

WAETAG

Washington Association of Educators
of the Talented and Gifted



Spring 2017 Newsletter

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And the Winner is... Ian Blevins!

Wendy Clark

At our annual conference last October, we introduced the theme for this year's conference along with a new scholarship opportunity for students across Washington. The theme, Grow the Gifts You Have, needed an eye-catching graphic to go with it. Why not ask our state's most valuable resource for help? We sent out a request to our talented youth, asking for a graphic design that incorporated the theme with our organization name and year. Ian Blevins, an 8th grader from Orondo, submitted the winning design that you see here. He was awarded a \$500

Dear Jan,

WAETAG 2017: Grow the Gifts You Have

Wendy Clark
Vice President & Conference Chair

We are beyond excited to welcome Brian Housand Pd.D., and welcome back Ian Byrd, as keynote speakers for WAETAG 2017. Brian is an associate professor and coordinator of the Academically and Intellectually Gifted Program at East Carolina University. Ian taught gifted students for years and has created a wildly successful website with resources for better understanding our gifted learners. Many of you already know and love Ian from our 2015 conference. We've listened to your requests and have invited him back.

Ian and Brian are a dynamic duo that always draws large crowds, sure to captivate and educate. They will be presenting combined keynotes in a two part series focusing on future careers for gifted students and practical classroom strategies to help catapult students into the world of tomorrow. Rapidly developing technologies and tools for communicating and publishing will also be shared and explored.

Additionally, both gentlemen will be presenting individual keynotes. Ian is sure to entertain and engage us in a thought provoking keynote titled "Cultivating Curious Kids." He will share with us some fun research about curiosity in the classroom, how to promote curiosity and ask we can ask better questions. Brian's individual keynote, "Utilizing Technology to Construct Personalized Learning Experiences," will explore the possibilities and potential afforded by today's technology. Teachers and students will be empowered to use those resources to make learning personal, meaningful, and differentiated for today's connected students.

Brian, Ian, and several others will be presenting through workshops and breakout sessions both Friday and Saturday. Ian will be sharing ways to help improve student writing, and also a session about developing delightful math projects. Brian will present breakout sessions that deal with how to help students fight fake news and become a super critical thinker. His other session explores how to increase student engagement with choice, creativity, complexity and curiosity. With so much to offer this year, you won't want to miss a single moment!

[Register today!](#)

We're Calling! Are YOU Ready to Answer?

Wendy Clark - Vice President & Conference Chair

Ring, Ring...Ring, Ring.....
Hello?

The Call for Presenters is now open. Every year we seek out quality presentations that will provide practical value and inspiration to the educational community in attendance at our



Brian Housand



Ian Byrd

scholarship, and the referring adult receives free registration to our conference in October.

WAETAG Summer Scholarships

Brenda Millay-Mai

WAETAG was very impressed by the outstanding students seeking scholarships for summer studies. Thank you to all the applicants for your interest. The following is a list of those students receiving WAETAG Scholarships.

Elementary Scholarship Recipient:

Oliver Montejano wants to go farther in math and science so he can understand quadratic equations, calculus, astrophysics, and find out what makes up quarks.

Middle School Scholarship Recipient:

Hayden Goldberg wants to dig deeper into Economics and understand not only the cause and effect, but also learn why of economic trends.

High School Scholarship Recipients:

Jeanine Iranyongeye came to the United States from Tanzania at the age of five. She sees the American Dream as something to vigorously pursue through higher education and wishes to someday attend law school.

Julia Schwartz is driven to have experiences in dance as well as study with a broad range of teachers. Her acceptance to the summer intensives at Houston Ballet's Six Week Summer Program is part of her overall plan.

WAETAG Board

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conference. The theme this year is "Grow the Gifts You Have." How do you help your gifted students grow? Maybe there are activities that help your students with self-awareness and social emotional stability. Possibly you've created some units for Project Based Learning, or run a debate team. Do you have resources or methods for setting up mentorships? How about creative ways to incorporate STEAM into an elementary grades classroom? The possibilities are endless!

If you are interested, we'd love to receive a proposal from you. **The deadline for conference presenter proposals is July 31, 2017.**



Another call we are making is for volunteers interested in helping out at the conference. Would you or someone you know love to attend the conference but aren't able to secure funding? We invite you to sign up as a volunteer. By volunteering for one day of the conference you receive the other day FREE. Volunteer shifts are available on a first come basis.



Calling all artists, causes, educational institutions, and businesses. Sponsor and exhibitor registration is now open, as well! WAETAG would like to invite you to join us as a sponsor or exhibitor at the 2017 Conference where educators and administrators from across the state will come together for two days of community building, learning, and empowerment.

For more information and to respond to the call for presenters, sponsors or exhibitors or sign up to volunteer, [visit our website](#).

WAETAG Board Election

Please [VOTE NOW!](#) The deadline for voting is June 9, 2017.

Technology Adviser

Aubrey Buerstatte:

Aubrey Buerstatte currently teaches 2nd and 3rd grade gifted students at Redmond Elementary in Lake Washington School District. Before this, she taught in the Kent School District where she was a 3/4th grade gifted teacher, a 3rd grade general education teacher, a Teacher-Librarian, and a Technology Integration Specialist. During her time in Kent, she developed a weekly just-in-time technology PD class for teachers, taught technology classes district-wide to teachers and administrators, created district webpages, and became certified as a Microsoft Innovative Educator Trainer. She also worked for two years managing technical IT projects in Kent as a Technical Support Specialist. In Redmond, Aubrey has worked with her staff to help teachers integrate OneNote Class Notebooks and Sway into their teaching. Aubrey uses technology in her classroom to support personalized instruction in a blended learning environment, to help make learning more interactive, and to enhance access to new learning. Her class just received a 3D printer, which her students are using as they apply engineering principles to design and print 3D solutions to everyday problems. Along with teaching, Aubrey is working toward earning her M.Ed. in Learning and Technology. Find her on Twitter: [@ThatTechTeacher](#) or on the Web: [www.thattechteacher.us](#)

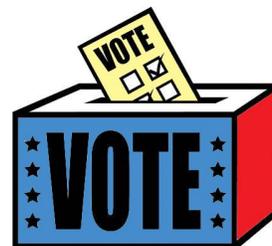
Jan Kragen:

I'm running again for Tech Adviser for WAETAG. This year we decided to rebuild the WAETAG website from the ground up with the guidance of Amy, our illustrious conference planner. The revised Tech role would include being the board liaison with her for all things web-related. If elected I would still collect materials, make sure documents were ready to be posted, and in general help with the website. At the conference I give tech support as needed. (I'm the one to turn to when the paid IT staff is busy!) I answer Board questions as they come up.

Private Schools Representative

Sandi Wollum:

Sandi Wollum currently serves as Head of School at Seabury School in Tacoma, WA. Seabury is an independent school for gifted children in PreK - 8th grade. Seabury also offers enrichment programs that are open to the community, as well as classes and programming for parents of gifted children. Sandi has been in the field of gifted education for nearly 30 years, beginning as a teacher in a self-contained elementary gifted program classroom in Sumner School district and then as the district gifted program coordinator. She has been at Seabury since 2002, first as a teacher and then Head of School since 2005. Sandi is a passionate advocate for the needs of gifted children and is committed to Seabury serving as a model to both public and private schools of what can happen when gifted children can learn in a program designed specifically to meet their needs. It has been her privilege to serve on the WAETAG board, and she would love to continue helping make the connection between the private and public school



[Jan Kragen](#)

Regional Representatives

ESD 101

[Brenda Millay-Mai](#)

ESD 105

OPEN

ESD 112

[Lisa Morgan](#)

ESD 113

[Jen Flo](#)

ESD 114

[Sonya Piper](#)

ESD 121

[Jennifer Vanderbeek](#)

ESD 123:

[Susan Tatum](#)

ESD 171

[Shelley Seslar](#)

ESD 189

[Linda Varner](#)

Private Schools

[Sandi Wollum](#)

Newsletter Editor

[Kyra Richardson](#)

Conference Chair

[Wendy Clark](#)

Conference Registration

[Amy Phillips](#)

OSPI Representative

[Jody Hess](#)

NWGCA Representative

[Denise Anderson](#)

SENG Representative

Visit our [website!](#)

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.

communities.

