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Gifted Education In China by Vicki L. Vaughn

On December 4th, thirty-nine delegates (two met us in China) representing fifteen states departed from the Los Angeles airport at 11:30 p.m. to China. The delegates were part of the People to People Ambassadors Program and were chosen from members of the National Association for Gifted Children. The delegation leader was NAGC President, Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska and the co-leader was Dr. Chwee Qwek, the doctoral student of the year from NAGC and current member of the Ministry of Education in Singapore. Most members of the delegation were educators from public or private schools or universities. The delegates were to visit three major cities in China: Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai and hold discussions with educational leaders and visit schools that educate China's most highly able students. The delegation would also visit several of the most exciting cultural sites including the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, Tiannamen Square, the Sacred Way of the Ming Tombs and the Yuyan Garden.

This trip provided the delegation with some "snapshots" of what education for high ability learners is like in three cities of the world's most populous country. Although I'm sure education in China's largest cities and education in the country's most rural and remote areas is quite different and what we observed was indeed a small part of the entire educational system, the visits left me with some overall impressions:

1. Although, the educators we met with were often very wary about calling their students "gifted," the rigorous exams and the competition to get into the highly selective programs and schools we visited would definitely qualify these students as highly gifted in the United States.

2. Currently, China has very little emphasis on training teachers in differentiating instruction or developing strategies to deal with gifted students effectively.

3. Many of the programs we visited are currently emphasizing the social and emotional needs of their highly able students. China's policy of allowing only one child per family has put a great deal of pressure on that single child not to "let down his/her family." Therefore, getting into and succeeding in the best programs and schools has become even more competitive. Schools are cognizant of the pressure being put on these children.

4. China is a growing and dynamic country and since the outside world has been opened up to its people, business and tourism have become more important to the changing economy. As a result, the Chinese seem to place a greater emphasis on the acquisition of other languages. Many of the programs and schools we visited had children that were fluent in English and other languages by 7th grade. How many American schools could boast the same thing? Would we find American students fluent in Mandarin Chinese in our schools by 7th grade? If American children are going to compete in a global economy, the study of foreign language in the United States needs to be rethought.

5. China values science and technology much more than we seem to do in many public schools. With the advent of "No Child Left Behind," many schools are placing greater emphasis on reading and math and science and other subjects are taking a "back seat." How will students in America compete with the knowledge and problem solving abilities of students from countries who have a different emphasis?

6. China finds its brightest students and begins educating them in special schools and special programs at early ages and especially in secondary school. These programs range from special schools that emphasize foreign language to after school week-end enrichment programs that stress science and technology. The country is using a variety of programming including the internet and e-mail to assure these students get what they need to develop special talents and abilities and do well in local, national, and international competitions.

Visiting China was an unbelievable learning opportunity for the delegation. We are still processing the information, programs, and schools we visited and discussing ways in which this information can best be shared. It is my hope that more trips like this one can be taken by American educators, and we can learn from what others around the world are doing to educate all students especially those who will be our leaders of tomorrow. Everywhere we visited in China, we found dedicated educators who wanted to discuss issues, share ideas, and form "exchanges." The world is truly getting smaller and we must do everything possible to make sure our children's talents and abilities are developed in school and that they will be able to compete in a global economy.

The Indiana Association for the Gifted and the Indiana Department of Education, Division of Exceptional Learners, are pleased to sponsor the following evening session during the 2006 Conference "Advocacy: All Voices Count"

"Parents as Partners for Advocacy"

Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**Thursday, February 23, 2006
7:00 - 8:30 PM**

This session is free and open to the public - please encourage parent attendance.

The Marriott North
3645 River Crossing Parkway, Indianapolis
(317) 705-0000



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**“Genius is one per cent inspiration
and ninety-nine per cent
perspiration”**

Thomas A. Edison, 1931



Attention Class of 2010!!!

The Honor/AP Orientation for student and parents will be Wednesday January 25, 2006 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. The available opportunities will be presented and you will have the opportunity to have your questions answered. The scheduling process for class will begin later this month. The program will be in the auditorium at Jeff.

**Spring Testing Dates in LSC: April 24-May 5,
NWEA for all students in in grades 2– 8.**

SAT Schedule for 2005-06

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Fee (\$21.00)
January 28	December 22	January 4
April 1	February 24	March 8
May 6	April 3	April 12
June 3	April 28	May 10

Basic fee for the SAT Reasoning is \$41.50. More information can be found @ www.collegeboard.com.
The contact person at Jeff HS for SAT, ACT or the PSAT is Mrs. Joyce Grimble, 772-4700 ext. 2026.

ACT testing for 2006

Test Dates	Reg. Deadline	Late Fee (\$18.00)
February 11	January 6	January 20
June 10	May 5	May 19

Basic fee for the ACT is \$29.99.
More information can be found @ www.act.org. Contact phone number is 319-337-1270.

BROAD BASED PLANNING

The Broad Based Planning Team meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- **January 25, Wednesday; and**
- **March 15, Wednesday.**

All meetings are scheduled to begin at **3:45 p.m.**, and will be held at the **Hiatt Administration Center**. The purpose of these meetings is for any interested parties; parents, teachers, counselors, administrators and community members to discuss issues important to the Challenge Program within the Lafayette School Corporation.

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND.