

GIFTED EDUCATION IN NEW YORK CITY: Getting at the Heart of the Equity Question

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Friday, October 29th, 2021

Panelists and Links

Alina Adams, New York School Talk

- https://newyorkschooltalk.org/author/alina_adams/
- <http://www.alinaadams.com>
- <http://nycschoolsecrets.com>

Tai Abrams, Admissions Squad

- <https://admissionsquad.org/meet-our-team>
- <https://taiabrams.com>

Dr. Elissa Brown, GiftedNYS

- <https://giftednys.org/about-us/our-team/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/elissa-brown-88160160>

Dr. Joy Lawson Davis, Scholar & Author of "Bright, Talented & Black"

- <https://drjoylawsondavis.com>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/drjoybrighttalentedblack>

Austina De Bonte, Smart is not Easy

- <https://www.smartisnoteasy.com>
- <https://www.facebook.com/smartisnoteasy>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/austinadebonte>

Dr. Donna Y. Ford, Professor, Consultant, Author, Advocate

- <https://www.drdonnayford.com>
- <https://ehe.osu.edu/directory/?id=ford.255>

Hector Rivera, Research and Development Institute for Gifted Students, Puerto Rico Parents Association for the Gifted

- <https://www.facebook.com/institutodotados.pr>
- <http://www.prgiftedinstitute.org>

See *Jim Delisle's article on differentiation:*

- <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-differentiation-doesnt-work/2015/01>

Webinar Chat Notes

The following chat notes have been edited for brevity and personal comments have been removed.

00:58:59 Tim Kulikowski - The G Word: Welcome to panelists and attendees. If you have any questions, please use the Q&A function on Zoom to post your questions. We'll be answering those during the last 15 minutes of the webinar. Thank you for being here!

00:59:09 Joi: Littleton, CO 80128

00:59:10 Susan: Potomac, MD

00:59:18 john: 97304

00:59:26 ed: 11215

00:59:29 Zerelina: 98053

00:59:33 Jennifer: 07739, Little Silver, NJ

00:59:33 Roxane: 54401

00:59:35 Donna: Seattle WA 98121

00:59:49 Egle: from Seattle area 98072

00:59:55 Betsy: Boulder CO 80302

00:59:57 Katharina: MA 02459

01:00:01 Susan: Very concerned about the direction of gifted programming nationwide. People in charge do not understand what gifted means/needs.

01:00:27 Tim Kulikowski - The G Word: Austina De Bonte, Smart is not Easy
<https://www.smartisnoteasy.com>
<https://www.facebook.com/smartisnoteasy>
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/austinadebonte>

01:02:40 Rene: Snoqualmie, WA 98065. I've been an active advocate in my own district for over a decade. In the wake of COVID we are forming a local Gifted 501c3 and beginning to really try to connect to advocate beyond our local district. I've become convinced that the key is legislative change at the State and Federal level.

01:03:42 Tim Kulikowski - The G Word: Dr. Elissa Brown, GiftedNYS
<https://giftednys.org/about-us/our-team/>
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/elissa-brown-88160160>

01:15:16 Gary: Los Angeles 90037

01:15:26 Sandra: Seattle 98103

01:15:40 Pat: Richmond, VA 23224

01:15:41 Gerry: Melrose, MA 02176

01:15:46 Susan: No gifted programming in DC at all - the nation's capital! Limited programs in MD.

01:15:50 Lisa: Chapel Hill, NC 27517

01:16:02 Tim Kulikowski - The G Word: Tai Abrams, Admissions Squad
<https://admissionsquad.org/meet-our-team>
<https://taiabrams.com>

01:16:06 Christine: Sumner, WA 98374

01:16:11 Margaret: 97202 Portland Oregon

01:17:46 Lynn: Richmond, VA 23219

01:18:46 Margaret: There should be an entry point at every grade level. We don't deny SpEd services to students who missed a kindergarten evaluation,

01:19:55 Shana: Brooklyn NY 11226, went to NYC gifted classes myself and have 2 2e kids in NYC gifted schools.

01:20:28 Tim Kulikowski - The G Word: If you have any questions, please use the Q&A function on Zoom to post your questions. We'll be answering those during the last 15 minutes of the webinar. Thank you for being here!

