

NWGCA-Connections Conference February 4th, 2012

8:00 – 2:00

Edmonds-Woodway High School
The Great Hall
7600 212th St SW
Edmonds, WA 98026

Parents of gifted rarely have the opportunity to get information about the specific academic, emotional and social needs of their gifted children. They have even less opportunity to talk with other adults candidly about the delights and the challenges of raising highly capable children. Spend a day asking questions and talking with educators and other parents who understand the joys and challenges you face.

Keynote Speaker: Charlotte Akin 8:30 – 9:30, 11:40 – 12:30

So What? Who Are These Kids and Why Do We Serve Them?

Frequently it is difficult to explain to teachers or a neighbor or relative why it can be challenging to have a very bright child. Or to *be* a very bright child. Or to *educate* a very bright child.

This presentation is designed to help participants articulate to others who gifted children are, what their characteristics and learning needs are, what their social and emotional issues are, the myths surrounding this small population, and the risk factors they face. Filled with examples to illustrate and research to quote, this presentation helps participants themselves feel like now they can talk about it to the others in their lives.

Charlotte Akin is an award winning teacher of gifted students, retired director of gifted education in the Evergreen School District (Vancouver, WA), President-Elect of the Washington Association of Educators of Talented and Gifted, and a published author in multiple forms and fields including gifted education.

Breakout Sessions:

9:40 – 10:30 Session 1

1. Childhood Stress & Anxiety – Chris McCurry, Ph.D.

This presentation will cover how stress and anxiety show up in the lives of children at various ages and stages and when parents should be concerned and seek professional advice. Dr Curry will talk about recent advances in understanding childhood anxiety disorders, strategies for responding to your child's stress and anxiety, and tools for promoting resilience in your child.

Chris McCurry, Ph.D., is a clinical child psychologist in private practice specializing in the treatment of childhood anxiety. He is a clinical assistant professor in the departments of psychology and psychiatry at the University of Washington.

2. **Educational Alternatives: Homeschooling and Other Non-traditional Options - Patrice Torres**

Thinking of homeschooling or enriching your child's learning at home? Homeschooling and alternative methods of schooling are not only becoming more popular, they are an ideal way to serve the gifted. Learning experiences can be tailored to the **individual needs** of the student (especially the twice exceptional). In this breakout session, Patrice will discuss the various methods of homeschooling, the law, and local resources & programs that are available to families.

Patrice Torres has been helping parents all over the country to creatively and effectively educate their children. She owns and operates Northwest Untest, an educational assessment and consulting firm that serves gifted students and their families. Patrice is a certificated teacher, homeschooling mother of three gifted children, and currently serves on the board of NWGCA.

3. **Gifted Tweens - Lisa Krieger**

Come learn about the challenges facing gifted adolescents and how parents can partner with educators to help students during this transitional period. Strategies will be shared to help parents assist their gifted teenagers in managing their academic load & extracurricular activities, especially given the increased demands on students' time as they take classes for high school and college and credit.

Lisa Kreiger teaches gifted junior high students in the Puyallup School District. Lisa Kreiger has served as the district K-12 language arts and social studies curriculum specialist, building learning specialist and assessment coordinator, and English department head. Lisa helped develop the P.A.G.E. program at Kalles Junior High and is currently is working with the district to develop a common curriculum for junior high honors and Pre-AP classes.

10:40 – 11:30 Session 2

1. **Building Relationships with Administrators and Teachers to Benefit Highly Capable Learners**

Brian Fox, Administrator of Gifted Education, Puyallup School District
Nancy Velazquez, Director, Gifted Education, Puyallup School District

The presenters will focus upon the ways in which three groups of leaders have influenced the success of Puyallup School District's programs for highly capable learners. Participants will learn of one district's work with a strong, effective parent group, the Academic Booster Club. They will also learn strategies for building relationships with classroom teachers, administrators, and school board members.

2. **Student Voices: What has worked for them - Teen panel discussion**

A facilitated panel of gifted teens share what has helped them find success personally and in their academic lives. There will be time for questions and answers, so come prepared!

3. Twice Exceptional: Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place - Larry Davis

For Gifted & Special Needs students to reach their potential, it is important that their intellectual strengths are recognized and nurtured, while they receive appropriate accommodations and support for their special needs. Often one side of the complex profile takes precedent over the other; special needs students may not be identified as "gifted" or gifted students may not be able to access support through an IEP or 504 Plan. As a result, there is much work to be done within the themes of **advocacy**, **mutual understanding**, and **creating bridges of collaboration** between school and home.

Larry Davis is the lead Gifted Coordinator of a K-8 program in the North Kitsap School District. Trained initially with the Renzulli program, he has a passion for serving special needs and gifted families as an education advocate.

12:30 – 2:00 Optional: Brown bag table sessions. Bring your brown bag lunch, select a table topic, and participate in a facilitated discussion with other parents and educators.