

AGATE Newsletter



Volume 24, Issue 2

December 17, 2013



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Greetings AGATE family! I sincerely hope that your fall semester has been a rewarding one and that you find time during the holidays to relax and renew as we gear up for an exciting spring semester. The fall semester has certainly been a busy one for AGATE! Our Board of Directors as well as the Awards, Scholarship, Enrichment grants, and Conference committees have all been busy planning and gearing up for the annual AGATE conference. Several Arkansas' gifted educators also attended the 60th Annual National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) convention in Indianapolis, Indiana in November. The convention was packed with innovative sessions that supported this year's theme "Shifting Into High Gear." Even if you were not able to physically attend the conference, many of the session handouts are available online on the NAGC website. These handouts and presentations would



be a great source of professional development and advocacy pieces to support your gifted program. As part of the convention, Sandra Johnson, AGATE MAP Chair, and I were honored to represent AGATE at the state affiliate breakfast. This annual event provided a platform for state affiliate leaders to share ideas as well as learn about the activities of other affiliates. The program also included a legislative update. This year we celebrated the fact that gifted education legislation, the TALENT Act (S.512/H.R. 2338), was re-introduced as a bipartisan bill in both the House and Senate. Other legislative news included an

announcement that gifted education language was added to the ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act). Although the ESEA was not re-authorized as part of this year's Congress, having gifted education noted within the language of the new Act is promising. In other convention notes, we are also excited to share that our own Dr. Christine Deitz was recognized with a Doctoral Student Award as part of the NAGC Celebration of Excellence held on Friday night of the convention! It's always exciting to have a colleague recognized nationally, and even more so to have our AGATE Conference Chairperson recognized! Congratulations Christine!

Speaking of conference, if you have not registered for AGATE 2014 yet, please visit our website at www.agate-arkansas.org and visit the conference

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"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Nelson Mandela

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK (CONTINUED)

link to access all the forms. The conference is scheduled for February 5-7th at the Hot Springs Convention Center in Hot Springs. With this year's conference, we celebrate 35 years of support for Arkansas' educators, parents, and students. This year's theme, "AGATE WOW-A Celebration of Wondrous Opportunities Within," is certainly a reflection of AGATE's purpose and legacy. Dr. Christine Deitz and her conference committee are working hard to finalize conference details for a conference packed with "wondrous opportunities" that she shares more about in her conference corner article in this newsletter. In addition to Christine's update about the conference, this edition of our newsletter features many other articles of interest regarding things benefiting

gifted students and educators. I hope you will take the time to peruse each one and share the ideas and resources presented.

Legislatively, don't forget to reach out to your local legislators to share special events and activities to spotlight your program. Our legislative strength as an organization begins at the local level and we must continue to build friendships and awareness of the needs of our students. Please continue to be mindful of local opportunities that you can share.

As always, if you have suggestions, ideas, and/or questions or concerns, please feel free to contact any AGATE Board member or

myself. We also welcome your active involvement in AGATE through volunteering to serve on our board and/or its committees. Our combined efforts in advocacy and volunteerism continue to make AGATE a strong organization. We appreciate your continued commitment to gifted education and its students.

Continue to shine wherever you serve!

See you in Hot Springs for AGATE 2014,

Romona Sawyer- AGATE President
2012-2014

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The following are the names of the AGATE scholarship recipients for 2013.

Heather Theodore	Booker Arts Magnet / Little Rock School District	ASU
Kimberly Burrow	Poyen School District	UALR
Rachel Morris	Booker Arts Magnet / Little Rock School District	ASU
Candice Duncan	Elmwood Middle School / Rogers School District	U of A
Caroline Fow	Hill Farm Elementary / Bryant	ASU
Taira Trusty	Jasper School District	Harding
Johnny Passmore	Quitman School District	UALR

2013-2014 AGATE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By: avis Hendricks, AGATE Legislative Liason

The Legislative Committee met on October 28 in Conway to follow up on work from the September meeting at the AAGEA Conference. Chair Barbara Prichard, Sandra Johnson, Brent Miller, Dr. Ann Robinson, and Advocate, Davis Hendricks, were joined by new members, Dr. Charlotte Green, GT Director for Conway School District and Aaron Randolph, GT and AP Director for Cabot School District.

The committee discussed the School Board Association's Acceleration Policy Model and agreed that GT Administrators should be aware of the policy since it supports acceleration and can be utilized as a point of discussion with administrators in individual districts. As advocates for Arkansas GT students, we should spearhead efforts to ensure each district has an acceleration policy based on research with efficient processes that allow precocious learners to progress at a rate most academically and affectively appropriate for them. We must be sure that we do not close the achievement gap by allowing students at the top of the gap to languish because they are not **appropriately** challenged.

One focus of the meeting agenda grew from a discussion in September about priorities of the upcoming fiscal legislative session. Even though Arkansas continues to be one of a few states in the country that sustains a mandate and funding for GT programs, the future of Arkansas gifted education is not guaranteed simply because it is the law. Without a well-informed and diligent presence during legislative sessions, GT programs could have been phased out several times. Even so, it is imperative that we do not adopt a defensive posture, nor be distracted from the process of clarifying our position to seek ways to improve services provided to gifted students.

In reviewing the history of gifted education in Arkansas, the committee discussed a need to clarify the details of our legislative history that have enabled us to persevere over more than thirty years. For that reason, the committee agreed to conduct thorough research into our legislative background. It is important that the legacy passed on to the gifted students and educators of tomorrow is worthy of those who provided the initial spark that has become GT Education in Arkansas. The fruits of this work will be a better understanding of the steps to sustain gifted programs in Arkansas as well as a definitive set of priorities for the future.

In December, the Legislative Committee met prior to the AGATE Board meeting and reviewed the initial information gathered. The committee consensus is that continuation of this task is worthy of the time investment needed. As the committee continues this endeavor, the membership will receive reports of work progress. If you have any information that you think would be relevant to the work, please contact Davis or Barbara or any member of the Legislative Committee.



ADVOCACY 101

By: avis Hendricks, AGATE Legislative Liason

This is the second installment of an ongoing addition to this article in the AGATE Newsletter that we are calling Advocacy 101. We will be sharing basic advocacy strategies and hope to provide some ongoing assistance to our members who want to do more, but aren't sure where to begin and how to most effectively engage the process.

One of the most important aspects of advocacy is staying current and being informed about the issues that are relevant to your advocacy focus. During election years, far too many citizens rely on thirty and sixty second sound bites to form their opinions about the candidates. During a legislative session, we are often amazed at how many of our friends outside the education field approach us about education issues, and have based their opinions only on the articles they read in the paper or the brief synopses they get from their preferred news stations on television and radio. As AGATE advocates we often find ourselves in the role of the educator, clarifying information that has been garbled in rhetoric that is often so emotion charged that the truth can be lost in the translation.

As educators, it is important that we are always armed with as much un-biased information as possible before we advocate an opinion. As your AGATE Advocate, Davis never publicly shares a partisan position because even though he is constantly researching issues, he knows the difficulty in getting at the truth by wading through a lot of biased reporting. He cannot identify himself in a way that could alienate legislators from any political party who might be key votes on legislation that is important to our constituents.

That is not to say that we do not ever take a stand. We have worked hard to represent AGATE in a way that reflects the philosophical base of gifted education programs, always seeking facts, separating the factual information about an issue from opinions and speculation, and always looking for data that cannot be biased. When we take a stand, it is after much research into numerous sources, and often after extensive discussions and debate with our adversaries. This is the posture we would recommend to our constituents, and that is to always do extensive homework before forming an opinion, and be slow to be oppositional until all the information available has been carefully considered and the research base is sound.

The fiscal session is just around the corner, so if you aren't a member of GT-Teach, the Arkansas GT list serve, you need to join and watch for legislative updates as the session begins. We post legislative alerts on GT-Teach and will also be adding information to the Advocacy page of the AGATE website. If you aren't already, please become familiar with the Arkansas 89th General Assembly website and be diligent in your monitoring of the media outlets, both print and television during the session. As always, Davis and the committee are eager for your questions and participation. Remember that Davis is available as a service of AGATE to visit your AGATE Affiliates, parent groups, Education Cooperative, teachers and any group that you feel could be advocates for gifted and talented students. Contact Davis at dhendricks95@att.net.

