



THE ONLY WAY IS UP

Nebraska Schools are Improving!!!

Teachers, administrators, students, applaud yourself on great successes.



2011-2012

State of the Schools Report



http://reportcard.education.ne.gov/Default_State.aspx

Ranking	Reading	Math
Improvement	↑ 185 of 248 districts	↑ 177 of 248 districts
Growth	↑ 198 of 248 districts	↑ 181 of 248 districts

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**State offices will be closed
December 25, 2012 and
January 1, 2013**



PHOTO COURTESY OF CNN IREPORT
IN THE DARK AND WANTING TO LEARN

What do you see here besides the glow of laptops? The photo is not the greatest.

It is the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. A school in New York with only partial power. Their doors are open to students. These students take their education seriously.

TEN MYTHS ABOUT GIFTED STUDENTS AND PROGRAMS FOR GIFTED

CAROLYN COIL

READ THE ENTIRE ARTICLE AT: [HTTP://SCHOOLSOFTHOUGHT.BLOGS.CNN.COM/2012/11/14/TEN-MYTHS-ABOUT-GIFTED-STUDENTS-AND-PROGRAMS-FOR-GIFTED/](http://SCHOOLSOFTHOUGHT.BLOGS.CNN.COM/2012/11/14/TEN-MYTHS-ABOUT-GIFTED-STUDENTS-AND-PROGRAMS-FOR-GIFTED/)



Carolyn Coil is a speaker, educator and author. She works with teachers, administrators, parents and students, offering strategies for raising achievement, developing creative and critical thinking skills, motivating underachievers, differentiating curriculum and assessing student performance. She has taught graduate-level gifted endorsement courses for more than 20 years.

From the article...

- Beyond the federal law definition there is no specific national criteria for identifying gifted and talented students nor does federal law

provide funding or mandates for identification. Definition is left to the states.

- Availability of programs and services for gifted students depends on where the student lives and what state, school district or school they attend.
- Is giftedness innate (nature) or developed (nurture)? Is giftedness driven by intelligence tests results or through other indicators?

(Read the entire article for the discussion under each myth.)

MYTH 1: Intelligence is inherited and does not change, thus we do not need any special services.

MYTH 2: Giftedness can easily be measured by intelligence and achievement tests.

MYTH 3: There is no need to identify gifted students in early grades.

MYTH 4: Gifted students read all the time, wear glasses and/or are physically and socially inept.

MYTH 5: Gifted kids are all model students-well behaved and make good grades.

MYTH 6: All gifted students work up to their potential.

MYTH 7: Teaching gifted students is easy.

MYTH 8: Gifted students will get by on their own without any special help from the school.

MYTH 9: It never hurts to teach others when they already know.

MYTH 10: All children are gifted.

COURTESY OF AHA! PROCESS INC.

HIGH ABILITY AND GIFTED STUDENTS IN THE REGULAR PROGRAM: LEFT BEHIND

TERESA A. JOHNSON, ED.D.

Teresa A. Johnson, Ed.D. is an itinerant teacher of the gifted in the Jackson-Madison County School District in Jackson, Tennessee. Dr. Johnson has been an educator since 1984, with the last 13 years' experience being in gifted education, and she has been a district trainer for aha! Process for 12 years. Dr. Johnson's doctoral research interests included a curriculum model for high-ability and gifted middle school learners that combined innovative curriculum ideas and alternative instructional strategies, 21st Century learning strategies, and the work of Drs. Ruby K. Payne and Paul D. Slocumb.

The main focus of the No Child Left Behind Act was to drive broad gains in student achievement. I have pondered if proponents of the law really considered the amount of scaffolding

needed for all students to achieve broad gains, particularly high ability and gifted students. Based on my observation, the establishment of this law shifted the attention of teachers to students at the proficient, basic, and below basic levels because teachers and administrators felt these students, which in most school districts comprise 75% of students, needed the most scaffolding for achievement gains.

Recently I was told a story about a gifted elementary student who brought home several pages of unfinished schoolwork. When the parent inquired why there was so much unfinished work, the teacher's response was the student was on grade level and reading well, so time and attention was

given to the students who needed more academic assistance with their schoolwork. The teacher told the parent her child would be okay.

