



# BVPAGE PAGES

[www.bvpage.org](http://www.bvpage.org)

## From the President

Ann Ryan

Greetings!

It's hard to believe another academic year is drawing to a close. Although our children's school years seem to evaporate, they are packed with rich experiences and accomplishments to be celebrated. Most of all, for me, each stage is to be cherished – and I am thankful for the genuine laughter that comes to us as adults when we spend time in the company of our children.

Our BVPAGE year has also flown by and has provided opportunities for growth as parents and insight into gifted education issues, as well as an understanding that while we have an extremely strong school district, there is room for improvement. We had the opportunity to speak to the District's Curriculum and Instruction Committee to voice our support of its review of, and consideration of improvement to, middle school rigor. Our Legislative and Advocacy Committee has actively lobbied our state legislature with respect to educational issues affecting gifted education. In addition, BVPAGE hosted a variety of programs for parents – from a forum of break-out sessions giving an overview of how to navigate the IEP process to an explanation of the “autonomous learner model” by its creator, George Betts, to the “nuts and bolts” of winning college scholarships presented by advisor and author, Sandra Jacob. Our members' students have had the opportunity for a group visit to Science City for a robot exhibit and have enjoyed viewing the night sky at a local observatory. BVPAGE is underwriting the awards for the District

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Robotics Fair. In May, we have scheduled a student event at the Nelson–Atkins Museum of Art for a 3–D tour of the Sculpture Garden. This summer, BVPAGE is privileged to help with the Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (“SENG”) conference, a national conference to be held in Overland Park.

In my mind, one of BVPAGE's most important accomplishments of the year is implementing an on–line member survey. We have a talented, experienced survey committee which drafted survey questions and is presently analyzing the survey results. The results will help focus our organization's advocacy efforts for the next year. We are so appreciative of the people who took the time to respond to the survey – and we are cognizant of the unifying concerns and interests that are being revealed by the survey results. Our survey confirms that although our children may have disparate issues and individual needs, as parents who are passionate about gifted education, we have a unifying desire for the strongest possible gifted education for our students. Advocacy involves active support. I encourage you to get involved in BVPAGE – Let's work together to ensure that gifted education rises to the level of a significant priority for our district.

## DCT's Corner (District Coordinating Teacher)

Dr. Sheri Nowak

### Announcing!!!

#### The 2007 SENG Conference

#### *The Gifted: Nurturing Hearts, Brains, and Courage*

July 13-15 in Overland Park, Kansas

Most conferences about giftedness focus primarily on educational issues. While a few presentations about the social and emotional development and needs of gifted people and the challenges facing the gifted population may be included, these presentations play a minor role.

SENG conferences reverse the priorities. We believe that recognizing, understanding, and accepting the unique social and emotional needs of this population are the first priorities for teachers, parents, and counselors. SENG supports strong gifted education programs, but we believe the emotional piece is the foundation for the development of healthy, happy, well-adjusted, appropriately educated, and contributing gifted members of society.

This conference is not only for teachers, counselors, and parents...but is also for gifted children ages 6-18. This is a wonderful opportunity for gifted children to interact with peers from all over the United States either in a fascinating fine arts strand or an Explore Kansas City strand.

As a SENG board member and co-chair of this conference, I can highly recommend it! It is rare that an opportunity such as this is so close to home...right in Overland Park at the Marriott on College Boulevard! For more information please see the SENG website at: [www.sengifted.org](http://www.sengifted.org)

Dr. Sheri Nowak Stewart  
District Coordinating Teacher  
Gifted Education

Feel free to call (239-4333) or email ([snowak@bluevalleyk12.org](mailto:snowak@bluevalleyk12.org)).



Education is not the filling of a pail, but  
the lighting of a fire.

**William Butler Yeats**

## SENG Conference to be Held in Kansas City

BVPAGE is proud to help sponsor



### The 2007 SENEG Conference

*The Gifted: Nurturing Hearts, Brains, and Courage*

July 13–15 in Kansas City/Overland Park, KS



Most conferences about giftedness focus primarily on educational issues. While a few presentations about the social and emotional development and needs of gifted people and the challenges facing the gifted population may be included, these presentations play a minor role. SENEG (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted) conferences reverse the priorities. We believe that recognizing, understanding, and accepting the unique social and emotional needs of this population are the first priorities for teachers, parents, and counselors. SENEG supports strong gifted education programs, but we believe the emotional piece is the foundation for the development of healthy, happy, well-adjusted, appropriately educated, and contributing gifted members of society. For registration information please visit the SENEG website at: [www.sengifted.org](http://www.sengifted.org).

