichment Classes

Apply now for 9-week online enrichment classes for grades 3-8 before it is too late.

Choose from such offerings as:

- * Topics in Biology
- * Online Writing Workshop
- * All the Presidents' Secrets
- * Puzzlements
- * Robotics
- * Introduction to Latin
- * Introduction to German
- * Computer Programming Classes in Scratch, Python, & Alice

Application deadline: September 1st.

Classes begin: September 15th.

Visit their web site for course descriptions, additional course listings and to apply now:

www.ctd.northwestern.edu/gll/

8. WOW! Free Webinars on Wednesday from NAGC

The National Association for Gifted Children's WOW series is designed for classroom teachers, counselors, graduate students, parents, g/t coordinators, and administrators.

In the convenience of your home or office you will be virtually connected to experts in the field who will share practical advice, as well as updates on the latest issues in gifted education.

WOW is FREE for a limited time! That's right, FREE! All sessions through 2009 are free, but you must register.

For more information and registration information please go to the NAGC website

<http://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=78372916&msgid=943706&act=VVBH&c=375888&admin=0&destination=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.nagc.org%2Fwow.aspx>

There is limited space available for these programs, and they do fill up. Check the schedule now to see which ones you might be interested in.

Thanks to Terry James Mohaupt of the IAGC for passing this information on to us.

If you are not a member of IAGC, you may want to consider joining. www.iagifted.org



Illinois Association for Gifted Children

9. Using Stimulus Funds To Support Gifted

Ask for federal stimulus funds to support gifted learners. Write a Letter to the Editor.

Federal Stimulus Funds Available For Gifted & Talented Services And Programs

Gifted education supporters should be advocating with their local school district leaders to spend a portion of the federal stimulus money to support gifted and talented programs and services.

The U.S. Department of Education has begun to distribute funds for K-12 and higher education, and at least two of the funding streams -- the State Stabilization Fund and Title I funds -- could be used to support gifted education students.

- **Stabilization funds** can be used to restore budget cuts and teacher positions, or the funds could be used to expand or create new services.
- **Title I funds** can be used to support gifted students from low-income families.

Additionally, gifted education advocates should know that \$100 million in stimulus funds will support Teacher Quality Partnership grants in Title II of the Higher Education Act, which will require university teacher preparation programs to increase new teachers' exposure to the needs of gifted and talented students.

Below is a link to a memo with more details to help you with your advocacy. Also see below for samples of letters to send to your local newspapers. **We urge you to modify the samples to make them your own by personalizing them with your own stories.**

Memo: [http://www.nagc.org/uploadedFiles/Advocacy/Stimulus%20memo%20for%20NAGC%20web%20\(April%202009\).pdf](http://www.nagc.org/uploadedFiles/Advocacy/Stimulus%20memo%20for%20NAGC%20web%20(April%202009).pdf)

=====

Using Federal Stimulus Funds to Support Gifted Education

Letter to the Editor

Sample Letter 1

Dear Editor,

As our STATE/SCHOOL DISTRICT work to determine how vital education stimulus dollars from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act are spent, I urge decision-makers to not overlook the needs of our gifted students.

Gifted students are often the first to have their programs cut under the mistaken belief that these students can educate themselves. However, when schools fail to provide the resources to meet these students' unique learning needs, they often tune out, shut down and too often even drop out.

Gifted and talented programming can – and does – make the difference between life-long success and failure. Like students who need help learning academic material and who are eligible for special education services, gifted and talented students need additional support to achieve their full potential. This is especially true among our underserved and underprivileged students.

If we care about reversing this trend, state and local education officials must make sure the appropriate amount of stimulus funding is reinvested in gifted and talented education and services. And don't we all deserve the chance to learn to our full potential?

=====

Using Federal Stimulus Funds to Support Gifted Education

Letter to the Editor

Sample Letter 2

Dear Editor,

As a PARENT/TEACHER/ADVOCATE, I am most hopeful that the federal funding heading to our state and local school districts will help us avert proposed cuts that could be detrimental to the well-being of our students. President Obama was absolutely correct when he said in his State of the Union address earlier this year that America must ensure "every child has access to a complete and competitive education."

There is an important caveat to the President's statement that must be addressed, and that is *all* children are entitled to a *complete* education. As STATE and TOWN choose how to distribute the ample funds that have been allotted to them to maintain existing programs and grow new ones, our leaders absolutely cannot forget or ignore gifted and talented education.

Far too often, services for gifted students are among the first programs to be reduced or chopped completely because policy-makers incorrectly assume gifted students can achieve on their own. But as a long time PARENT/TEACHER/ADVOCATE, I know first hand that this assumption is a fallacy.

When students - even gifted ones - are not given the services they deserve, they will often fall short from achieving their full potential. In too many cases these students fail by under performing and even dropping out. As STATE/LOCAL officials consider how to specifically allocate federal stimulus funding, I urge them to take this unprecedented opportunity to receive additional funding and ensure that gifted students - especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds - maintain access to the services they now receive and the educational rights that they deserve.

=====

If you have questions and wish a response, please contact IAGC Advocacy Committee Co-chairs

- Cathy Greene, [e-mail](#)
- Susan Rhodes, [e-mail](#)

GOAL: To educate the decision-makers about the needs of gifted children

10.

California Learning Strategies Center

www.LearningStrategiesCenter.com

Dear Parent,

Is your child (8th-11th grade) interested in attending a selective college?