01:20:58 Tim Kulikowski - The G Word: Alina Adams, New York School Talk
https://newyorkschooltalk.org/author/alina_adams/

<http://www.alinaadams.com>
<http://nycschoolsecrets.com>

- 01:22:39 Margaret: About Lowell HS in California: School of Dreams by Edward Humes
- 01:23:35 Elissa Brown: www.giftednys.org
- 01:24:45 Elissa Brown: NYC currently has a shortage 7000 teachers. How are they going to be able to reach ALL students, including GT??
- 01:27:56 Alina Adams: www.NYCSchoolSecrets.com
- 01:29:05 Tim Kulikowski - The G Word: Dr. Joy Lawson Davis, Scholar & Author of "Bright, Talented & Black"
<https://drjoylawsondavis.com>
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/drjoybrighttalentedblack>
- 01:30:24 Gail: My 7 year old twins are Black and qualified for city-wide gifted, but could get a space anywhere. We tried a pricy private school that didn't live up to the pretty promises, then moved to a unzoned NYC public school G&T that was great in some ways (but required a *long* commute), and now a gifted private school - but that only can generally only support a grade and a half ahead...and there are *very few* Black kids. 🙄 I'm at the point that I want to start a social justice oriented micro school for gifted kids of color in my neighborhood/11226!
- 01:30:25 ed: Given that "gifted programming" is not racist, has the historical administration of gifted programs been racially biased? If so, how do we avoid that going forward?
- 01:30:39 Susan: I am so glad you are one of our warriors Joy!
- 01:32:09 Pat: Analogous to Prince Edward County's decision to close all schools rather than integrate.
- 01:34:05 Tai Abrams: Thomas Jefferson in Virginia! YUP!
- 01:34:19 Shana: Gail, hello 11226 neighbor!
- 01:35:39 Gail: Shana! Was just about to reach out to you when I saw the zip code! Will do! 👍
- 01:37:36 Gail: What's amazing is that they want to address the racial inequities of the G&T program, but refuse to factor race into the admissions system! And now they dismantle the program...which still leaves kids like mine in the lurch!
- 01:37:55 ed: Do these black homeschooling groups have a nat'l org?
- 01:39:42 Gail: Killing me softly! I'm homeschooling now in part for that reason! One of my kids has a long subway commute, isn't safe...but why risk it for a school that can't meet the needs of these kids and separate them from their community and kids that look like them?
- 01:40:08 Rene: Thank you Joy! 🙌🙌🙌
- 01:40:13 Gary: You are right Joy, there is no shortage of opportunity. It requires parents to go get it. Stop waiting around for it to be handed over on a silver platter
- 01:40:32 Tim Kulikowski - The G Word: Dr. Donna Y. Ford, Professor, Consultant, Author, Advocate
<https://www.drdonnayford.com>
<https://ehe.osu.edu/directory/?id=ford.255>
- 01:41:51 Gail: @Ed- There are some, but a bunch are not active now and others emerging. Plus a bunch of that are focused on unschooling etc. ... 👍
- 01:42:54 Gary: You need to qualify equality. Be careful of getting rid of equality and treating people equally or we will be back in Jim Crow
- 01:44:57 Shana: Gail - I hear that, it's not worth it for little kids. We are also homeschooling one of my kids right now! citywide HS could not support her learning differences.
- 01:45:10 Gail: @Gary It's about the asking for *equity* - not just getting rid of "equality" as the goal...We can acknowledge differences and still do right by people... do even better than where we are now...
- 01:45:48 Gary: @ Gail Yes! context matters
- 01:46:14 Catalina: so true! I come from a poor family and have not had access to resources and only now as an adult I'm working hard to ditch past programming and revive my giftedness. I worked hard to put myself through uni and everything that I did and achieve was through hard work

and on my own. Have also suffered racism and I didn't even know what it was as where I'm from we didn't behave like so. I had many shocks through the years. I'm white and East European. If I dare to say I'm gifted I'm being picked on and bullied at work but I managed to get the management on my side and got support> We need to be vocal and stand our grounds wherever we are

