



# Genius Denied: How to Stop Wasting Our Brightest Young Minds

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With all the talk of failing schools these days, we often forget that schools can fail their brightest students too. Gifted children forced into a "one size fits all" approach to schooling find themselves bored or frustrated, which can lead to underachievement, behavioral problems, or depression. Without sufficient challenges and resources, say Jan and Bob Davidson, America's brightest young minds languish, never reaching their full potential. Society can't afford that loss.

In *Genius Denied*, the Davidsons -- founders of a nonprofit institute that provides assistance to gifted children -- offer hope and practical advice to parents and students alike. Through their own experiences and those of the families they've worked with, the Davidsons show parents how to find an appropriate education for their children, when to go outside the school system, and how to create a support network with school authorities and other parents. *Genius Denied* shows that with commitment and creativity, gifted students can get the education they deserve, one that nurtures their talents and minds.

## Genius Denied: How to Stop Wasting Our Brightest Young Minds Details

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# From Reader Review Genius Denied: How to Stop Wasting Our Brightest Young Minds for online ebook

## Josh says

My cousin Cathy lent me this book for the plane ride from Seattle to Spokane. Its premise is that gifted children are being woefully underserved by the American education system. This is a slam dunk point and like many non-fiction books they belabor it repeatedly; thereby boring any gifted person reading their book. Although I found the book repetitive and that it did not really have much to say I hadn't already figured out myself, the anecdotes and general message were useful and valuable. Their main message is that gifted children are bored in school and that this boredom is extremely painful to them and stultifying to their potential. While I couldn't agree more I'm not sure why school has to be boring to any child, regardless of whether they are gifted or not. I think that a general push to make school more meaningful and interesting, and open ended to all children would go a long ways towards addressing the concerns of gifted children and encourage their more average counterparts to learn more as well. Their main solution is to pull all gifted kids together in special magnet and charter schools. I'm sure this would work well for those kids, but I think in practice it would have the effect of further dumbing down the schools that were not magnet schools. I also want to say that there is great value in building diverse communities where all sorts of people value each other and get along well. Funny that I don't really have strong logical arguments for this principle. Nevertheless, I feel that separating high achieving kids might have the unintended consequence of creating an elitist feeling. This is not a necessary result, just a probable one in the real world. An interesting book that made me think and further refine my teaching philosophy; and for that reason I found it very valuable.

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## Melanie says

Read this one while ruing the days of my childhood that were wasted because no one bothered to figure out how to properly accelerate me. Pull-out enrichment programs aren't the answer, and I know in my case, 13 years of overly easy school led to serious underachievement in high school and a frightening lack of study skills while in college. Plus, virtually no ability to manage time effectively or plan a project incrementally. I got way too used to the "wait until the last second and turn in something half-assed (but still get an A)" approach.

Not sure if my own kids are gifted (certainly not in the manner of the prodigies profiled in this book) but was an interesting read for someone whose own gifted education was mishandled.

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## Allison says

Commentary on the current state of gifted education in the United States--frequently political, frequently divisive.

The book began well with good points but quickly reduces itself to whining and finger-pointing. Particularly offensive is the attack on special education programs for the disabled that are particularly expensive. The authors argue that more funding in public education should be focused on the enrichment of the gifted, even if it drains money from the average, mediocre, and deficient students because those groups lack the

possibility of greatness. Writing style is very simplistic and is aimed at (interestingly) the not so well educated population. I only read half way through and skimmed the rest because the redundancy and repetitiveness of the theme and main point became tiresome. I got their point pretty early on!

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### **Emily Osborne says**

Although the writing tends to meander and become repetitive by the end, Davidson's book offers solid, though mostly qualitative, proof that educators need to do more to differentiate for students at the top of the spectrum. Drawing on the mentoring examples of music and citing the dramatic improvements that can happen with grouped high ability classes, Davidson argues that below average students are not the only ones left behind. I tend to agree. Although traditional high school fare (especially with some differentiated coursework such as honors/AP coursework) can be appropriate and challenging for the moderately gifted when combined with extracurricular interests, if these are not enough to challenge, then more needs to be done.

