

WAETAG

Washington Association of Educators of the Talented and Gifted

Newsletter

Winter 2009

Gifted Education Day Friday, February 6, 2009

Columbia Room, Capitol Building
Olympia, WA
9:00A.M. — 2:30 P.M.

The most important part of Gifted Education Day is your visit with your Legislators. Bring your children to take part in democracy.

We encourage individuals, families, gifted groups and classes to join us in Olympia.

If you plan to bring a class, it is never too early to start making your plans for funding and permission.

wagifted@earthlink.net

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www.waetag.net

President's Message

Mary Freitas

This year is the 25th anniversary of Washington Association of Educators of the Talented and Gifted (WAETAG). WAETAG was formed by educators dedicated to the improvement of educational opportunities for gifted students, by strengthening services to and providing information for professionals serving these students in all settings. Toward that goal, our purposes are:

- To increase public and professional awareness of the need for appropriate educational opportunities for talented and gifted students.
- To encourage development of programs for professional preparation and growth in gifted and talented education.
- To assist with national, state and local legislation to provide consistent challenge for all students.
- To cooperate with other groups to organize and to enhance educational opportunities for all students.
- To support quality programs which increase challenging educational opportunities for all students.

We've been helping teachers since 1984, and this year is a precarious time for gifted education. Programs are being compromised or shut down not only in our state but across the country. The 2008 Fordham Report, "High-Achieving Students in the Era of NCLB," compares the progress of high achieving students since NCLB's implementation using data from NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress). "According to Farkas and Duffett, the nation's teachers have identified high-achieving students as a segment of the educational population that is currently underserved due in part to the pressure of NCLB to focus on low-achieving students. The authors conclude that 'teachers want these advanced students to move up the list of education priorities because educating them properly is the right thing to do and because it's good for the nation, but mostly because they see in their own classrooms youngsters whose considerable talents are not adequately challenged or fully utilized.'" *-Sarah Boone, MA, MFA*
Sarah Boone has a master's degree in teaching and is certified in gifted education. She also holds an MFA in creative writing

As the country goes into a recession and everyone is looking for areas in which to cut the budget, resources to help students who already meet and exceed the standards tend to be overlooked. If we do not make our presence felt now in our state capitol and educate our law makers on the importance of continuing to address the needs of the highly capable students, who will? And who better understands the needs of highly capable students and the ramifications of ignoring those needs, than you, their teachers and parents?

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President's Message

Continued from page 1

Mary Freitas

m-freitas@lycos.com

425-870-0595



Gifted Education Day is Friday, February 6th in Olympia, our state capital! This is an important day. Please consider what gifted education means to you and make arrangements if you possibly can to join us in Olympia. A coalition of WAETAG members and other gifted advocates appearing in person from around the state will get far more attention than familiar faces they are used to seeing in Olympia. If you can make it a civics field trip and bring gifted students along, that would be the best scenario of all to make an impact on our Senators, Representatives, and Governor. With so many other pressing concerns claiming their attention, they need to see and hear you in person. The Columbia Room in the State Capitol Building is reserved on Feb. 6th, 9:00 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. and legislators have been invited to come and talk to you. I encourage you to come and share your knowledge of the unique needs of gifted students and why their needs should be met. Consider attending Gifted Education Day and bring students and parents with you. If you are unable to attend you can contact your Senator or Representative at the HOTLINE at 1-800-562-6000 (TTY for Hearing Impaired at 1-800-635-9993). You can leave a brief message on issues or ask a question. When leaving a message, be prepared to leave your name and street address. To learn more you can go to www.waetag.org and to learn more about the Capitol, you can go to www.leg.wa.gov. Contact your legislators and let them know how important meeting the needs of gifted students is to you.

I want to thank Jan Krage and the team of people who put on a great conference at the Lynnwood Convention Center in Lynnwood, Washington. The 2008 WAETAG Conference was attended by over 260 people from throughout the state. The keynote speakers, Dr. Dennis Higgins and Dr. Elizabeth Nielsen, along with many other speakers, motivated us and stimulated our minds with new strategies and ideas.

This year WAETAG presented Distinguished Leadership awards to Gayle Pauley and Kathy Dwyer, along with a Distinguished Service award to Bob Sailors and Barbara Sailors. I want to thank these leaders for their many contributions to Gifted Education and please read Charlotte Akin's newsletter article to read more about these leaders in gifted education.

In closing, I encourage you to join the WAETAG team! Help on a conference committee, write an article for the newsletter, share resources which you have found effective for gifted students, write a letter to your legislator supporting gifted education, fill out a Call for Presenters Form, and attend the October conference. Let's work together as a team to make an even bigger difference in gifted education for the future - opening new doors, bringing fresh experiences and creating excitement in lives of the gifted!!!

