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Challenging Gifted Learners

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Qoice



What It Takes to Be Successful: Self-Regulation for Learning

By Dr. Richard Cash, nRich Educational Consulting, Inc
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What does it really take to be successful in school today? Most would say that it is a combination of early learning experiences, natural acumen for learning, and a supportive home environment. While all of those are characteristics that can be helpful in learning, the essential tool for school success is the ability to regulate oneself. In my upcoming book, *Self-Regulation in the Classroom: Helping Students Learn How to Learn* (forthcoming from Free Spirit Publishing, March 2016), I focus on the concept of self-regulation and provide strategies, techniques, and plans to help students be more autonomous in their learning.

Researchers Dale Schunk and Barry Zimmerman define self-regulation as “the process by which learners personally activate and sustain cognition, emotions, and behaviors that are effective toward achieving goals.” (Schunk and Zimmerman, 2012.) Building on this definition, I describe self-regulation for learning (SRL) as *a process in which the learner manages and controls his or her capacities of affect (feelings), behavior, and cognition (thinking)—the ABCs—to engage in learning and improve achievement and performance.* (Cash, 2016.)

continued on page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE . . .

| | |
|--|-------|
| Gray Matters | 2 |
| (Re)Conceptualizing Gifted Education in Minnesota | 6 |
| Oxford’s Word of the Year | 8 |
| The Fordham, Gifted Advocacy and the Common Core | 9 |
| Javits Federal Grant Follow Up | 11 |
| Reforming Your Instruction: Increase Engagement..... | 12-13 |
| 5 Minute Professional Development: | 14 |
| Project E ³ : Environmental & Engineering Sciences for Everyone | 15 |
| MEGT 24th Gifted Conference | 16-17 |
| MEGT 24th Gifted Conference Registration Form | 18 |
| Dr. Richard M. Cash Bio..... | 19 |
| Susan Daniels, Ph.D. Bio..... | 20 |
| 5th Annual MEGT Foundation Silent Auction..... | 21 |
| 2015 Distinguished Scholar Award..... | 21 |
| 2015 Legacy Book Award | 21 |
| 2015 Annmarie Roeper Global Awareness Award..... | 21 |
| Letter to your District Leadership..... | 22 |
| Celebrating Your Accomplishments..... | 23 |
| Legislative Update | 24 |
| News from Minnesota Department of Education | 25-27 |
| MEGT Foundation | 27 |
| Reflections on NAGC National Convention | 28-29 |
| Outreach..... | 30 |
| Represent Your Region | 31 |
| Purpose of MEGT | 32 |
| New Coordinators 101: A Joint Collaboration..... | 32 |
| Board Members..... | 33 |



MATTERS

GRAY

Lisa Worden
MEGT President



As an educators' organization, it is only natural that the mission of MEGT is largely focused on educators. This fall we had the opportunity to reach more educational professionals when MEGT collaborated with the Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented (MCGT) and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to offer two days of training for gifted and talented coordinators. Planning began last summer, with leaders from all three groups taking part.

The event had me considering the arrangement of Minnesota's two gifted associations. Only a handful of states separate their parent and teacher organizations. I didn't realize this until I attended the state affiliate breakfast at the NAGC conference, but I had given it some thought.

I understand that parents and educators of the gifted have different needs. Educators focus on groups of students, classrooms, budgets, and programming; parents may be more focused on their children's specific needs. I believe that we both have gifted children at the heart of our actions, the difference being a personal, singular connection versus the responsibility of many gifted children and continued programming that will serve many students to come.

Allow me to clarify that I appreciate the role of the advocating parent, and I acknowledge that this separation is not always the case. There are certainly parents who see the big picture and advocate for gifted students outside of their personal needs. I think the difference with these parents is an understanding for gifted students as a whole. Parents often understand their own child's needs, but realizing that those needs are similar to those of many other gifted children, widens their perspective.

I think of a (now) friend I met years ago when I was new to gifted education. The first time we met, she was signing up her child to be tested for Brainerd's AGATE program. She shared some of her concerns and experiences; I lent her a copy of *Living with Intensity*. She brought it back about a week later, expressing a mixture of relief and appreciation. This is a parent who could have chosen to stay secluded in

her child's needs. A conversation and a simple resource changed that route. She became well informed, shared her knowledge with others, and became intensely on the side of gifted students, teachers, and programming.

Benefits of Well Informed Parents

1. Understanding the needs of their gifted children can make home a better place, which makes for better days at school.
2. Understanding the needs of their gifted children often helps parents understand their own intensities and behaviors.
3. The more parents know, the more they can advocate. Not just for their child, but for teachers, programs, and gifted children as a whole.
4. Knowledge has a snowball effect. Well informed parents will share their knowledge with others.

Reread this list considering the effects of the uninformed or misinformed.



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MEGT *Voice*

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Self-Regulation for Learning continued from cover

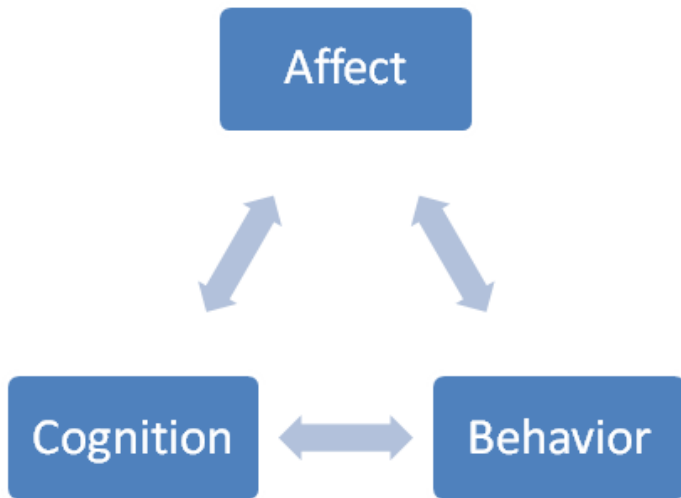


Figure 1. The ABCs of Self-Regulation for Learning (Cash, 2016)

Affect is commonly defined as “how we feel,” or our conscious awareness of our emotional states. **Behavior** is “what we do,” or the actions we take to be successful, including the skills we develop while in school. **Cognition** is “what we think,” and flows from *metacognition* (reflecting on one’s thinking) to *infra-cognition* (the structures of thinking, such as creativity, critical reasoning, problem solving, and decision making) to *metaphysical-cognition* (existential levels of thinking beyond the self). The interactive nature of these ABCs of self-regulation is critical to our students’ learning success. When their affect, behavior, and cognition work in tandem, students are more likely to be able to manage difficult situations, create balance in their lives, and build self-efficacy.

Gifted and advanced students who underperform or underachieve are evidence that a learner’s skills and aptitudes do not fully explain academic success. Quantifiably, these students have the ability and background knowledge to do well in school. However, by the time some gifted and advanced learners reach middle school, they are in severe underachievement mode. These students may not have acquired crucial self-regulation strategies such as how to manage distractions, put forth effort, and persist at rudimentary tasks.

Likewise, many students who struggle in school have not developed effective tools for self-regulation. Schools are a bastion of rules, structures, and order. For some struggling students, particularly those living in poverty, the rules are punishments for not knowing what to do and how to do it, the structures are foreign because the students lack structure at home, and the order is senseless because, again, the students lack the order at home to learn how to make good choices. Be they advanced or struggling, advantaged or disadvantaged, all students can benefit from learning strategies for self-regulation.

Zimmerman and colleagues state that self-regulation is

developed in four phases (Zimmerman, et al., 1996, 1997.):

Phase One

Modeling and observing. Students need to see others using self-regulation to manage their thinking, feelings, and behaviors. In some cases, students from disenfranchised backgrounds do not have adult role models at home using effective self-regulation strategies. In fact, the adults may be modeling ineffective strategies, which the child may then bring to the classroom. And as we observe these students’ lack of effective strategies, we may be overlooking the root issue. We may be blaming the victims by saying “they aren’t motivated,” “they won’t stay on task,” “they are lazy,” and so on. When in reality, they don’t know how to manage their feelings and use of appropriate behaviors attuned to the situation. At this phase we need to model positive self-regulation strategies, such as how to filter out distractions, work at a task for a specified amount of time, reward oneself for accomplishing a task, and reflect when a goal is not achieved.

Phase Two

Copying and doing. Once students have role models for self-regulation, they must begin using the strategies and be held accountable for doing so. A strategy is a *conscious* action, meaning that a person is aware she is using it and knows when to use it. This is a step that many teachers forget to emphasize in learning. Whether we are teaching strategies in math, reading, science, or self-regulation, we need to constantly reinforce those strategies with our students. We also should be checking in with the students to find out which strategies they are using to solve problems, manage behaviors, stay on task, and so forth. State out loud the strategies people use to be self-regulated, have kids copy these strategies, reinforce the strategies, and then request that students use the strategies they have learned.

Phase Three

Practice and refinement. Now that students have acquired some strategies for self-regulation, we must provide opportunities for using the strategies. These opportunities should be both academic and affective and include behavioral management. In other words, we must place students in learning situations that involve emotions and will take some time and effort to solve. For example: When investigating the pilgrims’ journey to the “new world,” ask kids to think about how people felt being crowded on the small boat for the eight months that it took to cross the Atlantic. *What was it like to be going from one home to a new, uncharted place?* Try to link the pilgrims’ experiences to the students’ experiences. Ask: *Have you ever left a safe place to go to an new place? What did it feel like? How might it feel to be with people you don’t know for eight months? Have you ever spent time in a small space with people you don’t know very well? How have you learned to deal with people who are different from you?* Linking the curriculum to feelings and how we manage those feelings is a very effective way to have students practice and refine their self-regulation skills.

continued on page 4



Self-Regulation, *cont. from pg. 3*

Phase Four

Independence and application. At this phase students should be independently using the strategies of self-regulation. They have made the strategies a part of their lives and can do them without being asked or coached. However, they'll still need constant support and encouragement in their use of the strategies. Have students use reflection tools, such as journaling or blogging, to document their personal learning development. We want to keep students focused on goals and what it takes to achieve those goals. After all, "Effort is the key to success." (Dweck, 2006.)

Following from these four phases, I've created four steps to achieving self-regulation for learning for our advanced learners:

Step One

Mobilize your resources.

