



# Gifted Unlimited, II

Vol. 9, No. 2, Winter 2010

Chartered in 1963, NWGCA is a statewide, nonprofit organization of people with an interest in meeting the special needs of highly capable children

NWGCA Treasurer  
PO Box 10704  
Spokane, Washington 99209

northwestgca@gmail.com  
www.nwgca.org

## NWGCA Board

Sherrie Flaman  
Christine Holland  
Ann Koch  
JC Hodgson, treasurer  
Marcia Holland, president



Washington Association  
of Educators of the Talented  
and Gifted (WAETAG)

www.waetag.net

Barbara Warren-Sams, editor

## Inside this issue:

GE Day will be held February 5, 2009	2
Use technology to organize kids	2, 8
Gifted education in basic education	3
Parent groups are essential	4
Lighting the gifted reader's journey	5
Your membership is critical this year	6
Joint Membership Form	7

## President's Message

Marcia Holland

### Governor Deletes Funding for Gifted Education from Budget What Do We Do Now?

In her initial Supplemental Budget for 2010-2011, Governor Gregoire proposes to suspend \$7.4 million budgeted for gifted education for this year. That would mean no money to your school district for gifted education in the upcoming school year.

Rep. Reuven Carlyle from the 36<sup>th</sup> District in the heart of Seattle suggests we "write those letters like mad and don't stop until the end of session and the Governor has signed the final budget. Don't give up. If you don't make the noise, the silence will be deafening."

It was for times like these that Northwest Gifted Child Association was created. Parents are the key to services being provided for your highly capable children. No one else understands the educational needs your children have. No one else really cares. It is up to you to act on your children's behalf.

#### What can you do today?

Send the Governor a message through her Web site [www.governor.wa.gov/contact/default.asp](http://www.governor.wa.gov/contact/default.asp) or the hot line 1 (800) 562-6000.

In a situation like this, it is the sheer number of messages, not the weight of your arguments, that will count. Make your message simple: "I want you to fully fund highly capable programs in the Supplemental Budget," or "Do not suspend highly capable program funding in the Supplemental Budget."

#### What can you do tomorrow?

Write or contact your state legislators—two representatives and one senator. Ask them to maintain funding for gifted in the supplemental budget. The Legislature will also propose a version of the Supplemental Budget after January 11. Gifted education has strong supporters among legislators, and we

will work closely with them on the issue of highly capable funding. You can find the contact information for your legislators at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/efault.aspx>.

The second part of your message to your state legislators is to include funding for gifted education in the first phase of implementation of ESHB 2261. (See "Gifted education in basic education: The facts," p. 3).

#### What more can you do?

If your school district does not have a support group for parents of gifted students, explore starting one. Such a group has multiple purposes. It is the foundation for effective advocacy for the highly capable learners in your district; a source of support and education for parents of gifted children; and a resource of supplementary educational experiences for your children. (See "Parent groups are essential," p. 4).



# GE Day will be held February 5, 2010

## Pre-registration required this year

*Why do we need Gifted Education Day now that reform legislation has passed? Because our work is not yet done.*

The Legislature assigned a number of work groups to craft the reform details of the Basic Education Act. The Funding Formula Technical Work Group (FFTWG) and the Quality Education Council (QEC) will be presenting their recommendations to the Legislature in December and January. The Legislature will then need to enact these recommendations into statute in the upcoming legislative session.

Parents and educators of gifted students will need to update legislators during the legislative session on the need to fund the highly capable section of the new Basic Education Act in the first implementation phase.

The Washington Coalition for Gifted Education (WCGE) will continue to keep an eye on the work of the FFTWG and QEC and will be prepared to advocate on behalf of gifted students in the upcoming legislative session. We will not be able to determine our main focus until after the session starts on January 11,

2010, when we will find out which bills are introduced.

