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ITAG- Furthering the Education of Iowa's Talented and Gifted

ITAG NEWS MAGAZINE

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In our **NEWS** magazine, we include: legislative updates; national and state conference information; news about programs and events of interest to gifted students, their parents, and teachers; articles for educators and parents about issues in gifted education; as well as reprints of material from state and national journals that may be of specific interest to gifted education advocates.

WE INVITE YOU

to submit suggestions, concerns, and/or articles you have written or read which you would like to share with the ITAG membership through **ITAG NEWS**.

PLEASE SEND your NEWS magazine suggestions, articles, or announcements to: the ITAG office

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News Magazine

Volume 34, Number 1 - Winter 2008-2009

Instructional Decision Making for Advanced Proficiency Learners IDM's Gift to Gifted Education

Instructional Decision Making (IDM) is a term that has been used with increasing frequency in school districts across Iowa since 2003. Based on Response to Intervention (RTI), a mandate in federal legislation, IDM is a statewide process designed to create a proactive, early intervention framework inclusive of all students. "The IDM process focuses on data regarding students' responses to instruction to guide future educational decisions. It drives how curriculum is delivered through instruction... The Iowa Department of Education supports, but does not mandate, this process." (Iowa Department of Education, 2007) Examining RTI, the foundation upon which IDM is built, followed by an overview of the Guiding Principles and Key Features of IDM, facilitates understanding IDM.

Response to Intervention is a three-tiered approach originally designed to support the learning needs of struggling students in the school setting; and in many contexts across the country, this remains the primary focus. Information presented in a Webinar conducted by the National Center for Response to Intervention on May 12, 2008, defines RTI as an

"organizational framework for instructional and curricular decisions and practices based on students' responses... Response to intervention integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior problems. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities." (Mellard, 2008)

According to Doug Fuchs and Lynn Fuchs (2005), "Policy-makers have high hopes that responsiveness-to-intervention RTI (a) will encourage and guide practitioners to intervene earlier on behalf of a greater number of children at risk for school failure, and (b) will... decrease the number of... students given a disability label who are low achievers because of poor instruction rather than an inherent disability." These stated goals for RTI are well intentioned and necessary to accelerate the learning and achievement of targeted students. The troublesome issue for gifted education professionals regarding Response to Intervention is the scarcity of references to and service provisions for learners at the

upper end of the distribution. An important question is this: When a school system embraces RTI as a way of doing business for students at risk for academic failure, what are the repercussions for advanced and gifted learners?

As Iowa has developed and refined Instructional Decision Making, this is the question the Department of Education IDM Team, IDM Coaches, and gifted education advocates have worked to answer. Like RTI, IDM is a three-tiered model and is inclusive of all students. A key characteristic differentiating IDM from RTI is the intentional, specific language embedded in the Iowa Instructional Decision Making document that advanced and gifted learners are, indeed, part of the "all" for which the educational system bears responsibility. This is clearly evidenced in the IDM Guiding Principles and the statement of Key Features (Iowa Department of Education, 2007).

Instructional Decision Making Guiding Principles

- Each student is part of the general education system and has the means to: 1) access to the general education curriculum, or 2) demonstrate mastery of and receive an enriched/accelerated version of the curriculum.
- There is shared responsibility for student learning and achievement across the entire school community.
- The best way to address student learning is to be proactive; therefore, any process of instructional decision-making must allow for the earliest possible differentiation.
- Differentiated instruction is essential to meet the needs of all learners. Differentiated instruction necessitates thoughtful planning of instructional tasks with regard to pacing, content, process, product and environment.
- Accurate reliable data are essential to determine the instructional needs of all students and to match resources to those needs.
- Multiple sources of data are needed to effectively inform instructional decisions.



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ITAG, an affiliate of the National Association for Gifted Children, is a tax exempt, 501(c)3 organization which was organized more than 25 years ago with a vision that gifted and talented children in the State of Iowa should receive an education commensurate with their abilities and needs. It promotes advocacy at the state and local level, pre-service and in-service training in gifted education, and parent/community awareness, education and involvement. ITAG is comprised of parents, educators, other professionals, and community leaders who share an interest in the growth and development of gifted and talented individuals in Iowa. ITAG annual membership dues are: Member, \$45; Friend, \$100-\$999; or Sponsor, \$1000 or more.

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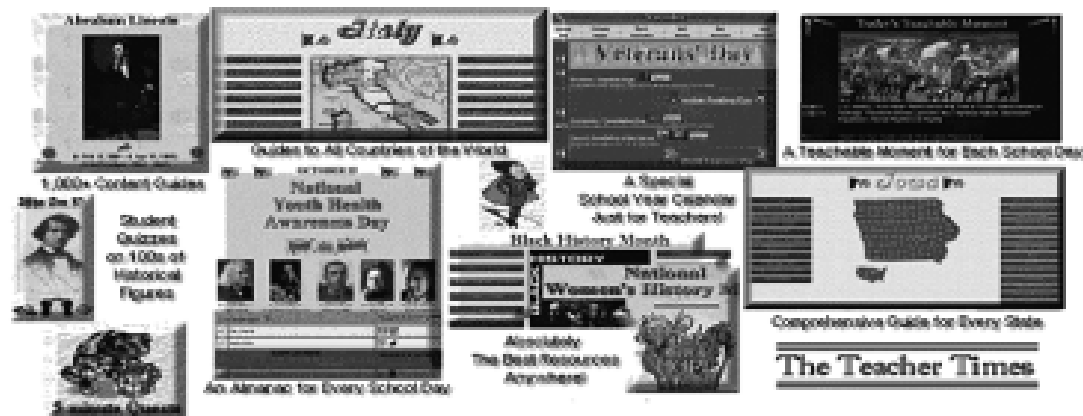
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From the President



As I ponder the topic(s) for this month's remarks, what keeps rising up is the great loss gifted education experienced in 2008 with the passing of Karen Garvin Wenthe. Those who knew Karen, gifted education consultant at the AEA formerly known as 7, remember her as a kind, generous, dedicated woman. I don't believe she set out to make a mark on the world – at least not in any self-serving way. But leave a mark she did by touching the lives of students, teachers, colleagues, friends, and family; by indelibly stamping the face of gifted education in Iowa through her vision, hard work, and leadership; and by serving as a sterling example of integrity and professionalism. Even when Karen had left the active circle of gifted education, she still maintained her interest in the field and her relationships with former colleagues.

