

WAETAG

Washington Association of Educators of the Talented and Gifted

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WAETAG Newsletter Winter 2017

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Dear Jan,

President's Message

Vicki Edwards



On behalf of the WAETAG Board, thank you for attending our fall conference. Whether you came from a local district or made your way across the mountains, we hope you gained useful strategies from breakout sessions and speaker presentations. More importantly, we hope you connected with other educators working with Highly Capable learners from all over Washington state through the many networking opportunities. The Whoava app was added to our conference playbook this year, providing one more way for educators to connect with colleagues. Our keynote speakers Susan Winebrenner and Roger Fisher received outstanding reviews from conference attendees. Their messages are always timely and seem to connect to each member of the audience, regardless of the capacity or level of involvement in the Highly Capable field.

Thank you to those who completed the online survey after the conference, sharing your feedback and insights. The board reviews the survey data and comments with the goal of improving and growing the fall WAETAG conference each year.

Wendy Clark, WAETAG Vice President, and I recently attended the NAGC conference in Orlando. We had many opportunities to share experiences and expertise with educators from all over the United States. These conversations validated what I already knew: Washington State is leading the way with identification practices and differentiation for all learners, especially the highly capable.

Looking ahead there are several opportunities to get involved in issues related to gifted education. January 13-14, 2017 Whitworth Gifted Education Institute will feature sessions by Carol Tomlinson, Ph.D. I plan to attend Gifted Ed Day on February 2, 2017 in Olympia, and the UW Equity Summit on February 9-10. If any of these events fit into your schedule, I would love the opportunity to meet you and thank you for all you do to improve the lives of all students, especially those with exceptional abilities.

Save the Date!

WAETAG 2017

Grow the Gifts You Have

October 13 & 14, 2017

Tacoma, WA



Logo Competition

Gifted Education Day
February 2, 2017
9 A.M. - 2 P.M.

Student and Teacher Scholarship Opportunity

Wendy Clark

Do you know a student interested in graphic design? We want to hear from him or her! Let your student know, and you could both benefit from our latest scholarship opportunity. WAETAG is excited to announce the prospect for a student to earn \$500 scholarship for him or herself AND a free registration for a teacher (administrator, counselor, etc.) to attend WAETAG 2017. The winning artwork may be chosen for our 2017 conference logo. Here are the specs:

Design a graphic logo incorporating our name (WAETAG) with the theme "Grow the Gifts You Have." Complete the [form](#) (on WAETAG's website), and send it with the logo design to [Wendy Clark](#)

Deadline: April 15, 2017

That's it! Now, help us spread the news.

The Columbia Room, Legislative Building

Join educators, parents and students in Olympia for Gifted Education Day, Thursday February 2, 2017.

Attended annually by hundreds of students, this event will commence at 9:00 A.M. in the Columbia Room in the Legislative Building. A representative will read the proclamation for the observance of Gifted Education Day in the state of Washington.

At 10:00, Jody Hess of OSPI will give an update on how Javits' Grant research is affecting the identification process in Washington State.

David Berg, from the Washington Coalition for Gifted Education has arranged a short, half hour program on how a bill becomes law and ways advocates can influence the process. Presenters from the Legislative Information Center will speak and provide attendees with handouts.

This day is typically well attended, hundreds of neon green scarves are a visible reminder to legislators of the large number of highly capable students in Washington.

On behalf of the Washington Coalition for Gifted Education and the Northwest Gifted Child Association, we encourage you to attend this day to honor those who work with gifted students and highlight the need for continued state funding of gifted programming. If you cannot attend, visit the Washington State Legislator website to find the contact information for the lawmaker in your district. A phone call can often times be more effective and be harder to ignore than a letter, email or social media post.

WAETAG Summer Scholarships



Each year WAETAG awards a number of scholarships worth up to \$500 each to gifted students wishing to

participate in summer enrichment opportunities.

Applications will be posted soon on our website under Resources for Students and are due by April 15, 2017. Also on our site, you can find several different summer programs held throughout our state. The scholarships are not limited to only these opportunities, however. If you are aware of other summer programs that gifted students may enjoy, please let us know. Suggestions and links can be emailed to our webmaster, [Jan Kragen](#).