Top grades, high SAT scores, and leadership in school activities are no longer enough to get your son or daughter accepted.

Selective colleges are looking for students with the initiative and passion to pursue their talents and interests well beyond this level. This newsletter addresses the many opportunities summer offers to help students do just that.

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to interested families, and to contact me with any questions, comments or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Susan Goodkin,

Executive Director

Susan.Goodkin@LearningStrategiesCenter.com

805-642-6686



Students can improve their chance of admission to selective colleges by using the summer to . . .

Find a national competition related to their strengths or interests.

Performing very well in a national competition will help your child stand out from the college applicant pack.

National competitions for high school students cover nearly every subject and interest. Along with the major math and science competitions (see below), you can find competitions involving the environment, vocabulary, economics and finance, mythology, robotics, computer programming, debate, writing, journalism, languages, and more.

For example, is your child fascinated by philosophy? Check out the Kids Philosophy Slam competition, <http://www.philosophyslam.org>. Does your child love mythology? Look into the Medusa Mythology Exam, <http://www.medusaexam.org>.

Summer is a good time for students to determine which competitions they might want to enter, to learn about the requirements and deadlines, and to start preparing for the competitions.

Find a mentor

Is your child an aspiring writer, a young entrepreneur, a theoretical math whiz, an inventor, a budding scientist. . . Students who have interests beyond the standard curriculum often need outside help to pursue them.

Mentors can advise students on projects such as writing a novel or screenplay, working on high-level math challenges (including problems to be used as science fair projects), carrying out scientific research, developing a business plan, etc.

Universities, professional groups, and community groups are all potential sources of mentors. Young writers should consider asking a local author or journalist to be their mentor. On-line long-distance mentoring is also an option if local mentors can't be found.

Mentors can be particularly critical for students working on science fair projects. Virtually all the finalists in the Intel Science competition have mentors. For an excellent article on finding a science fair mentor, go to http://www.sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/top_science-fair_mentors.shtml

Search out opportunities to publish their writing

Many college applicants are interested in writing; few have been published. Students can distinguish themselves by showing that they have the talent and initiative to get their work published.

Students can start their research by looking at *Writer's Digest*, which provides a comprehensive listing

of publications and their requirements for writing submissions. Libraries generally have reference copies of *Writer's Digest*, or for a small monthly fee it can be viewed on-line at <http://WritersMarket.com> Students can also find advice and encouragement from a successful young author at <http://writeon.zest.net/397.html>.

Study for one of the major math or science competitions

Placing near the top in one of the prestigious national math or science competitions, including those listed below, strongly increases a student's chances of being admitted to an elite college. Interested students should start studying for these competitions during the summer.

There are some excellent on-line programs to help students prepare for national math competitions. Additionally, students can see past science Olympiad tests on some of the websites below.

American Mathematics Competitions: <http://www.unl.edu/amc/>

Biology Olympiad: <http://www.cee.org/programs/usabo>

Physics Olympiad: <http://www.aapt.org/physicsteam/program.cfm>

Chemistry Olympiad: <http://www.chemistry.org>

Start working on a science fair project

To create a winning science project, it helps to find a mentor (see above), pick a topic, and start researching during the summer, rather than starting during the school year.

For very helpful advice about competing in science fairs, check out "How To Be Successful at a Top Science Competition," http://www.sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/top_science-fair_success.shtml, written by a student who has won awards at many prestigious science competitions.

Attend summer programs offered by colleges

Colleges across the country offer summer programs for high school students, providing the opportunity to further pursue academic interests or a passion for acting, dancing, art, etc.

Residential academic programs are also available through organizations such as the Summer Institute for the Gifted, <http://www.giftedstudy.com>. SIG offers programs on college campuses nationwide, including Berkeley, Amherst, Vassar, Bryn Mawr and UCLA. Students who have qualified for the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth can participate in summer programs on various college campuses as well. <http://cty.jhu.edu/summer/summer-programs.html>

Students can research a host of summer opportunities, including academic programs, at the National Association for Gifted Children's website, <http://www.nagc.org/resourcedirectory.aspx>

Need Help?

- We help students locate mentors, arrange for internships and volunteer positions, and find opportunities to engage in scientific research.
- We help students draft essays for college applications, as well as applications for scholarships, fellowships, summer programs, etc.
- We advise aspiring writers about publication opportunities, and help students through the process of editing and submitting their work.
- We advise students about state and national competitions in their areas of interest, and help them prepare to compete.
- We help students find colleges that are right for them.

Consultations available by phone or in person. Call Susan Goodkin at 805-642-6686 to arrange for consulting.

About our consultants: Susan Goodkin is a graduate of Harvard University, Harvard Law School, and Oxford University, where she was a Rhodes Scholar. Susan is Executive Director of the California Learning Strategies Center, www.LearningStrategiesCenter.com, which helps parents meet the needs of gifted students from kindergarten through college planning. Susan is a national writer on education issues, including the college application process.

For more information about our consultants, please go to www.LearningStrategiesCenter.com/bios.html

For more more information about our products and services, please go to www.LearningStrategiesCenter.com/products.html

Permission is granted to republish this newsletter in its entirety. Individual portions may also be republished, as long as the following statement is included: "This information provided by Susan Goodkin, Executive Director of the California Learning Strategies Center, www.LearningStrategiesCenter.com. The Center helps parents meet the need of gifted and advanced students from kindergarten through college planning."