

Fall 2015

Challenging Gifted Learners

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Qoice



# Finding High Potential among Culturally, Linguistically and Economically Diverse Students: Two New Scales for Equitable Identification

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## Introduction

In the 2007 report, *Overlooked Gems: A National Perspective on Low-Income Promising Learners* (Stambaugh & VanTassel-Baska), demographer Harold Hodgkinson explained that within a decade, no single ethnic group in the U.S. will predominate among public school students. In other words, schools in the U.S. are becoming more racially, culturally and linguistically diverse every year. Given this fact, it is alarming to note that many public school districts across the country underrepresent students of color, English learners (EL), and students qualifying for free or reduced lunch plans among their identified gifted population (Callahan et al., 2014). Furthermore, gifted and advanced learners who are culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse (CLED) consistently perform below their white, middle- and upper-class peers (Plucker et al., 2010). The use of standardized tests to identify gifted CLED students will clearly fail to produce an equitable result. In a recent national survey, fifty-one percent of elementary programs reported having a plan in place to develop talent among traditionally underidentified groups (Callahan et al., 2014). Yet, when it comes to useful tools to accurately and efficiently identify high potential CLED students, the field is at a loss: very few tools have been created that specifically target the identification of gifted CLED students, and among those that do exist, even fewer have the sufficient research to prove their efficacy.

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# MATTERS

GRAY

Lisa Worden  
MEGT President



Twenty years ago this fall, I began my teaching career. I realized this (oddly enough) while my daughter was raiding my closet. She pulled out the skirt I wore my very first day of teaching, asking, "How long have you had this?" Nothing else in my closet is 20 years old! I'm quite good at purging the unused; why had I kept the skirt all this time? Well, I have actually worn that skirt in the last year, and it reminds me of the wide-eyed sixth grade teacher in Glenwood, Minnesota, so very excited to start her first school year. The skirt has meaning and remains useful...it is relevant.

The milestone has me reflecting on the teacher I was and the teacher I have become, with special consideration given to the factors that have influenced my growth and, dare I say, improvement. Among these factors, two are most prominent: my desire to understand and learn, and connecting with the people around me. Trends come and go, current research is eventually outdated, and hundreds of students pass through my doors, but the connections with those around me and my desire to continually learn remain constant. As much as education has changed in 20 years, I continue to cling to these two factors. They, like the skirt, remain relevant.

Because some ideas come and go, experienced educators (including myself) can become leery of investing time and energy into new initiatives. It is here that I am grateful that my innate curiosity usually outweighs my skepticism. I think of our most gifted learners and what we try to foster in them: go deeper, ask meaningful questions, see potential where others may not, be leaders, and risk failure in order to innovate. Are you willing to ask the same of yourself as an educator?

I am fortunate enough to have been surrounded by a variety of incredible professionals, including teachers and administrators as well as other staff. They have mentored, challenged, questioned, reeled-in, opened doors, spurred ideas, teamed, offered advice, shared, and listened. On hard days, they are the ones who keep me going.

I particularly enjoy when these two factors merge

as one. As a teacher, is there anything more satisfying than watching students connect through learning or learn through connecting? To watch this happen among students is satisfying; experiencing this personally with other professionals is priceless. It almost becomes a which-came-first question. And the answer is...it depends. Some of us (and our students) need to connect in order to learn, others (especially our gifted learners) will connect through the learning as it happens. Either way, these two factors remain relevant.

As teachers of the gifted, I encourage you to use your knowledge and expertise about gifted students to make both personal and professional connections. Most teachers receive little to no training related to the characteristics and needs of gifted students. Reach out, ask the questions, go deeper, be a leader, take the risk, invite them to training. See the potential to advocate while fostering connections and learning. Maybe by doing this, we ourselves can remain relevant.

(By the way, the skirt is now in my daughter's closet!)



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Published Fall, Winter and Spring by  
Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented, Inc.  
...a nonprofit advocacy network  
Member of The National Association for Gifted Children  
<http://www.mnegt.org>

Please send all articles and announcements for the next issue by December 1, 2015 to:

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Newsletter design created by West Central Printing, Willmar, MN



## Two New Scales for Equitable Identification *continued from cover*

The use of teacher rating scales to identify gifted learners is a long-standing practice. Whereas much evidence shows that teacher bias limits the participation of CLED students in gifted programs (Bruch, 1975; Deslonde, 1977; de Wet & Gubbins, 2010; Ford & Grantham, 2003), other studies have shown that teacher rating scales can improve accurate identification of talent, especially when paired with quality training (Frasier et al., 1995; Hoge & Cudmore, 1986; Frank, 2007; Swanson, 2006). While a few tools, such as the HOPE Scale (Gentry & Peters, 2010) have demonstrated both reliability and validity evidence in identifying low income students, we saw a need to develop teacher rating scales that specifically addressed aspects of language and culture. Additionally, the *Scales for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students* (otherwise currently known as the *Renzulli Scales*) address more universal characteristics of giftedness, and therefore, we sought to create teacher rating scales for CLED students that were not redundant with these more generalizable items. These new scales are called the *High Potential Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Scale* and the *High Potential Culturally and Economically Diverse Scale*.

### Instrument Development

The items on the *High Potential CLED Scales* synthesize many of the behavioral characteristics cited in empirical and theoretical literature focused on gifted students from these populations (see Tables 1 and 2). A few items are verbatim from the literature, while others summarize behavioral characteristics cited in multiple studies focused on CLED gifted learners. After conducting a thorough review of the literature focused on behavioral characteristics of CLED gifted learners, we organized the resulting items into two scales: the first, the *High Potential Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Scale* includes items focused on aspects of language and culture, and pertains to high potential among English Language Learners; the second, *High Potential Culturally and Economically Diverse (CED) Scale* focuses on characteristics related to class and economic disadvantage among high potential students. Both scales included items that describe aspects of culture, such as behaviors related to acculturation and the development of a cultural identity. In our original study, each of the scales included 18 items. We arranged the items with a 6-point frequency response scale, which is common in many teacher rating scales for gifted identification, such as the *Renzulli Scales* and the *HOPE Scale*.

Instrument development takes much time and effort. In order to test the psychometric properties of any new tool, researchers must gather many samples from a wide swath of the population. In our case, we asked teachers across the country to fill out the *High Potential CLED Scales* on many different kinds of learners in their classroom and collected information on students' economic status, participation in English language learner services, and academic performance to ensure we had a truly heterogeneous group of students in our sample. We were then able to match individual teacher-completed scales to either the *High Potential CLD Scale* for students who were culturally

and linguistically diverse, or the *High Potential CED Scale* for students who were economically disadvantaged. We examined the results by performing a variety of statistical procedures with various cross sections of our data, including exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, cross-correlation analysis, and various criterion validation procedures. After performing these and other statistical procedures, each scale has been refined to include only ten of the original eighteen items.

After more than three years of instrument development research, our results indicate we have developed scales that can be used to accurately support equitable identification practices. These results have prompted us to share the scales with others in the field seeking to increase identification of CLED students for advanced learners and gifted services. Both of the scales have yielded strong reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.87 for CLD scale and Cronbach's alpha = 0.95 for CED scale). The scales have demonstrated good model fit, indicating that each scale measures a unified concept while still capturing the various aspects within it (e.g., the CED scale measures both interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of behaviors typified by CED students with high potential). . Importantly, by correlating completed scales from our sample with *Cognitive Abilities Test Form 7* scores, we have been able to demonstrate that the items on the scales relate to strong performance on a measures of high potential (the subscales and composite scale scores on the *CogAT 7*), and therefore distinguish between CLED high potential students and their peers (for a more technical description of our methods and results, please see our presentation at NAGC in November, or visit our website at [www.CLEDscales.com](http://www.CLEDscales.com)).

### Practical Considerations:

Institutions using teacher rating scales for identification of students for gifted programs have generally implemented them in one of two ways: either as a tool for nominating students for identification screening, or as part of a multiple measures identification process. In both cases, the first and most important step educational leaders should take is to train teachers in the use of the *High Potential CLED Scales*. As mentioned, research shows that educators who have not been trained to recognize the characteristics of gifted students who are CLED tend to default to a more mainstream (and therefore culturally limiting) conception of giftedness. Thus, training classroom teachers in their content prior to implementing the *High Potential CLED Scales* is essential. Teachers can work together to generate both classroom examples and non-examples of the behavior each item describes. They can also be guided to relate concepts from the literature about high potential CLED learners with the items on the scales. Although a formal teacher training manual has yet to be developed for these scales, opportunities to generate and relate classroom examples to the items on the scales will increase inter-rater reliability and the efficacy of the scales for identifying CLED students with high potential. Furthermore, because the items on the scales have been culled together from the literature, a good deal of reference material is available for

*continued on page 4*



## Two New Scales, *cont. from pg. 3*

teachers and administrators to review and apply to professional development opportunities (see citations, Tables 1 and 2).

Assessors can use the *High Potential CLED Scales* as part of a multiple measures identification protocol by calculating a total score and creating local norms for each scale. Individual scores can be calculated for each scale by adding the numerical responses for each item into a total score, and these total scores can be used to calculate a local norm for the district, school, or institution. Thus, students can each receive a percentile rank relative to their local peers. By determining an acceptable range for identification of above average potential (such as, above the 7<sup>th</sup> stanine, or 77<sup>th</sup> percentile), assessors can efficiently determine CLED students who might benefit from services in conjunction with other assessment data. In our research process, we used specific criteria for each scale: students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch were eligible to receive the CED scale, whereas students who qualified for English language learner services were eligible to receive the CLD scale. In the state of Minnesota, classroom teachers are not given access to students' economic information. Therefore, an advantage of using the *High Potential CLED Scales* as part of the multiple measures identification protocol includes the ability to disaggregate student data at the district level to determine economic status.

As a tool for talent spotting or nomination of high potential CLED students, the scales might be implemented at the beginning of the school year as a tracking device: after having been trained in the CLED characteristics and corresponding items on the scales, teachers can regularly record the frequency of CLED student behaviors using the scales. This practice may be especially useful in the identification of English language learners because teachers both know who these students are and often struggle to observe high potential due to language barriers. Although this is an area for continued research for us, we have already seen interesting results when EL teachers work alone or in collaboration with classroom teachers to complete the CLD scale, including a more sophisticated interpretation of the items on the scale.

Finally, a well-designed identification protocol should always match the services being provided to identified students. Schools, districts and other institutions interested in identifying more CLED students for gifted programming must design options that provide language scaffolds, culturally relevant curriculum, and other supports related to the needs of CLED students (NAGC, 2012). Fortunately, districts and researchers have begun to innovate replicable models that practitioners can turn to when designing strong programming options for high potential CLED students, including the Young Scholars Program, the School-wide Enrichment Model, and many of the Javits-funded projects that have been created over the past twenty years. Furthermore, gifted educators can collaborate with EL teachers, equity and diversity specialists, bilingual education staff and others to combine practices from each field when designing programming.

Our hope is that the *High Potential CLED Scales* can contribute to efforts across the country to include diverse

students more equitably among identified populations. Throughout this process, we were struck by the need for more quantitative studies related to CLED learners. Although equitable identification has been an important topic in the field of gifted education for several decades, it is surprising to note that much of our understanding of the characteristics of CLED talented learners are based on anecdotal evidence. This is partly due to the complexity of such a demographic, wherein specific cultural groups present very different behaviors based on social norms and other factors (Esquierdo & Arreguin-Anderson, 2012; Irby & Lara-Alecio, 1996; Ryu, 2004). Further research on the *High Potential CLED Scales* would include more focused analysis on different cultural groups with an aim to investigate if items are generalizable to the broad category of CLED despite cultural differences. Additionally, differences in teachers' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as training, years of service, and other demographic data should be investigated to further develop and make recommendations about applications of the scales. Other areas of inquiry include collaborative efforts between EL teachers and classroom teachers to complete the scales, as well as various methods of teacher training on the scales. In the world of instrument development the research process can often span many years, sometimes decades, as tools are continually revised and investigated in myriad contexts. At this time, we are pleased to present a tool with strong validity and reliability support for general use in the identification of CLED students for gifted and advanced programming.

Find copies of the scales and additional information, including a formal report of the study at [www.CLEDscales.com](http://www.CLEDscales.com).

\*Special thanks to Melanie Crawford, Director of Talent Development and Advanced Academics for Minneapolis Public Schools, who supported, encouraged, and inspired this work from the beginning.

