October 2, 1986

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Gavin Pitt
RE: Proposed Development Program

At Mark Krueger's suggestion I am attaching drafts of material relating to the proposed development program.

Mark asks that you correct, edit and/or revise as appropriate and bring these changes to the Board Meeting on Tuesday.

We look forward to your visit.
September 5, 1986

Mr. Mark Krueger
170 West 23rd Street, #4-P
New York, NY 10011

Dear Mark:

Responding to your August 18th letter, final editions of the enclosed drafts would be modified to meet the needs of each proposal presentation which I envision would include the following:

A. Letter of Transmittal.

B. Case statement which includes AAGC history, updated mission, affiliation which SENG, and programmatic goals.

C. or D. "Proposed Program on Minority Giftedness"

or

"Program for Health Care Professionals"

Also enclosed is a first draft of a Foundation prospect list which includes past AAGC funders, foundations suggested by Anne and yourself, together with others generated through research and my visit to the Foundation Center in June. With the refinement of this list to 25, fiscal information and names of trustees will be added.

With the advent of the new academic year, my Wright State time obligations have begun. Hence, the preparation of drafts relative to funding needs for the quarterly Newsletter and general administrative support will be delayed until early next week.

With kind regards,

Very sincerely,

Gavin A. Pitt
Director of Development

GAP/dh
Enclosures

bcc: Dr. Webb
September 4, 1986

Challenge: The Future Is In Our Minds

Few would challenge the statement that America's richest resource is its children and youth. Within a few short years they will have grown and developed into decision makers and leaders in every facet of the nation's life.

And yet, 3% to 5% of our school children with IQ scores of 130 or more represent a minority which is being grossly underserved. They come from all walks of life economically, socially and geographically. Typically they have an advanced vocabulary, broad interests, intense concentration and feelings, exceptional memory, quick learning of concepts and skills, an unusual talent, seemingly endless curiosity, and often a high activity level. Their academic performance is often—but not necessarily—high. Their motivation is usually intense—but may be sporadic or focused on unusual topics. Nonetheless, their demonstrated ability in one or more areas is typically outstanding.

Of great surprise is the fact that only half of the gifted children in the United States have been so identified by parents, teachers, pediatricians, or psychologists. Surprisingly, many parents underestimate their children's abilities and may have difficulty accepting that their child is "gifted" rather than "just bright" and often feel that "one must be a genius to be considered gifted." Even teachers often overlook gifted children. As a result, fewer than one-third of our nation's gifted children are being provided with suitable opportunities to develop their unique capacities.
The assumption that special attention for the gifted is unnecessary and will create an elitist group has already done irreparable damage. Statements reflecting this attitude are widespread, such as "a bright mind will find its own way" or "gifted children can make it on their own, and just need to fit in like everybody else." In truth gifted children need such special help as understanding, nurturing, and challenging opportunities if they are to develop their potential and become contributing members of society.

Too often gifted students, particularly those not yet formally identified, are significantly underachieving in school. Studies indicate that gifted children often feel bored with school and different from their classmates. They may have low self-concepts, low peer acceptance, and experience strong feelings of depression and alienation from others. Their behavior and attitudes may add turmoil and frustration to parents and teachers. Some become behavior problems; many need special guidance. Of great concern is the fact that at least 10% of our gifted are high school dropouts, and many more are college dropouts; these, together with the tragic number of gifted young people who commit suicide, result in a serious loss of the nation's most talented youth. These difficulties need not occur. When parents and professionals realize the special needs and secure information and techniques to guide and support these children, then development and problems are more easily handled.

Generally speaking, curricular planning and educational programming have succeeded in achieving the goal of mediocrity for all students while offering little care and attention to the cited minority—the gifted and talented. Educators have often turned criticism aside with the installation of a token program which at most is a fast track curricular program. While accelerated programs serve as a challenge for many, they provide little counsel and assistance to the emotional and self-image development of the gifted child/youth. Rejection by one's peers during the formative years will have a deleterious effect throughout their whole life.
Awareness of the needs of gifted children is very low. Few parents, teachers or other professionals have received special training, and public leaders are generally unaware. Teachers, families and friends often are not appropriately responsive to the intensity, curiosity, creativity, questioning and frustration that often surround these students who may feel puzzled as to why they don't "fit in." Ironically, these children are often criticized for their unusual interests, different ideas, learning styles, or intensity---aspects which are fundamental to gifted children. They frequently feel pressured to conform and even to become mediocre in order to be accepted.

