

Spring 2018 Newsletter

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IMPORTANT

UPCOMING

EVENTS

Take advantage of excellent workshops and courses!

[View all upcoming events here.](#)

WAETAG Summer Scholarships

Brenda Millay-Mai

WAETAG was very impressed

WAETAG 2018: Innovation & Equity

Jen Flo

October 12-13, 2018

New Location! Hilton Bellevue, Bellevue, WA

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

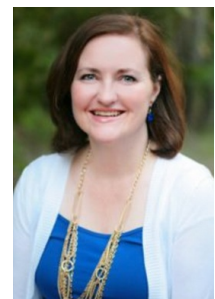
We are so excited to welcome Lisa Van Gemert, the Gifted Guru, and Dr. Kristina Henry Collins, President-Elect of SENGifted, as our keynote speakers for WAETAG 2018.

Dr. Kristina Henry Collins' research focuses on STEM identity, STEM talent development, parent engagement, and multicultural gifted education. She is a graduate of the The University of Georgia, where she earned a Ph.D. in educational psychology. She also holds an Ed.S. in educational psychology from the The University of Georgia, a M.S.Ed. in mathematics from Jacksonville State University, a B.S. in engineering from the University of Alabama, and a Military Science diploma in cryptology from the United States Navy. Dr. Collins has many years of experience with STEM teaching and leading in Title I middle schools and high schools. Her professional certifications include technology education, AP computer science, and educational leadership/administration. At Texas State University, she teaches courses related to talent development and gifted education.



Kristina Henry Collins

You might know **Lisa Van Gemert** (pronounced "gammert") as the Gifted Guru or have perused [her website](#). An educator by training and a Giftedland native, she describes herself as having the gifted trifecta: as a student, raised three gifted kids, and taught gifted students. Some of her professional experiences have included teaching, a school administrator, a homeschooling mom, a paralegal, an Army Intelligence Analyst, and a cheerleader. Not in that order. She is known for her ability to translate research into language and strategies everyone can use to improve their performance, efficacy, and enjoyment in what they do. She enjoys sharing best practices with schools and education conferences (and sometimes even businesses), specializing in the gifted.



Lisa Van Gemert

We look forward to having them join us this October - you won't want to miss them! And, check out our new venue - the Hilton Bellevue. We are looking forward to having more spaces for breakouts, spaces to connect with others in our region, and a new city to explore. Bellevue is the home to many great culinary experiences. The freeway access (and free parking at the hotel!) will make coming to the conference that much easier. Registration for the conference is open on the [WAETAG website](#), and discounted hotel rooms will be available soon. Please check out our website for the latest information.

If you are interested in being a presenter at the conference, please answer the ["Call for Presenters"](#) on our web page, too! Proposals will be accepted between April 17th and June 30, 2018.

We're Calling! Presenters, Volunteers, Vendors...Are YOU Ready to Answer?

by the students seeking scholarships for summer studies. Thank you to all applicants for your interest. Following is a list of students receiving WAETAG Scholarships in 2018.

Alex McLean: UW Robinson School for Young Scholars

Ariana Starfire Martinez-Pope: Robinson Center for Young Scholars Challenge Program

Gloria Sung: Traditional Korean School

Keiyu Mamiya: Robinson Center Summer Challenge: Saying with Sound

Daniel Krot: John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth Summer Camp Model United Nations and Advanced Geography

Michael Owen: ID Tech Camp Seattle

WAETAG

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ESD 123:

[Susan Tatum](#)

ESD 171

OPEN

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 conference. The theme this year is "Innovation and Equity." What are schools and teachers doing to meet the charge for equitable access for traditionally underrepresented populations? Presentations in the basic nature and needs to gifted students and how to recognize them are always needed for those new to the field. Have you had success with particular data collecting or testing methods such as Culturally, Linguistically, and/or Environmentally Diverse (CLED) scales to help identify gifted students? How are we providing innovative opportunities for students to succeed? 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 June 30, 2018.



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. We need volunteers to help at the registration table, photography, etc. 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 2018 Conference where educators and administrators from across the state will come together for two days of community building, learning, and empowerment. Student vendors are also encouraged.

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

Could This Be You?

Do you live in ESD 112, ESD 113, or ESD 171? Are you looking for a way to become involved with WAETAG? WAETAG is currently seeking representatives to serve on the Board of Directors from those ESD regions, as well as a Secretary to serve as an officer. See below for information about position responsibilities, desired skills, time commitment and benefits.



