

Kentucky Advocates for Gifted Education Speech: Lori Porter

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Frustration. Boredom. Loneliness. Confusion. These feelings can be normal on occasion, but they can become an **everyday struggle for gifted children not receiving the proper education**. I know this because for years, I have been one of the 5% that society labels as “The smart kid.”

These “smart kids” are gifted students, often the top of their classes. However, **the education of these students is far too overlooked**. It can be too easy to simply assign more work to keep them busy. As a result, many of these students are in the **wrong environment**. They stop being challenged, and may even leave school. Others become accustomed to **success with no effort, and refuse to expand their comfort zones**.

Gifted students, with their passion and potential, are one of Kentucky’s greatest assets. As our future, they deserve so much more. These students deserve to be stimulated and challenged, to be encouraged and supported. They deserve to be with likeminded kids and teens that help them learn from their failures and carry them to success. They deserve to know that they can lead their peers, and themselves, to new heights. America’s gifted children-- Kentucky’s gifted children-- deserve to recognize that they have the world at their fingertips, and that there are oceans to explore, rockets to build, and diseases to cure. They deserve to follow their dreams without losing their desire to learn.

I am one of the lucky ones. I have been fortunate enough to grow up with all of these things. From a principal in elementary school that became my “critical buddy” to a hands-on learning environment in Kentucky’s first regional career academy, I’ve found support wherever I’ve turned. However, after my trial and error, I’ve finally discovered where I belong. A school where dreams are encouraged and there is no limit to making imagination reality. There is nothing I can’t do at the Craft Academy.

The Craft Academy for Excellence in Science and Mathematics at Morehead State University is a dual-credit residential high school specifically made for gifted students. There, I’m able to be with people just like me, and be challenged in more ways than just academically. I’ve learned how important service is to my community, and to always be prepared to take the next step towards achieving my dreams. I’ve met with mentors and completed research in what I love. My project- entitled *XMM-Newton* Observations of Supernova Remnants G5.9 and G32 -may sound insignificant, but it excites me every day, aided by one of the most charismatic people I know. It is an incredible opportunity I would not have without Craft.

The support I’ve found in my life extends to each of you as well. Without proper funding, without continued encouragement and pressure, Kentucky’s students and schools would not find the same level of success.

One of my fondest memories comes from the fourth grade. I had just participated in a talent search program, and I received a letter from a member of the House congratulating me on my effort and my success. This member encouraged me to reach out to them should I ever need anything. Eight years later, I still think about that letter.

Instead of reaching out to this member, I've chosen to reach out to all of you, and I thank each and every one of you. Each of you represent the people of Kentucky. Do not underestimate the power of your support when it comes to education, especially gifted education. I would like to use this opportunity to advocate for gifted students I have encountered at the iLead and Craft Academies, those students completing groundbreaking research in what they love, the students maintaining internships and special projects at young ages. These students chasing their dreams are your students that you choose to support. Thank you.