



# Through a New Lens: Critical Literacy with Gifted Students

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First, I'm incredibly honored and privileged to be able to give a keynote address at the 2018 MEGT Annual Conference, being that I'm a long time Minnesotan and have advocated for gifted kids all over the country. I've been thinking a lot about how to introduce the talk that I'm giving at this year's conference. The talk is titled Promoting Critical Literacy with Social Justice Minded Gifted Students, which can be a complicated topic with the potential to touch on subjects that are sensitive to many, as well as the potential to leave more questions than it answers. One might even ask, why broach such a difficult subject. Perhaps I'll start there.

Critical literacy is defined as the examination of text for evidence of power and privilege that marginalizes certain groups and using that information to address the problems (adapted from Janks, 2013). In the 1970's, seminal work by Paulo Freire urged readers to go beyond the literal meaning of text to examine the author's purpose. Deeper understanding of the relationship between the text and the context, Freire argued, would prevent readers from being manipulated by the text in a manner in which they are

*continued on page 3*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE . . .

Gray Matters .....	2
5 Minute Professional Development: Creative Thinking Routines .....	5
The Importance of Ongoing Gifted Education from a Student Perspective .....	6
I Teach Gifted Students! What's Your Superpower?.....	7
Celebrating MEGT Member Accomplishments .....	8-9
NAGC Reflections .....	9
Product Review: 3 Act Math .....	10
Letter to your District Leadership.....	11
Legislative Update .....	12
Hamline University Credit .....	12
MEGT Mid-Winter Conference 2018 .....	13
7th Annual MEGT Foundation Silent Auction.....	13
MEGT Pre-Conference Sessions.....	14
MEGT Conference Schedule .....	15
MEGT Conference Keynote Speakers .....	16
MEGT Conference Tic-Tac-Toe .....	17
MEGT Board Member Roles & Responsibilities.....	18
News from the MN Department of Education .....	19-20
Honoring Betty Johnson.....	20
Be Prepared for The Backchannel.....	21
NAGC 65th Annual Convention 2018 .....	22
MEGT Board Members.....	23



# MATTERS

# GRAY

by

David Wolff  
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and substitute coverage so representatives from your district may attend.

I want to close by sharing a picture of unity. It is a beautiful picture of my students' art project in which each student was given one tile of a heart in a hand. Students colored their tile and I combined four tiles to create a picture of unity. Together we can achieve much!



The end of October was an especially special time of the school year at IJ Holton Intermediate School. We wore orange all week long and not because it was Halloween, but because it was Unity Week. The whole idea sparked hours of scrolling on Pinterest finding the right activities to help my students understand the meaning of unity and to practice showing kindness. I made the planning too difficult because as it turns out, the most impactful thing I did that week was read the book "The Hundred Dresses" by Eleanor Estes. Even though the book was copyrighted in 1944, the themes are as true today as they were then. My fifth-graders were on the edge of their seats wanting to know what happened next.

Unity goes beyond showing kindness and being 'nice' to others. Unity means supporting one another, especially in times when we can't support ourselves or cannot accomplish things on our own. Unity means holding hands; linking and connecting with others to accomplish the big tasks that lie ahead. Through our collaboration with leaders and members of MCGT [The Minnesota Council of the Gifted & Talented] and MDE [Minnesota Department of Education] we have accomplished a great deal. Our accomplishments include; our work together with NUMATS, the G/T Coordinators Workshops, the research as part of the federal Javits grants, and organizing the upcoming NAGC National Convention in Minnesota on November 15-18, 2018! This is a great time to be in the field of gifted education in Minnesota as there are opportunities to grow as a professional learner as well as opportunities to advocate for the needs of our gifted learners. I encourage you to begin planning for this unique opportunity now. Discuss with your district leadership about how you would set next year's budget for teachers' registrations

## MEGT Voice

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# Critical Literacy, *continued from cover*

unaware. Readers who seldom see people of color featured in the books they read, may be led to conclude that stories about white people provide more desirable reading than stories about non-whites. This conclusion is an example of how readers can be unwittingly manipulated if they are not taught to read critically. What makes critical literacy a challenging area of focus for those of us in gifted education is that it is related to one of the biggest problems that we have in this field -- the underrepresentation of gifted students from diverse populations. For this reason, educators in the field of gifted education need to turn their attention toward critical literacy.

The complication, then, is that becoming critically literate represents both what we say we do, as well as what we struggle to do. Gifted educators are familiar with skills they can use to develop the ability of their students to think critically, especially in relation to text. What we often fail to do, however, is focus these discussions around marginalization of groups of people and problematize the issues underlying this marginalization. Wikipedia suggests that problematizing could involve asking the following questions:

- Who is making this statement?
- For whom is he or she making it?
- Why is this statement being made here, now?
- Whom does this statement benefit?
- Whom does it harm?

(Questions from Wikipedia, 2017a)

Certainly these questions can become the focal point of discussions of text to help students increase their ability to critically analyze text in this way. It is also important to mention that our definition of text can be expanded here to include text in other forms such as film media and music. In addition to these questions, my keynote will address specific strategies that can you can use to address questions within the texts and content you teach.

## Problem Posing: Switching - A Strategy to Use

Since the conference is still over a month away at the time of this writing, I'd like to give you one strategy that you can begin to use with your students. This strategy is called Problem Posing: Switching (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). In this strategy, you would start by having your students read a narrative text. After the first read through, you would ask them to "switch" a major element of the text using one of the following choices: character's/s' gender, character's/s' race, the setting, character's/s' language, the theme, or an emotion. Doing this exercise can help students address the problematizing questions above in more meaningful ways. Let's try this strategy using a very simple example and a text with which everyone is familiar.

Story	Strategy	Questions to Ask	Thoughts/Conclusions
The story of Cinderella is about a girl who becomes orphaned and must live with her stepmother who then makes Cinderella do all the work and keeps her prisoner in her own home. Her problem is solved when a fairy godmother helps her get to the ball where she meets a prince who eventually comes to rescue her from her dire situation.	Let's apply the strategy of Problem Posing: Switching and use gender as our element to switch. Therefore, let's imagine that the main character is no longer a female, but a male character. Now, let's ask ourselves how the gender switch would affect our thoughts about this story.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If instead of being a female, the main character was a male, how would that change the story? Would the plot still be viable? Would the outcome of the story change?</li> <li>2. Once we switch the gender and the story is changed, can we think of any stories that are like this?</li> <li>3. From where did the original Cinderella tale originate? What was/is the purpose of a story like this?</li> </ol>	Our discussion of the questions posed here would likely include a bit of incredulity at the thought of a man being enslaved by his stepmother, or meeting a princess who will rescue him from his situation. I'm not sure whether stories like this exist - certainly I haven't been able to think of any (please let me know if you do). And if we think of the origins of this story, we would be taken back to 1697* in which the tale was written. While it wouldn't be hard for us to believe that women might have faced oppression in the 1600s which caused them to be subjugated to others, what is hard to believe is the fact that in over 300 years, it continues to be the <i>only</i> plausible plot line.