This makes planning for the specifics of Gifted Education Day a bit difficult. What is clear, however, is that **we will need as many people as possible in Olympia on February 5, 2010, who are prepared to talk to legislators about the needs of gifted students.** Please join us there.

To use the Columbia Room, we must ask you to pre-register. You can do this with the Coalition at [wagifted@earthlink.net](mailto:wagifted@earthlink.net). You must pre-register to receive Coalition materials.

## Use technology to organize kids

By Susan Goodkin

When it comes to organizing today's young students, many parents and teachers try to fit all students into one box. For example, students generally come home from their first day of middle school with new planners in hand and strict instructions to record all their assignments in it every day.

As many frustrated parents have learned, however, making every child use a planner as their primary organizational tool simply doesn't work in practice. For many students—particularly young boys—writing down their assignments in tiny boxes, for up to six different classes, is torturous.

Additionally, for the planner to be effective, not only do students have to accurately record the assignments in the brief time between classes, but

then they have to remember to review their scribbles. As one of my young clients earnestly informed me, "Oh, the planner works for me—I just forget to look at it."

If we want to improve our children's organization skills, we need to consider tools many kids are more comfortable with—and more likely to use—than planners.

Take cell phones, for example. When teachers write assignments on the board, a click of the cell phone camera will record the homework accurately and instantaneously. Students can also text message the assignment to their mom or dad. (I know, to many adults it seems just as easy to write down the assignment as to text it, but texting seems easier to kids.)

If homework is assigned verbally, students can use their cell phones, and

some iPods, to record their teachers' instructions. You can also channel your child's inner James Bond and get cool spyware gadgets such as a recording pen. For example, check out [www.spy-tronix.com/mp3playerpenrecorder.html](http://www.spy-tronix.com/mp3playerpenrecorder.html). *Of course, students need to get the teacher's permission before recording.*

Parents must also understand that teachers already have their hands full policing the use of cell phones and iPods. Students who don't limit their in-class use of these devices to recording assignments should lose the privilege of doing so—so back to the planner.

However students initially record assignments, they still need to review them. Rather than trying to get kids to haul out their planners to check their assignments every day, why not make

*Continued on p. 8*



## Gifted education in basic education: The facts

For the first time in the history of gifted education in Washington, gifted and talented programs will be part of basic education funding. At the urging of the Washington Coalition for Gifted Education (WCGE), Northwest Gifted Child Association (NWGCA), and Washington Association of Educators of Gifted and Talented (WAETAG), supportive legislators have been unrelenting in their pursuit of including gifted education in ESHB 2261, the Basic Education Act.

While much is yet unknown about how this funding is going to work, here are the facts that we can pass on to you at this time. We also know that legislators are counting on well-informed parents of gifted to be powerful advocates for gifted programming within their local districts.

**FACT ONE.** Work groups are developing the reform. The Funding Formula Technical Work Group (FFTWG) and Quality Education Council (QEC) will be presenting recommendations to the legislature in December and January. The legislature will then need to enact these recommendations into statute.

**FACT TWO.** Preliminary recommendations adopted by QEC call for including highly capable programs as a part of basic education to be implemented in the first wave of reform, beginning September 2011.

**FACT THREE.** Under ESHB 2261, highly capable programs must be provided and funded as part of the general education program of school districts. In other words, classroom space, teachers, facility costs, and curriculum should come out of the basic education allocation.

The basic education amount, however, is only an *allocation*. No district is

required to provide any specific structure for the delivery of education services. Districts will determine which services to offer and how much to spend on them.

*So, as a part of basic education, districts must provide appropriate services and programs for identified highly capable students in a manner designed by the districts in response to their local needs.*

**FACT FOUR.** Highly capable programs have additional costs not covered by the basic education allocation. Identification and advanced curriculum are the two most obvious costs. The legislation provides for categorical funding for these expenses. “Categorical funds” means funds that must be spent on the designated program and students may not be diverted into any other service or program.

