An Appropriate Education for Every Student
Message from the Dean

Dear Alumni, Faculty, Staff, Students, and Friends,

My faith and religious beliefs are the foundation of my life and professional work. One of those beliefs is that all human beings are sons and daughters of God, our Heavenly Father. As William Wordsworth wrote, newborn infants come to earth “trailing clouds of glory . . . from God, who is our home.” Children come with a variety of gifts and challenges. Those who do not develop typically may face challenges that put them at risk as they try to navigate the American school systems. However, challenges provide opportunities for growth and blessings.

I remember one such opportunity. A young girl with severe cerebral palsy was a student in the school where I served as principal. She did not have sufficient strength and control of her legs to walk, she could not use her arms and hands, nor could she speak. Everyone assumed that she also had mental retardation and could not learn to communicate or develop academic skills. A gifted, dedicated teacher discovered ways for the student to communicate, and within a year the child was reading, understanding mathematical concepts, and participating extensively in the school’s curriculum. This young girl taught us more than we taught her.

I hope this issue of McKay Today will provide assistance to all our readers, no matter their association, in teaching these beloved children. Ideas to guide instruction are given on page 4. Laws associated with special education and guidelines issued for designating gifted and talented students are described on page 2. Additionally, I know that many dedicated parents struggle to understand how to best help their child. Four seasoned parents share perspectives, beginning on page 10. Educators wanting fresh ideas will find them in our Education in a Changing World section. This issue also includes an insert giving language information, excerpts from recommended books by McKay School faculty members, and a moving tribute to a mother who became an educator and helped to mold gifted and talented programs in her school district.

As always, I hope the McKay School and its alumni magazine, McKay Today, assist you in your continued efforts to help all children reach their divine potential. I know these opportunities will bless your life, as well as the lives of your students.

Sincerely,

K. Richard Young

K. Richard Young
IDEA

Julie is five and loves to draw, help her mother, and play with her younger sister. However, when Julie started kindergarten her teacher was concerned that she was not entering school with the same skills as other students. Julie could not identify letters, write her name, or use scissors properly.

Kevin is 11 years old and loves to read and play games with friends on his computer, despite the fact that he has spina bifida and gets around in a wheelchair. Kevin understands everything he is learning in school, but sometimes the teacher allows him to demonstrate his understanding differently than the other students. For example, he uses a computer for his assignments and tests because it is easier for him than using a pencil.

Prior to 1975, students like Julie and Kevin may have been excluded from attending public school. Fortunately, today this cannot occur, thanks to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law, originally passed in November 1975, guarantees a free public education for all students. It is often called the federal bill of rights for children.

School personnel, parents, and students are all greatly impacted by IDEA. Most of what occurs in special education in the United States is defined by this act. In addition to providing services to school-aged students, the act covers preschool children who are experiencing developmental delays and students past age 18.

**Six major principles:**

- Zero reject: No child may be excluded from public education.
- Nondiscriminatory assessment: Evaluation methods must be nonbiased and multifaceted.
- Procedural due process: Due process protects the rights of parents and school districts when disagreements arise related to identification and placement of students.
- Parental participation: Parents must be given an opportunity to participate as members of a multidisciplinary team that directs their child’s education.
- Least restrictive environment: Students with disabilities are to be educated with students without disabilities to the maximum extent possible.
- Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written document must be developed collaboratively by parents and school personnel that details services and goals related specifically to the individual student’s educational needs.

The U.S. Congress reauthorized IDEA in 1990, 1997, and 2004—each time with additions and refinements. But the six major principles have remained in place and continue to guide implementation of special education and related services.

Impact

IDEA impacts not only students, their families, and the schools but their communities as well. The act requires, for example, that students with disabilities receive transition services that focus on postsecondary goals (e.g., postsecondary education, employment). The intent is to better prepare students for life.

Employers in the community are often involved in providing work experience for secondary students as part of the students’ transition goals. Preparing students for employment, residential settings, and social relationships must be components of effective postsecondary community adjustment.

IDEA has a less direct community impact as well. More students with disabilities are joining general education classrooms and schools. As a consequence, students without disabilities are learning about other students who have challenges. This helps to prepare general education students for lives in which those with disabilities will be a part.

For more information on IDEA, visit idea.ed.gov.

Jacob Javits Act

A smaller, less widely known program that addresses the education of gifted children is the Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Education Act. The federal definition of gifted and talented is contained in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as follows:

Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.

**Three primary components:**

- The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, which provides a forum to conduct research that will inform policy and practice
- A competitive demonstration grant cycle
- A competitive grant to states and local education agencies

**Purpose**

The purpose of the act is to encourage programs based on scientific research that will enhance the ability of elementary and secondary schools to meet the needs of gifted and talented students.

Resources are focused on identifying and serving traditionally underrepresented students. Hence most program funding is awarded to low socioeconomic areas. Most school districts must fund any and all gifted programs through existing budgets.
Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life’s Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.

Intimations of Immortality
—William Wordsworth

Exceptional Children

Trailing Clouds of Glory

by Shauna Baby and Debra J. May
Illustrations by Brian Aikar
Although every child enters life with glory, each child brings strengths and weaknesses as well. Varied abilities are shaped by physical, social, emotional, and environmental influences. Some children enter bodies with physical or mental limitations; others have healthy bodies with minds that are highly intelligent. Either way, each child comes into this world with a measure of glory and godliness. A child with a disability is often viewed as having clouded glory; a child who is gifted may be considered to have magnified glory. However, if we take the time to look carefully at each child, we come to realize that the glory is neither clouded nor magnified—just different. These children with differences are often referred to as exceptional.

