

Helping Students Achieve

(NAPS)—It often surprises people that the label “at risk” applies to our nation’s brightest students. Research indicates that 20 percent of all high school dropouts test in the gifted range while 40 percent of all gifted students are underachievers. Yet, the “No Child Left Behind” Education Act largely ignores these students.

One reason many gifted students drop out is that, unlike what is done for the musically or athletically gifted, schools rarely offer special opportunities for intellectually gifted students. To address this problem, many advocate for changes to the educational system that focus on “flexibility rather than funding.” For example, some teachers believe students should be grouped by ability, rather than by age.

“If a nine-year-old student can demonstrate that she is capable of completing advanced algebra, why should she be forced to take fourth-grade math?” asks Marie Capurro, M.Ed., program director at the Davidson Institute for Talent Development.

Dr. Jan Davidson, co-founder of the Davidson Institute, agrees. “If we applied our current educational model to individuals who demonstrated great ability historically, Mozart would have been required to take beginning music classes simply because he was a child. Had this been the case, would he have become bored, acted out or eventually dropped out?”

The Davidson Institute for Talent Development is a not-for-profit organization that offers free services and scholarships to highly intelligent students across the country. The Davidson Young Scholars program is a free consulting and support program designed to assist families with educational advocacy, academic and financial support and provide access to talent-development opportunities.

“Although the programs and services offered by our Institute are making a positive difference to many students, it is time that we as a nation make a commitment to providing all students with educational opportunities that are appropriate to their abilities,” says Davidson. For more information, visit the Davidson Institute’s Web site at www.davidson-institute.org.