Board of Directors Responsibilities and Requirements:

- * Live in ESD 112, ESD 113, or ESD 171
- * Support the mission of WAETAG
- * Read and understand WAETAG's financial statements and otherwise assist the Board in fulfilling its fiduciary responsibility
- * Attend board meetings and actively participate in decision-making
- * Share your area of expertise with the board and staff
- * Be an advocate for WAETAG; promote WAETAG in ways appropriate to your profession and contacts
- * Participate in strategic planning activities
- * Serve on at least one committee or task force each year
- * Participate in WAETAG's annual Conference
- * Assist WAETAG in interpreting the needs of the Gifted and Talented Education community

Additional Responsibilities as Secretary:

ESD 189

[Linda Varner](#)

Private Schools

[Sandi Wollum](#)

Communications

[Aubrey Dane](#)

Gifted Education Legislative

Liaison

[Jan Kragen](#)

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Staff

Executive Director

[Amy Phillips](#)

Accountant

[Tina Tidd](#)

Publications

[Kyra Richardson](#)

Visit our [website!](#)

Stay Connected



* Live in the state of Washington

* Keep the minutes of meetings of the members and the Board, and minutes which

may be maintained by committees of the Board

* See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws or as required by law

* Be a custodian of the corporate records of the corporation

* Keep records of the post office address and class, if applicable, of each member

and Director and of the name and post office address of each officer

* Sign with the President, or other officer authorized by the President or the Board,

deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments

* In general perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other

duties as from time to time may be assigned to him or her by the President or the

Board

Desired Skills and Experience:

* Knowledge of WAETAG history, mission and goals

* Knowledge of the Gifted Education community and commitment to maintaining a

strong foundation that is responsive to the membership

* Working knowledge of WAETAG bylaws

* Ability to handle all WAETAG business with tact, enthusiasm and commitment

* Ability to communicate effectively

* Ability to motivate committee members

* Ability to take responsibility and follow through on assignments

* Ability to work well with people individually and in a group

Term of Service:

Members of the Board of Directors are elected for a two-year term. Directors are elected by voting members of the WAETAG. Members may be re-elected for a maximum of a second two-year term in the same position, based on their ability to continue to fulfill board responsibilities.

Time Commitment:

* Three local board meetings per year (Spring, Summer, and Fall at 8-12 hours

each, not including travel time)

* One conference call meeting per year as needed (3 hours)

* 8-10 hours per month for committee or task force assignments

Benefits:

* Opportunity to make a difference in the Gifted Education community

* Opportunity to measurably support WAETAG goals

* Gain or enhance experience in building and working with teams

* Increase knowledge of WAETAG activities and resources

* Develop leadership in others

* Help to shape the WAETAG's direction and goals

* Complimentary registration and hotel room for WAETAG's annual conference

* Economic travel reimbursement to board meetings, the summer retreat, and the

annual conference

* Annual board retreat accommodations

If interested or if you have further questions, please [email](#) a short biography of your skills and qualifications. The bio will be used in an upcoming election publication. Members will vote by June 30, and the newly elected representatives will be invited to officially take on their positions at the summer retreat in early August.

President's Message

Vicki Edwards

Providing Equitable Access to Innovative Teaching and Learning

The theme for the 2018 fall WAETAG Gifted Education Conference is "Innovation and Equity."

With these ideas in mind, I asked my students to write definitions for the words **equity** and



innovation. The meaning of equity was relatively easy for the students. They looked at the "equ" and knew it had to do with something that is equal or balanced. Innovation, on the other hand was not as simple. Students couldn't break down the word by using the prefixes or spelling rules, it was not a word most had been using in their conversations, yet they were practicing innovation weekly when working on their challenges and STEAM tasks.

Innovation (n) means a new method, idea or product.

Innovate (v) means to make changes in something established, especially by introducing new methods, ideas, or product

Equity (n) is the quality of being fair, equal and impartial.

Through challenges and lessons, students learn about innovation and can then extend their thinking by writing or drawing in a journal. Ideas for innovation are everywhere; encourage students to write their ideas down as often as they can. Some of the students' favorite challenges and lessons have been provided at no cost through companies and grants. I would like to share some of my students' favorite resources that provide both an equitable and innovative learning experience.

Visit the [Dyson website](#) and request:

The Engineering Box is a reverse engineering kit that takes students through the design process beginning with the disassembly of a Dyson machine - they learn how a machine works by taking it apart. The lessons are hands on and are aligned to the CCSS.

The Design Process Box includes lessons challenging students to find inspiration in everyday objects and develop ideas, to identify problems and use their creativity to find solutions. The Box helps teachers nurture the skills needed for the next generation of engineers.