When we have magnificent leaders and role models like Karen, we just assume they'll be around forever. It's easy and comfortable to rely on them to keep doing what they do. (I liken it to the same handful of people serving on every committee at church.) We only need to look across the state to recognize and appreciate those whose leadership and service have furthered the cause of gifted education: Ann Boultinghouse, Bill Waack, Cathy Blando, Arlene DeVries, Lee Wolf, Pam Johnson, Nick Colangelo, Sally Beisser, and so many others I apologize for not mentioning. They have made leading look easy, when in reality it is often lonely and thankless work. Have we remembered to thank them for the difference they've made?

When the people who have been instrumental in building our foundation move on to that next phase in their lives –

second (or third, fourth...) careers, retirement, spending their lottery winnings, or the next best thing – we need to be prepared to continue the work, build on the solid base, and live out the vision they have helped create. How does this happen? Through growing new leaders, continuing to work together, and learning from the collective wisdom of our current and past leadership.

What I hope is the apparent point of these remarks is that ITAG needs a new generation of leaders to emerge and develop. In every corner of Iowa, there are passionate, dedicated teachers of gifted "on fire" for this profession, and there are classroom teachers and administrators whose skill and will to do whatever it takes for gifted children is obvious. They are learning and growing their leadership skills every day and need the support of our entire g/t community. Continuing the work and endeavoring to improve is the best way I can imagine to validate and honor the contributions of those whose efforts and dedication have led us on this journey.

Before closing, I'd like to thank Linda Moehring and Chris Schultz, 2008 ITAG Conference Co-chairs for their hard work and creativity in providing a rich and varied learning opportunity. Also deserving of recognition and thanks are Alda Helvey, Corrine Brightman, and the staff at Dynamic Resources for their support in conference planning, registration, and attention to detail. The 2009 conference will return to the Coralville Marriott on October 12-13.

By Mary Schmidt, ITAG President

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Continued from the cover

- The effectiveness of instruction is routinely monitored; continuously collected formative data are used to indicate when changes in instruction are needed.
- Parents are vital members of the team to support students.
- Administrators and teacher leadership teams are vital in the instructional leadership and data based decision-making of a district and school.
- Quality professional development is required to support implementation of a systemic effort to support IDM and to ensure that teachers have adequate tools and strategies to meet diverse student learning needs.
- Administration must provide teachers with the necessary supports and resources to meet the needs of all students.

Before continuing, the reader might pause to consider the following:

1. What connections to serving advanced/gifted learners are apparent in the principles?
2. To what extent does your district/school adhere to these (or similar) principles?
3. How would the principles move your district/school forward in meeting the needs of advanced/gifted learners?

Key Features

Instructional Decision Making has several key features. First is the assumption that schools are providing a guaranteed and viable, rigorous and relevant curriculum. The Iowa Core Curriculum will be the vehicle to ensure that assumption holds true.

Another feature is the use of assessment data collected from multiple sources to guide decisions about students' curricular and instructional needs. Because IDM is designed as a proactive system, schools neither wait for students to fail nor for them to succumb to the ennui created by lack of challenge. An on-going process of data collection ensures continuous improvement in a school, new learning in each class every day for all students, and the creation of a self-correcting system. Because schools collect and analyze data

on a regular basis, they are better equipped to identify what's working, what's not, and what to do about it.

A third feature is fluidity. As student progress is regularly monitored and sound formative assessment practices are employed, each student's unique learning needs are met. "...instruction may vary for students who are learning English as a second language, students who are highly proficient, students who are less than proficient and students who are at risk." (Iowa Department of Education, 2007) Students move in and out of groups as needed and are no longer held hostage by what can be an imperfect and ineffective system of identification for gifted services. Rather, soundly implemented IDM can enhance services to advanced and gifted students.

Additionally, IDM acknowledges that affective needs of students are a critical element of the school program and assists in making decisions about when support in addition to (or in place of) that provided by the regular program is necessary.

In summary, the IDM process is

- focused on appropriate instruction.
- focused on each and every student.
- data driven.
- a collaborative effort.
- proactive.
- a seamless continuum of instructional delivery.
- fluid, interactive and responsive. (Iowa Department of Education, 2007)

As IDM thinking expands to include advanced/gifted learners, schools – with input and guidance from gifted education experts – must build consensus for this perspective; challenge assumptions and beliefs about gifted kids; identify appropriate strategies to meet their needs; provide professional development for classroom teachers, counselors, and administrators; and create the infrastructure for implementation and service delivery.

Why This Matters

More and more, educators are hearing alarming news: in this era of NCLB and high-stakes accountability, the achievement of advanced students across the country is stagnant. The key findings of the recently released Fordham Institute study "High-Achieving Students in the Era of NCLB" indicate the imperative to view gifted students among "all" and to provide learning opportunities appropriate for them.

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The National Association for Gifted Children is pleased to offer all parent members of the Iowa Gifted and Talented Association a Parent Associate Membership for \$10. Your membership affords you four (4) issues of Parenting for High Potential (PHP), NAGC's full-color, award-winning quarterly magazine and access to all resources on NAGC's website, www.nagc.org.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Awareness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Grades | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent & Community | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Research & Evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Populations | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Schools/Programs | | |

**Personal Check # _____

Institution Check # _____

Purchase Order # _____

Visa MasterCard American Express Discover

**Credit Card # _____ Exp. date _____

Signature _____

Name on Card _____

Billing Address _____

Work Telephone # () _____

Home Telephone # () _____

I do not wish to have my name used for other mailing lists.

**There will be an additional \$30 fee for returned checks; \$20 for declined credit cards.

MEMBERSHIP

FULL MEMBERSHIP* INCLUDES: Magazine of your choice: *The Gifted Child Quarterly* (GCQ) or *Parenting for High Potential* (PHP). In addition, you receive *Compass Points* newsletter, a discount on materials, discounted Annual Convention registration, and a free information service. For an additional fee, you may receive **both** magazines. (Please note: *Institutional Membership* includes a discount for only one (1) attendee at the NAGC Annual Convention.)

*A Parent Associate Membership is available to parents and grandparents ONLY. This limited membership category is available to assist families who are interested in receiving *Parenting for High Potential* magazine, but otherwise cannot buy a full membership. **Home address is required for this category. No purchase orders are accepted - personal check or credit card only.**

DIVISIONS: All members may join any or all of the NAGC Divisions and participate with colleagues on issues of special interest to you. Division membership costs \$10 per Division per year.

Instructional Decision Making Con't.