School programs for these children typically are limited to a few hours per week starting in third grade, and these children are primarily "mainstreamed" with insufficient challenge and support. In 1979 the Federal government spent only $2.42 for the education of each identified gifted child, contrasted with $1,000 for each learning disabled child. Currently no federal office exists to stimulate, coordinate, or fund programs for gifted children and their families. State and city funds are likewise limited and provide very modest support.

American Association for Gifted Children

Cognizant in 1946 that the gifted were "the most neglected children in our democracy", Dr. Ruth Strang, a noted authority on child psychology, and Pauline Brooks Williamson, an educator and school health administrator, founded the American Association for Gifted Children (AAGC). Established as the first voluntary organization to serve gifted children, the Association's objectives aimed --

To recognize, appreciate, and stimulate creative work among gifted children;

To foster the development of a clearer appreciation of the possibilities and capabilities of gifted children and to promote plans to further their interests;
To encourage public sentiment in favor of plans to recognize gifted children at an early stage and to promote their welfare as individuals;

To publish writings, papers, books, pamphlets, and other publications for cultivating and fostering these purposes.

Under its aegis, the Association has published a variety of publications including two notable books—Dr. Paul Witty's "The Gifted Child" and "On Being Gifted", a compendium of statements by gifted high school students. Both volumes are preeminent in their respective contributions to the gifted field. In conjunction with the American Library Association, pioneering efforts by AAGC to encourage libraries to provide special assistance for gifted have proven very fruitful.

In 1984, recognizing the need for early identification of giftedness, the Association established a Task Force of specialists in gifted child education and the health care and allied professionals to consider how health care professionals could support the development of gifted and talented children. The noteworthy report of that Task Force (April 1985) identified four principal areas in which health care professionals could directly contribute to the well-being of the gifted: identification of the gifted; support and guidance of the child and family; referral to resources; and advocacy within their professions and in the larger community on behalf of the interests of the gifted.

With reference to institutional strategies, five areas were cited wherein the health care professions, through their institutions and associations, could make a constructive contribution to the gifted: research; changes in professional training and continuing professional education; the creation of professional networks across disciplinary lines; support for the development of resources for the gifted in the community; and advocacy for changes in public policy to support the needs of the gifted. There was concurrence that the role of the individual health care professional practitioner be as a natural extension of currently accepted practice rather than a radical
departure, should not suggest that the practitioner become an expert in giftedness, but build on interdisciplinary collaboration.

While the Association made great progress in the implementation of its stated purposes for almost four decades as a voluntary organization, its Board of Directors recognized that challenges and opportunities of serving gifted children merited affiliation with a program which had a professional staff. After evaluation of several organizations, AAGC was attracted to the "Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted" (SENG) program sponsored by the School of Professional Psychology of Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. Founded and directed by Dr. James T. Webb, an internationally recognized child psychologist and senior author of "Guiding the Gifted Child" which was awarded the 1983 Book of the Year Award by the American Psychological Association, the SENG program had merited much favorable attention in the gifted field for five years. Since its aims and philosophy were in concert and most compatible with those of the Association, cordial discussions resulted in affiliation of the two programs on July 1, 1986 at which time the principal office of the American Association for Gifted Children was established in Dayton.

Celebration of the Association's fortieth anniversary and affiliation with SENG were the highlights of a Dayton dinner attended by more than 500 educators and parents attending the fifth annual national conference in August. In greetings wired to the gathering, President Reagan said, "The theme of your conference is 'The Future Is In Our Minds', and it could not be more on target. Our young people face exciting educational opportunities in the coming years, and those who are especially gifted and willing to apply themselves can travel as far as their dreams can carry them."
Association's Mission Updated

In recognition of the fortieth anniversary of the American Association for Gifted Children and its recent affiliation with SENG, the Board of Directors has deemed it timely to update its mission statement to reflect the broader needs of gifted children, their parents and teachers which have surfaced in recent years. To best serve gifted children and youth, the Association's activities and programs will focus on the home, the school, and the community and their respective roles in meeting the special needs of the gifted. The Association will seek to develop, stimulate, and support opportunities which assist gifted and talented children to fully realize their personal potential while developing a strong self-concept. To achieve such goals will challenge the whole-hearted cooperation of parents and family members, teachers and school administrators, together with the community. The involvement and active participation of these several groups is essential to providing the understanding and emotional support as well as educational opportunities which will best nurture the gifted child's potential for maximum development.