2008 - 2009 WAETAG Board Members

President	Mary Freitas
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Financial Mgr.	Betty Buzitis
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OSPI Representative
Gayle Pauley

NWGCA Representative
Marcia Holland

WAETAG Mission Statement

WAETAG was formed by educators dedicated to the improvement of educational opportunities for gifted students, by strengthening services to and providing information for professionals serving these students in all settings.

Toward that goal, WAETAG has adopted the following aims and purposes:

- Increase public and professional awareness of the need for appropriate educational opportunities for talented and gifted students.
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- Support quality programs which increase challenging educational opportunities for all students.

Your WAETAG Regional Representatives

Two regions are highlighted with articles each issue.

Southwest Region

Pierce, Thurston, Lewis, Skamania, Clark, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, Pacific, Gray's Harbor, Mason, Jefferson, Kitsap, Callam Counties

Charlotte A. Akin, M. Ed.

CharlotteAkin@msn.com (360) 604-4001 X 4467



The Gifted Now and Beyond 2008 conference was a wonderful success! We had over 250 participants and very high quality break out sessions for all to attend. One of these, presented by Margo Long, was regarding the specialty endorsement for gifted education. The endorsement will be finalized this year and will not be a required endorsement. Our keynote speakers, Dr. Elizabeth Nielsen and Dr. Dennis Higgins, gave us thoughtful messages about wisdom and moral courage, in addition to bringing their expertise on twice exceptional children. It was especially therapeutic to have music as a part of their presentations. Mary Frietas, our amazing WAETAG president, was once again conference co-chairwoman, and she had the great help of Jan Kragen throughout planning and implementation of the conference.

Marcia Holland, President of NW Gifted Child Association, spoke to of the important lobbying work of the Washington Coalition for Gifted Education. Especially in times of economic turmoil and state budget deficits, we have a critical need to keep this organization funded. We passed the hat at the conference and collected over \$700. Marcia urged teachers to invite legislators to their classrooms to talk about the process of elections and other general kinds of things legislators do. While we can't allow promotion of voting for legislators or use schools to lobby, being in the classroom allows them to experience gifted children and their needs, which is part of their job, as well as giving students a worthwhile educational experience.

WAETAG gave out three awards this year, all to people who have worked shoulder to shoulder with the WAETAG community for a number of years. Barb and Bob Sailors were awarded the Distinguished Service Award for their long and dedicated service in gifted education. Kathy Dwyer, twice President of WAETAG, was awarded the Distinguished Leadership Award. Kathy is not one who is easily surprised, but she was this time! Another Distinguished Leadership Award went to our State of Washington shepherd, Gayle Pauley. Gayle has led Highly Capable Programs at OSPI for over 15 years, and we have all come to count on her wise counsel.

As we look to next year's conference, we are thinking about having a shorter conference and having it a week or two earlier than what we have done in the past few years. Plans are tentative at this time, but we would like you to keep WAETAG in mind for your 2009 October plans.

Central Region

Chelan, Grant, Franklin, Kittitas, Douglas, Okanogan, Benton, Yakima, Klickitat Counties

Maureen McQuerry

Maureen.mcquerry@gmail.com (509) 942-0416



"Real" Writing Instruction From "Real" Authors

News from Richland, WA: What would kids do to get "Real" writing instruction from a "real" author? Hopefully read books by the authors they hope to work with! Enterprise Middle School librarian, Michelle Lane, shares her vision for engaging students with authors at the first annual Middle School Writing Conference:

This last fall I attended a session titled: "What Authors Say About Library Visits" at the PNBA conference in Portland, Oregon. Each of the authors on the panel shared how much they prefer doing writing workshops with students to merely talking about their books. Somebody in the room mentioned an event she had heard of where a public library had organized a series of writer's workshops taught by published authors. Thus, a seed began to grow. Why couldn't I organize such an event for my school and our students?

My idea began to really blossom when I considered our large gifted population. All that I had learned in the past three years of working closely with our school's gifted coordinators began to really payoff. Students thrive when they have authentic learning experiences, and gifted students, especially, need to study a discipline from the viewpoint of a disciplinarian. They need to use the same terminology, techniques and tackle the same kinds of problems as those practicing it in the real world.

