

**THE DAVIDSON
ACADEMY
OF NEVADA**

**SCHOOL PROFILE
2009-2010**

P.O. Box 9119 Reno, NV 89507 | www.DavidsonAcademy.unr.edu | 775.682.5800

The School

Opened in 2006, The Davidson Academy of Nevada is a unique public day school, designated by Nevada legislation as a “university school for profoundly gifted pupils” (NRS Chapter 392A). The school is located on the campus of the University of Nevada, Reno, which ranks among the top 150 research universities in the United States according to the Carnegie Foundation.

The Davidson Academy is a secondary school serving highly able students who are prepared to progress through a middle and/or high school curriculum in a rigorous academic setting. Students are grouped by ability, not by age or grade; there are no grade levels at the Academy. The unprecedented nature of The Davidson Academy has resulted in several local and national media features, including a *Time Magazine* cover story, “Are We Failing Our Geniuses?” that calls attention to the need for academically challenging options for highly able students.

While at The Davidson Academy, each student participates in developing and implementing a **Personalized Learning Plan** that serves as a roadmap for academic and personal goals, as well as future opportunities. The plan is an adaptable document that is used to guide students through a rigorous core curriculum and help them make elective decisions based on their interests and commensurate to their levels of ability, achievement, and motivation. Personalized Learning Plans are consistent with the Academy philosophy to treat students as individuals who are invested in their own learning.

Academy courses are taught by licensed teachers and university instructors. In addition to Academy courses, students may also participate in courses at the University of Nevada, Reno, under a dual enrollment agreement. Academy students may access university professors as mentors in subject areas of interest.

Students and Graduates

Currently, 91 students attend the Academy, approximately half of which moved from other states and Australia. The school’s first graduate was recognized in May of 2008. Eight students graduated in May of 2009.

Graduates of the Academy are currently attending Bennington College; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Oberlin College; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Nevada, Reno; and University of Washington. Five of our graduates were named National Merit Scholarship Finalists and two were named Presidential Scholar Program candidates.

Mission Statement

The mission of The Davidson Academy is to provide profoundly gifted young people an advanced educational opportunity matched to their abilities, strengths, and interests.

Goals

To provide a personalized learning program that appropriately challenges each student’s abilities, allowing her/him to engage in learning opportunities at a pace and depth consistent with the student’s knowledge, skills, and personal motivations;

To allow students the opportunity to develop their talents and skills at an advanced level, and be supported by teachers, professors, and other experts in their fields of interest;

To provide students with an opportunity to learn with intellectual peers of similar age;

To provide students with a learning environment that fosters integrity, personal responsibility, conscientious citizenship, understanding and an appreciation of individual differences, along with respect for others;

To provide students with guidance in identifying and developing their unique talents and abilities, and counseling for the college application process, the procurement of scholarships, and access to professional areas of interest and career counseling;

To encourage students to develop their talents and abilities in positive ways for themselves and others;

To engage parents in the learning process, and provide opportunities for understanding and nurturing their children.

Core Values

At The Davidson Academy of Nevada, we recognize the importance of a well-balanced education. It is expected that our students not only learn about academic subjects, but also gain knowledge about themselves and how to interact effectively with those around them. We view strong character and the following core values as integral components to all student and Academy endeavors:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Integrity | Pursuit of Knowledge | Respect |
| Responsibility | Balance | Leadership |

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Eligibility Criteria

The Davidson Academy of Nevada serves students who demonstrate superior intellectual development, academic achievement, motivation, social and emotional maturity, and overall readiness for an accelerated educational environment. To be considered for admission, students must be performing at or above middle school level and be, or intend to become, residents of the State of Nevada.

Results of at least one of the admission/placement exams and/or at least one of the intelligence tests listed below must be submitted along with the formal application. These scores represent the minimum eligibility criteria for the Academy.

