



Advocacy for Gifted and Talented in New York

National Excellence: A Case for Developing American's Talent

U.S. Department of Education - Office of Education

U.S. Department of Education - Office of Educational Research and Improvement

**Please keep in mind that the following foreword and article were written in October of 1993 but the message remains the same.*

More than 20 years have elapsed since the last national report on the status of educating gifted and talented students. Much has changed since that report alerted Americans to the pressing needs of these youngsters and challenged policymakers to provide them with a better education.

National Excellence: The Case for Developing America's Talent discusses these changes. It also describes the "quiet crisis" that continues in how we educate top students. Youngsters with gifts and talents that range from mathematical to musical are still not challenged to work to their full potential. Our neglect of these students makes it impossible for Americans to compete in a global economy demanding their skills.

Americans can celebrate improvements over the past two decades in how we educate gifted and talented students. The public is more aware that these students have special needs that are seldom met. The number of programs for gifted and talented youngsters has grown substantially. Many states have enacted legislation encouraging local school districts to provide special opportunities for high-achieving and talented students. And, most significantly, model programs for gifted and talented students have challenged educators to improve curriculum and teaching strategies and encouraged them to raise expectations for all students.

But American education is now at a turning point--one that requires us to reach beyond current programs and practices. As the nation strives to improve its schools, the concerns of students with outstanding talents must not be ignored. International tests comparing American students with those in other countries show that students at all levels of achievement are not performing as well as students in many other countries. It is clear that many more American students must learn more complex material, and to do this they must work harder.

All of our students, including the most able, can learn more than we now expect. But it will take a major national commitment for this to occur. By recommending ways to move beyond our "quiet crisis," this report can point us in the right direction.

Richard W. Riley

Secretary of Education