Advertisers/sponsors are still needed for the event. Please contact Sheri Stewart at (913) 239-4333.

## A Message From the Current Director of SENEG, Shari Hill

### Parenting lessons

As we begin another year, we tend to reflect on the past. Though I find the "should haves," "could haves," and "wish I had's," a waste of energy, I do have some constructive thoughts to share from parenting my own brood. I wish I knew then that...

- The "experts" that offered advice on gifted children often had little or no training in the subject, especially regarding social and emotional needs, and that it pays to educate oneself.
- Listening to my kids was much more rewarding than lecturing to them.
- Some of those A's that seemed so important came at a price, for all of us.
- Many of the later B's, and even C's, came with a deeper and more complete understanding of the subject, and a happier kid.
- There are dozens of ways, outside of the traditional educational path, to be successful.
- For every kid that is thrilled to be at Harvard, there is another one thrilled to be at Doozyville U, and both can have their dreams come true.
- Allowing failures and disappointments is critical; treating them as learning experiences, and modeling optimism, is essential parenting.
- Being gifted is not a one-size-fits-all; there are many levels and "flavors."
- Spending time with your kids is not the same as time spent driving them to soccer, piano, gymnastics, play practice, baseball, etc.
- Our children's own goals and dreams may be very different, and more important, than the ones we have for them.
- The unique characteristics and needs that make our kids gifted don't end in 6th grade - gifted is for life, and that means for parents, too.
- Support from other parents of gifted children who "get it" is valuable, meaningful, and necessary.

The list could go on forever. We all do the best we can with what we have and know at the time. And we do a pretty darn good job, I think. The love and rewards are endless and priceless - enjoy them!

For more reading about parenting gifted children, check out the Parenting the Gifted section of SENEG's online Articles Library. [www.sengifted.org](http://www.sengifted.org)

## Student Showcase

### Blue Valley West Places First at Academic Decathlon

Submitted by: Pam Fellingham

BVWest Gifted Education & Academic Decathlon Coach

The Blue Valley West Academic Decathlon team placed first in Division II at the State Competition in Manhattan on Jan 27th. The team won more than 40 individual medals in the ten categories and placed third overall. The team members are: Emily Owens, Scott Tan, Meghan Schmitt, Krystin Arneson, Lichy Han, Lesley Darsnek, Michele Kerns, Gill Wright, Michael Hazel, Jordan Kaatz, Colwynn Ballenger, and Eric Whiting.

Each year the students compete in ten events: Mathematics, Social Studies, Language and Literature, Economics, Music, Art, Super Quiz (this year Global warming and Climatology), Interview, Speech and Essay.

Congratulations to this team for their accomplishments in this challenging academic competition!

### Blue Valley Middle School Places First in Mathcounts

Submitted by: Michelle Hoffman & Wendy Marvin

BVPAGE members & parents

In the recent Mathcounts Chapter Competition on February 7, 2006, Blue Valley Middle finished first, Overland Trail Middle placed 3rd, Lakewood Middle 5th, and Harmony Middle 6th. Pleasant Ridge was 10th and Leawood Middle came in 11th. For individual rankings at the Chapter competition, Vivek Menon (BVMS) finished 2nd, Brandon Bachar (OTMS) finished 5th, Allen Zhu (BVMS) finished 7th, Rebecca Marvin (BVMS) finished 8th and Gautham Prakash (BVMS) finished 10th. Twenty-eight middle schools and

approximately 180 students, including Shawnee Mission and Olathe middle schools, and many private schools, competed in this competition, making top rankings by the Blue Valley Middle Schools very commendable.

The top 5 schools competed at the State Mathcounts Competition held on March 17, 2007 in Salina, Kansas. 29 schools and approximately 110 students from across the State were present. Awards are presented to the top 6 teams in this contest. The BVMS team consisting of Vivek Menon, Rebecca Marvin, Gautham Prakash and Allen Zhu, finished in 4th place. For individual placements, Brandon Bachar finished 5th, Rebecca Marvin finished 11th, Gautham Prakash finished 13th and Vivek Menon finished 18th. Only the top 20 students are ranked.