\* Wikipedia, 2017b



# Critical Literacy

*continued from page 3*

Certainly if interesting discussion can be generated from a simple text such as this one, the wonderful texts that you are studying in your classroom are likely to bring conversations that are equally rich and generative in nature. Indeed, I'm hoping that you'll be willing to try out this strategy and let us know how it went. If you have the chance to try Problem Posing: Switching, please record your experiences and we'll bring them into our discussion at the January conference (go to <http://bit.ly/2yFdh6B> to record your experiences).

## Using Knowledge to Move Toward Action

While the ability to critically evaluate text is a foundational aspect of critical literacy, the use of that knowledge to enact solutions is also important. As a field, we are also very good at encouraging students to work toward the solution of important problems. Let's examine the ways in which the problem solving aspect of critical literacy is already at the heart of gifted education. There is an old philosophy experiment which asks, "If a tree falls in the forest but no one hears it, does it really make a sound?". I often vary the experiment and ask, "If a gifted child has gifts or talents but never really uses them in a significant way, is the child really gifted?". It begs the question of whether manifestation of gifts and talents is a necessary component of being gifted. Although I believe that giftedness does require the manifestation of talent, others might argue that it's not a requirement, or that it's dependent on the degree of manifestation. Regardless, we can probably agree that providing students with opportunities to actualize their giftedness can yield multiple benefits.

In the best gifted education, teachers help students see themselves as problem finders and solvers. In these classrooms, teachers realize that rather than ingesting packaged curricula, students should be taught to seek answers to real world problems. Indeed solving real world problems has been a central facet of Renzulli's Schoolwide Enrichment Model in which students focus on solving a problem of interest to them (Renzulli & Reis, 1985; 1997; 2014). Therefore, the topic of critical literacy is important to the field of gifted education because the critical examination of problems is the type of work that informs our practice. We want students to become problem solvers.

## Teaching Students How to Recognize a Problem

It would be naive for us to assume that our students understand how to be problem finders without having been taught. Certainly we're better at teaching students to solve problems than to find them (or solve problems with right answers, that is). Teaching students to identify problems, however, can help them understand that they are also responsible for solving problems. Renzulli (1982) gives four parameters to use when determining whether something is a "real" problem.

(1) The problem has a personal frame of reference and interests the student.

- (2) There is no solution which currently exists for the problem.
- (3) The problem must present an authentic tribulation for a person or group.
- (4) A solution of the problem should result in a change or contribution to the sciences, the arts, or humanities.

Students can be taught to compare a proposed problem to these characteristics. Renzulli goes on to stipulate that teachers wishing to teach students how to be problem solvers should not provide pre-determined pathways for solutions. Note that many of the issues that we might explore using a lens of critical literacy would meet the criteria in that they typically do not have solutions as yet, but that solutions could contribute to humanities, or the human condition more generally.

One of the things I've been increasingly aware of lately is my own willingness to critically examine these topics and jump into these tough conversations. These areas include issues of power and privilege which surround race, gender and socioeconomic status. However, if we are averse to jumping in to do the hard work of examining marginalization of people in our society, then our students will be ill-prepared to do so and we will leave important problems in our society unsolved. It is time for our field as a whole to take up the mantle of responsibility of teaching students to address and solve these real world problems.

As explained in the opening paragraph, I've written this article because I believe that the ideas discussed here are going to require a lot of head-space and I wanted to provide you with a bit of time to start thinking before just laying it on you in January. I would encourage you to try out the Problem Posing: Switching strategy and let us know how it goes. I'm looking forward to talking with all of you about these ideas and the specific practices that can be used to shape the thinking around our practice.

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# Help Yourself, and a Student

## Creative Thinking Routines

The National Association of Gifted Children specifically references the use of creative thinking strategies as a way to meet the needs of students who are gifted and talented. It can often seem that there isn't enough time to teach creativity, but building in a few simple routines can make a big difference for your learners.

### Creativity Routines

- **Reflect Creatively-** Ask students to create representations of their learning. Encourage a wide variety of reflections and display these in the classrooms. Challenge students to come up with ways to represent their learning that are new and innovative.
- **Examine Content From a Novel Lens-** How would this topic be viewed from a different lens? What lenses can we brainstorm? How would a social scientist view this historical event? How would a character from the last novel I read view my new protagonist?
- **Infuse Creativity into Math** When does  $12 + 12 = 2$ ? How about when you add one dozen to another dozen? Can you think of a time when  $7 + 7 + 7 = 3$ ? How about if we are talking about days and weeks? What other examples can you and your students think of? Try beginning math with a prompt like this each day.

1

#### MODEL CREATIVITY

Allow your students to see you push yourself to think creatively

2

#### DON'T PLAN IT ALL

What can your students come up with for demonstrating their learning?

3

#### CREATIVITY AND GROWTH MINDSET

Creativity is for everyone! Don't say "I'm just not creative!"

CREATIVITY IS INTELLIGENCE HAVING FUN  
-ALBERT EINSTEIN

#### LOOKING FOR MORE?

Visit [visiblethinking.org](http://visiblethinking.org) for a wide variety of thinking routines

VISIBLE THINKING



specifically designed to foster creativity

*Byrdseed*



# The Importance of Ongoing Gifted Education from a Student Perspective

By Austin Kellogg

National-Merit Semi-Finalist and a senior at Shakopee Senior High School

My school system has really single-handedly guided me toward becoming the person I am today. As a child, I preferred reading to playing sports, and this love of learning transferred into elementary school. I had many wonderful elementary teachers. However, my elementary High Potential reading and math teacher helped me pursue my passions and challenge me as a learner, along with similarly minded students. These teachers saw my potential, encouraged, and challenged me. I was a part of elementary High Potential Programming where I could learn with similar-ability students and our excitement for learning was truly fostered there.

As I moved to the junior high there was no longer HP teachers, just honors or accelerated classes. I was glad for those, but it was an adjustment. Thankfully I did have a handful of teachers who I connected with and helped me navigate these school years. A few teachers really stood out. My 6th grade math teacher, 7th grade science teacher, and my 7th/8th grade social studies teacher all specifically helped and mentored me in some way, when they were not obligated to. These teachers all saw I was a “good” student, but knew I could do more, and pushed me to become a “great” student. All three saw my unyielding desire to learn more and gave me extra opportunities in their classrooms to grow and flourish, like extra projects and individualized attention.

This is the defining characteristic of what makes Shakopee Schools special to me. Although Shakopee is a relatively small community, these teachers really treat students as individuals, reach out to teach all of us, and truly want to help us succeed and learn. Some of my teachers at my high school will spend their weekends in meetings with students over papers or stay after school until 6 to help students prepare for the next day’s test. I would not be as interested in learning and education without guidance from all of my teachers.