Exceptional Children: Students with Disabilities

By Shauna Raby

As an educator for almost 30 years, I have worked in both elementary and special education, and I have learned a great deal about children. I have learned that children with disabilities are more like their typical peers than different. Every child wants to feel loved and accepted, have physical necessities cared for, and progress. But students with disabilities have a harder time acquiring an education. They differ in their learning styles and academic needs from the children who are developing more typically. Some students with disabilities learn more slowly. Some cannot access the curriculum because of visual, auditory, or motor disabilities. Some are so distracted by an emotional or attention problem that what is typically taught in school has little meaning or relevance to their lives. For others, the curriculum is not appropriate. These students have difficulties that affect the education they can and will receive.

As a result, children with disabilities are sometimes surrounded by limiting myths or stereotypes. For example, not every child with autism responds adversely to touch. Not all children with Down syndrome are happy and loving. Not all children with emotional disturbances act out aggressively. Each child's disability manifests itself in a different way, making individualized education necessary.

Throughout my years as a special educator, I have worked with very skilled teachers—both special and general education—who understood how to adapt curriculum and classroom expectations to meet the needs of the students with disabilities. Although it may take years to master all the skills of these exemplary teachers, a few of the most effective can be summed up in six tips anyone can use.

Allow the students to do as much as they can on their own. Most students with disabilities are capable of doing many things. Teachers may be inclined to take over tasks like putting on a coat, carrying a backpack, or twisting the handle while pushing a door open. Sometimes we take over jobs because we feel sorry for a child or because we find it so much easier and faster to do it ourselves. However, before doing a task for a child with a disability, we should consider whether we are depriving the child of learning opportunities.

For example, one teacher paired a student with an orthopedic impairment with a student with a visual impairment to help each other down the hall. The student in the wheelchair gave verbal directions to the student pushing her, directing the other child to turn left at a corner or move right to dodge a drinking fountain. Holding onto the wheelchair stabilized the student with the visual impairment, and the student in the wheelchair practiced needed social skills. Both students became more self-reliant.

Model activities or tasks prior to asking the students to do them. Most students learn better if they can see a process or task demonstrated. Children with disabilities may need to be shown how to place milk on the lunch tray, turn a paper so it is easier to write on, put books away, or line up objects into arrays to understand multiplication.

In a classroom designed for students with significant intellectual disabilities, every child was able to “point and click” the pen when using an interactive whiteboard. When asked how the students mastered using the pen, the teacher said she demonstrated how to do it and then gently oversaw each student’s practice until all were able to use the pen independently. Had these students just been given the pen without any modeling, the pen might have ended up in their mouths rather than on the whiteboard. Giving any student a task without first demonstrating it often leads to frustration and failure.

Providing time for the students to practice communication throughout the day. Communication is a major element of education. Many students with disabilities need frequent opportunities to learn and practice language outside of reading and writing.

A child with significant brain injuries can be very easy to have in class “parked” in a wheelchair almost anywhere without disrupting the other students. One teacher with such a student worked with the speech therapist to develop the child’s communication skills. The teacher and the speech therapist asked the student’s parents to send pictures of the family to school. The student’s eyes lit up when he saw a picture of his sister, and soon he began trying to say her name.

Another group of students improved their writing skills when they were allowed time to talk about assignments prior to writing. A student who had a difficult time sitting still had an appropriate outlet for his energy if he could move to a designated place and talk to others. Activities that require spoken communication benefited most students with disabilities.

Use a multidimensional approach to teaching. Most teachers are able to add one or two elements to their lesson plans to make learning more accessible for all students. For example, teachers can allow students to draw pictures, engage in role-playing, or record answers rather than produce a written response.

One teacher used this technique and modified a worksheet to meet the needs of a student with a learning disability. While all the other students were finding the answers to the questions in their textbook, he was filling in the blanks with words from a word bank. Another teacher allowed a student with attention deficit disorder to move as needed during school. The student could choose to sit at her desk or stand behind it during class time. Accommodating for the disability was easier than constantly reminding the student to sit still.

Follow set routines and schedules. Children with disabilities often have difficulty understanding and managing time, so disruptions in the classroom schedule impact their behavior and learning. Daily review of a written or pictorial schedule helps students understand what will happen during the school day. Teaching clear routines and explaining procedures about how to line up, sharpen a pencil, or turn in assignments also helps students manage their own behavior.

One particular child with an emotional disability would become agitated and frustrated each time the teacher announced that it was time to line up for an assembly. When the teacher began using a daily schedule and allowed students to check off each activity, discipline problems related to scheduling improved.

Be patient. For students with disabilities, learning takes repetition and practice. Because learning is often slow, teachers should choose to teach information and skills that will be of the most lasting benefit for each student and then allow the necessary learning time. Getting to know individuals helps a teacher become more patient. Although teaching or parenting a child with disabilities can be challenging, it can also be rewarding.
Exceptional Children: Gifted and Talented Students
by Debra J. May

I am not sure that at the beginning of my teaching career I was even familiar with the term gifted and talented. However, during my teaching career I have come to understand that responding to gifted and talented students is a critical component of public education.

Gifted children, though they look typical, come with specific differences from other children. Additionally, gifted children differ from each other as much as kids in any other categorized population. To help teachers and parents understand their gifted child, I have defined five general traits usually exhibited by these students.

1. They learn and memorize more efficiently. While all students can learn, gifted students do so with amazing effectiveness. Author Madeline Hunter explains that the average child needs approximately eight cycles of learning to have a concept in place as long-term knowledge. The truly gifted child may need only one cycle of learning. A few children really need no teaching about some concepts. Such a child can look at information, make sense of it on her or his own, and remember it forever.

2. They are usually curious. Gifted children have unusual curiosity about much more complex topics than their age-level peers. Nuclear energy is not often a topic most third graders would want to study, but I once had a student who was absorbed by the topic for several months. Even though every child exhibits curiosity, gifted children tend to be curious about “big world problems.”

3. They tend to be creative thinkers. A truly gifted child already knows how to think creatively. I’m not speaking about arts and crafts creativity but about the creative act of combining information from different sources and doing something creative with it. We teach all children some form of synthesis, but these skills are natural for gifted students. The work of my third grader on nuclear energy became a very creative book, intended to help other kids understand the concepts.

4. They have strong communication skills. Most gifted children have superior communication skills, which may be manifest in written or oral communication. A student with this ability tends to use sophisticated verbal skills. Elementary children generally do not understand how children at different ages tend to take in information at different entry points. But as I watched one of my former students do a presentation on a project, I noticed he changed the presentation for different age groups. He had discovered this need on his own and was able to adapt to it. Likewise, gifted students tend to be competent writers, as they are able to focus their writing in unique ways. They have a clear understanding of what they are trying to accomplish; thus many will not respond to recommendations, even from a teacher.

5. They are socially healthier when they spend some time with their academic peers. Not all children should receive their instruction solely in the school setting if and when they have a teacher or parent who advocates for them, ensuring that differentiated instruction occurs. I worry most about students who have the characteristics of a gifted learner without the accompanying characteristics of an academic achiever, making it hard for them to negotiate school systems.

6. They have increased critical thinking abilities. Most gifted students who automatically see relationships or patterns in material are capable of high achievement in academic peers, not just their chronological peers. Gifted students are socially healthier when they spend some time with their academic peers, not just their chronological peers. Gifted students are not always good role models for other students. Many are more than two grade levels above their age level peers and cannot relate effectively.

3. Gifted students should not always tutor other children. Many teachers, instead of differentiating the curriculum, use their gifted students to help other students. While it may be good for all children to serve others, most of the time gifted students are not good at tutoring children who need step-by-step instruction to find an answer or understand a concept. Most gifted students who automatically see relationships or answers to problems have little understanding of how they “got there.” In addition, the gifted students in a classroom have the right to learn something new.

4. Allow gifted children to accelerate through curriculum. More than 50 years of research supports this option for gifted students. One kind of acceleration is to move students past content they already know and then provide extensions that challenge them to learn more about the topic or even select another to study. A friend of mine, JoAnn Seghini, used to say, “Children who have to work to learn will learn how to work, but those who never have to work to learn will never learn how to work.” Gifted students need instruction that stretches them and sometimes even perplexes them; otherwise, they may become underachievers.

5. Don’t expect a gifted child to be gifted in everything. Most often students are gifted in only one area. Additionally, some gifted children also have learning or other disabilities. These students are called “twice exceptional” and often go undetected for gifted services as well as other special education services.

6. Provide a differentiated curriculum of depth and complexity. Going deeper into the content by studying issues, problems, and themes is a way to create content options that challenge the gifted learner. Equally challenging is a curriculum that requires abstract processing. Studying a topic in more depth with more complexity and abstraction will certainly engage and challenge our most gifted students.

Conclusion
Not all children should receive their instruction solely in the general education classroom, but every child should have time with typically developing peers. Modifying assignments or accommodating for a student’s needs—whether that student is gifted, has a disability, or learns typically—are part of being a teacher. As educators look for the glory that is within each child, they will recognize the value of developing caring relationships with exceptional children.

As educators, look for the glory that is within each child, they will recognize the value of developing caring relationships with exceptional children.
Parents
GUIDING THE EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY

By Katie Van Dyke, Brenda Holtom, Annette Kindt, and Shauna Valentine

As parents of children at all levels of special needs, we understand the varied emotions that occur when a child’s unfolding abilities do not follow those of other children. We have felt sorrow and loss as we have let go of hopes and expectations we once held for some of our children. Conversely, we have felt nervous anticipation as other children have embarked on accelerated educational journeys. We understand that one of the most difficult aspects for parents as their children begin any special needs journey is the inability to even envision the road that may lie ahead for them. Through our experiences, we hope other parents can see that by being involved in their children’s education and building relationships of trust with their children’s educators, they can be an integral part of their children’s educational journey.

Katie and Her Daughter Bethany
My daughter Bethany began showing signs of delayed learning around the age of two. Doctors and health care professionals directed me to early intervention programs. By the time Bethany was three, it was clear she was not progressing normally. She underwent evaluations that showed she had severe speech and cognitive delays. She was immediately enrolled in a special needs preschool through our school district.

At the preschool, one of the first special needs educators with whom I came into contact was Clyde Farnes, the school’s speech specialist. His counsel helped to refocus my outlook for Bethany’s educational journey. At our first meeting Mr. Farnes looked at me and said with confidence, “Now I can help Bethany without you. I can retrieve her from preschool, work with her on her speech and cognitive learning in my office, and then return her to class. You are not required to attend or participate. But,” he emphasized, “if you will be a part of our sessions and reinforce what I do with her at home, she will progress much more quickly than if I do this alone.”

