

Parent Support Group Benefits Students

*By Jane McDowell and Valerie Thacker
Friends of Johnston ELP Board Members*

The Friends of Johnston Extended Learning Program (ELP) is a group of parents, educators, and others interested in supporting the Extended Learning Program in the Johnston School District. Our group was established in 1985 when Kathy Paul, ELP Coordinator, was asked by the Johnston School District superintendent to start a parent group. Since our group's beginning, our mission has remained largely the same: Advocate for high-ability education in Johnston.

Over the years, membership in our group has increased and is currently at 80 members, making us the largest parent group in the state. Our group is affiliated with the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association (ITAG). Members who join our group are encouraged to become members of ITAG and receive all the benefits of being part of a statewide organization.

The Friends of Johnston ELP continues to provide support and educational programs for parents of high-ability students. The four main functions of our group are:

- Encourage our schools to plan and provide for the unique educational requirements of high-ability students.
- Publicize the need for educational opportunities to enable high-ability students to achieve their full potential.
- Bring together parents, educators, and friends of high-ability students for mutual support and stimulation.
- Inform parents of legislation impacting education services for high-ability students.

As a public advocate for high-ability students, we disseminate information to parents and interested persons in the following ways:

Programs: We plan three or four programs each school year and invite guest speakers to discuss topics about parenting or educating high-ability students. Our programs

are free and open to the public. The program dates are listed on our district calendar and website.

Handbook: We have partnered with our ELP staff to compile information about ELP identification and services into a single resource book.

Website: Within the past couple of years, our group has worked with administration to develop our group's website: <http://www.johnston.k12.ia.us/schools/elp/index.html>

Our website is a place where parents, students, and teachers can find useful information: our parent handbook, membership brochure, newsletters, speaker information, contacts, and links to all kinds of educational resources for parents and students.

Newsletter: Our group publishes a newsletter four times each school year. Most of the content is provided by our ELP staff. The newsletter features information and photos about ELP activities at each school – classroom activities, special events, competitions, and student recognition. It is a great way for parents to stay informed and to learn about opportunities that become available as their student gets older.

We are proud to be a large and active group, which clearly reflects the tremendous amount of parental support for high-ability education in Johnston. Here are some suggestions to help you launch a group within your district to advocate for high-ability students:

1. Assemble a group of parents interested in supporting the needs of high-ability students in your district. Aim for an initial leadership group of six to ten parents.
2. Establish a relationship with a district staff member or administrator who can serve as the liaison be-



An affiliate of the National Association for Gifted Children

5619 NW 86th St. Ste. 600
Johnston, Iowa 50131-2955

2009-2011 OFFICERS

President

Diane Pratt
(dpratt@fort-dodge.k12.ia.us)

President Elect

Linda Moehring
(lmoehring@aea11.k12.ia.us)

Treasurer

Gail Kenkel
(gkenkel@cbcsd.org or gkenkel@yahoo.com)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Christine Comito (cdcomito@gmail.com)
Ashley Delaney (adelaney@waukee.k12.ia.us)
Gail Kenkel (gkenkel@cbcsd.org)
Claudia Koch (cdkoch@mchsi.com)
Rodney Martinez (martinez@norwalk.k12.ia.us)
Linda Moehring (lmoehring@aea11.k12.ia.us)
Jenelle Nisly (jenelle.nisly@shilohuniversity.org)
LeAnn Oldenburger (leann@oldenburger.us)
Diane Pratt (dpratt@fort-dodge.k12.ia.us)
Matt Robie (matt.robie@ankenyschools.org)
Sally Thorson (sth0004@q.com)
Doreen Underwood
(underwoodd@davenportportschools.org)
Kenn Wathen (kwathen@hamburg.k12.ia.us)
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EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS

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ITAG LOBBYISTS

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BUSINESS MANAGEMENT FOR ITAG BUSINESS AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Alda Helvey, ITAG Executive Director
Dynamic Resources, Inc.
5619 NW 86th St. Ste. 600
Johnston, Iowa 50131-2955
515-225-2323 (phone) 515-327-5050 (fax)

ITAG NEWS Editorial Staff

Matt Robie - News Editor
Doreen Underwood - Assistant Editor
Heather Paris - Graphic Artist

Future Submission dates are:

March 31, 2011 for the Spring Issue
July 31, 2011 for the Summer / Fall issue
November 30, 2011 for the Winter 2011-12 issue

ITAG CONTACTS FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION

ITAG President: Diane Pratt
1851 9th Avenue N, Fort Dodge, IA 50501
515-955-8620 515-574-5691
dpratt@fort-dodge.k12.ia.us

President Elect: Linda Moehring
830 Veterans Memorial Drive, Carlisle, IA 50047
515-989-4595 515-270-9030 x4631
515-270-5383 fax
lmoehring@aea11.k12.ia.us

Treasurer: Gail Kenkel
407 W. Graham, Council Bluffs, IA 51503
712-323-3373 712-828-6519
gkenkel@cbcsd.org or gkenkel@yahoo.com

LEGISLATIVE

Gail Kenkel
Linda Moehring
Rodney Martinez

MEMBERSHIP/NOMINATIONS

Sue Chartier
Susan Wouters
Jenelle Nisly

OUTREACH

Educator Outreach:
Kenn Wathen
Ashley Delaney
Sally Thorson

Parent Outreach:
Christine Comito
LeAnn Oldenburger
Claudia Koch

ITAG NEWS EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor: Matt Robie
matt.robie@ankenyschools.org

Assistant Editor: Doreen Underwood
underwoodd@davenportportschools.org

Website Facilitator and Graphic Artist:
Heather Paris, morganbridgid@mchsi.com

THE MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association is to recognize, support, and respect the unique and diverse needs of talented and gifted learners through advocacy, education, and networking.

THE ASSOCIATION

ITAG, an affiliate of the National Association for Gifted Children, is a tax exempt, 501C3 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.

THE BOARD

Meets during the months of November, January, March, May, August, and during the Annual Conference in October. Interested persons are welcome to attend meetings. Please contact a Board Member for the date, time, and location of a meeting if you plan to attend.

THE ITAG NEWS

Is published in January, May, and September, by the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association, 5619 NW 86th St., Ste. 600, Johnston, Iowa 50131-2955. Please send mailing address corrections to this Johnston address. For information regarding content of ITAG NEWS and/or submission of articles and announcements, please contact: Matt Robie, ITAG NEWS Editor, 3116 SW Timberline Drive, Ankeny, Iowa 50023. e-mail: matt.robie@ankenyschools.org or itag@assoc-serv.com.

NOTE: Please submit articles and announcements as an e-mail attachment in Rich Text Format (RTF) or Generic Text Only. Questions: please contact Heather Paris at e-mail: morganbridgid@mchsi.com or call 515-257-6306.

Please contact individual authors for permission to reprint their articles.

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ITAG does not endorse any specific perspective or methodology, but presents issues and articles that may be helpful in a variety of educational settings, and/or to many populations of gifted children.