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**Table 1. High Potential English Language Learner Scale Items with Literature Support**

The student demonstrates...	
1. ...a strong sense of pride in his or her cultural background	<p>Irby, B., &amp; Lara-Alecio, R. (1996). Attributes of Hispanic gifted bilingual students as perceived by bilingual educators in Texas. <i>SABE Journal</i>, 11, 120-140.</p> <p>Aguirre, N., &amp; Hernandez, N. (2002). Portraits of success: Programs that work. In J. Castellano &amp; E. Diaz (Eds). <i>Reaching new horizons: Gifted and talented education for culturally and linguistically diverse students</i>. Boston, MA: Pearson.</p> <p>Aguirre, N. (2003). ESL students in gifted education. In J. A. Castellano (Ed.) In <i>Special Populations in Gifted Education</i> (pp. 17-28). Boston, MA: Allyn &amp; Bacon.</p>
2. ...a desire to teach peers words from his/her native language	<p>Aguirre, N., &amp; Hernandez, N. (2002). Portraits of success: Programs that work. In J. Castellano &amp; E. Diaz (Eds). <i>Reaching new horizons: Gifted and talented education for culturally and linguistically diverse students</i>. Boston, MA: Pearson.</p> <p>Robisheaux, J. (2001). The intersection of language, high potential, and culture in gifted English as second language students. In J. A. Castellano, &amp; E. I. Diaz (Eds.) <i>Reaching New Horizons: Gifted and Talented Education for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students</i>. (pp. 154-174). Boston, MA: Allyn &amp; Bacon.</p>
3. ...eagerness to translate for peers and adults	<p>Aguirre, N. &amp; Hernandez, N. (2002). Portraits of success: Programs that work. In J. Castellano &amp; E. Diaz (Eds). <i>Reaching new horizons: Gifted and talented education for culturally and linguistically diverse students</i>. Boston, MA: Pearson.</p> <p>Rance-Roney, J. A. (2004). The affective dimension of second culture/second language acquisition in gifted adolescents. In D. Booth &amp; J. C. Stanley (Eds.), <i>Critical Issues for Diversity in Gifted Education</i>. (pp. 73-85). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.</p> <p>Castellano, J. (2006). Bilingual education issues: Haitian and Haitian-American students in gifted education. In G. Ericksson &amp; B. Wallace (Eds). <i>Diversity of gifted education: International perspectives on global issues</i>. New York, NY: Routledge.</p>
4. ...a balance between appropriate behaviors expected of his/her native culture and the new culture.	<p>Aguirre, N., &amp; Hernandez, N. (2002). Portraits of success: Programs that work. In J. Castellano &amp; E. Diaz (Eds). <i>Reaching new horizons: Gifted and talented education for culturally and linguistically diverse students</i>. Boston, MA: Pearson.</p>



<p>5. ...an ability to explain native dialect and idioms (e.g., play on words, slang).</p>	<p>Aguirre, N., &amp; Hernandez, N. (2002). Portraits of success: Programs that work. In J. Castellano &amp; E. Diaz (Eds). <i>Reaching new horizons: Gifted and talented education for culturally and linguistically diverse students</i>. Boston, MA: Pearson.</p>
<p>6. ...understanding of jokes and puns related to culture.</p>	<p>Aguirre, N., &amp; Hernandez, N. (2002). Portraits of success: Programs that work. In J. Castellano &amp; E. Diaz (Eds). <i>Reaching new horizons: Gifted and talented education for culturally and linguistically diverse students</i>. Boston, MA: Pearson.</p> <p>Robisheaux, J. (2001). The intersection of language, high potential, and culture in gifted English as second language students. In J. A. Castellano, &amp; E. I. Diaz (Eds.) <i>Reaching New Horizons: Gifted and Talented Education for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students</i>. (pp. 154-174). Boston, MA: Allyn &amp; Bacon.</p>
<p>7. ...ability to read above his or her grade level (either in English or his/her native language).</p>	<p>Aguirre, N., &amp; Hernandez, N. (2002). Portraits of success: Programs that work. In J. Castellano &amp; E. Diaz (Eds). <i>Reaching new horizons: Gifted and talented education for culturally and linguistically diverse students</i>. Boston, MA: Pearson.</p>
<p>8. ...above average English language proficiency growth.</p>	<p>Pereira, N., &amp; de Oliveira, L. C. (2015). Meeting the linguistic needs of high-potential English language learners: What teachers need to know. <i>Teaching Exceptional Children</i>, 47(4), 208-215.</p> <p>Brulles, D., Castellano, J., &amp; Laing, P. (2011). Identifying and enfranchising gifted language learners. In J. Castellano and A. D. Frazier (Eds). <i>Special populations in gifted education</i>. Waco, Texas: Prufrock.</p> <p>Granada, A. J. (2003). Assessing the curriculum, instruction, and assessment needs of the gifted bilingual/bicultural student. In J. A. Castellano, &amp; E. I. Diaz (Eds.) <i>Reaching New Horizons: Gifted and Talented Education for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students</i>. (pp. 133-153). Boston, MA: Allyn &amp; Bacon.</p> <p>Rance-Roney, J. A. (2004). The affective dimension of second culture/second language acquisition in gifted adolescents. In D. Booth &amp; J. C. Stanley (Eds.), <i>Critical Issues for Diversity in Gifted Education</i>. (pp. 73-85). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.</p>
<p>9. ...social maturity.</p>	<p>Irby, B., &amp; Lara-Alecio, R. (1996). Attributes of Hispanic gifted bilingual students as perceived by bilingual educators in Texas. <i>SABE Journal</i>, 11, 120-140.</p> <p>Pereira, N. (2008). Meeting the linguistic needs of gifted English language learners: Should teachers of all content areas teach language? Powerpoint presented at the NAGC Annual Convention. Purdue University.</p> <p>Robisheaux, J. (2001). The intersection of language, high potential, and culture in gifted English as second language students. In J. A. Castellano, &amp; E. I. Diaz (Eds.) <i>Reaching New Horizons: Gifted and Talented Education for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students</i>. (pp. 154-174). Boston, MA: Allyn &amp; Bacon.</p>



<p>10. ...ease in adapting to new environments.</p>	<p>Castellano, J. (2006) Bilingually enriched students. In B. Wallace &amp; G. Erickson (Eds) <i>Diversity in Gifted Education: International Perspectives on Global Issues</i> (pp. 56-69). London, England: Routledge.</p> <p>Ryu, J. (2004). The social adjustment of three young, high-achieving Korean-English bilingual students in kindergarten. <i>Early Childhood Education Journal</i>, 32. 165-171.</p> <p>Maker, C., &amp; Schiever, S. (1989). <i>Critical issues in gifted education: Defensible programs for cultural and ethnic minorities</i> (p.4). Austin, Texas: Pro-Ed.</p> <p>Winebrenner, S., &amp; Brulles, D. (2008). <i>The cluster grouping handbook: How to challenge gifted students and improve achievement for all</i>. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.</p> <p>Granada, A. J. (2003). Assessing the curriculum, instruction, and assessment needs of the gifted bilingual/bicultural student. In J. A. Castellano, &amp; E. I. Diaz (Eds.) <i>Reaching New Horizons: Gifted and Talented Education for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students</i>. (pp. 133-153). Boston, MA: Allyn &amp; Bacon.</p> <p>Rance-Roney, J. A. (2004). The affective dimension of second culture/second language acquisition in gifted adolescents. In D. Booth &amp; J. C. Stanley (Eds.), <i>Critical Issues for Diversity in Gifted Education</i>. (pp. 73-85). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.</p>
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**Table 2. High Potential Culturally and Economically Diverse Learner Scale Items With Literature Support**

<p><b>The student demonstrates...</b></p>	
<p>1. ...effective communication through expressive speech rich with imagery.</p>	<p>Torrance, E. P. (1977). <i>Discovery and nurturance of giftedness in the culturally different</i>. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.</p> <p>Irby, B. J., &amp; Lara-Alecio, R. (1996). Attributes of Hispanic bilingual gifted students as perceived by bilingual teacher in Texas. <i>SABE Journal</i>, 11, 120-142.</p>
<p>2. ... an interest in others from cultures different from his/her own.</p>	<p>Zappia, I. A. (1989). Identification of gifted Hispanic students: A multidimensional view. In C.J. Maker &amp; S. W. Schiever (Eds.), <i>Critical issues in gifted education: Defensible programs for cultural and ethnic minorities</i>. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.</p> <p>Torrance, E.P. (1977). <i>Discovery and nurturance of giftedness in the culturally different</i>. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.</p>
<p>3. ...a high degree of emotional responsiveness (i.e., spontaneity, openness and ease in sharing feelings with others).</p>	<p>Maker, C., &amp; Schiever, S. (1989). <i>Critical issues in gifted education: Defensible programs for cultural and ethnic minorities</i>. Austin, Texas: Pro-Ed.</p> <p>Torrance, E.P. (1977). <i>Discovery and nurturance of giftedness in the culturally different</i>. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.</p> <p>Texas Education Agency (n.d.). The varied faces of gifted/talented students. <i>Equity in Gifted Education: A State Initiative</i>. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.gtequity.org/docs/opt/varied_faces.pdf">http://www.gtequity.org/docs/opt/varied_faces.pdf</a></p>
<p>4. ...awareness of his/her self as a capable learner.</p>	<p>Passow, A. H., &amp; Frasier, M. M. (1996). Toward improving identification of talent potential among minority and disadvantaged students. <i>Roeper Review</i>, 18(3), 198.</p> <p>Texas Education Agency (n.d.). The varied faces of gifted/talented students. <i>Equity in Gifted Education: A State Initiative</i>. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.gtequity.org/docs/opt/varied_faces.pdf">http://www.gtequity.org/docs/opt/varied_faces.pdf</a></p> <p>VanTassel-Baska, J., Feng, A. X., Swanson, J. D., Quek, C., &amp; Chandler, K. (2009). Academic and affective profiles of low-income, minority, and twice-exceptional gifted learners: The role of gifted program membership in enhancing self. <i>Journal of Advanced Academics</i>, 20(4), 702-739.</p>



<p>5. ...an independent nature.</p>	<p>Fraiser, M., &amp; Passow, H. (1994). <i>Toward a new paradigm for identifying talent potential</i>. (Research Monograph 94112). Storrs, CT: The National Center on the Gifted and Talented. University of Connecticut.</p> <p>Gay, J. (1978) A proposed plan for identifying Black gifted children. <i>Gifted Child Quarterly</i>, 22(3), 353-360.</p> <p>Texas Education Agency (n.d.). The varied faces of gifted/talented students. <i>Equity in Gifted Education: A State Initiative</i>. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.gtequity.org/docs/opt/varied_faces.pdf">http://www.gtequity.org/docs/opt/varied_faces.pdf</a></p>
<p>6. ...a strong sense of altruism (i.e. caring about others).</p>	<p>Passow, A. H., &amp; Frasier, M. M. (1996). Toward improving identification of talent potential among minority and disadvantaged students. <i>Roeper Review</i>, 18(3), 198.</p>
<p>7. ...a keen sense of justice.</p>	<p>Ford, D. (1996). <i>Reversing underachievement among gifted Black students</i>. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.</p>
<p>8. ...an ability to express emotions (not necessarily with words).</p>	<p>Torrance, E. P. (1977). <i>Discovery and nurturance of giftedness in the culturally different</i>. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.</p>
<p>9. ...richness in imagination through informal language.***</p>	<p>Winebrenner, S., &amp; Brulles, D. (2010). <i>The SCGM: Everyone benefits! Implementing and supporting the schoolwide cluster grouping model</i>. Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.susanwinebrenner.com/handouts/schoolwide_cluster_grouping_model.ppt">http://www.susanwinebrenner.com/handouts/schoolwide_cluster_grouping_model.ppt</a></p> <p>Brulles, D. (2010). <i>The schoolwide cluster grouping model: Embracing diversity, increasing achievement, and expanding gifted services during lean financial times</i>. Powerpoint presented at the NAGC Annual Convention. Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.cmcgc.com/media/handouts/301111/203243.pdf">http://www.cmcgc.com/media/handouts/301111/203243.pdf</a></p> <p>Torrance, E.P. (1977). <i>Discovery and nurturance of giftedness in the culturally different</i>. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.</p> <p>Texas Education Agency (n.d.). The varied faces of gifted/talented students. <i>Equity in Gifted Education: A State Initiative</i>. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.gtequity.org/docs/opt/varied_faces.pdf">http://www.gtequity.org/docs/opt/varied_faces.pdf</a></p>
<p>10. ...a questioning orientation (i.e. strong curiosity and a tendency to ask many questions).</p>	<p>Passow, A. H., &amp; Frasier, M. M. (1996). Toward improving identification of talent potential among minority and disadvantaged students. <i>Roeper Review</i>, 18(3), 198.</p> <p>Glaser, E. M., &amp; Ross, H. L. (1970). <i>A Study of Successful Persons From Seriously Disadvantaged Backgrounds: Final Report</i>. Washington, DC: Department of Labor Office or Special Manpower Programs (Contract No. 82-05-68-03).</p> <p>Texas Education Agency (n.d.). The varied faces of gifted/talented students. <i>Equity in Gifted Education: A State Initiative</i>. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.gtequity.org/docs/opt/varied_faces.pdf">http://www.gtequity.org/docs/opt/varied_faces.pdf</a></p> <p>Felder, M. Y., Taradash, G. D., Antoine, E., Ricci, M. C., Stemple, M., &amp; Byamugisha, M. (2015). <i>Increasing diversity in gifted education</i>. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.</p>





# Help Yourself...And a Student

## 5-Min. Professional Development

David Wolff, [david.wolff@austin.k12.mn.us](mailto:david.wolff@austin.k12.mn.us)



### Gifted 108: Barriers in realizing gifts & talents

A school's primary goal is providing ALL students with an appropriate educational experience. Gifted & Talented programs exist to serve the needs of highly able students to address the individual needs of each student who needs additional challenges to have his/her learning needs met. Unfortunately, many gifted learners do not have his/her learning needs met due to barriers preventing them from achieving at high levels on standardized assessments or daily work.