2017 Washington State Teacher of the Year: Camille Jones, Quincy School District Highly Capable STEAM Teacher



Camille was raised on a farm in rural Quincy, Washington and returned to the area to teach in 2010, because she believes we ought to bloom where we're planted. She teaches school wide enrichment and highly capable programs at Pioneer Elementary in Quincy, where most of her rural students are still learning English and living in poverty.

Camille embraces her identity as a millennial, saying it reinforces her commitment to recognize the changing needs of her students. She is constantly adapting her practice to expand her students' worldview and provide a globally-relevant education.

Camille has led an overhaul of the school wide enrichment program to focus more on STEAM and develop future-ready skills like collaboration and critical thinking. As the Highly Capable District Lead, Camille led an initiative to better identify giftedness and nurture potential in marginalized students. Today, Camille's advanced programs include students from all backgrounds - including special education - and the opportunity gap in Quincy's highly capable programs is narrowing each year.

For more information about Camille Jones or to invite her to your event, visit the [OSPI website](#).

Webspiration

Jen Flo



Whether I'm looking for a problem-of-the-day, or looking to engage students in a different way of thinking, these are few of my favorite places to find engaging activities. These resources offer a treasure trove of engaging problems, real world and high level:

[Open Middle](#)

This free resource opens with the quote "Challenging math problems worth solving," and it lives up to that claim. Offering an array of search options (grade levels K-12, strand or standard), teachers can quickly locate a problem that will engage students. The problems are clearly stated, as are the hints and solutions.

[Byrdseed](#)

Always engaging and challenging, Ian Byrd offers teachers problems that promote deeper thinking and exploration of ideas. Teachers can download free resources and purchase additional items in his store. Some of my favorites includes researching the shrinking airplane seat and how many parking spots...in a Disney parking garage. His use of visuals is engaging to all!

[Robert Kapilinsky](#)

"Problems at higher depth of knowledge levels have the potential to challenge the most gifted students yet remain accessible to struggling students." Robert Kapilinsky's approach to real-world problems allow access for all students. His website not only offers tasks at a variety of grade levels, but also offers a clear and comprehensive use of Webb's DOK (Depth of Knowledge) that can inform your practice outside of his activities.

[Yummy Math](#)

This website offers a variety of problems, sorted by grade level and by math strand. The files can be downloaded for free and used in the classroom. There is a fee if you would like to download editable versions of the activities and their solutions.

[Jo Boaler's Inspirational Math](#)

Last, but definitely not least, Jo Boaler has a comprehensive website that engages students in math activities that are designed to explore the beauty of

Conference Wrap Up and Looking Ahead

Wendy Clark



The WAETAG Board and I would like to extend a sincere thank you to those that attended our conference last October. With over 40 sessions choose from and three separate keynote addresses, we endeavored to have something for everyone. Our membership and attendance has continued to grow each year, and 2016 was no exception with the highest number of attendees to date. Hopefully by now, you have been able to share some of what you took away from the keynote speakers and presenters with your students and, possibly, other teachers and administrators in your district. By doing so, we can all help keep Highly Capable needs at the forefront, ensuring all students are learning something new each and every day.

For those that completed the online feedback form, we thank you. We use the feedback from that survey to do whatever we can to make improvements for you each year. For example, we heard suggestions for improving the communication opportunities between constituents from the same ESDs and also with similar teaching models. By making some small changes to our registration process for WAETAG 2017, we can accommodate those opportunities more efficiently. Always encouraging for us to read are those comments that reinforce our many efforts to bring you a quality experience:

"This is my second year as a gifted teacher and second year attending. This has been the greatest resource in my 30 years of teaching. The short, powerful sessions led by teachers currently in the classroom are incredibly valuable. Administrators and teachers would benefit from attending together. It was nice to see so many principals there!" - We agree! We hope to see more administrators and counselors in the upcoming years as well.

"Without WAETAG it would be very easy to feel alone in the Gifted world of a small school district. All of the support and recognition from leaders across the state and beyond was extremely motivating. It inspires me to keep doing what I'm doing, even when things feel impossible." - You're not alone. We see you, understand your obstacles, and are here to help in any way we can.

"I've been teaching gifted students for the past 38 years and I've come to realize that we all need refresher courses from time to time. We also need to spend time with those from our profession. It's so energizing!" - We couldn't agree more! It is for precisely this reason that those of us on the Board volunteer many hours each year.