ITAG Website

<http://www.iowatag.org>

Please send changes in the above information to Alda Helvey at ITAG@assoc-serv.com

How does your local program make a difference for your gifted students? How are your students different because of what you do in your gifted classrooms? What influences student learning for gifted kids that increases their achievement? These are the questions that the Iowa Core will ask of us. And they are questions that many districts have not addressed for their gifted/ELP programs. An examination and assessment of what we each do can help us prepare for a future site visit that holds us accountable for an answer!

There is no one “right” way for a gifted program to look in Iowa schools. In an effort to maintain local control, the state allows each district to design what will best serve the needs of its own students. But by definition, it must be a “comprehensive K-12 program.” In Iowa, that means others must be involved in planning for the education of gifted students, not solely the TAG provider. Certainly, the most frequent provisions for gifted learners should be taking place in the mainstream classroom through differentiation, ability grouping, enrichment, acceleration, etc. So classroom teachers and content area teachers, as well as gifted specialists and administrators should identify and plan how they intend to serve the needs of these K-12 students. You may find it surprising, however, that the last Iowa BEDS (Basic Educational Data Survey) Report lists very few identified K-1 students in the state! If this is your district, it is something that needs to change before the next local site visit!

Just as there is not one right way for a district’s gifted program to look, there is no one curriculum to be used for the gifted, at any given level. The needs of our students must be identified so that experiences within curriculum

are designed to support improved achievement. It is imperative, then, that this reaches beyond the gifted classroom and includes the experiences in the mainstream classroom. Gifted providers must strive to become more active in serving as resources and mentors to classroom teachers, advising them of appropriate models of high end differentiation. Local needs and priorities should remain the focus if we are to obtain support for gifted education.

Partly because of increasingly greater understanding of how the brain works, researchers are finding that our brains can be nurtured into a high level of function when supported with opportunity, application and effort. The Tower Education Group, a British think-tank made up of education researchers and professionals, has identified twelve future trends in gifted education. Five of those include:

1. Building capacity within education systems to meet the needs of gifted learners: a comprehensive and collaborative approach
2. A multi-faceted approach to discovering hidden potential of all learners, not only high achievers
3. Whole school improvement that is enhanced by a focus on gifted education, then working from the top down, creating a more positive environment
4. Representation in GT/ELP that broadly reflects the whole school population
5. Continuous program evaluation that monitors the outcomes of the learning offered, providing evidence of need for expansion or of replication of services

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tween the parent group and the district. Our group is guided by a leadership board which includes ELP Coordinator, Kathy Paul, who functions as a liaison between our group and the district. Kathy Paul was instrumental in the forming of Friends of Johnston ELP in 1985 and remains an active participant in our meetings. Work with your district liaison to determine how your group can best support the teachers.

3. Determine if your group's intent is to provide parent support via programming and communications, or funding for extended learning initiatives at school, or both.

If you want to reach out to other parents and grow a membership, free informative programming is an easy way to create interest in your group. At programs gather names and contact information of people interested in serving high-ability students in your district, so that you can develop a database to be able to communicate with the group. We rely primarily on electronic communication to keep our administrative costs to a minimum and maximize our funding to staff.

If you are just starting up, one idea would be to include a flier along with the identification letters sent out to students in the spring for an upcoming program such as "My Child Has Been Identified for Gifted Programming. Now What?" At this meeting, have the extended learning staff members discuss the levels of service and the types of ELP activities offered within your district. For other programming ideas, think about what parents of high-ability students are interested in learning. A list of our programs for recent years is included on our website.

If your desire is to provide funding support for teachers, you will need to incorporate as a section 501(c)(3) non-profit group. Money raised by our organization is channeled back to Johnston ELP staff for educational materials and resources. Through our membership fees, donations, and concession stand work, we are pleased to be able to provide our district ELP staff with funds each fall to purchase curriculum and supplies the staff otherwise would not have available.

There are several reasons why your group should become a tax-exempt non-profit corporation:

- Comply with federal and state laws for reporting receipts and income. These laws are designed to

protect the public interests concerning charitable organizations.

- Be exempt from paying income taxes.
- Be able to claim donations are tax-deductible.
- Limit personal liability of officers and members.
- Incorporation increases the likelihood of obtaining tax-exempt determination from the IRS (if needed) by clearly defining how the organization operates, and provides for longevity of the organization.
- Additional cost, time, and recording requirements of the corporation are minimal versus operating as an unincorporated organization and complying with the laws.

These are the basic steps needed to get your group started as a tax-exempt non-profit corporation:

- File "Articles of Incorporation" with the State of Iowa - \$20 fee.
- Obtain Employer Identification number (EIN) Form SS-4 at the www.IRS.gov website.
- Write bylaws and adoption by the corporate board of directors.
- Set up corporate records, financial and business (minutes of meetings) supporting documents.
- File Form 1023-Application for Recognition of Exemption and Form 8718-User Fee for Exempt Organization. See IRS website to determine if this is required.
- Have a written plan to ensure your group is able to comply with all federal and state reporting requirements in the future.

4. Create a website for your group. Work with your district staff liaison to have a link on your district's website. Many of our ELP staff members include a direct link to the Friends of Johnston ELP website from their school web page. A dedicated website serves as an informative site for programming details, as well as provides a way for the leadership group to direct people to consistent information as to what the group is about. It is important to be able to give parents a clear, consistent message about the purpose of the group.

The Friends of Johnston ELP has been a very valuable support group for our parents and staff over the years. Membership has increased along with student involvement in the program, as parents have seen the need for advocacy. It has taken several years for our group to develop to where we are today, but it has definitely been worth the time and effort.

Annual Report to the Members of ITAG

Your association is composed of 14 elected board members, two ex-officio members, and an Executive Director. Board Members serve for a three-year term and can be re-elected for up to two additional terms. Board Members for the 2009-2010 school year were: Diane Pratt, Fort Dodge, President; Mary Schmidt, Norwalk, Past-President; Sue Chartier, Sioux City; Christine Comito, Des Moines; Claudia Koch, Fort Dodge; Jean Johnson, Sioux City; Gail Kenkel, Council Bluffs; Kristy Latta, Des Moines; Linda Moehring, Carlisle; Jenelle Nisly, Le Claire; Matt Robie, Ankeny; Sally Thorson, Waverly; Doreen Underwood, Davenport; and Kenn Wathen, Hamburg.

Ex-Officio members are Rosanne Malek, representing the Department of Education and Maureen Marron, representing the Belin Blank International Center for Talent Development.

Board Meetings: During the 2009-2010 school year, five meetings and one retreat was held. The meeting dates were August 5 and November 14, 2009 and January 28, June 11 and August 3, 2010. The retreat was held April 24, 2010.

Standing Committees: The ITAG Standing Committees are: Conference, Parent Outreach, Educator Outreach, Legislative, Communications, Membership/Nominations. Each committee reported at the board meetings and met/communicated with members as needed throughout they year.

