

CEC & NAGC Rebuttal to Elimination of Javits Act in H.R. 1891

The *Setting New Priorities in Education Spending Act*, H.R. 1891, sacrifices America's brightest students in the guise of cutting education costs by eliminating the Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act. In its 22-year history, the Javits Act has resulted in the identification and specialized education of thousands of students who otherwise would have been left without the gifted education interventions needed to succeed. As the sole federal program dedicated to examining ways to identify and support high-ability learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, research funded under the Javits Act has demonstrated that not only is there high levels of talent and ability in every population, but the strategies that are successful with many of these students can also help improve achievement for all students. CEC and NAGC urge Congress to retain this program so important to developing talent for the nation's future.

Myth: Javits is Ineffective

Review of the facts:

- U.S. Department of Education has rated the Javits program as meeting or exceeding its indicators for success, such as:
 - **Effective professional development** focusing on gifted and talented education: EXCEEDED TARGET
 - **Significant gains in academic achievement** among target student populations: EXCEEDED TARGET

By design, the Javits program is strictly focused on the development of evidence-based best practices in identifying and serving students who are traditionally not represented in gifted education programs – students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, English language learners, and students with disabilities – who may have circumstances that mask their high-ability. The Javits program has developed sensitive assessment tools to identify these student populations.

Additionally, the Javits program has resulted in producing effective professional development models and materials which have resulted in significant academic achievement gains for this underserved population.

Myth: Javits is Duplicative

Review of the facts:

- The Javits program is the **ONLY** federal program focused on the needs of gifted & talented students;
- The Javits program funds the **ONLY** federal research being done in the field of gifted education, and focuses on underserved students, who often are overlooked for advanced programs and services.

Myth: Javits Has Had “Extremely Limited Impact”

In its effort to eliminate “wasteful” programs, H.R. 1891 wrongly claims the Javits program has had an “extremely limited impact” as the rationale to eliminate this sole federal investment in gifted education. A review of the facts quickly contradicts this claim:

- **Gifted Education Curriculum Developed by the College of William and Mary** as a result of multiple Javits grants has impacted more than 600,000 students, has been distributed to school districts in all 50 states and 28 countries, and has trained 60,000 teachers resulting in:
 - Improved student performance on standardized assessments, including for students who are eligible for Title I;
 - African-American students had greater growth trajectories on achievement tests (ITBS) and critical-thinking assessments;
 - Enhanced expectations for all students;
 - Lasting professional development.
- **Project U-STARS~PLUS:** Originally, this grant was a collaboration between the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill and three rural districts in North Carolina to use high quality science instruction to support the early recognition of high potential for K-3 students from economically disadvantaged and/or culturally linguistically diverse families.

Although grant funding has ended, U-STARS~PLUS has proved to be a self-sustaining program that continues to expand. It is currently being implemented in 38 school districts and 100 schools in North Carolina, Colorado, Louisiana, Ohio, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Over 1,000 K-3 teachers are involved and more than 21,000 young children have been impacted. The original team at UNC-Chapel Hill continues to provide contact support to teachers participating in U-STARS~PLUS.

- **Project M3: Mentoring Mathematical Minds:** Project M3 math curriculum for students in grades 3-5 is used in 46 states and foreign countries including Singapore and Korea, though it’s original focus was on 10 schools of varying socioeconomic levels in Connecticut and Kentucky. Additionally, M3 has been modified for younger students as part of a National Science Foundation Grant.

M3 consists of a series of advanced math curriculum – one to two grades levels beyond the regular curriculum -- and focuses on the development of critical and creative thinking skills in problem solving.

Myth: Javits is Unnecessary Since Gifted Education is Addressed at the State/Local Level

Review of the facts:

- 13 states provide \$0 in state funding; 5 states spend \$1 million or less. Availability of gifted education services varies not only between states but within – more advantaged, better resourced school districts are more likely to have services available for high-ability students.
- Although the majority of high-ability students are in the general education classroom, only 5 states require all teachers to receive pre-service training in gifted and talented education.
- By national and international measures, states are doing a poor job of serving and challenging high-ability students.
- According to 2009 PISA results, the **U.S. ranked 14th in reading, 20th in science, and 28th in math, behind many other industrialized nations**¹.
- The percentage of student scoring at the advanced level varies considerably among the 50 states, but **none does well in international comparison**.²
- High-achieving students from disadvantaged backgrounds, when compared to their more advantaged peers, are **twice as likely to drop out of school**; more likely to **lose ground as they move forward in their schooling**; and are **less likely to attend or graduate from college**.³
- **A growing “excellence gap”** – the achievement gap at the top levels of academic performance on state and NAEP assessments -- between African American, Hispanic, or students from low-income backgrounds and their Caucasian and more advantaged peers that will take decades to close.
 - 9.4% of Caucasian students scored at the advanced level on the 8th grade NAEP in 2007, yet only 1.8% of Hispanic, 1% of African American, and 1.7% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch scored at the advanced level.⁴
- 44% of children from low socioeconomic backgrounds who are considered **high achieving when they enter school are no longer high achieving by 5th grade**.⁵
- **African American and Hispanic students are underrepresented in gifted education programs:** African American students represent 17% of the total student population, while their enrollment in gifted programs is 9%; Hispanic students represent 20% of the total student population while their enrollment in gifted programs is 12%.⁶
- **90% of teachers in a national survey reported that they would like more professional development to better educate high-ability students.**⁷

¹ Hanushek, E., Peterson, P., Woessmann, L., (2010). *U.S. Math Performance in Global Perspective: How Well Does Each State Do at Producing High-Achieving Students?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

² Hanushek, E., Peterson, P., Woessmann, L., (2010). *U.S. Math Performance in Global Perspective: How Well Does Each State Do at Producing High-Achieving Students?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

³ Wyner, J., Bridgeland, J.M., & Diulio, J. J. (2008). *The achievement trap: How America is failing millions of high-achieving students from lower income families.* Lansdowne, VA: Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

⁴ Plucker, J. A., Burroughs, N., & Song, R. (2010). *Mind the (other) gap: The growing excellence gap in K-12 education.* Bloomington: Indiana University, Center for Evaluation & Education Policy.

⁵ Wyner, J., Bridgeland, J.M., & Diulio, J. J. (2008). *The achievement trap: How America is failing millions of high-achieving students from lower income families.* Lansdowne, VA: Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

⁶ Office of Civil Rights. (2006). *Projections for the nation of students receiving gifted and talented services.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

⁷ Farkas, S., & Duffett, A. (2008). *High-achieving students in the era of NCLB: Results from a national teacher survey.* Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute.