

WAETAG

Washington Association of Educators of the Talented and Gifted

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WAETAG Newsletter Fall 2016

www.waetag.net

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Dear Jan,

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Register now!

Discount ends Sept. 30

Oceans of Excellence



Hotel Murano
Oct. 28 & 29, 2016
Tacoma, WA

Keynote Speakers:
Susan Winebrenner
Roger Fisher

Up to 12.5 FREE clock hours available!

Three keynote sessions, plus 42
workshop and breakout sessions!

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WAETAG Mission
Statement

Oceans of Excellence: Navigating the HiCaps

Wendy Clark

Ahoy, Me Hearties! Be ye ready to come on board fer an excitin' adventure whilst we get our sea legs and learn to navigate th' HiCaps? Grab yer mates and come on along! All hands have been on deck here at WAETAG preparing for this year's conference at the beautiful Hotel Murano in Tacoma on October 28-29. Just as there are scientists investigating all of the aspects of the ocean, including the physical, biological, and geological features, we will be gathering together with some of the top professionals to explore characteristics and strategies for meeting the needs of our gifted students. WAETAG 2016 will feature not one, but two keynote speakers who are widely-known and respected for their expertise in the field.



Roger Fisher, gifted educator and consultant, will provide ways to engage the intellect of the gifted child during his keynote address on Friday, October 28, "Meet Me At The Thinking Wall- Creating a Space for Gifted Kids to THINK Big!" Educator and author of several well-known books, including *Teaching Gifted Kids in Today's Classroom* and, most recently, *Differentiated Lessons for Every Learner*, **Susan Winebrenner** will present two keynote addresses the following day: "Cluster Grouping Can Challenge Gifted and Advanced Learners While Raising Achievement for

All" and "Empowering Twice Exceptional Students to Participate Successfully in Your Gifted Education Program."

Both Roger and Susan will be presenting breakout sessions, in addition to their keynotes!



Speaking of breakout sessions, in order to help us understand and navigate the tricky waters of the gifted child, our sessions will address needs for everyone from teachers who are new to the field to administrators who are building and managing programs, best practices and theory, along with Monday-ready activities that get creative and critical thinking juices flowing. Do you want help with meeting both academic and social emotional needs, working with the twice exceptional or the underrepresented, meeting the needs of all students in a cluster model? How about ideas for creating a maker space in your classroom? We aim to please with a balance of something for everyone, addressing all grade levels and subject areas.

In addition to adding more choices per session and a wider variety of vendors, we have also added the option of attending a film screening in the ballroom following the Friday reception with heavy hors d'oeuvres and the keynote address. We've also kept the option of time to share speed lessons with those members who look forward to this fun and fast-paced collaboration each year. If you wish to participate, remember to bring some of your tried and true lesson ideas to share with colleagues.

With three separate keynote addresses, over 40 workshop and breakout options, and up to 12.5 FREE clock hours available, it's sure to be smooth sailing ahead for #WAETAG2016! Follow us on Facebook for up-to-date information, articles, and anecdotes. Anchors aweigh; we will see you in October!

[Registration & More Information](#)

President's Message

Vicki Edwards

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 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



My name is Vicki Edwards. I live in East Wenatchee and am a Central Wildcat Alum. I am thrilled to represent Washington State as the new President of WAETAG. I have worked at Monument Elementary in Quincy, Washington for 10 years. This fall, I will begin my fifth year as the 4-6 grade STEM Enrichment teacher and Highly Capable Specialist for Quincy School District.

My role as Hi Cap Specialist led me to a fall WAETAG conference where I met then Vice President, Kari DeMarco. A couple of months later I attended one of Kari's three-day ESD Hi Cap Differentiation trainings, and I was hooked. Her passion for student learning and depth of understanding of the nature and needs of highly capable students was contagious. I walked away feeling that creating a balanced model for student learning and emotional support was not only attainable, but worth the work.

I felt empowered to work harder for my students because I knew that the expert help I needed was just a phone call or email away. Kari was not only on the WAETAG Board and an ESD trainer, but also the Hi Cap Program Director for Wenatchee Schools. She was able to help me in so many different ways because of her connections to the Washington Hi Cap network. Kari recognized my passion as a student advocate and sensed I would be a good fit. She literally grabbed me and said, "We need you to be on our WAETAG Board!" It has been a fast and steep learning curve for the past two years, but one that has led me to grow beyond any imaginable classroom experience or book learning possible.