Focus Group Retreat: A goal development workshop was held April 24, 2010 at Heartland AEA, Johnston, IA. Four goals had been identified to provide direction for our work: assisting districts in understanding and filling endorsement needs; connecting with teacher preparation programs; supporting the practitioner; and developing and maintaining a speakers' bureau.

ITAG Website: The Association's website is located at www.iowatag.org. In addition to information about the organization, there are many links to related resources on giftedness.

Communications: Quarterly Newsletters are quite informative and feature articles by national as well as state authors. An attempt to address current issues in

gifted education and well as offer practical solutions is behind each issue. A monthly Spotlight on Gifted Education e-mail was added this year to provide a quick tip for friendly reminder for issues of interest to gifted educators. A Facebook page was added our communication efforts this fall.

Legislative Representation: Our legislative committee is charged with following issues of gifted education of both state and national interest. ITAG is an affiliate of National Association for Gifted Children. The state association sent two representatives to the national affiliate conference March 6 to 9, 2010. Our association also maintains state lobbyists who regularly communicate the status of issues of interest to our association.

State Department of Education: Rosanne Malek, Director for Talented and Gifted for the state of Iowa is an Ex-Officio representative of our board. Her regular attendance at meetings as well as access during the year provides a valuable service to our association.

ITAG Annual Conference: This year the annual conference was held at the Des Moines Airport Holiday Inn on October 18-19, 2010. The theme was The Winds of Change: Generate, Challenge, Promise, and Possibilities. 442 people attended. Results of the fall elections were announced.

Young Scholars Conferences: Two Young Scholars Conferences were held this spring. 138 students and chaperones attended the conference at UNI on Tuesday, April 6, 2010 and 48 attended the conference at BVU on Wednesday, April 14, 2010. The purpose of the Young Scholars Conferences is to bring higher education professionals together with selected talented and gifted students, bringing today's dreams with tomorrow's possibilities.

Other State Conferences: We regularly have a vendor booth at the School Administrators of Iowa in August and at the Iowa Association of School Boards conference in November. There was a drawing for a one day administrator registration to the fall ITAG conference. For the IASB conference, we again had a "gifted knowledge" quiz with a \$50 gift card going to the lucky winner.

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Plans for attending/presenting at other state professional conference during the 2010-2011 school year are being pursued.

Mentorships/Partnerships: The opportunity for novice teachers to partner with experienced teachers has been available for four years. Again this year, fliers were put in 2010 conference folders to assist in this connection.

2010-2011 Board Meetings: All meeting locations are at the Heartland AEA office, Johnston, IA except for the January meeting which is held over the ICN after school.

November 6, 2010	10:00-2:00	
January 11, 2010	4:00-6:00	
April 2, 2011	10:00-2:00	
June 10, 2011	10:00-2:00	
August 2, 2011	4:30-8:30	location TBD

By Diane Pratt, ITAG President

Continued from Page 3 - President's Message

"Gifted education has to address the big 'so what' and 'why bother' questions. It has to demonstrate that it has something substantial to offer," says the Group.

Best practices in gifted education have long been acknowledged to be good for all learners. We become an asset to our districts when we remain knowledgeable in the practices, trends, and research of our field. As educators of gifted, the best thing we can do is to continue to learn all we can: networking with colleagues, taking classes, reading professional journals and books, participating in the listserv, developing relationships with our gifted and mainstream colleagues.

We hope you were able to join us at our annual October conference. What an exciting event! After pouring over your feedback, our conference committee and Board of Directors are committed to another fantastic learning experience next October 17-18, 2011 at the Airport Holiday Inn. As one of the best ways to participate in gifted professional development during the school year, please make it priority. It will be a final opportunity to earn credit towards an endorsement in this way before the July 2012 deadline!

Thanks for all you do for our gifted students.

By Diane Pratt, ITAG President

ITAG Partners

PLEASE HELP!!! We are 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 Kenn Wathen, Educator Outreach, kwathen@hamburg.k12.ia.us if you would be willing to help.

Monthly ITAG Spotlight

Are you receiving the ITAG Spotlight on Gifted Education e-mail? If not, please e-mail your current contact information to the ITAG office at itag@assoc-serv.com.

In addition, please make sure that you add ITAG's e-mail address as an approved contact in your e-mail program's address book.

SENG

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SENG is dedicated to fostering environments in which gifted adults and children, in all their diversity, understand and accept themselves and are understood, valued, nurtured, and supported by their families, schools, workplaces and communities.

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Meet the ITAG Board Committees



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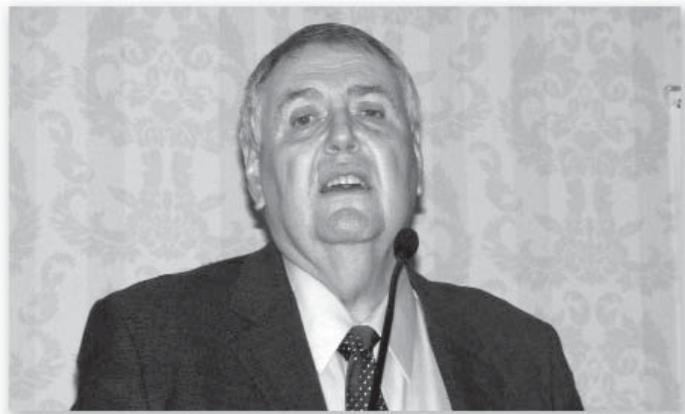
Jenelle Nisley

Furthering the Education of Iowa's Talented and Gifted





Mary Schmidt presents Jill Ulrich (left) with the inaugural Administrator of the Year award.



Keynote speaker Dr. George Betts speaks about "The Journey of Lifelong Learning".



Keynote speaker Dr. Marcia Gentry addresses the audience at one of her breakout sessions.



Conference attendees collaborate and network between sessions.



Rosanne Malek shares her musical gift with conference attendees.



Dr. Nicholas Colangelo speaks on the topic of anti-intellectualism.

2010 ITAG Conference Highlights



2010 Conference Co-Chairs Tony Voss and Debra Mishak.



Linda Moehring speaks about serving gifted preschool students.



A distinguished panel gathered on the second afternoon of the conference.



Sally Thorson presents Jenelle Nisley with the 2010 ITAG Research Award.



Chris Schultz, Sue Chartier, and Diane Pratt discuss next steps.



Keynote Speakers Elizabeth Nielsen and Dennis Higgins speak and sing about "Transformational Leadership".

Comprehension and Collaboration: Inquiry Circles in Action

Authors: Stephanie Harvey and Harvey Daniels

Building knowledge that really matters in the lives of highly capable students is one of the challenges many gifted and talented educators face. **Comprehension and Collaboration: Inquiry Circles in Action** is co-authored by Stephanie Harvey and Harvey Daniels. It recognizes the need for consistent structure that supports all students to actively use knowledge and put it to work in their lives. Chronicling current research and practices behind comprehension instruction and classroom collaboration, the authors describe how students are taught to be critical, thoughtful, independent-minded researchers.