- 01:47:30 Gail: I love these voices just laying it out there! It's such a relief! Thank you Marc for this space! Saw you through GHF and knew this would be a quality program!
- 01:47:53 Tai Abrams: G&T needs to be expanded into every school district with universal screening mechanisms. Absolutely!
- 01:48:28 Alina Adams: Into every school, Tai!
- 01:48:53 Cindy: Where do we get funding for both talent development and 2e support services for economically disadvantaged and marginalized learners?
- 01:49:04 Alina Adams: No reason why every school can't universally screen and identify students, then keep them in their own school for an appropriate education.
- 01:49:23 Cindy: we MUST take luck out of the equation!!!
- 01:49:32 Tai Abrams: We also need more teacher training programs for G&T programs. We need to build more capacity for it. YUP!
- 01:49:35 Elissa Brown: Gifted education is a right; not a privilege
- 01:49:36 Gail: This really is the moment to reimagine the whole system. We know on *so many levels* that "back to normal" is NOT going to cut it!
- 01:49:50 Cindy: Yes, Tai!
- 01:50:16 Lynne: If we could only look at Gifted as a learning need rather than a label, all students would get what they need in order to grow.
- 01:50:21 Cindy: Elissa--yes!!
- 01:50:37 Shana: yess Elissa
- 01:50:53 Tai Abrams: Agreed Elissa!
- 01:51:09 Cindy: need multiple universal measures
- 01:51:49 Gail: Gifted education should NOT mean a marginalized student can't learn in and with their community...in terms of identity and neighborhood.
- 01:52:10 Gail: Donna Ford 🤝🤝🤝🌹🌹🌹
- 01:52:27 ed: @Alina would love to know how you see Universal Screening plus serving all students in their current school work.
- 01:52:54 Tim Kulikowski - The G Word: Hector Rivera, Research and Development Institute for Gifted Students, Puerto Rico Parents Association for the Gifted
<https://www.facebook.com/institutodotados.pr>
- 01:53:43 Alina Adams: Every school should allow every student to move through every subject at their own pace. If that is available, then kids won't need to travel multiple miles, they can stay in their school, with their friends, but get an education fit for them.
- 01:54:30 Alina Adams: The idea that all kids develop on the same timetable is absurd. they are all of different heights in 2nd grade, why should they all be on the same level in every subject?
- 01:56:30 Gail: Yes, Alina! Agreed! That's why "getting gifted right" could have huge positive effects on the entire system!
- 01:56:38 Rene: My biggest concern about moving services to neighborhood schools instead of full time programs is that doing so BEFORE the mechanisms and professional development are fully implemented only results in almost the same experiences and outcomes of just erasing the gifted programming altogether. I would want to see some knowledge sought and some trust earned before people move to cluster grouping...
- 01:57:07 ed: @Alina - that seems reasonable, perhaps aspirational, but of course a large re-org of how most subjects are currently presented
- 01:57:24 Alina Adams: Even district and citywide programs do a bad job at differentiation.
- 01:57:54 Alina Adams: You may say I'm a dreamer... but I'm not the only one. ;)

01:57:58 Margaret: "walk to reading" and "walk to math" are low cost interventions that don't require a lot of training.

01:58:25 Alina Adams: Yes, Margaret, great point. most important point. it won't cost extra!

01:58:36 ed: I was able to do that in math, K-3rd grade at a private school, and in 7th grade at a public school

01:59:45 Rene: I love the idea of course self-selection, personalized education, personalized acceleration... I would LOVE to see that. Gifted classes are terribly flawed, but they do support some acceleration and some of the unique social and developmental needs that gifted children have. Gen ed classrooms don't recognize those non-academic needs.

02:00:21 Rene: Our district had a couple of schools that did walk to math for a couple of years. The teachers hated it and it was unceremoniously removed.

02:00:52 Gail: I didn't know about this program in PR, so glad to make that connection...👍

02:01:12 Marc Smolowitz: Please put your questions in the Q&A box, and we will go over them in just a few. :)

02:01:29 Alina Adams: My daughter tried advocating for herself when it came to moving from Algebra to Geometry, but the school wouldn't listen to a kid's voice. It wasn't till I got involved - and I didn't want to - but adults don't listen to kids!

02:02:14 Alina Adams: NYC used NNAT along with OLSAT for K-3 screening up until last year

02:02:35 Gail: And Alina, adults don't always listen to other adults either! 😊😏😞

02:02:40 Hector Rivera: Puerto Rico Gifted Institute web site in Spanish:
<http://www.prgiftedinstitute.org>

02:03:15 Elissa Brown: Yes Nancy, the OLSAT and NNAT but then Pearson combines them (even though they measure different constructs) into 1 score....crazy!

