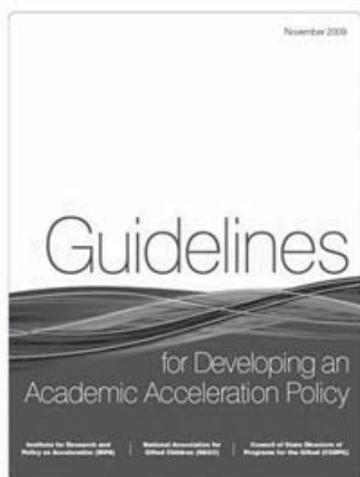


Guidelines for Developing an Academic Acceleration Policy

By Maureen Maron, Belin Blank Center, University of Iowa



Guidelines for Developing an Academic Acceleration Policy is a significant new document that provides professional guidance and advocacy in the development of acceleration policies. *Guidelines* represents the collaborative efforts of the Institute for Research and Policy on Acceleration (IRPA) at the University of Iowa's Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development, the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), and the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted (CSDPG).

Acceleration is "progress through an educational program at rates faster or at ages younger than conventional" (Pressey, 1949). It is an empirically validated educational intervention for high-ability students (Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004). The research consistently demonstrates the academic benefits to students and allows the conclusion that students are not negatively affected in the social-emotional domains.

Many high-ability students need more academic challenge than they are receiving in their education. Yet, many states and school districts have no formal policies that address either the desirability of acceleration or procedures to be followed in making decisions about acceleration for particular students. In the most recent *State of the States in Gifted Education*, a national survey from NAGC and CSDPG, only eight states report having a state policy that allows ac-

celeration; seven states report having a policy that formally relegates the decision about an acceleration policy to local education agencies (LEAs); 27 states report having no policy, thus leaving any decisions about acceleration to LEAs by default (NAGC & CSDPG, 2009).

An acceleration policy is a means to guide individual districts in implementing acceleration practices. *Guidelines for Developing an Academic Acceleration Policy* can serve as a concrete tool to guide policy makers, school administrators, and educators to create or modify policies at the state and/or school district levels. Absence of a formal policy might invite inconsistent practices that could even discourage acceleration, as is the case when early entrance to kindergarten, early high school graduation, or whole-grade acceleration are explicitly prohibited. The existence of an acceleration policy helps to ensure that students have their academic needs addressed.

The goal of the *Guidelines* project is to provide guidance and to encourage the systematic adoption and practice of acceleration in schools across the nation. *Guidelines* can assist schools in writing and modifying an acceleration policy that is suited to local needs and adheres to research-based best practices. An acceleration policy is a necessity for schools because:

- All students have the right to an educational program that matches their academic and cognitive abilities (it's about equity).
- Gifted education has the necessary research base to make defensible recommendations for policy development.
- Without a policy, personal beliefs will continue to trump the research evidence.
- Without a policy, opportunities for high-ability students will be determined by geography and happenstance.



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)

Immediate Past President

Mary Schmidt
(mschmidt@aea11.k12.ia.us)

Treasurer

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sue Chartier (schartier@nwaea.k12.ia.us)
Christine Comito (cdcomito@mchsi.com)
Jean Johnson (johnsoj@siouxcityschools.org)
Gail Kenkel (gkenkel@cbcsd.org)
Claudia Koch (cdkoch@mchsi.com)
Kristy Latta (klatta@ahlerslaw.com)
Linda Moehring (lmoehring@aea11.k12.ia.us)
Jenelle Nisley (jenelle.nisley@shilohuniversity.org)
Diane Pratt (dpratt@fort-dodge.k12.ia.us)
Matt Robie (matt.robie@ankenyschools.org)
Sally Thorson (sthor0004@q.com)
Doreen Underwood
(underwoodd@davenportschools.org)
Kenn Wathen (kwathen@hamburg.k12.ia.us)

EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS

Dept. of Education Liaison
Rosanne Malek

Belin-Blank Center Liaison
Maureen Marron

ITAG LOBBYISTS

Paula J. Feltner
Michael B. Heller

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
Jean Johnson - Advisor
Heather Paris - Graphic Artist

Future Submission dates are:

March 31, 2010 for the Spring Issue
July 31, 2010 for the Summer / Fall issue
November 30, 2010 for the Winter 2010-11 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

Immediate Past President: Mary Schmidt
9291 Lakewood Pointe Dr, Norwalk, IA 50211
515-285-4960 515-270-0405 x4375
515-270-5383 fax
mschmidt@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

ITAG NEWS: ITAG OFFICE

5619 NW 86th St. Ste. 600
Johnston, Iowa 50131-2955
515-225-2323
ITAG@assoc-serv.com

Legislative: Gail Kenkel
gkenkel@cbcsd.org

Linda Moehring
lmoehring@aea11.k12.ia.us

OUTREACH

Educator Outreach: Kenn Wathen
kwathen@hamburg.k12.ia.us

Sally Thorson
sthor0004@q.com

Parent Outreach: Christine Comito
cdcomito@mchsi.com

Claudia Koch
cdkoch@mchsi.com

ITAG NEWS EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor: Matt Robie
matt.robie@ankenyschools.org

Advisor: Jean Johnson
johnsoj@siouxcityschools.org

Website Facilitator and Graphic Artist:
Heather Paris, morganbrigid@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: morganbrigid@mchsi.com or call 515-257-6306.

Please contact individual authors for permission to reprint their articles.

Permission to reprint non-author articles from the ITAG NEWS is given to local ITAG chapters and G/T organizations in other states. Please credit both the article and the ITAG NEWS and send two (2) copies of the reprint to Matt Robie, ITAG NEWS Editor, at 3116 SW Timberline Drive, Ankeny, Iowa 50023. The opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association.

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 Web Site

<http://www.iowatag.org>

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

From the President



I've been fortunate in my life to have enjoyed privileged experiences. My most recent privilege has been to become President of Iowa Talented and Gifted. I became a member of ITAG many years ago when our family returned to Iowa from Michigan. At that time, I was a mom of two gifted youngsters and somewhere in the middle of my ten-year "maternity leave" (also a privilege). When the opportunity presented itself in Fort Dodge, becoming a teacher of talented and gifted students seemed a perfect fit and one which continues to enrich my life (another privilege). When first asked to run for the ITAG board in 2000, I was honored, but admittedly apprehensive about what I would have to contribute to that very "first-class" board of directors. And, though I had a plethora of local leadership roles, a state association was not among them. The secret I now know is that it wasn't about me. It was about many people, with different passions and strengths, who were as devoted as I to advocacy for gifted learners in Iowa. Our organization still is about the synergy of our efforts.