- Teach students that everything is possible as long as they *believe in themselves*. Having a strong self-belief is the most powerful tool a person can use when working toward a goal.
- Teach students to *use the support of others*. Tell students that your role as teacher is not as an authority figure, but rather as a partner in their learning and success. Also, show them how their classmates can be supportive and useful in areas where they may not be as strong. For example, if a student is not great at math, he may want to partner with a student in math class who is strong and willing to assist him in his learning. Students should also be aware of the adults around them who can provide support. Knowing the strengths of others and accepting their help is an essential life tool.
- Teach students to *use the materials available*. So many times in my classroom, I found that students didn't know what learning materials were required on a daily basis or where to find materials when needed. I learned to repeatedly list the necessary tools (pencil/pen, paper, textbook, notebook, etc.) and tell students where in the room to find these tools if needed. This seemingly simple act of coming to class prepared to learn can be a huge barrier for unregulated learners.
- Teach students to *ask questions and ask for help*. Again, what seems like a simple idea is in fact an overwhelming struggle for many students. They fear asking questions might make them look uninformed or even stupid. For gifted kids, asking for help may seem to threaten their identity as "gifted." However, questioning is how we learn and should be the expectation in a thinking classroom.
- Teach students how to *advocate for themselves*. Knowing when they need something and how to obtain it in the appropriate way can benefit students throughout their

lives. Learners in need of extra support must be able to ask for more help, assistance, or clarification. Advanced learners must be able to request greater challenges rather than simply more work to do

Step Two

Motivation is personal.

We all have certain motivators that drive us, whether they are positive or negative beliefs. Our positive beliefs are topics we are passionate about, rewards that make us feel good, and goals we set for ourselves. Our negative beliefs include our fears and anxieties, challenges that seem overwhelming, and feelings about our own limitations. Intrinsic motivation is developed when we overcome negative beliefs and act on positive beliefs.

It's important that students recognize their negative beliefs, so they can address these hindrances and override them. When they are frustrated about not meeting a goal, focus students on ways they can do better next time, rather than on reasons they didn't meet the goal. We must also help students identify and focus on their positive beliefs, and set rewarding goals or have a meaningful reward when a goal is achieved.

Step Three

Live a growth mindset.

Dr. Carol Dweck wrote a remarkable book titled *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. (Dweck, 2006.) In it she identifies two ways people perceive the world: through a *fixed mindset* or a *growth mindset*. In a fixed mindset a person believes his intelligence and talents are a fixed trait that cannot be changed or enhanced. People in a fixed mindset measure their success or failure by the amount of innate intelligence or talent they possess. A person with a growth mindset, on the other hand, believes that most skills and abilities can be learned. Therefore, success or failure is a result of how much effort a person exerts and what strategies worked or didn't work to accomplish a goal.

Unfortunately, many gifted students come to school in a fixed mindset, as much of what we do in school is based on testing and documentation of innate abilities and skill attainment. The overuse of testing to measure success perpetuates a fixed mindset in both struggling and advanced learners. Students in a fixed mindset never learn how to struggle beneficially or put forth real effort.

Teachers can help kids develop a growth mindset in these ways:

- Provide accurate, constructive, descriptive feedback that focuses the learner on specific areas for improvement.
- Praise a child's effort, not her ability. Say, for example: "I'm impressed with the level of effort you made to achieve your goal." Or: "Even though you didn't achieve your goal, I can see you worked your hardest at it." Or: "What could you change about the way you approached this task to make sure you reach your goal next time?"
- Teach challenges that are worth solving. So often



the materials and problems we give to students lack meaning and have no relevance to their lives. Use real-world problems and situations in which students can apply the strategies they have learned in class.

Step Four

Create a classroom with structure.

Many unregulated students come from home and family backgrounds that lack structure. Children crave structure; they need and want to feel secure. Structure provides students with a safe environment for learning. Follow the “3 Cs” in developing structure in your classroom: Be *consistent, concise, and concrete*.

Post classroom guidelines, policies, and procedures around the room and review them on a routine basis. Tell students often that success, intellectual risk-taking, and collaboration are the expectations in your classroom. Post schedules where students can easily access them. If there are changes to the schedule, make sure students are prepared for the changes. Unplanned events can be difficult for the unregulated student.

Discuss and frequently review the rules and expectations of a productive classroom. Share with students both the rewards for following the rules and the meaningful consequences for not following them. Consequences don’t always have to be punitive;

instead, they can involve delayed gratification, such as requiring a student to wait longer for “choice time” (a time during the day when students can select what they would like to do).

Though the concept of self-regulation is not new, its application has become a critical need in this age of constant distractions and instant gratification. For those of us working with gifted students, we have always had a focus on the social and emotional development. Now, we need to advance toward the inclusion of the ABCs of self-regulation. Taking into account the three dimensions of the whole child can be most beneficial to their success in this ever increase complex world.



<http://nrichconsulting.com/>

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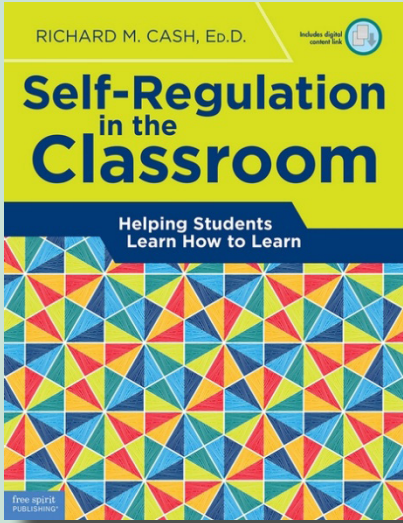
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Coming in March, 2016!

Self-Regulation in the Classroom: Helping Students Learn How to Learn

By Dr. Richard Cash



<http://www.freespirit.com/teaching-strategies-and-professional-development/self-regulation-in-the-classroom-richard-cash/>



(Re)Conceptualizing Gifted Education in Minnesota¹

By Scott J. Peters, University of Wisconsin—Whitewater
and Michael S. Matthews, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

In a keynote speech to the National Association for Gifted Children, Bob Chase, the former president of the National Education Association stated:

Gifted programs are not about elitism. We are talking about the essence of quality public education: enabling all children to reach their full potential. We seek for gifted children exactly what we seek for other groups of exceptional and special-needs children: an appropriate learning environment (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2011; emphasis added).

Public education is failing to serve the thousands if not tens of thousands of under-challenged students who are ill-served by the age-based, grade-level content instruction and for whom no gifted and talented services exist. For academically advanced learners, the regular grade-level curriculum alone cannot be considered to provide a high-quality education if or when a large mismatch exists between what a particular child needs and what she is currently being taught. On a recent visit to a Minnesota school I (Peters) encountered a third grade student who was scoring higher than eighth-grade content standards. While not all tests are well equipped to measure above-grade level performance, this discrepancy between current achievement and current instruction suggests that something different needs to be done to provide an appropriate education for this student. In such cases, including in those where the mismatch is far less drastic but no less significant, the traditional grade-level curriculum is simply not enough.

Minnesota has long been seen as a national leader in education if, for no other reason, because of its highest-in-the-Midwest ACT scores (ACT, 2015). Advanced learners in Minnesota benefit from state-mandated gifted identification and from a fairly strong level of financial support for advanced learners – especially compared to many other Midwestern states (see the following table).

| State | Funding Dollars | Dollars Per K-12 Student |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Georgia | 367,057,950 | 227.67 |
| Iowa | 35,354,981 | 74.77 |
| Virginia | 44,155,053 | 35.08 |
| Ohio | 40,723,826 | 23.71 |
| Minnesota | 11,417,865 | 13.75 |
| Indiana | 13,000,000 | 13.11 |
| Kentucky | 6,622,300 | 10.38 |
| Montana | 250,000 | 1.75 |
| Wisconsin | 237,200 | 0.27 |
| Illinois | 0 | 0 |
| Michigan | 0 | 0 |

Table 1. Gifted education across the United States

While every school cannot be all things, every school *can* focus on doing a few things very well, and one of those things can be a narrowly focused and thoughtfully developed set of learning options for advanced learners. Although programs and services for advanced learners are optional for Minnesota public schools, these students exist, we know from research that they are ill served by grade-level curriculum, and their growth counts toward teacher evaluation systems in many districts. At no time in history has the appropriate level of challenge for advanced learners been more important.

The current Minnesota state definition of “gifted” is far more restrictive and exclusive than the broader population of students who are under-challenged. Thus, there are likely many students who are not identified as gifted who are in need of learning experiences beyond those provided in the grade level classroom. For school and district leaders the challenge becomes, how can we meet these students’ needs when additional funding is not provided to districts for students who do not meet formal criteria to be labeled gifted? Many of these learners likely remain in grade-level classrooms where the curriculum is not challenging them nearly enough to assure academic growth.

In [a recent book](#) (Peters, Matthews, McBee, & McCoach, 2014), my colleagues and I suggested that instead of focusing on who is or who is not gifted, the field of gifted education and of K-12 schools in general should focus more on which students are not having their needs met by the general-education classroom (see Sidebar). Specifically, we have recommended that schools reflect on what curriculum they offer, at what levels of mastery in the various content areas students are performing, and the match (or mismatch) between the two. The question should be “who is not being challenged?” as opposed to “who is or who is not gifted” for a particular school. In many places, identification receives so much attention and funding that little is left over for programming. Minnesota in fact may offer the best / worst example of this problem, because identification is mandated but services are optional. The purpose of labels, and of the assessments that establish them, is to make educational decisions that focus resources where they are most needed. For example, a student might be labeled as having a reading disability so that she can receive support from a certified reading specialist. If students labeled as gifted will receive no modified or specialized services, because they are optional, why do we identify these students in the first place? Of course, many schools do provide these services (the best estimate is that 75% of MN schools provide *some* kind of service or support), but we think it is simply common sense that the gifted label should be used to facilitate services, and that identification should never be the sole focus.



Perhaps our book's most controversial suggestion is that the identification process should avoid the label "gifted" altogether; instead, we suggest, students should be identified *for* specific programming as opposed to being identified *as* gifted. Students may participate in a particular advanced academic program if they show a need for it, regardless of their "gifted identification" status. In practice, this may already be happening to some extent; many teachers tell us their gifted classrooms often include additional non-identified students they identify as "high flyers", due to teachers' recognition of a variety of factors beyond formal identification criteria. Some reasons may include low numbers of identified gifted students in the school, training or other staffing decisions at the building or district level, or even resistance to the very idea of pullout programming models (this despite ample research that demonstrates positive outcomes of instructional grouping by ability). We believe that the label *advanced academics* more clearly states the goal that schools are trying to accomplish—that is, matching students with programming that best meets their individual learning needs—while avoiding the sometimes-problematic connotations that have come to be associated with the label "gifted" (see for example Matthews, Ritchotte, & Jolly, 2014).

We suggest that schools begin by identifying the nature and extent of programming they are able to provide. This programming usually—but not always—will be in the academic content areas that schools traditionally are designed to serve, but programming can and should vary around these central foci based on the values and priorities of the local district. This can require some difficult conversations because perceptions of educational value will vary from one individual stakeholder to the next, and even from one school or district to the next. The local culture and environment also will influence programming decisions. Because this program development process is not the central focus of this necessarily brief article, interested readers are encouraged to look through the second chapter of the book for more on this topic.