There are 4 main barriers that prevent students' gifts from being noticed and talents from being developed – low-income levels, culturally and ethnic diverse backgrounds, Limited English Proficiency, and physical and/or learning disabilities.

#### Barriers related with Low-Income Levels

- Limited access to enrichment programs offered during the summer
- Limited access to rigorous curriculum
- Less likely to live in a literacy-rich home
- In accurate perceptions held by educators
- Additional responsibilities including after school jobs, care for younger siblings, or other family responsibilities
- Lowered parental aspirations for children
- Limited experience with college

#### Barriers related to Limited English Proficiency

- Standardized tests scores may be too high to take into account students operating in 2 languages
- Articulate in native language but not in English so it is difficult to express themselves and their gifts at school

#### Barriers related to Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

- Giftedness is not recognized or is defined differently by different culture groups
- Standard achievement tests are bias to the majority [white, middle- to upper-class]
- Puerto Rican children are raised to seek advice from their family instead of acting independently
- Mexican American children are taught to respect their elders and authority, not individual competition
- African American children may have mixed feelings about academic success; fear of being accused of 'acting white'
- American Indian children are taught the value of interdependence, decisions are made collectively

#### Barriers related to Physical and/or Learning Disabilities

- Disability masks their ability to demonstrate their giftedness in most recognizable ways
- Some students can be Unidentified Learning Disabled and Unidentified Gifted
- Some students can be Unidentified Gifted and Identified Learning Disabled
- Some students can be Identified Gifted Unidentified Learning Disabled
- Discrepancy scores identify student for disability
- IEP focuses on interventions for the disability not the gift
- May have concerns with processing, fine/gross motor skills, or disruptive behaviors

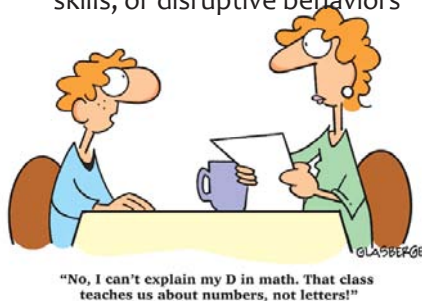
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Delisle, J. & Galbraith, J. (2011) *The Gifted Teen*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Press.

Delisle, J. & Galbraith, J. (2002) *When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Press.

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Waco: Prufrock Press.





# The Four A's to Equitable Access

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

I recently attended a workshop on the Total School Clustering Model where all participants received a child case study. We were asked to review the child's profile and determine if that child would be identified as 'gifted' in our current schools. Case study after case study, the children's profiles did not match districts' identification procedures even though as practitioners we were able to see glimpses of potential. At the end, the identities of the case studies were revealed: Jane Goodall, Dali Lama, Martin Luther King Jr., and Albert Einstein to name a few.

One case study stood out to me; the case study of Dr. Ben Carson. I was curious. To learn more about him, I read the autobiography, *Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story*. Carson is currently the Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at John Hopkins Hospital and conservative Republican candidate running for the Republican nomination for the 2016 Presidential Election. As a Seventh Day Adventist, Carson's religious beliefs are embedded through the book and guide his personal convictions regarding politics including taxation and health care.

In reviewing this book, my goal is to share the impact "talent scouts" had on Dr. Carson's life and how his life is similar to many of our talented and culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse [CLED] students in our classrooms today. My goal is not to make a political endorsement or stir religious controversy. With politics and religious convictions aside, I have written this to illustrate the importance services that include talent development for CLED students is needed. In his book, Carson shares all the barriers that lay before him – he was a young, black youth who grew up in inner-city Detroit in the 1950's and 1960's in a single-parent home, and his mom was illiterate with a third grade education. Carson was labeled as "dumb;" his classes frustrated him; and his peers mocked his performance, which fueled his violent temper.

Dr. Carson's story could have ended as a statistic of a black male growing up in poverty; instead, he made history being named the Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at John Hopkins Medical Institutes at age 33. What made the difference?

Carson had many influential people in his life, including his mother and teachers who were talent scouts. His mom had high expectations for him in spite of others' racism and low expectations. She pushed him to get a good education by sacrificing many luxuries; she limited his time to watch television and required trips to the library with two book reports due each week. Through it all, she modeled her message of excellence through working hard and doing her best.

Carson also had teachers that recognized his innate talent despite his academic performance. In fifth grade, his science teacher arranged special projects for him to complete. Carson remembers these projects as opportunities to shine! Because of these projects and all of the additional reading, he slowly did better in all of his school subjects.

As teachers of many talented and CLED students, Dr. Carson's story serve as a reminder that our work as "talent scouts" and "talent developers" is extremely important. What can we do?

## The Four A's to Equitable Access:

### **Acknowledge**

Respect the cultural norms of ethnic and economically diverse groups; respect that gifted characteristics are manifested and honored differently in various ethnic and economically diverse groups. For example, I used information from the Project Bright Horizons website and a document titled, "Distinguishing Characteristics of Gifted Students with Factors" to help build cultural understanding with my team.

<http://www.azed.gov/gifted-education/project-bright-horizon/>

[http://www.csi.state.co.us/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_2345071/File/Distinguishing%20Characteristics%20of%20Gifted%20Students%20With%20Factors%20\(ELL,%20FRL,%20IEP\).pdf](http://www.csi.state.co.us/UserFiles/Servers/Server_2345071/File/Distinguishing%20Characteristics%20of%20Gifted%20Students%20With%20Factors%20(ELL,%20FRL,%20IEP).pdf)

### **Alert**

Train yourself and others as "talent scouts" by looking for strengths in all your students. Use interest inventories, ambition surveys, or multiple intelligences surveys.

### **Alternative**

Find different tools and assessments that identify students' strengths. For example, use the NNAT2 or the Nonverbal Battery on the CogAT to identify spatially talented youth or teacher surveys that recognize gifted characteristics no matter how they are manifested. A next step beyond assessments is developing alternative curriculum options. The Primary Education Thinking Skills [PETS] curriculum is an excellent resource to support critical and creative thinking skills for all learners. PETS curriculum follows Blooms Taxonomy in presenting lessons in analysis, judging, and creating levels to create rigorous and high-interest lessons.

### **Act**

"Rivers need streams." Even small acts will have long lasting impact. Develop a plan that offers support that focuses on

*continued on page 11*



# The Four A's, continued from page 10

assets rather than deficits. Many talent development services are based on the mindset of 'Response to Challenge' [RtC], which offer additional services and opportunities to allow students to develop their skills as they meet various academic challenges.

The Young Scholar Model has been implemented by numerous districts in Minnesota. The Young Scholar Model was first designed by Carol Horn in the Fairfax County Public School District in Virginia. Young Scholars Programs target students typically underrepresented in traditional gifted services. For more information, go to <http://www.fcps.edu/is/aap/ys.shtml>

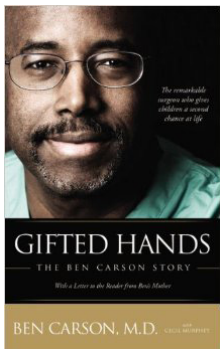
The Schoolwide Enrichment Model created by Joseph Renzulli and Sally Reis at the University of Connecticut supports enrichment opportunities in three steps: lessons for all, targeted lessons for few, and individualized instruction. This model has teachers present a challenging concept to the whole class. As students respond to the new learning, the teacher carefully collects formative data that is used to create a targeted small group. In small group, the teacher digs deeper with the concept. The targeted small groups are kept flexible rather than fixed to allow opportunities for all learners to demonstrate their strengths in various ways. From there, teachers can individualize authentic projects for students to dig deeper into.

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Images courtesy of Bing Images

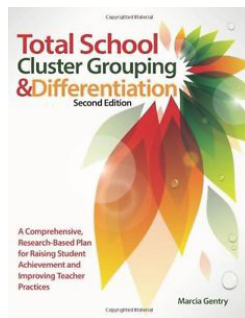
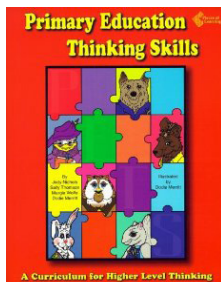


Image courtesy of D. Wolff



## LEGISLATIVE

## UPDATE

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

Bill Keilty, MEGT Legislative Liaison

At the time of this writing, no legislation is being acted on in Congress. The President was affirmed today that the Iran deal will happen and now folks may want to get back to business. Gifted students' needs are not the concern it should be. Even the few dollars approved will not go too far beyond a few sites who are conducting research. It might take national insult of another country landing someone on Mars before we do to tilt the playing field in favor of gifted kids as it did a generation ago. Right now it is achievement gap that garners all of the attention. No one seems to recognize that other gaps exist and the top quartile is consistently losing ground.

We have tried for two years to convince the governor to mandate gifted services across the state with little success. Last spring I reported to our specialist that the MDE that we knew the districts in greater Minnesota we losing gifted programs. But we also have begun to see even some metro and second round suburban schools dissolving their gifted programs and signing off with the state that the gifted dollars are being used for talent development that translates into closing the achievement gap. We need a mandate or an alternative. We will begin exploring the Iowa model for gifted services in the near future. Watch for a survey seeking input. Thank you for being an advocate.



# World Class Skills & Gifted Learners



Conference information at: [www.mnegt.org](http://www.mnegt.org)

## 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 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Teaching Thinking: Assisting Gifted Learners in Digging Deeper, plus 2 breakout sessions!*

**Second Keynote Speaker Will Be Announced Soon!**

- \*Practical classroom focused breakout sessions!
- \*Please contact MEGT if you have expertise & experiences to share for a breakout session.
- \*Complete conference information and registration forms on the MEGT website: [www.mnegt.org](http://www.mnegt.org)





## Who should attend the MEGT Annual Conference?

Classroom Teachers  
 Gifted/Talented Coordinators & Specialists  
 College and University Faculty  
 School Administrators  
 Researchers

State Department of Education Staff  
 Guidance Counselors  
 School Psychologists  
 Graduate Students  
 Parents

Scholarships [partial- & full-awards]  
 are available through the MEGT Foundation  
 to attend the MEGT Conference.

See the MEGT Foundation Grant portion of the newsletter to apply!

## MEGT conference location – reported by Sue Feigal-Hitch

The goal of the MEGT board is to plan a mid-winter conference that not only brings in nationally recognized leaders in the field of gifted education but to also create an overall positive conference experience for all attendees. The MEGT board would like to thank all of you who have responded to the surveys on the mid-winter conference location over the past few years. Because we have received feedback from some of our members asking about the possibility of holding our mid-winter conference somewhere closer to the Twin Cities, the board began checking into other venues for a conference site. The board wanted to look at comparable costs specific to a large meeting room for the keynote speaker, breakout rooms, AV costs, food and lodging, as well as available parking. Two board members spent time researching possible Twin Cities locations. Their findings showed that with almost all aspects of the conference from meeting rooms to food and lodging the price would, at the minimum, double in cost. Therefore the overall conference cost that MEGT would need to charge would increase significantly to the districts sending teachers to the conference. The board reviewed what Cragun's has to offer in the conference cost agreement with MEGT which includes no extra cost for the large keynote room, breakout rooms, AV for breakout rooms and the numerous networking spaces. Breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner are included in the conference cost for the days of the conference. The opportunity to network after the meeting sessions was stated often in the survey responses as a large positive factor for the participants attending the conference. This networking opportunity was not easily duplicated in many of the Twin Cities venues. Cragun's gives the MEGT organization the most cost effective venue for our conference. The board decided that this issue has been researched sufficiently at this point in time and the conference will remain at Cragun's. The board will not revisit a change in venue for at least the next five years. Thank you again to all who have given the MEGT board feedback on the conference surveys. We value your ideas and opinions.

## MEGT Conference Extras – all included with your registration!

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Expert Keynote Speakers	✓	✓	✓
1-Year Membership	✓	✓	✓
Pre-Conference Workshops	✓		
Breakout Sessions		✓	✓
Breakfast/Brunch		✓	✓
Lunch		✓	
Supper	✓	✓	
Social Hour	✓	✓	
Silent Auction	✓	✓	
Networking Opportunities	✓	✓	✓
Poolside Vendors		✓	
Free Wi-Fi	✓	✓	✓
Door Prizes		✓	✓
On-site Hotel Accommodations	✓	✓	
Options for specific CEU Requirements		✓	✓

PLUS 12-month access to all conference handouts on Google Drive!