Both the Design Process Box and Engineering Box are loaned for 3 weeks and include postage paid shipping.

Visit the "[You Can Do the Rubik's Cube](#)" website and request a set of Rubik's Cubes, loaned for 6 weeks at a time. All lessons are aligned to the CCSS and support STEAM learning. Using Rubik's Cubes is an engaging way to teach problem solving, critical thinking, perseverance and logical thinking.

Rubik's Cube Mosaic Builder Sets include the Rubik's Cubes, Mosaic Lessons and/or Mosaic Building Guides. Creating mosaics is a fun team-building classroom activity that teaches STEM concepts in a fun way.

Educational Sets come with cubes, guides in English and Spanish, Learn-To-Solve curriculum, a poster to display and a flash drive with great lessons.

Visit the [Destination Imagination](#) website and download Instant Challenges to do with your students.

The WAETAG Board would like to extend an invitation as we move to a new location, the Hilton Bellevue, for our fall conference. We hope you will join us for WAETAG's 34th Annual Gifted Education Conference on Innovation and Equity. The keynotes will be presented by Kristina Collins and Lisa Van Gemert. Participants will also attend hands-on workshops and powerful breakout sessions led by industry leaders throughout the state and country.

Wishing you a happy spring!

Highly Capable legislation and Javits HiCapPLUS online professional learning modules update

Jody Hess
Program Supervisor and Javits Project Director

Changes to Highly Capable procedures passed as part of the March 2018 budget bill signed by the governor. OSPI is beginning the WAC (Washington Administrative Code) revision process and soliciting public comment. Please review the section of the bill [here](#) and forward your comments and questions to [Jody Hess](#). You will receive updates on WAC progress if you email us. The schedule will be out soon for webinars with guidance on completing Form Package 250 HiCap end of year report and changes to Form Package 217 District HiCap plan for 2018-19.

We had a great opportunity to meet with almost 400 educators at nine regional meetings to roll out the Javits HiCapPLUS Access/Equity and Pedagogy/Strategies modules. After a January 11th start at ESD 189 in Anacortes, Dr. Jann Leppien of Whitworth led meetings February through April in Spokane Schools, Wenatchee ESD 171, Pasco Schools, and Pierce Co. Skills Center in Bethel School District. Dr. Nancy Hertzog of UW completed the circuit, meeting in March and April at ESD 113 in Tumwater, Bremerton School District, Yakima ESD 105, and Vancouver Schools. Thanks to several pilot districts and ESDs who shared insights about use

of the modules to create change. Dr. Todd Christensen co-facilitated the workshops and Jason Miller of OSPI helped troubleshoot technology and access. Dr. Kathryn Torres from Education Northwest is compiling and analyzing all the great feedback from participants. We were impressed with participants' level of engagement, team planning, and depth of questions. We will reach out to districts unable to attend the in-person workshops through follow up webinars.

Many thanks to our hosts at each workshop location around the state.

An Educator's Experience with a 2e Student

Replacing Classroom Instruction with Online Instruction

Susan Heyer, M.A.

I've had several students whose natural path in learning included acceleration. Because of the physical distances between the schools in our district, using online instruction was an effective way to meet their needs.

One of these students is Nick, a middle schooler with autism, who struggled to keep up with his 7th- and 8th-grade schoolwork. Faced with written assignments and homework that seemed overwhelming to him, Nick tended to sink into depression by midyear.

Although his classroom teachers worked diligently to modify his requirements and provide a variety of accommodations, Nick could never manage to turn in all of his work. As a result, he found himself unable to earn a grade higher than a "D" and felt hopeless. The grades he was earning did not reflect his knowledge of the subject matter.

Time for a Change

Through teamwork, we decided it was time to get really creative and courageous; we needed a plan that took a path into the unknown. The first step was to assess Nick using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and following the guidelines of the Iowa Acceleration Scale. The test I administered was a grade above his current 8th-grade level; Nick scored in the 92nd to 99th percentile range in all categories!

After meeting with key folks, including Nick, we decided to try providing him with classes better suited to his style of learning, level of learning, and academic knowledge. We accelerated him from the middle school to the high school at the beginning of the second semester. Here is where our courage came in. Would Nick be successful?

We created a plan for high school that met his personal and academic needs, one that allowed him to sleep in until 9:00 am and arrive at school by 10:00. He would have two online classes, geometry and honors English, plus two computer programming classes. To take the online classes, Nick requested the support of an adult to help him learn how to access his courses and meet the requirements. He would work in a classroom designed for students engaged in independent learning online.