Once the program design has been conceptualized, the conversation should move toward thinking about student need – whose needs are being met, and whose are not? We conceptualize need as a flexible, changing indicator of the extent to which a student's level of readiness is mismatched with the instructional environment in his or her current educational setting. Because classroom setting, curriculum, and student composition changes over time, a given student may have a need one year, but not the next, or vice versa. For example, a kindergarten student reading chapter books whose classmates are still learning their letters and sounds has a clear need for advanced academics in the area of reading. If the same student is placed the following year into a multiage classroom with first and second graders, readings in the second grade curriculum may provide sufficient challenge without any additionally advanced curriculum. In both cases, the student's instructional needs are met without recourse to the formal label "gifted".

Taking this approach to need also will tend to minimize instances of a school where nearly all (or more commonly, none) of the students are identified as "gifted". In such settings, under our model, there will still be students whose needs are not met in the general education setting; however, a student who moves from one of these settings to the other may suddenly need, or no longer may need, advanced academic programming because of the revised match between his or her learning ability and the curriculum and instruction provided in the new classroom environment.

Only after program development has been accomplished should procedures for identifying students be developed – though as we have stated above, this does not mean programs are developed in the absence of any consideration for what students need. Identification practices must be clearly and closely related to the programming for which they seek to identify students, and specifically should be designed to address the likelihood of student success in this programming. After this initial development, student progress and success in the programming should be reviewed regularly, with the goal of identifying any possible changes that these monitoring efforts may imply are needed.

We suggest that schools should draw upon the professionalism and expertise already present in schools to consider how we might develop additional specialized schools and narrowly focused advanced academic programs to meet the needs of our advanced and gifted learners. Such programming would serve those students who have sufficiently advanced needs that curricular differentiation in the regular K-12 classroom alone cannot provide sufficient challenge. Though space precludes additional discussion here, we note that such programs clearly can be implemented even within neighborhood schools (e.g., as a school within a school), where they would not require additional infrastructure or transportation costs. Trying out new ideas such as these will help keep Minnesota schools in the forefront of innovation, while providing our children with the best possible education we can deliver. Those of us involved in the education of advanced learners are uniquely posed to lead the way in these efforts.

Sidebar: Three Golden Rules:

1. Identification should only take place if it is *for* some intervention. In other words, if no programming or intervention will be provided to a student as a result of that student being "identified" as gifted or academically advanced, then the process of identification should be discontinued because it wastes resources that could better be used somewhere else.
2. "Giftedness" or the need for advanced academic programming should be seen as a mismatch between what a student can currently do and has mastered and what he or she is currently being taught in school. A student should be identified for an intervention (see rule #1) if



that intervention will meet a need that is not currently being met. For example, a sixth-grade student who has demonstrated mastery of beginning algebra might qualify for a gifted intervention in school A because that content is not typically taught until eighth grade. However, in school B the district has a policy in place where that child can access algebra via a self-paced computer program. Because of this no “gifted” intervention is necessary. Does this mean a child can be gifted in one school but not another? Yes. Does this mean a child can be gifted one year but not the next? Yes. This is why we suggest abandoning the term – it carries with it too much baggage denoting natural, innate, or permanent characteristics. A gifted program should be provided only when it is needed.

3. The goal of any gifted education / advanced academic program should be student growth toward the goals or objectives of the program. This is why conceptualizing what programs we want to offer, and what their goals are, must come before we can identify students successfully.

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¹Note. This article was adapted from an earlier piece by the same authors published in the newsletter of the North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented



Images courtesy of Peters and Matthews



MEGT State Board of Directors Minutes

The minutes from the MEGT State Board of Director’s meetings will no longer be printed in the newsletter and will be located on the organization’s website at www.mnegt.org. All previous minutes are archived in the published newsletters.

Oxford’s Word of the Year: What is this telling us?

In November of 2015, Oxford released their word of the year as the “Face with Tears of Joy” emoji! A pictograph rather than a word!?! As the controversy of this continues, I encourage you to step back and think about the instructional implications this decision has in our classrooms.

What does this decision inform us about ...?

- How students communicate?
- How students process information?
- How students store information?
- How students prefer to learn?
- How student acquire new languages and sophisticated vocabulary?

As educators, how will we respond?



To read more about this, visit the Oxford blog at: <http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2015/11/word-of-the-year-2015-emoji/>



The Fordham Foundation, Gifted Advocacy, and the Common Core

By Stephen Schroeder-Davis, Faculty at College of Saint Scholastica, gtcadvocate@gmail.com

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute's (<http://edexcellence.net/fordham-mission>) primary mission is "Advancing Educational Excellence," and its mission statement includes "The Thomas B. Fordham Institute mission is the nation's leader in advancing educational excellence for every child through quality research, analysis, and commentary, as well as on-the-ground action and advocacy in Ohio." An excellent overview of Fordham can be found at <http://edexcellence.net/about-us>.

While the Fordham Institute's interests are much broader than gifted education, they have published several studies with attendant commentary that were of immense benefit to gifted education. These include "High Achievers in the Era of No Child Left Behind" (2008), "Do High Flyers Maintain Their Altitude?" (2011), and "Talent on the Sidelines: Excellence Gaps and America's Consistent Talent Underclass" (2012).

Fordham's previous support of gifted education make its most recent publication, "Common Core and America's High-Achieving Students" (Plucker, J. 2015) all the more curious. Prior to examining Jonathon Plucker's article, some background is necessary. In the fall of 2014 I wrote an article in *Gifted Education Press Quarterly* (<http://www.giftedepress.com/GEQFALL2014.pdf>) entitled "A Cure for the Common Core" (Schroeder-Davis, 2014) in which I addressed what I viewed as the Common Core State Standard's (CCSS) potential to pose a "No Child Left Behind" type threat to gifted students *precisely because* the CCSS standards are more rigorous than those that preceded them. While this assertion may appear paradoxical, the paradox disappears when one considers that the CCSS's more rigorous standards are being imposed with a one-size-fits-all rigidity on school systems that still track students by age rather than readiness, and so ignore teachers' real life challenges. Here is one example of the problem teachers face from my *Gifted Education Press Quarterly* article:

The enormous diversity represented in a typical classroom encompasses essentially all the ways in which humans differ, but for simplicity's sake, I'll temporarily restrict the idea of student diversity to just 10 factors: culture, academic engagement, aptitude, *readiness*, interests, learning preferences, access to educational resources, parental involvement, motivation, and English language proficiency. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2013), this is the student reading proficiency ("readiness") continuum facing an American fourth- grade teacher:

10% of students are below basic proficiency
31% are at basic proficiency
44% are proficient
16% are advanced (averages are rounded, so the total equals 101%)

And yet, the framers of the CCSS and virtually every other standards' advocate clearly think addressing the continua above is within the reach of all teachers. This is an excerpt from the 2014 CCSS Language Arts Introduction:

The Standards do not define the nature of advanced work for students who meet the Standards prior to the end of high school . . . For those students, advanced work in such areas as literature, composition, language, and journalism should be available. The Standards set grade-specific standards but do not define the intervention methods or materials necessary to support students who are well below or well above grade-level expectations . . . It is also beyond the scope of the Standards to define the full range of supports appropriate for English language learners and for students with special needs. At the same time, all students must have the opportunity to learn and meet the same high standards if they are to access the knowledge and skills necessary in their post-high school lives. (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d., p. 6).

Please read the excerpt above carefully to see if my paraphrasing is too severe: "We are not going to define "advanced work," but do believe "advanced work" should be available. Further, students with special needs and those who are just learning English should be accommodated, but how that's done is not our concern. Finally, despite the two preceding sentences, all students have to learn all of the standards (and during the same time frame, i.e. one school year)!

According to the U.S. Department of Educational Statistics cited above, 41% of 4th grade students are below proficiency in reading, while 16% of students are above proficiency. If, as the CCSS maintains, "all students must have the opportunity to learn and meet the same high standards," how will teachers challenge those above proficiency while simultaneously remediating 2/5th of their students? Short answer: they won't.

This brings us to the current article, "Common Core and America's High-Achieving Students" (2015) by Jonathon Plucker with accompanying commentary by Chester Finn and Amber Northern (2015) <http://edexcellence.net/articles/can-gifted-education-survive-the-common-core>. Both the article and commentary offer the same four propositions in support of gifted education, and I recommend the commentary piece in addition to the article due to the excellent links provided there.

Author Plucker (2015) begins with this introduction:

While the merit and politics of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have been much debated and discussed, one topic has been virtually ignored: What do the standards portend for America's high-ability students? This brief addresses that question and



The Fordham Foundation, continued from page 9

provides guidance for CCSS-implementing districts and schools as they seek to help these youngsters to reach their learning potential.

A google search conducted on March 9, 2015 using the descriptor “gifted education and CCSS” yielded 25,900,000 hits. That raw statistic isn’t particularly revealing, as it’s purely quantitative with many repetitions, but with further examination it becomes clear that ~ far from being ignored ~ the issue of CCSS and gifted students has been examined and debated extensively. Education Week, <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/10/30/10cc-gifted.h33.html>

The National Association for Gifted Children, <http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/timely-topics/common-core-state-standards-national-science-0>, Prufrock Press, <http://www.prufrock.com/Using-the-Common-Core-State-Standards-for-Mathematics-With-Gifted-and-Advanced-Learners-P1657.aspx> and literally hundreds of blogs, articles and commentary pieces have considered the question, “What do the standards portend for America’s high-ability students?”

In his Fordham piece, Dr. Plucker (2015) offers four suggestions for “. . . CCSS-implementing districts and schools as they seek to help these youngsters to reach their learning potential.”

1. Common Core is no excuse to ditch gifted services.
2. State and local officials should get rid of policies that hurt gifted students and strengthen those that help them.
3. Schools should work harder to make differentiation “real.”
4. Schools should make use of existing high-quality materials that help teachers adapt the Common Core for gifted students.

Each suggestion is accompanied with examples and suggestions, but for the purposes of this article, the four points listed above will suffice. Note that suggestions two and three, which have been the focus of intense advocacy (and mixed results) for thousands of gifted advocates for decades, have no intrinsic relationship to CCSS. Those two suggestions would be appropriate in relation to virtually every dictate, innovation, and framework visited upon schools (see Response to Intervention, Out-Come Based Education and No Child Left Behind). The Common Core State Standards do, however, make differentiation even more difficult for teachers whose priorities remain mass proficiency rather than the individual growth of their students.