# What's So Different About Differentiation for the Gifted?

Richard M. Cash, Ed. D.

Now that “*differentiation*” has become a common term in the educational lexicon, we need to differentiate the practice of differentiation. The idea of differentiation has a long history in education. In the 1930s, as schools were educating more people than just the elite, it was found that some students had academic needs beyond what was provided in the general curriculum. These “gifted” students, it was said, required a “differentiated learning experience” to ensure their continued academic growth. More recently, Carol Ann Tomlinson, professor of education at the University of Virginia, led the charge that the methodologies of differentiation should be used in *all* classrooms with *all* children. Implementing differentiation has a profound effect on meeting students where they are at in the learning process (their readiness), on getting students engaged in learning (their interest) and on focusing instruction on how students like to learn (their learning preferences). This is all accomplished through the content (what we teach), the process (how students come to own the information), and the products (how students show what they have learned). Because differentiation is now considered a practice to address all learners’ needs, we must ensure when we differentiate for gifted students that specific practices are implemented. This is what my friend Diane Heacox and I did when we wrote *Differentiation for Gifted Learners: Going Beyond the Basics*. We suggest that the essential characteristics of differentiation (content, process, and product) can be uniquely adjusted to meet the particular needs of each gifted student.

## Three Dimensions of Differentiation for Gifted Learners

**1. Advance the levels of the *content*** by developing interdisciplinary concepts.

*Examples:*

- Link all coursework through meaningful concepts that are relevant to a students’ lives, such as:
  - power
  - conflict
  - desire
- Use essential questions that seek answers for the betterment of humanity, such as:
  - In what ways has *power* influenced our lives?
  - How does change create *conflict*?
  - Why is *desire* so potent?
  -

**2. Advance the levels of the *process*** by embedding sophisticated levels of thinking.

*Examples:*

- Invest students in collaborative, authentic issues or problems, such as:
  - Find a local issue where there are struggles for power. What is the issue? What recommendation can your team make to solve the problem? With whom would you share your ideas?
- Develop students’ thinking by teaching advanced critical reasoning strategies and creative thinking tools, such as:
  - Analyze the similarities and differences of lead characters in *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and define a common principle of power that links them all together.
  -

**3. Advance the levels of *product creation*** by requiring authentic products for authentic audiences.

*Examples:*

- Create products that have value to others, such as:
  - After the study of myths, legends, and folktales, create a new myth, legend or folktale that represents the benefits or responsibilities of power and produce a book for younger students. Keep in mind that your young readers will be the ones to assess the quality, aesthetics, and meaningfulness of your book.
  - Attend a school board meeting, and note the various power structures and plays for power during the meeting. Detail your findings using video clips, slideshow presentations, or documents shared during the meeting. Report to the school board and district after a public meeting on your representations of the distribution and sharing of power.



In addition to adjusting the three dimensions of content, process, and product, another way to increase the levels of differentiation for gifted learners is through **advancing students' learning autonomy**.

*Examples:*

- Require students to act as disciplinarians within a discipline. A *disciplinarian* is an expert in a field of study who researches and publishes findings, performs specialized tasks, and collaborates across disciplines.
- Ask students to develop and use scholarly dispositions, such as:
  - being open- and fair-minded
  - being inquisitive
  - thinking and acting flexibly
  - seeking out reason
  - immersing oneself in acquiring information
  - being respectful of and expecting diverse points of view
- Allow for the study of topics of interest not addressed in the core content.
- Encourage students to develop advanced levels of self-regulation through:
  - setting stretch goals
  - monitoring the progress toward those goals
  - reflecting on how well they accomplished those goals

### Three Critical Practices

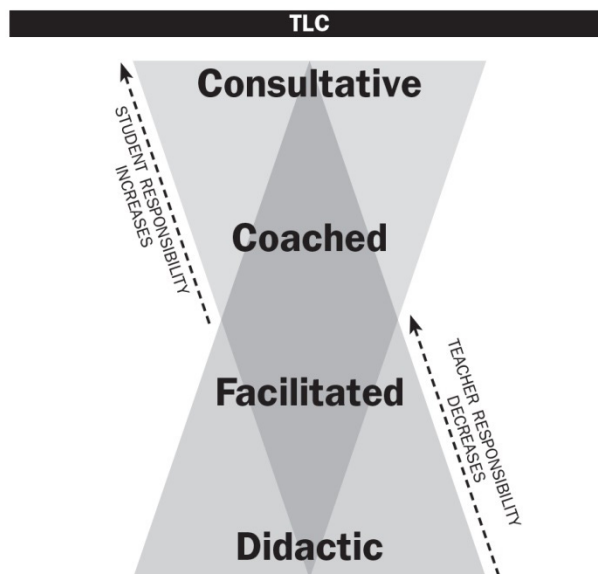
Keep in mind that there are also three critical practices that must be incorporated into the education of gifted students:

#### Critical Practice #1: Accelerated Pace

*Pace* is related to the instructional practices and management within the classroom environment. For advanced learners, instructional pace is accelerated by spending less time developing background knowledge, offering fewer examples of how to carry out methods, and doing less teacher-lead practice. Students are expected to develop independence more rapidly than in the regular classroom setting.

*Suggestion:*

- Help students take greater responsibility for their own learning by guiding them through the levels of instruction—from didactic to consultative—in the continuum of teaching and learning (see the figure below).



\* Cash, 2011.

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### Critical Practice #2: Sophisticated Levels of Complex Thinking

Complexity is found in the levels of thinking used by students within learning activities. For advanced learners complex activities require them to use more sophisticated levels of higher order thinking (analysis, evaluation, and synthesis), creative thinking, critical reasoning, decision making, and problem solving. Situations are more abstract and infused with greater levels of ambiguity. Students are expected to use various formulas to find answers. There is a greater need for students to work together and be able to clearly and succinctly communicate results. In most cases, complexity is considered the breadth of thinking and doing within a discipline of study.

*Suggestion:*

- Employ the higher levels of thinking and require students to not only answer complex questions, but to also ask complex questions. See the chart below describing four levels of questions, with the bottom two--divergent and analytical--offering more complexity.

Four Levels of Questions (also included in the digital download)

<p><b>Factual</b> Verifiable, found on the page, tests foundational knowledge in the content, one right answer</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who was in love with Hamlet?</li> <li>• What are the common elements of alkali metals?</li> <li>• Which country has the highest gross domestic product for 2010?</li> <li>• What is the sum of 320 x 46?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Convergent</b> Verifiable, found within the text, tests comprehension/interpretation/inference/evaluation of material, often closed-ended</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the reasons Ophelia went mad?</li> <li>• In what ways do alkali metals differ from other metals?</li> <li>• Why do some countries continue to have high gross domestic products every year?</li> <li>• What are some other ways to solve the equation . . . ?</li> </ul>
<b>4 LEVELS OF QUESTIONS</b>	
<p><b>Divergent</b> Validity is based on probability or possibility, found through the text, knowledgeable logical projections, intuition, creation or imagination (synthesis), open-ended</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What might have become of Hamlet and Ophelia's relationship had Hamlet not been so obsessed with revenge?</li> <li>• How might alkali metals be used more effectively to improve the human situation?</li> <li>• How might second world countries increase their gross domestic product?</li> <li>• Create a unique way to explain the solving of this equation (such as through the use of metaphor).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Analytical</b> Connects the texts to other content areas, takes the learner beyond the text, uses sophisticated levels of thinking, may involve multiple logical or affective thinking processes, open-ended answers require perspective for interpretation</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the similarities and differences between the deaths of Ophelia and Juliet?</li> <li>• In what ways are alkali metals some of the most dangerous chemicals?</li> <li>• What are the political actions of countries with high gross domestic products related to their steady growth?</li> <li>• How is data used to persuade opinion?</li> </ul>

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### Critical Practice #3: Increased Depth of Discipline Knowledge

Depth is related to the degree to which a student explores the content and develops a greater understanding of the discipline. For advanced learners the content offers greater abstractions of the concepts and connects to other content areas. Students learn and use the principles (rules) and theories of the discipline. In advanced courses students investigate topics that have applications in real-world situations. The diagram below illustrates how depth increases as learning moves from the concrete to the abstract.

**DEPTH**

Concrete/Specific/Demonstration

- Facts
- Vocabulary
- Observation

*continued on page 17*



## Differentiation, continued from page 16

Skills/Application/Details within the Discipline

- Tools
- Procedures/process
- Action/application

Concepts/Abstract/Interdisciplinary

- Big Ideas
- Questions
- Intersections

For specific ideas on meeting the needs of gifted students, whether in a mixed-abilities classroom, send-out program, or advanced level course, see *Differentiation for Gifted Learners*. My coauthor and I share strategies for using our progressive program model, addressing new and changing standards, designing a true honors course, meeting the needs of twice-exceptional learners, facing the challenges of diversity, using the co-teaching method, and many more.

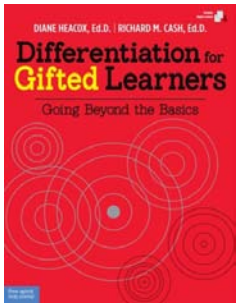
Excerpts from “Cash in on Learning: What’s So Different About Differentiation for the Gifted?” originally appeared at [www.freespiritpublishingblog.com](http://www.freespiritpublishingblog.com). Copyright © 2014 by Free Spirit Publishing. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

### Resources:

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Cash, R. (2016). *Self-Regulation in the Classroom: Helping Students Learn How to Learn*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

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## The Metro Chapter of MEGT announces its fall workshop featuring

**Dr. Brian Housand**

October 27, 2015

8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Hamline University (St. Paul campus)



Image courtesy of Bing Images

Dr. Brian Housand, assistant professor and co-coordinator of the Academically and Intellectually Gifted Program at East Carolina University, will be presenting on the integration of technology and enrichment into the curriculum. He is a well-known presenter at gifted conferences with standing-room only presentations. He currently serves on the NAGC Board of Directors as a Member-at-Large.

## MCGT’s Annual 2015 Fall Conference, “On Behalf of Gifted Kids...”

Saturday, November 7, 2015 from 8:30am-5:00pm  
at Robbinsdale Middle School

The keynoters are Nadia Webb, *The Social and Emotional Brain*, and Richard Ruczsyk, *Problem Solving: A 21st Century Education*.

Classes and Book Swap for students in Grades K-7 whose parents are attending the conference.

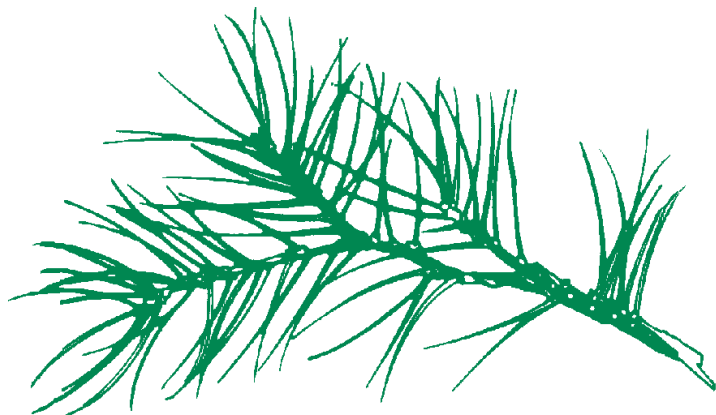
Registration deadline: October 26.

Adults who are members pay \$55 for the first adult in a family and \$25 for the second adult. Kids pay \$35. Nonmembers pay \$70, but may pay the member fee that day. Those fees include lunch and all materials. Those who register by October 16 (postmark) receive in their registration packet a coupon for \$2.00 off a purchase made at the MCGT book table.

Register at <http://mcgt.net/>



Images Courtesy of Bing Images







**Upcoming Professional  
 Development Opportunities  
 Sponsored by the Minnesota  
 Department of Education**

**Putting the Innovation in STEM: Creating Opportunities for Making and  
 Collaboration among High Ability Learners Workshop: October 13th**

Creativity leads to persistence, critical thinking, curiosity, and deeper understanding of core concepts in mathematics and science. How do we promote creativity within STEM programs for highly able learners? In this workshop, participants will work with three experts in innovation through creativity. We will discuss strategies that encourage youth to be makers, to see the world as something they are actively helping to create, and learn how to incorporate creativity and assessment into daily classroom practices. Target audiences for this workshop are: Gifted Ed Coordinators & Specialists, Classroom Teachers, STEM/MAGNET School Teachers, Administrators, After School and Out-of-School Program Providers. Presenters are Patti Drapeau, AnnMarie Thomas, and Diane Heacox. [Learn more about the workshop and register online at Metro ECSU.](#)

**New Coordinator Workshops: October 26 & December 8, 2015**

MDE is pleased to announce a two-day training workshop for new gifted education coordinators and specialists. The workshops are a collaboration between MEGT, MDE and the Minnesota Council for Gifted and Talented (MCGT). Representatives of each organization met to identify critical information for those with new responsibilities for gifted education. Though intended to address the needs of those new to the field anyone wishing a refresher on issues related to legislation, funding, the identification of students for services, and models is welcome. Speakers will include presenters from all three organizations plus panels representing districts of all sizes and models of services. [Learn more about the workshop and register online at Metro ECSU.](#)

**Full-Time Gifted Programs Network Meetings 2015-2016**

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. Each full-day session will be held at MDE in Conference Center B, Room 16 from 9:00 – 3:00 p.m. There is no charge to the participant to attend, but lunch is on your own. All are welcome.