Through this counsel I became aware of two vital things: First, Bethany was in very capable and caring hands. Both Mr. Farnes and her preschool teachers were confident in their curriculum, in their programs, and in their abilities to help Bethany with her special needs. Second, these special needs educators knew that I was a crucial part of Bethany’s learning and progress. They knew positive progress would be made if I reinforced their methods at home. Becoming aware of these two things helped me see the importance of my involvement in Bethany’s education while building trusting relationships with her educators. As I have focused on these two things, our journey has changed from one of uncertainty and fear to one filled with hope, optimism, and a bright outlook toward Bethany’s future.

Brenda’s Children
My children fall into three learning categories: one who has special needs, one who is gifted, and one who falls into both areas.

I know that involvement in my children’s education and trust in their educators are crucial to their success. One way I build relationships of trust is by proactively creating positive
communication. I do this by meeting with each teacher within the first few weeks of school. I bring a prepared document made up of three distinct parts. The first part is titled “What Can I Do for You?” In this section I offer suggestions on how I could assist in areas of communication and support. I emphasize the personal accountability of my child and offer to help the teacher with any needed follow-up. I focus on empowering my child to be an active participant in his or her education. Teaching is my child’s challenge, and I am here to help him or her learn to manage this challenge.

The second part is titled “What Might Help Me.” This section focuses on what the teacher might do on behalf of my child. I bring a prepared document that shares my own personal circumstances. I want to help not only my child, but also the school and our family is much better.

The third part of the document concludes with written appreciation for the teacher’s efforts. Teaching is a hard job. I have made a habit of writing letters of appreciation to most of my children’s teachers each year. These letters of praise include specific behaviors, teaching styles, or positive changes on the teacher’s part. I often send copies of these letters to counselors, administrators, and even the district’s superintendent. These efforts send a strong message that I am supportive, appreciative, and involved in my children’s educational journeys.

Annette’s Perspective

I am the mother of four children with autism. I have learned the importance of being supportive and trusting of teachers as well as being involved at the community government level. Over the years I have been involved in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and have served on several school community councils. I am currently the PTA president of the junior high school where my two older daughters attend. Because I am on these boards, teachers and administrators know that I am trying my best to give my kids a quality education, and we build more understanding relationships. As a result, educators are able to be more helpful when my children have been involved or difficulty with assignments. They understand my children’s needs, so the relationship between the school and our family is much better.

Additionally, the motives for my involvement go beyond my own personal circumstances. I want to help not only my own children but also other students with special needs. As a member of these boards, I have found that I am able to provide a perspective that regular classroom teachers aren’t able to see.

I think it is important for all communities to be represented on these boards so that all children can be recognized and served well.

Shauna’s Experience

Many people think gifted students don’t need help, that they’ll do fine on their own. But parents know that all children need guidance and direction as they mature, even those who exhibit exceptional gifts and talents. With four of our children identified as gifted and one as highly gifted, I felt it was important for me to be their advocate and constant—the person connecting experiences and giving direction to their educational journey through the years.

While getting to know and connect with individual teachers was critical, it was also beneficial to connect with parents of other gifted students. When we did this, parents were able to research and talk to teachers and school administrators about our concerns as a group. We volunteered to help in classrooms with ability/interest groups and programs. Educators were willing to work with us, and we became part of the solution. We also provided enrichment experiences outside of school.

The highly gifted group eventually formalized and worked with district administrators and the school board to meet these gifted students’ needs. One result of this process was the opportunity for these students to work with an academic mentor if they requested one. This parent group also provided regular opportunities for families to meet to discuss issues and concerns while the children played and socialized with each other.

This time was beneficial to these students because gifted students often prefer to work on the computer, read, study, or engage in other isolating activities. Gifted children aren’t gifted in every area. Each of my children encountered challenges in their education. But each possessed gifts that needed to be developed and shared in order for them to become good, happy, contributing citizens.

Conclusion

As a group I believe that by getting involved in our children’s education at either the classroom or administrative level, parents can have a positive impact on the educational experiences of students at both ends of the special needs spectrum. All students need voices and advocates, and parents know their children best. Parents are, in ways no one else can, their children’s distinguishing personalities, varying interests, and special talents. All children will be guided along their educational journey as parents and educators work together with trust and respect. Disabillities can be improved, abilities enhanced, and uniqueness encouraged.

Please visit education.byu.edu/news/magazine/parents.

Books That Can Help

WHAT EVERY TEACHER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MAKING ACCOMMODATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH MILD TO MODERATE DISABILITIES

“Differentiated instruction is practiced in many classrooms. When students with disabilities are included in general education classes, however, the law requires teachers to provide individualized supports that enable students to access and make progress in the general education curriculum. Accommodations and adaptations are ways to provide students with needed support. Accommodations change the manner in which a response is required on the way an assessment is administered, but do not change the difficulty level of the task. Adaptations alter or modify the level of content difficulty.” (p. xiv)

AUTHORS: Nari Carter, Mary Anne Prater, Tina Taylor Dyches
PUBLISHER: Pearson Education, 2009
PAPERBACK: 164 pages

UNDERSTANDING THE WHOLE STUDENT: HOLISTIC MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

“Holistic education stems from the simple yet powerful notion that education...must try—to the extent practical in any given educatıonal situation—to address various aspects of that student’s being. A person is not just a stimulus-response mechanism, a member of a politically marginalized group, or a passive vessel into whose head facts and theories are to be disseminated and poured. Rather, the student is a complex creature...and he or she will grow more and more detached from the teacher and the curriculum if this complexity is ignored. For us John Dewey correctly observed almost a century ago, deep and durable learning—the kind that will stay with and influence a person throughout his or her lifetime and will not be forgotten after the next test—occurs only when a student finds the curriculum relevant to his or her life situation.” (pp. 3-4)