Key Findings

- While the nation's lowest-achieving youngsters made rapid gains from 2000 to 2007, the performance of top students was languid.
- This pattern — big gains for low achievers and lesser ones for high achievers — is associated with the introduction of accountability systems in general, not just NCLB.
- Teachers are much more likely to indicate that struggling students, not advanced students, are their top priority.
- Low-achieving students receive dramatically more attention from teachers.
- Still teachers believe that all students deserve an equal share of attention.
- Low-income, black, and Hispanic high achievers (on the 2005 eighth-grade math NAEP) were more likely than low achievers to be taught by experienced teachers.

This alarming trend will be reversed only when schools examine their assumptions about advanced/gifted children, recognize the specific learning needs of this student population, and embrace their need for appropriate curriculum and instruction. As a gifted education advocate, involvement in your school's IDM planning and implementation is imperative. Whether IDM is looming on your school's horizon, is knocking at the front door, or is comfortably ensconced in the living room, there are steps you can and should take to make effective application of the framework a reality for gifted children. Suggestions include:

1. Volunteer to be part of your school's IDM Leadership Team.
2. Participate in "Data Day" or other opportunities to analyze the student data used to make curricular and instructional decisions. Encourage conversation about what the data show regarding the needs of advanced learners. Don't be satisfied with "We'll talk about them later." or "They'll be fine." or "We have kids with more pressing issues." Create some cognitive dissonance!
3. Share and model strategies appropriate for advanced/gifted learners.
4. Develop a system to document the growth of advanced/gifted learners. Adjust your practices based on those data.
5. Ask questions and push others' thinking.

Application of the IDM framework and principles aligned with best practices in gifted education holds great promise to

ensure that advanced and gifted children learn something new in school each day and most certainly are not left behind.

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By Mary Schmidt
ITAG President

Annual Spring Gifted Conference

April 27 & 28, 2009
Eastern Iowa – Coralville Marriott

April 30 & May 1, 2009
Western Iowa – Griswold

"Preparing Creative and Critical Thinkers"
Presented by: Dr. Donald Treffinger
President of the Center for Creative Learning
– Sarasota, Florida

"Teachers can help students become 21st century problem solvers by introducing them to a broad range of thinking tools."

Conference information will be available soon at:
www.aeal.k12.ia.us (Eastern Conference)
www.aeal3.org/giftededucation/ (Western Conference)





President Mary Schmidt has been an Iowa educator for 30 years. Her experiences include teaching junior high and high school English and speech, facilitating middle school and high school gifted and talented programming, and serving as an AEA School Improvement and Gifted Education Consultant. Currently, Mary is the Gifted Education Consultant at Heartland AEA in Johnston where she serves on the differentiation, Instructional Decision Making (IDM), and Balanced Leadership teams. She holds a Masters in Gifted Education from the University of Northern Iowa and is a National Board Certified Teacher. You may contact Mary at mschmidt@acall.k12.ia.us.



President-Elect Diane Pratt has been a member of ITAG for 19 years, completing three terms on the ITAG Board of Directors and two on the Educator Outreach Committee. Diane has been involved with talented and gifted learners, their parents and teachers for over 25 years, having taught preschool through eighth grade. Diane received her K-12 Gifted Endorsement within her Master's study from Buena Vista University. She was the 2000 recipient of ITAG's Research Award and the first David Belin Excellence in Teaching Award. Diane is a member of NAGC, ASCD, and IAMLE. She has presented at various conferences and is a summer instructor in the University of Iowa's TAG endorsement program. She is currently a 5/6 TAG instructor and high school TAG advisor for the Fort Dodge Community School District where she facilitates professional development and serves on numerous district committees. You may contact Diane at dpratt@fort-dodge.k12.ia.us.



Treasurer Tony Voss is a very familiar ITAG face. He has served on the board since 2003, the year he was the conference co-chair in Waterloo. Tony taught 4th grade for 12 years and then became the K-12 Talented and Gifted Coordinator at Eldora-New Providence Community Schools through 2005. Along with his coordinator duties he volunteers as trainer for the Tiger football and basketball team and co-advised the Yearbook and Student Council. Tony received his BA from Iowa Wesleyan College in Mt. Pleasant, and his M.A.E in Elementary Curriculum from the University of Northern Iowa. Along with his degrees he has a K-12 TAG Endorsement, K-12 Administrative Endorsement and a Music Approval. Tony was responsible for expanding the Talented and Gifted Program at E-NP into grades 9-12. He has been a long standing member of ITAG and has recently become active with the Legislative committee. He is a strong advocate for gifted students and gifted programs in rural Iowa. For the past three years Tony has been a gifted and talented consultant for secondary schools with the Des Moines Independent School District. He serves 8 buildings both middle and high school. Outside of school Tony is very active in the community. He sings in the Plymouth Chancel Choir and Chorale. He works part-time as an usher at the Civic Center and has volunteered with refugee families. He still works part-time as a registered Pharmacy Technician at the Eldora Pharmacy. Tony has been a foster parent and enjoys the relationship he has kept with his foster son. There is not a lot of time for any grass to grow under his feet. He enjoys serving as a legislative contact and treasurer for ITAG and looks forward to continued service to gifted and talented students in Iowa. You may contact Tony at anthony.voss@dmps.k12.ia.us.



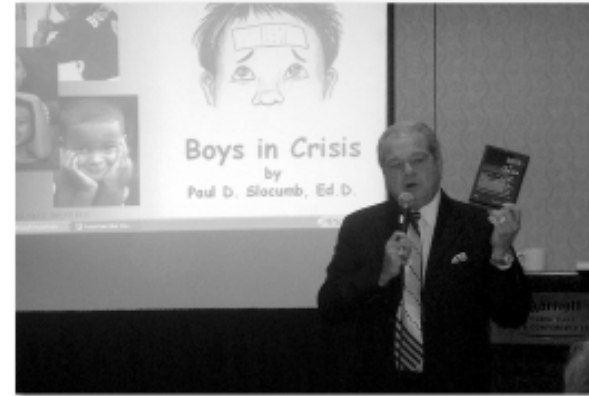
Board Member Sue Chartier is the Gifted Education Consultant for Northwest Area Education Agency. She has been in education 22 years, 10 years as a middle school teacher in the Sioux City Community School District where she had elementary teams in Odyssey of the Mind and Destination Imagination, and 12 years as a Consultant and the lead for the Differentiated Instruction Team. Sue has been instrumental in creating the East-West Spring conference, bringing the speakers to both sides of the state for greater attendance opportunity. She earned her BA from Morningside College and MA from the University of South Dakota. Sue is a member of ITAG and NAGC. You may contact Sue at schartier@nwaea.k12.ia.us.