Yes, it is absolutely possible to leave high ability and gifted students behind in the regular program. Even though the elementary student in the above vignette completed the schoolwork at home with ease, and may be okay academically as the teacher predicted, more rigor and scaffolding may have helped the student stay focused and more engaged. High ability and gifted students from low socioeconomic backgrounds need extensive scaffolding from teachers, as many parents from these homes are

[Continue page 5](#)

COURTESY
OF ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENT EDUCATION
RIPPLE EFFECT

DOWNLOAD FREE REPORT: <http://www.all4ed.org/>

A new report from the Alliance for Excellent Education argues that as students of color and diverse ethnicities become the leading population of public school systems in numerous states, closing achievement gaps can secure the country's future prosperity. Given that two-thirds of our economy is driven by consumer spending, the report makes the case that raising individual education levels will boost purchasing power and by extension, the national economy. Students of color make up more than half of the K-12 population in 12 states and between 40 and 50 percent of students in an additional ten states. Yet the high school graduation rates of students of color trail whites' by an average of 20 percentage points. Disparities continue into higher education where in 2011, 31 percent of whites age 25 and older held at least a bachelor's degree, compared to just 20 percent of blacks and 14 percent of Hispanics. The latest data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show dropouts more than three times as likely to be unemployed, and when employed and at the peak of earning capacity averaging only \$9 per hour compared to high school graduates and those with bachelor's degrees, who earn \$13 and \$25 per hour, respectively. The report notes that if every state had graduated 90 percent of its students for just the Class of 2011, America would have more than 750,000 additional high school graduates -- many of whom would have pursued postsecondary education -- who would have earned an additional \$9 billion each year.

A GREAT RESOURCE
**CULTURAL HISTORY OF
YOUR COMMUNITY**



Every community has one, maybe two or three. Sometimes they are located in the middle of your town, on the outskirts or in a farm field. They host the history of your community; each rich with historic cultural information.

The National Geological Society of America wrote a program **"Gravestones Talking through Time."** Stones reflect the lives of people, some lost in time. They might have only visited your community for a short time. They might have been prominent individuals. But all of them made your community what it is today. It would be an educational experience to weave their stories and listen as they talk through time.

COURTESY OF PUBLIC AGENDA WEBSITE

KEY ATTRIBUTES OF HIGH-ACHIEVING, HIGH-POVERTY SCHOOLS

DOWNLOAD FREE REPORT: [HTTP://WWW.PUBLICAGENDA.ORG/FILES/PDF/
FAILUREISNOTANOPTION_PUBLICAGENDA_2012.PDF](http://www.publicagenda.org/files/pdf/failureisnotanoption_publicagenda_2012.pdf)

A new report from Public Impact investigates why some schools in high-poverty communities produce remarkable success where others fail. The report examines how principals, teachers, parents, and students define the keys to success, and highlights specific strategies and decisions in these high-achieving schools. It also looks at how schools sustain effective practices and what helps them weather reductions in funding. The schools in the study are a mix of traditional public schools, magnet schools, and a charter school, and face common challenges: tightening budgets, restrictive regulatory

policies and labor agreements, parents whose socioeconomic situation makes it difficult for them to participate in their child's education, and a high proportion of students ill-prepared for school. Successful schools in the study have principals who lead with a strong and clear vision, engage staff in problem-solving and decision-making, and remain focused on goals and outcomes. Leaders provide genuine opportunities and incentives for teachers to collaborate and share best practices, and teachers regard student data as clarifying and helpful, using it to inform instruction. Principals and teachers have

high expectations for all students and reject excuses, and set high expectations for school discipline and student behavior. Schools offer nontraditional incentives for academic success and good behavior, and students feel valued, loved, and challenged. Principals and teachers do not view lack of parent and community support as an insurmountable barrier to student achievement. Finally, school leaders and teachers seek continuous improvement on many levels.

Don't be a Sick Classroom

Last month we discussed sick buildings. Now it is the classroom that needs your attention. From preschool to high school, all classrooms have germs.

Develop hand washing routines for all classrooms. Disinfect door handles, sink handles tables, chairs, lab equipment, locker

handles and other shared items within the classroom and hallways

Remember the air quality in your school can effect YOUR health, YOUR student's health and academic performance.