The Association will strive to inform parents and professionals on the identification of giftedness and the special needs of gifted children and their families and resources which encourage gifted children to fulfill themselves and to benefit others. Particular efforts will be exerted toward assisting gifted children who are underachievers, members of minority groups, and those with emotional or physical handicaps. To further its mission, AAGC will work cooperatively with relevant associations and groups in addition to independently instituted efforts. The Association aspires to achieve the maximum effect possible in creating family and community environments conducive to assisting children of high intellectual and creative potential to most fully develop themselves emotionally, intellectually, and socially.
Programmatic Plans

To implement the Association's updated mission, renewed emphasis will be addressed to the preparation of a variety of publications with special attention to AAGC's sponsorship of new books on giftedness. A quarterly Newsletter/Member Exchange will be initiated which will provide invaluable information on the subject. Preliminary planning is already underway for the sixth annual AAGC national conference which will be attended by 800-1,000 next August in Chicago. Parent seminars and workshops will be continued in Dayton and a network initiated in other parts of the country. And the important collaborative programs with the American Library Association will be enhanced.

The greatest programmatic impact, however, will be focused on two programs: (1) sharing information and written materials with health care professionals and teachers to assist them in the early identification of gifted children and (2) developing programs for those gifted minorities who are in great need of assistance and encouragement.

With reference to the first program, since health care professionals have contact with children long before educators do, they are major resources for preschool gifted children and their families. The practitioner can help identify the "hidden" gifted, such as children who perform poorly in class or those who are ignored or discriminated against in the school system. Practitioners can diagnose conditions, such as visual handicaps and learning disabilities, that might limit the gifted child's potential, and they are often consulted about medical and behavioral problems in which giftedness is a factor to be considered.
With reference to the second program, a most challenging area of need, but one with a great concomitant of opportunity, is with minorities. There is increasing evidence of giftedness among children of very modest if not economically straitened home environment. Toward the end of identifying such gifted children and providing them with assistance and encouragement during their formative years, the Association in conjunction with the School of Professional Psychology at Wright State University has developed an innovative program which is included in this presentation.
PROPOSED PROGRAM
ON
MINORITY GIFTEDNESS

As cited in the background statement, only half of the gifted children in the United States have been so identified by parents, teachers, pediatricians, or psychologists. Inasmuch as identification has often been determined by progressive schools in affluent communities, there is every reason to conclude that black children are the most underserved in the gifted sector. Needless to say, the waste of creativity and talent represented in this group is especially costly to the nation. Cognizant of the great need and challenged by the opportunity it presents, the American Association for Gifted Children has assigned top priority to the initiation of a program to contend with the problem. While there is genuine interest in the subject, no national group has assumed a leadership role in developing programs.

In making its programmatic decision the AAGC recognized that -

1. there are many gifted children among the minority communities that are dispersed throughout America, and their special needs seem to have been addressed only occasionally on a national level

2. these children are in particular risk of having their needs overlooked by a well-meaning society addressing the social and economic conditions of minority group members generally

3. the need is greatest for national coordination of local efforts on behalf of these children, and for encouraging and helping family and community leaders to meet their needs. The AAGC is particularly well-positioned to develop programs in this area in light of our national stature and our emphasis on the roles played by the gifted child's family and community

4. funding is readily available for programs addressing the needs of minority group children
Many black gifted children feel they are out of place because they are smart and have nowhere to go in a white-dominated society, with few trailblazers, role models or mentors to guide them. Publicizing the experiences and feeling of a representative sampling would provide emotional support and, possibly, inspiration. It would also project a strong positive image to the rest of society.

In view of the considerable success of the parental guidance workshops developed by SENG, it is proposed that a comparable model be developed that would enable black parents to help each other provide the best opportunities for their children. Through such a specialized minority parent group such a pilot model would provide important assistance to parents in their interface with their gifted children and with school programs.