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### **Crystal Swafford says**

#### **Eye-opening read!**

This book was great to open my eyes to what gifted education does and could look like. I feel prepared to help my daughter figure out what her needs are. I would not have made all the progress without this book.

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### **Lauren says**

Book Study for GT cert

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### **Marcie says**

I have to disagree with some of the other reviewers. This book was FULL of ideas on how to improve education for gifted students and it didn't say that homeschooling was the only way to teach these special needs children. Genius Denied provided examples of how difficult it is to meet the needs of these very unique children. It is difficult to provide an education, friends, challenge, and a good social atmosphere for highly gifted children. They really do have few real peers. The book detailed a lot of solutions- mentors, grade skips, early college admission, GATE schools and classes, homeschooling, summer programs, etc.

I don't have highly gifted children and I'm not a teacher, so I wasn't looking for a solution for myself but I found the book really interesting.

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### **Julie King says**

I found this book to be repetitive at times, but the basic premise is that gifted children are the most under served student population in schools. The authors provide various stories from students that they have worked with as well as references to studies (the notes and bibliography section are 41 pages long). I think the aspect of the book that rang most true to me are the instances where we put a ceiling on learning for children. The current education focus on testing has also done these students a disservice as the focus is on bringing up test scores for low-achieving students while students who are going to score high on tests whether or not they actually learn anything are largely ignored. I appreciated that there was an action guide in the back of the book as well as different points for parents, gifted children, teachers, and policy makers.

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### **Katie says**

Stylistically, the book wasn't great. But - not that I'm a "genius" - I was really moved by the book. That is, the ideas in it - I'm so so so so so infinitely glad to be where I am, where it's okay to be smart and praised and such [I can't believe it isn't like this everywhere still!] and to have supporting peers and family and teachers etc.

But still, imagining an entire SCHOOL like that sounds too good to be true...and I wish we could indeed raise both the floor and ceiling where education is concerned.

Interesting quotes [which I don't usually do but here]:

"most highly gifted children are underachievers - doing enough to get straight A's, but hardly enough to stretch and grow their minds"

"ongoing pep rallies likely to drive the intellectually curious mad"

"They've never been challenged, so they've never failed and are petrified by the idea"

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### **Alison Vliet says**

I read this book on a recommendation from a website ([www.ditd.org](http://www.ditd.org)) and it is fabulous! If you are the parent of a gifted child, if you think you are the parent of a gifted child, if you're a teacher, or if you're just interested in the state of gifted education in America today, this is a MUST-READ! I am an elementary school teacher and the parent of what I believe to be a gifted child, and it has opened my eyes to a some views I never thought before. The great things about this book is that it doesn't just describe the problem, the second half also offers many, many solutions. It provided me with so many resources with which to advocate for my son within the school system. Highly recommended!

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### **Jenna says**

This is definitely an interesting read for teachers and education advocates alike. As an employee at a progressive charter school, I appreciate this book's willingness to point out the large gap that has been created in this country between the lowest-level learners and the highest. Too few people would like to acknowledge that we must meet every child where he or she is, regardless of ability, but we often only concentrate on the lowest-level learners when we make this statement. I agree with the author's claim that America's focus on egalitarian education has created a "level-playing field" that shouldn't exist; there is not a "one size fits all" approach to the knowledge that children should know at the end of a set amount of time,

but our educational system does not operate this way because it's not "fair" to all students. The book points out - and rightly so - that this approach doesn't work for any student, especially those who need to be challenged more inside the classroom.

That said, I think this book takes on a "woe is me" tone for the extremely intelligent and gifted student and their experiences in the public school system. I know that it is absolutely necessary to meet every student at his or her ability level (whether it be low, mid or high) and cater my lessons to meet their needs, regardless of how much work this creates for me. But, the book takes on a tone that made me feel like only gifted students are deserving of this kind of culture. The authors advocate for the creation of schools to educate the gifted when we should concentrate on bettering ALL public schools to educate every student fairly. We should revamp our school culture to meet all children where they are, not just the ones on the highest end. The gifted students may require the most work because they require the most supplementary materials and the most challenging lessons, but even the lowest-level learner is deserving of this care from a teacher.