I'd like to again thank Linda Moehring and LeAnn Oldenburger for their vision and work on the 2009 conference. If you didn't get a chance to join us at the ITAG Conference, be sure to look at the photos in this newsletter to capture the essence. We were treated to two outstanding keynote speakers and also had the opportunity to hear them speak again on related topics. Dr. Deborah Ruf is one of only a few researchers identifying traits and characteristics that distinguish the young gifted child. When added to the research of Paul Slocumb and Ruby Payne in their book **Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty** and NAGC's report **"Overlooked Gems: a National Perspective on Low-Income Promising Learners"**, we can be certain that the change in the Iowa Code to include K-1 in district TAG programming is a move in the best interest of Iowa's students.

Dr. Shelagh Gallagher served up outstanding instructional incentives for Problem Based Learning. She was able to eradicate some fears and replace them with motivation and resources to get us started! The offerings of breakout sessions were also excellent. Thank you to all who filled out the conference evaluation forms. The 2010 conference chairs will be using that information when planning and implementing next year's conference.

We face many challenges as teachers and leaders in the field of gifted education, not the least of which is that of endorsing all Iowa teachers of the gifted by 2012. That means districts must have in place a systemic process by which teachers become a part of the program for the "long haul," rather than assign whoever is left over from another content area to cover gifted classes. Districts must provide incentives and do whatever they can to encourage and guarantee qualified candidates prepare for these positions. We each are the face and voice of gifted education in Iowa. It will be up to us as teachers and coordinators to ensure that this mandate is not overlooked. Our gifted students deserve highly qualified teachers.

These are challenging times. We hope you'll visit our web site frequently (<http://www.iowatag.org>) to access many resources available and consider joining us at a Board Meeting. We also welcome your contributions to newsletters!

And please let us know how we can best assist you professionally as you make your way through this school year. This is *your* association.

By Diane Pratt, ITAG President

In this Issue:	
Guidelines for Developing and Academic Acceleration Policy.....	1, 4, 5
Contact Information.....	2
From the President	3
Meet the ITAG 2009-2010 Board	6, 7, 8
Tackling the Multi-Tasking Virus	9, 10, 11
ITAG 2009 Conference Photo Highlights	12
Teacher Feature (Pull Out Section).....	13, 14, 15
ITAG Partners (Pull Out Section).....	13
ITAG Announcements (Pull Out Section).....	16
Friends of ITAG (Pull Out Section).....	16
Gifted and Talented Funding in Iowa (Pull Out Section).....	17
An Education: A Student's Perspective.....	18, 19
Legislative News	20
NAGC Membership Form and Joint Membership Form.....	21, 22
IASB Quiz Winner? How Much Do You Know about Gifted Children?.....	23
AEA Contact Information.....	23



Continued from the front cover

Attendees of the 2009 NAGC conference in St. Louis received the short version of *Guidelines* in their registration materials. The short version lists policy recommendations in five key areas and includes a Checklist for Developing an Academic Acceleration Policy. Print copies of the short version of *Guidelines* can be requested from IRPA. The full version, which includes five appendices, can be downloaded for free at IRPA's Web site, www.accelerationinstitute.org and at NAGC's Website, www.nagc.org. The long version is available only in an electronic form.

We offer two general notes of caution regarding the use of *Guidelines*. First, *Guidelines* can serve as a stand-alone policy or it can be incorporated into a gifted education policy. Regardless of its relationship to other policies, the acceleration policy should clearly state that participation in a school's gifted education program is not a prerequisite for a student being considered for acceleration. Second, score profiles, not composite scores, should be used to identify students for consideration for acceleration. A student might not qualify for a school's gifted and talented program because he or she did not obtain a qualifying composite score. However, students who have an uneven profile of achievement scores (significantly advanced in one area but not others) are not likely to obtain a qualifying score for a gifted program but may be served well by content acceleration in the areas of strength.

Although the full *Guidelines* document has over 40 pages, the heart of it is pages 1-11, which provide definitions of acceleration options, a summary of the research support for acceleration, and, importantly, a listing of the five recommended elements of an acceleration policy. The guidelines presented on pages 1-11 are summarized in a checklist (pp. 12-13). The checklist can be used to make sure that a district's acceleration policy contains all of the recommended elements.

The following are the five key areas of policy recommendations, as well as the sub-topics that we recommend are addressed in a policy:

1. The policy is characterized by accessibility, equity, and openness.

Is access to referral for consideration of acceleration open to all students regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, socioeconomic

status, English language proficiency, and school building attended?

Are all student populations served, including ELL, at-risk, low socioeconomic status, profoundly gifted, and twice exceptional?

Is the process of student evaluation fair, objective, and systematic?

Do parents or legal guardians have open communication with school officials about the policy document?

Does the community have access to the policy document?

Is the policy accessible in the languages served by the school?

2. The policy provides guidelines for the implementation of acceleration.

Are both categories of acceleration (grade-based and content-based) specified?

Are the forms of acceleration (e.g., early admission to school, telescoping, AP) and types (where appropriate) specified?

Is the process of obtaining acceleration services detailed (including referral & screening, assessment & decision making, and planning)?

Does the policy specify that child study teams, not individuals, consider acceleration cases?

Does the policy specify the creation of a "Written Acceleration Plan"?

Does the policy specify a monitored transition period?

3. The policy provides guidelines on administrative matters to ensure fair and systematic use of accelerative opportunities and recognition for participation in those accelerative opportunities.

Does the policy address short-term needs, such as...

- specifying which grade-level achievement test should the student take?
- clarifying transportation issues for students who need to travel between buildings?

Does the policy address long-term needs, such as...

- maintaining accelerated standing?
- assigning appropriate credit for accelerated coursework?
- indicating acceleration coursework on a transcript?
- determining the student's class rank?

Does the policy specify the process of awarding course credit to students?

4. The policy provides guidelines for preventing non-academic barriers to the use of acceleration as an educational intervention.

Are procedures in place to ensure participation in extracurricular activities, including sports?

Have funding formulae been reviewed to prevent unintended disincentives?

5. The policy includes features that prevent unintended consequences.

Is an appeals process detailed? Will the policy be regularly evaluated for its effectiveness?

The long version of the *Guidelines* document provides extensive information and support in the appendices.

Appendix A: Definitions of Acceleration Interventions (p. 21) expands on the definitions of the categories, forms, and types of acceleration that are presented earlier in the text.

Appendix B: Survey of State Acceleration Policies (p. 24) summarizes the acceleration-related results of the 2008-

2009 State of the States in Gifted Education survey from NAGC and CSDPG.

Appendix C: Implementing Acceleration (p. 26) provides educators with guidelines for practicing acceleration. The suggestions we offer for implementing acceleration are based on the *Iowa Acceleration Scale* (3rd ed.) (Assouline et al., 2009). We discuss the three broad areas of how to implement acceleration: referral and screening, assessment and decision making, and planning.

Appendix D: Example Language from State Acceleration Policies (p. 30) represents half of the text in this entire document. Appendix D gives examples of language from state acceleration policies, state gifted policies that specifically mention acceleration, and state regulatory language.