In the context of Dr. Plucker’s article, suggestion one – “Common Core is no excuse to ditch gifted services” – reflects the (authentic) concern that some will opportunistically present the CCSS as rigorous enough to challenge even the most gifted student. Ironically, the real threat from CCSS for gifted students is that districts may have to siphon off what little money is devoted to gifted services in order to increase monies devoted to remediation. The CCSS exacerbate the current circumstances created when uniform standards are imposed on a generation of students who represent the entire spectrum of human diversity:

students who struggle will monopolize teachers’ time, student authentically capable of meeting the standards will learn, and gifted students will be bored in proportion to their giftedness. To be clear: it’s certainly true that CCSS is no excuse to ditch gifted services, but they may cause the erosion of gifted services as an unanticipated by-product of their adoption. At the very least, the CCSS will further exacerbate the focus on remediation and mass proficiency that marginalize gifted students, who do not need remediation and consistently exceed proficiency, often prior to instruction.

Suggestion four, “Schools should make use of existing high-quality materials that help teachers adapt the Common Core for gifted students,” is again sound, but naïve, as it begs the following questions:

1. How will schools fund the purchase of these materials?
2. Who will train teachers to use them appropriately?
3. How will teachers deliver this parallel/enriched curriculum while simultaneously remediating 2/5 of their students?

Conclusion

I stated earlier that Fordham’s previous support of gifted education make its most recent publication, “Common Core and America’s High-Achieving Students” (Plucker, J. 2015) all the more curious. Here we have a respected writer in a publication that supports gifted education offering four ways to somehow make CCSS not only compatible *with* but an opportunity *for* gifted education. Yet upon examination suggestions two and three, “State and local officials should get rid of policies that hurt gifted students and strengthen those that help them,” and “Schools should work harder to make differentiation ‘real,’” while logical, are in not exclusively related to CCSS, and suggestion one, “Common Core is no excuse to ditch gifted services,” while absolutely true, appears not to anticipate the amount of remediation CCSS requires, and therefore how CCSS may actually jeopardize gifted services. Finally, suggestion four, “Schools should make use of existing high-quality materials that help teachers adapt the Common Core for gifted students,” does not address the funding, training, or implementation realities required for the suggestion to become a reality.

A closing thought: while the CCSS are often lauded because they are more “rigorous” than standards that preceded them, I would like to challenge that idea (even though I alluded to the rigor of the CCSS in this article). In 2001, Richard Strong defined rigor is “. . . the goal of helping students develop the capacity to understand content that is complex, ambiguous, provocative, and *personally or emotionally challenging* (Strong, R. 2001) (emphasis added). The problem with CCSS and any other curriculum that dictates identical content to every student in America is this: when students are forced to narrow their learning focus to the dictates adults impose, the chances are that at any given time a majority of students will not find assignments *personally or emotionally challenging*. In other words, students will find the assignments irrelevant. “Rigor” without relevance



is merely difficulty. Until and unless supporters of the CCSS can explain the import and applicability of each standard's relevance to every student's academic trajectory, they are merely making learning difficult for many, and joyless for most.

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Image courtesy of Bing Images



JAVITS GRANT FOLLOW UP:

As announced in the Fall issue of, *The Voice*, The State of Minnesota was just awarded a Javits Federal Grant for the amount of \$442,000 over three years. Below is the abstract for the Javits grant:

Project North Star: Training Rural Teachers, School Leaders, and Parent/Communities to Support Underserved Gifted Learners

Abstract

In the past 10-15 years, much has been written regarding children who show academic potential but are underrepresented in gifted programs, due, in part, to their being (a) culturally diverse (e.g., Baldwin, 2005; Ford & Grantham, 2003; Callahan, 2005), (b) economically disadvantaged (e.g., Slocumb & Payne, 2000; VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2007), or (c) presenting as twice exceptional (e.g., Foley Nicpon, Alimon, Sieck, & Stinson, 2011; Lovecky, 2004; National Education Association, 2006; Reis & Ruban, 2005; Rogers, 2011). Project North Star intends to elevate the identification and programming approaches provided for disadvantaged and underserved rural populations by preparing their teachers, school administrators, and communities with the knowledge and skills their gifted students need to be successful in the greater world. Project North Star's research design is quasi-experimental with some elements of pre-experimental design. The project utilizes six of the state's Regional Educational Centers in determining "treatment" schools or districts within regions. Selected Centers represent state poverty centers as well as locations of American Indian Reservation Schools. The project design includes developing three two year professional development asynchronous on-line training modules: one for teachers, another for school leaders, and a third for family and community. The project also provides support for implementing services and instructional practices through teacher and school leadership collaboration and peer coaching. A field tested Educator Growth Indicator system will be developed to determine the effectiveness of the professional development modules as well as to document application of learning in respective schools or districts.



Reframing Your Instruction: Increase Engagement

By David Wolff, District Coordinator of Gifted & Talented Services, Austin, MN

Take a moment and reflect on these two questions:

*If your students didn't have to be in your class, would you be teaching in an empty room?
Do you have any lessons you could sell tickets for?*

As an educator, these questions are humbling. If given a choice, would students attend our class or find somewhere else to learn? As society evolves, education has evolved, and so must the role of the teacher. With access to infinite amounts of knowledge, our role isn't so much as the "keeper of knowledge" but more as the "facilitator of knowledge."

To facilitate a lesson is no easy task. As Marzano (2007) states, "that engaging students is becoming increasingly more difficult in a society of fast-paced media and video games." From game consoles, smart phones, wireless television, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, educators are competing for the attention of our students in a culture that is increasingly distracted, and attention spans are plummeting (Burgess, 2012). We know the effect- size of engagement in terms of attending, participating, concentrating is high. Hattie's (2009) meta-analysis of concentration and engagement is $d=0.48$.

I recently came across the book, *Teach like a Pirate: Increase Student Engagement, Boost Your Creativity, and Transform Your Life as an Educator*, by Dave Burgess. The term "Pirate" is used as a metaphor that describes teachers who are daring, adventurous, rejecting status quo, and refuse conformity, "who are willing to use unorthodox tactics to spark and kindle the flame of creativity and imagination in the minds of the young" (Burgess, 2012). Burgess uses "Pirate" as an acronym that outlines his philosophy: Passion, Immersion, Rapport, Ask & Analyze, Transformation, and Enthusiasm.

Passion Burgess describes how to feel

passionate about what you teach even if you are not excited about teaching it. When we are in need of inspiration, he suggests we tap into our Content Passions, Professional Passions, and our Personal Passions. Content Passions include subject areas within the school day; Professional Passions include passions that are education-related but not specific to a subject area; and Personal Passions include passions unrelated to the teaching profession. "With a focus on professional passion, teaching is no longer about relaying the content standards, but about transforming lives" (Burgess, 2012).

Immersion Burgess gives a great metaphor to remind teachers to immerse oneself in the moment. Teachers can be a lifeguard or a swimmer. Lifeguards sit above the pool and supervises the action. Lifeguards are focused, but there is division between the lifeguard and the swimmers, both physically and mentally. Swimmers are participating and part of the action. Teachers are encouraged to jump into and immerse themselves in the learning.

Rapport Cash (2010) and Marzano (2007) state that engagement happens when we create situations that allow students to talk about their interests and passions. Burgess' secret to getting to know his students at a personal level is spending less time trying to get kids interested in what you are teaching, and making an extra effort to make connections between what you are teaching and what the students are already interested in.

Ask & Analyze Burgess challenges educators to ask themselves the right questions to best 'hook' their students to the content being presented. "How do I...?, how many ways...?, or how can

I get...?" are all prompts to ask yourself to hook students to the content. Using high energy activities to engage students includes physical activity and appropriate pacing; puzzles and games tap into our sense of curiosity and anticipation; and mild competition at the right level of intensity for the right duration stimulates engagement (Marzano, 2007).

Transformation With so many things competing for our students' attention, standing out from the crowd is the only way to ensure our message is being received (Burgess, 2012). Burgess says, "Not only are we fighting to stand out from all the images, sounds, products, people, and emotions vying for our students' attention, we are also fighting to keep them from tuning out altogether." He encourages educators to consider using marketing strategies like "positioning" and "reframing" to make your lessons stand out as compared to all of the video games, social media, and other technologies.

Enthusiasm Interestingly, Burgess noted that unlike passion, enthusiasm can be faked (2012). Like the old saying, "Fake it until you make it," is a mantra educators should live by. Marzano states that research suggests that teacher enthusiasm and intensity also appear to affect students' energy levels and enhance engagement (2007).

Gifted learners, as much as every other learner in our schools, are in need of teachers who are willing to teach like a PIRATE. Siegle and McCoach outline three ways gifted learners view school as useful, purposeful, and interesting (2005). To avoid underachievement, educators need to help gifted learners connect what they

continued on page 13



Reframing, *continued from page 12*

are learning to their present and future goals, be of interest to them, and align with their personal values.

Reconsider the questions at the beginning of this article. By using the PIRATE approach and the hooks Burgess provides, would students come to your class even if they didn't have to? Would you be able to reframe your content in ways that students would pay to come to class? Take a chance and see what happens.

<http://daveburgess.com/>

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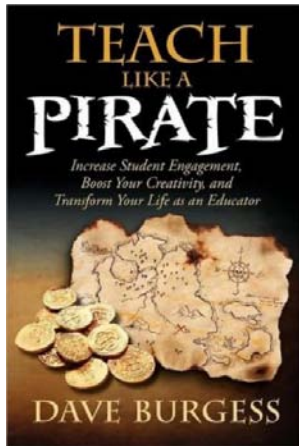


Image courtesy of Bing Images



Image courtesy of Wolff

Reflections on GERI Summer Camp

By Michael Carroll, 10th grade and Participant in GERI Summer Camp

Last year, Dr. Marcia Gentry generously donated multiple scholarships to the MEGT Foundation's silent auction for students to attend Gifted Education Resource Institute's [GERI] Summer Camp at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. One of the recipients of the scholarship reflects on his experience at GERI Summer Camp.

"I am a sophomore in high school and I attended GERI program this past summer. It was two of the best weeks of my life packed with adventure and learning. I met some really good friends that I will keep in contact with for the rest of my life. You meet kids that love to learn and can challenge even the brightest students. The small group I was put in was amazing; with kids who you could connect with and an awesome counselor. The camp was filled with engaging activities intended to build teamwork and creativity. There was never a dull moment at GERI.

The camp gave a wide variety of classes that could meet anyone's interests. I took Discovering Statistics and Jurassic Paleo Biology. I learned how to collect data to create my own statistics. We analyzed many different types of stats and applied them to everyday life. The class taught me how to interpret stats given in the media and question their relevance. The Jurassic class was more hands-on, filled with models of fossils and dinosaurs. We created our own models and learned about the many types of dinosaurs; how they evolved, lived, and went extinct. It was a class that pushed me to learn about a topic I was not comfortable with. GERI is a great program to push students to their maximum potential and stray from their comfort zone."