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Eastern Region

Pend Orielle, Stevens, Ferry, Lincoln, Spokane, Adams, Asotin, Garfield, Columbia, Walla Walla, Whitman Counties

Betty Burley-Wolf

garyw@pioneerschool.com (509) 992-7818



Northwest Region

Whatcom, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, King, Island Counties

Roger Daniels

drdaniels@seattleschools.org (206) 252-0132



Important Dates

NOW	Write to your Senator or Representative, advocating funding for gifted education!
February 6	Gifted Education Day 2009
March 16	WAETAG Summer Scholarship Application Deadline www.waetag.net
June 1	Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Award Deadline

Summer Scholarship Opportunity

This year WAETAG will again grant scholarships to students wishing to attend summer university programs. As many \$300.00 scholarships as possible will be awarded (usually three).

To apply, students must complete and submit an application packet, which includes an information sheet, an essay, a self-evaluation, and a teacher evaluation. Application packets are available online at the WAETAG website (www.waetag.net); please forward this information, and/or copy and distribute these forms to interested students, 3rd to 12th grades. The application deadline is March 16.

Criteria: Funding will go to students who will profit most from the experience, who have a high interest in participating in a summer program, and who have a willingness to work. A committee of at least three WAETAG associates, education professionals with experience in the field of gifted, will evaluate the applications and choose the recipients. Please alert students, also, that evaluators consider both the content and writing quality of the essays submitted.

Applying: Please print and give the application to students who meet the above criteria. Note that applications must be postmarked by **March 16, 2009**. No late applications will be considered. Applications should be sent to WAETAG, P.O. Box 1440, Battle Ground, WA 98604. Students awarded scholarships must use the money to attend a gifted summer program at a four year institution. Please make sure that students and their families understand that they are responsible for applying to the summer program of their choice. In the past, Washington State University, the University of Washington, Western Washington University, and Eastern Washington University, to name a few, have offered classes in areas ranging from the arts to the sciences; families need to do some research to find a program that works best for them.

Again, we appreciate your efforts in helping to promote these scholarships.

Don't hesitate to call (360) 604-4001 or e-mail Charlotte Akin at CharlotteAkin@msn.com with questions.

Thank you for your support and for the work you do for our special population of students!

WAETAG By-Laws:

Approved by membership on October 2008 at Annual WAETAG Conference

The Board will be looking to fill the new representative positions. If you are interested in any of the positions, please contact a current WAETAG Board Member.

The Private Schools/Home Schools Representative is charged with reaching out to Washington State's private and home schools, communicating their unique perspectives and needs to the WAETAG membership at large and to encourage private school membership in WAETAG. This position shall be appointed by the Board and reviewed annually.

The Advocacy Coordinator will serve to coordinate advocacy efforts with the state and federal organizations and legislative representatives. This position shall be appointed by the Board and reviewed annually.

Regional Representatives. The Representatives are charged with the responsibility for communicating the views and opinions of the state area they represent.

There will be seven Regional Representatives from public education with at least one representative per ESD area as listed:

- (1.) ESD 105 and ESD 123, (2.) ESD 113 and ESD 114
- (3.) ESD 189, (4.) ESD 171, (5.) ESD 101, (6.) ESD 121, and (7.) ESD 112

Central Region *continued from page 3*

When I returned to school I attacked my new project with a vengeance. I came up with a name for my event: "A Cavalcade of Authors: Wildcats Wild about Writing." After getting buy-in from my principal, I created an invitation to e-mail to a handful of authors. Within the first two hours, I had four authors committed, and within the next couple of days I had my last two. We are excited to welcome the following six authors to our first annual event: S. A. Bodeen, Janet Lee Carey, Renee Riva, Arthur T. Lee, Alma Alexander, and Maureen McQuerry.

The day will consist of four 40 minute sessions. Each of the authors will work with 15 students at a time, and the students will then rotate from author to author. In preparation for this event, and to earn passage to the event, students will read books from four of the six authors. We are considering requiring a "work in progress" piece to be brought to the workshops by each of the students as well. After the workshop rotation, authors will do a book signing in our library while parents are setting up our lunch room for a luncheon. Parents, students, and authors will eat together with another book signing and author panel to follow.

Interested in planning a similar event for your school or district? Email Michelle Lane at Michelle.Lane@rsd.edu.

Important!

Gifted education in our State is currently on the "chopping block." To ensure that the State legislature does not eliminate funding for gifted education programs (this is a real possibility with the current economic crisis) please write, call, or e-mail the Governor and/or your state representatives today!

Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Award Deadline June 1, 2009

WAETAG and the National Association for Gifted Children are pleased to announce the NAGC Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Awards program for the 2008 -2009 school year. Originally funded by the Nicholas Green Foundation and NAGC, this award program is designed to recognize distinguished achievement in academics, leadership or the arts, in children grades 3 through 6. One child per state can be named a Nicholas Green Distinguished Student and that winner receives a \$500 U.S. savings bond and an NAGC Certificate of Excellence.

