Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education

**Director**
- Megan Foley Nicpon

**Website:** https://belinblank.education.uiowa.edu

The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development is dedicated to serving the needs of the gifted community at local, national, and international levels. It offers programs for preservice and inservice educators, including the State of Iowa Talented and Gifted Endorsement. Its online and on-campus courses about the nature and needs of gifted learners, as well as about ways to facilitate talent development, support the professional development of educators worldwide.

The center is home to the Assessment and Counseling Clinic and the Acceleration Institute.

**Precollege Program Offerings**

The Belin-Blank Center offers a wide variety of programs for precollege students.

**Belin-Blank Exceptional Student Talent Search**

The Belin-Blank Exceptional Student Talent Search (BESTS) (grades 4-9) helps determine talented students' academic abilities and needs.

**Invent Iowa**

As one of the state's original science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs, Invent Iowa (grades K-12) is a comprehensive statewide program developed to support educators in promoting the invention process. Since 1999, the Invent Iowa program has been a part of the Belin-Blank Center.

**Junior Science and Humanities Symposium**

The Junior Science and Humanities Symposium (grades 9-12) engages students in original research and experimentation in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math). Students present the results of their research to a panel of judges and an audience of their peers at the Iowa Regional Junior Science and Humanities Symposium. The top two presenters are invited to present at the national symposium.

**Scholastic Art & Writing Awards**

The Belin-Blank Center is proud to serve as the Iowa and Midwest region at-large affiliate for the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards (grades 7-12), which recognizes achievement in the literary and visual arts. The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards program is the nation’s longest-running, largest, and most prestigious recognition program for creative teens. Over the past 90 years, the Awards have recognized and encouraged artists and writers such as Sylvia Plath, Andy Warhol, Truman Capote, Robert Redford, Tom Otterness, Zac Posen, among countless others.

**Weekend Enrichment Program**

The Weekend Enrichment program (grades 2-8) consists of half-day enrichment opportunities for elementary and junior high students that take place on the University of Iowa campus. Classes in STEM, arts, and the humanities cultivate students' interest and enliven their curiosity.

**Summer Programs**

The Belin-Blank Center also offers the following summer programs, many of which are residential programs held on the University of Iowa campus during the summer. Students in each program participate in cultural and recreational activities and have access to the University’s libraries, computer facilities, and study areas. For residential programs, housing and meals are provided at the University’s residence halls.

Junior Scholars Academy students do not stay on campus.

**Blank Summer Institute**

The Blank Summer Institute for the Arts & Sciences (BSI) is a program that provides an intensive, advanced educational experience designed to enhance exceptionally talented students' intellectual and social growth. The BSI plan of study complements the regular school curriculum. Students are nominated for program participation.

To be eligible for BSI, students must be Iowa residents, must be completing grade 7 or 8, and must be nominated by their schools. Students selected for BSI receive a scholarship to cover part of the institute's cost.

**Junior Scholars Academy**

The Junior Scholars Academy (JSA), formerly known as Blast and the Junior Scholars Institute, hosts students (grades 2-8) with a deep curiosity, a love of learning, or a great deal of talent in a particular area. It is a summer program designed specifically for bright elementary and middle school students who want to thoroughly explore a topic while having fun with other kids who share their enthusiasm for learning. Students choose one class to focus on all day, for a full week.

**Perry Research Scholars Institute**

Students completing grade 9 or 10 may apply for the Perry Research Scholars Institute (PRSI), a two-week residential summer academic program. PRSI students experience first-hand the wide variety of research that takes place at a research intensive university. Students earn 1 s.h. of academic credit. Visit the PRSI website to learn more about the program, including eligibility and application.

**Secondary Student Training Program**

Students completing grade 10 or 11 may apply for the Secondary Student Training Program (SSTP), a five and one-half-week residential summer research program. SSTP students conduct research in university research groups under the guidance of a faculty mentor. Students earn 3 s.h. of academic credit. Visit the SSTP website to learn more about the program, including eligibility and application. See the Secondary Student Training Program (University College) in the Catalog.

**Summer Art or Writing Residency**

The Summer Art Residency or Summer Writing Residency offers a three-week residential program for students completing grade 9, 10, or 11. The two programs immerse students in the creative environments of the University of Iowa’s world-class faculty in art or writing. Out of class
opportunities include evening tours, lectures, and events that are designed to stretch the developing artist or writer. Students earn 2 s.h. of academic credit. For more information about the center and its programs, contact the Belin-Blank Center or visit its website.

**College Early Entrance Program**

**Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy**

The Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy (grades 10-11) gives high-achieving students the opportunity to enroll at the University of Iowa before they finish high school. The academy provides top students with high-level curriculum and research opportunities while supporting them through the transition from high school to the university. To enter the program, students must have completed grade 10 or the equivalent. The program is open to high-ability students worldwide.