The focus of Appendix D is state-level language. On the IRPA Web site, we will post your school or district's acceleration policy for others to view. Visit http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/Resources/Policy_Guidelines/ to submit your local policy.

Appendix E: Example Referral Forms from the Ohio Department of Education (p. 56) offers Ohio's acceleration referral forms as one example of forms that educators may wish to develop to implement acceleration in their district.

On November 18, 2009, Dr. Colangelo presented an hour-long Webinar on use of the Guidelines through NAGC's Webinars on Wednesdays program. NAGC members have free access the archived version of Dr. Colangelo's Webinar, which includes the presentation and the PowerPoint slide (available from NAGC's Web site at <http://www.softconference.com/nagc/amh.asp>). Nonmembers can access the presentations for \$39.00.

We are interested in hearing your comments on the Guidelines document, on your school's use of the document, or on other issues related to acceleration policy development. Please send comments to Maureen Marron at Maureen-marron@uiowa.edu.

Submitted by
Maureen Marron, PhD
Administrator, Institute for Research
and Policy on Acceleration
Member of National Work Group for
Guidelines for Developing an Academic
Acceleration Policy



President 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.



Immediate Past 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. Contact Mary at mschmidt@aea11.k12.ia.us.



Treasurer 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@cbsd.org or gekenkel@yahoo.com.



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



Board Member Jean Johnson has been an educator in the Sioux City Community School District for 30 years. Jean received her B.A. degree and her M.A.E. with an endorsement in PK-6 Administration from the University of Northern Iowa. Currently Jean holds an endorsement in Gifted Education and is the K-12 Talented and Gifted Education Coordinator for the Sioux City Schools. She also serves her district as an instructional coach and as a facilitator for professional development in differentiation. Jean is a member of ASCD, NAGC, and ITAG and serves as the ITAG Newsletter Advisor. You may contact Jean at johnsoj@siouxcityschools.org or wjm959@cableone.net.

Meet the ITAG Board Continued



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 at Heartland AEA 11. She holds a M.A. in Gifted Education and has been involved in the field for 19 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 PreK-12. She believes that classroom learning opportunities can and should support the authentic learning and critical thinking that excite students to become lifelong learners. Linda advocates for and serves gifted education as a Heartland AEA differentiation team member and facilitator. 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@aea11.k12.ia.us.



Board Member Jenelle Nisly is the Vice President of Academic Affairs at Shiloh University. Prior to her university position, Jenelle worked with gifted students for eight years as a talented and gifted (TAG) facilitator in the Davenport Community School District. Because of her passion for serving the needs of gifted students, Jenelle has been a member of the Board of Directors for the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association since 2005. In addition, she is currently pursuing her doctorate of education (Ed.D.) degree in Administrator Leadership for Teaching and Learning from Walden University in Minneapolis, Minnesota and expects to graduate in May of 2010. She received her Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Olivet University in Bourbonnais, IL; her talented and gifted endorsement from the University of Iowa; her teaching credential from California State University, Long Beach; and her Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree from United States International University, San Diego, CA. You may contact Jenelle at jenelle.nisly@shilohuniversity.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. Matt has served as an ITAG Board Member since 2007, and serves as ITAG News Magazine editor. You may contact Matt at matt.robie@ankenyschools.com.





Board Member Sally Thorson received her degree and the endorsement for TAG from UNI. 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 sthor0004@q.com.



Doreen Underwood has been a Talented and Gifted (TAG) Facilitator in both elementary and intermediate schools in the Davenport Community School District (DCSD) for the past five years. Currently she is the TAG Facilitator at both Garfield and Jackson Elementary schools. In addition to teaching gifted students and being the mom of a gifted 7 year old, she is pursuing her Master of Arts degree in School Counseling with a gifted emphasis from the University of Iowa. Prior to working in the DCSD, she taught K-6 gifted students for 9 years in the Anamosa Community School District. During 6 of those years, she was also the program coordinator for the K-12 Extended Learning Program (ELP). Doreen received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from the University of Northern Iowa and received her TAG Endorsement from the University of Iowa. You may contact Doreen at underwoodd@davenportschools.org.



Board Member 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.



Executive Director Alda Helvey has served as executive director for ITAG since 1998. She has over 20 years experience in leadership, management and administration of 501(c)(3) and (c)(6) not for profit organizations. As owner of Dynamic Resources Inc. she and her staff provide services to associations that are Iowa based and two regional and national groups. Her background includes knowledge of rules and regulations governing nonprofits, personnel matters and finance. In her spare time she serves on the board of directors for five organizations. You may contact Alda Helvey at itag@assoc-serv.com.

*Congratulations to our newest recipients of
ITAG's Distinguished Service Award!!!*

Carma McLaren, consultant with AEA 13 and Dr. Clar Baldus, administrator of programs through the Belin-Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development were recognized for their exemplary service to Iowa's gifted students, their parents, and teaching professionals.

Tackling the Multi-Tasking Virus

About the Author

*Josh Waitzkin, author of **The Art of Learning**, was the subject of the book and movie, **Searching for Bobby Fischer**. An eight-time National Chess Champion in his youth, he is now a martial arts champion, holding a combined 21 National titles in addition to several World Championships. Josh is president of the **JW Foundation**, an educational nonprofit. He is currently training for the World Championships of his third discipline, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, and lectures nationwide on the subjects of the learning process and performance psychology.*

Tackling the Multitasking Virus

I recently wrote an article about a heartbreaking new trend in our classrooms. In Universities throughout the US, students are surfing the internet, shopping online, Facebooking, and emailing while their professors speak to disengaged minds. One can argue that kids have always passed notes, but this semester's explosion of multi-tasking is on a terrifying scale and teachers nationwide are bereft. The Dean of the University of Chicago Law School just banned surfing during class. Harvard Business School was forced to cut off internet access. Columbia, Barnard and countless others are hustling for solutions, but students demand that their rights are not infringed upon. You can read my account of this crisis and of the dangers of multi-tasking in a piece on Tim Ferriss's blog. What I would like to do now is propose some actionable solutions to a cultural problem that extends far beyond our schools.

In my opinion, cutting off internet access in classrooms, while a good idea, is just addressing the symptom of a much broader disengagement. We have to get to the root of the problem by understanding why kids, and adults for that matter, are not deeply immersed in what they are doing. What is getting in the way of presence? Alienation. From a very young age, kids are not being listened to and so they are turning off their minds. Horrible policies like No Child Left Behind, and the gauntlet of standardized tests our kids have to endure, are turning education into a forced march. Most of the professional world is an extension of the same problem. Everyone is being jammed into the same cookie cutter mold, and that is not how anyone will thrive. Below are some internal solutions to navigating an increasingly disconnected external environment.