ESD 101 Representative

Brenda Millay-Mai:

Brenda Millay-Mai has devoted her career to advocating for the needs of highly capable students. She has been a teacher of gifted and talented students for over twenty-nine years, working in both Renton and Spokane School Districts. Brenda, along with Mike Cantlon, developed Odyssey in Spokane, Washington (a full time, self-contained school for highly capable students in grades 4-8). She has also taught in Tessera (a pull-out enrichment school for gifted children, grades 3-6). While teaching for Tessera, part of her work included developing screening procedures, administering testing, and participating in the identification of highly capable children eligible to receive services from Spokane Public Schools. In addition, she has been a teacher for People to People Programs and has led high school students in world travel. Brenda has also been a mentor teacher, helping new teachers adapt to the varied demands of teaching highly capable students. She taught a differentiation course for Whitworth University during two summer sessions. Currently, Brenda is serving as a WAETAG board member. She continues to teach in a neighborhood school developing and integrating differentiation strategies to meet the needs of many distinct learners in the traditional classroom setting.

ESD 121 Representative

Kim Kooistra:

Kim Kooistra is a Differentiation Specialist at Sakai Intermediate School and an ELA teacher at Bainbridge High School in the Bainbridge Island School District. She has taught all levels of learners in both middle and high school in California, Virginia and Washington for fifteen years. Her latest work has focused on leading 5th and 6th grade ELA teachers in a collaborative redesign of unit curriculum to enrich the program. Kim has a BA in English, a MA in Humanities, and she is currently earning a MAT with an Emphasis in Gifted and Talented Education at Whitworth University. She is a Differentiation Specialist who serves as an instructional coach, highly capable case manager, teacher, and presenter of workshops that focus on differentiation, assessment, and GAFE technology integration.



President's Message

Vicki Edwards

"Standardized testing is at cross purposes with many of the most important purposes of public education. It doesn't measure big-picture learning, critical thinking, perseverance, problem solving, creativity or curiosity, yet those are the qualities great teaching brings out in a student." ~ Randi Weingarten

With spring comes another season in Washington State Testing Season. In schools across Washington, students are using Chromebooks and iPads to demonstrate understanding of essential

skills and standards. I posed a question to my students this week: "You have been asked to replace the tests you are taking for math, reading and science. What would you like to be tested on and how would you show your understanding?" I added another question for those who wanted to step it up a notch. "How does your idea connect to real life and the world?"

It was entertaining to watch and listen as students pondered this question, some later telling me they hoped I was serious and the ideas were going to be implemented instead of the current testing practice. Here are some testing ideas from fourth, fifth and sixth grade students.

*I want to be tested on how fast a Lego car races compared to a Hot Wheel car. If I can find this answer, maybe I can be a car designer when I grow up.

*I want to show how many drops of water it takes to break a sphere of water and cause the drops to spill outside the perimeter of the bubble. (This student discovered that water beads have a skin that hold the shape to a sphere until meeting the breaking point and connected it back to sunscreen on a person's skin.)

*I want to see how high I have to hold this Lego capsule when I drop it so it won't break, kind of like when an astronaut comes to earth and crashes into the ocean in a capsule.

*I want to show how long it takes to melt crayons in the sun vs. using a heat tool.

*I want to figure out how to blow a note on my recorder longer, test me on that.