TIME HEALTH & FAMILY

AUTISM AND AIR POLLUTION: THE LINK GROWS STRONGER

LAURA BLUE, NOVEMBER 27, 2012

READ THE ENTIRE ARTICLE AT [HTTP://
HEALTHLAND.TIME.COM/2012/11/27/AUTISM-AND-AIR-POLLUTION-THE-
LINK-GROWS-STRONGER/?IID=HL-ARTICLE-MOSTPOP1](http://healthland.time.com/2012/11/27/autism-and-air-pollution-the-link-grows-stronger/?iid=hl-article-mostpop1)

A study published in the *Archives of General Psychiatry* analyzed 500 children living in California.

Mothers provided researchers with residential location information during their pregnancy and the child's first year of life. Data was gathered on traffic volume, vehicle emotions, wind patters and other pollutants.

From the article...

- Data was gathered on traffic volume, vehicle emotions, wind patters and other pollutants.
- Children with autism are two to three times more likely to have been exposed to car exhausts, smog and other air pollutants.
- Children in the top 25% of pollution exposure were more likely to be diagnosed with autism.
- Research said pollution may not be the cause but maybe a risk factor for autism.

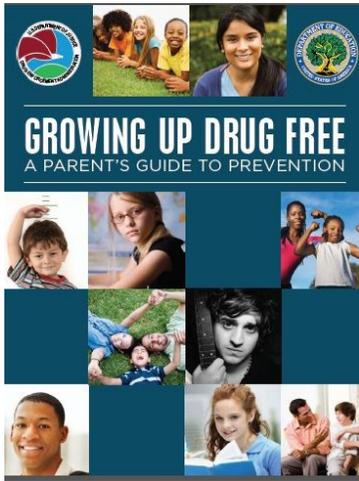


GETTY IMAGES



Additional information was found at WebMD. Read the article titled, "Air Pollution May Raise Autism Risk" dated November 26, 2012

[http://www.webmd.com/brain/autism/
news/20121121/air-pollution-autism-risk](http://www.webmd.com/brain/autism/news/20121121/air-pollution-autism-risk)



Free UPDATED publication from the U.S. Department of Education.

[Growing up Drug-Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention \(2012\)](#) has been released! The U.S. Department of Justice partnered with the U.S. Department of Education to revise this publication that was originally published in 1998. The 55-page booklet is organized in 6 major sections: 1) How This Book Will Help You? 2) What Substances Do Kids Use? 3) Why Do Kids Use Drugs? 4) How Do I Teach My Child About Drugs? 5) What If I Think My Child is Using Drugs? 6) Resources. Parents and caregivers will find this publication a user-friendly and valuable guide for what to do and how to communicate about the harmful effects of illicit drugs and alcohol to children from elementary through high school.

PARTNERSHIP AT DRUGFREE.ORG

MANY TEEN HOOKAH SMOKERS DON'T RECOGNIZE HEALTH RISK

HHS/CDC REPORT

Many teenage hookah smokers do not recognize that the practice carries serious health risks, suggests a new report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). An estimated 18.5 percent of 12th graders said they used a hookah in the previous year.

More needs to be done to decrease the number of teens who smoke flavored tobacco from hookahs, the CDC states in the journal [Preventing Chronic Disease](#). The report notes hookah smoke contains many of the same toxins as cigarettes. It has been associated with lung cancer and respiratory illness, the [Los Angeles Times](#) reports.

The researchers conclude the same interventions used in reducing cigarette smoking can be successfully used to reduce hookah smoking.

These include raising the price of flavored tobacco smoked from hookahs, called shisha. They point out the price for a pound of hookah pipe tobacco is \$22 lower than that for cigarette tobacco. The CDC also calls for graphic labels on hookah tobacco products to warn smokers about health dangers, as well as removing sweet flavorings

from shisha. Hookah bars should no longer be exempt from smoke-free laws, the researchers argue.



CONTINUE FROM PAGE 2

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HIGH ABILITY AND GIFTED STUDENTS IN THE REGULAR PROGRAM: LEFT BEHIND

TERESA A. JOHNSON, ED.D.