Image courtesy of Carroll



Help Yourself...And a Student

5–Min. Professional Development!

David Wolff, david.wolff@austin.k12.mn.us



Gifted 207: What Motivates You?

When facing resistant learners, teachers must look closely at what motivates the student to learn. Look beyond trinkets, point sheets, sticker charts, and candy.

Heacox suggests that students are motivated to learn in four areas: Mastery, Purpose, Autonomy, and Belonging.

Mastery

Students who are motivated by mastery have a need for a sense of accomplishment and to be viewed as competent.

| The student values... | Then, use this... |
|-----------------------|--|
| Mastery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery Points [Retesting] • Descriptive feedback • Self-evaluation • Progress charting • “Now that...” rather than “If/Then” rewards • Strategies dealing with setbacks |

Autonomy

Students who are motivated by autonomy need a degree of control over what, where, when, and how they will learn.

| The student values... | Then, use this... |
|-----------------------|---|
| Autonomy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice in process and product • Interest based tasks • Structure not coercive control • Choice of redirecting behavior or logical consequences |

Reference:

Heacox, D. (2013) *Motivating Reluctant Learners*. Rochester.

Purpose

Students who are motivated by purpose are in need for a rationale for what they are learning, a relevance of learning, and the need to make connections to their lives.

| The student values... | Then, use this... |
|-----------------------|--|
| Purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating the relevancy of what is being learned • Connections to real life applications • Flexibility in assignments to respond to their interests • Promote the value of their learning • Conversations about the purpose of behavior and the effects of misbehavior on others |

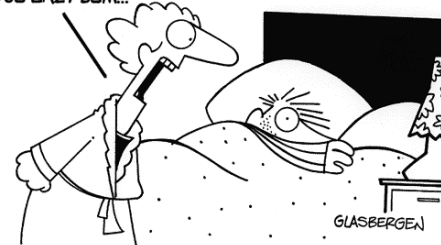
Belonging

Students who are motivated by belonging have the need for personal connections between teachers and students, need for classroom community, and needs for opportunities to work with others.

| The student values... | Then, use this... |
|-----------------------|--|
| Belonging | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative work • Opportunities to connect with teachers and peers • Peer mediation • Opportunities for ‘redemption’ |

HEY! GET OUT OF BED AND GET TO WORK, YOU LAZY BUM!!!

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How Motivational Speakers Get Motivated.



Project E³: Environmental & Engineering Sciences for Everyone: A Promising Program

By David Wolff, District Coordinator of Gifted & Talented Services, Austin, MN

In collaboration with Kristi Beckman, Coordinator of the Alliance for Educational Equity Integration Collaborative, Austin, MN

The Minnesota Department of Education’s Division of Achievement and Integration recently recognized Project E³ as one of the state’s “Promising Programs.” Project E³ is a STEM enrichment program focused on the conservation of water, habitats, and energy. Through the collaboration between the departments of Gifted & Talented and Integration in Austin Public Schools, Project E³ was created to achieve common goals shared by both departments to raise the student achievement of culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse learners.

In 2013, Minnesota Integration leaders were faced with new programming challenges in response to the integration legislation which included a separate fund, called Incentive Funds. To use Incentive funds, Integration collaboratives were required to create programming specifically for multi-district enrollment opportunities. Leaders from the Albert Lea, Austin, Hayfield, Lyle, and Southland school districts, located in southeast Minnesota, met this challenge with a program that created opportunities to develop sustained relationships and eliminated the traditional ‘summer slide.’

In the first year, Project E³ worked with 75 students in grades 4, 5, and 6 from the five school districts; in the second year, the program grew to serve 90 students – 46 of whom returned from the previous year.

The students meet eight Saturdays during the academic year and twenty days during the summer. The goal of Project E³ is to offer opportunities for students to make connections to the

natural world, embed learning through engaging educational experiences, develop ‘citizen scientists’ that will put new knowledge of the natural world to action in their communities, and motivate students to work at their highest potential throughout the academic and calendar year.

During the first year, students learned about water conservation efforts in our communities and how to advocate for change at home, in their neighborhood, and in their town. Currently, students are learning about the impact that habitat conservation has on animals and humans – focusing on topics of interest globally and locally.

For more information you can check out the website: <http://projecte3.weebly.com>

Project E3 Team is pictured above:: [left to right] Back Row: Joni Irvin, Valentina Gallegos, Kassie Robinson, Erin Johnson, Laura Ramirez; Front Row: David Wolff, and Arik Andersen. Images courtesy of Wolff





World Class Skills & Gifted Learners



MEGT 24th Gifted Conference

January 31st—February 2nd 2016

Cragun's Conference Center in Brainerd

Keynote Speakers

Dr. Richard Cash: *Self-Regulation for Learning: What it really takes to be successful in the 21st Century and Teaching Thinking: Assisting Gifted Learners in Digging Deeper, plus 2 breakout sessions!*

Dr. Susan Daniels: *Everyday Creativity in K-12 Classrooms and Divergent Thinking & Creativity, plus 2 breakout sessions!*

*Practical classroom focused breakout sessions!

*Please fill out a Call for Proposals to present a breakout session.

*Complete conference information and registration forms on the

MEGT website: www.mneqt.org

Conference information at: www.mneqt.org



World Class Skills & Gifted Learners

Pre-Conference Session



Creativity Is Contagious, Pass It On

Creativity is often a forgotten instructional strategy in the current education world of content standards. The NAGC 2015 convention highlighted the importance of integrating creativity in all areas. MEGT would like to encourage all teachers to bring creativity back into the classroom. This session will use the *“Learn It Today—Use It Tomorrow”* format. There will be six to eight teachers sharing their favorite creative activities.

Come to this pre-conference session to learn activities that will ignite the creativity in your students. MEGT will create a Creativity folder within the conference Google folder to share as many ideas as possible. If you have a creative activity to share please email Sue Feigal-Hitch at: sfeigalhitch@edenpr.org by January 1st, 2016.

****An additional registration fee is required for this session. This session starts at 1:00 Sunday afternoon. Be sure to arrive on time so you don't miss any of the good ideas.****

MEGT 24th Gifted Conference

January 31st—February 2nd 2016
Cragun's Conference Center in Brainerd
registration at: www.mnegt.org

Conference information at: www.mnegt.org

CONFERENCE & CRAGUN'S LODGING RESERVATION FORM

Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented (MEGT) – January 31-February 2, 2016

Name _____ M F
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Confirmations will be emailed to address listed on this form

Please mark your MEGT region: Arrowhead Headwaters Heartland Homestead
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Mark your focus: Elementary Middle Secondary Coordinator
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Roommates: EACH PERSON MUST COMPLETE A SEPARATE RESERVATION FORM. If you are selecting roommates, reservation forms must be mailed or faxed together. If not received together, Cragun's will place you in a room at the single occupancy rate. For safety and security reasons, Cragun's will not assign roommates. List names(s) below of roommates you are selecting:

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FULL CONFERENCE TWO-NIGHT PACKAGE INCLUDES:

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- MN sales tax & service charge

Please mark preference:

- \$584.00 Single Occupancy (per person) \$ _____
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PRE-CONFERENCE SESSION SUNDAY 1:00 – 3:30pm INCLUDES:

- handout materials
- light snacks provided

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MONDAY ONLY CONFERENCE 8:30 am – 4:30 pm INCLUDES:

- Keynote speakers, Monday's breakout sessions,
- 1 year MEGT membership, Monday's lunch & breaks

\$260.00 per person \$ _____

MAIN CONFERENCE WITHOUT LODGING INCLUDES:

- Main Conference Registration; Sunday 2:00 pm – Tuesday 1:00pm
- 1 year MEGT membership

-Meals: Sunday's supper through Tuesday's brunch

- MN sales tax & service charge

\$351.00 per person \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

All lodge rooms/cabins are **NON-SMOKING**. \$300 will be charged for smoking in a non-smoking room.

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Cardholder's Name _____



Dr. Richard M. Cash has worked in the field of education for over 25 years. His range of experience includes teaching at the elementary and middle school levels as well as the college level. Most recently, he served as Director of Gifted Programs for the Bloomington Public Schools, in Minnesota, USA.

Dr. Cash received his doctorate in Educational Leadership and a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, MN. Along with his Bachelor's degree in Education from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Richard holds a Bachelor's degree in Theater from the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire. For over 10 years, Richard co-directed the Lakeshore Players Children's Theater Company in White Bear Lake, MN, and co-authored 4 award winning children's plays.

Richard serves on various boards and associations, such as the World Council on Gifted Education, ASCD, and The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). He is the President and Lead Consultant for **nRich Educational Consulting, Inc.** His consulting work has taken him throughout the United States, as well as into Canada, The Czech Republic, China, England, Indonesia, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Poland, Qatar, Spain, and Turkey.

His areas of expertise are educational programming, rigorous and challenging curriculum design, differentiated instruction, 21st century skills, brain compatible classrooms, and self-regulated learning. Dr. Cash authored the books *Advancing Differentiation: Thinking and Learning for the 21st Century*, (2011) and *Differentiation for Gifted Learners: Going Beyond the Basics* (2014) (co-author Diane Heacox), which was awarded The Legacy Book® Award for Outstanding Educators Publication. His newest book on self-regulation for learning will be released in early 2016. All books are published by Free Spirit Publishing, Inc. (freespirit.com).

Dr. Cash may be reached at:
www.nrichconsulting.com
richard@nrichconsulting.com
612-670-0278





Announcing Keynote Speaker
MEGT 24th Gifted Conference
January 31st—February 2nd, 2016



Susan Daniels, Ph.D.

Susan Daniels, Ph.D. is a Professor of Educational Psychology and Counseling at California State University and a former classroom teacher and K-12 gifted program coordinator. Her research interests and areas of expertise include: gifted education, social-emotional development of the gifted, visual thinking and learning, and the development of creative potential.

Susan has written two books – *Living With Intensity: Understanding the Sensitivity, Excitability, and Emotional Development of Gifted Children, Adolescents and Adults*, and *Raising Creative Kids*, as well as over 40 articles and chapters. She is a regular speaker at state, national and international conferences. And Susan is also Co-founder and Co-director of the Summit Center – a psycho-educational clinic for Gifted Talented, and Creative Children located in Walnut Creek, CA with offices in surrounding areas outside of San Francisco.

Susan is originally from the Midwest, so she's delighted to be visiting Minnesota in the winter and to have the opportunity to experience our invigorating seasonal climate!