Board Member Christine Comito has been working with gifted children for 14 years, but didn't know it until they started school! Christine has three gifted children in Des Moines Public Schools. Recently, Christine served three years on the Greenwood Elementary PTA Board, and five years on the board of the Des Moines Association for Talented and Gifted. She earned her Bachelor's Degree from Boston College and did post-graduate work at George Washington University. You may contact Christine at cocomito@mchsi.com.



Board Member Jean Johnson has been an educator in the Sioux City Community School District for 30 years. She served as a gifted education consultant for Western Hills Area Education Agency (now Northwest AEA) from 2003-2006. Currently Jean is the K-12 Talented and Gifted Education Coordinator for the Sioux City schools. Jean received her B.A. degree and her M.A.E. with an endorsement in PK-8 Administration from the University of Northern Iowa. Jean is a member of ASCD, NAGC, and ITAG. She has served as an ITAG Board member and as the ITAG News Magazine Editor since 2004. You may contact Jean at johnsoj@sioux-city.k12.ia.us.



Keynote speaker Dr. Paul Slocomb, Ed.D discusses *Hear Our Cry: Boys in Crisis*.



Mary Schmidt presents Kathy Paul with the 2008 Distinguished Service Award.



President Mary Schmidt addresses the ITAG Conference attendees.



Mary Schmidt presents Marilyn Buxton with the 2008 Distinguished Service Award.



Dr. Bertie Kingore



Research Awardee Krista Taylor with Diane Pratt.



Keynote speaker Dr. Bertie Kingore discusses her topic with ITAG attendees.

Gifted Children and Sensitivity

Sensitivity is usually at the top in lists of gifted characteristics. Accordingly, parents often ask, "What does sensitivity really mean? My gifted child can't remember family birthdays."

Your gifted child may very well be both emotionally sensitive and intellectually sensitive; that is, acutely aware of everything in his environment and within himself.

Intellectual sensitivity refers to an openness to ideas, which allows your child to be receptive to his own imaginative creativity and that of others. Emotional and social sensitivity - an acute awareness of other people and the environment - allows a child to sense the emotional temperature in a room, heightened tension, for example.

Heightened emotional and social sensitivity affects your child's perception of expectations from peers, parents, and other adults, and may be accompanied by heightened vulnerability to criticism suggestions, and emotional appeals from others. One problem is that well-meaning parents, relatives, friends, siblings, and teachers are often eager to add their own expectations to the bright child's own dreams, plans, and goals. Sometimes, the greater the child's talent, the greater the expectations and outside interference.

Keep in mind that although your child may be emotionally sensitive, that is not necessarily the same as being emotionally mature. A child's reactions and behavior to people and events may be appropriate but seem immature when compared to his or her sophisticated intellectual and emotional awareness.

When we understand just how much gifted children absorb from every environment, we can support them in times of stress.

This quote from Pearl Buck helps us understand a gifted child's sensitivity.

"The truly creative mind in any field is not more than this: A human creature born abnormally, inhumanly sensitive. To him..."

a touch is a blow,
a sound is a noise,
a misfortune is a tragedy,
a joy is an ecstasy,
a friend is a lover,
a lover is a god,
and failure is death.

Add to this cruelly delicate organism the overpowering necessity to create, create, create --- so that without the creating of music or poetry or books or buildings or something of meaning, his very breath is cut off from him. He must create, must pour out creation. By some strange, unknown, inward urgency he is not really alive unless he is creating."

-Pearl Buck-

By Sandra Berger, M.E.D.

Reprinted from a Council for Exceptional Children publication. It was printed most recently in the April/June 2007 issue of Outlook, Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented publication. Found online at <http://school.familyeducation.com/gifted-education/social-skills/38658.html>

ITAG Partners

PLEASE HELP!!! We are still in need of experienced TAG/ELP educators who could serve as a mentor/partner with a less experienced colleague.

This connection may be based on e-mail correspondence, but could develop into whatever relationship the two teachers decide. We currently need experience at all instructional levels. Please consider guiding a new colleague in uncharted territory!

E-mail Diane Pratt, Educator Outreach, dpratt@fort-dodge.k12.ia.us if you would be willing to help.

Meet the ITAG Board



Board Member Gail Kenkel has been teaching gifted students for Council Bluffs Public Schools since 1993, first as a TAG strategist, currently as a TAG/talent pool social studies/language arts teacher. Gail earned her B.A. from the University of Kansas (Go Jayhawks!) and her Master's degree in gifted education from UNI. You may contact Gail at gkenkel@cbscd.org or gekenkel@yahoo.com.



Board Member Claudia Koch has been involved in the field of gifted education for the past 25 years. She received a B.S. from Southern Illinois University in 1970 and an M.A. in Gifted Education from Western Illinois University in 1990. For the past 17 years, Claudia has served as the K-12 Gifted Coordinator at the West Bend-Mallard Community School District. She also serves as the High School Gifted Coordinator for the Twin River Valley High School. Claudia is a member of NAGC, ITAG and Lakeland TAG, an ITAG Affiliate serving both gifted professionals and gifted children in North Central Iowa. She has held several offices in that organization. Claudia has also taught several gifted endorsement classes. You may contact Claudia at cdkoch@mchsi.com.



Board Member Kristy M. Latta attended the Sioux City Community School District and later the West Des Moines Community School District. She participated in gifted learning programs such as TAG and ELP. She received her B.A. with distinction from The University of Iowa in 2002 and her J.D. with high honors from Drake University Law School in 2005. While in law school, she served on the Drake Law Review. She is a member of the Order of the Coif. She was admitted to the Iowa Bar in 2005 and served as a judicial law clerk to Justice David S. Wiggins of the Iowa Supreme Court from 2005 to 2006. She is currently an associate attorney practicing in the Education Law and Local Government Law groups at Ahlers & Cooney, P.C. in Des Moines, Iowa. She is a member of the Polk County, Iowa State, and American Bar Associations, as well as a member of the Iowa Council of School Board Attorneys and the National School Board Association's Council of School Attorneys. You may contact Kristy Latta at klatta@ahlerslaw.com.



Board Member Linda Moehring is a Professional Learning and Leadership Consultant, and is in her eighth year at Heartland AEA II. She has been involved in the field of gifted education for 18 years. Linda is a strong advocate and proponent of early programming to meet the needs of young gifted children regardless of "official" identification. She supports gifted education programming that provides appropriate challenge in every classroom every day for all gifted children K-12. She also serves gifted education through participation of the agency's differentiation team. While in her district, Linda started Odyssey of the Mind, Destination Imagination, Academic Decathlon, GT Retreat for secondary students, and HS courses for credit. You may contact Linda at lmoehring@area11.k12.ia.us.