AUTHORS: Clifford Mayes, Ramona Maile Cutri, P. Clint Rogers, Fidel Montero
PAPERBACK: 212 pages

HUMAN EXCEPTIONALITY: SCHOOL, COMMUNITY, AND FAMILY (10TH EDITION)

“What do the words disabled, challenged, or different mean to you? Who or what influenced your knowledge and attitudes toward individuals with differences and the labels we often use to describe them?...You may have a family member, friend, or casual acquaintance who is exceptional. It may be that you are a person who is exceptional in some way. In reading and interacting with this book, we believe you will find that the study of human exceptionality is the study of being human. Perhaps you will come to understand yourself better in the process.” (p. xix)

AUTHORS: Michael L. Hardman, Clifford J. Drew, M. Winston Egan
PUBLISHER: Cengage Learning, 2009
HARDCOVER: 544 pages

TEACHING ABOUT DISABILITIES THROUGH CHILDREN’S LITERATURE

“Children learn through experience that humans differ by characteristics such as age, gender, size, and hair color. Yet many children’s experiences with diverse groups, especially those with disabilities, are limited. Literature can expose readers to and thus raise levels of awareness of people with various disabilities. Literature can also foster awareness of and complex social issues such as inclusion, friendship, causation and prevention of disabilities, historical treatment of disabilities, and so forth.” (p. xix)

AUTHORS: Mary Anne Prater, Tina Taylor Dyches
PUBLISHER: Libraries Unlimited, 2008
PAPERBACK: 148 pages

TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH MILD TO MODERATE DISABILITIES

“The development of strategic learning processes is also necessary for successful learning. ...Strategies are the plans, actions, steps, and processes that allow students to accomplish a learning or problem-solving task. ...Strategies involve both cognition and behavior and may be thought of as the approach to the task rather than the actual skill or knowledge used to accomplish the task.” (p. 27)

AUTHOR: Mary Anne Prater
PUBLISHER: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon, 2007
PAPERBACK: 360 pages
Preparing to Teach the Individual

With approximately 14 percent of students designated by national reports as having special needs, what is being done at the McKay School of Education to ensure effective instruction for these children? Currently a bachelor’s, a post-bachelor’s, and a master’s program are offered through the Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education.

Program class sizes are small. One student, when asked to describe the professors, said, “They don’t let you fail.” As evidence, job placement rates have stayed near 100 percent for almost 10 years. Additionally, students are able to use and apply their belief systems in the classroom. Professor Tina Dyches explains, “We believe in the divine nature of children with disabilities, and we can talk about that in the classroom.”

The special education degree programs of the McKay School focus on preparing competent educators trained to assess student needs and design effective instructional strategies. Culture and diversity are also emphasized. In short, the department embraces a collaborative, evidence-based approach to serving diverse individuals.

Special Education Undergraduate Programs

The McKay School offers a special education bachelor of science degree program with two emphasis choices: severe or mild/moderate disabilities. Course work is completed on the BYU campus with real classroom fieldwork in local school districts.

The curriculum is based in both theory and practice. Special education courses emphasize ways to assess student abilities, plan instruction, and use appropriate behavior management strategies. Students are also instructed in collaborative problem solving with school and family systems. The program’s learning outcomes are referred to as ABC-TIP (assessment, behavior support, collaboration, teaching, interpersonal relations, and professionalism). More details of the undergraduate program are documented at education.byu.edu/cpse/bs.

Special Education Postbaccalaureate Licensure Program

The postbaccalaureate special education licensure program is for educators who have completed a baccalaureate degree from an accredited university and are seeking a license to teach special education. This program, offered through the BYU Division of Continuing Education, is designed to assist school districts in Utah to increase the number of certified special education teachers.

As with the undergraduate program, course work is completed on the BYU campus and within participating local school districts. Successful completion of the program leads to professional licensure in special education. Courses in this program are similar to the regular bachelor’s program. Students may also choose between two emphases: mild/moderate disabilities or severe disabilities. This program is specifically described at education.byu.edu/cpse/postbac.

Special Education Master’s Program

The special education master’s program prepares special educators to provide collaborative leadership that fosters moral development and improves the learning and social competence of children with exceptionalities and/or challenging behaviors. This innovative program prepares special educators to work collaboratively with multidisciplinary teams in their schools. The master’s program also models cooperative teaching and working with professionals in related disciplines.

The program serves licensed special educators in student cohorts of up to 15. Students complete 30 semester hours of course work and six hours of thesis credit in two years. Classes are offered in the evenings to accommodate students’ work schedules. New cohorts are admitted every two years. For more information, please visit education.byu.edu/cpse/master.

Preparing Educators for Gifted and Talented Students

The McKay School also cooperates with the BYU–Public School Partnership to administer a gifted and talented endorsement that meets Utah State Office of Education (USOE) teacher licensing standards. Completion requires two years. Interested applicants must have a valid teaching license. For more information, contact Moya Kessig at the Utah State Office of Education at moya.kessig@schools.utah.gov.

Note: The McKay School also emphasizes English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction and diversity instruction. The McKay School encourages special educators to also pursue an ESL endorsement through the Teaching English Language Learner program (education.byu.edu/tell).

Please visit education.byu.edu/news/magazine/focus.
An Appropriate Education

It is easy to spot students who are gifted in athletics or in the performing arts; those whose talents are so advanced that they require supplementary or different training. It is not always as easy to pick out students who are gifted academically. However, they too need additional or enriched programs to challenge, engage, and interest them. When students receive an education appropriate to their needs, they can reach their full potential.