Nick Does an About Face

Since the end of January, 2018, Nick has accomplished over 50 percent of the required online work, and he maintains grades of about 95 percent in both geometry and English. He's thoroughly enjoying the autonomy and organization methods of online learning. His plan is to complete the two classes by April 1 and continue with the next set of online classes for the final quarter. At this rate, Nick will begin the 2018-19 school year as a sophomore!

Nick has even begun writing his own book. Of course, there's some irony here. Nick has always hated writing, but that was when he needed to complete large amounts of written assignments. Now, homework assignments for his online classes are not even required. Nevertheless, Nick finds himself actually reviewing the homework as a way to prepare for taking the assessments.

There have been other changes, too, for Nick. In middle school, he typically would be extremely tired each day when school was over. Getting through a school day used up a great deal of his emotional and mental energy. Since his move to high school, Nick finishes his school days with energy left over - enough even to take a six-hour, after-school field trip with the Science Club. Nick has shown improvement in two other significant areas as well - his personal care and his willingness to complete family/household chores.

When we embarked on this new acceleration path with our 2e student, we could have had a much different outcome. What helped to ensure that Nick would be successful was the time we spent talking, planning, employing supportive tools, and designing the entire transition. We wanted to make sure that it would be simple for Nick, yet full of support and personal interest. And now, Nick is a very happy and successful student!

This article first appeared in 2e Newsletter and is used here with permission.

Susan Heyer is a Highly Capable Coordinator/Differentiation Instructional Coach in the Port Angeles School District in Washington. The most fortunate turning point in her life and career

The Importance of Social and Emotional Learning

Jen Flo
ESD 113 Representative

How is this important to gifted students? Aren't they doing just fine?

We would like to think so, but asynchronous development is a part of the definition of gifted children. They often have intensities that accompany their giftedness and can be at risk for difficulty with self-regulation, self-confidence (imposter syndrome), developing resilience, challenges finding and building friendships (social outliers), maintaining motivation (underachievement), perfectionism, and more.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) involves processes through which children and adults develop fundamental emotional and social competencies to

1. understand and manage emotions
2. set and achieve positive goals
3. feel and show empathy for others
4. establish and maintain positive relationships
5. make responsible decisions

(Check out this video link: [Edutopia: 5 Keys to Social and Emotional Learning Success](#))

As educators, we strive to create classrooms that support our learners and encourage students to achieve across all domains. This can be challenging since students identified as gifted or profoundly gifted may have needs beyond those required by neuro-typical peers. They hide their insecurities, overthink tasks, question everything and are more intense than their chronological peers.

Fortunately for educators, there are many resources for us to explore!

[CASEL](#) is a combination of research, practice and policy that will support high-quality social emotional learning. Check out their Resources page for tools that can help with program design and other tools to support teachers & administrators. CASEL also offers resources by topic and in a variety of formats that can help you share research, create PD opportunities, and support students.

[Kernels of Learning](#), from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, is a developing model to introduce SEL in a personalized, bite-sized approach. Currently in the pilot stage, the researchers are developing sets of kernels, or targeted, small techniques that teachers can use easily in the classroom. Along with KEL, [Brain Games](#) are also being developed to support three "Brain Power" skills: working memory, attention, and mental flexibility.

Many teachers also utilize bibliotherapy as another way to support students. By using reading material or movies, students work through discussions and external examples, individually or in small groups. Topics can include: perfectionism, gender identify, friendships, anxiety, loneliness, and other issues that may need to be addressed.

Some resources:

[Nurturing Social And Emotional Development In Gifted Teenagers Through Young Adult Literature](#) (article)

[Bibliotherapy and Gifted Learners](#) (website)

[Understanding the Social and Emotional Lives of Gifted Students](#) (book)

Blue Sky Thinking

Janet Kragen

"If you could redesign schools, what would you do?"

That had to be the best, most intriguing question a job application form ever handed me. I keep going back to it and playing with it. [Mandy Manning's post](#) brought it up again. If we could start from scratch, what would we do?

Here are some ideas I've had over the years.

First of all, we need a lot more [recess](#)--supervised but unstructured, free play recess. A 15-minute break in the morning, a half-hour break at lunch, and a 15-minute break in the

afternoon. That's an hour of physical activity for the kids every day, which is exactly what the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends. (Why do we stop recess at the end of elementary school? Do children suddenly stop needing physical activity or a mental break during the day?)

Second, we need a lot more art and drama and creative problem solving (like maker spaces). Things we used to have that have gotten squeezed out. If we want to stay competitive in the global market, we need to keep the part of the American educational system that was unique and attractive--our ability to develop creative thinkers. Ironically, the more we try to emulate homogeneous school systems from other nations in order to increase our scores on international tests, the more we are going to lose our edge.