1) Do what you love. This seems pretty obvious, but it's incredible how few of us actually do it. Life is too short

to bog ourselves down in a life that doesn't inspire us. I believe that children, from a very young age, should be encouraged to pursue what they are passionate about. Most kids are drawn to something early—maybe it will be math, music, a sport, painting, dance, reading, chess, whatever. Once you see that spark of inspiration in your child's eyes, encourage her to dive in. If we dig deeply into something, anything, at a young age, and we touch Quality, then that scent of Quality will be a beacon for us for the rest of our lives. We will know what it feels like. And we will know what it is like to love learning. Then, as adults, we should build our lives around what inspires us. It is common to box ourselves into a lucrative career that we hate, with the belief that the money will make us happy. Of course it will not. I have found that if we do what we love, and we do it passionately, the external will follow naturally.

2) Do it in a way you love and connect to. It is astonishing how this principle is ignored. All of us have different minds, and so our road to mastery will be unique. The art in the learning process emerges when we begin to tap into the unique nuance of our minds—when the walls are broken down between the conscious and unconscious minds, when creative inspiration directs our technical growth. There are some very simple questions we can ask ourselves to get moving in this direction. For example, am I primarily an auditory, visual, or kinesthetic learner? What about secondarily? I, for one, am a visual and kinesthetic processor, which makes sense given a lifetime in chess and the martial arts. To be a bit more nuanced about my process, I take in technical information most efficiently in a visual mode, but then I internalize it most deeply kinesthetically. So in my everyday martial arts work, I am constantly converting techniques from sight to feeling. And when I am teaching a technique or idea, I reverse the process and convert what I feel to what I can see. This open two way channel between the visual and kinesthetic is at the core of how I synergize and deconstruct data. That is how I function best, and I have built my growth process and my performance style around my strengths.

This understanding of my process is absolutely critical, because otherwise I would be confused about what makes me function at a high level. For example, if I see ten phone numbers I can remember them, but if I hear one, it will be a challenge. So I do my best to see things I want to remember, and if I can only hear them I will usually visualize them

Continued on Page 10

Continued from page 9

in my mind. Someone shouting complex technical instructions from my corner in a martial arts match is not helpful, and will slow me down if I try to follow—many fighters are ruined in the ring by their talkative coaches. Along similar lines, imagine if you have a teacher who is an auditory processor, speaking in his or her language to your child who has a visual mind. The disconnect will be huge. And your child might be incorrectly diagnosed with a learning disability.

But this is just one question. Are we charismatic, creative, aggressive, conservative, organized? Do we thrive in stormy conditions or when things are under control? Introspective sensitivity should be at the core of our learning process, so we can build games and loves around our strengths, and so we can address our weaknesses in a language that makes sense to us. This issue is very personal to me, as it precipitated the crisis that ended my chess career. I lost a life's work because I did not listen to my gut, and it took me many years and a new discipline to return to my roots. We must be true to ourselves to thrive.

3) Give people a choice and they become engaged.

My mom told me a beautiful story a few nights ago. She learned to play chess from me and for the past fifteen years has run chess programs in schools in New York City and New Jersey. She's the greatest teacher and mother I could ever dream of. In one of her kindergarten classes there is a little boy named Evan who drives all his teachers crazy. No matter what they are doing, he always wants to read a book. His school life has become defined by teachers taking books out of his hands, telling him to sit down and listen with the rest of the kids. This is unfortunately a typical response to an unusual mind.

So in my mom's first few chess classes with Evan, she would be teaching a lesson on a demonstration board, or everyone would be playing chess games, and Evan would walk to the bookshelf, pick up a book, sit down and start reading. My mom's solution: she smiled and gave Evan a chess book that covered similar material to what she was teaching. He immediately put down his other book, opened his eyes wide and started reading the chess book. The wonderful thing about the story is that after a few classes in which my mom embraced his mind and gave him a chess book to read, Evan started putting down the chess book and listening to her lessons. Then he started playing chess with the other kids instead of isolating him-

self. The next somewhat surprising step is that some other kids started asking for chess books too. The visual learners started to creep out of the woodwork, and the whole class now thrives because a teacher was willing to listen to them.

4) Release a fear of failure. This is a big issue. The constant testing in our schools, and the bottom-line language of our culture has kids terrified of failing. We've all heard the "I wasn't trying" excuse. That is protecting the ego. And disengaging from any one thing by skipping along the surface of everything is another version of not trying. Many kids, by the way, have told me their attraction to video games is an escape from the pressures of the real world. They are safe from failing in that virtual reality. If we can relieve the fear of failure, then engagement will become a less terrifying experience.

Fortunately, this is not so difficult. Parents and teachers simply need to transition from result-oriented to process-oriented feedback. Tell a child you are proud of the work done instead of praising the result. Help them internalize what developmental psychologists call an *incremental* theory of intelligence—a perspective that associates the road to mastery with effort and overcoming adversity. The alternative, a *fixed* or *entity* theory associates success with an ingrained level of ability in a particular trait—thus the language "I'm smart at math." This is a much more brittle approach because it does not embrace imperfection. Most valuable lessons come from learning from our errors, and if we associate messing up with being "dumb" then we can become paralyzed by a fear of failure. Think about it this way—if a well-intentioned parent tells a child that she is a winner, and that child associates success with being a winner, what happens when she inevitably loses? *The winner becomes a loser.* The developmental psychologist Carol Dweck has done very important research and writing in this field, and I have explored the dynamic in the context of my life in [The Art of Learning](#).

5) Build positive routines. Cultivating new habits is the best way to get rid of bad ones. This is a simple truth with infinite application. We are creatures of habit, and so we should build positive routines into our lives. Exercise, honesty, process-oriented language, introspection, meditation, reading—anything we believe will help our growth can be put into a routine that will help us thrive. So if you are trying to get your child to stop playing video games, then I would suggest replacing the activity with something else that he or she loves to do but that is healthy—for example go outside and have a catch, read a book together,

or go to a dance class during video game hours. Do this for 5 or 6 days in a row and the craving for reading or exercise will replace the craving for Nintendo.

Routines can also be built to help us enter states of deep concentration or connectedness. In my chess and martial arts careers, a moment without presence can have devastating effect, and building routines that I condense into triggers for the zone has been an integral part of my process.

6) Do one thing at a time. It is somewhat counter intuitive in our information age, but the truth is that by focusing on less, we will accomplish a great deal more. If we are tackling multi-tasking, we must replace the habit of doing six things at once with the routine of doing one thing at a time. Skipping along the surface will get us nowhere, and if we cultivate the muscle of digging deep, then it will grow. Not only will single-tasking increase effectiveness, but it will also open up our creativity in the learning process. We'll start making connections we never dreamed of, because we'll be working with underlying principles that operate everywhere.

Let's take the martial arts as an example—most people want to start off by learning ten or fifteen fancy techniques that they've seen in movies or watched the advanced students apply. This will lead to years of wasted time and hollow learning. The more powerful approach is to spend days, weeks, even months on one relatively simple technique. What happens then is quite beautiful. You start to get a sense for what it feels like to do something well with your body. Your mechanics become unobstructed, you experience a smooth fluidity, you focus on subtle ripples of sensation. Once you reach this point of full body flow, you can turn your attention to other techniques and you will very quickly internalize them at a high level, because you know what Quality feels like—or in less abstract language, you have internalized axioms that govern all techniques. This same process applies to chess, math, music, dance, finance, business, medicine, psychology—learn a principle deeply, and it will manifest everywhere. Whatever we are cultivating, depth beats breadth any day of the week.