"This was the first and only hi cap conference I've ever attended, because this is the first year I've been asked to teach hi cap kids. I would never have considered going before I became a "hi cap teacher," but the content is extremely valuable, no matter if you have an inclusive hi cap classroom or not. So, I wish this conference would be better advertised to more gen-ed teachers." - We try in as many ways as we feasibly and fiscally can to get the word spread far and wide, but we also depend on word of mouth from attendees like you. Please feel free to share!

Even though we just put WAETAG 2016 to bed, we are already looking forward to our time together with you next year for WAETAG 2017, "Grow the Gifts You Have". We are pleased and excited to announce that, back by popular demand, **Ian Byrd** will be returning as a keynote speaker. Ian was here in 2015 and extremely well received. Coming with him will be a newcomer to WAETAG, but definitely not new to gifted education, **Brian Housand**, PhD from East Carolina University. These two dynamic presenters are nationally recognized and sure to please. Save to date and plan on joining us again in Tacoma for WAETAG 2017 on October 13-14, 2017.

mathematics and encourage the development of a growth mindset in students. One of my favorites is introducing students to her Week of Inspirational Math (WIM).

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ESSA and Gifted Education

Jan Kragen



For my entire career in education-and I started teaching in 1977-the federal government limited its involvement in gifted education to Javits grants, investing millions of dollars over the decades in scientifically-based research into gifted education.

Javits grants have not gone away. But the federal government has finally moved beyond Javits grants in addressing the needs of gifted students in America. I am thrilled that directives regarding

gifted and talented students are peppered throughout the Every Child Succeeds Act ([ESSA](#)).

The overarching goal of the ESSA is "to ensure that all children receive a high-quality education." The law requires that "each local educational agency will monitor students' progress in meeting the challenging State academic standards by ... developing and implementing a well-rounded program of instruction to meet the academic needs of **all** students" (page 134, lines 10-22, emphasis mine).

In the past, states and districts reported data for students performing at the proficient level and below. Now they must also provide data for students performing at advanced levels. That PLC question 4 might look a lot more important to school and district administrators when the high scores are disaggregated out!

The feds know their requirements are going to cost money, so for the first time they say districts ("local educational agencies") may use Title I funds to "assist schools in **identifying and serving** gifted and talented students" (page 138, lines 17-18, emphasis mine). One huge impact that funding could have is allowing districts to employ universal screening for gifted and talented programs, which we do at my district in second grade and which can help overcome the "gifted gap" among racial groups (see [article](#)).

Districts applying for Title II professional development funds *must* supply "a description of how the State educational agency will improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in order to enable them

- to identify students with specific learning needs, particularly children with disabilities, English learners, students who are gifted and talented, and students with low literacy levels, and
- provide instruction based on the needs of such students" (page 328, lines 9-17, bullets mine).

In that professional development, districts are to provide "training to support the identification of students who are gifted and talented, including high-ability students who have not been formally identified for gifted education services, and implementing instructional practices that support the education of such students, such as:

- *early entrance to kindergarten;*
- *enrichment, acceleration, and curriculum compacting activities; and*
- *dual or concurrent enrollment programs in secondary school and post-secondary education" (page 343, lines 1-13).*

Let's look at the kinds of practices the feds recommend, starting with *early entrance*. At a Washington Association of Educators of Talented and Gifted (WAETAG) conference years ago, I met a parent who came to get advice about her four-year-old son. He was auditing courses at the university where her husband was a professor. She said she didn't want to enroll him and make him a media sensation, but those classes were the only places where he got his intellectual needs met.

I asked where they lived and told her they might want to consider moving since there were about five schools in the country with elementary programs for the severely and profoundly gifted. She said if those schools existed, then moving made sense. "After all, his little

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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.

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

Assist with national, state, and local legislation to provide

brother? He's even smarter."

Some students need to start school before five years old. When you think of *enrichment* activities, don't be limited by suggestions in trade books. Gifted students crave novelty; they find learning brand new information and skills exciting. My lesson comparing causes of World Wars 1 and 2 went well over an hour, and when I finally put a stop to it, my students objected vehemently. "No!" they howled. "Don't stop! Keep going!" Why? Depth and richness of information. The students were building connections. I was helping them make sense of the world.

There is more research in the literature supporting *acceleration* than any other intervention for gifted. My student who is currently triple-accelerated in math (my fourth grader in seventh grade math) is one of the best students in his math group. He could probably move up another grade level, but then he'd be working on his own, and his mom and I decided we'd keep him in this group this year. He's happy there.