When I entered the history class of gifted students, it was evident that their teacher was not only prepared but gifted as well. There was excitement in the air. The first thing I noticed was that everyone was engaged in the topic. Curious about the subject matter, students were asking questions, making inferences, communicating with clarity, and collaboratively using their critical thinking skills—and they were having a good time. This high level of interest continued until the dismissal bell.

Did You Know?

► Thirty-two states mandate some level of gifted education services, but only six fully fund the mandate. Five states with mandates do not include any funding.
► Only five states require all teachers to receive preservice training in gifted and talented education.
► General education teachers in 36 states are not required to have any training on the nature and needs of gifted and talented students at any point in their careers.

“State of the Nation in Gifted Education,” National Association for Gifted Children

Working with Gifted

Programs and Activities

Programs and activities are offered to gifted as well as other interested students. They may be part of a gifted class or offered as an elective, an after-school program, a weekend event, or a summer session.

► Odyssey of the Mind
► Bright Ideas
► The Future Problem-Solving Program
► Talented Young Writers
► Writing Festival
► Youth Symphony
► History Fair
► Debate
► Creative Pursuit
► Mortor Math
► Mathematical Olympiad
► Academic Games
► Olympiad of the Mind
► Mock Trial
► PTA Reflections
► Foreign Language
► School Plays
► Spelling Bee
► Others

Within the Classroom

Teachers accommodate the needs of the gifted in a regular classroom working with individuals or small groups.

► Individualized instruction
► Independent study
► Curriculum compacting
► Ability grouping
► Cluster grouping
► One-on-one mentoring

Charter Schools

Many charter schools serve gifted students. Charter schools are public schools with open enrollment, attended by choice. They are elementary or secondary schools receiving public money and operating under different rules, regulations, and statutes but accountable for producing certain results set forth in their charter.

Magnet Schools

Magnet schools are also public schools on the elementary or secondary level with specialized courses or curricula. Magnet refers to how the schools draw students from across the normal, defined school boundaries.
Special Education

“Although the students at Oakridge School struggle with difficulties and disabilities affecting their minds and bodies, there is a spirit within each of them that is untouched, aware, and engaged. We believe this spirit is capable and desirous of growing in capacity and capability.”

—DR. RICHARD KAY, PRINCIPAL

Special education teachers serve children and youth with a variety of disabilities. A small number of students have severe cognitive, emotional, or physical disabilities, and special education teachers primarily teach them life skills and basic literacy. The majority of special education teachers work with children and youth who have mild to moderate disabilities that require modification of the general education curriculum to meet the child’s individual needs along with appropriate remedial instruction. Additionally, early intervention is essential in educating children with disabilities.

Speech and Language Pathology
Speech-language pathologists (speech therapists) assess, diagnose, treat, and help to mitigate disorders related to speech, language, cognitive communication, voice, swallowing, and fluency.

School-Based Physical Therapy
School physical therapy intervention is designed to help the student move as independently as possible in the school environment; participate in classroom activities; maintain and change positions in the classroom; and manage stairs, restrooms, and the cafeteria.

EagleEyes
EagleEyes is technology that allows a person with a severe physical disability to communicate and access information by using his/her eyes or head movement to manipulate a computer through electrodes placed on the head.

Thirteen Disabilities That Qualify for Special Education Services
- Specific learning disability
- Hearing impairment
- Speech or language impairment
- Visual impairment
- Intellectual disability
- Emotional disturbance
- Orthopedic impairment
- Autism
- Traumatic brain injury
- Other health impairment
- Deaf-blindness
- Multiple disabilities
- Developmental delay (ages three through nine)

All states require teachers to be licensed. Traditional licensing requires the completion of a special education teacher-training program and at least a bachelor’s degree, although some states require a master’s degree.
Alumni Happenings

Emerita
Bonnie Wilson Lucido

Bonnie Lucido’s life has been filled with service and blessing all my life,” she said. She feels she has been where she was supposed to be to experience those opportunities. She spent 20 years at BYU in communication disorders and special education, retiring in 1999.

Bonnie received her bachelor’s degree from BYU in audiology and speech therapy before beginning her work in Nebo School District. After earning her master’s degree, she helped to set up a residential treatment and research program working with children who had communication disorders that interfered with their learning. The program was housed in Springville, Utah, but participants came from several surrounding counties. Many other programs followed.

Bonnie continued her studies at the University of Iowa, then worked with young children in Iowa who had unintelligible speech and parents who thought them mentally challenged. All the children taught by Bonnie’s methods were understandable by the time they entered kindergarten.

Through centers, agencies, and grants, Bonnie has also trained parents as well as doctors and their staffs to work with children with various disabilities. She taught parents how to become advocates for the rights of those with disabilities. Through the years she has seen laws pass to cover all children.

Upon returning to Utah, she earned her PhD from the University of Utah. She worked at the Utah State Developmental Center before coming to BYU. She has been active in the Utah Speech-Language and Hearing Association and has served as president of that organization.

