



March 11, 2024

Dear Governor Cooper,

On behalf of the Board of PAGE of Wake County and the gifted learners we serve, we write to express our deepest gratitude for your declaration of this week as Gifted and Talented Education Week in North Carolina. Your recognition of the vital role that our gifted students play in shaping the future of our state's workforce and economy underscores your unwavering commitment to the education and development of all our young people. We humbly request that the week become an annual tradition in North Carolina.

Recent years have seen a concerning shift away from meeting the needs of academically and intellectually gifted learners, who come from diverse racial, gender, and socio-economic backgrounds. Factors such as the commendable and necessary focus on students struggling to meet grade-level minimum standards, dwindling resources for AIG teachers and specialists, and the closure of external supports like Duke TIP have left caregivers and educators of our brightest students in a difficult position.

At PAGE, we observe firsthand the consequences of neglecting the unique needs of our intellectually gifted students. Without adequate challenge and support, these bright minds can quickly lose their passion for learning, ultimately hindering their full potential and future contributions to our state.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of "Bright Flight" poses a significant threat to North Carolina's continued prosperity, as our most talented students may begin to seek opportunities elsewhere, just when our IT, biotechnology, aerospace, and other important local industries need us to prepare students for complex employment opportunities. It is imperative that we prioritize the retention and cultivation of these future innovators to ensure the continued success of North Carolina's economy.

Thank you once again for your unwavering dedication to the educational success of all North Carolina students for the benefit of our great state.

Sincerely,

Crystal Whittenton, President

Suzy Wang, Vice President

PAGE of Wake County, Inc.

www.wakepage.org



PAGE of Wake County is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit volunteer-run organization of parents, teachers, gifted education experts, and other stakeholders interested in supporting and encouraging the development of gifted students.

As local affiliates of the North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented (NCAGT), PAGE chapters seek to promote an understanding of the characteristics and unique needs of gifted students and to foster local appropriate educational and social opportunities at home, school, and in the broader community.

Each episode of the NCAGT podcast starts with this excellent summary that we'd like to share:

“Too often the brightest students are bored and under-challenged in school. We’re not giving them a sufficient chance to thrive. Our nation’s education policies narrowly focus on the achievement gap for struggling learners, which is extremely problematic for the widening “excellence gap” faced by high-ability students. Most regular classroom teachers do not receive adequate training to recognize and address the needs of high-ability learners.

This is even more pronounced for children of color, English Language Learners, and children from low-income backgrounds. In addition, these teachers are under a prohibitive amount of pressure to close the achievement gap of their struggling students; while this is an important measure, it shouldn’t be at the expense of our gifted and talented students. Here at NCAGT, we believe that it is up to us, as parents, educators, and stakeholders to provide the gifted community the support that they rightfully deserve.”