5TH ANNUAL MEGT FOUNDATION SILENT AUCTION

From ski tickets, framed artwork, jewelry, massage and healing products, golf packages, to a Little Free Library... these are just some of the past items donated to the annual MEGT Foundation Silent Auction.

Held during the MEGT Mid-Winter Conference on January 31-February 2, 2016 the silent auction is a fundraising event intended to raise money for the MEGT Foundation which in turn offers scholarships to teachers to support opportunities for gifted and talented students.

Starting bids are assigned as items are donated and the silent auction begins on Sunday afternoon and goes through Monday afternoon when the winners will be announced.

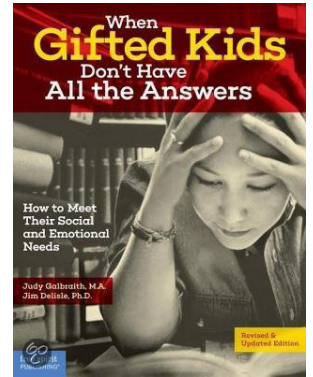
As in the past years, if you would like to donate an item for the auction, please bring your donation to the conference or drop off the item in advance with any of the MEGT Board members.

In addition to this event, after the Tuesday morning keynote speaker, there will be a drawing for all conference attendees. Prizes include gift baskets donated from each region around the state.

Questions regarding the silent auction can be addressed to Sue Karp at: susankarp@rocketmail.com

2015 Legacy Book Award

MEGT would like to congratulate authors Jim Delisle and Judy Galbraith [MEGT Member] for being the recipients of the 2015 Legacy Book Award from the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented for their book, *When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers: How to Meet Their Social and Emotional Needs* [Free Spirit Publishing].



"The Legacy Book® Awards ... honor outstanding books published in the United States that have long-term potential for positively influencing the lives of gifted individuals and contribute to the understanding, well-being, education and success of gifted and talented students."

To learn more about the Legacy Book Award, visit: <http://txgift-ed.org/legacy-book-awards/>



Images Courtesy of Bing

2015 Distinguished Scholar Award



MEGT would like to congratulate Karen Rogers for being awarded the 2014 NAGC's Distinguished Scholar Award during the NAGC Celebration of Excellence presentation for her significant contribution to the field of education regarding gifted and talented individuals. <http://www.nagc.org/about-nagc/nagc-awards-scholarships/annual-awards>

Images Courtesy of Bing

2015 Annmarie Roeper Global Awareness Award

MEGT would like to congratulate, author and publisher, Judy Galbraith who was the recipient of NAGC's 2015 Annmarie Roeper Global Awareness Award. Recipients of this award are recognized for their response to concerns of gifted children regarding the future and the world they live in. <http://www.nagc.org/get-involved/nagc-networks-and-special-interest-groups/networks-global-awareness/annmarie-roeper>



Images Courtesy of Bing



Letter to your District Leadership:

MEGT has prepared the following letter for your use in generating support from your district leadership to attend the MEGT Mid-Winter Conference. Feel free to customize the letter to help “make the case” for your attendance. For this document formatted in WORD, go to www.mnegt.org and look under ‘Conferences.’

Dear [District Leader’s name],

At the annual MEGT Conference on Personalized Learning, K-12 educators will gather enhance their professional skills, knowledge, and careers. I would like to attend this event, scheduled January 31- February 2, 2015, as this is an opportunity for our school to invest in all of our students’ academic growth and success.

The conference will include keynotes and breakout sessions on issues like:

- Common Core State Standards
- Technology Integration
- 21st Century Learning Skills
- Student Motivation and engagement
- Grading and Assessment
- Classroom Management
- Growth for Advanced Learners
- Student Focused Differentiation
- Critical Thinking & Creative Thinking
- Inquiry – Problem Based Learning – Genius Hour
- Cultural, Linguistic, and Economically Diverse learners
- Twice-Exceptional Learners
- Meeting Academic and Affective Learning Needs

I expect to learn practical and effective strategies for differentiating my instruction, while addressing immediate issues impacting instruction like using integrating technology to enhance instruction, aligning and extend Common Core & state standards, and engaging all learners.

From internationally-known keynote speakers as well as fellow practitioners, I will have the opportunity to learn from to stay abreast of current research, important issues, and new challenges facing advanced learners in our classrooms.

Opportunities to network with other educators working with advanced learners do not happen frequently. By attending, I will be able to make meaningful connections with other educators across Minnesota to better support what we are doing here in our district.

Past participants have learned a great deal like Laura, “One of the best conferences I have attended! I gained so many valuable ideas that not only I will use but I am sharing what I learned with all of the gifted education teachers in my district. This will help increase student achievement for students...” and Shari, “This conference helped my professional growth by providing me with a deeper understanding of the gifted and talented, and many ideas and opportunities to offer our students and staff through our services.”

Upon my return I plan to share what I learned with my peers in many ways including [include opportunities like PLCs, staff meetings, grade level/department meetings, etc.].

More information about the conference is on the MEGT’s website at www.mnegt.org.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Sincerely,

[Your name]



Celebrating Your Accomplishments!

Barbra Dullaghan's Smart Start



Young children are curious about the world around them. The Smart Start series for prereaders fosters engaging conversations for parents and their children through the use of interactive questioning. Images in this book convey children in realistic situations, and each image's corresponding questions prompt children to think at critical, creative, and mathematical levels about their everyday surroundings and activities. The open-ended questions stimulate curiosity and invigorate conversations between parents and children. Each book highlights the vast world of a child's imagination and encourages children to think deeply about the objects and situations they're faced with every day.

The Smart Start Series of three books were released August 1, 2015 by Prufrock Press. Around My House, Let's Go to the Market, and Let's Play are the three titles in the series, aimed at 3-5 year olds. The series is co-authored by, Barbra Dullaghan, Elementary Gifted and Talented Coordinator in Bloomington Public Schools, along with Dr. Ellen Honeck and Dr. Nancy Hertzog. http://www.prufrock.com/cw_contributorinfo.aspx?ContribID=17210



Images courtesy of Prufrock Press

Congratulations

MEGT would like to congratulate, Minnesota Department of Education's Gifted Specialist, Wendy Behrens who was named President of the State Board of Directors.



The Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted (CSDPG) is the national organization of state education agency personnel responsible for developing public school programs for the gifted and talented in the 50 states and the trust territories of the United States. The Council's purpose is to strengthen the capabilities of state directors by supporting a strong federal policy, facilitating the field of services for gifted students, influencing national educational movements and research, collecting and disseminating information, and enhancing the knowledge and skills of its members. Council membership provides a forum for collegial dialogue, opportunities collaborate on common issues, and networks to build capacity among state directors and communicate best practices.

The CSDPG leverages resources across the states by developing a collective voice to guide policy or procedures and implement policy. The council also works closely with the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) to advocate for gifted education policy and to create the State of the States in Gifted Education, a biennial analysis of state laws and policies to support high-ability and high-potential students.

<http://csdpg.weebly.com/>





LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

by Bill Keilty, Ed. D., MEGT Legislative Liaison

Revenue outdistances expenditures at the state level. The governor is calling for a special session to resolve the sudden unemployment issue in the northern tier of the state and hopefully deal with the equity issues revolving around the north side of Minneapolis and the rest of the Twin Cities and across the state. The executive branch and the legislative branch are trying to determine how to spend the excess and have over a billion-dollar balance, but gifted programs are suffering with local control. There is no directive or rule from the state that governs how the \$13,000,000.00 is to be divided and districts are struggling to balance their own budgets. Since one does not have to report how you spent the gifted dollars it can be used for other purposes.

But there are some state dollars, while not directly targeting gifted students, available for many gifted students. The Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$4.5 million dollars to provide financial incentives to schools for student exam subsidies and teacher training for the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs. Those dollars are available for public and non-public teachers attending in-depth summer AP training.

AP Exam subsidies are available for public and non-public school students for both fee-reduced (low-income) and non-fee-reduced students.

At the federal level: After over five years of active lobbying, visits, phone calls, email, advocates have been rewarded. The Congressional conference committee appointed to work out differences between the House and Senate-passed versions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reached agreement on a bill that could go to the president before the end of the year.

For the first time, the needs of gifted and talented students are included in the teacher training provisions of the bill (Title II). For example, states will be required to include in their plans a description of how they will use the Title II professional development funds to improve the teaching skills of school professionals in identifying the specific learning needs of gifted students and in tailoring academic instruction to those needs. Also, school districts that receive Title II funds will be required to address the learning needs of students who are gifted and talented.

Two other important provisions NAGC sought to include in ESEA made it through the committee. State report cards must now include disaggregated student achievement data at EACH level of achievement and the Javits Gifted Students program was retained in ESEA after being eliminated in the House bill. The new provisions in ESEA came directly from the TALENT Act, legislation that our community wrote about to their Members of Congress and that so many state leaders spoke about in Congressional office visits over the past several years.

These efforts paved the way for further conversations and support in both the House and Senate. These new requirements in ESEA provide advocates opportunities to educate and advocate so that states and districts are able to implement these provisions as effectively as possible. The new data requirement on the state report cards will help us make the case that we are leaving many high-ability students behind; the Javits research will continue to inform us about best classroom practices; and the Title II requirements will help move the needs of gifted students onto the agenda in all districts, many of which have not before offered professional learning on the topic.

“The Senate and House passed the “Every Student Succeeds Act,” the successor to No Child Left Behind, paving the way for the president’s signature. And for the first time since 1988 (when the Javits act was added to the Elementary & Secondary Education Act), the federal law addresses the needs of gifted and talented learners. It’s a great milestone day.

New provisions in the law address data collection and reporting, Title II professional development, and computer adaptive assessments, and specifically permits Title I funds can be used to identify and serve gifted students.

NAGC has begun to put together some information that you may find useful, and we’ll be adding more information as we develop it. For now, you can get a copy of the full ESSA, a Q&A about what’s in the law for gifted, and the specific legislative language of each provision supporting gifted. We’ve posted the information on the NAGC website and invite you to share it with others in your state agencies working on Title II state plans as well as state report card.”

Jane Clarenbach, J.D. | Director of Public Education, NAGC



Reauthorizing the Elementary & Secondary Education Act [ESEA]: Cheat Sheet

Here is a resource to help you understand the changes to the ESEA.

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2015/11/accountability_and_the_esea_re.html



News from
Minnesota Department of
Education

GIFTED AND TALENTED ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Gifted and Talented Advisory Council is comprised of representatives of stakeholder groups with interest and expertise in gifted and talented education. The council provides valuable guidance and feedback to the department on social emotional and instructional needs of highly able learners. Two council members are appointed to the council by the state gifted education specialist and remainder are selected through an open application process. MDE is pleased to announce the appointment of two new council members, Billie Annette and Leah Brzezinski. Billie and Leah will begin their two years terms in January.

