



Gifted Unlimited, II

Vol. 10, No. 2, Winter 2011

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

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Washington Association
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and Gifted (WAETAG)

www.waetag.net

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Inside this issue:

President's Letter	2
It's important to join your state gifted organization	4-5
Connections: A symposium for parents of gifted children	6
Joint membership form	7

Parents speak with legislators for gifted education—again and again



Advocates for gifted education have been very busy the last few weeks.

The good news!

Parents, educators and other advocates did a truly remarkable job during the legislative special session held December 11, 2010. The special session budget submitted by Governor Gregoire to the legislature eliminated all state funding for gifted education. Calls, emails, and one-on-one meetings occurred all over the state. As a result, gifted

education funding was retained at the same level as appropriated in the 2010 supplemental budget.

The state legislature passed the second supplemental budget bill. The bill restored highly capable funding to the level in ESSB 6444, that is., \$18,377,000 for two years, including \$170,000 for Centrum and \$90,000 for Future Problem Solving/Destination Imagination. The 6.287 percent across-the-board-cut ordered by the Governor this fall was rescinded.

The bad news!

It seems we have only just begun. This bill plugs only half of the budget hole. The Governor has proposed eliminating gifted education in another supplemental budget which she will introduce when the legislature convenes in January.

In addition, Governor Gregoire published her budget for 2011-2013. Once again, her budget eliminates all funding for gifted education. We advocates will have to go through the drill again to

Continued on p. 3

Opportunities for parents that you don't want to miss!

CONNECTIONS Conference, January 29, 2011, 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Redmond High School Performance Center
17272 NE 104 Street
Redmond

Parents of gifted rarely have the opportunity to get information about the

specific academic, emotional, and social needs of their children. They have less opportunity to talk with other adults candidly about the delights and challenges of raising truly bright children. *Do not miss this rare conference geared especially for parents of gifted* (see brochure on page 6).

Gifted Education Day, February 11, 2011, 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Columbia Room, ground floor of the Capitol Building, Olympia

In a year when the Governor has issued three separate budgets eliminating

Continued on p. 3



President's letter

The Governor is proposing to hang a sign on the public school house door: ***"No state services for most capable learners offered here!"***

Where is the equity for our state's most capable learners?

Gifted education is willing to share in budget woes but is unwilling to be eliminated completely.

While the Governor's proposed 2011-2013 budget increases funding for migrant and bilingual education by 16.6 percent and the Learning Assistance Program by 8.9 percent, it has completely eliminated **ALL** funding for the gifted including funding for Destination Imagination/Future Problem Solving, Centrum, and the pilot Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics programs. The supplemental budget that legislators will soon be asked to vote on that will fund the rest of this biennium reflects the same inequity for highly capable students.

Gifted learners are disheartened at the prospect of spending hours in school each day with nothing new to learn.

Parents are alarmed at the potential harm to their children's enthusiasm for learning and their future career prospects in a global world where China, India, and Brazil are preparing their best and brightest to develop innovations in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Washington employers may face a shortage of highly capable employees. Potential employees from other states will most assuredly research the educational opportunities for their children before accepting a job offer from Washington employers. The results of their research may very well prompt them to reject those offers. Washington employers should worry that they might not be able to recruit bright, capable employees from outside of the state once the economy recovers or retain the ones they employ now. Washington employees may seriously consider job offers from other states that provide education for gifted students.

School districts will need to make the tough decision whether to educate their most capable learners with ever shrinking local dollars or abandon the educational needs of these children all together.

Gifted education is not enrichment. It is basic education designed to meet a well-defined learning difference. Gifted children do not thrive in a basic education classroom. Rather, they learn poor study habits, waste hours of valuable learning time, lose their enthusiasm for learning, and fail to master critical academic disciplines they will need to compete with students from developing nations such as China, India and Brazil that are educating their top 10 percent to be world-class leaders.

Washington has been known as having one of the most highly educated populations in the nation. We are now contemplating a state education budget with ZERO funding for our children with the greatest capacity for learning. Where is the wisdom in that? Where is the equity for these children?