The questions students posed demonstrate creativity and curiosity, difficult traits to measure and currently not awarded points on a state testing rubric.

According to Ann Cronin, students "need to learn to ask questions of their own and explore their questions in depth. They need to learn to collaborate with others in order to grow as broad and deep thinkers. They need to learn creative problem solving. They need to learn how to innovate. They need to learn how to express their thinking, using effective oral and written communication in a wide variety of forms and in both personal and academic voices. They need to be motivated. They need to be engaged. They need to love to learn."¹

Encourage development of programs for professional preparation and growth in gifted and talented education.

Assist with national, state, and local legislation to provide consistent challenge for all students.

Cooperate with other groups to organize and to enhance educational opportunities for all students.

Support quality programs which increase challenging educational opportunities for all students

In Madison Connecticut, social studies teacher Paul Coppola explained how educators in his district designed indicators of academic growth and development for their students and assess their students on their achievement of learning objectives, based on those indicators. The indicators are:

creativity
collaboration
communication
problem solving
global perspectives

As the year draws to a close, if time allows, ask your students the same questions, "You have been asked to replace the tests you are taking for math, reading and science. What would you like to be tested on and how would you show your understanding?" "How does your idea connect to real life and the world?" The answers you get will likely start some thought-provoking conversations and maybe even some ideas for future lessons or challenges.

Wishing you a happy spring and a restful summer.

1. Cronin, Ann P., "Replacing SBAC with Real Learning." *Real Learning CT*, Jan. 8, 2016. [Link](#)

Stay Connected



Extraordinary People Have Singular Issues and Needs - *Gifted* Movie Review

Sandi Wollum



I confess that when I went to a screening of the new film, *Gifted*, last week, I expected to be frustrated and disappointed. Gifted kids are often portrayed in TV and movies as either social misfits to be laughed at or mini adults and phenoms to perform for our amazement and amusement. Stories about gifted kids tend to be simplistic. "Gifted schools" have nerdy kids with thick glasses, no recess and chess clubs as the only activity. Putting them at a regular school with "normal" kids is the way to make gifted kids "normal."

Gifted took a nuanced look at the challenges of raising a profoundly gifted child, exploring the idea of how you provide a childhood to a gifted kid. What does "normal" really mean? Mary's caring Uncle Frank wants her to be a kid. He doesn't deny that she has extraordinary intellectual gifts. In fact, he continually challenges her intellect, engaging in philosophical discussions and supporting her passion and ability to learn increasingly advanced mathematics. He recognizes that that learning is her joy. But he also understands that she is a kid. He wants her to run, play and ride a bike and do all the things that kids do. He tries sending her to first grade, where her age would place her. It is immediately obvious that she doesn't fit in. She is incredulous that the other 7 year olds are learning simple one-digit addition. She calls them "aliens" because their way of seeing the world is so different from hers.

Her grandmother, on the other hand, believes her enormous potential is a responsibility. Her family owes it to the world to develop her immense mathematical potential. If that means she has to forgo being a child to get serious about her studies so be it. It's the sacrifice she has to make because of the gifts she's been given.

Continue Sandi's full review of *Gifted* on [Seabloggery](#).

Peeling the Onion: Equity in HiCap

Austina De Bonte
NWGCA President

Equity in Highly Capable (HiCap) programs in Washington State is a hot topic these days. There's no question that there is a disproportional under-representation of low-income students, students with learning disabilities, English Language Learners, and students of color in our HiCap programs statewide. If you look closely at the [data](#), you will see under-representation in many groups, as well as quite a bit of variance between different school districts.

This is a national issue as well. In fact, the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) recently reported that "[gifted children in poverty and from minority groups are 2.5 times LESS likely to be identified for, and in, gifted and talented programs in schools](#)" - even when measured achievement is the same. This is clearly a sobering statistic.

However, there hasn't been as much discussion of exactly where these disparities come from. What is the root cause behind this disproportionality? What can we do about it?