Although there are amazing teachers at the junior and senior high, I think we need to continue to look as a

larger educational system at what we do for our bright students at a secondary level. After elementary school High Potential Programming support really drops off for academically gifted students. I even wrote a letter to the school administration about my concerns. Unfortunately, I do not think my situation is unique, and I think many other bright students have difficulty transitioning from elementary gifted programming or talent development programming to the secondary model of honors/accelerated/AP classes.

I think one of the best ways that schools could support me and other students is through more support in planning for and applying for colleges. Additionally, gifted students have not only unique academic needs but also need ongoing social-emotional support. It is easy for people to look at bright students and think “oh, it’s easy, they’re smart, they can get in to whatever college they want.” Even though this may seem true on the surface, the reality is that having many opportunities of higher level classes and more, creates new overwhelming burdens that would not exist otherwise for everyone else. I don’t feel like I have anywhere at all in the entire school to go to for help.

For our brightest students there is often specific, targeted HP or GT services at the elementary level. However, this dedicated support really drops off at a time students need it most. All in all, I am watching schools, in general, follow a troubling trend of ignoring our school’s best performing students leading into the years of the school where the influence and success of those very same students will make or break a school’s system. While I had amazing support in my younger years, I am concerned that this early encouragement to reach further is not directly supported in later academic years. If school systems as a whole do not thoughtfully address this, then the hopes and dreams of all the potential students will not become a reality.



# I Teach Gifted Students!

## WHAT'S YOUR SUPERPOWER?



### Jodie Kragness- Differentiation Specialist, Kennedy Community School

Jodie Kragness is an invaluable resources to both staff and students at her school. Jodie consistently goes above and beyond to ensure that students are challenged and are attaining a year's worth of growth.

Jodie was nominated by her district coordinator, Laura Steabner. Laura says,

"Jodie's commitment to students, willingness to go above and beyond and the way she mentors teachers new to our team are just a few of the things that make Jodie an exceptional professional, but don't take my word for it, here's what her students have to say!"

"Mrs. Kragness is a fun-filled teacher. When you walk into her classroom she always greets you and makes you feel good. She is always stretching your learning but still making it fun. Mrs. Kragness is a kind, caring teacher. She cares about your needs and helps you get the learning that is best for you. She encourages you to try your best and speak up! Mrs. Kragness is a truly wonderful teacher!"

-Taryn M.

"Mrs. Kragness is really nice. Even when people get answers wrong, she encourages us to keep trying and work with partners to share how we got our answers. She is always giving hard questions to challenge us. It always makes us think outside the box."

-Nolan F

"Mrs. Kragness can make hard things become fun. She gives us opportunities to share our thinking."

-Olivia C

"She challenges your brain to think harder."

-Donovan F.

### Do you have a teacher you think should be featured in "I Teach Gifted Students, What's Your Superpower?"

Follow these steps-

1. Send an email to one of the newsletter editors briefly describing what makes this teacher exceptional.
2. Collect 3-5 student quotes that highlight what students think is great about this teacher. Include these quotes in your email.
3. Watch to see if your nominee is featured in an upcoming issue of The Voice





# Celebrating MEGT Member Accomplishments!

Compiled by Erin Heilman

This is truly a wonderful group of people to celebrate—and if you think of others, please do let us know. We love to celebrate all we accomplish for gifted education!

## Happy Anniversary



Congratulations to Judy Galbraith and the Free Spirit Publishing Company who are celebrating 35 years of business!

photo credit Free Spirit website: <https://www.freespirit.com/authors/judy-galbraith/>

I love this following quote of Judy's from the Free Spirit website

*"Bookstores have shelves filled with self-help books for adults. But why should kids have to wait until they're grown to find the help they need? We offer them books that are current and solution-focused so they can identify their needs and achieve their goals."*  
—Judy Galbraith, founder and president of Free Spirit Publishing

A former classroom teacher and gifted-education specialist, Free Spirit founder Judy Galbraith remembers looking in vain for kid-friendly information that addressed the real-life issues her students faced. In 1983, she made a decision to begin filling that void, starting her own company to offer accessible, contemporary books to help young people develop socially, emotionally, and intellectually. More than three decades later, Free Spirit Publishing continues to be the leader in social-emotional learning, building its list from just a few titles to over 300 award-winning books and products, with new titles being published every year.

These days, Free Spirit has millions of books in circulation around the world. Over 140 Free Spirit titles have been translated into 30 languages including Croatian, Japanese, and Icelandic. Our books have received recognition from esteemed institutions including the American Library Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, YALSA (Young Adult Library Society of America), National Mental Health Association, Mensa Association, Autism National Committee, Chicago Public Library, Girl Scouts of the USA, and many others. Free Spirit's expert authors have been critically hailed on broadcast outlets including CNN, NPR, and the BBC, and have been written about in every publication from *Education Week* and *School Library Journal* to *USA Today* and *The Washington Post*.

## New Positions/Publications



Congratulations to Teresa R. Manzella who has been elected chair elect of NAGC GLBTQ Network. She is co-author of the NAGC Special Series publication, "Needs and approaches for educators and parents of gifted gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students," and the LGBTQ section of the new Diversity and Equity Online Toolbox, both of which were released

at the 2017 NAGC convention. Teresa has also written for the 2e: Twice Exceptional Newsletter. For the past 14 years, served as the Gifted Youth Coordinator for Minnesota Mensa, and is a of the American Mensa National Gifted Youth Committee. Teresa blogs occasionally and has a website: [www.gsquaredyouthadvocate.com](http://www.gsquaredyouthadvocate.com)

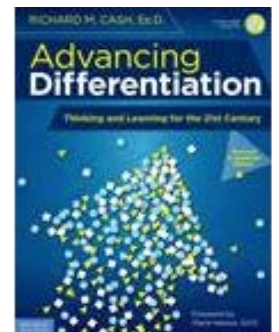
## Book Awards/Recognition



Congratulations to Richard Cash, Ed.D who recently was awarded a prestigious book award from the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented: 2017 Educator Award Recipient for ***Advancing Differentiation: Thinking and Learning for the 21st Century (Revised & Updated Edition)***

photo credit <http://www.nrich.consulting/about.html>

Dr. Cash's book, *Advancing Differentiation*, will lead educators through the process of creating a thriving, student-centered, 21st-century classroom. Since *Advancing Differentiation* initial publication, the book's materials have undergone rigorous testing and refinement in classrooms all over the world to deliver the best and most effective differentiation strategies.