THIS TIME IT'S PERSONAL: PREPARING FOR THE 2014 AGATE CONFERENCE

By: Dr. Christine Deitz, 2014 AGATE Conference Chair

After months of planning and prepping, the 2014 AGATE Conference is just around the corner and offers something special for everyone. The Conference will be a bit earlier this year – February 6 and 7 at the Hot Springs Convention Center in beautiful Hot Springs, Arkansas. The Action Labs, featuring dynamic speakers and memorable hand-on learning experiences, will take place Wednesday, February 5. AP Day, featuring AP Language, World History, Chemistry, and Statistics, will run concurrently with Friday's Breakout sessions on February 7. Visit the 2014 AGATE web-site for Conference details, registration forms and links, and hotel reservation information <http://www.agate-arkansas.org/conference.html>

On behalf of the 2014 Conference Committee, we want to send a heart-felt thanks to everyone who submitted a proposal for a session this year. After carefully considering and arranging the sessions, we're confident the Conference will have a personal feel. Attendees will experience sessions personally designed to share best practices, new program ideas, exciting activities, and meaningful services for gifted children.

The 2014 Conference will also be a time to connect and network with others passionate about gifted education. An impressive group of vendors ranging from publishers, university programs, GT program options, and creative services will offer a wide array of services and products. Several vendors will also be conducting Breakout sessions. For example, Pieces of Learning will bring two of their most popular authors. Dr. Keith Polette will present two three-hour Action Labs on Wednesday and two Breakout Sessions on Thursday. Dodie Merritt will present a Breakout session both Thursday and Friday.

Don't even think about heading home Thursday afternoon! At 4:00 we'll be gathering in Exhibit Hall A for light snacks, coffee, tea, and a celebratory reception for four of the authors of "A Century of Contributions to Gifted Education: Illuminating Lives." Edited by Dr. Ann Robinson and Dr. Jennifer Jolly, this much talked about book features a collection of biographies authored by Arkansas's own Ann Robinson, Bronwyn McFarland, and Debbie Dailey. Dr. Joy Davis, Friday's expert speaker and author of the chapter on Dr. Martin D. Jenkins, will also be attending the reception.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank the 2014 Conference Committee for working so diligently to create this very special three-day event. We know attendees will be thrilled with the gifted professionals who are bringing fabulous ideas, practices, and projects to the Conference. From every vendor, presenter, and AGATE Conference Committee member, we are wishing you a very personal AGATE 2014. – Christine



Click the link above for conference information.

ARKANSAS GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL

By: Mary Kathryn Stein, Director of ADE-Office of Gifted and Talented and Advanced Placement

Currently it is the season of applications for Arkansas Governor's School. The school is a six-week summer residential program for gifted and talented rising high school seniors. The school is operated by the Arkansas Department of Education through a grant to Hendrix College and is supervised by the Office of Gifted & Talented Education. The thirty-fifth annual school will be conducted for approximately 400 students from June 8 through July 19, 2014, on the campus of Hendrix College in Conway. Students who attend the School must be nominated by their local high schools and selected by the State Student Selection Committee designated by the Department of Education. The committee works to ensure that every area of the state is represented. The program is designed to give gifted students the opportunity to develop and expand their powers to conceptualize, to theorize, and to explore the latest progress and problems of various academic and artistic fields. The curriculum is designed to focus on contemporary topics and issues and to encourage curiosity and a spirit of inquiry. Tuition, room, board, books, and instructional supplies are furnished for students from funds appropriated by the Arkansas General Assembly. Students are responsible for travel to and from Conway and for any personal expenses. More information about the program including an overview and videos can be found at <http://www.hendrix.edu/AGS/>

Students who attend the School must be nominated by their local high schools and Gifted and Talented Coordinators and teachers are encouraged to support the process. The curriculum is designed to focus on contemporary topics and issues and to promote curiosity and a spirit of inquiry. Tuition, room, board, books, and instructional supplies are furnished for students from funds appropriated by the Arkansas General Assembly. Students are responsible for travel to and from Conway and for any personal expenses. More information about the program including an overview and videos can be found at <http://www.hendrix.edu/AGS/> Tuition, room, board, books, and instructional supplies are furnished for students. More information about the program including an overview and videos can be found at <http://www.hendrix.edu/AGS/>

All application forms are due by *January 28, 2014*.



REFLECTIONS FROM THE 60TH ANNUAL NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN: 2013

By: Barbara Prichard, Director of Gifted Program, Fayetteville

For Arkansas educators who have attended past NAGC's or this November, post-conference reflection is a good exercise in which to engage and share with colleagues. Over the course of the national conference, one can attend well over forty sessions in a variety of strand areas. Some of my reflections this year were both unsettling but also reinforcing of positions and research that long have been part of the gifted community conversation. I will digest five sessions from varied areas that were presented by current and respected professionals reflecting new or renewed ideas.

