

campus & city

Gifted get special attention

By PHYLLIS J. POWELL
Special to the Battalion

Eighty-eight percent of the gifted students in America don't get the extra attention and academic encouragement they need.

Since the Great Society of Lyndon Johnson, America has had many programs to deal with those who are disadvantaged, but has largely neglected those who are gifted. Opinion is divided on how to treat the gifted students in public schools. Some feel that the gifted already have an edge on the average student and time and money are best spent helping the slower learners and academically disadvantaged.

Still others feel that the students should be advanced to a higher grade where they will be challenged by the course work. Still another group feels it is important to round the gifted students out by letting them progress at the normal rate and providing a specialized program to broaden their knowledge while they remain with their peers.

Bryan Independent School District has supported the latter viewpoint and a gifted enrichment program for the past two years. They have about 600 students enrolled in their gifted program at this time.

"That is approximately 5 percent of the number of students in the district and corresponds to the national proportion of gifted to average stu-

Since the Great Society of Lyndon Johnson, America has had many programs to deal with those who are disadvantaged, but has largely neglected those who are gifted.

Students are nominated for the program by counselors, parents, teachers, principals or themselves. A selection committee, composed of the school principal, program teacher, counselor and selected others, evaluates each student on the basis of seven criteria.

Many programs depend exclusively on IQ or achievement tests to determine if a student is gifted. But the Bryan program also includes tests for creative thinking, teacher assessments and specific talent evaluation.

With a recent grant from the Texas Educational Agency of \$62,500, the district has been able to expand its program to include kindergarten through fourth grade. They have already hired three teachers who will work exclusively with gifted students in these grades.

Another grant of \$14,851 was awarded to the district's career edu-

cation program. The program is based on one designed by Dr. William Nash and Dr. Christopher Borman of Texas A&M University. The program was designed and set up at A&M Consolidated High School in College Station with a federal grant, but when the grant ended in May of 1978, Consolidated

In considering students for admission, the Bryan program tests them for creative thinking and takes into account teacher assessments and specific talent evaluation.

The first five weeks are spent in self-evaluation, said Martha Fulbright, director of the career education program. Students determine their career interests and goals.

They are given lessons in decision-making to help them objectively consider all career alternatives. They spend a great deal of time interviewing people in the community, sending off for information and doing library research on certain professions.

The students go on field trips to Texas A&M to learn how to use the University library where they spend a lot of time doing their research. They are also given a demonstration of the use of computer terminals so they can use them in their research.

At the end of this time the students must narrow their investigations to specific career fields. Then they spend the last four weeks of the guidance lab hearing speakers from the community and the college who give autobiographical accounts of why and how they are in the field they are, such as: Richard Smith, mayor of Bryan; Dr. Philip R. Alexander, a local physician and outstanding musician; Robert Wenck, head of Texas A&M's theater arts department and many other men and women who have been successful in their professions.

The students also receive training in creative problem-solving techniques and will be entering a team in the University Scholastic League Future Problem Solving Bowl which will start this month.

When the gifted and talented seniors enter the second phase of the program, mentorship, they have a thorough background knowledge from the intensive research they must make on the career chosen. The mentorship phase pairs the students with Texas A&M professors who are experts in the field in which the students are interested. This part of the program lasts about 12 weeks.

Each student shadows his mentor

to gain first-hand knowledge in his career choice. The student learns the specialized vocabulary of the field and has a chance to decide if this is the career he wants to pursue.

During the two weeks in January when the University students are still on vacation, the student and the mentor set a project that the student will work on during this time.

Near the end of this mentorship phase the student specifies the exact field he is interested in and an internship with a local business or profession is arranged.

The internship, the last phase of the program, lasts 12 weeks. The students work, unpaid, a minimum of 10 hours per week for a businessman, doctor, lawyer or someone of another profession. The objective of this phase is to apply theory to practice. They are given a chance to experience the difference between school and the "real world."

"The program gives the student involved a head start," said Mel

Chastain, director of educational television for KAMU-TV station. "One nice thing about it is it tends to force the issue and gives them a concrete idea of what they want to do," he said.

Chastain has been a mentor and intern supervisor for the past three years. He said the students assigned to internship under him produced a 30-minute television program. They spent more than the required hours per day to get it ready to air. They came in for evening sessions several times and one work period where they stayed up all night working on the program, he said.

The students often enjoy and be-

lieve so involved with their internship that they spend much more than the required 10 hours per week on their job. A girl who worked for a local clothing store went with her supervisor on a buying trip to Dallas.

Some, like Dwayne Parsons, choose to pursue the career they focused on in the internship. Parsons

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Certification program criticized

Board dwells on driver education

By ROY BRAGG
Battalion Staff and
SANDRA SEFCIK
Battalion Reporter

The A&M Consolidated School Board was given an overview of the district's driver education program during a one-hour meeting Monday night.

Dr. Maurice Dennis, driver education supervisor, told the council that Texas has one of the lowest certification levels for driver education teachers anywhere in the nation.

A&M Consolidated Schools and Texas A&M University education officials are trying to change this situation, Dennis said.

Student teachers from Texas A&M are learning to teach driver education classes. These new teachers are allowed to teach driver education classes in the district. Use of student teachers cuts down on the size of classes and allows students to receive more individual attention.

Dennis said this helps the district provide a more thorough driver education program for all students.

In Texas, students are required to have 32 hours of classroom study and 6 hours of actual behind-the-wheel driving. A&M Consolidated gives students nine hours of behind-the-wheel driving instruction, Dennis said.

In other action, the Peace Lutheran Church was given another six-

month lease on the high school cafeteria. For two years, the church has been using the cafeteria for worship services while a new church is

being built. Pastor Stan Sultemeir told the board of trustees the new church building is near completion.



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A&M chemistry sixth in the nation

Texas A&M University's chemistry research program has been ranked sixth in the nation, based on 1977 figures for dollars expended on research and development, according to the National Science Foundation.

Chemistry studies totaled \$3,894,000 that year and officials say 1978 figures should reflect a significant increase.

Texas A&M was one of only nine institutions receiving more than \$3 million in 1977 and it led all other research centers in the South and Southwest.

The University of Utah topped the rankings with \$7,149,000 in 1977.

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Interviewing on Campus October 19, 1979. Contact Davis W. Simpson or send resume to: Tommy Griggs, Cafeterias, Inc., Century Bldg., Suite 200E, 84 Northeast Loop 410, San Antonio, Texas 78286 512-349-2461