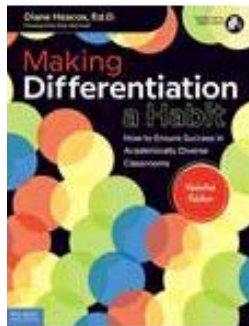




In other news, Diane Heacox, Ed.D. has just released an updated version of Making Differentiation a Habit.

photo credit : <http://dianeheacox.com/>

In Dr. Heacox's updated edition of her guide to daily differentiated instruction,



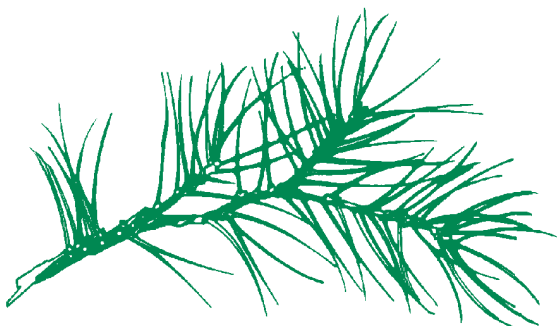
she outlines the critical elements for success in today's classrooms. She gives educators evidence-based differentiation strategies and user-friendly tools to optimize teaching, learning, and assessment for all students. New features include an expanded section on grading, information on connections between personalized learning and differentiation, integration of strategies with Tier I instructional interventions, scaffolding strategies, revised planning templates, and updated resources, which include digital tools and apps for assessment. Digital content includes customizable forms from the book.

(Information credit on both books to Free Spirit Publishing.)

### General Celebrations:

Congratulations to Wendy Behrens being named to the Editorial Advisory Board for *Gifted Child Today*!

Doug Paulson was named acting director of Academic Standards at the Minnesota Department of Education.



# NAGC Reflections

David Wolff, 5th Grade Teacher,  
IJ Holton Intermediate School, Austin, MN

This year has been a whirlwind of excitement for me as I returned back to the classroom; the place that initially sparked my passion for teaching so many years ago. As a teacher, I have the opportunity to put the research into practice and to use the tools and strategies that I've learned over the past six years as a coordinator and principal. Learning never stops, so when I had the opportunity to represent MEGT at the NAGC National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina I jumped at the opportunity!

Breakout sessions to the keynotes, the underlying theme I heard was, 'focus on teaching THINKING rather than teaching CONTENT!' I saw this in sessions about solving math problems in novel ways, integrating art dialogue into core areas, tapping into a child's sense of wonder, and using social justice through literature. Thinking was the focus in sessions about implementing Socratic Seminars and asking the right questions to help learners with perfectionistic tendencies. As teachers, our role to facilitate discussions starts with asking questions that make our students think.

Representing MEGT included many other tasks beyond attending sessions and keynotes. Much time was spent with NAGC, MCGT, MEGT, and MDE representatives in discussing and planning for the upcoming 2018 NAGC Convention in Minneapolis, MN. From the block party to the awards, to the display tables and the sponsors; every aspect is being discussed to make the 2018 convention the best in NAGC's history. From these meetings, Tania Lyon, MEGT President-Elect, volunteered to 'lead the charge' as MEGT's Co-Chair for the convention in Minnesota! Tania's leadership, eye for detail, and excellent communication skills will be key in working with MCGT, MDE, and NAGC throughout the planning process.

In closing, I wanted to share my highlight of the convention; it was meeting another of my Edu-Heros, Dottie Merrick! Dottie is the co-author of the widely used Primary Educational Thinking Strategies, or PETS, books! I shared with



her how her books gave me and my team in Austin the tools to support so many of our Young Scholars achieve at high levels with their critical and creative thinking skills as well as in their core content classes. I shared with her how schools across Minnesota are using PETS to support their Young Scholars and early gifted learners - the ripples go to all four borders. 'Focus on teaching the THINKING rather than teaching the CONTENT!' Kudos Dottie and thank you!



# Product Review: 3 Act Math

By Laura Steabner

Imagine completing a math lesson and having your classroom erupt into cheers. Have you had that feeling when you are teaching a lesson so engaging you can literally feel your students hanging on to every detail? If you'd love to be inundated with cheers, or are looking for a new way to really hook your students into deep mathematical problem solving, check out Dan Meyer's website, 3 Act Math at [whenmathhappens.com/3-act-math/](http://whenmathhappens.com/3-act-math/)

3 Act Math is a format that recognizes the power of great storytelling as a hook for students. Meyer creates mathematical journeys, or Act Ones, that begin with compelling, visceral and intriguing images. These images cannot be viewed without questions coming to mind. Meyer's carefully selected images ignite the fire of curiosity.

After students have generated questions, teachers choose a focus question and ask students to identify what information they need to solve the problem. This tactic honors the fact that students often have a plan or can see a solution without direct instruction from the teacher. In 3 Act Math, the teacher offers the information students need, but does not articulate the pathway to the solution. Students collaborate with the information they have asked for to create their own path to the answer. This process is what Meyer defines as "Act 2".

Meyer then brilliantly adds an extension in Act 3. Students who have manipulated the given information and have arrived at a solution are challenged to extend their mathematical learning in a related, but more complex way. Not all students access all three acts, but the challenge is there, ready for the students.

Meyer's free website, has everything a teacher needs to incorporate 3 Act Math into the classroom. Meyer has pulled together images and videos that address mathematical concepts from grade three to calculus as well as prompts that guide the class through each act. The site also includes blog posts that elaborate on the format, as well as videos modeling the 3 Act Math process. I have found it to be unique, user friendly and explanatory. I highly recommend it for any

teacher who is trying to incorporate more student led learning, student talk or high level thinking into their math instruction.

Meyer includes these words on one of his blog posts, which ring true to me. He says,

*"Many math teachers take act two as their job description. Hit the board, offer students three worked examples and twenty practice problems. As the ALEKS algorithm gets better and Bill Gates throws more gold bricks at Sal Khan and more people flip their classrooms, though, it's clear to me that the second act isn't*

*our job anymore. Not the biggest part of it, anyway. You are only one of many people your students can access as they look for resources and tools. Going forward, the value you bring to your math classroom increasingly will be tied up in the first and third acts of mathematical storytelling, your ability to motivate the second act and then pay off on that hard work."*

So, check out 3 Act Math and amp up your mathematical storytelling!





## *Letter to your District Leadership:*

MEGT has prepared the following letter for your use in generating support from your district leadership to attend the MEGT Mid-Winter Conference. Feel free to customize the letter to help “make the case” for your attendance. For this document formatted in WORD, go to [www.mnegt.org](http://www.mnegt.org) and look under ‘Events, MEGT Conference 2018.’

Dear [District Leader's name],

At the annual MEGT Conference on Guiding Gifted Learners to Navigate the World, K-12 educators will gather to enhance their professional skills, knowledge, and careers. I would like to attend this event, scheduled January 28-30, 2018, as this is an opportunity for our school to invest in all of our students' academic growth and success.

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

- Excellence Gaps in Education
- Technology Integration
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Skills – Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, and Critical Thinking
- Personalized Learning environments
- Student Motivation and engagement
- Grading and Assessment
- Classroom Management
- Growth for Advanced Learners
- Student Focused Differentiation
- Critical Thinking & Creative Thinking
- Inquiry – Problem Based Learning – Genius Hour
- Cultural, Linguistic, and Economically Diverse learners
- Twice-Exceptional Learners
- Meeting Academic and Affective Learning Needs

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

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

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

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

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

More information about the conference is on the MEGT's website at [www.mnegt.org](http://www.mnegt.org).