Board Member Jenelle Nisly has been working with gifted students for more than 8 years. She is currently a TAG facilitator in the Davenport Community School District and teaches robotics in the children's summer CHESS program for the Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa. Jenelle graduated with a B.F.A. in Classical Ballet from United States International University School of Performing Arts in San Diego, CA. She received her teaching credential from California State University, Long Beach; her TAG endorsement from the University of Iowa; and her M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from Olivet University in Bourbonnais, IL. She is currently pursuing her Ed.D. in Administrator Leadership for Teaching and Learning from Walden University in Minneapolis, MN. You may contact Jenelle at nislyj@davenportschools.org.



Board Member Matt Robie is a K-5 Talented and Gifted Teacher for the Ankeny Community School District. He received his B.A. in elementary education from the University of Northern Iowa, and his Masters Degree in education from Michigan State University. Matt previously taught sixth grade for eight years at North Polk Schools, and holds endorsements in TAG, K-8 reading, K-8 science, and coaching. Professional areas of interest include problem-based learning, and the integration of science and technology into elementary gifted education. You may contact Matt at matt.robie@ankeny-schools.org.

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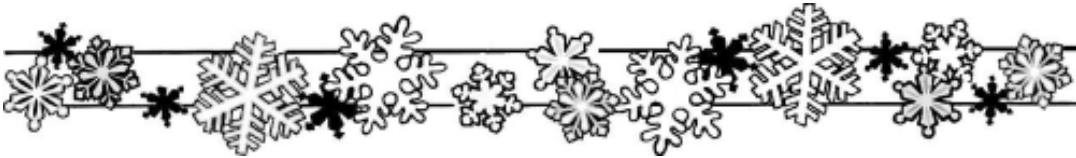
Board Member Jolene Teske is currently teaching high school English and gifted at Iowa Falls-Alden High School in Iowa Falls and is responsible for coordinating gifted programming for the Iowa Falls Community School District. This is her 11th year at Iowa Falls-Alden and her 19th year in education. Her previous experience educating students in English and working with gifted students included experience in Des Moines. Jolene also teaches classes through Ellsworth Community College. Jolene received her Master of Arts in the Education of Gifted Students from UNI in 1998 and continues to learn daily about the needs of the gifted. She has been a member of ITAG for 19 years and a board member for the past six years, was a member of the 2003 planning committee for the ITAG conference, worked as exhibit chair for the 2002 ITAG conference, was a Belin Fellow at the Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa, and is currently the Secretary for the Iowa Academic Decathlon State Board. You may contact Jolene at jteske@iowa-falls.k12.ia.us.



Sally Thorson received her degree from UNI and the endorsement for TAG. She was an adjunct professor of Secondary Social Studies Methods class at Wartburg College. During the past 31 years she taught at Waverly-Shell Rock and was involved in TAG since 1985. Among her contributions to education, Sally developed W-SR 7-12 TAG programming, taught AP US History, authored lessons in collaboration with the Herbert Hoover Library for students in AP US History, and has presented at the national conventions for Teachers of American History in Pittsburgh PA and San Antonio TX. Sally was an academic coach for Mock Trial (18 years/16 years to state). She has been involved with National History Day (21 years/8 times to nationals), National Oratorical, Iowa Math League and Math Counts, Science Bowl teams, eCybermission, Future Problem Solvers, and many more. You may contact Sally at sthor004@q.com.



Kenn Wathen has been an educator for 27 years and an Iowa educator for the past 18 years. His experiences include teaching elementary school, mostly in multi-age primary classrooms, for 7 years and serving as elementary principal for 20 years. He is currently beginning his 12th year as the elementary principal for the Hamburg CSD. He serves on the AEA 13 ELL Advisory Committee. He has served as an adjunct instructor for Buena Vista University teaching Human Relations and Teaching of Reading and worked as a Reading Consultant for curriculum development for Southern Prairie AEA. He is the parent of a gifted student who was involved in Belin-Blank Center programs throughout junior high and high school and who entered the Early Start program at the Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa in the fall semester 2005. Kenn was also a 2006 Belin Fellow at the Belin-Blank Center. Kenn earned his B.S.S. from Cornell College and his M.S.E. from Wayne State College. He is a current member of NCTM, IRA, NAESP, SAI, IAEYC, NAEYC, ITAG and NAGC. You can contact Kenn at kwathen@hamburg.k12.ia.us.



ITAG Board of Directors Mission

"The mission of ITAG is to advocate for the identification of needs and the provision of appropriate opportunities for gifted and talented students."

Make Your New Year's Resolution: Book a "TAG-Along!"



The election is over. The Iowa legislature will begin their work January 12. There will be many demands on your tax dollars, but our legislators have

made firm commitments to education excellence in Iowa. While we have had our legislators' support for gifted education, we need to make our legislators aware of the strides our kids make in our gifted programs. We need to make the opportunity for them to see what gifted students do in our schools. Here is one way: make it your goal this year to engage your students and your school in TAG-Along, an invitation to Iowa Legislators to visit your school.

The goal for TAG-Along is to express our appreciation to our lawmakers for their support of gifted education AND give students an opportunity to demonstrate some leadership skills.

We are asking that you have your GT students contact your designated legislator and invite him/her to lunch and "TAG-Along" with the students through part of the day surrounding lunch time. It is a time to showcase your school and school programs and let the legislators mingle with our best and brightest students. You may choose to discuss some issues ahead of the visit so lively conversations take place. It is that chance to accentuate the positive and slip in a few concerns while thanking them for all they do.

A form letter seems too impersonal so we are asking, as part of the growth and learning, that you sit down with your students and create that correspondence that will include the "TAG-Along" invitation, itinerary, time, date, meeting, location, etc. Find your legislator at this email address: <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/FindLeg/>. Click on "Find Your Legislator."

Once you have issued the invitation, you may need to follow up with a phone call as a reminder to your legislator.

We want to track the success of this event with a Visit Confirmation form. Please e-mail Tony or Gail with the name of the legislator, date they visited your school, students involved, and a brief summary of the day's visit. Also email us any photos you have taken.

Thank you for your support and all you do for gifted students. We appreciate the time and effort you will be taking to bring TAG-Along together.