Billie Annette has worked in the field of Indian education for 35 years in several capacities that include serving as a home-school liaison for a public school, tribal scholarship/career education specialist and Johnson O'Malley program coordinator for the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. Billie's educational journey includes graduating as Valedictorian from Red Lake High School in 1976; graduating from Bemidji State University in 1980 and then earning her Master's Degree in Tribal Administration and Governance from the University of Minnesota Duluth in 2014. Promoting education is a passion for Billie but she does find time for other activities that include among other things writing poetry (her first book "Life Whispers" was published just this past October and another is near completion.)

Leah Brzezinski has a B.A. in Elementary Education, a M.S. in Speech Language Pathology, and an Ed. D. in Child and Youth Leadership with a focus on special education. She has worked with children and adults in various settings including schools, hospitals, and clinics. Her experiences include Coordinator of the Autism Clinic and Diagnostician at the University of Minnesota and extensive volunteer work related to adoption and with children from low socioeconomic backgrounds and with special needs in the US, South Korea, and Costa Rica. Leah is the Director of Arete Academy, a school inspired by her twice exceptional sons and created to provide bright students who learn differently an educational setting in which they can reach their fullest potential.

This fall MDE publicized criteria and an open application period for three positions on the advisory council. The positions were promoted on the department's website, through newsletters, emails, and at professional conferences. MDE received no qualified applications for the out of school/after school program representative openings but several who met the criteria for the parent/guardian representative and the school counselor/psychologist positions. The applications are currently being reviewed and ranked by a sub-committee advisory. Advisory council meetings are open to the public. The council will meet on January 25th, April 11th and June 27th from 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. in Conference Center A, room 3 & 4.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES SPONSORED BY THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

HORMEL FOUNDATION GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM: JUNE 13-16, 2016 AUSTIN, MN

Save the Dates! The Hormel Foundation Gifted and Talented Education Symposium will be held in Austin, Minnesota June 13-16th. There will be a pre-conference on June 12th and an Administrator Day on June 12th. Registration and more details will be available in late January via a link from the Minnesota Department of Education Gifted Education webpage and the Austin Public School District. Sessions address best practices on the identification of students for services, program models, social and emotional needs, instructional strategies, under-represented populations, under-achievement, integration of STEM and technology and specific content in the areas of science, mathematics, language arts and social studies



WORKSHOPS

Four outstanding workshops reached full capacity at MDE this fall.

- Putting the Innovation in Stem: Creating Opportunities for Making and Collaboration among High Ability Learners
- New Gifted Education Coordinator & Specialist Workshops
- Young Scholars Workshop: Finding and Developing Talent in Underserved Populations of Gifted Learners
- On Location: The Full-Time Network Visits Three Suburban Districts

Extending the Standards at workshop with Dr. Diane Heacox will be held at MDE on March 15th. More information will be available on the MDE website soon.

FULL-TIME GIFTED PROGRAMS NETWORK JANUARY 22, 2016, MARCH 04, 2016 AT MDE

The Full-Time Gifted Programs Network focuses on the unique needs of schools that have full-time programs for the gifted **or** are exploring the possibility of creating one. Full-time programs for the gifted include school within a school models and gifted magnet schools. Each network meeting includes an invited guest speaker and the opportunity for leaders to discuss their roles and best practices on a variety of topics. All are welcome to attend. There is **no charge** to the participant to attend but **registration is required**.

[Register here](#)

01/22/2016: The Science and Impact of Calm In the Classroom

Guest Speakers: Sandra Mortensen, School Counselor and Julie Donaldson, Gifted Education Coordinator, Bloomington Public Schools

03/04/2016: Conducting Internal Gifted Education Program Evaluations

Guest Speakers: Dr. Karen B. Rogers, and Dr. Karen L. Westberg, University of St. Thomas

MN AT NAGC

Minnesota was well represented at the National Association for Gifted Children's 62nd Annual Convention and Exhibition in Phoenix, Arizona. Of the 49 Minnesotans attending 10 were speakers making a total of 17 presentations. Many were on hand to honor Dr. Karen Rogers the 2016 NAGC Scholar of the Year Award and Judy Galbraith recipient of the 2016 Annemarie Roeper Award. Congratulations to these well-deserving Minnesotans!

SELECTED OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

SCHOLARS OF DISTINCTION AWARD PROGRAM

Student projects are due on or before March 4, 2016 and may be submitted to Wendy Behrens at wendy.behrens@state.mn.us. All applicants were required to complete the Intent to Apply Form by December 15th. Students and schools will be notified on May 4th and the award ceremony will be held on May 9, 2016 at the Perpich Center for Arts Education.

JACK KENT COOKE SCHOLARSHIPS

[Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Scholarship](#) is a new undergraduate scholarship program available to high-performing high school seniors with financial need who seek to attend and graduate from the nation's best four-year colleges and universities. Selected from a nationwide pool of applicants, up to 40 students will become Jack Kent Cooke Scholars and have access to funding for up to four years for undergraduate studies

DAVIDSON FELLOWS SCHOLARSHIPS

The 2016 [Davidson Fellows Scholarship](#) application is now [available online](#). Young people 18 and younger have the opportunity to earn a \$50,000, \$25,000 or \$10,000 scholarship in recognition of a significant piece of work in the categories of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, music, literature and philosophy, or a project that represents outside the box thinking. The application deadline is Wed., Feb. 10, 2016.



RESEARCH SCIENCE INSTITUTE (RSI)

The Center for Excellence in Education (CEE) and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) co-sponsor the Research Science Institute (RSI) for talented 11th Grade STEM Students. Students with an interest in Science Technology Engineering or Mathematics and a desire to complete a research program are encouraged to apply for the program held on the MIT campus June 26 to August 6, 2016. The program is free to students except for travel to and from MIT. If you are a high school junior and interested in the program, take a look at the CEE website or RSI application materials, and more information about the program. See application information at: <http://www.cee.org/apply-rsi>. Contact Maite Ballesterro maite@cee.org with questions.

EPSILON CAMP - MATH EXPERIENCE FOR YOUNG STUDENTS

Application season has begun for [Epsilon Camp](#), a two-week summer residential camp serving promising young mathematicians and their families through an intensive student program and parent workshop. The mission of Epsilon is to meet the learning needs of students ages 7 through 11 with extreme intelligence and a love of mathematics by exposing them to suitable content, pedagogy, peers and mathematicians. Epsilon Camp 2016 will be held at Washington University in St. Louis, Mo. from July 24 to August 7. Epsilon will offer one full scholarship for a camper and one parent/guardian, and up to four additional financial assistance awards.

MEGT FOUNDATION Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented Foundation

The MEGT Foundation has an updated look to its website. Watch for updates and announcements at <http://www.megtfoundation.com>. Consider logging in and making your donation.

Our board has expanded. Our newest member is Lynn Montgomery. She has joined the board bringing with her fund raising opportunities we will pursue as a board.

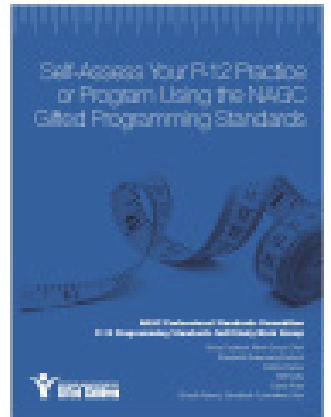
We recently finished the current year's grant award process, awarding \$4000 in grants to teachers across the state to attend conferences, establish innovative ideas for the gifted kids in their classrooms or to pursue additional coursework. Some recipients will attend the MEGT Annual Conference at Craguns' in February.

We continue to explore fundraising ideas. We will continue with silent auction at Craguns', along with the \$1 bid auction held during the conference. We are exploring corporate grant awards and are looking for the companies that provide matching funds for donations made by employees. If your significant other is employed with companies that do match funds, please consider the MEGT Foundation in your gifted giving. Please remember because we are a 501(3) C, donations may be deducted.

Bill Keilty,
MEGT Foundation President

A new resource was recently published by NAGC to assist professionals in examining and improving their gifted program. *Self-Assess Your P-12 Practice or Program Using the NAGC Gifted Programming Standards*

This resource, developed and authored by the NAGC Professional Standards Committee PK-12 Programming Standards Self-Study Work Group: Alicia Cotabish, Work Group Chair; Elizabeth Shaunessy-Dedrick, Debbie Dailey, Bill Keilty and Diane Pratt; along with Cheryll Adams, as the Standards Committee Chair, is an inexpensive book that provides guidance for an initial review of the district's gifted program.



This guide is designed to allow practitioners to examine their program through the lens of student outcomes enumerated in the NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards. The Self-Study Guide provides a step-by-step process that includes review of the student outcomes and evidence-based practices for each programming standard, data gathering, completion of a checklist to evaluate practice and prioritize areas needing attention, gap analysis, action planning, and progress check-in. The Guide includes samples for each tool provided, additional resources, questions for further discussion, and examples of sources from which to gather evidence to measure student outcomes. The \$12 resource is an important addition to the bookshelf of the gifted program coordinator. The book is available in the online store at NAGC, <https://netforum.avectra.com/eweb/shopping/Shopping.aspx?Site=nagc&WebCode=Shopping>



Reflections on NAGC National Convention

By Lisa Worden, Third-Grade Classroom Teacher, AGATE Academy

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) convention took place in Phoenix, Arizona on December 11-15. I was a first-time attendee, and grateful for the opportunity to spend five days immersed in gifted education and those who share the same passion. These are my thoughts, organized by topic rather than schedule.

Eye-opening

The impressive breadth of programming and speakers:

- Keynotes speakers included Disney executive, Thomas Schumacher; *Make Magazine's* Creative Director, Jason Babler; Joshua Davis, author of *Spare Parts*; and Google's Chief Education Evangelist, Jaime Casap. (For summaries of the keynote speakers and their topics, [click here.](#))
- Among the main conference keynotes and various programs, were 12 breakout sessions, most of which offered more than thirty topic choices. Presenters in these sessions represented 42 states (as well as Washington DC) and 7 countries. It was clear I would have the opportunity to grow!

Affirmation

Minnesota gifted and talented education is well represented on a national level:

- 18 of Minnesota's gifted and talented experts presented a total of 27 times in breakout sessions. Still more speakers have earlier school and work connections to Minnesota.
- Though on a smaller scale, conferences I've attended in Minnesota (like the MEGT Winter Conference and the Hormel Symposium) are comparatively rigorous.