Summary Notes:

Competition thoughts from author Ashley Merryman: Competition is often seen as either a black or white concept. Merryman shared that competition itself is not bad; it is the response to it that can be. The benefit of competition is *improvement in a moment and over time*. She states that gifted students are NOT inherently more fragile, rather we end up convincing them that they are. Do not praise students for "who they are", they can't change that. Praise should be for *the work*. As educators of gifted students, we should assist our charges *not* to become addicted to praise for things that are easy or are not "worthwhile".

GT Focus on Bias in Identification from Dr. Frank Worrell, UC Berkeley: Dr. Worrell's recent research discounts the belief that IQ scores are biased, as both misinformed and misdirected. He studied this postulate in the areas of construct validity, reliability, and differential item functioning across varied groups. His research indicates that tests do *reflect* achievement gaps but do not *cause* the gaps and therefore the scores themselves are not biased. He finds the same research support relative to teacher bias, which he states is also misdirected. His position is that reality should be accepted that IQ tests are "OK" and that they are an effective general purpose predictor. He further states that *local norms and identification procedures* always should be used via multiple indicators to determine program placement within *each school district* context.

Guiding toward Achievement and Confidence from Dr. Sylvia Rimm: Dr. Rimm has done yeoman's research work for increasing expectations and access in all fields for females. In spite of gains in recent years, she says there still exists what she terms a "leaky pipeline" for women and that there is a long way to go to accomplish true access and equality in the professional world. Her recent work shows that women still lag 28% behind men in salary. Increases in other areas exist but do not match the percentage of women now operating in the field of law, college presidencies, school superintendents, or symphony orchestra conductors. Facilitating goal-setting for gifted girls can and should begin in elementary school.

REFLECTIONS (CONTINUED)

Gifted Education Confronts enormous 21st Century Problems and Opportunities: from a panel discussion by four past presidents of NAGC: This was an unsettling session but clearly one that addressed huge problems that face not only our nation but education as a whole. Statements from panel members were direct that the political system is “absolutely broken”, “that political agendas that are erupting want to doubt science where in the past science has been apolitical”, “education has failed to teach students and thus society how to play well together”, and “kids need to be taught how to handle tolerance for ambiguity, self-doubt and how to evaluate information”. A massive challenge to all educators came from one panelist, “The strength or weakness of the education system will determine the fate of society”.

The Creativity Crisis: from Dr. Abeel and Dr. Kim of the University of Mary Washington and College of William and Mary respectively shared data demonstrating the decrease in American creativity since 1990. Their explanation of this phenomenon is that since that time, Asian countries have started copying American education and America has started copying Asian education. They offered a number of strength and weakness comparisons between the two, along with myths and realities about creativity in general. A brief summary about their theory of the reality of creativity is as follows: “Creativity requires divergent (generating many, flexible, and original ideas), convergent (evaluating ideas and selecting the best), and emergent (integrating, refining, and implementing the idea) thinking. They also propose that creators rather than being “loners” are really “collaborators”. So often we hear in today’s educational conversations that we no longer have the time for creativity. This clearly is an area where gifted education must continue to offer these experiences to our students.

These summaries hopefully indicate the importance of “looking outside” of our own arena of interaction. We can do that by attending conferences about gifted education (like AGATE!), national opportunities, reading current research and journal articles in our field, and also general networking with experienced colleagues in gifted education. The responsibility to be a life-long learner as an educator for gifted students is one we should embrace since the direct consequences of that learning makes us better able to meet the needs of the gifted students in our care.



ECONOMIC EDUCATION OUTREACH

By: Kris Bertelsen, AGATE Board Member, Business Affiliate

As part of its outreach and education initiatives, the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis makes every effort to be the premier source of FREE curriculum materials for K-16 educators. The St. Louis Fed produces materials for various subject areas including economics, personal finance, language arts, U.S. and world history, civics/government, and math. We provide lesson plans—most with a Smart™ or Promethean™ application—videos, online courses, interactive activities for students, and one of the most comprehensive sources for economic data anywhere in the world—Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED)

In addition, we offer professional development, Federal Reserve Bank Certification for various economic topics, and reasonably priced graduate credit offered through a partner university. Here at the Little Rock Branch, we offer professional development opportunities at the branch or at schools as well as workshops with partner organizations, typically at no cost to participants.