Gifted education is willing to shoulder its fair share of the budget woes facing the Washington education system. It is not willing to be totally cut. It would be "penny wise and pound foolish" to eliminate all education for our state's most capable learners.

Marcia Holland

Failure to help the gifted child is a societal tragedy, the extent of which is difficult to measure, but which is surely great. How can we measure the sonata unwritten, the curative drug undiscovered, the absence of political insight? They are the difference between what we are and what we could be as a society. *Dr. James J. Gallagher, University of North Carolina*



Parents speak, continued from p. 1

preserve gifted education funding for the upcoming two years.

While gifted education has been willing to share the budget woes in equal proportion with all other education cuts, advocates for these underserved and under-challenged children object strongly to these children receiving such inequitable treatment. They have a learning difference that cannot be served in a regular classroom and need special accommodation for their unique learning needs. Denying these children access to that education is not acceptable.

Two years ago, the legislature placed gifted education into the basic education definition as part of ESHB 2261. **The bill stated that gifted education is basic education for this category of students.** Discontinuing funding at this time will imperil programs all over the state. At

some time in the next six years, gifted education must be offered in all school districts in the state as part of basic education according to ESHB 2261. To be forced to shut down programs in 2011 only to have to start them up again before 2017 will be a costly affair—in both financial as well as human terms.

There are no other advocates for your gifted children. You need to connect with your legislators today. Let them know why gifted education is so important to your children's educational development. Stay alert for messages from Northwest Gifted Child Association and the Washington Coalition for Gifted Education. These two statewide associations will keep you posted, ask for your help, and give you talking points to help with your advocacy. Other things you can do are listed in the accompanying box.

There never has been a time of such opportunity or such peril for gifted education.

HELP STATE GIFTED EDUCATION FUNDING

1. Join the Washington Coalition for Gifted Education (see joint membership form on page 7 for contact information).
2. Email your legislators today and let them know why it is important for them to fund gifted education.
3. Attend or participate in Gifted Education Day, February 11, 2011.
4. Talk with the school board members in your school district. Make sure they are supportive of gifted education. Urge them to tell legislators to fund gifted education.

Advocacy requires members who believe in opportunities for gifted and talented students. It is hard for a general to fight a war without soldiers. Also, it is hard to replace attitudes of apathy and indifference with enthusiasm and support without dedicated members willing to go the extra mile. *Dan Reeder, past president, Kentucky Association for Gifted Education*

Opportunities for parents, continued from p. 1

state funding for gifted, only a persistent, loud voice for gifted education will save funding for your child's gifted program. *If you have never participated before, you must do so this year.*

Intensity Through the Ages, January 13, 2011, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. (free)

Seattle Public Schools
Stanford Center Auditorium
2445 Third Ave. South, Seattle

Lisa Rivero, Author of *A Parent's Guide to Gifted Teens, Living with Intense and Creative Adolescents*

If only one word were chosen to sum up the gifted, that word would have to be intensity. Many people mistakenly think that giftedness happens only in the classroom, or that it affects only how much or how fast children learn. Lisa will discuss the role that intensity plays in giftedness—intensity not just of the intellect, but of emotions, sensations, imagination and physical movement—and how understanding gifted intensity can help us to help our children with issues such as perfectionism, stress, and feelings of not fitting in with the rest of the world.

SENG Model Parent Group Discussions, January 13, 2011, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. (free)

Seattle Doubletree Hotel,
18740 International Blvd., Seattle

Thirty to forty parents are needed for parent discussion groups. The emphasis of these groups is on positive aspects of parenting, avoiding power struggles, and helping gifted children learn appropriate life skills while enhancing the parent/child relationship and parent self-esteem. Open to first 40 parents who register.

Continued on p. 8



It's important to join your state gifted organization

By Julia Link Roberts and Tracy Inman

Perhaps you have heard that a whole is no stronger than its parts. That generalization is certainly true for organizations whether the parts refer to the people in the organization, the committees, or the affiliate groups that create the organization as a whole. An advocacy organization, then, is much more effective when its affiliates are active and strong, and strength enhances the opportunity for goals to be reached. A state organization is more effective with healthy locals groups, and a national organization is empowered by strong state advocacy organizations.