Intelligence Tests:

Stanford Binet V (SB-5)	145 or above for Full Scale and/or Verbal/ Critical Reading or Non-Verbal
Wechsler Intelligence Test – IV (WISC IV)	145 or above for Full Scale and/or Verbal/ Critical Reading and/or Perceptual Reasoning

Admission/Placement Exams:

School Code 290-207

Grade:	7	8	9	10
SAT**				
Verbal/Critical Reading	590	630	650	700
Math	630	680	700	720
Combined	1220	1310	1350	1420
ACT*				
English	26	28	30	32
Math	23	26	30	33
Reading	28	30	32	34
Science Reasoning	24	26	28	30
Composite	24	26	28	30

*Criteria includes meeting or exceeding 3 or more of the 5 scores listed for the grade level at which the ACT test was administered. ACT scores obtained prior to Grade 7 are considered on an individual basis.

** The writing section of the SAT I will be considered as supplementary information. SAT scores obtained prior to Grade 7 are considered on an individual basis.

The Davidson Academy of Nevada admits qualified students of any race, color, gender, and national or ethnic origin, and is impartial in its administrative and educational policies with respect to these characteristics.

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Graduation Requirements

The Davidson Academy of Nevada High School Diploma exceeds the standards of an Advanced High School Diploma in the State of Nevada. For current high school graduates, The Davidson Academy of Nevada issues a High School Diploma based on the following requirements:

1. Cumulative weighted GPA of 3.4
2. Passage of all sections of the Nevada Proficiency Exam and continuous progress in relation to assessment benchmarks
3. 25 total credits. Of the 25, five (5) credits are elective and twenty (20) are required, as follows:

English	4
Social Studies*	3
Science	3
Mathematics	4
Foreign Language	2
Physical Education	2
Art/Humanities	1
Computer Literacy	½
Health	½

**World History/World Geography, U.S. History, and American Government*

One credit toward high school graduation is earned when a student successfully completes a full-year course at The Davidson Academy or a pre-approved three-credit semester course at the University with a grade of “C” or better. A pre-approved semester-long, one-credit course successfully completed at the University equals 0.33 credits at The Davidson Academy.

Students at The Davidson Academy may earn credit toward high school graduation by successfully completing coursework at the University of Nevada, Reno, or another approved college or university. The Davidson Academy administration determines the courses for which credits may be earned.

Beginning with the Class of 2011, graduation requirements include a minimum of 28 credits, with the additional credits distributed across core academic subjects. In the interim, students are consistently encouraged to complete more than the minimum number of academic courses required.

Test Scores – Class of 2009

SAT I

100% of the Class of 2009 took the SAT I

Mean Reading Score: 691; Range 530-800

Mean Math Score: 669; Range 560-790

Mean Writing Score: 680; Range 560-800

ACT

38% of the Class of 2009 took the ACT

Mean Composite Score: 29.7; Range 25-35

SAT II *63% of the Class of 2009 took one or more SAT II exams:*

Chemistry (Mean 593; Range 490-730)	Math Level 2 (Mean 775; Range 750-800)	Literature (Mean 730; Range 670-800)
Biology E (780)	Spanish (700)	Spanish with Listening (670)

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Curriculum

The Davidson Academy curriculum is designed to challenge highly able students while supporting the breadth and depth of their academic interests. Students are expected to take at least five graded courses each semester. The school day includes six periods of 60 minutes each. Typically, core subjects are offered four days per week, and electives are offered in 2-hour blocks on Fridays.

The Davidson Academy of Nevada does not offer designated Advanced Placement (AP) courses. However, our students are encouraged to take AP examinations as appropriate, and usually do very well.

Davidson Academy Courses, 2009-2010

For 2009-2010, the Academy is offering over 30 courses for high school credit, as well as several courses for middle school credit.