The First Layer of the Onion: Identification

The most obvious factor is how we identify students for highly capable programs; let's start peeling the onion there. There are many, many problematic identification practices. What is most troubling is that most of these problematic practices are standard operating procedure for districts across the state - and have been for years. So in a very real sense, we shouldn't be that

surprised that we are seeing disproportionality - it's a direct reflection of how we currently go about identifying students.

Continued [here](#).

Equity Summit at University of Washington Recap

Jody Hess
OSPI

Robinson Center for Young Scholars at University of Washington sponsored the first Equity Summit on Gifted Education, February 9 - 10, 2017. Dr. Nancy Hertzog and her team organized a wealth of speakers reflecting many perspectives on equity and excellence in educating Highly Capable students. The Summit began with welcome remarks from Mia Tuan, Dean of the College of Education, and Ed Taylor, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs. Rene' Islas, Executive Director of National Association for Gifted Children, shared the organization's initiative to improve access to all gifted learners, especially the vulnerable.

Jamila Appleby, teacher of ELs in Champaign, Illinois, discussed the power of Problem Based Learning to develop and reveal students' talents. University educators shared their work, as well. Kristina Henry Collins of Texas State University, San Marcos shared her work on responsive talent development for students interested in STEM. Jean Gubbins of University of Connecticut presented best practices promoting biliteracy from the National Center for Research on Gifted Education (universal screening, alternative ways to identify talent, web of communication, and professional learning to promote change.) Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth staff discussed case studies of talent development in Baltimore and San Luis, AZ schools. Karen Westberg, University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN shared the CLED teacher rating scales to help recognize talent in high-potential culturally, linguistically and economically diverse students. Jann Leppien of Whitworth University presented about the specialty endorsement in Gifted Education offered by Whitworth and inclusion of coursework about equity and access for the endorsement or Master's degree.

University of Washington faculty were well represented. Teddi Beam-Conroy studied gifted Latino bilingual high school students. Ismael Fajardo provided information on the campus-wide effort to empower males of color. Michelle Montgomery shared her personal experience as an indigenous student navigating school, and her work on culture and identity. Tom Halvorsen led discussion about how different definitions for equity and equality may lead to different educational outcomes.

District administrators, teachers, and Board members from Highline, Everett, Seattle, Tukwila, and Federal Way School Districts presented a variety of district-based efforts to promote equity. Among them are early childhood education, equitable access to rigorous curriculum, use of Racial Equity Analysis Tool, and building district policies to promote equity. Students spoke about petitioning their school board for advanced classes and early entrance to accelerated programs. Dan Finkel of Math for Love shared his play-based and rigorous approach to young students' math development.

OSPI Bilingual Education staff Alyssa Westall and Jenny Choi shared data about underrepresented ELs in Highly Capable programs and current efforts to address disproportionality. Jody Hess presented current work through Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented federal grant to develop professional learning modules for educators to identify and serve Highly Capable students, especially underserved subgroups.

Gifted Education Day 2017

Vicki Edwards

M. René Islas, Executive Director of the National Association of Gifted Children, WAETAG President Vicki Edwards, Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction, Gayle Pauley, and 2017 State Teacher of the Year, Camille Jones joined hundreds of students, parents and teachers in Olympia on February 2, 2017 for Gifted Ed Day.

Mr. Islas came from Washington DC to testify before the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee. Gayle Pauley and Camille Jones also testified before the committee in hoping to impact the funding of Highly Capable student programs and services in Washington State in the proposed budget. You can read Mr. Islas' Gifted Ed Day remarks on the [NAGC website](#).

Camille Jones and WAETAG President Vicki Edwards were honored and introduced before a caucus by Republican Tom Dent, Ranking Minority Member of the House Early Learning and Human Services Committee. Supporters of Highly Capable programs and students made a visible impact wearing the traditional green scarves, visiting with legislators, gathering for a campus tour or speaking before committees.



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