Another suggestion for a way to get to know your legislators is to meet them in their hometown forums. Council Bluffs' legislators have bi-monthly coffees at our public library. It's a chance to hear what the Congressmen and women have to say, and it's equally important for them to hear from their constituency. Where and when do your legislators meet with their voting public? Call or e-mail your state representative and find out. Again, that web site is <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Legislators/LegislatorInfo.aspx>. Click on "Find Your Legislator."

By Gail Kenkel, gkenkel@cbcsd.org
Tony Voss Anthony, voss@dmps.k12.ia.us
Legislative Co-Chairs

It took a lot of blood, sweat and tears to get to where we are today, but we have just begun. Today we begin in earnest the work of making sure that the world we leave our children is just a little bit better than the one we inhabit today.

Barack Obama



ITAG wishes all of our members a very happy holidays!

Movie-Making in the Elementary Classroom: Four Projects to Encourage Creativity and Critical Thinking in Your Gifted Students

Cameras and computers. For many elementary students, these two pieces of technology are more than motivation. The movie-making process ties together some key components of gifted education: critical thinking, creativity, and technology. The possibilities are endless, but here are a few tried and true projects to try this year!



Campaign Ads

When election fever sweeps the nation, we are inundated with 30-second spots explaining why we should vote a certain way. What could your students "run for"? Student council? Certain classroom jobs? Have the students view several different online campaign ads and evaluate them. What was the intent of the candidate when making each? Discuss the intended audience for the campaign ads that the students will be creating, and how to best reach that audience. Students should decide on a focus for their ad, and incorporate writing traits such as word choice, ideas, and voice. After storyboarding, film and edit until students have created a persuasive ad that can be used in their campaign.

Gentle Reminders

Every elementary building has behavior issues. From hallway etiquette to lunchroom behavior, students often need reminders about how to act at school. Imagine the power of a short video, created for students by their peers. How should the message be delivered? Who should be the one delivering it? Should the video be humorous or serious? What strategies will be most persuasive? This project gives students an authentic purpose, and usually leads to changes in your building.

Public Service Announcements

Another way to use movie-making in the elementary classroom is to create public service announcements that tie closely with content being studied in the science or social studies classrooms. When studying the environment, students may choose to make PSA's about global warming, alternative energy, drilling for oil, or urban sprawl. When studying history, students may want

to creatively make persuasive videos that encourage the public to join the Patriot Cause, or to vacation in ancient Egypt. How can movie-making tie to your curriculum?

Averages

The above suggestions are all persuasive movie-making projects, but making an informative video can encourage creativity as well. One idea is to make a movie that stereotypes the average student or teacher in your building. Students brainstorm the questions that they want answered. Then through polling and interviews, students find out information such as average bedtimes, percentage of teachers who drink coffee, etc. After deciding what information is relevant and interesting, students weave the facts together to make a script, which is then filmed, edited, and shown school-wide.

By Matt Robie
ITAG Board Member



Until every gifted child can attend a school where the brightest are appropriately challenged in an environment with their intellectual peers, America can't claim that it's leaving no child behind.

**Jan and Bob Davidson with Laura Vanderkam,
in Genius Denied**

Improving Gifted and Talented Programming SCHOOL LEADERS' TO DO LIST



- August-September – Schedule regular opportunities for professional conversations with your teacher(s) of gifted. Identify the timeline for accomplishing the following:
 - o Provide gifted and talented professional development – specific to gifted and talented programming or embedded in ongoing district and/or building professional development
 - o Item/data analysis and examination of trend data for advanced proficiency learners
 - o Attend the 2009 Iowa Talented and Gifted Conference at the Coralville Marriott
 - o Conduct a "search and rescue mission" for underachieving gifted students

- Identify and personally recognize your student leaders.
- Set aside a time to recognize the contributions of parents of the gifted and to celebrate the joys and challenges of parenting gifted children.
- Check the demographics of your identified gifted students. It should mirror district demographics.
- In honor of Music in Our Schools Month (March), celebrate your gifted artists and musicians.
- Identify creative scientists, writers, mathematicians, and out-of-the-box thinkers (students, teachers, administrators, and staff members).
- Engage in career planning and course alignment for high school and post-secondary students.
- Gather data from students, classroom teachers, teachers of gifted, parents, and others regarding ways to improve gifted and talented programming and services.
- Celebrate your school's inclusion of gifted children in "all".



SAVE THE DATE!

The 2009 ITAG conference will return to the Coralville Marriott on October 12-13, 2009.

Gifted Endorsement Language - Revised 2008

14.140(13) Talented and gifted teacher-coordinator.

a. Authorization. The holder of this endorsement is authorized to serve as a teacher or a coordinator of programs for the talented and gifted from the pre-kindergarten level through grade twelve.

This authorization does not permit general classroom teaching at any level except that level or area for which the holder is eligible or holds the specific endorsement.

b. Program requirements—content. Completion of 12 undergraduate or graduate semester hours of coursework in the area of the talented and gifted to include the following:

- (1) Psychology of the gifted.
 1. Social needs.
 2. Emotional needs.
- (2) Programming for the gifted.
 1. Pre-kindergarten-12 identification.
 2. Differentiation strategies.
 3. Collaborative teaching skills.
 4. Program goals and performance measures.
 5. Program evaluation.
- (3) Administration and supervision of gifted programs.
- (4) Practicum experience in gifted programs.

NOTE: Teachers in specific subject areas will not be required to hold this endorsement if they teach gifted students in their respective endorsement areas.

Practitioners licensed and employed after August 31, 1995, and assigned as teachers or coordinators in programs for the talented and gifted will be required to hold this endorsement.

c. Other. Individuals who were licensed in Iowa prior to August 31, 1995, and were allowed to teach talented and gifted classes without completing the endorsement requirements must complete the endorsement requirements by July 1, 2012, in order to teach or continue to teach talented and gifted classes. A waiver provision is provided through the board of educational examiners for individuals who have been successfully teaching students who are talented and gifted.

The rule became effective August 20, 2008. The schools still have until July 1, 2012 for any change to occur in hiring teachers with the endorsement so there is no need for any panic. They should just be AWARE that this change is occurring.

The rule can be found on the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners website. Scroll to the bottom where all of the rules are listed. Click on Chapter 14.

Questions? Contact Susan Fischer at susan.fischer@iowa.gov or 515-281-3605.

Losing OUR Minds, Gifted Children Left Behind

*Deborah L. Ruf, Ph.D.
 * Great Potential Press, 2005
 * www.giftedbooks.com
 * ISBN: 0-910707-70-7

I cringe when I see the commercial on TV that talks about how students from our country are academically behind their peers from other countries. I think I know the answer to that dilemma and most of you do to. If we would allow our gifted children to learn at the pace that they need and provide learning opportunities to them in each class period every day, from the day they first enter school – I don't think we would be testing behind other countries! I kept coming back to this thought as I read this newsletter's featured book.