The authors discuss how teachers can foster the active use of knowledge with their students. As gifted and talented teachers, one of our most important jobs is to foster the active use of knowledge. Using the collaboration and inquiry strategies set forth in this book, students aren't asked to simply remember what they learn, but are asked to put it to use in their everyday lives while interacting collaboratively with pairs of students, teams, or inquiry groups. Throughout the book, the authors have interspersed classroom accounts demonstrating how teachers are putting the principles of inquiry to work with students. The principles of inquiry work well with our unique students.

"The more kids see their thinking matters, the more they understand their own power." The authors discuss the power of teaching students to think about content, wonder about information and actively use the knowledge that they gain. Thinking and wondering about topics of interest leads students to take action and to use their newly learned knowledge actively in their everyday lives.

Topics that are authentic and relevant will be most significant to highly capable students. Audience is particularly important. "Without an audience, there's no real inquiry needed, no original work to do, no 'ahas' around the next corner." If the work is not authentic, highly capable students feel like it is more of an assignment than an invitation to learn. Authenticity is highly important in an inquiry-based classroom. Students choose inquiry topics based on real questions and interests. Students engage in authentic research using real-world tools such as Web searches, interview, surveys, focus groups and, of course, visits to the library. Relevance and authenticity go hand in hand. When students relate to what they are studying, learning is more authentic and more enjoyable.

As teachers of highly capable students, we should stress knowledge over information. Highly capable students find little motivation in acquiring knowledge for any reason if it cannot be used in a meaningful way in their lives. For the authors, "going deeper means thinking about what we learn and applying that knowledge every day." Through an inquiry-based approach, students learn new information, integrate that information, and apply it in their lives. They are often challenged by new information to apply it to experiences and circumstances that arise in daily living. Situations such as debating a public issue, deciding on political candidates, or making informed choices about how we live are certainly ways that students can use their knowledge.

Choice is highly motivating to gifted and talented students. Through inquiry-based strategies, students are encouraged to take a curious and critical stance. When students are given the opportunity to use their critical curiosity, students will often favor topics that are important to them and have great significance in their lives. This authentic choice is, again, highly motivating to highly capable students.

Caution should be exercised when forming small-groups. The authors describe forming groups around student strengths in order to divide up group tasks. Well-structured small-group inquiries can be highly motivational and relevant to students. "Small groups allow us to differentiate instruction." It is important, however, to keep groupings temporary and flexible. The authors would encourage students to switch roles. "We don't always let the kids take the same role over and over." We should always consider how our small-groups are functioning for all members. The highly capable student that is routinely the leader in a small-group may rise to the occasion or may tire of the role. Highly capable students may appreciate a leadership role at times, but may also need to feel like they aren't "required" to have all the answers. Fluid groupings should reign supreme in an inquiry-based classroom. Continually check in with students to see how they are functioning in their small-group. Be ready to respond when students want to work alone or if the small-group is falling short of the outcomes they hope to achieve. The key words here are fluid, flexible and responsive.

I have appreciated this book for the many strategies that I have been able to apply to my work with highly capable students. I value the principles of inquiry and collaboration that the authors write about to support students' use of active knowledge. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who would like to teach students to be critical thinkers and to inspire them to actively use knowledge in their everyday lives.

Review submitted by Vicki Taylor
Ankeny Extended Learning Program
Ankeny Community School District

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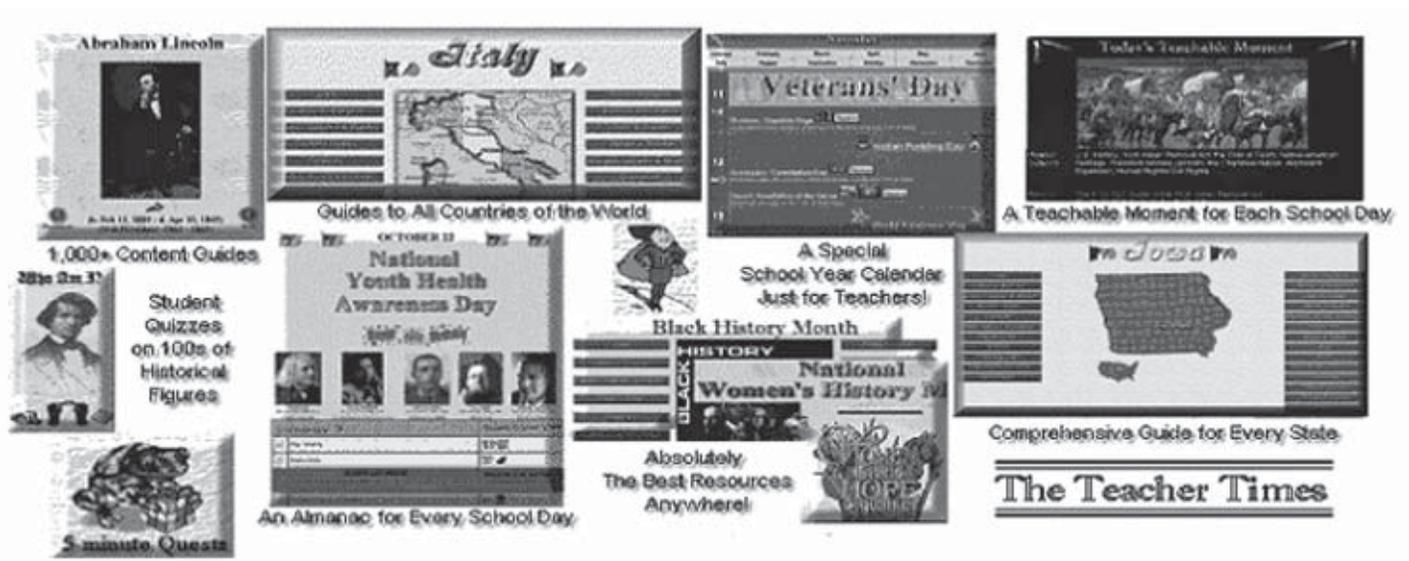
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ITAG is proud to announce its second Administrator of the Year award to be given in 2011! We will be recognizing a building level or district office administrator who supports and advances ITAG's mission in his/her school or district. As you consider your nomination, please refer to the ITAG Mission (see below) and describe the ways this administrator furthers that mission and contributes to meeting the needs of the gifted learners in your school, district, and community.

Full details and the nomination form are found on the ITAG Website under the Conference and Resource tabs or at <http://www.iowatag.org/DOCUMENTS/AdminofYear.pdf>

IOWA TALENTED AND GIFTED MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association is to recognize, support, and respect the unique and diverse needs of talented and gifted learners through

ADVOCACY:

by encouraging **informed** educational professionals, parents, policy makers, and all other stake holders to take appropriate action for the benefit of talented and gifted learners.

EDUCATION:

by strengthening and encouraging the recognition and implementation of practices that support **identification** of talented and gifted learners and **accommodation** of the social, emotional, and intellectual levels.

NETWORKING:

by increasing opportunities for **collaboration** and **cooperation** among all stakeholders with the goal of advancing the abilities and developing the potential of talented and gifted learners.