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Sincerely,

[Your name]



# LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

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

## GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS PROGRAMS

Minnesota Statutes, section [120B.15 GIFTED and TALENTED STUDENTS PROGRAMS](#) (a) and (b), permit school districts to identify students who are gifted and talented, locally develop and evaluate programs addressing instructional and affective needs, provide staff development to ensure that they have access to challenging educational programs. The legislation also provides guidance for districts to adopt procedures for assessing and identifying students.

Section (b) requires schools to adopt guidelines for assessing and identifying students for participation in gifted. The guidelines must be included in district and charter school World's Best Workforce Plans ([120B.11 Sub 2.](#))

Section (c) directs school districts and charter schools to adopt procedures for the academic acceleration of gifted and talented students that include an assessment of students' readiness and motivation for acceleration and a match between the curriculum and the students' academic needs. The procedures must be included in district and charter school World's Best Workforce Plans (120B.11 Sub 2.)

Section (d) requires schools to adopt procedures consistent with section [124D.02](#) subdivision 1, for early admission to kindergarten or first grade of gifted and talented learners. The procedures must be included in district and charter school World's Best Workforce Plans (120B.11 Sub 2.)

## GIFTED AND TALENTED REVENUE

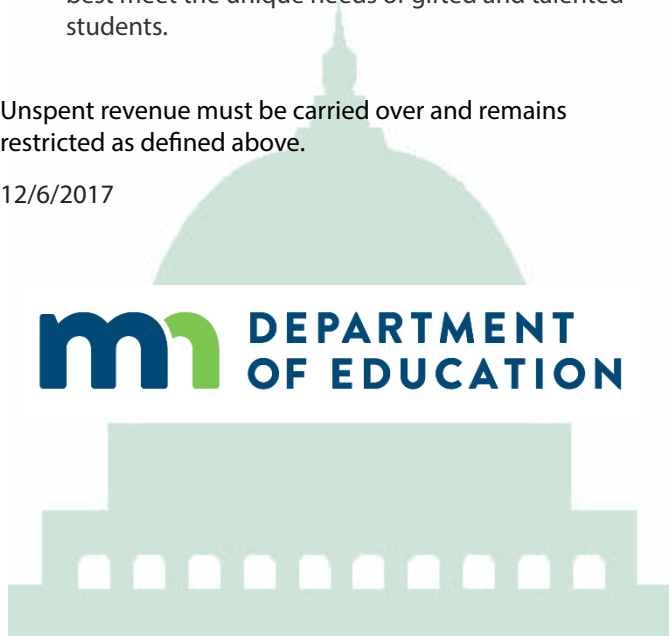
GENERAL EDUCATION REVENUE [126C.10 Subd. 2b.](#) Gifted and talented revenue:

Provides school districts and charter schools with \$13 times a district's adjusted pupil units to be used to:

1. Identify gifted and talented students.
2. Provide education programs for gifted and talented students.
3. Provide staff development to prepare teachers to best meet the unique needs of gifted and talented students.

Unspent revenue must be carried over and remains restricted as defined above.

12/6/2017



## Hamline University Credit

### *Are you in need of college credit?*

By attending the MEGT Winter Conference, you can learn 2 college credits toward your degree, lane change, or relicensure. Associated fees are separate from the conference registration costs.

**The Course:** EDUC 6998 Guiding Gifted Learners to Navigate the World

2 semester graduate credits

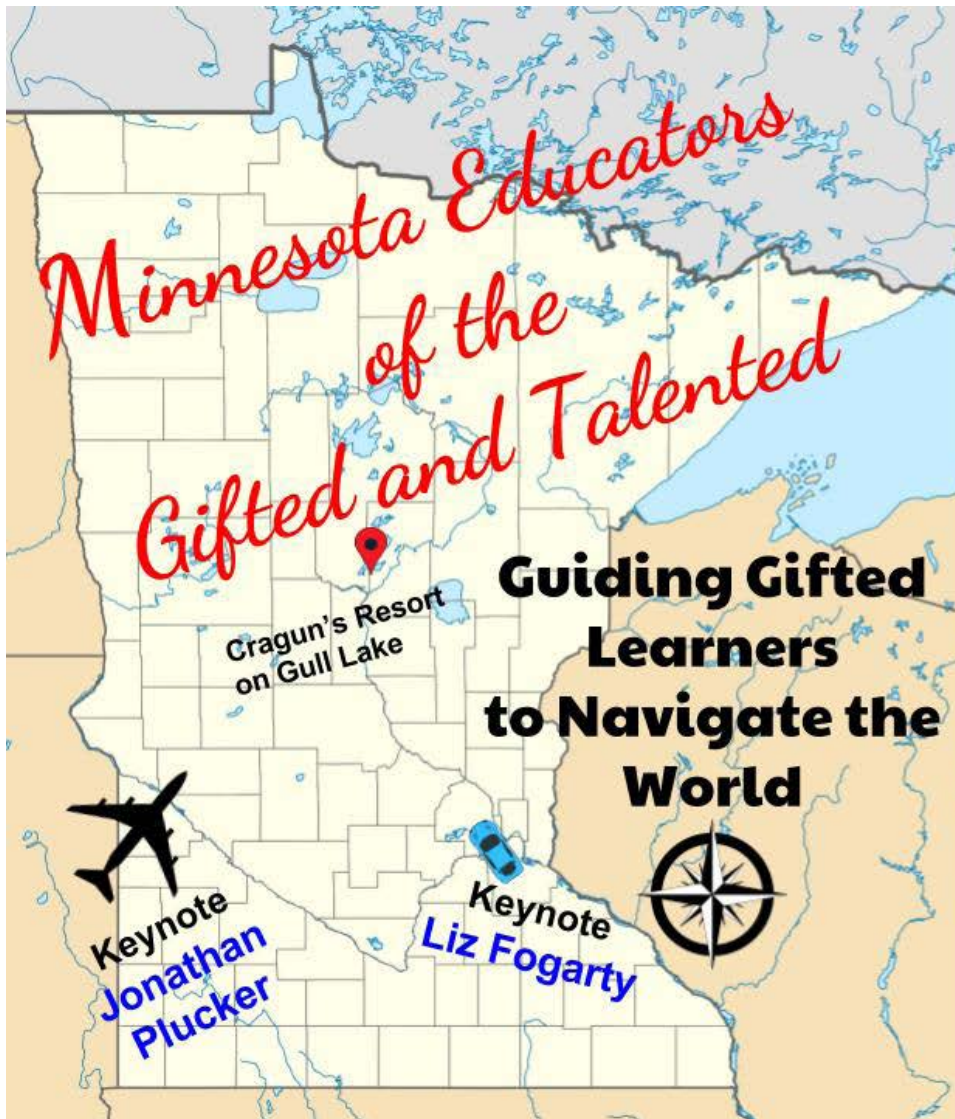
**Task:** Maintain a reflective journal throughout the conference and develop a lesson plan, following a template and employing new learners from sessions attended.