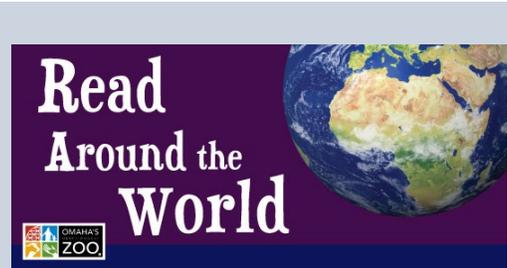
unable to help their children with assignments and depend heavily on teachers.

Last year my seventh-grade gifted students stated they enjoyed the challenge word section in my gifted class, as the challenge words they received in the regular class were words with which they were already familiar and did not have to study. These students needed more challenge and

scaffolding in reading and language arts, as they desired a more challenging vocabulary.

So the question becomes how to provide rigor in the regular program and gifted programs for all children, particularly the ones from diverse backgrounds. One answer, in my opinion, is to teach the whole child by intertwining the art and science of teaching through learning experiences

that provide challenge and rigor; teach ethics when appropriate; inspire; develop creativity, originality, and innovation; and that connect and are meaningful to students' lives.



Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium Read Around the World program has become a great incentive to encourage youth to read over one million books in the last eight years. The Read Around the World event encourages families, educators, and students to read about the diversity of life found around the world.

Program begins December 1st, 2012 and ends March 1st, 2013.

Questions? Ask your child's teacher or contact the Zoo at (402) 738-2092.

A Framework for Understanding Poverty

For a colorful visual reminder of powerful key strategies from aha! Process, this [four-poster set](#) can't be beat. The Nonfiction Reading, Fiction Reading, Q TIPS, and Writing Multiple Choice Questions strategies will help you raise achievement in your classroom. Get results fast!

The freebie this month is a study guide for Ruby Payne's seminal *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*. This study guide can be used to guide reading and discussion in any book group or professional development setting, or can simply enhance your individual reading of the book.

http://www.ahaprocess.com/files/FrameworkStudyGuide.pdf?inf_contact_key=4c52ae1c21bd809378f257af24adf0b375ef8491c2aa40b1d7c967dd7014516d

Poverty Census Data download http://www.ahaprocess.com/files/CensusCharts_2010_DataReleased_2011.pdf?inf_contact_key=6cd42d6574fdcd8bfe64d1bcc4feff6902995fff2f237fff14bd05a144d582d1



MARK THE MAP

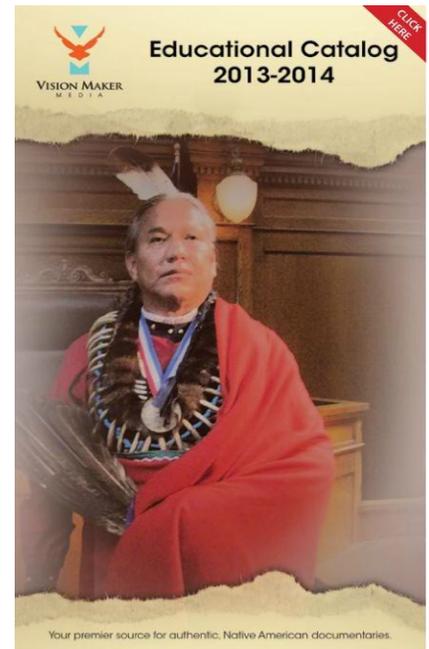
American Experience on PBS
Marking the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation—a three part film.

From Monday, November 26 through Monday, December 3, AMERICAN EXPERIENCE is hosting a Pin Drive, a contest to pin as many photographs, videos, and audio files to the Abolitionist Map of America as possible. The person or

organization that contributes the largest number of complete pins to the map — including titles, dates, locations and descriptions — during the drive will win the Pin Drive contest and will also receive a DVD copy of *The Abolitionists*.