#### MATHCOUNTS TEAMS

##### KSPE Eastern Chapter to State Advancement

##### Blue Valley Middle School

Coach: Wendy Marvin  
Vivek Menon  
Allen Zhu  
Rebecca Marvin  
Gautham Prakash

##### Overland Trail Middle School

Coach: Jason Hoffman  
Andrew Martel  
David Thompson  
Jon Ruben  
Akshay Almelkar

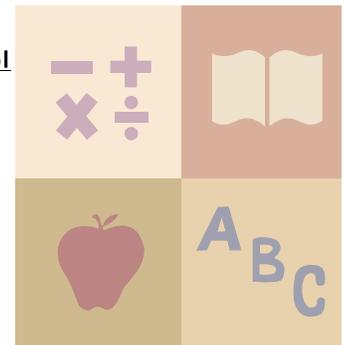
##### Lakewood Middle School

Coach: Teri Adams  
Nimish Mittal  
Blake Berkowitz  
Charles Lin  
Max Regan

Individuals:

##### Oxford Middle School

Brandon Bachar



The *BVPAGE Pages* are published quarterly. If you have any news items for this newsletter, you may contact the editor, Angela Case, at: [bvpage@everestkc.net](mailto:bvpage@everestkc.net)



## Duke TIPS Article of Interest

### Parenting for Achievement – Duke

Gifted Letter

Volume 4 / Issue 2 / Winter 2004

I'm smart, and smart people don't have to study or work hard." Does this sound familiar? How unexpected and frustrating to discover that your child who has been identified as gifted is underachieving academically! Twenty percent or more of students identified as gifted do not work to their potential in school. Underachievement is a family affair, and reversing or preventing it is possible with family guidance and support. Following is a discussion of some common reasons that gifted students underachieve, with recommendations for change.

Just as underachievement is learned, so it can be unlearned.

#### WHY CHILDREN UNDERACHIEVE

Children underachieve because of the environment at home or in school and/or because of social or personal factors. To help your child, you must consider all of these variables. Peer pressure, unrealistic expectations, lack of effort, perfectionism, learning disabilities, conflicting learning/teaching styles, general disinterest, poor study habits, and lack of organizational skills are a few things that can contribute to a child's underachievement. Keep the following in mind:

- All children are motivated, but for different reasons and by different incentives. Some children are motivated by grades, others by parental approval; still others are interested in learning or have well-established goals and dreams. *Find out what motivates your child; this knowledge can be a powerful tool.*
- Children who do not see the connection between school and the "real world" are not likely to be interested in school. Some children quickly see how what they learn in school can be used in life; others do not. *Parents must help such children make this connection. For instance, if your child is interested in baseball but dislikes math, help him or her see how baseball statistics are calculated.*
- Children who are concerned about the opinions of others tend to underachieve in school. For example, if they are teased for being smart and their identities are

tied up with being popular, they may give in to negative peer pressure. *Frankly discuss the importance of having friends with your child, but also let him or her know that trying to be popular at the expense of doing well in school can be harmful to one's future and is also not being true to oneself.*

- All children want to be successful, but external factors can sidetrack them. Extroverted children are more likely to place friends before books. Others may be distracted by family problems; some who work part- or full-time jobs end up having too little time for their school work. *As much as possible, parents should remove unnecessary barriers and distractions for their children.*
- Children who are not challenged in school, especially gifted children, are likely to be unmotivated. *Parents of such children must work with teachers to develop challenging educational plans. Suggest ways for children with time on their hands to use it wisely, for instance, by finding a book to read, working on an unfinished assignment in another subject, or designing a self-selected independent project.*
- Children who have low self-esteem or think they are not smart are less likely than others to do well in school. Many of them may believe that, no matter how hard they work, they are incapable of getting good grades. *Find ways to focus on your child's strengths, especially the nonacademic ones. Once children feel confident of themselves in areas not related to school, they may be more easily led to appreciate their gifts and talents in academic areas.*
- Children who believe that ability is more important than effort are likely to underachieve. Such children frequently develop poor work ethics, study habits, and organizational skills. *To convey the message that effort is important, parents should discuss effort with their children when commenting on their schoolwork and grades. Ask them how much effort they put forth on a task and have them think about how more effort might have improved their performance. Be careful about praising children for getting high grades on schoolwork done at the last minute.*
- Finally, children on whom adults place unrealistic expectations may underachieve because they feel overwhelmed or frustrated. Such statements as "Why did you do that? Smart people don't act childish" and "You're gifted—you should make all As" may send