10/30/2015	<i>Taking the Quantum Leap: Innovating an Array of Gifted Services</i> Guest Speakers: John Alberts, Executive Director of Educational Services, and David Wolff, District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Services, Austin Public Schools
12/11/2015	<i>On-Location: Full-Time Network Visits Three Suburban Districts*</i> Guest speakers: Staff and students at three full-time gifted schools
01/22/2016	<i>The Science and Impact of Calm In the Classroom</i> Guest Speakers: Sandra Mortensen School Counselor and Julie Donaldson Gifted Education Coordinator, Bloomington Public Schools
03/04/2016	<i>Conducting Internal Gifted Education Program Evaluations</i> Guest Speakers: Dr. Karen B. Rogers, and Dr. Karen L. Westberg, University of St. Thomas

[Register here](#)

*continued on page 19*





## Young Scholars: Finding and Developing Talent in Underserved Populations of Gifted Learners Workshop: December 3, 2015

The Young Scholars model is designed to find students with high academic potential from diverse backgrounds at an early age, and to nurture their potential so that they will be prepared to engage in advanced learning opportunities as they progress through school. Presenter Dr. Carol Horn coordinates K-12 Advanced Academic Programs for Fairfax County Public Schools in Northern Virginia and has over 25 years of experience in gifted education, developing and implementing the Young Scholars model. In the afternoon, three Minnesota schools with Young Scholars programs will share their implementation stories. Target audience: gifted education coordinators and specialists, classroom teachers, administrators, and early childhood educators. Questions: contact Wendy Behrens [wendy.behrens@state.mn.us](mailto:wendy.behrens@state.mn.us). [Register online at Metro ECSU.](#)

### Save these Dates!

#### Extending the Standards Workshop: March 4, 2016

Diane Heacox is the speaker for a one day workshop at MDE on March 4th. Registration information will be available on the MDE website later this fall.

#### Hormel Symposium 2016: June 13-16, 2016

Registration information, sessions and presenters will be announced on the MDE Gifted Education page on or before January 20, 2016. The Pre-conference will be on June 12<sup>th</sup>, Administrator Day on June 13<sup>th</sup> and the General Symposium June 13-16<sup>th</sup>. Save the dates and plan now to attend!

## MDE's Gifted and Talented Advisory Council

### Council Meetings

The Gifted and Talented Advisory Council is made up of representatives of stakeholder groups with interest and expertise in gifted education. The council meets quarterly to provide guidance and feedback to the department on gifted education issues. Meetings are held at the Minnesota Department of Education, 1500 Highway 36 West, Roseville, Minnesota and are open to the public. During the 2015-2016 school year, the council will meet in Conference Center A, Room 3 and 4, 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.:

- September 21, 2015
- January 11, 2016
- April 11, 2016
- June 27, 2016

### Advisory Council: Open Positions

Applications for the following two-year open positions on the Gifted and Talented Advisory Council will be accepted through November 16, 2015: Parent or Guardian Representative, School Psychologist or Counselor Representative, and After or Out of School Education Program Provider Representative. Parent or Guardian Representatives must currently be active in one or more parent organizations and must be the parent or guardian of a school-aged child. School Psychologist or Counselor Representatives must be employed full-time working directly and consistently with students and teachers in a Minnesota public school and have a minimum of five years of experience. After or Out of School Education Program Providers must be employed in a leadership role and have a minimum of five years of experience. Applicants must have permission from their employer to attend scheduled meetings during school hours and serve on sub-committees as needed. Applicants will be notified by December 16, 2015. Questions? Contact Wendy Behrens: [wendy.behrens@state.mn.us](mailto:wendy.behrens@state.mn.us) [Apply for an open position on the advisory council.](#)

## Opportunities for Students

### Scholars of Distinction Award Program

The Minnesota Scholars of Distinction program nurtures and recognizes distinguished achievement by highly motivated self-directed students. Each award area was developed through partnerships of educators, the business community and others. To earn this recognition, students must complete required work in the Minnesota Academic Standards, demonstrate mastery of complex subject matter and apply their knowledge to challenging projects. Students may pursue one or more area of focus in any or all years of their K-12 education. Scholars of Distinction awards may be earned in leadership, mathematics, science, social studies, STEM, and theater arts. All participants must complete *the Intent to Apply Form* available on the MDE website October 15-December 15<sup>th</sup>. Project submission deadline is March 4, 2016 and awards announced May 9<sup>th</sup>. The award ceremony will be held on May 15<sup>th</sup> at the Perpich Center for Arts Education.

## Selected STEM Focused Student Opportunities

### Navigate Your World – A Free STEM Experience for Girls

On Saturday, September 26, 1,000 people are expected to celebrate the first annual Global Girls in Aviation Day at the Downtown St. Paul Airport. At this free event for girls ages 10 – 17, participants will receive a “Logbook” that takes them through an experience with a broad spectrum of STEM careers, education programs and technology displays. Featured guest Dr. Sandy Magnus, who served on the International Space Station and flew the last space shuttle mission, will be joined by other iconic women who have paved the way in their fields along with role models from many Minnesota companies. Free flights will be part of the mission to help girls see the world differently, learning how STEM affects the way we live, work and play.

*continued on page 20*



### TECH Experience Tours

The Minnesota High Tech Association (MHTA) is partnering with ESP IT to provide a unique event for students interested in learning more about informational technology and the high tech business world. During National Computer Science Education Week, December 7-13, MHTA is connecting high school students with IT-focused companies and the IT departments of other high-tech businesses in Minnesota. They're working with companies and non-profit organization to provide high school students with the opportunity to have a first-hand encounter with a high-tech work environment. Research shows that the most effective encouragement for students to pursue a STEM career is the opportunity to meet and interact with a STEM professional. Help your students connect with businesses and individuals who would like to participate in the event by contacting Tim Barrett at [tbarrett@mhta.org](mailto:tbarrett@mhta.org).

### Dream It Do It

Dream it Do It is offering a teacher's guide, *Introduction to Manufacturing in Minnesota Teacher's Guide to Manufacturing*, which includes lessons, activities, and videos which introduce middle and high school students to manufacturing and the many opportunities manufacturing holds for them; talking points and teaching objectives, and applicable educational standards pertinent to the manufacturing industry. It is recommended for grades 6-12. To request this [teacher's guide](#) by November 14, 2015 and be entered into a drawing of \$2000 for your classroom, please email Jaimee Meyer at [jmeyer@bemidjistate.edu](mailto:jmeyer@bemidjistate.edu). This opportunity is open to all Minnesota science and technology teachers.

## Enrichment Programs and Competitions

### Reach for the Stars Catalogue

Programs that have received the Minnesota Academic League Council's endorsement are included in the *Reach for the Stars Catalogue*, which is published as a public service by Synergy & Leadership Exchange, with generous support from Lifetouch Publishing. MDE is a strategic partner of the Academic League Council. [Access the online catalogue](#) or request a printed version by emailing [eanderson@synergyexchange.org](mailto:eanderson@synergyexchange.org). Online and print copies are free!

## Selected FREE Workshops for Educators

### GIS Educator Day: Oct. 7th

The organization of statewide GIS professionals invites all teachers to an Educators day at the at the Duluth Convention Center 9 am – 4:30 pm. On October 7th. Teachers will learn about online mapping resource (ArcGIS Online), available free to all schools. This FREE event (including lunch and snacks) will include sessions presented by teachers and professionals for both beginning and advanced users as well as specific sessions for science and social studies. The schedule provides opportunities to collaborate with other teachers and GIS professions on projects for the classroom. CEUs will be available for teachers and administrators. Visit the [teacher registration page](#).

### EdCamp Math and Science MN: Oct. 16th

Edcamp is a form of unconference for teachers. Unlike traditional conferences which have schedules set by the people running the conference, Edcamp's agenda is created by the participants. Instead of a presentation, people are encouraged to have discussion and hands-on sessions. This free event will be held at Eden Prairie High School and is sponsored by the Minnesota Science Teacher's Association, and the Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics. For information and registration visit the [Edcamp website](#).

## Congratulations!

The September issue of *School Administrator Magazine* is devoted to cultivating gifted students. Four Minnesota school districts are recognized for their outstanding work: Austin, Bloomington, Eden Prairie, and Mankato. Jane Clarenbach, Director of Public Education at the National Association for Gifted Children quotes Sue Feigal-Hitch, District Coordinator of Gifted Services for Eden Prairie Schools and Erin Boltik, Director of Gifted Programs and Services in Bloomington in her article, *Expanding the View of Giftedness*. The *Gifted Tactics in the Field* section features essays by John Alberts, Executive Director of Educational Services for the Austin Public Schools, and Tania K. Lyon, Talent Development Coordinator for Mankato Area Public Schools on their district's work in program evaluation and identification of underrepresented populations. [Read the September edition of School Administrator Magazine](#).





# A Journey Toward Responsive Gifted Education

By Sarah Prindiville, Fine Arts and Gifted Education Coordinator, Robbinsdale Area Schools

Gifted. In some places, it's thought of as a term to signify the elite, indicate a worthiness of special treatment, or synonymous with 'entitled'.

After further examination, however, the term is more suitably used to describe the learning needs of individual students. The State of Minnesota describes gifted students as "students whose potential requires differentiated and challenging educational programs and/or services beyond those provided in the general school program." (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015).

In our district, as I'm sure is the case in many districts, we serve students on a vast continuum of needs, and needs that have changed over the past 15 years. Unfortunately, due to economic downturns, budget cuts and the like, our Gifted and Talented program has not changed with the changing needs of our students and community.

Currently, our district uses pull-out instruction in Grades 3-5 to serve identified gifted students. Students are identified with a non-verbal ability test and MCA/MAP results starting in the spring of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Students receive 50-60 minutes of pull out instruction once per week, focusing on creativity, problem solving, and critical thinking. We have three full-time gifted teachers for all 10 elementary schools. Their main duties surround instruction and identification; however, they have some availability to collaborate with classroom teachers to provide indirect service to non-identified students who demonstrate a need for challenge.

While this model may have been sufficient 15 years ago, we have discovered that it does not meet the needs of today's learners in our district. Our district is unified around the theme of 'High Intellectual Performance Through Equity,' however we have discovered that the cadre of students who are identified as gifted is racially disproportionate to the entire student population of our district. We have also discovered that the current programming does not effectively meet our top

performing students' need for academic rigor.

Paula Olszewski-Kubilius asked in the Spring 2015 issue of the MEGT Voice, "...what do we do to identify exceptional ability in all children including those who evidence high levels of achievement and advanced knowledge as well as students with potential but not necessarily demonstrated achievement. These are two different groups of gifted learners who require different approaches." (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2015).

This leaves us pondering some important questions: What is an equitable way of identifying high achieving students or high potential students? What programming do we need to serve their needs? What is the role of enrichment? Are only certain students eligible for enrichment?

And so, we as a district stand at a crossroads. We seek to develop a new vision for Gifted and Talented Education. This vision is rooted in racial equity and serving students each according to his or her needs, acknowledging that some students have certain educational needs and realizing that those needs might not be evident on standardized tests or in classroom work.

In the coming months, we will conduct a formal needs assessment by talking with our many stakeholders in Gifted and Talented Education. We will dig deeper into data. We will conduct courageous conversations. From there, a new approach to Gifted and Talented Education will take shape. This exciting journey will continue as we develop a more responsive approach to meeting our students' needs and developing their gifts and talents.

## Bibliography

Minnesota Department of Education. (2015, May 12). *Minnesota Department of Education*. Retrieved from Gifted Education: <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/GiftEd/>

Olszewski-Kubilius, P. (2015). False Forced Choices in Gifted Education. *MEGT Voice*, 1, 3-4.







## STATE of MINNESOTA

# Proclamation

WHEREAS: Young people are Minnesota's most valuable resource — they are critical to the future of our state; and

WHEREAS: Education should foster the development of the young mind's leadership, creativity, academic abilities, and artistic talents; and

WHEREAS: The State of Minnesota and its education system play a key role in nurturing our remarkable students; and

WHEREAS: Minnesota is blessed with tens of thousands of gifted and talented children, whose full potential can only be tapped through the cooperation of educators, families, communities, and government; and

WHEREAS: Development of each individual's intellectual and creative powers ensures the challenges of the future can be met.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MARK DAYTON, Governor of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim the week of November 1-7, 2015, as:

## GIFTED AND TALENTED YOUTH WEEK

in the State of Minnesota.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Minnesota to be affixed at the State Capitol this 24<sup>th</sup> day of July.