Staff at the Little Rock Branch is available to assist teachers wherever possible in locating materials or providing assistance with the website. Check out all of the resources at: http://www.stlouisfed.org/education_resources/

Keep up-to-date on professional development opportunities at the Little Rock Branch by checking <http://www.stlouisfed.org/littlerock/contact-ee.cfm>

For any questions, feel free to contact me:

Kris Bertelsen, AGATE Board Member, Business Affiliate.

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TECH TOOLS FOR COMMON CORE SUCCESS

By: Bill Shelly, Gifted and Talented Specialist, Arkansas River ESC

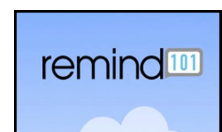
Four words that are frequently used in the Common Core State Standards are Communication, Collaboration, Publication and Research. I will list and describe four free technology tools that can help educators reach their pupils in these areas and prepare them for Common Core success.

Communication – Remind101.com. Remind101 is an online texting service for teachers. You create a free account and give students a number and a password. Students text the password to the given number in order to “register” their phone with the service. From that point forward, every time you send a text message via the service, every registered phone will receive the message. You can create multiple groups in order to send different messages to different groups of students and even to their parents. Best of all, your cell phone number remains private. This is a one-direction information delivery system.

Collaboration – Scribblar.com. Scribblar is an online collaboration service very similar to Go To Meeting. With plans starting at FREE, it is a great video conferencing tool for schools and individuals. Unlike Skype, Scribblar has an online white board and document sharing features. Paid plans feature multiple rooms and larger numbers of participants. Whether you are supporting a home-bound student or facilitating a collaboration project between schools, Scribblar is a tool worth checking out.

Research – Bibme.com. Bibme is a free online tool for creating properly formatted bibliographies. There is an automatic look-up feature that will pull all of the information about a book simply from its ISBN number and format it properly according to the style you choose. It will also accurately cite websites, magazines, newspapers, etc. If a publication is not in the system, Bibme will walk the student through a manual process of inputting the necessary information. Creating a free account in Bibme allows you to save multiple bibliographies to reference, edit and print at a later date.

Publication – SimpleBooklet.com. SimpleBooklet allows users to create online flipbooks, fliers, sliders and/or brochures. These products can then be easily embedded into webpages, wikis or blogs or they can be emailed to parents. Creating an account is free and the first five publications per account are also free. There is education pricing as well. For \$10 a year, you can get a teacher account and 30 student accounts. So give SimpleBooklets and try and see what possibilities you can create for your classroom.





2014 AGATE Officer Absentee Voting Ballot

Vote for One

___ President-Elect - Karm Prock, Searcy School District

_____ Write In

Vote for One

___ Treasurer - Mary Kathryn Stein, ADE/GT

_____ Write In

Vote for One

___ District I Director - Julie Lamb-Milligan, Arkansas State University

_____ Write In

Vote for One

___ District III Director - Rachel Gibson, Gravette School District

_____ Write In

Vote for One

___ District V Director - Sandra Oliver, Hamburg School District

_____ Write In

Vote for Two

___ Nominating Committee – Debbie Dailey, University of Central Arkansas

___ Nominating Committee – Rachelle Miller, University of Central Arkansas

___ Nominating Committee – Donna Garlington, Springdale School District

_____ Write In

_____ Write In

ABSENTEE BALLOT PROCEDURES



Procedure:

1. Print out and mark the ballot.
2. Print this page and sign and date the verification stub. Include your AGATE membership number.
3. Detach the verification stub along the dotted line.
4. Place the ballot and only the ballot in an envelope and seal it. Print the words absentee ballot on the envelope.
5. Address to AGATE a larger envelope including a complete return address.

Place the sealed envelope and the completed verification stub in the larger envelope and mail to:

AGATE Election Committee
P.O Box 250754
Hillcrest Station
Little Rock, AR 72225

VERIFICATION STUB

Signature: _____

Membership Number: _____

Date: _____



Arkansans for Gifted & Talented Education

Newsletter Contact:

Bill Shelly
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shellyb@aresc.k12.ar.us

AGATE's Mission:

AGATE is an independent organization promoting excellence in education, particularly as it relates to gifted and talented children and youth in Arkansas.

AGATE works to educate its members and the Arkansas community as to the nature and needs of gifted and talented children and youth, and to develop a community that recognizes, nurtures, and rewards the fulfillment of the unique individual potential of each