**Cost:** \$395

**Instructor:** Bill Keilty

All documents for the course, including registration, will be available on line. The documents can be completed during the conference.

Contact Bill Keilty at [microtubel@me.com](mailto:microtubel@me.com) for inquiries, questions, and further information.



Save the Date  
January 28-30  
2018

Minnesota Educators of the  
Gifted and Talented  
Mid-Winter Conference

**Cragun's**  
RESORT ON GULL LAKE



[www.mnegt.org](http://www.mnegt.org)  
[@MEGT\\_MNGifted](https://twitter.com/MEGT_MNGifted)  
[#MNGifted](https://twitter.com/MEGT_MNGifted)

## 7<sup>th</sup> Annual MEGT Foundation Silent Auction

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

Held during the MEGT Mid-Winter Conference on January 28-30, 2018 the silent auction is a fundraising event intended to raise money for the MEGT Foundation which in turn offers scholarships to teachers to support opportunities for gifted and talented students.

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

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

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

Questions regarding the silent auction can be addressed to Sue Karp at: [susankarp@rocketmail.com](mailto:suskarp@rocketmail.com)



# Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented

## Guiding Gifted Learners to Navigate the World

**Pre-Conference Sessions**  
**Two Options Available!**



### Gifted 101: Who, What, How, and Why

Is this your first MEGT conference? Are you new to gifted education? This is the session for you. Let's make your conference experience great by giving you some valuable background information about gifted learners. You will gain knowledge which will guide you as you choose breakout sessions for deeper learning as the conference progresses. Even if you have experience in gifted education, come to this session and lend your voice to the conversation.



This session will be an overview on several large topics:

- Who are the gifted, how do we find them, and why do they need support?
- What's all the fuss about differentiation and rigor? Don't all students need this?
- What are the research based, best practices in program services?

### Robotics: Standards Based Learning Tools

Would your students be motivated by robotics? Have you been intimidated to try robotics?

This session will provide the hands-on learning experience you need!

- Learn how to incorporate robotics into what you are already doing.
- Walk away with standards-aligned activities to enrich student learning.
- Become familiar with a variety of robots and technology tools.
- Explore resources for funding and support.





## **Conference Schedule**

### **Guiding Gifted Learners to Navigate the World**

January 28-30, 2018

#### **Sunday – January 28**

1:00-3:30	Preconference Session – Gifted 101 or Robotics: Standards Based Learning Tools
3:30-5:00	Conference and Room Registration Hospitality and Silent Auction- Everyone is welcome!
5:00-6:00	Dinner
6:15-6:45	Welcome and Awards Program
6:45-8:15	Keynote: Dr. Jonathan Plucker Addressing Excellence Gaps: Promoting High Achievement in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century
8:15-9:00	Silent Auction and Social
8:30-9:00	Discussion Session with Dr. Jonathan Plucker Research on Gifted Students and its Implication for Teaching and Policy

#### **Monday – January 29**

7:00-8:00	Breakfast
8:00-8:30	MEGT Morning Greeting Legislative Update MDE Update
8:30-10:00	Keynote: Jonathan Plucker Creativity: What it is, What it isn't, and How to Help Children Have More of it
10:00-10:30	Morning Break and Vendors
10:30-11:30	Breakout Session A
11:30-12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:30	Breakout Session B
1:45-2:45	Breakout Session C
2:45-3:15	Afternoon Break and Vendors
3:15-4:45	Keynote: Dr. Liz Fogarty Promoting Critical Literacy with Social Justice Minded Gifted Students
4:45-5:30	Silent Auction Announcements
5:30-6:30	Wine Social and Vendors
6:30-7:45	Dinner
8:00	Regional Gatherings

#### **Tuesday – January 31**

7:00-8:00	Continental Breakfast – Sports Centre
8:00-9:30	Keynote: Dr. Liz Fogarty– Sports Centre But Are We Really Challenging Our Talented Readers?
9:30-9:45	Break/Check-out
9:45-10:45	Session D
10:45-11:45	Brunch- Dining Room
11:30-11:45	Closing Ceremony-Drawings –Dining Room



# Keynote Speakers

## Liz Fogarty



### **Monday Afternoon Keynote** ***Promoting Critical Literacy with Social Justice Minded Gifted Students***

Students often blindly accept the messages in digital and print media. Developing critical literacy allows gifted students, often sensitive to issues of social justice, to examine picture books, novels, and digital media with a critical eye to combat

social injustice from positions of knowledge rather than intuition. Gain an understanding of how critical literacy can be used as a tool to examine concepts of race, gender, power, and their positioning within media.

### **Tuesday Morning Keynote**

#### ***But Are We Really Challenging Our Talented Readers?***

As Differentiation enjoys 10 minutes of fame as an educational buzz word, gifted educators must be careful not to assume that its use means the needs of talented readers are “covered.” One question to ask ourselves is how do we know when our talented readers are encountering challenge and growing in their English/ language arts skills? This session will examine high leverage practices for promoting rigor for talented readers. Though the session will focus on topics in literacy, the examination of ‘what makes rigor’ will be relevant to teachers in all content areas.

### **Breakout Session**

#### ***Introduction to the Schoolwide Enrichment Model – Reading (SEM-R)***

The Schoolwide Enrichment Model – Reading is a reading workshop model which integrates the principles of Renzulli’s Enrichment Triad model to extend choice and challenge to readers of varying abilities. Of particular focus in this model, however, are strategies designed to help talented readers grow. This training will provide an overview of the benefits of the model and lead participants through the three Phases of the model including: Phase 1 – Hooking kids on books, Phase 2 – Conferencing to promote comprehension, and Phase 3 – Extending interest through choice. Participants will also learn how the SEM-R can be integrated within existing reading programs. This session, or previous training in the SEM-R, is a pre-requisite for the Advanced Training in the SEM-R session.

### **Breakout Session**

#### ***Advanced Training in the Schoolwide Enrichment Model – Reading***

Designed for practitioners currently implementing the SEM-R, or those who’ve attended the Introduction to SEMR session, this training will take participants into a deeper understanding of the

model and associated pedagogies. The session will cover three topics in depth, including one for each of the three phases. We’ll explore strategies for finding diverse and adequately challenging books for Phase 1 Book Hooks. Next, we’ll examine strategies for making the most effective use of Phase 2 conference time to dive deep in just five minutes. Finally, we’ll learn how to help students move toward independence and long term problem-solving during Phase 3. Participants will leave the session with strategies and resources to deepen their practice in the SEM-R. Previous training in the SEM-R is a pre-requisite for this Advanced Training in the SEM-R session.

## Jonathan Plucker



### **Sunday Evening Keynote** ***Addressing Excellence Gaps: Promoting High Achievement in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

The economy and culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has a tremendous need for talent. Whether one works in manufacturing, government, education, or the service industry, there is always a shortage of talented people. A major cause of this shortage is the excellence gap – the achievement gap at the high end of student learning. Evidence suggests excellence gaps are growing, yet research has also identified possible strategies for reversing this trend. In this session, we will briefly review recent research on the excellence gaps, followed by a detailed discussion of potential solutions.