Currently, districts apply for these funds. In the last year for which we have data, only 216 of the state’s 295 districts applied for the funds. Under the reform legislation, all 295 districts can receive highly capable categorical funds based on 2.314 percent of full-time enrollment. This is the percentage currently funded; the FFTWG recommends that an increase in the percentage be studied as it believes this percentage is too low to cover all gifted students.

**FACT FIVE.** The current funding formula is simple. The amount of funding equals \$401.08 times 2.314 percent of FTE. **FY 2010 funding is in jeopardy because the Governor has removed gifted education funding from the supplemental budget.**

This formula will be replaced by a new calculation. The values in the calculation are mostly unknown. The FFTWG has suggested budget lan-

guage which calls for enhanced categorical funding for 2.314 percent of a school district’s total student FTE that includes:

- A. Instructional time of 2.196 hours per week in *extra* instruction with 15 highly capable students per teacher
- B. An enhanced maintenance, supplies and operating cost allocation (MSOC)
- C. An allocation for administrative costs associated with the highly capable program

This formula provides an allocation dollar amount but does not require any specific expenditures. Those things are left to the discretion of the district.

In addition, the legislation proposes a hold harmless clause for districts whose funding by these formulas is less than the amount appropriated in 2010-2011. This means funding will be no less than currently received.

The values for the extra instructional time, administrative costs, and MSOC are unknown. These will be determined by the amount the legislature allocates for these items as part of the basic education allocation. MSOC includes technology, curriculum, other supplies and library materials, professional development, utilities and insurance, central office and security, and facilities maintenance.

**FACT SIX.** So how much funding will there be for highly capable programs under the reform legislation? We know that districts will be expected to provide appropriate services to identified highly capable students *out of their basic education allocation*. We do not know—and I doubt anyone knows—what the categorical enhancement for highly capable will be beginning in September 2011.



## Parent support groups are essential

*“Gifted children need strong, responsible advocates, and parent groups can make a difference. It takes persistence of large groups of parents to assure that provisions for gifted children are kept firmly in place. Parents of children who are gifted need opportunities to share parenting experiences with each other, and parent groups can provide a place where that can happen.”*

Linda Kreger Silverman, “How Parents Can Support Gifted Children,” ERIC Digest #E515

Most of us would agree that having the opportunity to interact with other parents of gifted children would be helpful as we navigate the parenting maze. Now for the \$65,000 question: How does one go about forming a parent group if one doesn't exist in your area?

While there is no magic formula that will work in all instances, I will try to share some tips and ideas that I have used or seen work in various groups around the state.

Several of the groups that I am familiar with started because of a crisis in their district. This motivates parents to protect programs or perhaps a particular teacher, but it doesn't always morph into a sustainable parent group once the emergency is over. It also can leave a lingering negative view of the group.

In my opinion a better way to start is before there is a threat to programming. Looked at in this way, the parent group is a positive force that can work hand in hand with district administrators and staff to build, maintain, and support gifted programs while educating parents on their role in their child's life.

There are five main things to consider as you begin the process of starting a parent group:

### FINDING YOUR FRIENDS

Start by finding other parents. Seek parents who can set aside their own interests to look at forming a group to

support **all** parents of gifted children in your district. Consider meeting for coffee at a local restaurant or gathering at the library or your school. This could be a simple getting to know each other meeting, or you could offer a speaker or videotaped presentation to facilitate discussion. Ideas could be solicited from the assembled parents regarding the direction of a new parent group. From this gathering, a small committee can explore how to start building a parent group.

### SEEKING SUPPORTERS

Start by talking with your superintendent, gifted coordinator, principals, teachers and counselors. Find out where your supporters are and gently question to see how they would want to help you, for example, you'll need meeting space, speakers, access to a copy machine, etc. Build a team of supporters. Reinforce that you intend to work with them to educate parents about parenting gifted children. Savvy administrators understand that parents can raise money, talk with legislators, and bring business partnerships to schools.

### IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES

Consider what challenges and roadblocks you'll face. Look to your supporters for ideas on how to overcome them. These could include meeting space, insurance, distribution of meeting notices, and funding. You need to know where you are going before you take off. Will your mission be to sup-

port and educate parents, raise money for programs, or provide enrichment? Do you want to sponsor academic competitions or activities for families? Use the input gathered from the initial meeting with parents to shape a purpose statement and begin to share it with parents and supporters. Start small and build upon your successes.

### RAISING MONEY

How your group obtains funds will depend in large part upon your demographics. Some groups have a membership fee and others depend upon donations. Some do fund raising much like a PTA so that they can use it to support their gifted programs. Evaluate your mission statement and then decide on your financial needs and potential fund-raising avenues. The next question will be who will handle the money? Will you need to complete the paperwork to become your own nonprofit organization or can you work through your local PTA or school district?

Once these things are in place, you can start planning what your group will be able to offer to parents and families.

Next time I'll talk about various program ideas and activities for parent groups. To exchange further ideas, email Ann Koch at northwest-gca@gmail.com.

—Ann Koch, NWGCA board member



# Lighting the gifted reader’s journey: The parent-librarian partnership

By Debbie Abilock, MLS

I was browsing the children’s section at my local Borders when I heard, “Not this—you’re too advanced for these,” and watched an earnest young mother close an oversized picture book and point her pre-adolescent daughter toward the teen section. As the girl slowly turned her eyes from Harriet Tubman’s expressive stare and walked toward the splashy display of edgy young-adult novels, I resisted an impulse to pull her back—to lay open those dramatic double-spread paintings of Tubman’s determined face and read aloud the lyrical story of a courageous journey to freedom by the light of the North Star. I paused. The girl obeyed her mother. I left as

***Aliterate gifted readers  
(those who can read but choose  
not to) are an emerging phenomenon.***

she immersed herself in a mélange of gossip girls and crossover adult titles.

But the moment sticks. For, as one independent bookstore after another closes and schools divert funds from their libraries so they can focus their resources on test failures, the reading guidance available to parents and children is more often from a paperback’s back cover than from an educator’s knowledge of the just-right book for a particular reader.

Increasingly, remarkable readers are guided on their intellectual journey by the consensus of social networks, marketing directors selling formula novels with media tie-ins, or generic award lists. An educator’s expertise is

being replaced by anecdotal opinions on Amazon, tips from My Space “friends,” mass-retailers’ display shelves of high-volume titles, and impersonal “best” lists issued by various education organizations.

Some self-sufficient gifted readers find and read books across many genres and topics while others soak up everything about a particular topic, such as dinosaurs or the Civil War. As a long-time school librarian, I’ve seen books returned all soggy because they could not be put aside for a bath and watched a boy navigate a crowd, without lifting his eyes from a compelling

book. Such independent readers rarely ask adults for help, yet they can flounder silently.

They usually exhaust their classroom’s offerings within the first months of school and, without guidance or opportunity, turn to rereading favorites or to Internet browsing. While both have merit—rereading can deepen understanding and increase fluency, and the Internet does contain a variety of treasures—a steady diet of shallow, predictable reading deadens sensibilities and curiosity. Online text bytes lack extended logical analysis and are devoid of the fully developed characters and lyrical language that feed curious, imaginative minds.

The reading habit tends to decline with age. A recent national Yankelovich survey of parents and

primary guardians reports that high-frequency readers (reading for fun every day) declines from 40 percent of 5-8 year olds to 29 percent of 9-11 year olds, and that the percentage continues to decline through age 17....