THE PROCESS:

1. Consider the descriptors found in ITAG's Mission Statement. Nominations will be considered and the award recipient determined using these descriptors.
2. Complete the nomination form found on the ITAG website at <http://www.iowatag.org/DOCUMENTS/AdminofYear.pdf>
3. Submit to Mary Schmidt by **June 4 , 2011**.
E-mail: mschmidt@aea11.k12.ia.us
USPC: 9291 Lakewood Pointe Drive, Norwalk, IA 50211



The recipient will be recognized at SAI in August and ITAG in October.

2011 Distinguished Service Award



**Please mail your nominations to:
Kenn Wathen
1400 Main Street
Hamburg, IA 51640**

**If you have questions, please
contact Kenn Wathen at
kwathen@hamburg.k12.ia.us**

**Nominations must be received
by June 30, 2011**

The Iowa Talented and Gifted Association Distinguished Service Award is presented in recognition of an individual's exemplary service, contribution, and commitment to Iowa's talented and gifted students. This includes parents, teachers, administrators, or others who have demonstrated effort to positively impact services and opportunities for gifted learners.

Anyone may make a nomination for the award. Affiliate chapters are especially encouraged to submit nominations. Since only one award is usually given each year, many exceptional nominees are yet to be recognized. Current ITAG Board Members are not eligible for this award.

Please use the nomination form on the ITAG website: <http://www.iowatag.org> (resources page) or duplicate this form. Additionally, please include a statement (500 word limit) explaining your reasons for nomination. You may attach other supporting documents and letters of support from administrators, teachers, parents, or students.

No materials will be returned.

Nominee name _____

School district _____

Street address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Number of years of service
to gifted and talented _____

Nominated by _____

Daytime phone number _____

Evening phone number _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Relationship to nominee _____



Curriculum Compacting: A Getting Started Guide for Math

As more and more emphasis is placed on differentiation within the regular classroom, teachers are searching for ways to meet the needs of all students at all times. One model that meets the needs for differentiation that many schools in Iowa are adapting is the Instructional Decision Making Model which examines student populations as a whole and then determines what type of instruction; direct, remediation, or enrichment, best serves their needs. Curriculum compacting fits into this model perfectly and is a way for regular classroom teachers, with the support of the talented and gifted services offered in their building, to differentiate.

Curriculum compacting, according to Joseph Renzulli and Sally Reis, is a procedure used to streamline the grade level curriculum for high potential students to provide time for more challenging and interesting work. It is an instructional technique that is specifically designed to make appropriate curricular adjustments for students in any curricular area and at any grade level. It is a concept that has been on the fringes of mainstream educational practice for the last couple of decades.

Curriculum compacting, as a form of differentiation, appealed to us because it meets the individual needs of our varied populations. Muscatine has eight elementary schools and each one has a unique demographic. Because of the variance in backgrounds we have found curriculum compacting to be the perfect answer for our differentiation needs.

We adopted curriculum compacting in math as a means of differentiation based on the knowledge that our brightest students weren't being adequately challenged in a math program every day. Because of the structure of our program, it wasn't feasible for us as ELP teachers to provide every day programming because we are only in a building two days per week. We discussed the possibility of subject acceleration and realized that for most students this isn't practical because it requires that students be performing at least 1-2 whole grade levels above their current grade and we discovered that most students have gaps in their grade level expectations. For some students, however, subject acceleration is a viable solution and should be considered.

The curriculum compacting program we started in the schools we serve provides an opportunity for students to apply the math skills in a given chapter at a higher level instead of completing the "regular" classroom assignments.

This change allows students to have a deeper understanding of these skills and how they're used in the real world. For instance, instead of learning about different types of graphs along with the classroom, compacting students are making posters to display in the room about graphing and how it is used, or looking for examples of graphs in newspapers and magazine and summarizing how they contribute to the effectiveness of the article.

It is important to note that all curricular areas can be modified by curriculum compacting, however for the purposes of this article and our experience, we will focus on curriculum compacting in math at the upper elementary level. These steps and suggestions can be easily modified to suit any grade level and any subject.

For some of the schools and some classrooms in the Muscatine School District, this is second year of this program and others are just beginning this year. Along the way, we've refined and reworked some of the logistics to make it more challenging for students and easier to administer from the teacher's perspective. The important thing to remember is that it isn't and doesn't have to be exactly the same across a district. It is tailored to the needs of the students and the classroom teacher.

Getting Started with Curriculum Compacting

Step 1: Recruit an ally (or two!) As with any project it's important that it be successful from the outset. In order for curriculum compacting to take root and expand in a school system it's important to have the support of your administrators. The next step is finding an ally in the form of a regular education classroom teacher. As important as administrative support is, the support of classroom teachers is crucial. Choosing the right person with whom to collaborate is instrumental in the success of the program. Without a classroom teacher's enthusiasm in providing challenge for all students, the process of curriculum compacting will be doomed to fail. When choosing a person with whom to collaborate consider the following: Is this teacher considered a leader in the school system? Will this teacher have the necessary skills, i.e. organization, ability and desire to differentiate? Do you work well with this teacher? Does the teacher have students who could potentially benefit from curriculum compacting? Generally, you will have a gut feeling about who this person will be based on your previous interactions with this teacher.

Step 2: Determine what area to compact based on your students' needs. It's important to start small. It's

critical to have success with this program from the start so that teachers and students can see its benefits and will want to collaborate with you in the future. The one area to be careful of is trying to do too much. The excitement students feel when starting curriculum compacting can expand quickly to other classes and it's important to manage the growth or else it can get out of hand easily.

We chose to start with math, because again, we knew our students had a need and that this would be an area that would be manageable. Math is less abstract than social studies or science and we knew we could get teacher buy in from the start.

Step 3: Determine level of mastery needed for curriculum compacting. Generally speaking this is 90% or above on a pretest. However, we have discovered that often there are students who don't meet that criteria, but are only missing one or two concepts from the chapter. In this case we work with the classroom teacher to determine if the student needs replacement curriculum, classroom work or a combination of both. In math we have found that it's often the vocabulary that can prevent a student from achieving a 90% or above on a pretest and classroom teachers generally feel this is an easy thing for them to learn. Classroom teachers have the responsibility to be sure the concepts missed are taught to the students either before compacting begins or as the chapter is taught. Classroom teachers also allow students to take the final test if mastery isn't shown on the pretest.

Step 4: Determine who should be pretested. This is a really individualized decision based on the classroom teacher's preferences. We've found that some classroom teachers choose to pretest the entire class and then use the results of the pretest to guide instruction. This is definitely our preference, but we understand that it can be time consuming. The other option is that teachers choose to pretest those who have a reasonable chance of being successful on the pretest based on past performances. The downfall of this is that students who have a specific pocket of knowledge on a topic may be missed. An example of this is in the area of geometry. We've found this is one area where students who may not ordinarily be able to compact out of the curriculum have success. Likewise, students who compact often find geometry to be challenging and their needs are met within the classroom setting.