This important generalization transfers directly to you as a concerned parent, educator, or citizen who is interested in speaking out in behalf of children who are gifted and talented.

Why should you belong to a local affiliate of your state organization for gifted children? Why should you join a state organization if your local chapter is more in tune with what happens locally? What do state advocacy organizations offer to their members? Reasons to join can be described in three words that begin with the letter "I"—impact, information, and involvement.

IMPACT

Numbers count when you want to make a difference. An organization can only impact legislation and policy at the state and national levels if numerous voices support your cause. An individual may change what happens in a classroom or school, but multiple advocates working together make changes happen at levels that affect all children in the state. A state-wide organization provides the vehicle for many advocates to join together to address the academic, social, and emotional needs of children who are gifted and talented. Legislation that establishes regulations and policies that must be followed for all children who are gifted and talented can make a great impact. Examples include regulations for gifted services, required college-level courses at every high school, teacher requirements for gifted endorsement, and age limits to start school. This potential impact applies to state and national levels when state groups support the national organization. The advocacy voice flows from the local level to the state and national levels.

INFORMATION

State organizations for gifted education provide information that educates members: they send newsletters, operate listserves, update websites, and offer conferences and other professional development opportunities. If you want to stay up-to-date on what is happening concerning gifted education in your state, then you need to be a member of the organization. Not only is this state organization your direct link to the latest information, but it also is a source for opportunities that help you make appropriate decisions for your gifted children. Such information makes you a far more effective advocate for your gifted child and other gifted children.

INVOLVEMENT

If you want to help "make things happen" in your state, your state organization for gifted education is the obvious place to join with others who are also interested in advocacy for gifted children. You will find others who share your interest and passion. From planning events to contacting legislators to writing an article for the newsletter, your talents and efforts are needed. You will have numerous

Continued on p. 5



Did you know that some of the characteristics of giftedness are impatience with self, perfectionism, and feeling guilty for "down time"?



Importance, continued from p. 4

opportunities to be involved and make a lasting difference in the lives of gifted and talented children.

The three “Is” (impact, information, and involvement) describe the three main reasons to be a member of the state advocacy organization. Now let’s look at specific reasons to join your state gifted organization.

You will learn about opportunities for your children who are gifted and talented.

You will receive newsletters, emails, and mailings to keep you up to date about what is happening that relates to the education of children who are gifted and talented.

You will have a presence for gifted education in your state capital through your state organization.

You will be in the loop for knowing what is and what is not happening in your state capital, so you will have time to contact decisionmakers to influence decisions.

You will be in a network with others who are working to ensure appropriate educational opportunities for children who are gifted and talented in our state and across the country.

You will have the opportunity to hear leaders in the field of gifted education at state conferences, experts you otherwise might be unable to hear.

You will be a part of state organization with name recognition among educational and civic groups that can

support decisions that impact the education of children who are gifted and talented.

You will be a member of a state organization with the primary goal of advocating for appropriate educational opportunities for gifted and talented children.

Your voice will combine with others who advocate for children who are gifted and talented.

So what do you say to someone who says, “I want to join the local gifted organization, but I don’t think the state group make any difference to my child or children?” The response is simple. Although you may be tempted to put your membership dues toward a field trip to a museum through your local group, those same dues plus a little more on the state level can have a more profound impact when targeted toward policy or advocacy on a grander scale. In other words, you can make a little difference on your own. You may change what is happening for your own child during this school year. But, if you want to make a lasting difference, one that affects more than your child this year, you must add your voice to what happens in your state. There is no doubt that numbers count when it comes to state-level advocacy. Legislators often ask organizations how many members the organization has. They want to know how powerful the group is—they want to know if it is a force to be

reckoned with. Add your membership to your state organization. You will add to the impact your organization can have, you will receive valuable information, and you will have numerous opportunities to increase your involvement in gifted education. By joining your state organization, you’re ensuring that the parts are indeed strong and that the whole is powerful.

