

Teacher: Public Schools Can't Support Gifted Students

Over the weekend, columnist Jay Mathews presented a revealing anecdote in [The Washington Post](#) about the nature of public education.

According to Mathews, Maryland student Caitlyn Singam recently graduated at age 15 with an SAT score of 2200. Such a feat is impressive, particularly since her kindergarten teacher wanted to make Caitlyn a special needs student because she read “too fast”:

*“But the teacher agreed to wait for test results. When she saw them, she did a complete turnaround. **She ‘began to insist that public schools simply didn’t have the means to support my daughter,’** Singam said. She encouraged him to enrich the child’s learning at home, which he did.*

Caitlyn loved it. She rushed home each afternoon for extra reading and writing at the dining room table. By second grade, she was begging to be home-schooled. Singam, dubious, told her to ‘write me a persuasive essay and convince me that home-schooling was a viable option.’ She hit that assignment out of the park. Home-schooling began.”

As Mathews goes on to report, the time spent in homeschool allowed Caitlyn to enter public middle school at age 9, a move the public education system also balked at.

What’s interesting about this story, however, is how the kindergarten teacher insisted that the public school system was simply not able to handle a gifted child such as Caitlyn. This is surprising, particularly since Mathews labels Caitlyn’s school district – Montgomery County – as “stellar.”

I looked up Montgomery County to see what kind of test scores a stellar district is producing. According to 2015 results, [roughly 40 percent](#) of 6th graders (the grade which Caitlyn Singam entered at age nine) are meeting or exceeding the state's standards in English and Math.

With scores like that, perhaps it's not so surprising that Caitlyn's kindergarten teacher suggested that the public school simply couldn't help a gifted child like her.

We stand in awe today that a 15-year-old could graduate and advance to college at such a young age and with such stellar scores. But the fact of the matter is, such a phenomenon was a [regular occurrence](#) during the early days of the American founding.

Is it possible that students like Caitlyn should really be the norm instead of an anomaly? Have we brought public education in America down to such a low shelf that we're depriving even children of normal intelligence of the education they deserve?

Image Credit: Ruthie Hansen bit.ly/liowB8m