Handwritten signature of Mark Dayton in black ink.

GOVERNOR

Handwritten signature of Steve Pinn in black ink.

SECRETARY OF STATE



# Reflection from the 2015 Hormel Symposium

Gregg Rutter

I was fortunate to be able to attend The Hormel Foundation Gifted and Talented Education Symposium in Austin, Minnesota this year as the recipient of generous funding from MEGT. After working together with Wendy Behrens, Gifted and Talented Specialist with the Minnesota Department of Education, and having her conduct a workshop at my school, she suggested that I attend the conference, and she helped facilitate the funding for me from MEGT. I couldn't be more grateful!

I am the gifted and talented education coordinator at Nay Ah Shing School, the tribal school on the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe reservation in Vineland, Minnesota. When I began work there in 2012, there was much needed improvement to be done with gifted programming – and we have come a long way. It was exciting for me to participate in the thoughtful, well-structured, well-organized Hormel Symposium and walk away with strategies and ideas that I could immediately put to use, as well as engage in professional dialogue with colleagues, and be presented with meaningful concepts and topics from the daily keynotes. Some quick take-aways I am, or will be, putting to use this year at Nay Ah Shing Schools include:

- Using the Pippi Longstocking story, as Jane Kise did in her keynote, asking staff about focusing on meeting the needs of an individual student at the expense of creating a community of learners versus fitting the individual student into a community of learners at the expense of ignoring the individual's needs. A great thought-provoking, reflective activity for a professional development meeting.
- Paul Oh's idea of paper circuitry; what a wonderful STEAM activity. I am collaborating with our art teacher

to use this idea to make illuminated notebooks; students will learn note taking strategies including visual / doodle note taking – and will incorporate paper circuitry into their notebooks. This expands the note-taking concept to include science, engineering, and art. An extension will be the creation of a paper circuitry art piece.

- Kimberly Chandler's Problem-Based Learning session gave me the framework to create local, real-world learning units that meaningfully connect with cultural activities at our school. I am in the process of writing problem based learning units that focus on ricing and the sugar bush – two culturally significant activities at Mille Lacs – within the broader abstract concept of systems. I am developing these units in collaboration with classroom teachers and cultural staff at Nay Ah Shing.

There were many other ideas and resources from the symposium that I will be implementing, from designing lessons that promote and support creative thinking to analyzing texts for rigor and complexity to advocating for early identification and early enrichment of gifted learners.

The four days I spent at the Hormel Gifted & Talented Education Symposium were full, rich, and engaging; I am sure what I came away with will lead to better meeting the needs of not just the students in the gifted program at Nay Ah Shing but to enhancing the entire school. I look forward to attending the symposium again in 2016!

## MEGT Star of the North Award

For the past sixteen years, MEGT along with NAGC has annually presented a \*Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Award to children who have made a difference in their community and who have excelled academically or in the arts.

Recently, national funding for this award has dwindled causing NAGC to eliminate their support of this award nationwide.

The MEGT State Board wishes to continue this award in the state of Minnesota. The award will now be called, "Minnesota Star of the North." Students in grades 5-8 will be eligible to receive this award. Students selected for the award have distinguished themselves in academic achievement, leadership, or the visual or performing arts.

Eligible students may be nominated by parents, teachers, students, or community/civic groups. Nomination forms may be found online at [mneqt.org](http://mneqt.org) and sent by December 1, 2015 to:

Lori Habben  
410 Avon Ave. North  
Avon, MN 56310

Further questions- please contact Lori at [lhadden@mail.albany.k12.mn.us](mailto:lhadden@mail.albany.k12.mn.us)







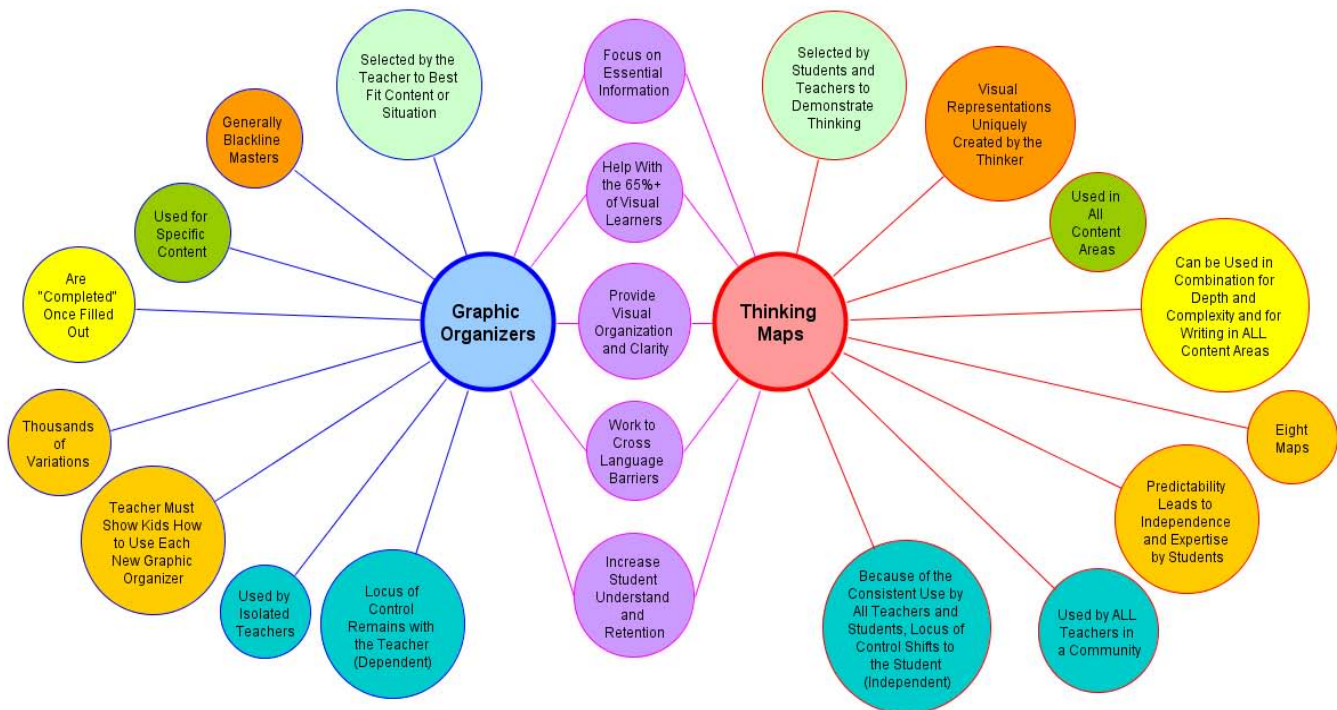
# My Journey with Thinking Maps

Rob Nelson, Thinking Maps Representative; *former* Principal at Harriet Bishop Gifted & Talented Elementary for six years.

Several years ago, as a result of a state-mandated Integration process, my school and I found ourselves unexpectedly in the discussion to revamp our neighborhood school into a Gifted and Talented School. The process that followed, although not entirely unlike the one many school districts navigate when trying to establish GT schools and programs, was unique in a couple of ways. First, we were to remain a neighborhood school. Second, while our staff members were free to request reassignment, no one did, which meant we were ALL learning the world of gifted education together. Aside from our Gifted Coordinator, who was an amazing researcher and passionate educator, we were going into it blind.

needs of the gifted.

Overlaying our newfound knowledge and commitment to the gifted, was a continuing commitment to preserve the neighborhood feel of the school, its parents, and its students. We searched for strategies that could be used by ALL teachers and stakeholders with ALL students. Easier said than done... Just when it seemed a bit like mythology that there were such strategies, we were introduced to Thinking Maps. At first they seemed like graphic organizers. They even looked like them – same type of shapes – bubbles and rectangles. Thankfully we were open to learning new things and we took the time to learn more. We discovered that while they had some similarities, they were fundamentally different in many ways.



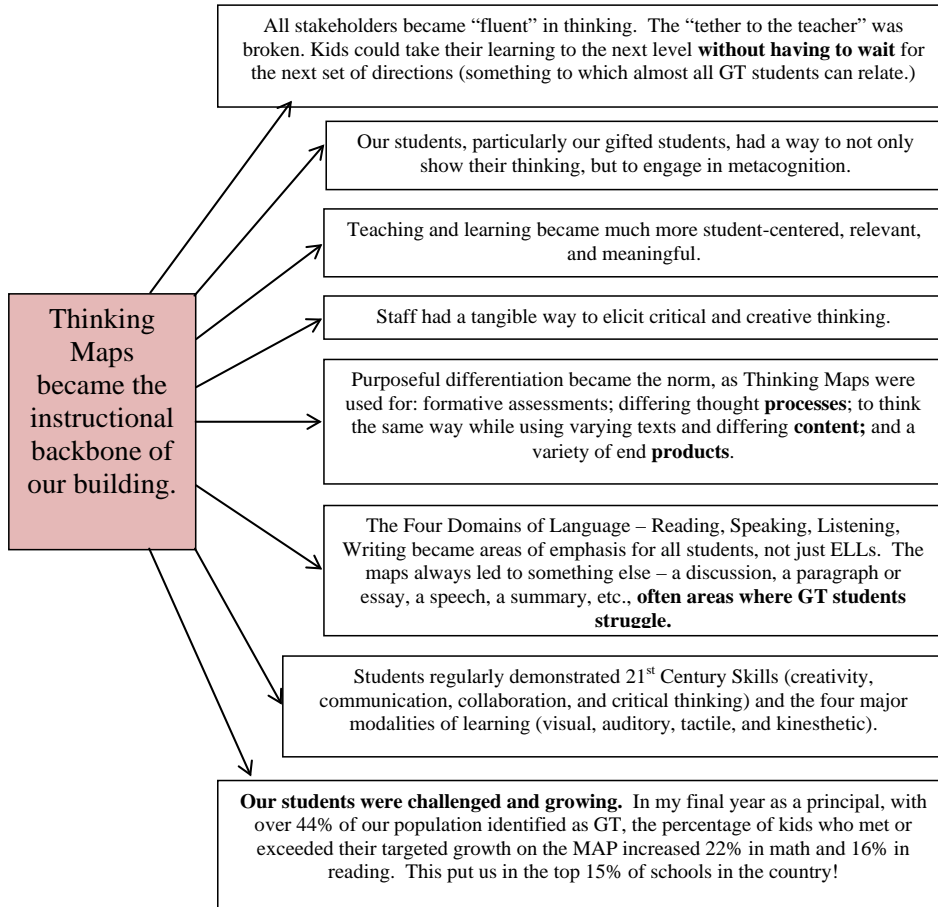
Luckily we had a year to prepare. We lined up some terrific professional development. We met on the affective needs of gifted students, identification tools and what the information told us, UbD frameworks, curriculum compacting, subject acceleration, Schoolwide Enrichment Model in Reading framework, and so much more. Through it all we embraced and epitomized Marcia Gentry's work and recommendations for Whole School Cluster Grouping. It was all great and pushed us to our limits in preparing for the start as a gifted and talented magnet. This targeted professional development was essential in helping us meet the unique

We realized that because Thinking Maps are visual representations of our thought processes, they could be used with everyone. You see, all of us utilize eight cognitive thought processes. We are born with eight. We die with eight. Our IQ, how quickly we process, how much we know about a topic, or our years of experience cannot and do not add more processes. Of course those things significantly impact how deeply and critically we think, but now we had something tangible to use with all of our students.