Alumni
Adnan Aabed
Class of 2006

Adnan Aabed was working as an English language teacher at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees in a Near East school when he met a BYU alumnus who told him about the educational leadership program at the McKay School. He was encouraged to apply, which he did, and he graduated with a PhD in 2006. He became principal at Iqra Academy of Utah, an Islamic school, before moving to Michigan. Unable to return to the Gaza Strip, he is serving the Arab American population as principal of Oakland International Academy in Detroit. Dr. Aabed was hired to teach fifth grade in the Alpine School District. Feeling it imperative to be continually involved in learning and professional development, he earned an MEd from Southern Utah University, with a concentration in literacy-specific instruction. In 2007 he became an instructional coach for new fifth- and sixth-grade teachers in Alpine District, modeling her excellent skills as an educator and sharing her passion for learning. In 2009 she was one of 100 national recipients of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. She and her husband, Brian, are the parents of one son, with another on the way.

Sandy L-ching Lee
Class of 1988

Sandy L-ching Lee graduated from National Taiwan University in 1973 and came to BYU for her master’s degree in educational psychology in 1988. She also has her teaching certification for special and gifted education. She has taught in Utah and China, and at present she teaches in Riverside, California. Sandy says that while she was at BYU she acquired a habit of ongoing learning that she shares enthusiastically with her students. She feels that teaching is a blessing because of the opportunity to shape so many young minds.

Orson Scott Card: Friend of Education

A Teacher Who Influenced My Life

Ida Huber passed away several years ago, after a long decline. It was essential to realize that this bright, funny, kind, enthusiastic teacher had her memory stolen by Alzheimer’s a bit too late.

Mrs. Huber was my high school English teacher in my sophomore year at Mesa High School in Arizona, and English was my best subject. But that isn’t why I loved her. It was the way she taught—full of love for her subject, with absolute clarity, and with a habit of digressing to the most marvelous places.

For instance, in talking about Shakespeare, she suddenly jumped off into a discussion of the difference between singing in Shakespeare’s day and bel canto singing now. “No vibrato,” she said. “They sang like me.” Whereupon she demonstrated that pure, clear tone. For instance, in talking about Shakespeare, she suddenly jumped off into a discussion of the difference between singing in Shakespeare’s day and bel canto singing now. “No vibrato,” she said. “They sang like me.” Whereupon she demonstrated that pure, clear tone.

She saw great promise in me and even went to the school administration to try to get them to let me go to college right away, essentially skipping the last two years of high school. They told her no, but I was stunned that she had attempted it at all—especially because I never asked her to or even hinted that I wanted to. She simply believed that I was ready for college and the rest of high school would waste my time.

What she didn’t realize was that I was already getting college-level English grammar and literature—from her. She was, in fact, my last teacher of grammar, of the bones of English, and my best teacher of English literature until I entered graduate school.

It wasn’t just me. All my friends looked forward to her class; we talked about it after it ended. It was like being in love. Whenever I’m playing with language, or writing with it, there she is in my mind, enjoying the sport as much as I do.

Read more at housed.com.
Measuring Autism: A Problem of Epidemic Proportions

**Purpose**
Tina Dyches, a professor in the McKay School's Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education, recently presented information on the increasing problem of autism. She explains that the autism spectrum is a large umbrella that covers five disorders: autism, Asperger's syndrome, Rett's syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder, and PDD-Not Otherwise Specified (a diagnosis for children who may exhibit traits of the autism disorders but do not meet the criteria to be classified in any one of them).

**The Facts**
Autism spectrum disorder is now diagnosed in 1 in 80 children (1 in 58 boys), according to the Center for Disease Control. Many refer to this as an autism epidemic, but Dyches poses a relevant question: "Is it a measurement issue?"

Guidelines have been established to diagnose children with any of the five disorders on the autism spectrum. For example, a child with autism must exhibit at least two symptoms in the category of social interaction, nonverbal behaviors, peer relationships, or social-emotional reciprocity; at least one symptom in communication, and at least one pattern of disordered behavior, abnormal preoccupation, inflexible adherence to routines, or repetitive motor mannerisms. However, even if the system of diagnosis appears clear and specific on the surface, the reality is that diagnosing children on the autism spectrum is extremely complex.

**Important Information**
According to Dyches, the spectrum of autism disorders is huge, and behavior and development vary considerably among individuals diagnosed on this spectrum. Sometimes children with autism are misdiagnosed as having mental retardation. "Just because a child is nonverbal and non-social does not mean he could not have a gifted IQ," Dyches told students and faculty. "We have at least seven students along the autism spectrum here at BYU."

Variation in research methodologies makes it difficult to accurately diagnose autism. In a recent study, surveyors took all the medical records and school administration records for Utah children ages five to 18 to determine the prevalence of autism in the state. This method differs from another study in which researchers phoned parents and asked the question "Has a randomly selected child ever been told he has an autistic disorder?" Critical questions of this study included the following: How was the child randomly identified? Did a doctor or a health care provider diagnose the child?

**Recent Appointments**
Two administrative changes have occurred at the David O. McKay School of Education since fall of 2009. Dean K. Richard Young announced the appointment of Charles Graham as the new associate dean of the McKay School. Charles joined the McKay School faculty as an assistant professor in the Department of Instructional Psychology and Technology. The professional research interests he brings to the school include innovations in blended learning environments. For more information about Dr. Graham, please visit education.byu.edu/news/news659.html.

Nancy Wentworth was appointed the new chair of the Department of Teacher Education (TEd) after serving as an associate dean for the McKay School of Education for more than a year. Her top priority is to continue restructuring the elementary education program by creating a preservice program that blends the theories and practice of teaching so that candidates are well prepared to engage students in learning. For more information about Dr. Wentworth's appointment, please visit education.byu.edu/news/news652.html.

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**Joint Family Literacy Project**
The McKay School of Education is collaborating with the Harold B. Lee Library in a joint family literacy project this year. The initiative is a collection of student-run projects brought together through faculty mentors to promote literacy and reading in families and to encourage lifelong learning.