Mark the map and read about the upcoming program <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/interactive-map/abolitionists-map/>

Additional programs are available on Tuesday evenings, visit their website <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/>



NOTE: this is interactive, you click on the top corner of catalog http://www.nativetelecom.org/files/13-14_educatalog_11-21-12.swf



Grant/Fellowships and Funding Opportunities

TEACHER GRANTS/FELLOWSHIPS

Fund for Teachers: Grants

The Fund for Teachers provides funds for direct grants to teachers to support summer learning opportunities of their own design. Maximum award: \$5,000. Eligibility: teachers who work with students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12, with a minimum of three years teaching experience, full-time, spending at least 50 percent of the time in the classroom at the time grants are approved and made. Deadline: January 31, 2013. <http://www.fundforteachers.org/about-us.php>

Earthwatch Institute: Fellowships

The Earthwatch Institute offers educators fully-funded fellowships for hands-on learning with leading scientists doing field research and conservation on one of over 100 projects around the world. Maximum award: fully-funded fellowship. Eligibility: elementary, middle, and high school educators and administrators of any discipline. Deadline: two weeks after educator-interest application is submitted; ultimate deadline May 1, 2013. <http://www.earthwatch.org/aboutus/education/edopp/>

ENVIRONMENT

NGA/Mantis: Mantis Award

The National Gardening Association Mantis Awards to charitable and educational garden projects that enhance the quality of life in their host communities. Maximum award: NGA selects 25 outstanding applicants to receive Mantis tiller/cultivators. Eligibility: Applicants must operate a charitable or educational program that is not-for-profit in the United States. Deadline: March 7, 2013. <http://grants.kidsgardening.org/2013-mantis-tiller-award>

Captain Planet Foundation: Grants for the Environment

The Captain Planet Foundation funds hands-on environmental projects to encourage youth around the world to work individually and collectively to solve environmental problems in their neighborhoods and communities. Maximum award: \$2,500. Eligibility: U.S.-based schools and organizations with an annual operating budget of less than \$3 million. Deadline: February 28, 2013. <http://captainplanetfoundation.org/>

CLASSROOM AND ACHIEVEMENT

Pets in the Classroom

Intended to support pets or aquariums in the classroom for the purposes of teaching children to bond with and care for pets responsibly. Only small animals that reside in the classroom. Awards: \$50 and up. <http://www.petsintheclassroom.org/>

Panasonic National School Change Awards

This is the only award of its kind. Annually, six schools across America are recognized for having 'significantly changed.' Responding to an invitation to nominate such schools, state commissioners of education, superintendents, national educational associations, universities, and foundations endorse candidates to be considered for these prestigious awards. Nominated schools measure themselves against sixteen criteria. Award winners are selected in the spring of each academic year, with 24 finalists and the six winning schools gaining national recognition. Schools may nominate themselves. The awards are conducted and sponsored by the Panasonic Corporation of North America. Deadline: Rolling nominations by year Award: \$5,000 including Panasonic products <http://www.panasonic.com/meca/foundation/pnsca.asp>

NEA Student Achievement Grants

The NEA Foundation provides grants to improve the academic achievement of students in U.S. public schools and public higher education institutions in any subject area. The proposed work should engage students in critical thinking and problem solving that deepen their knowledge of standards-based subject matter. The work should also improve students' habits of inquiry, self-directed learning, and critical reflection. Proposals for work resulting in low-income and minority student success with honors, advanced placement, or other challenging curricula are particularly encouraged. Deadline: Ongoing. Applications deadlines are February 1, June 1, & October 15 every year. Award: \$5,000 <http://www.neafoundation.org/pages/educators/grant-programs/student-achievement-grants/>



Nominate a Nebraska teacher for the National Teachers Hall of Fame at <http://www.nthf.org/>

The National Teachers Hall of Fame recognizes exceptional career teachers and encourages excellence in teaching. Five teachers are chosen each year.



<http://www.reclaiming.com/content/node/279>

20th Anniversary Black Hills Seminars are scheduled for June 17-24, 2012 at the Rapid City Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Monday-Friday, June 17-21 - LSCI Training

Wednesday, June 19 - Deep Brain Learning® Training

Thursday and Friday, June 20-21 - Response Ability Pathways™ (RAP) Training and Developmental Audit® Training

Saturday, June 22 (morning) - 1/2 Day Circle of Courage® Training Workshop

Saturday, June 22-Monday, June 24 - Reclaiming Youth Conference. *The conference will begin Saturday afternoon, June 22, following the completion of the Circle of Courage workshop. The final session will take place Monday evening (June 24) at Crazy Horse. Participants can plan an early morning departure on Tuesday, June 25.*

Vancouver Island Seminars will be held April 26-29, 2013 at The Harbour Towers Hotel and Suites in beautiful Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Friday, April 26, 2013 - 1-day Circle of Courage® Workshop
Standard Rate - \$180.