Curriculum compacting has been around for decades. My high school teachers did it in the 1960s. My sophomore year advanced placement English teacher gave our class the end-of-the-year exam at the beginning of the year. After he graded it, he told us, "You know most of the stuff on the test except you are shaky on punctuation, and you really don't understand commas." So we spent a month learning punctuation. Three weeks of that was commas. At the end of September we took the test again and did fine. Then we had **the rest of the year** to do the actual work of the class, learning public speaking. It's a time-tested idea, which is probably why it's on the list of recommended practices.

As for *dual or concurrent enrollment* programs, we do well. In Washington we have both AP and Running Start. But, in my humble opinion, we ought to be open, in a similar way, to students taking a three-year middle school program in two years. Or taking middle school and high school classes at the same time. Those options would certainly be allowed, and I think encouraged, under the ESSA.

The Javits grants studied gifted students for generations and decided that gifted students can be identified, they have educational needs, and that those needs can be met through several well-documented strategies. Now the ESSA is saying, "Go meet those needs. Here are some excellent ways to do it. And you can use federal money to help!" If your district needs help finding Highly Capable professional development specialists, go to the [WAETAG](#) site.

Originally posted at [Stories from School](#).

HiCapPLUS in Washington State

Jacob K. Javits Federal Gifted and Talented Program

Project

Jody Hess



How do we... respond to a legislative mandate to identify and serve gifted students in Kindergarten through grade 12 in every one of Washington's 295+ Local Education Agencies (districts, ESDs, charters, tribal compacts)? * (RCW 28A.185.020: The legislature finds that, for highly capable students, access to accelerated learning and enhanced instruction is access to a basic education.)

How do we... support the smallest LEAs that identify and serve one Highly Capable student or the largest that serve thousands?

How do we... address inequitable identification processes that miss many students with potential for high academic performance?

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

Highly Capable Student Program Office is in Year 2 of Jacob K. Javits federal grant to develop Professional Learning and Technical Assistance modules for educators charged with identifying and serving Highly Capable students. ESDs and school districts have joined as pilot sites. The wide range of pilot population, size, resources, geographic character, staffing, and approaches to professional learning reflect the diversity of our state. Some pilots serve significant numbers of English learners (ELs), a high percentage of families eligible for free and reduced price meals, and students with disabilities. Across the nation, these subgroups are consistently passed over by traditional Highly Capable identification processes.

HiCapPLUS partners - Dr. Nancy Hertzog of UW Robinson Center for Young Scholars and Dr. Jann Leppien of Whitworth Center for Gifted Education are the experts creating content for online professional learning modules. Dr. Todd Christensen, who facilitates Northwest ESD 189 Highly Capable Cooperative, is working with OSPI and pilot districts and ESDs to develop and promote regional networking resources.

HiCapPLUS evaluators - Dr. Caitlin Scott and Dr. Kathryn Torres of Education Northwest collect formative data from pilot educators that helps shape development and implementation of the modules. Continuous improvement means using implementation science/action research/cycles of inquiry, at the district and practitioner level, to support innovation and determine what works in local settings.

HiCapPLUS targets specific challenges in providing Basic Education services for Highly Capable students. Year 3 will culminate with these Professional Learning and Technical Assistance modules published online in the public domain, and widely promoted through communication channels of OSPI and its educational partners. For information, please contact [Jody Hess](#), Project Director for HiCapPLUS.

What Parents and Educators Need to Know About Gifted Kids

Did you know you can invite the NW Gifted Child Association to speak about what parents and educators (and administrators, legislators, coaches, doctors, grandparents, etc.) need to know about gifted kids in your district? NWGCA parent talks are free! They also offer professional development talks/in-services for educators. Other speakers & topics are available. Email info@nwaca.org.

Many people are surprised to learn that bright children's unique "quirks" are actually well-studied social & emotional behavior patterns that appear across large populations of highly intelligent children. Whether it's refusing to wear shirts with buttons or tags, overreacting to the slightest criticism, gravitating toward adults and older children, forgetting to turn in their homework, trouble with handwriting, anxiety about trying something new, or preferring a book to a party, these and many other perplexing behaviors are common in this population. Hear the latest research and neuroscience behind these traits, and discover why this is truly a special needs population. Intervention is vitally important for smart kids' social and emotional development, as well as developing their academic talents, from the preschool and elementary years all the way to high school and beyond.