7) Take Breaks. This is a terribly underappreciated tool, especially in the work place. When I begin to train a company, without exception I see too much linearity in the workday and creative process. People start the day buzzing with energy, but then after a few hours they are tired and perform at a much lower level. That's when the hunt for coffee begins, there is a brief buzz, and the inevitable crash looms just around the corner.

There is no way we can focus intensely on something for many hours in a row without burning out. The human mind thrives in an oscillatory rhythm. We need to pulse between stress and recovery in order to think creatively over long periods of time. I learned this lesson in my chess career, trying to concentrate feverishly in world-class tournaments 8 hours a day for two weeks straight. After starting to train with the performance psychologists at the Human Performance Institute, I noticed that after an intense 13 minutes of thinking in a chess game, the quality of my process deteriorated slightly. So I started taking little breaks between chess moves or whenever my energy flagged—if extremely tired, I'd wash my face with cold water or even go outside and sprint 50 yards, which would flush my physiology and leave me energized. My endurance and creativity soared. A nap is a beautiful thing to fill up the tank. So is a quick 30 minute workout. A great way to improve mental recovery is with physical interval training. Have you or your child's physical exercise follow the rhythm of stress and recovery, and your ability to take breaks and recover from mental strain will also improve dramatically.

A big obstacle in this battle against disengagement is guilt. We have so much to do and so little time, taking a break seems absurd—the same could be argued for doing what we love in a way we connect to, releasing perfectionism, giving ourselves some freedom to choose our way, building positive routines, and doing one thing at a time. Release the guilt! Four or six hours of high quality, inspired immersion will be infinitely more effective and satisfying than eight or ten hours of grinding your way through the day and getting locked into a mechanized, inside-the-box mode that ignores your true potential. For child and adult, learning or working should not be a forced march, and in order to engage deeply and creatively, we need to be as organic as possible by listening to our internal rhythms.

Josh Waitzkin
President, JW Foundation
Permission for reprint
granted from the author

Monthly ITAG Spotlight

Are you receiving the ITAG Spotlight on Gifted Education email?? 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.



Keynote speaker Dr. Shelagh Gallagher is joined by conference co-chairs LeAnn Oldenburger and Linda Mohring.



Keynote speaker Dr. Deborah Ruf



Board President Diane Pratt with Carma McLaren, Distinguished Service Award winner



Board President Mary Schmidt expresses gratitude to outgoing board member Tony Voss.



Clar Baldus receives a 2009 Distinguished Service Award.



Keynote speaker Arlene DeVries



Mary Schmidt passes the gavel to new Board President, Diane Pratt.

Contests and Competitions are Curriculum Too!

As public schools' gifted education programs integrate themselves more and more into the regular curriculum, many struggle with giving up the beloved contests and competitions that dominate waning pull-out programs. Gifted and talented educators are co-teaching, collaborating, and differentiating for students more than ever which replaces the time previously used to facilitate contests and competitions such as Kids Are Authors and Invent Iowa. The shame is these competitions provide valuable experiences and learning opportunities students no longer benefit from if eliminated for the sake of differentiated standardized curriculum. Why must one be sacrificed for the other? Compromise and creativity provide a viable solution. Teachers and program coordinators need to look deep into their creative minds and curriculum maps to apply contests to the curriculum.

Students necessitating academic challenge beyond the standard curriculum have several options at Colfax-Mingo Schools. Classroom and gifted education teachers believe choice is the critical component to successful differentiation for gifted learners. One choice available to students involves researching and applying a subject-relevant contest to the related curriculum map.

An example of a student who took advantage of this option is Hannah, an eighth grade student at Colfax-Mingo Middle School. Hannah is formally identified with gifted general intellect. Her passions are in the Social Sciences and English. When she expressed boredom in her U.S. History class, the classroom and gifted education teachers collaborated to provide enrichment through using National History Day (NHD). Hannah worked with her G/T teacher and the district curriculum maps to find a topic that met the qualifications of the NHD theme and applied it to the district curriculum.

Hannah completed an individual documentary on John Muir, the forefather of preservation, while the rest of her classmates completed a unit about the Industrial Revolution Muir fought against. She received classroom credit for all of the assignments and assessments by completing the district's project proposal form (shown on pages 14 and 15). Her grades came from the stages required to complete her project: primary and secondary research, a story board, scripted note cards, the final documentary, and participation in the NHD contest. Finally, Hannah's presentation of her project to the class

provided a practice run for the contest day and replaced her unit assessment grade. An unintended result of the process was the unique bits of information Hannah was able to provide during class discussions. Her opposing view was instrumental in creating dynamic discourse while exhibiting her expertise.

This option provides advanced students with more than the grades and enrichment listed above. It gives them a chance to discover how to differentiate for themselves, gain independence, and learn skills in self-advocacy and analysis. This also opens the chance to participate in competitions that offer experiences and opportunities not found in a traditional setting. For classroom teachers, this option is a method of differentiating through co-teaching and collaborating with student involvement. It gives classroom teachers grades for their books from work appropriate to the students' abilities. For teachers of gifted, it is a way to balance curriculum differentiation with valuable contests and competitions. When done with proper consideration, contests and competitions can become a valuable component of the overall curriculum.

A hard copy of the proposal form can be found on the next two pages. (Page 14 and Page 15)

Ashley Delaney
ELP Coordinator and Middle School ELP
Teacher for Colfax-Mingo Schools
For an electronic copy of the project
proposal form, contact her at
adelaney@mail.colfax-mingo.k12.ia.us

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.



Independent Study Course Outline and Class Enrichment Project Proposal for Class Credit

Name: _____ Date: _____ Grade: _____

Proposing class credit for which class and teacher:

Project name and topic:

Description of independent study or enrichment project:

When is your project completion date? Where is the project being presented?

What is the purpose of this project? What are you learning?

ITAG Teacher Feature



Why do you think you deserve credit for this project? How does it related to the district's curriculum and/or state standards?

How do you propose class credit is given? How do you think your grade should be determined?

Teacher Notes, Response, and Decision:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

ELP Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Check out the ITAG Teaching and Learning Center at

www.k12tlc.net

**Great Quality, Great Value –
Just for ITAG Members!**

**Creative Resources for Teachers and
Families of the Talented and Gifted**

*Wallace Research Symposium
on Talent Development*

May 16-18, 2010

The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

The Wallace Research Symposium on Talent Development is internationally renowned for being one of the premiere scholarly conferences where the latest in gifted education research is presented. The research emphasis this year will be academic acceleration.