Deborah Ruf's book, *Losing OUR Minds, Gifted Children Left Behind* is a must read for all teachers of gifted as well as administrators, educators serving on a TAG committee, and parents of gifted children. The book provides case studies to help the reader better understand the abilities and frustrations of gifted child both at home and at school, and the needs that must be addressed in order for them to thrive.

Deborah Ruf describes five different levels of giftedness and provides developmental milestones at varying age levels so that parents can compare their own children's milestones to those of the children who are described in the book. This information is also very helpful to educators to realize the potential that many children have, and to make sure that learning opportunities are available to this population of students. As we try to have a better understanding about giftedness it is important to see how the learning and behavioral distinctions differ between children who are bright and those who are substantially more advanced. It is very important to understand the differences in levels of giftedness. As Deborah Ruf states in her book, we really don't know how many gifted children there are. Many are not served in a way that allows them to show their gifts and talents therefore in some cases they are not identified, and in many cases, their extreme needs are not met.

In describing the 5 levels of giftedness, Deborah states that level 5 children could finish the entire elementary curriculum in less than a year *if they were given the opportunity*. Level 2 children could complete the entire elementary curriculum in less than 3 years. The problem is that our systems don't let them. There are more students in these upper levels

of giftedness than we will ever know. Some of the students will never be formally identified as gifted because their challenging behaviors in a regular classroom may work against their identification. Some level 4 children may start in public schools, however the parents might move or send the child to a particular school looking for better educational opportunities. Many parents of Level 4 and higher children turn to home schooling so fewer level 4 and 5 children are in our schools than could be.

My application from reading this book is that we **must provide programming** with very young gifted children as soon as they enter our doors. We can't wait for formal identification with standardized test scores, and shouldn't have to when parents have as much data as they do about the abilities of their children. It is the law in Iowa to **serve** gifted children **K-12**. It doesn't state that they have to be formally identified before that service can begin. Unfortunately most schools don't have the proper screening procedures for preschool and kindergarten that would test for the behaviors that are exhibited by young gifted children. Most schools are testing for letter recognition, not asking children to read their chapter books out loud!

I encourage you to read *Losing OUR Minds, Gifted Children Left Behind* as a book study with your identification committee and to think outside of the box when talking about programming and serving young gifted children. The very children who excitedly can't wait to come to school, quickly learn that when they come to school, they wait to learn. I challenge all of us to rethink service to our young gifted children and provide challenging, rigorous learning opportunities the day they step into our schools.



By Linda Moehring
 ITAG Board of Directors

The Endorsement in Gifted Education from The University of Iowa, the College of Education and the Belin-Blank Center

The Belin-Blank Center has been a leader in professional development in gifted education for almost 30 years. For the State of Iowa Talented and Gifted endorsement, teachers earn at least 12 credit hours from a wide array of courses/workshops available through The University of Iowa College of Education; at least 1 credit hour must be from each of 4 different strands. The strands (Psychology, Programming, Administration, and Practicum) facilitate comprehensive understanding of the needs of gifted learners, ways to meet those needs, and ways to ensure the best programs possible.

Teachers choose schedules that meet their needs, taking classes during evenings, weekends, or summers, attending on campus, at extension sites, and/or online. Educators from as far away Wyoming have completed the Iowa endorsement, transferring credentials back to Wyoming! Since 1995, The University of Iowa College of Education has nominated over 200 teachers for endorsement.

The coursework sponsored by the Belin-Blank Center helps teachers meet dual Standards in Gifted Education articulated by the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) for programs and for professional preparation. The schedule of upcoming coursework is updated regularly at the Center's Website (<http://www.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/>). Spring courses include:

- **Introduction to Educating Gifted Students** (Psychology) 3 hrs; independent study; Nicholas Colangelo, Ph.D.;
- **Identification of Students for Gifted Programs** (Psychology) 3 hrs; on campus; Susan Assouline, Ph.D.
- **Program Models in Gifted Education** (Programming) 3 hrs; online or on campus; Laurie Croft, Ph.D.
- **Administrative and Policy in Gifted Education** (Administrative) 2 hrs; online; Catherine Blando, Ed.S.
- **Differentiated Instruction for the Gifted** (Programming) 1 hr; online; Nancy Grimes, M.A.
- **Special Readings/Projects: Iowa Acceleration Scale** (Psychology) 1 hr; online; Susan Assouline, Ph.D. **IAS training required:** Webinar on February 21; special arrangements may be made with the instructor. Automatic partial tuition scholarships are available!

- **Math Programming for High-Ability Students** (Programming) 1 hr; online; Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik, Ph.D.
- **Guiding Autonomous Learners** (Programming) 1 hr; Saturday Extension Class in Des Moines; Chris Bergman, M.S. & Anne Orsini, M.S.
- **Practicum:** those licensed to teach at the elementary level MUST complete at least 1 hour of secondary practicum; those licensed to teach at the secondary level MUST complete at least 1 hour of elementary practicum; Laurie Croft, Ph.D.

For additional information, please visit the Website at www.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank, or contact Dr. Laurie Croft (laurie-croft@uiowa.edu).

Laurie J. Croft, Ph.D.
Administrator, Professional Development/Endorsement

Winter In Iowa

*It's winter in Iowa
And the gentle breezes blow
Seventy miles an hour
At twenty-five below.
Oh, how I love Iowa
When the snow's up to your butt;
You take a breath of winter
And your nose gets frozen shut.
Yes, the weather here is wonderful
So I guess I'll hang around,
I could never leave Iowa
'Cause I'm frozen to the ground!*

Author unknown



Drake University Online GT Endorsement Program www.drake.edu



Drake University's outstanding online program received the 2008 Iowa Distance Education Association Point of Presence Award. Instructors are competent, content is high quality based on NAGC standards, and the technology is exciting. In 3 consecutive semesters, you can complete the 12 required hours in four areas of psychology, programming, administration, and a practicum. Busy people appreciate the online convenience, saving gas money, and the technology assistance from the Drake Help Desk! Online courses fill up quickly so register now.

These graduate level courses are offered fully online. See course offerings below.