## Duke TIPS Article of Interest continued

students the message that they must be perfect in everything. *Avoid making generalized statements and establish realistic expectations. Accept that your child may not be successful all the time.*

### PARENTING FOR ACHIEVEMENT

Preventing or reversing underachievement is no easy task. Children do not become underachievers overnight, and they will not become achievers instantly, either. It takes commitment, time, and persistence on the part of you and your child. Final recommendations:

- Parent involvement is essential at home and at school. Advocate for your children.
- Academics come first. Children must learn that homework and schoolwork come before such activities as watching TV, playing sports, and going to parties.
- Expect excellence and effort, but keep your expectations realistic.
- Nurture your children’s interests and strengths.
- Teach time management. Have your children keep a diary for a couple of days on how they spend their time. When they see that time is limited, they may think more carefully about how they manage or mismanage it and about the impact that time

management has on their schoolwork.

- Never let your children’s weaknesses become excuses for failure or low expectations. Help your children build on their strengths and find ways to compensate for their shortcomings.

Through discussions with your children and by working with their teachers, you can help your children improve their academic achievement and ultimately be happier and more successful.

*Donna Y. Ford, PhD, and Michelle Frazier Trotman, PhD*

*Donna Y. Ford is professor of education at Ohio State University.*

*Michelle Frazier Trotman is director of the Millennium Community School in Columbus, Ohio.*

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Achiever	Underachiever
Future oriented; recognizes the importance of education	Uninterested in learning and achievement; is concerned with short-term gratification; does not take responsibility for decisions and actions
Hopeful	Has low expectations of self and others
Has a healthy identity	Often has poor or distorted identity self-esteem)
Takes part in extracurricular activities	Avoids challenges and new things for fear of failure
Manages time well; studies and does assignments and homework	Mismanages time, is disorganized, and has mixed-up priorities
Correlates effort with achievement	Refuses to do work or commit self to tasks
Needs achievement more than affiliation	Needs affiliation more than achievement
Respects, appreciates, and develops positive relationships with teachers; seeks their help	Has poor relationships with teachers; does not view them as allies or as people who care
Perseveres when faced with challenges	Is easily discouraged or distracted

BVPAGE UPCOMING EVENTS



Dates: April 5th—  
20th  
(April 10<sup>th</sup> not  
available)

Stargazing with the  
Dembinski



Contact persons: Dave and Karen  
Dembinski

*Limit 8—10 per  
GROUP*

**BVPAGE  
SURVEY**



Thank you to all who participated in the BVPAGE survey. The survey will help us gather information about how BVPAGE can best advocate for the gifted learners in our district. Watch for the survey results on the BVPAGE website.

**YOUTH TOUR & WORKSHOP  
AT THE NELSON**



Who: All interested Blue Valley Gifted students

When: May 8, 2007 3:00pm

Where: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

**4525 Oak Street Kansas City, MO 64111  
816.751.1ART**

The tour of the Nelson is free. If you would like to participate in an additional multi-age workshop for grades 3-12, there are two available:

- ❖ Life in 3-D (construct a 3-dimensional form) and
- ❖ 3-D exploration (construct a relief sculpture)

**HOW TO REGISTER:**

Please register for this event by e-mail to [bvpage@everestkc.net](mailto:bvpage@everestkc.net).

Please put "NELSON TOUR" in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail please include the following:

1. Parent name (s)
2. Phone # where you can be reached
3. Number of students attending/names/ages
4. Please let us know if you are interested in :

For more information contact  
Rose Kiley, chair of Student Events at  
(913) 897-6471

Tour only (free) <or> Tour & Workshop (and which one). Please make sure to bring \$7.00 per child if you are planning on doing the workshops.