Step 5: Provide replacement curriculum. This is the most fun part of curriculum compacting for us, but it can be challenging to find just the right materials and we've found it can be time consuming. It's important that the replacement curriculum isn't busy work, but provides students with

an opportunity to apply critical thinking skills and use higher order thinking. We also think it's important to provide students a choice of projects that best meets their learning styles. In the beginning all students were completing the same work and we found it to be a manageable place to start, however we quickly learned that students wanted the opportunity to choose how to apply their mastered skills. After looking at a variety of resources we chose to look at a "menu" approach for compacting where students can choose from a variety of projects that relate back to the concepts being taught in the regular classroom. Students are responsible for selecting and completing projects with assigned points totalling 100. Higher order thinking projects have a higher point value and projects with less real world application have a lower point value. We include a variety of difficulty for students because we are in the building two days a week and want to ensure that students are always working.

We've found this is an excellent time for students to integrate technology into their projects. We've had students create SMART board lessons, complete webquests, plan a week's worth of meals for their family using online resources, create blogs, and complete assignments on a blog.

Step 6: Assessment of student work. After students have created this wonderfully creative work, make sure to plan time to properly provide feedback to students. We've found this feedback is necessary to attain the quality work expected of this independent study program. In addition, classroom teachers need feedback on how their students are performing so that they can use the information to provide appropriate grades for their students.

This is a piece of the compacting issue that we are currently addressing because of the time needed to properly assess and provide feedback to teachers and students. Find time in your schedule for this important step.

As we move forward with this program, teachers' and students' roles in the Instructional Decision Making model have allowed for their needs to be met in a challenging and appropriate way. Curriculum compacting is a doable form of differentiation in that you can use the resources you already have and it can be tailored to meet the needs of both students and teachers.

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Submitted by Stacy Emrich and Ginger Dahms,
Muscatine Community School District

To contact us:
Stacy slemrich@muscatine.k12.ia.us
Ginger gadahms@muscatine.k12.ia.us

Removing the Cloak of Invisibility: Identifying and Serving Twice Exceptional Students

The National Institute for Twice-Exceptionality (NITE)

This year, the Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development in the University of Iowa's College of Education launched a five-year project to develop a National Institute for Twice-Exceptionality (NITE). Supported by an initial one-year \$165,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education, this institute will provide increased services to address the needs of gifted children who also have learning, behavioral, emotional, and/or social impairments, and are thus referred to as twice-exceptional. There is a clear national need to serve this population; it is estimated that there are more than 360,000 twice-exceptional students in our nation's schools (Ralabate, 2006).

Twice-exceptional students present a unique challenge within the educational setting because they often go unrecognized and/or unidentified. Sometimes their high intellectual ability may "mask" their disability. So for example, an exceptionally bright student with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who shows precocious language development and reads at a 3rd grade level before starting kindergarten may not be readily identified as twice-exceptional until he or she gets into a more structured school setting and exhibits difficulties interacting with other children, adapting to the structure of the classroom, and making transitions between activities. Or, conversely, the student's disability may mask their academic potential. So, a gifted student with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may initially appear to be an average or below average student; but once the ADHD is identified and treated, may exhibit exceptional academic performance. In some cases twice exceptional students are "invisible," and their talents or their disabilities are not identified and addressed. While these children are well served in some educational settings, this is not always the case because of the limited access educators and parents have to information about twice-exceptionality.

The primary goal of NITE is to increase awareness and education about twice-exceptional students among teachers and parents. Initial objectives include the following:

1. Expanding professional development opportunities for educators, counselors, and psychologists.
2. Continuing clinical services in the Center's Assessment and Counseling Clinic, which involve provision of comprehensive psycho-educational assessments and counseling for twice exceptional students,

3. Conducting additional research studies to learn more about the abilities, challenges and needs of twice-exceptional students and their families and develop effective intervention strategies for addressing these.
4. Increasing our dissemination of information through the establishment of a web-based clearing house; publication of research; production of webinars; and presentation at state, national, and international conferences.

The University of Iowa, with its history of leadership in the areas of gifted education, special education, and developmental disabilities, along with its opportunities for collaboration among faculty and staff in a range of departments, provides an excellent context in which to develop this institute. "We're looking to this institute to be a national leader," remarked Nicholas Colangelo, Director of the Belin-Blank Center, during a gathering of University of Iowa and State officials to announce the creation of NITE.

The Belin-Blank Center has developed particular clinical and training expertise in the area of twice-exceptionality. The Center's Assessment and Counseling Clinic staff includes two licensed psychologists, Megan Foley Nicpon, Ph.D., and Claire Whiteman, Ph.D., and recently added a post-doctoral scholar Alissa Doobay, Ph.D., (funded through the NITE grant), all of whom have expertise in conducting comprehensive assessments and providing counseling for twice exceptional students, including gifted students with ASD, ADHD, learning disabilities (LD), and emotional/behavioral concerns (such as anxiety or depression). All Clinic staff have also received intensive training through the University of Michigan Autism and Communication Disorders Center in a comprehensive diagnostic system to identify ASD, which has been an important component in developing expertise in this area. In addition, more specific knowledge about the abilities and challenges of twice-exceptional students was gained through a U.S. Department of Education Javits Grant (2005-2008) which funded a collaborative effort between the Iowa Department of Education and the Belin-Blank Center to study twice-exceptional students in Iowa. This study, completed within the Assessment and Counseling Clinic at the Belin-Blank Center, included a needs assessment survey targeted at Iowa educators and comprehensive psycho-educational evaluations of two groups of twice-exceptional

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students: gifted students with LD and gifted students with ASD.

Gifted Student with Written Language Disabilities

Our investigations of gifted students with learning disabilities revealed that the most frequently occurring disability in our group of referred students was a written language disability. The profiles of these students, which were obtained as a result of comprehensive evaluations, revealed that verbal and nonverbal intellectual abilities were much better developed than working memory and processing speed abilities (See figure 1 below).

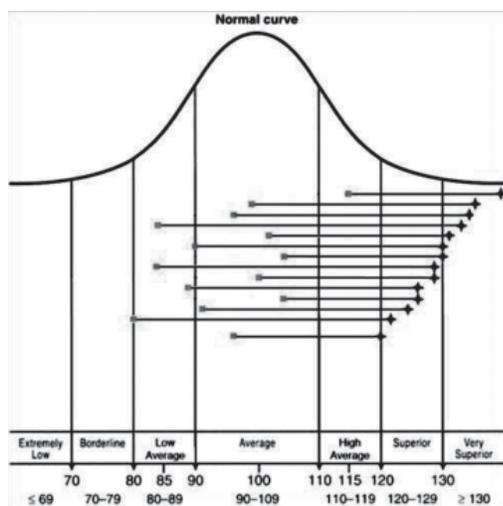


Figure 1 - Comparison of Intellectual Ability (stars) and Overall Written Language (squares)

A particularly interesting finding was that verbal intellectual abilities were somewhat better developed than nonverbal abilities, which was unexpected since written language skills draw heavily on verbal abilities. Reading profiles in this group were highly variable; 36 percent of the students had a concomitant diagnosis of a reading disorder. The most striking finding was how much lower written language scores were than expected given students' exceptional overall intellectual ability. While many of these students exhibited written language skills within the Average range, their scores were significantly (in some cases 2 ½ to 3 Standard Deviations) below their intellectual ability (Whiteman & Foley Nicpon, 2009). This discrepancy illustrates why these students have difficulties completing written assignments and performing language arts tasks at the level expected based on their high ability; problems that can keep them from flourishing within the educational setting.