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Information about the three statewide advocacy organizations is found on page 7. Please consider joining at least the organization for parents – Northwest Gifted Child. Association.



Photo Courtesy of Olympic National Park

CONNECTIONS

A symposium for parents of gifted children

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 truly bright children.

Keynote speakers:

Steve Curtis, PhD. “Appropriate Parent Expectations of Their Gifted Child’s School Experience” Goal is to help attendees get a grasp on what the school experience can be and what expectations are too ambitious. Attendees will be given ideas on how to find other activities that can fill in gaps left by the realistic school experience.

Nancy Hertzog, PhD. “Enhancing Creativity and Inspiring Curiosity at Home” Practical suggestions will be shared for designing the home environment to foster children’s creativity and curiosity. Presenter will share ideas for redesigning the learning environment as the “Third Teacher.” Participants will collaboratively think about ways they can provoke curiosity at home by purposefully creating intriguing aesthetical spaces for their children.

**Saturday, January 29, 2011
Redmond High School
Performance Center
17272 NE 104th Street
Redmond, WA 98052
8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

NWGCA members Pre-Register \$24
Non members Pre-Register \$59*
Pre-Registration Closes January 25th
At the door, \$30/\$65*
Additional family members pay only \$5
*Non member rate includes one-year membership in Northwest Gifted Child Association

Choose 2 options for small group discussions:

Session 1:

“**What your Gifted Kids Want You to Know**” *Jane Hesslein*

Discuss what gifted kids wish their parents knew about them.

“**Perfectionism: The Gift and the Rock**” *Sandy Malone-Long,*

Learn to help gifted children reduce stress and enjoy success.

“**Twice Exceptional Learners**” *Steve Curtis, PhD.* Strategize ways to work effectively with your child’s school.

Session 2:

“**Twens**” *Lisa Kreiger, gifted education middle school teacher,*

Discover the young teens’ world and how to help them navigate it.

“**Advocacy from Classrooms to the Capitol**” *Marcia Holland Risch*

Acquire skills for effective school based advocacy and legislative savvy.

“**BrainSports**” *LWGEAC parents* Gather resources on how to develop academic competitions in your own school.

- Do you have **questions** about your child’s exceptional abilities and differences?
- How often can you **talk with educators** and other parents who understand about the joys and challenges of raising a high-ability child?
- Will you invest half a day **reminding yourself of the joys of giftedness**?

Northwest Gifted
Child Association &
Lake Washington
Gifted Education
Advisory Council

2010-2011

Washington Highly Capable Membership Campaign

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Private Schools—Betty Burley-Wolf

www.waetag.net

WCGE—since 1985

Barbara Poyneer—Treasurer
wagifted@earthlink.net

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

*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 2010-2011 school year

NWGCA/WAETAG

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 Mail to PO Box 10704, Spokane, WA 99209
 WAETAG \$35/year Mail to 830 Cary Rd., Edmonds, WA 98020
 WCGE \$35/year Mail to B. Poyneer, 18149 147 Ave SE, Renton, WA 98058
 JOINT MEMBERSHIP SPECIAL Mail to B. Poyneer, 18149 147 Ave SE, Renton, WA 98058
Only \$90 for all 3 organizations **Make joint membership check payable to WCGE**



Opportunities for parents, continued from p. 3

Registrants will participate in parent discussion groups so that those being trained as facilitators can get some first-hand experience while their training is fresh and experts are still available for supervision and feedback. To register or get more information, email: lori.comallie@sengifted.org.

SENGinar Overexcitabilities, January 31, 2011, 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

Learn from your computer at home. Register at www.sengifted.org. Susan Daniels, PhD, associate professor of Educational Psychology and Counseling at California State University, San Bernardino, is co-editor of *Living with Intensity – Understanding the Sensitivity, Excitability and Emotional Development of Gifted Children, Adolescents, and Adults*.

National SENG Conference, July 15 to 17, 2011

Seattle Doubletree Hotel, 18740 International Blvd, Seattle

Watch www.sengifted.org for more details. If you can't attend the live webinar, register anyway and listen to the recorded session within one week after the live event.



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