The Nicholas Green Foundation was established by Maggie and Reg Green to honor the memory of their seven-year-old son Nicholas who was killed in a drive-by shooting while visiting Italy in 1994. The Greens started the Distinguished Student Awards because they wanted to recognize young people who are working hard to make the most of their lives and develop their unique gifts and talents, and who are now about the age that Nicholas was when he died.

The Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Awards inspire children to achieve to their fullest potential, highlight high-ability students, and draw attention to the educational needs of our nation's gifted and talented students.

Nominations are accepted from parents, teachers, students, and community and civic groups. Applications are available online at www.waetag.net or from Mary Freitas, m-freitas@lycos.net. Packets are due by June 1, 2009.



Extreme Starburst

Dr. Tony Phillips

A star is born. A star is born. A star is born.

Repeat that phrase 4000 times and you start to get an idea what life is like in distant galaxy J100054+023436.

Astronomers using NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope and ground-based observatories have found that the galaxy gives birth to as many as 4000 stars a year. For comparison, in the same period of time the Milky Way produces only about 10. This makes J100054+023436 an extreme starburst galaxy.

"We call it the 'Baby Boom galaxy,'" says Peter Capak of NASA's Spitzer Science Center at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, CA. "It is undergoing a major baby boom, producing most of its stars all at once. If our human population was produced in a similar boom, then almost all people alive today would be the same age."

Capak is lead author of a paper entitled "Spectroscopic Confirmation of an Extreme Starburst at Redshift 4.547" detailing the discovery in the July 10th issue of *Astrophysical Journal Letters*.

The galaxy appears to be a merger, a "train wreck" of two or more galaxies crashing together. The crash is what produces the baby boom. Clouds of interstellar gas within the two galaxies press against one another and collapse to form stars, dozens to hundreds at a time.

This isn't the first time astronomers have witnessed a galaxy producing so many stars. "There are some other extreme starburst galaxies in the local universe," says Capak. But the Baby Boom galaxy is special because it is not local. It lies about 12.3 billion light years from Earth, which means we are seeing it as it was 12.3 billion years ago. The universe itself is no older than 14 billion years, so this galaxy is just a youngster (Capak likens it to a 6-year-old human) previously thought to be incapable of such rapid-fire star production.

The Baby Boom galaxy poses a challenge to the Hierarchical Model of galaxy evolution favored by many astronomers. According to the Hierarchical Model, galaxies grow by merging; Add two small galaxies together, and you get a bigger galaxy. In the early years of the universe, all galaxies were small, and they produced correspondingly small bursts of star formation when they merged. "Yet in J100054+023436, we see an extreme starburst. The merging galaxies must be pretty large."

Capak and colleagues are busy looking for more Baby Boomers "to see if this is a one-of case or a common occurrence." The theory of evolution of galaxies hangs in the balance.

Meanwhile: A star is born. A star is born. A star is born.

This article was provided by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under a contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.



830 Cary Rd., Edmonds, WA 98020

Check your membership expiration date on the address label. If your membership is expired, please renew it by sending in \$35 and the form below. Membership includes newsletters, advanced conference mailings, student scholarship mailings, and news of advocacy and training opportunities. Stay with us for the students' sakes!

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YOUR NEWS AND VIEWS ARE WELCOME!

Share or review a favorite curriculum resource, describe your program, or a lesson, teacher, or student. We all need new ideas. WAETAG Newsletter offers you one more way to network. Please send material within an e-mail message or attached as a Word document .

Contact Kyra Richardson for newsletter details: dustinandkyra@msn.com, (509) 489-1175 (please do not call after 8 P.M.). For other information about WAETAG, please contact the WAETAG President (see President's Message on page 2).

If you receive this newsletter at work, please send us your home address on a membership form to assure you continue to receive prompt WAETAG mailings. Label it UPDATE.

WAETAG Membership Form

I wish to support meeting the needs of gifted children in Washington State.

WAETAG membership category: [] Individual/Parent (\$35) [] Student (\$15)

Name _____
Address (h) _____
Address (w) _____
e-mail _____
School District _____ ESD No. _____

Phone (h) _____ Phone (w) _____
City (h) _____ State _____ Zip _____
City (w) _____ State _____ Zip _____

I am a:
[] Gifted Program Teacher [] Counselor
[] Classroom Teacher [] Researcher
[] Parent [] Student
[] Administrator [] Other
[] Public School [] Private School

As an educator, my level of work is (check one):
[] Preschool [] Primary
[] Intermediate/Middle [] Junior High
[] High School [] College

Mail membership form and check to WAETAG, 830 Cary Rd., Edmonds, WA 98020

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