Gifted students with ASD

Gifted students with ASD have been of particular interest because of the wide variability in ability and performance within this population, and the challenges faced by families and educators in providing appropriate services to address both their gifts and their challenges. To date, our research has examined general characteristics of this population (e.g., intellectual profile, adaptive skills, academic achievement, psychosocial functioning, etc.), as well as compared gifted students with ASD and gifted students without ASD across these domains (Foley Nicpon, Assouline, Amend, & Schuler, 2010). While our clinical experience supports the common adage "if you have met one child with autism, you have met one child with autism," indicating that each student with ASD demonstrates a unique constellation of characteristics, our research also has allowed us to identify common profiles of gifted students with ASD.

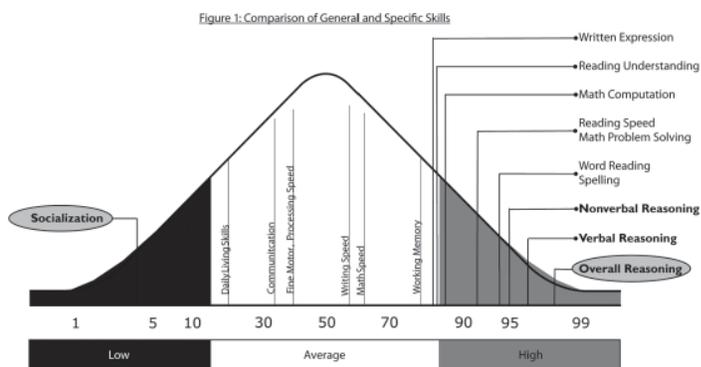


Figure 2 - Comparison of General and Specific Skills

Our research findings showing the performance of gifted students with ASD on a range of measures is provided in **figure 2 above**. The average full scale intellectual quotient of our sample of gifted students with ASD is between the 95th and 99th percentile. Similarly, these students have demonstrated very strong academic abilities, with reading and math abilities above the 90th percentile. The average level of academic performance on measures of written expression was above the 80th percentile. Our sample of gifted students with ASD demonstrated average abilities in the areas of working memory and processing speed. They had significantly more difficulty with adaptive functioning, most notably in the areas of socialization with a score at the 5th percentile. The discrepancy between intellectual functioning and adaptive skills in this population helps to explain the confusion experienced by many parents and educators in working with this group; they have exceptionally strong skills in some areas (e.g., intelligence and academic achievement) but meet criteria for a disability in others (e.g., social skills). In other words, appropriate interventions to address both their talent areas and their challenge areas are necessary in

order to assist them in both developing their potential and remediating their areas of weakness.

Another issue that has been addressed has been differences between gifted students who have ASD and gifted students who do not have ASD (Doobay, 2010). This research revealed significant differences between groups in each of the domains assessed. More specifically, both groups demonstrated Very Superior verbal and nonverbal intellectual abilities, but gifted students without ASD had significantly higher scores in the area of processing speed (rapidly and accurately identifying and responding to information) than did gifted students with ASD. Very significant differences were found between groups in overall adaptive, or day-to-day functioning, in the areas of daily living (e.g., attending to personal hygiene, household chores), communication, and most notably, socialization. Parent and teacher reports of psychosocial functioning yielded similar profiles, with gifted students with ASD demonstrating greater difficulties in the areas of attention, hyperactivity, depression, social withdrawal, atypical behavior (e.g., unusual behavior that leads the child to appear different from peers), adaptability, activities of daily living, and social skills. The gifted students with ASD reported having greater concerns regarding anxiety, depression, social stress, and general feelings of inadequacy. This research not only helps us better understand gifted students with ASD, but also guides us in how to differentiate gifted students with ASD from their gifted peers who may be experiencing social difficulties as a result of their giftedness.

A case study (Assouline, Foley Nicpon, & Doobay, 2009), illustrates the importance of a comprehensive assessment in making a diagnosis of ASD in gifted students, and also highlights the need for solid research in this area to better understand the characteristics of gifted students with and without ASD. "Carrie" and "Hannah" both presented to our clinic because of concerns about social skills. Carrie, 13-years-old at the time of her evaluation, previously had been identified as gifted and had been whole-grade accelerated from 6th to 8th grade. Her history was significant for precocious language development and reading abilities, and she was fluent in several languages. However, Carrie's parents were concerned about her difficulties with attention, organization, friendships, and self-care skills.

Hannah was 12-years-old at the time of her evaluation. Like Carrie, she had previously been identified as gifted and was bilingual; she had been considered for whole-grade acceleration but instead was subject accelerated in math because of concerns about her behavior and social skills. Hannah's parents reported concerns about her difficulties with impulsivity, organization, shyness, and friendships.

Despite Carrie and Hannah's similarities in background information, significant differences in other areas of functioning were revealed by the comprehensive evaluation, which resulted in different diagnoses and recommendations (**see Table 3 below**). Both girls had remarkable intellectual abilities, with scores 3 to 4 Standard Deviations above the mean. Similarly, both girls demonstrated exceptional academic achievement. However, clear differences were seen between the two girls in adaptive functioning, particularly in the area of socialization. Neuro-psychological assessment revealed that only Carrie had clinically significant challenges with attention, behavioral inhibition/impulsivity, memory for faces, and identification of emotions based on facial expression. Finally, results of the Autism Diagnostic Observation System (ADOS: Lord, Rutter, DiLavore, & Risi, 2003) and Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R: Rutter, Le Couteur, & Lord, 2003), which are measures specifically designed to assess for symptoms of ASD, yielded scores suggesting that only Carrie met criteria for ASD. Since this evaluation, both girls have received intervention to address areas of challenge and have continued their participation in gifted programming. Carrie is now attending college through a program that supports students who enter college during their senior year of high school.

	"Carrie"	"Hannah"
IQ	160 (>99 th %tile)	153 (>99 th %tile)
	PSI 88 th %tile	PSI 98 th %tile
Achievement	>99 th %tile	>99 th %tile
Adaptive Behavior	18 th %tile	70 th %tile
	Communication 30 th %tile	Communication 95 th %tile
	Socialization 5 th %tile	Socialization 42 nd %tile
Attention	25 th %tile	91 st %tile
Inhibition	2 nd -5 th %tile	98 th %tile
Memory for Faces	2 nd %tile	95 th %tile
Affect Recognition	25 th %tile	50 th %tile
ADOS/ADI-R	ASD	No ASD

Table 3

As a result of our clinical experience and research with gifted students with ASD, two publications were developed for professionals and families to address the needs of students participating in educational programs and provide information and guidelines for promoting a positive experience for these students. These are the *Packet of Information for Professionals* and the *Packet of Information for Families*.