This year's Wallace Research Symposium on Talent Development will be held at the University of Iowa's Memorial Union, May 16-18, 2010.

Save the Date!

**The 2010 ITAG Conference will be
October 18-19 in Des Moines.**

See you there!

The Iowa Talented and Gifted Association Board of Directors proudly announces these

Friends of ITAG

Sally Beisser, West Des Moines
Catherine Blando, Iowa City
Bobbi Chester, Manchester
Christine & Brendan Comito, Des Moines
Arlene DeVries, Des Moines
Jim Hanks, West Des Moines
Alda Helvey, Clive
Jean & Walter Johnson, Sioux City
Claudia Koch, Fort Dodge
Carma McLaren, Farragut
Marlys Mitchell, Buckingham
Kay North, Ames
Diane Pratt, Fort Dodge
Lois Roets, Des Moines
Jean Saveraid, Huxley
Mary Schmidt, Norwalk
Chris Schultz, Ankeny
Kindall Todd, Sioux City
Chris Vandeventer, Algona
Kit Weston, Cedar Rapids
Lakeland Tag, Everly



**ITAG wishes all of our members
a very happy holiday season!**

Iowa Code 257.46

1. The budget of an approved gifted and talented children program for a school district, after subtracting funds received from other sources for the purpose, shall be funded annually on a basis of one-fourth or more from the district cost of the school district.
2. The remaining portion of the budget shall be funded by the thirty-eight dollar increase in allowable growth for the school budget year beginning July 1, 1999, multiplied by a district's budget enrollment. The thirty-eight dollar increase for the school budget year beginning July 1, 1999, shall increase in subsequent years by each year's state percent growth. School districts shall annually report the amount expended for a gifted and talented program to the department of education. The portion of a school district's budget which corresponds to the thirty-eight dollar increase in allowable growth for the school budget year beginning July 1, 1999, added to the amount in subsection 1, shall be utilized exclusively for a school district's gifted and talented program.
3. If any portion of the gifted and talented program budget remains unexpended at the end of the budget year, the remainder shall be carried over to the subsequent budget year and added to the gifted and talented program budget for that year.

281—98.20(257) Gifted and talented program. Gifted and talented funding is included in the school district cost per pupil calculated for each school district under the school foundation formula. The per pupil amount increases each year by the allowable growth percentage. This amount must account for no more than 75 percent of the school district's total gifted and talented budget. The school district must also provide a local match from the school district's regular program school district cost and this portion must be a minimum of 25 percent of the total gifted and talented budget. In addition, school districts may have donations and grants, and the school district may contribute more local school district resources toward the program. The 75 percent portion, the local match, and all donations and grants shall be accounted for as categorical funding.

The purpose of the gifted and talented funding described in Iowa Code section 257.46 is to provide for identified gifted students' needs beyond those provided by the regular school program pursuant to each gifted student's individualized plan. The funding shall be used only for expenditures that are directly related to providing the gifted and talented program.

98.20(1) Appropriate uses of categorical funding. Appropriate uses of the gifted and talented program funding include, but are not limited to:

- a. Salary and benefits for the teacher of gifted and talented students. If the teacher is a part-time gifted and talented and a part-time regular classroom teacher, then the portion that is related to providing the gifted and talented program can be charged to the program, but the regular classroom portion could not.
- b. Staff development for the gifted and talented teacher.
- c. Resources, materials, software, supplies, purchased services that meet all of the following criteria: 1) meet the needs of K-12 identified students, 2) are beyond those provided by the regular school program, 3) are necessary to provide the services listed on the gifted student's individualized plan, and 4) will remain with the K-12 gifted and talented program.

98.20(2) Inappropriate uses of categorical funding. Inappropriate uses of the gifted and talented program funding include, but are not limited to, indirect costs or use charges, operational or maintenance costs, capital expenditures other than equipment, student transportation, administrative costs, or any other expenditures not directly related to providing the gifted and talented program beyond the scope of the regular classroom.

For questions, contact:

Su McCurdy, School Finance Administrator
Iowa Department of Education
Phone: 515-281-4738
E-mail su.mccurdy@iowa.gov

An Education: A Student's Perspective



Clare Boerigter is a senior at Waverly-Shell Rock High School in Waverly, Iowa. Clare is a three-year recipient of the Robert J. Zoller Writing Award for pieces in fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. She is an active member of her Talented And Gifted Program through Mock Trial, National History Day, and National Oratorical. Clare is President of the National Honor Society at Waverly-Shell Rock and is an Iowa Senior All-Star and Iowa All-Academic Cross Country runner. Clare plans to attend a four-year liberal arts college and study creative writing and Spanish. Next semester, Clare will work in Des Moines at the Capitol Building as a Legislative Services Agency Page.

Clare is President of the National Honor Society at Waverly-Shell Rock and is an Iowa Senior All-Star and Iowa All-Academic Cross Country runner. Clare plans to attend a four-year liberal arts college and study creative writing and Spanish. Next semester, Clare will work in Des Moines at the Capitol Building as a Legislative Services Agency Page.

As I sit down, my graduation impending, and toil like most high school seniors over college applications, I can't help but to contemplate the past four years and how my days as a high school student are coming to a close. I remember practical jokes, cross country practices, making friends and losing some, favorite teachers, and days when my world reached near-perfection or near-ruin. Looking back on the varied experiences of my high school career, I pose one of the ultimately most important questions: what has made a difference in my education? Framing my memories in this lens, it is easy to sort out the many fun distractions of high school and focus on the bedrock of these four years and what I have counted on to prepare me for college—my education.

Though many people might not have guessed it from observing my younger and very shy self, I have grown into a woman who quite enjoys expressing her opinion and getting involved in a good debate. I think that class discussions not only force students to reexamine an idea, but also ask them to internalize, analyze, and synthesize that issue, which is a much more productive process. Many of my favorite courses utilize the instructor as a facilitator while students take the lead to explore and learn. However, debate is not exempt from pitfalls. As a student, I can easily spot when a teacher is using class discussion as an excuse not to teach. A good facilitator needs to be prepared and attentive and ready to steer the conversation in the most beneficial direction.

Teachers also need to remember their pupils. The faces staring at educators day after day may seem unenthused and disinclined to work, and in all honesty, some students really are. I know this presents difficulties for many teachers, and so I would like to share the experience I have had with an instructor and his success in motivating even some of the most apathetic students. Mr. Richard Snyder, my Advanced Placement United States History and Psychology teacher, is an incredible educator. The enthusiasm with which Mr. Snyder tackles his subjects—from discussing his great personal interest in particular historical figures to introducing pertinent articles to the class to encouraging student-run study groups—energizes and motivates the young adults he teaches. Not only does Mr. Snyder show a profound affinity for his subjects, he also demonstrates a true concern for his students. Whether that means taking a student aside and asking about their day-to-day life, offering additional help, or orienting a project around a student's particular interest, Mr. Snyder continually reveals the depth at which he genuinely cares for his pupils. Mr. Snyder respects his students and treats them like the young adults they are; in return, his students work to prove their maturity and commitment to Mr. Snyder. Whenever Mr. Snyder is brought up in conversation, students learning at all levels respond with praise and respect. So what am I trying to say? Instructors who are passionate about what they teach cannot help but spread that enthusiasm to their pupils; teachers who respect and care about the well-being of their students cannot help but be highly appreciated and respected in return.