02:03:17 Alina Adams: Cheaper! Every district's favorite word!

02:04:10 Rene: @Austina Yes!

02:04:26 Chien: Growth mindset! 🙌🙌

02:05:19 Elissa Brown: Nurture intellectual capital!

02:05:21 Hector Rivera: I encourage you to see yesterday conversation about Latinx, and minorities and know Amaya's Story.

02:05:21 ed: More differentiation sounds great, but we can't even get classrooms down below 30+

02:05:58 Gail: G&T needs to be understood as part of the Special Ed conversation (beyond 2E), in such a way to transform the Special Ed convo... And THAT could remix education more generally...🙏🙏

02:06:42 Rene: If differentiation is not possible, then student choice makes it possible for students to self-differentiate. It's not what it should be, but it's better than expecting everyone to be at one level.

02:07:06 Gail: I hear you @ed - it's hard to be/stay optimistic or dream big... 😞

02:07:54 Margaret: typical city middle school teachers see well over 100 students a day--HS teachers often see more than 200--isn't reasonable to tell them to "differentiate"

02:08:10 Chien: Putting younger students with older ones create other social emotional issues

02:08:31 Rene: @Chien Only because it's not common.

02:08:32 Chien: Kids should be forced to commute hours a day.

02:08:44 Chien: Should NOT

02:08:51 Gail: Over an hour and a half ~ subway then bus transfer! For kindergarten

02:08:55 Gary: yes Rene. see Jim Delisle's article on differentiation
<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-differentiation-doesnt-work/2015/01>

02:11:18 Rene: Would love to see schools not get credit for great grade level scores from gifted students. I would love to see those students be assessed and scored on the level they're working on instead of on the age-grade level they are assigned.

02:11:49 Gail: I'm feeling overlap between school and prison in terms of who is helped by

moving ppl out of their community! Political power given to upstate residents based on incarcerated folks living in the prisons - and incarcerated folk not allowed to vote!

02:12:17 Elissa Brown: Donna Ford's Deficit vs Dynamic Thinking is one of the best articles ever!

02:12:38 Rene: "It's not rocket science!" Dr. Ford, you are amazing and I've always been thankful for the day I first heard you speak. THANK YOU for all of your work!!! Thank you for being good trouble!

02:12:40 Gail: 🙌🙌🙌🙌

02:15:22 Gary: thank you Tai. People have no idea what is put on principals

02:15:41 Margaret: ESSA could be a vehicle towards changing the metrics--if it was implemented with fidelity.

02:15:52 Gail: Whew...I might not be able to fix it all, but these speakers are giving me the needed inspiration to bloom where I'm planted! What can I do for Flatbush - that others can take as inspiration from? 🙌🙌

02:16:00 Rene: I was told by a director that they don't collect data and create growth plans for the gifted program because the state would only penalize them if they didn't meet it. Simply by including it in their school plan, they put themselves in an unnecessary position of being accountable. They like to choose "low hanging fruit" of raising a micro target within a remediation group...

02:16:09 Gail: The TEST PREP CRAP!

02:16:25 Donna Y. Ford: Thanks everyone for being passionate for equity and justice. Good trouble!!

02:16:49 Susan: These parents are out of control!

02:17:46 Tiffany: When you talk to the children in gifted and IB programs, the children whose parents test prepped them are struggling. They can't keep up in those gifted classes.

02:18:16 Elissa Brown: Then you are setting up for failure, because they take a test (from being prepped) and then are being placed in gifted classrooms and can't handle the complexity

02:18:52 Rene: Parents want their kids in gifted classes because they believe there is better instruction and more opportunity there. Creating gifted classes designed for neurodiverse (gifted) students has to be partnered with improving GEN ED instruction so that all students are getting appropriate opportunities to thrive based on their needs. THEN parents won't be so quick to want their children in gifted classes...

02:18:56 Elissa Brown: Teacher certification and training is paramount!

02:18:57 Rene: I think. Maybe.

02:19:22 Rene: Joy! Thank you! Teacher training! They do not know... And they don't know that they don't know!

02:19:27 Gail: I often mention that my Black babies blew the lid off the test, and the only prep was showing them the handful of sample questions at the end of the city booklet the night before! And folks still raising eyebrows when they show up... just like they did for me years ago.