Toward the end of challenging the most knowledgeable professional leaders familiar with giftedness among black children, the Association proposes to establish a Task Force on Giftedness among Black Children. Ten nationally recognized authorities would be invited by AAGC to serve on the Task Force, the charter of which will have two main purposes:

1. The preparation of a directory or compendium of programs currently available for gifted minority children together with details of services, key resource people, and eligibility criteria.

2. The development of recommendations for programs and services which the American Association for Gifted Children or other agencies might support to enhance the identification and nurturing of gifted black children.
To provide the Task Force with much needed staff leadership and services, it is proposed that a full-time Project Director be appointed at an early date. The great success of the Association's "Task Force on Reaching Out to the Gifted Child: Roles for the Health Care Professions" (1985) was in large measure a reflection of the outstanding Project Director. Among the several talents inherent in the Project Director will be proven editorial expertise in report presentation and preparation. Secondly, to assist in the compilation of current program data from around the country for cataloging in the Directory, a half-time Research Associate will be needed. Provision will also be necessary for secretarial services to assist the Project Director and the Research Assistant.

Implementation of the above program for the first two years is contingent on annual funding of $45,000. This amount would include the Project Director and part-time Research Assistant with basic support expenses together with the travel expenses for two annual work sessions of the members of the Task Force. Such an investment would provide an invaluable service to one of the most important but least served sectors of this nation.
When published in April 1985, the Task Force Report on "Reaching Out To the Gifted Child: Roles for the Health Care Professions" was extremely well received by leaders in the several health care fields. By coincidence, the attention of the Board of Directors of the American Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) was at that time addressed to an in-depth study and evaluation of ways and means by which it might most effectively pursue its mission. Not until December 1985 was this issue resolved through affiliation with the "Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted" (SENG) at the School of Professional Psychology at Wright State University. And the first six months of 1986 have been transitional as the affiliation of the two programs and organizations was completed.

In anticipation of July 1st as the new fiscal year, the Association has given high priority to the implementation of the basic recommendations cited in the Task Force Report as to the mission of the Project:

1. The Project should suggest authors for articles on the gifted in professional journals and speakers for professional conferences and workshops.

2. It should assist in the compilation of resource lists and bibliographies.

3. It should develop contacts within as many professional associations as possible and bring these individuals together in collaborative efforts.

4. It should promote links between gifted-child experts in education and health care professionals who want to become more active in the field.

5. It should make special efforts to engage the allied health care professions of nursing and social work, whose traditional emphasis on family guidance and counseling and referral to community resources is particularly appropriate to the support of the gifted.
As an initial step in furtherance of the program, AAGC proposes to reconvene the members of the Task Force for these major purposes:

1. Determine a pilot program with appropriate documentation which would most effectively secure the cooperation of health care professionals in the early identification of gifted children.

2. Develop a program for a series of meetings of leaders of health care professions to seek their counsel and cooperation in the dissemination of the Task Force Report and related information.

3. Identify liaisons in key professional organizations, both national and local.

4. Identify experts to propose as authors in professional publications and presenters at professional conferences.

5. Facilitate regular communication among these organizational liaisons and professional experts through the AAGC, by the distribution of articles, curricula, newsletters, etc.

6. Commission a review of existing research on the gifted child in the health care and education fields.

7. Develop and distribute prototype resource lists and other models suitable for adaptation by local parent and professional organizations.

The Association recognizes the need for full-time staff support of the program, but the recruitment and appointment of a Project Director is contingent on the availability of funding. Much of the Project Director's time and effort will be addressed to developing contacts with pediatricians. The fact that this physician has the earliest opportunity of the professions to note gifted characteristics in a child reflects the high potential of service which this group can provide.

To assure the success of this pilot program, AAGC believes that it merits a minimum of a two-year commitment to underwrite the Project Director together with related support services and travel expenses at an annual cost of $35,000.
Sponsorship of this program would serve as a pioneering effort in support of the early identification of giftedness toward the end that parents and teachers, being cognizant of a gifted child, could more effectively counsel, nurture, challenge and understand a gifted child, thereby enhancing its emotional, mental, and physical development. The funding of this project would yield the rich dividends which are potentially inherent in this program. If the nation's children are its richest resource, through the effective development of its gifted all aspects of the country's life will benefit.
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