The presentation is given by Austina De Bonte, President of NW Gifted Child Association (www.nwgca.org), the Washington state association for families with highly capable children. Founded in 1963, NWGCA is the oldest gifted organization in Washington state. A dynamic and engaging presenter, Austina is frequently invited to present at school districts and communities across Washington state, providing both parent education as well as professional development for educators. She has presented at WAETAG, OATAG, NAGC Conferences, at King County Juvenile Court, as well as presentations in countless communities across Washington state. Austina is a certified SENG Model Parent Group facilitator. Contact Austina at president@nwaca.org

Gifted Girls in the Movies

Jan Kragen



Last night my husband and I went to see [Hidden Figures](#). What a great movie! The Cold War, the Space Race, and the Civil Rights Movement all come to life with sharp writing and excellent acting.

Hidden Figures starts with an elementary girl doing highly advanced math problems, to the amazement of several adults. The math "just makes sense" to her. The teachers and principal meet with the parents and tell them she needs to go to a more advanced school. The parents will actually have to move in order to enroll her there. The staff at her current school has taken up a collection to help the parents with the move.

That little girl was an exceptional child who went on to achieve extraordinary things. Go watch the movie. I left uplifted and inspired.

I also left wondering: What if her teachers had told her to be quiet and do the arithmetic the way all the other students were doing it-or the way they were comfortable teaching it? What if the school had said she had to use the adopted curriculum for her grade level? What if no one at her school had explored the options for her outside of her current school? What if there were no options outside her current school?

Or what if her parents had said no? What if they had said they weren't going to move, that she could get the same education as every other student, that she could end up with the same kind of job as everyone else?

She was a girl with curiosity and drive and imagination. And she had support from her educational community and from her family. I was less inspired by a preview for another movie, [Gifted](#). It hasn't been released, so I haven't seen this movie yet, but the preview gave me pause.

Gifted features another young girl, another math prodigy. Her working-class uncle is rearing her on his own. He and his wealthy mother are estranged.

Cue the violins, we're going to play on the heartstrings for the dead mom issues. Cue the Darth Vader music for the heavy-handed class issues.

But the movie purports to be about gifted education.

The grandmother wants to take the girl away from the uncle and put her into an academy. The uncle wants to fulfill the wishes of the dead mother and let the girl "be a normal kid." There are scenes of uncle and daughter twirling around, scenes of kids playing on the beach, laughter.

How many of you right now are voting to let the kid be "normal?" Guess what? Me too!

But, I also want the girl to get the education she needs.

Oh my gosh, this is one of the WORST stereotypes, one of the WORST clichés, that gifted kids aren't normal kids. Of course they're normal kids. Watch them around people they like and trust. They tell jokes. ("What do you call a pig in the morning?" "Breakfast!"). They get uncontrollable giggles. They have best friends, and they play together on the beach. (Want more myths about gifted kids?)

On the other hand, they are students who have special needs.

Last week a parent of a former student came in to do an hour-long observation in my classroom. She is working on her administrative credential and wanted to remind herself of how my classroom worked. At the end of the time we talked about her son. She laughed. When he

heard she was coming back to visit me, he said, "Back in fifth grade, I didn't want to switch schools. I didn't like Mrs. Kragen. I thought she was mean. She made me work so hard."

The mom explained-in case I had forgotten-he had come from years of always being at the top of the class, of always getting the best grades with no effort at all. Suddenly he was in my room with his intellectual peers. The bar was set considerably higher. He needed to listen, to focus, to concentrate, to study, to work hard, to practice, which were all new skills for him. He hated it!

Looking back now, more than a decade later, he had a different perspective. "If she hadn't taught me to work hard, I wouldn't have taken the courses I did in high school and college. And I wouldn't have the job I do now." By the way, he has a really cool job where he does design work in electrical engineering. It's his dream job. He adores it.

I'll admit, I'm a fan of that old Puritan work ethic value of deferred gratification. Work hard, put the effort in over time, and the payoff will be that much sweeter in the end.

Last night at the movie theater it was an ironic juxtaposition to watch one film where a gifted girl received the emotional as well as the educational support she deserved and went on to soar to the stars, while a trailer for another film intimated that the best solution for a gifted girl was to, what, ... build castles in the sand?

I can hope that *Gifted* ultimately offers both a human solution as well as an educationally sound solution. I'll have to wait and see.

WAETAG, Winter 2017

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