*Excerpted from the Duke Gifted Letter, Volume 7, Issue 3, 2007.*

## GIFTED READERS LIKE

1. Sophisticated beginning-to-read books
2. Alternative worlds, utopias, and dystopias
3. Playful thinking and humor
4. Patterns and parallels
5. Nuanced language
6. Multidimensional characters
7. Visually inventive books
8. Stories about young children who can read
9. Stories about avid readers who use reading to solve problems
10. Story problems and plot twists to be solved
11. Books which position readers to think like an expert in a discipline
12. Unusual connections
13. Abstractions, analogies, metaphors
14. Quantities of information about a favorite topic



# Your membership is critical this year

*Are you unsure about when your NWGCA membership expires? Here's how to check your NWGCA membership expiration date.*

When you first join NWGCA, your membership expiration date is established: usually 13 months after the month your initial payment is received. Thereafter, as long as you remain a NWGCA member, each yearly renewal payment extends your membership expiration date by 12 months, no matter when you make

the payment. If you want to pay for more than one year at a time, your payment will be prorated and the membership expiration date adjusted appropriately.

Your membership expiration date is shown just below the mailing address on your NWGCA newsletter.

If your membership expires before the next newsletter, your newsletter will have the message: **“Please RE-NEW NOW,”** along with the membership expiration date.

If your membership has expired, your newsletter will have the message

**“Membership EXPIRED—LAST ISSUE unless you renew!”**

We try to send at least one newsletter after your membership has expired so that you have a chance to retain your NWGCA membership without missing any newsletters.

Check the membership expiration date on your newsletter today, and, if you have either of the above messages, please send your renewal payment as soon as possible.

If you aren't a member yet, please consider joining NWGCA, using the form below.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“In the ordinary elementary school situation, children of 140 IQ waste half of their time. Those above 170 IQ waste nearly all of their time. With little to do, how can these children develop the power of sustained effort, respect for the task, or habits of steady work?” *Children Above 180 IQ Stanford-Binet: Origin and Development*, Leta S. Hollingworth, p. 299.

“The surest path to positive self-esteem is to succeed at something which one perceived would be difficult. Each time we steal a student's struggle, we steal the opportunity for them to build self-confidence. They must learn to do hard things to feel good about themselves.”

—Sylvia Rimm

### NWGCA Membership Application

Does your employer match contributions?  Yes  No

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

School District \_\_\_\_\_

I don't want to share my information with other Washington organizations for the gifted.

Please cut or copy this form and send it with a check for \$35 (yearly dues) to:  
NWGCA Treasurer, PO Box 10704, Spokane, Washington 99209. Make check payable to NWGCA.

2009-2010

# Washington Highly Capable Membership Campaign

Be a part of the force to further gifted education in Washington  
"Join 1 or all 3 statewide organizations"

## Board Members

### NWGCA—since 1963

Marcia Holland—Bellevue, Pres.  
JC Hodgson—Spokane, Treasurer  
Sherrie Flaman—Dayton  
Christine Holland—Puyallap  
Ann Koch—Kent

northwestgca@gmail.com

### WAETAG—since 1984

Mary Freitas—Edmonds, Pres.  
Betty Buzitis—Lynnwood, Treas.  
Laurie McGovern, Shelton, Sec.  
Eastern Region-Betty Burley-Wolf  
Central Region-Maureen McQuerry  
SW Region- Charlotte Aiken  
NW Region-Roger Daniels  
Gayle Pauley—OSPI, ex officio  
Marcia Holland—NWGCA,  
ex officio

www.waetag.net

### WCGE—since 1985

Barbara Poyneer—Treasurer  
wagifted@earthlink.net

Northwest Gifted  
Child Association

Washington Educators  
of Talented and Gifted

Washington Coalition  
for Gifted Education

## NWGCA

### Mission

To support highly capable/  
gifted children by:

- Supporting **parents**
- Disseminating information
- Encouraging development and maintenance of programs for gifted students
- Supporting legislation

### Major Activities

Publishes a newsletter with local, state and national resources for gifted families

### Why Join?

Parents need a voice at the state level as well as a way to connect on a local level. Parents are vital to ensure gifted programming remains a priority.