As an identified Talented And Gifted student, I have found boredom to be the most detrimental element to my learning. As a good friend puts it, it's harder to be constantly bored throughout the day than to actually have to work. In my personal experience, boredom in a classroom is toxic. Most teachers are quite aware of this fact, and actively work to keep the majority of their students engaged. However, when only certain students find the material to be unchallenging, some teachers are willing to overlook the problem. Why would a high school student complain, after all, if a course is easy? This is where I take issue; a class should ensure rigor for each and every young adult, and if a course is incapable of that, then students should be allowed to bypass it for a more challenging class. As Mrs. Sally Thorson, my 7th through 10th grade TAG teacher, repeatedly reminds me, there is

absolutely no benefit in allowing a talented student to skate through high school. Gifted students who do not seek to challenge themselves not only waste their talent, they leave themselves woefully unprepared for the rigors and without the good academic skills necessary to succeed in college.

So how can teachers keep all levels of students engaged? From personal experience, I have found that most teachers genuinely want to offer a challenge for all students. In a number of courses, I have relied on an open dialogue with my instructor regarding the difficulty and pace of class work. In two instances I was able to demonstrate sufficient knowledge in a subject to be allowed to work outside of the classroom in a more in-depth study. I think this a very practical and potentially beneficial method. Allowing a group of interested and responsible students to challenge themselves, especially in the case of an inescapable required course, outside the rigid forum of a basic class can be a boon for teachers and students. However, I would caution teachers to think realistically and remember that even gifted students will need structure and support to remain motivated. Again, discussion and accountability will go a long way in keeping talented students learning. Simply turning a student loose who has already covered the class material does not provide that student with a challenge, and the unchecked freedom (again, from past experience) can keep students from effectively utilizing their time.

How timely, that I should find myself transitioning into suggestions about time after mentioning student's ability, or lack thereof, of managing it. As I myself have struggled, and observed many of my peers sharing in this plight, it is difficult to find a balance between academics, athletics, extracurricular activities, and socializing in high school. I am sure just about every high school-aged young adult would agree with me when I say that receiving an education, while being the most important thing, is hardly the only activity occurring within the school building. A demanding course can do a lot to help students prioritize and develop good study and work habits. I have found this especially true when forced to juggle advanced courses while running cross country and participating in time consuming speech and debate competitions. I applaud teachers who make use of the syllabus and keep students informed of upcoming tests and assignments. I think fondly of the syllabi handed out on the first day of the courses I have taken at Wartburg College, and how they work to keep everyone on track and everything running smoothly. I would strongly

recommend the proliferation of syllabi among high school teachers and students, as students greatly appreciate the ability to plan around tests and assignments. A syllabus and the forethought necessary in creating it, can serve both teachers and students in their quest to achieve the best use of their time.

So, what has made a difference in my education? In the vein of one of my mother's favorite musicals, I give you a few of my favorite (educational) things:

- being challenged with high expectations
- insightful assignments meant to encourage thought, synthesis, and interpretation
- a facilitated discussion in a productive environment in which my peers and I are encouraged to share differing viewpoints and debate issues
- being forced to present facts and data to back up an argument
- being expected to be accountable to and pushed by an educator
- projects with structure that allow creative thinking
- being given appropriate time to digest and analyze an issue
- being tested not only on hard data but also interpretations and deeper understanding
- never being allowed to forget my subject material
- being inspired

As I continue to fill out those college applications and write those college essays, I find myself surprised by the sense of finality, of the ending of an era in my life. High school, as cliché as it may sound, has been a remarkably memorable experience. In the end, I look back and I remember all the people, all the small things, that made a difference. I remember the teachers with their enthusiasm and dedication, the challenging projects that required higher order thinking, and the friends that pushed me to my limits in thoughtful, intense discussions. That was it, I think, slightly wistful, but excited too, because I'm young and idealistic and the world is still out there, still waiting for me. And how much of that idealism—of my desire to change the world—do I owe to the gifted educators around me?

What was it that my high school experience gave me? The answer: an education, and so much more.

By Clare Boerigter, Senior,
Waverly-Shell Rock High School,
Waverly, IA

Legislative Update: How Can I Advocate for Gifted Kids?

As educators, parents, and friends of gifted children, how do we advocate for them in these challenging economic times? The answer lies in communication. Consider these steps as laying the foundation for continued and/or increased support for services for these kids.

Educators:

1. "TAG-A-long:" Invite state legislators into your schools and have your gifted kids share what they are doing. Consider this **YOUR OPPORTUNITY** to explain the reason why gifted programs and services are important to your community and the state of Iowa. Take pictures of the visit and forward the photos along with an explanation of the visit to your local newspaper. Please forward any interactions to me as well so we can include it in our newsletter.

Educators, Parents, Friends of Gifted Children:

2. Many communities have legislative coffees where our state legislators connect with their constituents. Invite parents, students, and TAG teachers to attend. Look for an opportunity to have an informal chat with them about gifted education.
3. Check the NAGC web site for legislative updates. Go to www.nagc.org and click on "Legislative Network." You will be alerted via email when your Congressmen and women need to be contacted concerning issues in gifted education.
4. Also on the NAGC website, from the left hand column, click on "Advocacy and Legislation." From there you can access an "Advocacy Toolkit" explaining the hows of advocacy. You can click on "Legislative Update" to see the latest legislation in Congress concerning gifted education, and you can also link directly to the Legislative Network.
5. Check out the State of the States in Gifted Education, 2008-2009 at the NAGC website. It is the only national look at gifted education policies and practices in the states.

How do you find your state legislators?

- Go to <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/FindLeg/>
Fill in your address and click "submit."

Who is on the education committee for the state of Iowa?

- To find out who is on the committee, go to: <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/FindLeg/> and click on "committees" on the left hand side, then "Education" at the next site. If your legislator is on the education committee, contact them and explain how gifted education works in your school district. Share any success stories you have concerning gifted students in your TAG programs.

Did you know.....

- Iowa Senator Tom Harkin is chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension Committee?
- Representative David Loebsack (2nd Congressional District) serves on the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education?
- Representative Tom Latham (4th Congressional District) is a member of the House Appropriations Committee, which provides funding for numerous activities, including education?