Admittedly, the next year was an absolute blur. We transformed into a gifted and talented magnet. We had families join our school from all around the area. Students felt a sense of belonging. We put



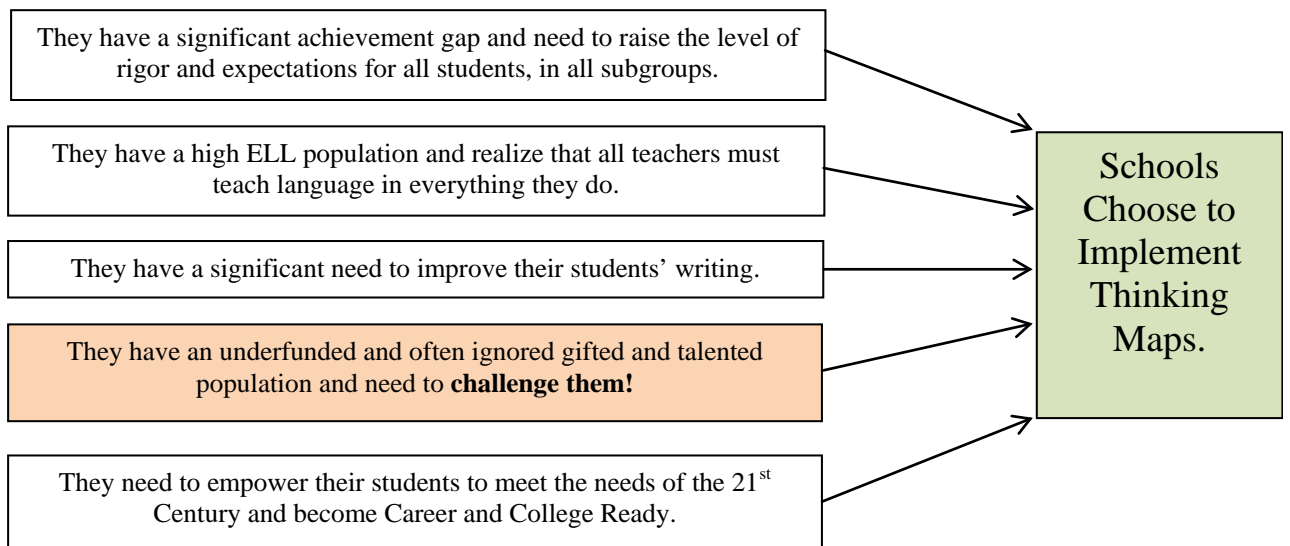
our processes and frameworks in place. Everything felt new. Families were ecstatic. As a staff, we were pushed to the brink. What came next was remarkable. Through it all, a borderline-overwhelmed staff found a comfort in teaching with **thinking** in mind. It was tangible and safe, yet simultaneously more and more open-ended and facilitative. Teacher after teacher began saying, "I can't imagine teaching without Thinking Maps." Even more importantly, Thinking Maps had become student-owned. They were truly the visual language for learning. Thinking Maps had transformed our climate and culture in almost every way-



I am a lifelong educator and learner. I have served as an educational assistant, a bus driver, a coach, a teacher, a coordinator, and a principal. Teaching and serving others is in my blood. It's who I am. I was not looking to leave the public sector, but the opportunity to work with schools across the Upper Midwest and introduce educators to the power of Thinking Maps was a lure I could not resist. I believed in what Thinking Maps could do for kids, for teachers, and for whole school systems. Now two years later, I reflect on the remarkable progress we are making in the Midwest. Schools and districts are deciding to implement Thinking Maps for several reasons-

No matter the reason, the results have been the same. **EVERYONE** is empowered for deep and critical thinking. In thinking back to where this crazy journey has taken me and from where it began, I am so thankful we looked beyond what Thinking Maps appeared to be.

My wife recently asked me how my job now compared to my life as an educator. After briefly thinking about it, I shared that it has always been about "the sparkle in the eyes." In each position I have held, whether it's as a coach with my athletes, a teacher with my students, or as an administrator with my staff, there is a moment in time in which people "get it." The world shifts and possibilities abound. I am still blessed with those moments.





# Is a B- Good Enough?

*Response to the Report Card on State Support for Academically Talented, Low-Income Students*

By David Wolff, District Coordinator of Gifted & Talented Services, Austin, MN on behalf of MEGT Board of Directors

In March of 2015, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation released their report, *Equal Talents, Unequal Opportunities: A Report Card on State Support for Academically Talented, Low-Income Students*, citing income-based “excellence gaps” exist in schools across the nation creating a “persistent talent underclass” of bright low-income learners.

In the report, Dr. Johnathan Plucker of the University of Connecticut created a rubric of eighteen indicators representing state-level policies and student outcomes. The indicators were chosen because they were all readily available information that could be collected by all fifty states, the data was easily understood, and the data was comprehensive. The purpose of the report was to “provide clear guidance to the states to better support advanced learning for all learners” (2015) [see Table 1]. For a comprehensive review of the report, please visit: <http://www.excellencegap.org/initiatives/state-report.html> or to learn more about the “Excellence Gap,” visit: <http://www.excellencegap.org/>

Minnesota was celebrated for its scores on both the input and output indicators; both earned a B-. Is a B- good enough for all intellectually gifted and academically talented learners in Minnesota? The Minnesota Educators for the Gifted and Talented [MEGT] believe we can still do better. We need better policies to ensure identification and service delivery for ALL advanced learners regardless of one’s zip code; we need better policies to ensure gifted education coursework is a required part of teacher and administration training; and we need better policies to hold educators accountable for serving advanced learners.

## What is Minnesota doing well?

Through partnerships across the state, we are making a difference in the education of advanced learners. Current state statute gives districts \$13 per pupil to be used for the identification of, educational programs for, and staff development of gifted learners. In addition, state statute required districts to have policy outlining procedures to determine early entrance to kindergarten and grade accelerations.

Minnesota has a wealth of expertise within our borders. Residing in Minnesota, we have nationally and internationally respected leaders in the gifted education field like Richard Cash, Diane Heacox, Karen Rogers, Karen Westberg, Stephen Schroeder-Davis, and Jane Kise to name just a few. As practitioners, we have four conferences hosted by MEGT, Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented [MCGT], University of St. Thomas, and the Minnesota Department of Education [MDE]. Districts across Minnesota are participating in research as part of the recent Jacob K. Javits Federal Gifted and Talented Grant. The Mankato Area Public School District is working in partnership with the University of St. Thomas as well

as over 10 districts participating in Purdue University’s research upscale of the Total School Clustering Model. Although districts and cooperatives are not required to report this data, per state statute, we know there are there are an estimated 10 regional gifted and talented networks to bring educators together for purposeful collaboration of specific needs in their region as well as grow professionally. At the local level, there is an estimated 20 districts that offer full-time services for gifted learners. Of the 328 districts in Minnesota, as reported in 2014-15 school year, we know there are numerous districts that offer small group gifted and/or talent development services periodically through the week. These are truly things to celebrate!

## How does Minnesota get an A?

The question still remains, “Is a B- good enough?” What must we do to help our state earn an “A” in both the input and output indicators?

Unfortunately, gifted services and programs are easily eliminated in Greater Minnesota due to low enrollment numbers, inadequate staffing, expertise, and other factors. Of the estimated 20 districts that offer full-time services, only 3 of them are located outside of the Metro area. MEGT believes that a ‘Mandate for Services’ that includes academic programming, professional development, and fiscal accountability is needed. In the Mandated Services for Gifted Education Call for Action Paper, MEGT states, without a mandate for academic programming, professional development, and fiscal accountability, students across the state receive inconsistent opportunities (2015). With a mandate, districts would be accountable for how they spend the state funds to impact gifted and talented learners, giving advanced learners throughout the state access to more rigorous learning opportunities that meet their learning needs.

Going hand-in-hand with a mandate for services is a mandate for educator training; providing access to educators to the “who?, what?, why?, and how?” of gifted education. Providing professional development to current educators and training in preparation course work on the philosophies of gifted education paradigms (the what?), purpose of gifted education and talent development services (the why?), characteristics and behaviors of eligible students (the who?), and the instructional strategies to meet the eligible students’ learning needs (the how?) (Dai and Chen, 2013). Through partnerships with private and public universities and colleges, teacher and administrator preparation course work should include in-depth discussions, readings, research, and field experience with gifted learners.

## Conclusion

It is obvious Minnesota is heading in the right direction. Through collaborations between MCGT, MDE, MEGT, and other parent and community advocacy groups, we have made great



progress in meeting the academic and affective needs of gifted learners. Yet the journey is far from over. Together, we can continue to advocate for gifted learners and be the first in the nation to earn an “A”. MEGT (2015) suggests:

- Access former MEGT position papers for talking points about what gifted students need.
- Talk with colleagues, administrators, parents, parent groups, and parent/teacher organizations in your district about why laws are needed to ensure an appropriate education for gifted students.
- Talk to your local government representatives.
- Participate in dialogue with those in your professional organizations about the need for more consistency across the state in providing gifted education services.
- Involve the business community in the discourse of the importance of nurturing talent to positively impact workforce strength.
- Form alliances with other groups who would support gifted and talented learners such as arts groups, STEM initiatives, technology associations.

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EQUAL TALENTS, UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

JACK KENT COOKE FOUNDATION

# MINNESOTA

INPUTS / STATE EMPHASES	ALL STATES	MINNESOTA
<b>INPUT GRADE</b>	A: 0 B: 6 C: 18 D: 24 F: 3	<b>B-</b>
SEA annual report or monitoring/auditing of LEA gifted & talented programs	Yes: 28 No: 23	<b>Report (Not monitoring)</b>
State accountability system includes growth measures for high achieving students or other indicators of excellence	Growth and indicators: 13 Growth or indicators: 27 Neither: 11	<b>Growth (Not indicators)</b>
State participates in international assessments	Yes: 9 No: 42	<b>Yes (2011 TIMSS)</b>
State mandates identification or services for identified advanced learners	Both: 31 Identification: 5 Neither: 15	<b>Identification and acceleration</b>
State policy on early entrance to Kindergarten	Permitted: 11 LEA permitted: 10 No policy: 10 Not permitted: 20	<b>Permitted</b>
State policy on acceleration	Permitted: 9 LEA permitted: 19 No policy: 22 Not permitted: 1	<b>Permitted</b>
State policy on middle school / high school concurrent enrollment with credit received for high school	Permitted: 17 LEA permitted: 18 No policy: 10 Not permitted: 6	<b>Permitted</b>
High school honors diploma	Yes: 19 No: 31 Unknown: 1	<b>No</b>
State requires gifted coursework as part of teacher / administrator training	Yes: 3 No: 47 Unknown: 1	<b>No</b>

OUTCOMES	ALL STATES		MINNESOTA	
<b>OUTCOME GRADE</b>	A: 0 B: 6 C: 29 D: 16 F: 0		<b>B-</b>	
% Advanced G4 Math NAEP 2013	8		16	
% Advanced G8 Math NAEP 2013	8		14	
% Advanced G4 Reading NAEP 2013	8		10	
% Advanced G8 Reading NAEP 2013	4		4	
% HS students scoring 3+ on 1+ AP exam 2013	20		20	
	<b>NOT LOW-INCOME</b>	<b>LOW-INCOME<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>NOT LOW-INCOME</b>	<b>LOW-INCOME</b>
% Advanced G4 Math NAEP 2013	14	2	22	4
% Advanced G8 Math NAEP 2013	14	3	19	5
% Advanced G4 Reading NAEP 2013	14	3	14	3
% Advanced G8 Reading NAEP 2013	6	1	6	2

<sup>1</sup> "Low-income" qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch

March 2015



## Equal Talents, Unequal Opportunities:

A Report Card on State Support for Academically Talented Low-income Students

Researchers looked at how state education policies nationwide impact the success of our nation's 3.4 million high-ability, low-income students. The dashboard below shows how states performed in **9 key policy measures** — underscoring the randomness of whether states identify, track, report on and provide resources for advanced learners.

### States Missing the Mark



### % OF LOW-INCOME STUDENTS IN AMERICA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

For the first time in at least 50 years, America's public schools teach a population that is more than 50 percent low income.



**3.4 Million**  
low-income, high-achieving students in the U.S.

While America has improved school performance at basic proficiency, a growing and troubling "excellence gap" exists at the upper levels of performance. As the population of low-income school age America grows, the question of what can be done to realize the full potential of high-performing, low-income students becomes a national priority.

"We think that high-achieving, low-income kids don't need our help. **Nothing could be further from the truth.**"  
Harold O. Levy, Executive Director, Jack Kent Cooke Foundation - NPR Interview, October 30, 2014

Visit [www.excellencegap.org/reportcard](http://www.excellencegap.org/reportcard) to view the full report.

Sources: [www.excellencegap.org/reportcard](http://www.excellencegap.org/reportcard)  
[http://www.jkcf.org/assets/1/7/Achievement\\_Trapp.pdf](http://www.jkcf.org/assets/1/7/Achievement_Trapp.pdf)  
<http://www.southerneducation.org/Publications/New-Diverse-Majority/Percent-of-Low-Income-Students-in-PS-2015-01.aspx>



JACK KENT COOKE  
FOUNDATION

# HOT

## off the Press!

**Just Announced!**

The State of Minnesota

was just awarded a

Javits Federal Grant

for the amount of

\$442,000

over three years.

Look to the Winter issue

of The Voice for the

full abstract of the grant.



Visit MEGT on the web, at:  
[www.mnegt.org](http://www.mnegt.org)



"Like" MEGT on  
Facebook by  
searching:



**Minnesota  
Educators of the  
Gifted and Talented**



Tweet with  
**#megt**





# MEGT FOUNDATION

Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented Foundation

The MEGT Foundation will be participating in the Fall, "Give to the MAX" day. Go to <https://givemn.org>, Find us on the search box, and give what you are able.

This past year we were able to fund 10 recipients in their efforts to serve gifted students. Nine teachers received dollars to attend the MEGT Annual Conference and learn more strategies to support their gifted students. One teacher received a grant for an initiative started in his school to serve their gifted students. One teacher received a grant to take on gifted coursework. The Foundation's purpose was met by each of those applicants. The Foundation is meeting its goals with the support of members of the gifted community and members of the community at large.

Currently board members are soliciting support from corporate sponsors. During the "Give to the Max" day, one of our donors was able to set up Medtronic with a donation and matching funds from his employer. We are now recognized by Medtronic as an approved non-profit. So if you know someone who is employed by Medtronic ask that they consider the MEGT Foundation as a nonprofit to support. Every dollar donated will be matched.