02:19:51 Tai Abrams: Very few of the schools offer the certificate for gifted and talented

02:20:29 Margaret: Back to the trinity--funding, training, accountability

02:20:38 john: Yes, Joy!

02:20:42 Shana: I would say a majority of kids in our citywide G&T have outside tutors. Because they prepped for the test, they got in but have to spend the rest of their childhood trying to keep up.

02:21:38 Elissa Brown: Giftednys.org is working on legislating teacher training!

02:21:51 Tai Abrams: That's so critical Elissa!

02:22:01 Gail: And @Rene, we might need to talk about how parents connect their ego to their kids' ID as gifted! Just like parents end up with shame (!) around kids enrollment in Special Ed. 😞

02:22:30 Tiffany: The parents should be ashamed of themselves. They are going to raise an entire generation of children with anxiety issues and low-self esteem.

02:22:36 Hunter: PLACE NYC a 9000 person parent advocacy group is advocating for Expansion of G&T to serve the needs of all gifted children to be inclusive racially/ethnically and for ELL and 2E kids. PLACE Advocates for Universal Screening, Neighborhood and School Level Norms, Guaranteed gifted services for every child who qualifies within yellow bus distance (less than 5 miles from home) and a continuum of services to serve a broad range of gifted learners. i am the Co-Chair of PLACE's Gifted Working Group and co-penned this editorial outlining our advocacy.
<https://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/ny-oped-building-better-gifted-talented-20211001-hkkuvqnxfb6rl6w57ar3f2m7e-story.html>

02:23:34 Gail: It would be great if the chats could be archived with the replays somehow...

02:24:06 Rene: @Gail Yes. Schools absolute need to rethink how they teach parents to relate to the schools and education. With that glaring vacuum, parents are winging it and relying on each other. Some of them get good information. More don't. We need to create a culture of "community" with parents and TEACH them about all of these things so we're working together. At least, working together more.

02:24:39 Rene: Thank you all for taking the time to be here today. Thank you for your voices and your work.

02:25:33 Hunter: If you would like to learn more about PLACE NYC advocacy and help save and expand the program to serve all gifted students, you can learn more at <https://placenyc.org>.

02:27:30 Gail: @Rene - YES! I am thinking a lot about what a comprehensive parent education program would look like. Giving parents more tools to understand what happens in school and how to best advocate for their kids. It is so needed...

02:27:36 Ac: Proud parent of G&T, AdmissionSquad, Specialized High School and Prep for Prep 🍑

02:28:10 Gail: The systemic changes. Yes to this all day!

02:29:19 Cindy: absolutely, Donna

02:31:01 Rene: @Gail They really, REALLY don't know. I find that even educators don't know sometimes. There are a lot of missed opportunities. This isn't the old schoolhouse anymore. These are complex systems with lots of moving parts. Parents only see a couple of pieces. And they don't know how to address issues. "Go to the teacher" doesn't get most parents very far... And they don't know what to do next but get upset... It's a very uncomfortable dynamic.

02:31:09 Nami: Yes!

02:31:30 Gail: I so appreciated this space, especially after walking those Twitter streets surrounded by folks who don't even believe gifted kids *exist*... 😞

02:32:43 Ac: Gail, you're so correct 😊

02:33:44 Gail: Well said @Rene...and in NYC there is a lack of trust between teachers and parents that some track back to the teacher strike and parent strike decades ago...

02:33:54 john: Right on, Alina!

02:34:35 Gary: Great job Tai. Thank you for not buying the narrative

02:34:54 Chien: Agree Tai!

02:34:58 Ac: Thanks Tai 🙏

02:35:14 Gail: I could connect on this all day.

02:35:14 Hector Rivera: Well said Tai!

02:35:16 Austina De Bonte, Smart is not Easy: Looking for more reading? <http://tinyurl.com/seattlenyc>

02:35:27 Hector Rivera: well said Tai.

02:35:31 Chien: Absolutely

02:35:32 Gail: Yes, Marc!!

02:35:53 Tim Kulikowski - The G Word: Thank you for joining us today!

02:35:57 Gail: 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

02:36:08 Nami: Thank you!

02:36:12 Brenae: Thank you

02:36:14 Lisa: Thank you all

02:36:15

Austina De Bonte, Smart is not Easy: will do Shelagh! And congrats on your big news, I just heard!