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Our clinical work and research with twice-exceptional students with LD, ADHD, and social-emotional concerns have also yielded insights into their specific characteristics and strategies that can enhance the academic and psychosocial adjustment of these populations. The booklets mentioned above and abstracts of research publications are available on the Belin-Blank website at <http://www.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/Clinic/Resources.aspx>.

Future Directions

As we go forward, our plans for NITE are to expand our service and training, research, and dissemination activities. Below are some of our goals:

Service and Training

1. Service to a broader constituency of twice-exceptional students
2. Training of the next generation of professionals
3. Development of educational opportunities for parents of children who have twice-exceptionalities
4. Development of intervention strategies (e.g., social skills groups, video self-modeling, peer mentors)

Research

1. Complete national needs assessment
2. Compare students with ASD across the intellectual spectrum
3. Investigate parent satisfaction
4. Study home-school vs. public school outcomes for twice-exceptional students
5. Investigate group-based group interventions with twice-exceptional students and parents

Dissemination

1. Website Development
2. Webinars
3. Informational Publications (e.g., Packet of Information for Brothers and Sisters)
4. Journal Articles
5. Presentations at National and International Conferences

The growth process for this institute is expected to take three to five years. Recent presentations at the fall ITAG conference and the National Association for Gifted Children Convention in November have served to inform people

locally and nationally about our institute. For more information about NITE and the Assessment and Counseling Clinic, please visit our website <http://www.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/Clinic/Default.aspx> and click on the clinic tab.

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Authors: Claire Whiteman, Ph.D. and
Alissa Doobay, Ph.D.

Other NITE team members: Nicholas Colangelo, Ph.D.; Susan Assouline, Ph.D.; Megan Foley Nicpon, Ph.D.; and Anna Zoerner.



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2. Network Selection

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NETWORKS: Effective September 2010, each Individual, Graduate Student, and Lifetime Member may select up to three (3) NAGC Networks as part of their annual membership. **Want to join more than three? There is an additional \$25 annual fee for all-Network access.**

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Conceptual Foundations | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Populations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling & Guidance | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Grades | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Schools/Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent & Community | |

Need more info on NAGC Networks? Visit www.nagc.org/networks.aspx

All Networks \$25 _____

3. Donation

Please consider a donation to assist in our efforts to increase awareness of the needs of high-ability learners. As a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization, your donation to NAGC is tax deductible to the extent the law allows.

Donation (optional) _____

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Payment Method:

- Check Mastercard Visa AMEX Discover
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Signature _____

Name on Card _____

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- I do not wish to have my name used for other mailing lists. NAGC never shares phone or e-mail information.

Payment Calculation

1) Membership \$ _____

2) Network Total \$ _____

3) Donation \$ _____

Total _____



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The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) is pleased to offer all PARENT members of Iowa Talented and Gifted Association, a Parent Affiliate Membership for \$15.

This one-year membership provides you with four (4) issues of *Parenting for High Potential* magazine, access to all resources on the NAGC website (www.nagc.org), discounts on NAGC WOW events (Webinars on Wednesday), the NAGC Annual Convention registration fee and books purchased from the NAGC Online Bookstore, and the monthly member e-newsletter, *Compass Points*. After one-year you may renew your membership as an NAGC Associate Member.

I would like to support high-ability learners by joining NAGC today

Contact Information

First Name _____ Last Name _____ M.I. _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
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Membership Category/Annual Dues

Affiliate Membership \$15.00

TOTAL DUE _____

Payment

Payment Method: Check Mastercard Visa AMEX Discover
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Name on Card _____

Card Number _____

Exp _____ Card Verification # _____ Billing Zip Code _____

Signature _____

Please mail completed application with payment to:
National Association for Gifted Children
1331 H Street NW - Suite 1001
Washington, DC 20005

OR

Fax completed form with credit card information to:
202/785-4248

Questions? Call 202/785-4268

AEA Contact Information



Tracy Grimes
Keystone AEA 1
1400 2nd Street NW
Elkader, Iowa 52043
Ph: 563-245-1480
E-mail: tgrimes@aea1.k12.ia.us

Laurie Hayzlett
AEA 267
3712 Cedar Heights Drive
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613-6290
Ph: 319-273-8200
E-mail: lhayzlett@aea267.k12.ia.us

Linda Linn
Prairie Lakes AEA 8
23 East 7th Street
Spencer, Iowa 51301
Ph: 712-262-4704
E-mail: llinn@aea8.k12.ia.us

Sandra Campie
Mississippi Bend AEA 9
729 21st Street
Bettendorf, Iowa 52722
Ph: 563-359-1371
E-mail: SCampie@aea9.k12.ia.us

Mike Macklin
Grant Wood AEA 10
4401 6th Street S.W.
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404
Ph: 319-399-6525
E-mail: mmacklin@aea10.k12.ia.us

Mary Schmidt
Heartland AEA 11
6500 Corporate Drive
Johnston, Iowa 50131
Ph: 515-270-9030
E-mail: mschmidt@aea11.k12.ia.us

Linda Moehring
Heartland AEA 11
6500 Corporate Drive
Johnston, Iowa 50131
Ph: 515-270-9030
E-mail: lmoehring@aea11.k12.ia.us

Sue Chartier
Northwest AEA
1520 Morningside Avenue
Sioux City, Iowa 51106
Ph: 712-274-6000
E-mail: schartier@nwaea12.k12.ia.us

Carma McLaren
Loess Hills AEA 13
1213 5th Avenue
Council Bluffs, Iowa 51502-1109
Ph: 712-246-1714 ext. 2152
E-mail: cmclaren@aea13.k12.ia.us

Terri McClure
Loess Hills AEA 13
Halverson Court
P.O. Box 1109
Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503
Ph: 712-328-6489 ext. 432
E-mail: tmclure@aea13.k12.ia.us

Elaine Fargo
Green Valley AEA 14
1405 North Lincoln
Creston, Iowa 50801-1199
Ph: 641-782-8443
E-mail: efargo@aea14.k12.ia.us

Sandy Morrison
Great Prairie AEA
3601 West Avenue Road
Burlington, Iowa 52601
Ph: 319-753-6561
E-mail: sandy.morrison@gpaea.k12.ia.us

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TAG Teacher | (Please Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TAG Coordinator | _____ |
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PLEASE CHECK BOX IF NEW ADDRESS

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- \$45-\$99 Member
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* \$25 per person if submitted as part of a local chapter. If you are already an ITAG member, please pass this form along to another interested advocate of education for Iowa's gifted and talented students.

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

ITAG NEWS MAGAZINE

*IS ONE OF THE TANGIBLE BENEFITS
OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE*

IOWA TALENTED AND GIFTED ASSOCIATION

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

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

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