By Gail Kenkel, Legislative Co-Chair
gkenkel@cbcsd.org





1707 L Street, N.W.
Suite 550
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202)785-4268
FAX: (202) 785-4248
www.nagc.org

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.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ (W) _____ (H)

New Renewal (# _____)

Referred by _____

E-mail: _____

Check one: Teacher Professor Parent Administrator Counselor
 Consultant Coordinator Other _____

QUESTIONS? Please contact NAGC at: (202) 785-4268 or nagc@nagc.org

1) U.S. MEMBERSHIP

Choose one option:

- Gifted Child Quarterly*
- Parenting for High Potential*
- Both Magazines Option

1 Year Individual	<input type="radio"/> \$ 65.00	<input type="radio"/> \$ 85.00
1 Year Institutional	<input type="radio"/> \$ 65.00	<input type="radio"/> \$ 85.00
2 Year Indiv. or Inst.	<input type="radio"/> \$ 125.00	<input type="radio"/> \$ 163.00
3 Year Indiv. or Inst.	<input type="radio"/> \$ 185.00	<input type="radio"/> \$ 242.00
CONTRIBUTOR (1 year)	<input type="radio"/> \$ 100.00	
LIFE MEMBER (US & Ind. only)	<input type="radio"/> \$ 700.00 (GCQ Only)	
*Parent Associate (Limited)	<input type="radio"/> \$ 25.00	-non voting, PHP only-
Graduate Student (GCQ only)	<input type="radio"/> \$ 25.00	----->

CANADIAN / FOREIGN MEMBERSHIP

Choose one option:

- Gifted Child Quarterly*
- Parenting for High Potential*
- Both Magazines Option

1 Year Individual	<input type="radio"/> \$ 75.00	<input type="radio"/> \$ 100.00
1 Year Institutional	<input type="radio"/> \$ 75.00	<input type="radio"/> \$ 100.00
2 Year Indiv. or Inst.	<input type="radio"/> \$ 144.00	<input type="radio"/> \$ 191.00
3 Year Indiv. or Inst.	<input type="radio"/> \$ 215.00	<input type="radio"/> \$ 285.00

Graduate Advisor's Signature _____
Name of School _____

PLEASE NOTE: YOU MUST INDICATE WHICH MAGAZINE YOU PREFER. IF NO BOX IS CHECKED YOU WILL RECEIVE GCQ ONLY.

2) DIVISIONS: (\$10 per Division per year / \$5 for graduate students ONLY) Please check which Division(s) you would like to join:

- Arts
- Creativity
- Middle Grades
- Special Populations
- Computers & Technology
- Curriculum Studies
- Parent & Community
- Special Schools/Programs
- Conceptual Foundations
- Early Childhood
- Professional Development
- Counseling & Guidance
- Global Awareness
- Research & Evaluation

**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 DUES CALCULATION

1) Membership	\$ _____
2) Division Total	\$ _____
3) Donation***	\$ _____
GRAND TOTAL (1,2,&3)	\$ _____

Please Remit All Payments in U.S. Dollars

Checks Payable to: **National Association for Gifted Children**
1707 L Street, NW, Suite 550
Washington, DC 20036

NAGC-AFFILIATE JOINT PARENT MEMBERSHIP

The National Association for Gifted Children is pleased to offer all PARENT members of ITAG 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.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____
Address (home or work?): _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Phone (W) _____ Phone (H) _____
Email _____
NAGC State Affiliate Organization _____

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Parenting for High Potential: NAGC's quarterly, full-color magazine that examines issues faced by children at home, in the community, and at school.

Compass Points: NAGC's monthly e-newsletter providing resources and information to keep parents up-to-date and "in the know."

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

- Parent Associate *limited membership*, ~~\$25~~ \$10 - nonvoting, PHP only

NETWORKS

Please join any or all of the NAGC Networks and participate with colleagues in working on issues of special interest to you. You must be a NAGC member to join our Networks. Network membership fees run concurrent with NAGC membership.

\$10 per Network

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Grades | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Populations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computers and Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent and Community | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Schools and Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conceptual Foundations | <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling and Guidance | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Research and Evaluation | |

PAYMENT METHOD

Personal or Institutional Check # _____
Purchase Order # (a copy of the purchase order must be attached) _____
Please make check payable to:
National Association for Gifted Children
Attention: MEMBERSHIP
1707 L Street, NW
Suite 550
Washington, DC 20036
Credit Card Options
VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover

Credit Number: _____
Exp. Date: _____
Name on the Credit Card: _____
Credit Card Billing Address: _____

MEMBERSHIP DUES CALCULATION

- 1) MEMBERSHIP \$ _____
2) DIVISION TOTAL \$ _____
3) DONATION* \$ _____
GRAND TOTAL (1, 2, & 3) \$ _____

***We urge you to consider making an additional donation to NAGC to assist in our advocacy programs. NAGC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and your donation is tax deductible to the extent the law allows.

ANNUAL CONVENTION DATE

November 5-8, 2009 - St. Louis, MO

Each Fall 3000+ convene and discuss the latest in the gifted field. Be there!



1707 L Street, N.W. - Suite 550 • Washington, DC 20036
www.nagc.org • Tel:(202) 785-4268 • Fax:(202) 785-4248

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

IASB Quiz Winner: How Much Do You Know About Gifted Children?

Thanks to all Iowa Association of School Boards convention attendees who stopped by the ITAG booth and completed the "How Much Do You Know About Gifted Children?" quiz that was based on Ten Things All Administrators Should Know About Gifted Children by Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Ed.D., Center for Gifted Education, The College of William and Mary.

Congratulations to Jim Uhlenkamp, School Board Member from Mt. Ayr for winning the random drawing for the \$50.00 VISA gift card.

Honorable Mention goes to Ramona Nelson, School Board President for the Decorah School District as the only participant who scored 10 out of 10 correctly on the quiz.

We, at ITAG, appreciate all you do as board members to provide appropriate educational services for gifted children in your district. We look forward to serving you throughout the year and hope you will visit the ITAG booth at next year's IASB convention.

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





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

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
DES MOINES IA
PERMIT NO 4824



Join Us!
Become a
Member,
Friend, or
Sponsor
of
ITAG

Help ITAG continue its support of
gifted education for Iowa students.
Please send your check for annual
dues of:

\$45.00 - \$99 Member
\$100.00 - \$999 Friend OR
\$1,000.00+ Sponsor

Make checks payable to:
Iowa Talented and Gifted
Association, and mail to:

ITAG TREASURER
8345 UNIVERSITY BLVD., SUITE F-1
DES MOINES, IA 50325

Please check as many as apply:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TAG Teacher | (Please Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TAG Coordinator | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counselor | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrator | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent | _____ |

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____ ZIP CODE _____

EMAIL: _____

PLEASE CHECK BOX IF NEW ADDRESS

Membership Amount Enclosed:

- \$45-\$99 Member
- \$45 Institutional
- \$100-\$999 Friend
- \$1,000+ Sponsor

* \$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 edu-
cation; 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:

ITAG NEWS

5619 NW 86th St., Ste. 600
Johnston, IA 50131-2955
or E-Mail: itag@assoc-serv.com