SPRING 2009

- EDUC 210 GT Practicum (1 hr) Mar 23-Apr 19, 2009
- EDUC 290 Administration & Supervision of G/T Programs (1 hr) Apr 6-May 3, 2009
- EDUC 291 Intro to Gifted Education (3 cr) Jan 26-March 22, 2009
- EDUC 292 Social Emotional Needs of Gifted (2 cr) Feb 2-March 15, 2009
- EDUC 295 Curriculum & Assessment of GT (3 cr) Jan 20-Mar 15, 2009
- EDUC 297 Gifted Learners: Literacy Strategies (2 hrs Mar. 30 - May 10, 2009)
- EDUC 298 Gifted Learners: Math Strategies (1 hr) Mar. 30-Apr 26, 2009

SUMMER 2009 (to be approved)

- EDUC 295 Curriculum & Assessment of Gifted (3 hrs) May 25-July 19, 2009
- EDUC 298 Gifted Learners: Math Strategies (1 cr) May 25-June 21, 2009
- EDUC 296 Differentiated Instruction for Gifted (1 cr) June 1-June 28, 2009
- EDUC 293 Creativity and Gifted (1 cr) June 29-July 26, 2009
- EDUC 294 Special Populations of Gifted (1 cr) June 29-July 26, 2009
- EDUC 290 Administration & Supervision of G/T Programs (1 hr) July 20-Aug 16, 2009

Contact information: ann.martin@drake.edu or call 515-271-2034. Complete the application online at <http://www.drake.edu/graduate/index.php>.

1. You will be assigned an advisor for your transcript review and assist you in planning your GT courses. If you want an Effective Teaching Masters Degree (MSE) for only 17 more credits go to www.drake.edu then to **Academics** then to **School of Education** then to **Programs and Degrees**.

2. To register for classes contact debbie.dodge@drake.edu or call 515-271-3727. Sign up right away since courses are capped at 20 students. Students who have taken classes are from 8 states and 2 countries so you may enjoy studying with a diverse group of peers.

Drake University Contacts:

Sally Beisser, Ph.D. Gifted & Talented Program Coordinator sally.beisser@drake.edu
Marcy Sparks, MSE. Effective Teaching Program Advisor marcy.sparks@drake.edu
Thalya Hanson, MSE. Effective Teaching Coordinator etcoordinator@drake.edu

K-12 Talented and Gifted Endorsement

The talented and gifted (TAG) endorsement program is a 12-hour program approved by the Iowa Department of Education. The TAG endorsement is an add-on endorsement; that is, it must be added to an existing teaching license. The coursework required for the TAG endorsement may be taken at the undergraduate level, the graduate level, or a combination of both.

Prerequisite: teacher certification—elementary or secondary

Required Courses:

- EDUC 40IG Intro to Teaching the Gifted (3 hrs)
- EDUC 580 Development/Management of Gifted Programs (2 hrs)
- EDUC 581 Curriculum and Methods for the Gifted (3 hrs)
- EDUC 582 Internship: Gifted Education (2 hrs)
- Electives (2 hrs)*

Tuition is \$160 per graduate credit.

The credits for this endorsement may count toward the Professional Educator Master's degree program. If you are interested in this endorsement, apply to our program and request a program of study for TAG. Applications as well as other graduate information are available at: <http://webs.morningside.edu/gradedu/>.

To register for classes or for additional information, contact the Morningside Graduate Office at (800) 831-0806 ext 5375.



How can schools use state funding for gifted programming?

Funding for gifted programming is to be used for students identified who require appropriate instruction and educational services commensurate with their abilities and needs beyond those provided by the regular school programming. Regular school programming is the school district's pace and expectations for grade level and content level expectations as adopted by the local school board. The Iowa legislature provides gifted funding to support the requirement of meeting the cognitive and affective needs of students whose instructional needs exceed regular expectations.

In most school districts the first need is an educator with gifted endorsement to administer that gifted programming services for students and teachers. As gifted programming needs vary to meet individual student needs, school district staffing varies to meet those needs. If the educator staffed to provide gifted programming for the school district has additional teaching responsibilities, the portion responsible for gifted programming can be used from the gifted and talented budget. Gifted programming funding can be used for materials and resources to meet identified student needs not met by regular school programming.

For specific inquiries, contact Rosanne Malek, Consultant for Gifted Education, Iowa Department of Education, 515-281-3199 or rosanne.malek@iowa.gov.

Submitted by Rosanne Malek,
Consultant for Gifted Education,
Iowa Department of Education



The Endorsement for Gifted Education Program at the University of Northern Iowa is being offered over the ICN (Iowa Communication Network) and on campus. The program consists of four graduate courses totaling 12 credits. The courses form a sequence, with the first course offered in the fall, then one in the spring, the third in the summer, and the practicum the next fall. The sequence begins again each fall with a new cohort. Information is available on the web at: <http://www.uni.edu/continuinged/programs/career/gifted/index.shtml>. The University of

Program Coordinator: Northern Iowa is planning to soon offer the Master's Degree in Education of the Gifted, also to be provided via the ICN and on campus. The four endorsement courses will be included in the Master's Degree.
Dr. Audrey Rule
audrey.rule@uni.edu

State Requirements	Course Title	Course Description
Psychology of the gifted	210:254 The Gifted and Talented – 3 credit hours	Educational needs of gifted and talented children and youth. Emphasis on characteristics, identification, assessment, special populations, counseling, parenting, and program intervention.
Programming for the gifted	210:255 Educational Strategies for Gifted and Talented – 3 credit hours	Current trends in educational programming for the gifted and talented. Prescription, implementation, and evaluation of differentiated curriculum/educational strategies used in the comprehensive program.
Administration and supervision of gifted programs	210:257 Coordinating Programs for the Gifted and Talented – 3 credit hours	Methods/procedures for coordinating/directing school district PK-12 programs for the gifted and talented. Emphasis on program planning, management, supervision, and evaluation.
Field Experience	210:297 Practicum for the Gifted and Talented – 3 cr. hrs.	Practicum experience.

Why wasn't information about the Iowa Core Curriculum presented at the ITAG conference?

I am happy to respond. The Department of Education is carefully crafting the information about the Iowa Core Curriculum. Each of the AEAs are providing 6 training sessions over the course of this school year. The material is being developed right up to the time of each of the training sessions. Therefore, it would have been premature for us to offer a session on material that hadn't yet been presented. In fact, the first Iowa Core Curriculum training was held the week of the ITAG conference. I do encourage you to talk to your administrators and ask who is attending the training. Be a part of the conversations, or at least be informed about the information that is being shared. In the meantime, I encourage you to go online to download the Iowa Core Curriculum along with resources, background information and access to FAQs. <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/>

Submitted by Linda Moehring,
ITAG Board Member