**Stud Guide**
Roní Jo Draper of the Department of Teacher Education is working to improve the effectiveness of course study guides.

**CITES**
The office of the Center for Improvement of Teacher Education and Schooling (CITES) was recently restructured to include three divisions: Education Support, Education Research, and Professional Development. Under the new structure, three major contributors to the new tripartite will be (i) the McKay School and the arts and sciences units, (ii) the public schools in the five partnership districts, and (iii) the families and/or community. Steven Baugh and Tiffany Hall of the CITES Department will head the Education Support and Professional Development divisions. Tim Smith of the Counseling Psychology and Special Education Department will head the Education Research division.

**School Psychology Professors of the Year**
Last spring students graduating in the Education Specialist Program chose Ellie Young as School Psychology Professor of 2009. Both students and faculty agree that Young's exceptional teaching and her many efforts to promote and strengthen the school psychology program at BYU qualify her for this award.

**Special Education Coordinator**
Michelle Marchant of the Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education has been selected to serve as the department's special education coordinator. In this position she will direct student support and advisement services, handle course scheduling, and oversee the department's fieldwork, including summer practicum and student teaching. She will also be responsible for coordinating the program structure with various committees of the BYU Education Preparation Program and for meeting accreditation requirements.

**Outstanding Work**
Three MSE alumni and one student were recognized at the Utah Association of School Psychologists (UASP) conference for their outstanding work in the field of school psychology. Lisa Dickison, Veronica Gorgueiro, Melissa Leininger, and Leah Voorheis. Award recipients are nominated by university faculty, colleagues, or members of the UASP executive board. Four of the six 2009 award winners come from the McKay School, demonstrating the quality of the McKay School psychologist program.
Robert Patterson

With sadness we announce the unexpected death of our esteemed colleague and friend Robert (Bob) Patterson. He passed away peacefully during the night of March 21, 2010. Dr. Patterson was a former dean of the McKay School, serving from 1991 to 2003. He was a lifelong educator and author. He will be greatly missed.

Cluff Lecture

Dr. George Batsche, professor and co-director of the Institute for School Reform in the School Psychology Program at the University of South Florida, was the featured speaker at the seventh annual Benjamin Cluff Jr. Lecture sponsored by the David O. McKay School of Education. The lecture was held last March. Dr. Batsche is a strong proponent of data-based problem solving. He spoke on the topic “Response to Intervention,” a concept based on using data to inform teaching.

You’re Invited

The Second English Language Learner Symposium

BYU Wilkinson Student Center

Teacher Celebration, June 10th; Symposium, June 11th. For complete details and registration, visit education.byu.edu/ellsymposium/2010.

Arts Express Summer Conference for Elementary Educators

Riverton High School, June 15–16, 2010

Watch the Web for information about McKay School 2010 Homecoming activities.

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Sara Hacken: Advocate for the Gifted Student

What do you do if your family moves to a new area, looks for gifted/talented programs, and finds none? If you’re Sara Hacken, you go back to the university to earn a master’s degree in educational administration, add a teaching credential and a gifted/talented endorsement, and finally volunteer to be an intern in your children’s school district. “People can complain, but you need to do something positive. Nothing is going to change anything about it.”

Sara was given a small desk, a filing cabinet, and time to research her efforts. But currently one of her grandsons is in her junior high class, and the difference.”

Sara’s goal has been to meet the needs of all children. Many services and ideas offered to the gifted have been adopted into the general curriculum. Only one of Sara’s four children was able to benefit from her mother’s efforts, but currently one of her grandsons is in her junior high class, and teaching him has been rewarding.

In the fall of 2009, the first Sara Hacken Service Award was announced by her district to recognize Sara’s work. It was presented to her with thanks for the years she dedicated to building the gifted program.

Sara concludes, “I have had such an interesting career. I wouldn’t change anything about it.”

As a district president for the American College of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. He will preside over the southwest district of the United States, which consists of Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, California, and Hawaii. Prusak, who specializes in children’s health, will lead the regional organization in its efforts to advocate, research, publish, and create standards for health in the United States.

New STEM Strand

A new STEM (Science Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) strand has been added to the teacher education curriculum for their project “Development of a Scalable and Sustainable Infrastructure for Global, Collaborative Engineering Design Education.” Davies and his associates plan to develop an approach to learning that enables students to acquire global competencies.

National Health Alliance

Keven Prusak, an associate professor in the Physical Education Teacher Education program, which resides in the Department of Teacher Education, was elected as a district president for the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. He will preside over the southwest district of the United States, which consists of Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, California, and Hawaii. Prusak, who specializes in children’s health, will lead the regional organization in its efforts to advocate, research, publish, and create standards for health in the United States.

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Deanna DeVore was a recipient of the Fritz B. Burns Foundation Scholarship and recently graduated from the McKay School of Education.

A puddle in the ocean of teaching

Once a teacher of mine said, “The day you think you know everything about teaching is the day you should quit.” I never understood this until I entered my first practicum class and discovered that my knowledge was a puddle in the ocean of teaching. I have helped monolingual and bilingual students, students with disabilities, students who struggle, students who excel, and plain-old regular students. From each child I learn something new, and from each experience my puddle of knowledge has grown larger.

Deanna

EVERY GIFT MATTERS

To fund scholarships that provide needed financial aid to students in the McKay School of Education, please contact Bonnie Taylor at 801-422-9157 or bonnie_taylor@byu.edu:
education.byu.edu/giving