I'm glad that the authors briefly acknowledge the need to revamp schools and school culture. They acknowledge that educating students at their level is a social change, not just a policy one. It's hard to get parents and law-makers on board with these kinds of changes because there are a lot of people that refuse to believe that it is OK for students to learn different things and be in different places academically when they finish a certain amount of schooling. We want everything to be "fair" and the same for all students; however, the reality of our current school system is short-changing EVERYONE, not just the gifted. We're actually being more unfair by assuming all students are the same and should have the same knowledge when they are finished with a grade level or with primary school. Though the authors briefly point this out, I think this book fell short on the real educational issue here. The gifted argument is a valid one to make, but it needs to be tied in with overarching educational reform, not just accommodations for the gifted.

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### **Shalah Collins says**

Information Guide for parents who may find that they have a gifted child on their hands. Or for anyone interested in knowing what challenges gifted children face in the bureaucracy of education private and public. Those who know their child is gifted, will be familiar with the challenges their children face in the system. This book does not only present the problem, it also offers the solution. If you believe your child may be a little different, or have certain abilities that other children probably don't have, then you should consider buying this book, you will not be disappointed.

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### **Erica says**

A fine book. A good starting point to learn about gifted education....but if you have already been reading up on it, then this book will just seem repetitive and not bring anything new to the table. So, start with this one! I instead started reading off their website (Davidson gifted)-all my first order investigations started there, so this book seemed a little basic and bland after that.

In my continuum of reading all sides of the gifted education debates, I still find myself washing back and forth on approach. I agree that children need more custom fit educations, but I am uncertain how much we should ask them to do at young ages. It is going to be so hard to balance social against educational needs. I see a long hard road ahead. And I feel that if a good balance isn't found, that behavioral problems are sure to escalate. There is so much mental energy that needs outlet and a craving for challenge that must be satisfied.

I think a good daily hike might be the cure all and is sure at least to ignite a love of geology.....

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### **Aubrey says**

This book is a shameless plug for The Davidson Institute and it's website. Some of the stronger points emphasized:

- Funding for gifted services is minimal compared to programs like no child left behind because assisting low achievers is more charitable.
- Less than 10% of teachers are qualified to assist gifted children
- Olympiads have coaches, just as gifted children need coaches and training
- higher levels of depression, anxiety, mood disorders, and suicide are associated with IQ.
- It is more cost effective to accelerate quick learners as 11 years of education costs less than 13.
- High IQ alone does not guarantee success without a challenging education and peers.
- Chance favors the prepared mind.
- Donate above grade level books to school libraries and advocate for their acceptance.

As a parents, factual information and resources would have been more helpful than building a case through narratives. People give more to low achievers because it is the RIGHT thing to do, not charitable. As a whole, I find this website far more useful than AGD:

<http://www.prufrock.com/>

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### **Melinda says**

This book documents fairly extensively what we all know -- public schools serve almost every child poorly with its "one size fits all" mentality. Those children who are behind and struggle to catch up are served poorly. Yet even those who are advanced and forced to slow down are served just as poorly. This book addresses the plight of gifted students and their stories of frustration, boredom, behavior issues, and sometimes depression and suicide. Dozens of stories of parents trying to work within the public school system are described.

The authors are founders of a non-profit foundation that supplies resources for gifted children. The website for the authors is referenced frequently throughout the book.

The problem that I have with this book is that it assumes somehow that educators are better at providing educational guidance for students. I have found that this is not the case. Story after story in the book says, "our clients were forced to homeschool because the educators (principles / administrators / teachers) were simply not helping us forward Jimmy's education even after we had him tested and he was off the map as a genius." My question is, "why wait so long to figure out that parents know their children better and can provide superior educational guidance than a mere public school employee?". The success of homeschoolers is grudgingly acknowledged, but is always paired with the "but what if homeschooling isn't an option for you?".

Looking at the months / years of constant "working with and educating your school teachers and administrators" to promote your child's situation, how many countless hours of effort, the sheer man-years of effort, could have been better used by just pulling them off of a train that is headed to a train wreck and

finding things outside the system?

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