Reminders

Having stepped into the student roll for an extended period of time, I was gently reminded that students deserve the same privileges I was allowed at NAGC:

- The opportunity to make choices concerning my learning.
- Time to process and connect my learning - sometimes with others, sometimes alone.
- Rigorous and new content that makes me question and search further.

Get out of the way! Teach less and facilitate more:

- So many of the inspiring stories I heard during the conference only became possible because students were allowed to explore, build, and experiment. Adults were present, but they were supporting and questioning.

Application and Change

Google's Jaime Casap on collaboration and innovation:

You have likely heard his quote, "Rather than, What do you want to be when you grow up? Let's ask, What problem do you want to solve?" It makes sense. Our students will be performing many jobs that don't even exist today. Plus, it moves the conversation forward toward the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to solve the problem.

However, it was something else that Mr. Casap said that made an instant change in my classroom. "Education is an individual sport but the problem is that we live in a team based world!" (The exclamation point is not creative interpretation on my part; I contacted him through Google+, and considered the punctuation in his response appropriate!) Casap explained that collaboration isn't just working on separate parts of a project. True collaboration is conversing, questioning, changing ideas, and making improvements based on those around you.

He gave the analogy of his work at Google. Imagine if he presented his team with Google's education plan, promising that the plan was all his own work, that he collaborated with no one, and it only included his ideas. It wouldn't go over very well, but that is exactly the expectation in classrooms across America.

The challenge: How do we allow students to work collaboratively while holding them accountable for their individual learning? I do not have a comprehensive answer to that question right now, but I have some ideas and I would love to hear your ideas. I plan to improve this aspect of my teaching practice, and I hope to collaborate with others in doing so.

The Cause

I'd be remiss to not mention the importance of NAGC and the work they do. This year the *State of the States in Gifted Education* in its complete form is available to download for free. I encourage you to read the report's key findings in [Turning a Blind Eye: Neglecting the Needs of the Gifted and Talented Through Limited Accountability, Oversight, and Reporting](#). The article also includes a link to the full report.

Next year's convention is November 3-6, 2016, at *Walt Disney World* Resort in Florida. Start planning now!



NAGC National Convention

Minnesota was well represented at the NAGC National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona in November 2015.

<http://www.nagc.org/>



Board Members [Left to Right]: Sue Feigal-Hitch, Jeanne Simmonds, Bill Keilty, Lisa Worden, David Wolff, and Tania Lyon with renowned researcher, François Gagne' [in the middle].



Eighteen presenters represented Minnesota at NAGC including Wendy Behrens, Jerry Burkhart, Richard Cash, Melanie Crawford [pictured above], Julie Donaldson, Terence Friedrichs, Diane Heacox, Michelle Libby, Tania Lyon, Carol Malueg, Heather Mueller, Karen Rogers, Deborah Ruf, Gregg Rutter, Maggie Smith [pictured above], Kelly Stewart, Karen Westberg, and Rhiana Yazzie.





Outreach

By Melanie Olson



Image courtesy of Olson

I am thrilled to share that I have joined the MEGT board in a newly created Outreach position.

I have always been passionate about the needs of gifted and talented students. The happiest and most rewarding of my 11 years of teaching have been the past 5 that I

have spent in the Quest program at Buffalo-Hanover-Montrorse Schools, which is a school within a school for gifted and talented learners. I greatly enjoy connecting with like-minded educators. I look forward to our MEGT conference each year. While attending, I have been able to strengthen and/or build relationships with peers. For the past three years I have presented at the conference and often keep in touch with those who have attended my sessions throughout the school year by opening up my classroom to site visits as well as through email, twitter, and facebook. I strongly believe in the power of a connected network. As your new MEGT Outreach board member, my responsibility is to promote the mission and vision of MEGT to organizations and media sources. I help to advertise our Mid-Winter Conference, the Star of the North Award, the Friend of the Gifted Award, MEGT Foundation Grant opportunities, and Professional Development opportunities that apply to our field. Much of this is done through our MEGT Facebook page and on Twitter.

Since I began my position on the board, our Facebook page has gone from 109 likes to 175. We have created an event page specifically for the Mid-Winter Conference. I encourage you to like our Facebook page and join the Mid-Winter Conference Event. You can also share both our page and the event with your friends on Facebook. When you like or share MEGT posts, you help us to reach a wider audience.

Since joining Twitter in October, @MEGT_MNGifted has acquired 198 followers. When you are tweeting about topics that are relevant to the gifted community, please use #MN-Gifted. When you favorite or retweet MEGT, you are helping to build our network as well.

We have moved from using #MEGT to #MNGifted because it is a hashtag that no other group or organization is using. Therefore when you search #MNGifted, you will be seeing a much more focused newsfeed than what you would have found by searching #MEGT.

If you don't have a twitter or facebook account, you can still use the links below to view our pages and the information that we share. I encourage you to connect with MEGT and individuals who are passionate about gifted education, not just at our Annual Mid-Winter Conference, but on social media as well.

•Twitter Account: @MEGT_MNGifted

•Twitter Search Results: #MNGifted

•Facebook Page: Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented

•Facebook Event Page: Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented Annual Mid-Winter Conference: World Class Skills and Gifted Learners

I look forward to connecting with all of you! I hope to see you online and at our conference this winter.

Melanie Olson

Facebook Page

@M_OLSON_



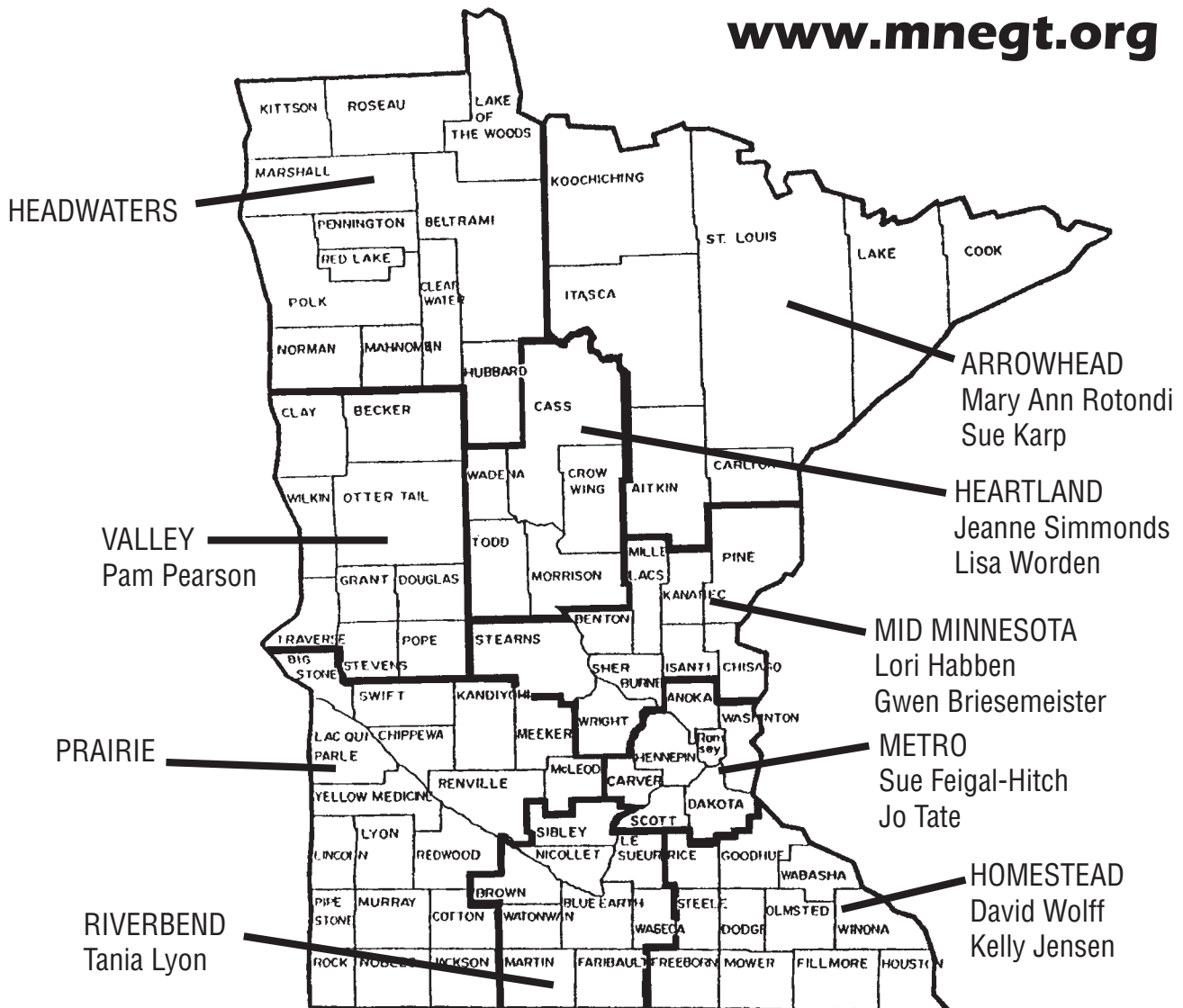


Advocate for your gifted learners...represent your region!

The MEGT State Board has several open positions in the following regions:

- Headwaters [Northwest MN] 2 positions
- Prairie [Southwest MN] 2 positions
- Riverbend [South-central MN] 1 position
- Valley [West-central MN] 1 position

If you are interested in representing your region, contact Lisa Worden, MEGT President or David Wolff, MEGT President-Elect.





Purpose of MEGT

The Purpose of MEGT

- To promote and support the professional preparation of teachers and other educational professionals who have responsibility for the education of gifted and talented students.
- To cooperate with other organizations and agencies in efforts to promote the education, funding and welfare of gifted and talented students.
- To encourage scholarly research and the dissemination of information pertaining to gifted and talented children in school and society.

<http://www.mnegt.org/about-me>

New Coordinators 101: A Joint Collaboration

Through the collaboration between MEGT, MDE and MCGT, we were able to offer a two-day training for coordinators, specialists, and administrators new to gifted education. Each morning, participants learned about critical components of gifted education including identification, legislation, district philosophy, characteristics, diversity, and twice-exceptionalities. The afternoons were opportunities for districts to share how they approach providing services in their districts including challenges and celebrations they have encountered. Efforts were made to include districts of varying size, location, and diversity. MEGT would like to thank the following members for their involvement in the planning process and/or the presentation of content:

- Lisa Worden, Brainerd
- David Wolff, Austin
- Wendy Behrens, MDE
- Jo Tate, White Bear Lake
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- Marianne VanVickle, Brainerd
- Trina Hira, Roseville
- Tania Lyon, Mankato
- Tracy Olson, Plainview-Elgin-Millville
- Laura Steabner, St. Cloud





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