### **Sunday Evening Discussion**

#### ***Research on Gifted Students and its Implication for Teaching and Policy***

### **Monday Morning Keynote**

#### ***Creativity: What it is, What it isn’t, and How to Help Children Have More of it***

Creativity is considered to be a highly valued 21<sup>st</sup> century skill, but what do we know about how to foster it in children? How can we even define it? We will explore these and other questions through a series of vignettes that illustrate and model key creativity-producing instructional strategies.

### **Monday Breakout Session:**

#### ***Creativity Through the Magic of Constraints***

Constraints are often viewed as the enemy of creativity, but research suggests that constraints may be helpful to the creative process. Using a hands-on activity, we will explore the relationship between constraints and creativity and discuss specific ways to use these principles when working with students.





# MEGT Mid-Winter Conference

# TIC-TAC-TOE

## Game

### Playing is Easy!

Print this card and bring it with you to the conference! Complete three boxes in a row and earn a chance to win a basket drawing on Tuesday morning; the more 3-in-a-row the more chances to win!

To enter your card in the drawing, give it to David Wolff, MEGT President, or Tania Lyon, MEGT President-Elect before the keynote on Tuesday morning.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

<p>Timely Feedback is Needed! Complete conference evaluations</p>	<p>Post picture on Facebook or Twitter of Jonathan Plucker's Keynote with #mngifted</p>	<p>Meet your Leadership! Meet one of your regional representative on the MEGT State Board of Directors</p>
<p>Have some Monday night fun - Stop by the Bear Trap Lounge for Karaoke</p>	<p>Post a selfie or groupie on Facebook AND tag MEGT; remember to include #mngifted</p>	<p>Connect with a new colleague; get a business card or connect on social media with someone new</p>
<p>Post picture on Facebook or Twitter of Liz Fogerty's Keynote with #mngifted</p>	<p>Browse and Buy! Greet and meet two of the pool side vendors</p>	<p>Everyone belongs at MEGT! Sit with someone out of your district/region at a meal</p>



***Mission Statement:***

*Promoting and supporting excellence in gifted and talented education*

Due to the restructuring and consolidation of the regions, we currently have three positions open on the State Board of Directors; one open position in Mid-Minnesota Region and two open positions in the Metro Region. If you are interested in fulfilling the roles and responsibilities [as outlined below] of a Board Member, please contact your current regional representatives with your 1) contact information and 2) a written piece describing how your contributions have and will support gifted and talented learners in Minnesota.

**Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented  
Board Member Roles & Responsibilities**

**Requirements**

- Current member of MEGT
- Live and/or work in the region
- Current (or formerly) licensed teacher
- District support (preferred)

**Responsibilities**

- Promote the mission and vision of MEGT
- Strongly advocate for gifted students and education
- Regularly attend MEGT State Board meetings
  - There are typically five board meetings per year
  - One meeting occurs during the MEGT State (Winter) Conference
  - Most meetings take place in St. Cloud
  - The location of the summer board meeting occasionally differs
  - Additional board meetings may be scheduled when circumstances so require
- Attend and provide assistance at the MEGT State Conference
- Periodically support Education Minnesota Conference
- Assume assignment of a role/task (examples include Friend of the Gifted Award & Conference Committee)
- Occasionally contribute to the MEGT Newsletter, *The Voice*
- Work with other regional representatives to communicate State Board information in your region
- Serve as a contact person for others in your region



News from the



DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES SPONSORED BY THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### **Envisioning All Students with High Ability to Reach Their Potential: The Scholar Identity Model in Action Workshop: March 26, 2018 at MDE**

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is pleased to announce Dr. Gilman W. Whiting of Vanderbilt University will present a workshop on March 28<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Whiting's areas of research include: educational disparity; special and gifted education; race, sports, and American culture; welfare reform and fatherhood initiatives. During 2006, Dr. Whiting created the Scholar Identity Model™, a psycho-social model designed for assisting communities in developing methods to combat academic apathy. Dr. Whiting is a dynamic speaker and the founding chair of the Achievement Gap Institute for the George W. Peabody College of Education at Vanderbilt. Attendees will learn about research, theory and practice relative to underachieving, high-ability students, the Scholar Identity Model™ and will gain a model for engaging students who appear to lack motivation. Registration is required. A link to workshop registration will be available from the MDE website in January.

### **Full-Time Gifted Programs Network January 11 & March 15, 2018 at MDE**

The Full-Time Gifted Programs Network focuses on the unique needs of schools that have full-time programs for the gifted or are exploring the possibility of creating such programs. Full-time programs for the gifted include school within a school models and gifted magnet schools. Each network meeting includes an invited guest speaker and the opportunity for leaders to discuss their roles and best practices on a variety of topics. There is no charge to attend, but lunch is on your own. Registration is not required and all are welcome to attend. The network will meet 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at MDE.

### **Hormel Foundation Gifted and Talented Symposium: JUNE 19-21, 2018 Austin, MN**

Join us for the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Hormel Symposium! This new and improved event features a Tuesday-Thursday format, an added keynote presentation, as well as new and returning staff. Keynote presenters for this year's symposium are: Jennifer Stancil, President and CEO, Glazer Children's Museum; Steven C Smith, EPDC Education Specialist at NASA Johnson Space Center; Patti Drapeau, Maine Department of Education and Educational Consultant for the University of Southern Maine; and Professor Duchess Harris, JD, PhD, Chair of American Studies at Macalester College. Visit the symposium website at [www.gtsymposium.org](http://www.gtsymposium.org) for information about previous events. The site will be updated and available for registration on or before February 1<sup>st</sup>.



### **Gifted and Talented Advisory Council**

The Gifted and Talented Advisory Council comprises representatives of stakeholder groups with interest and expertise in gifted education. The council provides valuable guidance and feedback to the department on gifted education issues. The department thanks outgoing council members Kris Happe, John Foty and Katie Rotvold for their service to the state. Many outstanding educators applied for the open council positions, making the replacement decisions difficult. After careful consideration, a committee selected new council members whose names will be announced at the MEGT Conference in January.

Advisory meetings are held at the Minnesota Department of Education, 1500 Highway 36 West, Roseville, Minnesota and are open to the public. The council will meet on January 8, and on April 9, 9-11:30 a.m.

*In case of inclement weather, please check major news outlets. Advisory council meetings will be rescheduled from any day that either the Minneapolis or St. Paul School districts are closed.*

*continued on page 29*



## MDE, continued from page 26

### MN at NAGC 2017

Minnesota was well represented at the National Association for Gifted Children's 64th Annual Convention and Exhibition in Charlotte, North Carolina. Forty Minnesotans were in attendance. The following people were speakers who made a total of 30 presentations: Wendy Behrens (1), Richard Cash (2), Liz Fogarty (4), Terry Friedrichs (3), Judy Gailbraith (1), Diane Heacox (2), Tania Lyon (3), Carol Malueg (2), Teresa Manzella (2), Heather Mueller (1), Cori Paulet (2), Karen Rogers (3), Mary Wandrei (2), and Karen Westberg (2). Way to go Minnesota!