## News You Can Use

### Legislative Update March 2007

Submitted by Rhona Alter,  
Legislation/Advocacy Committee

#### Current Bills

- SB 30 Keeping Education Promises Trust Fund (sets aside \$122.7 million in a trust fund at the beginning of FY 2008 (July 1, 2007) to be used for school finance in FY 2009 (beginning July 1, 2008)) passed by Senate, 37-1, 1/9/07; amended by House committee to include two years' worth of financing in trust fund (total of \$271.7 million) and \$76 million for the Regents Crumbling Classroom Debt Repayment Fund) passed by House as amended 105-17.
- SB 61 (eliminating the mandatory election for LOB increases) passed by Senate Education Committee; killed in the Senate.
- SB 68 (supporting non-proficient at-risk weightings) passed by Senate 35-5; sent to House; referred to House Education Committee.
- SB69 (allows cost of living weighting and declining enrollment weighting to be used without maximizing LOB) passed by Senate 39-1; sent to House; referred to House Education Committee.
- SB 142 (changes COLA weighting from being based on average housing cost to comparable wage comparisons) scheduled for hearing by Senate Education Committee 2/6/07.
- HB 2063 (would reduce minimum distance of school bus travel to be reimbursed by the state from 2.5 miles to 1 mile) scheduled for hearing by House Education Committee 2/6/07.
- HB 2276 (would permit school districts utilizing all permitted LOB but still capped by existing budget limits at a level below the average per pupil expenditure of school districts in their size category to bring their budget up to that average by accessing additional local funding) defeated in House Education Committee 7-9; could be resuscitated by floor amendment.

- HB 2347 (requires students seeking licensure as a teacher to have one course on, and teachers seeking licensure renewal to have 10 hours of professional development on, needs and characteristics of gifted learners, especially those frequently overlooked (e.g., gifted children in poverty, rural locations, multicultural, twice exceptional)) scheduled for hearing by House Education Committee 2/16/07.
- HB 2348 (requires that the Kansas Academy of Math and Science add the fields of technology and engineering to the program for high school students) (program still unfunded) referred to House Education Committee.
- HB 2349 ((AP grant program to provide money for AP equipment and instructional materials, cost of AP test fees, and cost of completing teacher training for AP courses) referred to House Education Committee.

#### State Board of Education

- Repealed science standards adopted in 2005 that included intelligent design theory.
- Adopted standards representing more mainstream scientific consensus about what science is and what evolution is.



# BVPAGE

*BVPAGE strives to increase the quantity and enhance the quality of services, disseminate information to and maintain a support group for parents to benefit all gifted and talented students in the Blue Valley School District.*

*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

[www.bvpage.org](http://www.bvpage.org)

**A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/ RENEWAL FORM IS AVAILABLE ONLINE**

## Jewell Academies of Science Deadline April 9, 2007

The Jewell Academy for Women in Science (JAWS) and the Jewell Academy for Men in Science (JAMS) will be hosting free residential summer camps for rising 7<sup>th</sup>- and 8<sup>th</sup>-graders on the William Jewell College campus in Liberty, Mo. **Thanks to a generous grant from The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the week-long, interactive camps are open to students from across the greater Kansas City metropolitan area at no charge.**

The JAWS camp for girls is scheduled to take place June 17-23; the JAMS camp for boys is scheduled for June 24-30. In order to be eligible for participation, students must attend the entire camp. Lodging and meals will be provided for campers in William Jewell's residence halls and dining facilities throughout the week at no cost. The application deadline is April 9, and 40 slots are available for each academy.

The camp will be based on an interdisciplinary, integrative curriculum focusing on the concept of energy. Specifically, student participants will be exposed to biology, chemistry, ecology, physics, computer science, and bioethics through hands-on laboratory learning. Evenings will feature less-structured science enrichment activities. In addition to the science curriculum, the camp will feature extensive leadership training, goal-setting, teambuilding & cooperation skills, and personal development.

"Overall, the Jewell Science Academies will offer a cohesive, enriching experience with the goal of preparing students for successful academic careers in high school and beyond," said Dr. Tara Allen, associate professor of biology at William Jewell.

Applicants should be in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grades (or the homeschool equivalent) during the 2006-07 school year. Students from diverse backgrounds or representing underserved populations are especially encouraged to apply.

Applications can be found online at [www.jewell.edu/scienceacademies/](http://www.jewell.edu/scienceacademies/). Completed applications should be mailed to:

William Jewell College  
Jewell Science Academies - Box #1059  
500 College Hill  
Liberty, MO 64068



For more information, contact Dr. Allen or Emily Abdoler at [sciencecamps@william.jewell.edu](mailto:sciencecamps@william.jewell.edu)

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