Current course offerings for high school credit include the following:

Advanced Chemistry
Advanced Physics
Advanced Rhetoric
Algebra I
Algebra II
American Literature
American Studies
Biology
Calculus
Chinese VI
Choir
Colonial U.S. History/Government
Creative Writing
Digital Media I
Digital Media: Flash
French I
Geometry
Gothic Literature
International Fiction
Jazz Band
Math Club
Method Acting Workshop
Music Theory II
Performance Drama
Physics
Physical Education
Pre-Calculus
Spanish I
Spanish II
Studio Art
Theories in Psychology
Web Design
Yearbook

University Courses, Fall 2009

The Academy utilizes the university option for advanced and/or specialty courses that support students' Personalized Learning Plans. Currently, 28 students are taking courses at the University of Nevada, Reno, under our dual enrollment agreement. The courses in which Academy students are enrolled for Fall 2009 include:

American Sign Language I45: American Sign Language I
Astronomy 109: Planetary Astronomy
Biology 192: Principles of Biological Investigation
Biology 223: Human Anatomy & Physiology I
Chemistry 121: General Chemistry I
Chemistry 122: General Chemistry II
Chemistry 201: General Chemistry for Scientists & Engineers I
Chemistry 241: Organic Chemistry I
Chemistry 341: Organic Chem. for Scientists & Professionals I
Chinese 111: First Year Chinese I
Computer Science 202: Computer Science II
Core Humanities 201H: Honors Ancient & Medieval Cultures
Economics 102: Principles of Microeconomics
English 102H: Honors Composition II
English 321: Expository Writing
English 415A: Old English Language & Literature
French 111: Elementary French I
French 112: Elementary French II
French 211: Second Year French I
History 101: United States
Italian 111: First Year Italian I
Italian 211: Second Year Italian I
Japanese 111: First Year Japanese I
Japanese 211: Second Year Japanese I
Math 283: Calculus III
Math 310: Intro to Analysis I
Math 331: Groups-Rings-Fields
Music: Applied Instruction 107: Clarinet-Lower Division
Music: Applied Instruction 129: Piano-Lower Division
Music 121: Music Appreciation
Physics 151: General Physics I
Political Science 101: American Politics: Process & Behavior
Psychology 101: General Psychology
Spanish 305: Spanish Composition I
Spanish 306: Spanish Composition II
Spanish 309: Spanish Conversation
Spanish 350: Intro to Hispanic Literature

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Grading System

Grade point averages are calculated on a traditional 4.0 scale for all courses, other than those designated as college preparatory, which are calculated on a weighted 4.5 scale. Designated college preparatory courses have been offered; the current terminology used is “advanced” or is indicated by an advanced level, such as courses marked “III” or above. University courses are considered for weighting on a 5.0 scale. Transcripts for The Davidson Academy include non-weighted and weighted cumulative grade calculations for all courses taken for high school credit.

Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	0-59

Please note: The grading system has been altered over time. A grade of A+ was only available during the 2007-2008 academic year.

Accreditation Status

The Davidson Academy of Nevada was granted provisional accreditation for the 2008-2009 school year by the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools. The initial 18-month self-study period begins during the 2009-2010 school year. The Davidson Academy welcomes phone calls to discuss our evolving program and student excellence.

For More Information

We encourage communication, including visits, from college admissions officers and any other staff and faculty interested in learning more about The Davidson Academy of Nevada. Please contact us with questions or to arrange a site visit: admin@davidsonacademy.unr.edu; 775-682-5800.

If you have questions about a student in the college application process, please contact us directly:

Colleen Harsin, Director

charsin@davidsonacademy.unr.edu

KC Miller, Guidance Counselor

kmiller@davidsonacademy.unr.edu

For more information about The Davidson Academy of Nevada, please visit our website at www.DavidsonAcademy.UNR.edu, including our Press Room which features the following media links:

[Are We Failing Our Geniuses?](#) August 16, 2007 - Time Magazine

['Profoundly Gifted' Students Find Home in Reno](#) June 4, 2007 - ABC News Nightline

[Genius: Quest for Extreme Brain Power](#) September 17, 2006 - CNN

[The High Price of Easy Schoolwork](#) September 4, 2006 - Los Angeles Times

[Some New Help for the Extremely Gifted](#) October 26, 2005 - New York Times