### Scholars of Distinction Award Program

**The Minnesota Scholars of Distinction** program nurtures and recognizes distinguished achievement by highly motivated, self-directed students. Each specialty area was developed through partnerships with educators, the business community and others. Student projects are due on or before March 12, 2018 and must be submitted to the program's new mailbox: [mde.scholarsofdistinction@state.mn.us](mailto:scholarsofdistinction@state.mn.us).

All applicants were required to complete the Intent to Apply Form by December 16, 2017. Students and schools will be notified on May 7<sup>th</sup> and the award ceremony will be held on May 12, 2018 at the Perpich Center for Arts Education. For information about the criteria, quality standards, timelines and the application process for a 2018 award, [visit the Scholars of Distinction page](#).

### Out of Level Testing

In the United States, centers for talent development are organized by regions. Minnesota is located within a region served by the Center for Talent Development (CTD) at Northwestern University. One of the services offered by this non-profit center at Northwest University is the Midwest Academic Talent Search (NUMATS). NUMATS is a research-validated program that utilizes above-grade-level assessment, as a means of gifted testing, to help parents and educators better understand their students' educational needs. NUMATS allows eligible students to take internationally recognized tests before the grade levels at which they are normally administered. CTD is currently looking for Minnesota schools with an interest in becoming out-of-level testing centers. Testing occurs during weekends and local proctors are provided with training and stipends. If your school is interested in becoming a testing center, contact Susan Corwith at [s-corwith@northwestern.edu](mailto:s-corwith@northwestern.edu) or 847-491-3782.

# Honoring Betty Johnson

David Wolff, MEGT President



This fall, the field of gifted education lost a pioneer - Betty Johnson. Through her efforts, gifted education made significant strides forward and helped bring us to where we are now.

"Betty Johnson was an extraordinary woman - a visionary whose passion for creating opportunities for others helped to make Minnesota a better place. Truly the *Grandmother of Gifted Education in*

*Minnesota*, Betty had been an active member of MDE's Gifted Education Advisory Council and the Minnesota Council for Gifted and Talented. Betty founded West Suburban Summer School, and lent her time and talents to a variety of organizations that enriched the lives of many. I'm deeply saddened by her passing but eternally grateful to have known and worked with Betty."  
-Wendy Behrens, MDE Gifted Education Specialist

Although I never had a chance to meet Betty in person, our electronic correspondence over the years showed me Betty's heart for education and the learners in Minnesota. MEGT honors Betty's work with humble gratitude.

photo credit: Minnesota Star Tribune



# Be Prepared for The Backchannel

By Melanie Olson @M\_Olson\_

At this year's Mid-Winter Conference we will be looking for conference attendees to share insights and provide feedback through the MEGT Backchannel. A backchannel is a conversation that takes place alongside an activity or event. Back channels or back-channeling is common at conferences where attendees use tools like Twitter to discuss the various presentations in near real time. MEGT wants you to tweet up a storm! Feel free to take pictures and post resources of keynote and session presentations. Follow MEGT as well as other conference attendees before the conference starts so that you can jump right in! Here is a list of key people to follow during our conference.

Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented	@MEGT_MNGifted
Keynote Speaker: Liz Fogarty	@Lizloveshockey
Keynote Speaker: Jonathan Plucker	@JonathanPlucker
MEGT Outreach: Melanie Olson	@M_Olson_
MEGT President: David Wolff	@wolffdavid11

These people will get the conversation started. Use #MNGifted in your tweets to create a unique MEGT Twitterfeed! There may be special announcements on Twitter during the conference that you won't want to miss!


To get the latest news and announcements regarding the conference, join our Facebook Event! Search MEGT Mid-Winter Conference on Facebook and RSVP. When you indicate that you are going or interested in the event, you will automatically receive updates in your Facebook news feed. We also would like to invite you to share the event with others. Invite your friends and colleagues.





**Followers**  
**1,015**




**454**  
**Likes**



**@MEGT\_MNGifted**  
**#MNGifted**



**Minnesota Educators of  
The Gifted and Talented**  
<https://goo.gl/mMwBZT>

**\*Print and share this in your teacher's lounge or include it in your school newsletter or website.\***



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR Gifted Children

## 65th Annual Convention

Minneapolis, MN | November 15-18, 2018



Challenging Gifted Learners Challenging Gifted Learners Challenging Gifted Learners Challenging Gifted Learners



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



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Follow MEGT on Twitter @MEGT\_MNGifted #MNGifted #MEGT

### MEGT Regional Map

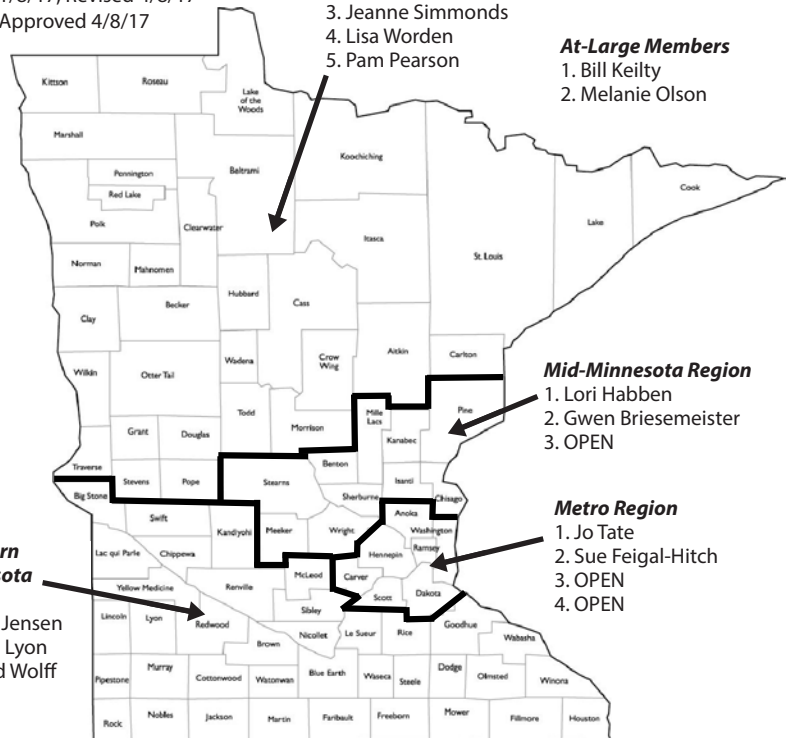
Created 1/8/17; Revised 4/8/17  
Voted & Approved 4/8/17

#### Northern Minnesota Region

1. Mary Ann Rotondi
2. Sue Karp
3. Jeanne Simmonds
4. Lisa Worden
5. Pam Pearson

#### At-Large Members

1. Bill Keilty
2. Melanie Olson





# Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented Board

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