Saturday-Sunday, April 27-28 - Options for 2-day training courses
-Response Ability Pathways™ (RAP)
-Developmental Audit®
-The Three Pillars™ of TraumaWise™ Care
-Effective Leadership and Supervision
Standard Rate - \$395.

Monday, April 29 - Deep Brain Learning Training® (DBL)
Standard Rate - \$180.

Bridges/Community Programs Training Dates

Bridges Out of Poverty Trainer Certification

April, 2013: Norman, OK
Details coming soon

Online Bridges Recertification with Phil DeVol

March 26, 2013, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. CDT
June 13, 2013, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. CDT

Conversion to Lifetime Certificate online (\$399 per registrant)
2-Year Recertification (\$225 per registrant)

Online Getting Ahead Facilitator Training

Feb 08 and 11, 2013 - 10:00am - 1:00pm CDT
Aug 09 and 12, 2013 - 10:00am - 1:00pm CDT
Nov 15 and 18, 2013 - 10:00am - 1:00pm CST

Register now (\$299 per registrant)

A Framework for Understanding Poverty Trainer Certification

June 12-14, 2013: Santa Fe, NM

Register now (\$795 per registrant)

Lifetime Certification available (\$1299 per registrant)

Raising Achievement with 9 Systemic Processes with Ruby Payne

June 11, 2013: Santa Fe, NM

Register now (\$189 per registrant)

Online Framework Recertification with Ruby Payne

January 23, 2013, 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. CST
March 26, 2013, 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. CDT
August 13, 2013, 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. CDT
Nov 12, 2013 10:00 a.m. -12:30 p.m. CST

Conversion to Lifetime Certificate online (\$399 per registrant)
2-Year Recertification (\$225 per registrant)

Note: Only one three-hour session is needed for recertification. Group discounts available.

Student Opportunities



Winter Break day camps, Polar Opposites– Explore polar opposites, the Arctic and Antarctica. Discover animals that call these places home and learn how they survive such extreme environments.

Ages 5-7 December 27 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
 Ages 8-12 December 28 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Feeding Frenzy – It's feeding time at Omaha's Zoo & Aquarium! Did you know that each year the Zoo goes through about 72,000 pounds of apples, 33,000 heads of lettuce, and 66,000 hard-boiled eggs? Explore the special diets of carnivores, omnivores, herbivores, and insectivores.

Ages 5-7 December 28 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
 Ages 8-12 December 27 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.



Dive into a life-changing adventure with Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium! This year we will travel to beautiful Cozumel, Mexico. During the first week of camp (5 days) students will be given the opportunity to shadow animal care staff and learn about the ocean and marine animals. The second week of camp will be spent in Cozumel where we will learn SCUBA on the 2nd largest coral reef in the world, snorkel with Whale sharks, experience the Yucatan culture, and much more.

This trip is open to students (high school and older). The application form can be mailed out by calling (402) 738-2092 or emailed by sending a request to classes@omahazoo.com.



American Indian Graduate Center 2013-2014 Application is open <http://www.aigcs.org/Scholarships.aspx> and http://www.aigcs.org/Other_OpportunitiesOther_Scholarships.aspx



Prevention is a key aspect of tackling health disparities and preventive efforts must begin with youth, particularly to create behavior change and healthy lifestyles. As such, outreach to youth is a key component of *American Indian Health Research and Education Alliance*. Each ambassador will serve for one year and will be paid for his/her efforts. 4 High School Students (2 male, 2 female; \$500/year), 4 college students (2 male, 2 female; \$1,000/year), 4 Graduate students (2 male, 2 female; \$1,500/year). We plan a competitive application process for the position, with the Executive Community Advisory Board making the final determination. Youth ambassadors will attend events such as pow wows, basketball games, school functions, etc. Ambassadors will promote *American Indian Health Research and Education Alliance* and AIHREA's projects. Finalists will be interviewed by phone in February 2013, selections for youth ambassadors will be made by March 1, 2013



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