

What We Didn't Know: Reflections on Surviving School as a Gifted Kid

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Mitchell Coughran I'm a student in the Wentzville School District who has been involved in the Horizons gifted program since 2nd grade. The gifted program in my district has been instrumental in my academic and social development. I became friends, shared ideas, and grew within this community of learners where we could make fools of ourselves without judgement. It's made me very thankful to have the options that I did, and to still have the friends that I met what feels like so many years ago.



Aaron Pearson Aaron is in his 11th year as a gifted education teacher at Bryan Middle School in Francis Howell. Aaron wasn't a huge fan of school, so he's designed his classroom to be the opposite of everything that he did not like. He believes the importance of gifted education lies in strong relationships and allowing kids to be themselves. Gifted education gives an outlet to kids they often do not get anywhere else. Aaron avoids yellow starburst, eats entire sleeves of Oreos in one sitting, and often acts as his wife's third child.



Preethi Sriraman I'm a senior at Marquette High School. I've spent most of my time in school in the gifted program, and gifted education is important to me because of the resources it's given to me to be successful academically and comfortable socially. It's shaped my understanding of gifted thinking and has helped me recognize when to seek help and reach for more. Because gifted education has helped me so much, I intend to pursue studying it alongside special education when I go to college next year.



Bethany Zolman My daughter Alexandra is 14 and has been part of gifted programs in the Francis Howell school district through elementary and middle school. I joined the Gifted Support Network as a board member when it first started. I have helped with (and attended) many of the programs for parents and my daughter has joined in enrichment classes. Many of my ideas about gifted programs have changed over time and I very much appreciate opportunities to talk openly and honestly with other parents and educators.