**JOIN TODAY** for the  
2009-2010 school year

**TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

## WAETAG

### Mission

To improve educational opportunities for gifted students by strengthening services to and providing information for **professionals** serving these students in all settings.

### Major Activities

- Leadership symposium
- Annual statewide conference and workshop
- Quarterly coordinator meetings by ESD
- Newsletter
- Student scholarship for summer opportunities
- Web page on regional, state, and national issues

### Why Join?

Teachers, parents and students face many of the same challenges in meeting the needs of the highly capable student. WAETAG provides a way to share ideas, voice concerns, and increase professional preparation.

## WCGE

### Mission

To work collaboratively with key state governmental decision makers on issues related to the education of highly capable students, their families, and their schools.

### Major Activities

- Employ a **lobbyist**
- Educate key decision makers on issues
- Provide legislators with current information and seek their support for funding and programs .
- Work with state agencies on highly capable issues
- Inform members about legislative issues

### Why Join?

The Coalition is YOUR voice in Olympia and is the only non-profit gifted advocacy group in Washington that can hire a lobbyist. As a member of the Coalition, you provide the necessary financial support.

**TOGETHER**

**WE'RE STRONGER**

## Membership Information

## Does your employer match contributions?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ School District \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  I do not want to share my information with other WA gifted organizations

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Join:  NWGCA \$35/year  
 WAETAG \$35/year  
 WCGE \$35/year  
 **JOINT MEMBERSHIP SPECIAL**  
Only \$90 for all 3 organizations

Mail to PO Box 10704, Spokane, WA 99209  
Mail to 830 Cary Rd., Edmonds, WA 98020  
Mail to B. Poyneer, 18149 147 Ave SE, Renton, WA 98058  
Mail to B. Poyneer, 18149 147 Ave SE, Renton, WA 98058  
**Make joint membership check payable to WCGE**



## Using Technology, Continued from p. 2

use of a tool the vast majority of kids unflinchingly look at without reminders: their computer. You can turn the computer into an organizational aid with free programs available on-line.

Using programs such as Airset ([www.airset.com](http://www.airset.com)) or Zohoplanner (<http://planner.zoho.com>), students can calendar homework assignments, record appointments, create to-do lists, and more. Students can also program reminders to pop up before assignments are due, as well as emailing their entries to parents—thereby creating another source of reminders!

Finally, for those kids who are reluctant writers of to-do lists and the

like, parents can check out voice recognition systems such as Dragon Naturally Speaking ([www.nuance.com/naturallyspeaking/](http://www.nuance.com/naturallyspeaking/)). This software will magically transform your child's spoken words into a written document. This is helpful for all kinds of tasks, as well as reducing the frustration of those kids who think faster than they can write.

Getting our children organized will be a lot easier if we adapt to their world. What are the odds that today's students will rely on low-tech devices such as planners when they're adults? Let's help our kids by letting them use 21<sup>st</sup> century tools to organize their 21<sup>st</sup> century lives.

*For more information, contact susan.goodkin@learningstrategiescenter.com.*

### CONTACT BOARD MEMBERS BY EMAIL

Sherrie Flaman, Dayton  
[sflaman@1coyote.com](mailto:sflaman@1coyote.com)

JC Hodgson, treasurer, Spokane  
[jchodgson@hotmail.com](mailto:jchodgson@hotmail.com)

Christine Holland, Puyallup  
[thenaturalchoice@juno.com](mailto:thenaturalchoice@juno.com)

Marcia Holland, president,  
Renton, [mhollandrisch@comcast.net](mailto:mhollandrisch@comcast.net)

Ann Koch, Kent  
[rkoch-sea@comcast.net](mailto:rkoch-sea@comcast.net)

**Northwest Gifted Child Association  
(NWGCA)  
PO Box 10704  
Spokane, Washington 99209**