I'll tell you what I mean. I had a teacher from Japan visit my classroom. She was stunned at how eagerly my fifth grade students offered to leap up and do presentations. She told me none of her students would ever volunteer to present in class. She was impressed with the quality of the presentations.

As the kids walked out to recess, she went over to a display on my wall and asked, "What's this?"

"Bloom's Taxonomy," I said. "You know what it is."

She had never heard of it. Not in any of her education courses. So I explained it to her.

She nodded thoughtfully and said, "In Japan, we do this," pointing to Knowledge and Comprehension.

I said, "Well, of course, everyone starts there. You have to. But then you do these," and I pointed to the rest.

She said, "No, we do these," pointing again to Knowledge and Comprehension. And she taught high school.

By the time we were done talking, she wanted to come teach in America.

Third, we need to rethink how we move kids through our system. I have a few suggestions.

Start with entrance into kindergarten. Parents can bring four-year-olds to registration. If they demonstrate that they are ready to start kindergarten, they are welcome to come in at that time. Some kids are ready by age four. Otherwise, they go home and wait until next year. In the same way, parents can bring five-year-olds to registration. If they demonstrate that they are ready to start kindergarten, they are welcome to come in at that time. After all, the majority of children will be ready at age five. Otherwise, they go home and wait until next year. Then we take any remaining six-year-olds the next year because they should be ready by age six. Think how many students would have their needs better met simply by starting school in the year that is right for them. One keynote speaker I heard (I'm sorry I can't remember the name) said the worst tracking we have in the U.S. is by date of birth.

In kindergarten the teachers focus on social and emotional skills, team-building, cooperation, responsibility, independence, creativity. Reading readiness, math readiness, writing readiness.

Kindergarten lasts as long as it needs to last. Some students will finish in a matter of months (weeks? days?) and some will take a year and some will take longer. No one will freak out. We know that children develop at different rates and we accommodate their needs.

Once a child has completed the reading/math/writing readiness and the civilization process of kindergarten, they are ready to move to primary school, which is completely ungraded. There is no first, second or third grade. There are no report card grades and no grades on activities. At report card time, each teacher writes a single page narrative about each child detailing their progress in reading, writing, and math. Teachers also do fun and engaging science, health, and social studies units with their class, based on student interests. (In my world, the school library has a storage room filled with science, health, and social studies kits for all grade levels, ready for check out at any time.)

Finishing the academic demands of primary school could take a matter of months to multiple years. No one will freak out. We know that children develop at different rates and we accommodate their needs.

Now we move to intermediate school for fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. By now we have children of wildly disparate ages. That's all right. They are all roughly at the same academic level. They will be assigned to a homeroom class based on their age (the better to meet their social/emotional needs). However, at some point during the day, they will each be moving to the math group that meets their needs, the reading group that meets their needs, and the writing group that meets their needs.

Intermediate school does get graded. I love standards-based rubrics for more subjective assessments like writing assignments and projects and oral presentations. I prefer percentage grades for objective assessments like math tests. "You got 8 out of 10 right. That's 80%." Here's a radical thought--I would let teachers choose which type of

assessments they use, even on report cards.

In junior high, students go into the math/science block they qualify for, based on their math scores, and they go into the English/social studies block they qualify for, based on their reading and writing scores.

I've never taught high school, so I will bow out and let others go from here.

I believe this system would revolutionize the way we do gifted programs and special education programs. In my system, students move through the grades at their own speed. Students can accelerate seamlessly. No one pulls students out for remediation because they are behind their age peers. The expectation is that they will move forward at their own pace.

Are there some students who will need additional help from the gifted department or the special education department? Of course. Students who are very advanced or those who are taking longer than the average student may need tutoring that the primary or intermediate teacher is not able to provide. In addition, any teachers who work with them will need training in how to meet their social and emotional needs.

Students who struggle will now have the gift of time. Currently, for example, there is a red line--every child must be reading by the end of third grade. And we march every child through the grades, willy-nilly. It's nonsense. It puts enormous pressure on students and teachers, pressure that doesn't need to be there. I remember another keynote speaker years ago who said that in Europe no one cares when a child learns to read. And eventually every child learns to read.

Schools around the world are getting [innovative](#). What ideas are YOU kicking around?

This article was originally published in the Stories from School Blog and is published here with permission.

[WAETAG | president.waetag@gmail.com](mailto:president.waetag@gmail.com)

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