If you have suggestions and contacts of other organizations structured like Medtronic and know someone who works with them, please pursue their support. If you know of an organization with similar structures, please contact me, ([microtubel@me.com](mailto:microtubel@me.com)), with those names and contact information. Many corporations provide matching grants and our dollars would grow, as well as, our capacity to support the teachers of the gifted.

We are always looking for fundraising ideas for our Silent Auction. If you have a time-share week that may not be used, consider donating it to the Foundation as a tax deduction and we can offer it in the Silent Auction.

Thanks to all of you who have supported us in the past and thanks for all you do for gifted kids.

Watch for the announcement on the MEGT website: [www.mnegt.org](http://www.mnegt.org), for the application and due dates for the Foundation grants.

Bill Keilty,  
MEGT Foundation President

## *Nominations for Friend of the Gifted Sought*

Do you know a colleague who deserves to be recognized for many years of service in support of gifted education in Minnesota? Take an opportunity right now to nominate that person for the MEGT Friend of the Gifted Award.

The criterion for a nomination includes:

- long-term support of the gifted,
- broad-range impact in Minnesota or beyond,
- currently a Minnesota resident

Any MEGT member may nominate a candidate for this award. Please contact Gwen Briesemeister at: [gwen.briesemeister@delanoschools.org](mailto:gwen.briesemeister@delanoschools.org) to submit the name of your candidate and include 1-3 paragraphs about why this candidate should be considered. The state board will review all nominations in November and make a final selection. Please take advantage of this opportunity to recognize someone from the state who deserves of this award.





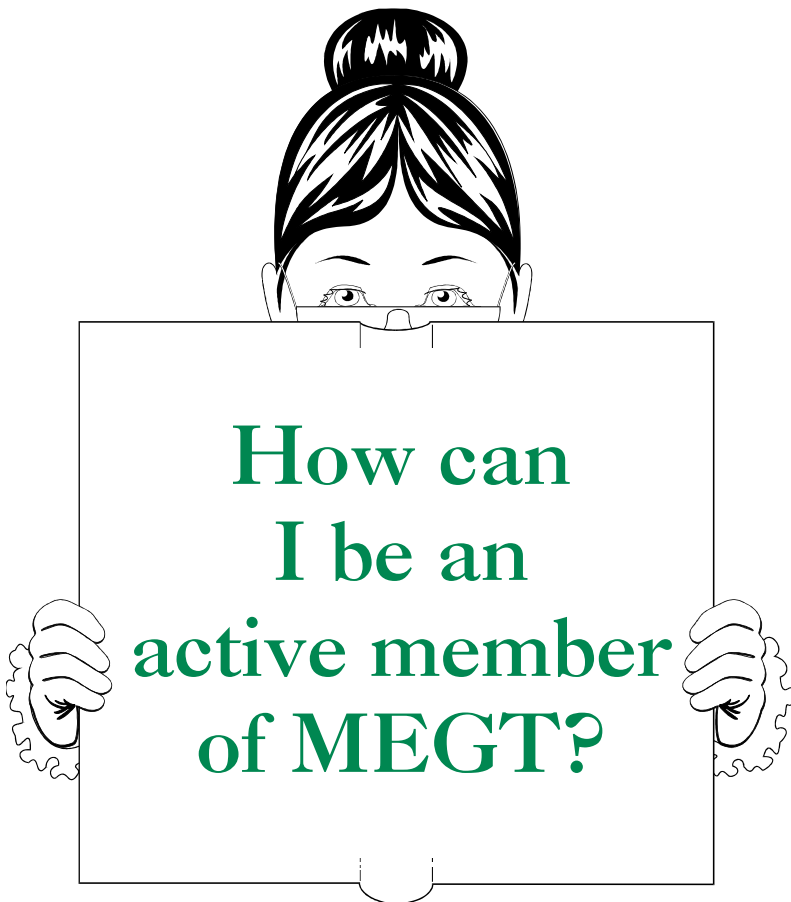
# World Council for Gifted & Talented Children

The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, Inc. (WCGTC) is a worldwide non-profit organization that provides advocacy and support for gifted children. The WCGTC is a diverse organization networking the globe with an active membership of educators, scholars, researchers, parents and others interested in the development and education of gifted and talented children of all ages. The World Council hosts a biennial World Conference at a major international city during late July or early August in odd-numbered years. This year's conference took place in Odense, Denmark a charming city and the home of Hans Christian Andersen, beloved author of fairy tales and stories.

Wendy Behrens has been a member



of the World Council for ten years, taking vacation to attend the previous five biannual conferences. She was one of 548 attendees from 58 countries who participated in the conference August 10-13th. Daily keynotes and break-out sessions featured speakers sharing research, promising practices, trends. Friendships were renewed, made and a great deal of laughter shared. Wendy presented two sessions at the conference, Using Effective Gifted Education Strategies to Effectively Reach All Learners and Using Case Studies to Make Differentiation Decisions. Elected delegates representing the United States through 2017 are Wendy Behrens, Laurie Croft, and Sylvia Rimm. The next conference will take place in Sydney, Australia in July 2017.



There are so many ways to be an active member of MEGT. You don't have to be a member on the state or local board to be an active member. An African Proverb says, "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." Please consider the following:

- Participate researching and writing position papers
- Write a book/product review for the newsletter
- Write an article or a 'program spotlight' for the newsletter
- Submit a proposal to present at the MEGT Conference
- Volunteer to assist in the planning or running the conference
- Recruit other educators and parents to join MEGT

If you are interested in anything mentioned above or you have another idea to be involved, please feel free to contact Lisa Worden, MEGT President, at [lisa.worden@isd181.org](mailto:lisa.worden@isd181.org) or any of the other board members.



# MEGT

**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING**  
**June 15, 2015 - 10:00 a.m.**  
**Bill Keilty's home – Wyoming, MN**

PRESENT: Gwen Briesemeister, Sue Feigal-Hitch, Lori Habben, Sue Karp, Bill Keilty, Tania Lyon, Mary Ann Rotondi, Jeanne Simmonds, Jo Tate, Lisa Worden

AGENDA ITEMS	NOTES
Secretary's Report	Motion to approve the minutes of the April board meeting: Jeanne Simmonds Second: Lori Habben <span style="float: right;">Motion approved</span>
Treasurer's Report	Motion to table 2015-16 budget discussion until the September meeting: Gwen Briesemeister Second: Mary Ann Rotondi
<b>Committee Reports</b>	
Website	Justin Hitch has everything loaded and up-to-date. He will look at the flow of the website during the summer. The 2016 conference dates and keynote speaker need to be added.
Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friend of the Gifted</li> <li>• Position Paper</li> <li>• Star of the North</li> <li>• Social Media</li> </ul>	<p><b>Friend of the Gifted</b>            No report at this time.</p> <p><b>Position Paper</b>            We will be updating two previous Position Papers – Young Gifted Learners, Ages 3-8 and Gifted Learners in Rural Setting, PK-12.</p> <p><b>Star of the North</b>            No report at this time. December 1, 2015 will be the deadline for applications this year.</p> <p><b>Social Media</b>            We can benefit from other gifted organization who “like” our page. This will help our exposure.</p>
Newsletter	No report at this time. September 1 is the deadline for the next newsletter.
Legislative	Schools got 2% increase. Gifted remains at \$13 per pupil.
Membership	No report at this time.
Conference	<p><b>Discussion of possible new locations:</b>            Because we have received feedback from some of our members asking about possibly holding our mid-winter conference somewhere closer to the Twin Cities, the board began checking into other possibilities. Gwen Briesemeister and Lori Habben have been researching possible Twin Cities locations. Findings are that almost all aspects of the conference would be higher priced. The overall conference cost would increase significantly.</p> <p>It was decided that this has been researched sufficiently and that we will have the conference remain at Cragun's. The board will not revisit a change in venue for at least the next five years. This decision will be reported in an article in the newsletter.</p> <p>Motion that we proceed with Cragun's as our location: Sue Karp            Second: Jo Tate <span style="float: right;">Motion approved</span></p> <p>Conversation regarding venue change will be reopened in five years.</p>

*continued on page 23*



MEGT Foundation	The Center for Talent Development will donate a scholarship for their summer program as a silent auction item for the Foundation.
EdMN	Forms have been submitted for our MEGT session. The MetroMEGT chapter will be covering the booth.
<b>Old Business</b>	
	<p><b>State Outreach Brainstorm Session</b> Discussion was held on how we can reach out to various parts of the state that have few representatives working with gifted.</p> <p><b>At-Large Board Member</b> MEGT is announcing a newly-created At-Large Member for the MEGT Board of Directors.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Outreach” At-Large Member</p> <p>Description: The Outreach At-Large Member will be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the mission and vision of MEGT to organizations and media sources</li> <li>• Advertising the MEGT State Conference and awards to various media outlets, including social media and professional publications</li> <li>• Reporting activities at quarterly MEGT board meetings and in the MEGT newsletter <i>The Voice</i>.</li> <li>• Attending and providing assistance at the MEGT State Conference</li> </ul> <p>Includes membership fee and mileage stipend to meetings.</p> <p>MEGT members or other interested parties should submit a paragraph via email to <a href="mailto:lisa.worden@isd181.org">Lisa Worden</a> (lisa.worden@isd181.org) by Sept.11, 2015.</p> <p>The paragraph must describe the applicant’s abilities to fulfill the responsibilities as outlined above and any other pertinent information.</p> <p>To determine best fit for the position, the MEGT board will review all applications. All applicants will be notified by October 1, 2015.</p> <p>Motion to approve the addition of an at-large member responsible for outreach and the outreach application description: Gwen Briesemeister. Second Sue Feigal-Hitch. <span style="float: right;">Motion approved</span></p> <p><b>MDE Advisory</b> Gwen Briesemeister will be the MEGT Board rep to the MDE Gifted Advisory.</p> <p><b>Hormel Institute</b> David Wolff shared input he had received regarding MEGT conference and Hormel conference that participants appreciate both formats.</p>
<b>New Business</b>	
<b>Future Meeting Dates</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September 19, 2015 at Old Chicago in St. Cloud</li> <li>• November 21, 2015 at Old Chicago in St. Cloud</li> </ul>
<b>Adjournment</b>	
	Meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.





# Understand the MN Multiple Measures Rating System

Corey Haugen, Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment  
Austin Public Schools, Austin, MN

Differentiation in today's educational setting is more important than ever. With the shift in Minnesota schools performance measurements moving from the traditional AYP Index calculation to the MN Multiple Measures Rating (MMR) system, it is critical to address the learning needs of all students regardless of proficiency levels. The MMR system is built around multiple measures and is focused on closing the achievement gap and promoting high growth for all students. This creates a different mindset from years past where the goal was to move students to proficiency in the AYP Indexing system.

With the MMR, schools are given an annual rating consisting of four different measurements: Proficiency, Student Growth, Achievement Gap Reduction and Graduation Rate (High Schools Only). While proficiency is still an important factor in measuring school success, it is now only a third of the overall calculation for non-high schools and a quarter for high schools. What has greater weight in the new MMR system is Growth and Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR). This has direct impact on all student populations. For example, in the old AYP Index system, high achieving and gifted students generally were in the Meets or Exceeds proficiency level meaning they would generate the 1.0 index points desired. This is still important for proficiency, but now growth from year to year has an equally important role in a school's performance rating. The Growth domain in the MMR measures the ability of schools to get students to meet or exceed predicted growth. The student's growth scores are based on a student's prior year assessment result and comparing their current year assessment result to their peers with the same

overall prior year scale score on the MCA assessment and using a growth z-score calculation to determine if that result is above or below predicted expectation. The Minnesota's growth z-score<sup>1</sup> is calculated as:

$$\text{Growth Z Score} = (\text{Student Score} - \text{Expectation}) \div \text{Standard Deviation}$$

This z-score calculation will generate a value between  $\pm 3$ , with a z-score = 0 meaning that the student scored the same result as the group's average score from one year to the next. This z-score provides you with details on how a particular student performed. If the z-score is a negative result, indicating the student did not exhibit the same amount of growth from prior year to current year and a positive z-score indicating the student exceeded in growth over peers from prior year to current year. Annually MDE publishes tables for determining expected scale scores from one year to the next in files named Determining Growth Target Ranges. By reviewing these tables, you can provide students with target goals for upcoming assessments. A school's Growth domain score is determined by averaging all the growth z-scores for all students to determine an overall school score, thus, if high achieving students do not exhibit growth from year to year, they can negatively impact a school's overall MMR score.

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/ESEAFlex/MMR/>

## Honoring Your Contributions!

In appreciation for the years of service, advocacy, and dedication to gifted education!

MEGT celebrates the retirements of  
**Dr. Diane Heacox**  
from St. Catherines University  
and  
**Dr. Stephen Schroeder-Davis**  
from Elk River Public Schools;  
we will be forever grateful for your  
insights, guidance, and support.

Image courtesy of Bing Images





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