Being a part of WAETAG has broadened my expertise in the area of highly capable more than I could have imagined. From working along side one of the authors of the Highly Capable Program Handbook, Charlotte Akin, to spending time talking to the amazing Temple Grandin this past February at Whitworth, the journey so far has been amazing and I am ready to lead WAETAG for the next two years. Exciting changes are on the horizon with the ESSA and court challenges stemming from the McCleary Case. We are sure to see an increase in media attention both for and against equitable funding for highly capable education.

Arm yourself with the facts and be ready to passionately support the Washington Coalition for Gifted Education, NWGCA and WAETAG as we stand before political leaders in Olympia to testify and explain why the current inadequate funding must change. You can add the Washington's Paramount Duty button or tag to your social media, follow this link; <http://paramountduty.org/tool-box/>

This fall, as you come to the WAETAG conference in Tacoma, I hope you will introduce yourselves to me and to the rest of the board. We are here for you, ready to help you as you *Navigate the Hi Caps*. You are the future teacher leaders, ready to step up and join our board or become advocates for highly capable funding and opportunities, and I can't wait to meet you!

Going Beyond Your Own Classroom

Janet L. Kragen



The first professional development class I took for gifted education, back when I started teaching gifted students in the 1980s, was called "Beyond the Classroom." The instructors wanted us to come away with two main points. The first was to promote our programs, classes, and students. The second was to advocate for those students in our classroom and for gifted students in general. Their lessons have stuck with me for over thirty years, maybe because it was my first professional development class on gifted education. Or maybe it was because their ideas were so good!

The first idea is for us to promote our programs, classes, and students. To do that, we need to get over our natural shyness about promoting ourselves. You need to remember this crucial point; we are not promoting ourselves when we let people know the great things our students are doing. We are promoting our programs and our students. We are presenting them to the public in the best possible light. Take a look at the newsletters and articles about the band and choir and sports groups in your district. Those groups get promoted. All the time. True, it's possible that a booster club member wrote those pieces instead of a teacher. But how many booster clubs are there for gifted kids in your district? Chances are, you have to be the booster club for your kids.

I used to call the education desk directly at the local paper to spread my good news. (Ok, the truth is, I live in a small town. The paper doesn't really have an education desk. I just knew the right name to contact.) In the last few years our district has come up with a new policy, and I can't do that anymore. What I can do is contact the Community Relations office in our district, tell them what great things are happening in my classroom, and suggest that the local paper might be interested. The Community Relations office can take it from there. Even if my story doesn't get into the local paper, at least there will probably be an article in the district newsletter.

The second idea is for us to be bold advocates for our special population of kids. Most of us, I hope, are perfectly able to stand up for our students and explain their needs when we meet with other staff members or with administrators within our building or our district. If you feel shaky in this area, then I highly recommend taking the "Nature and Needs" class offered by the regional Highly Capable professional development specialist in your area. What about going beyond staff and administration? Do you speak before your school board? Do you write letters to your state and national representatives? Have you hosted a legislator in your classroom? Have you attended a Town Hall Meeting?

There are lots of people willing to speak out about in front of legislators regarding roads and guns and taxes. There are lots of people who will talk about other issues in education. Very, very few people write or call or speak about the needs of gifted students. Our students make up a very small population. They have very few advocates. They need every one of their teachers to be one of their advocates.

Over the years I've done all those advocacy activities. By the way, here's a tip: When I went to a Town Hall Meeting, I sat in the front, as close as I could get. Then, I made eye contact and smiled at the legislators all through the meeting. When I emailed one later and identified myself, she emailed back, "Oh, yes, I remember you. You are the one who smiled." Apparently, most people in those meetings don't smile. It's not hard to stand out and be memorable!

After the meeting, I went up to shake hands. I complimented the representatives on positions they had taken and added that I teach gifted students and wanted to advocate for their needs. Then, I went to the back of the room and gave my card to the legislative assistants. I also told them what my concerns were and offered to help answer questions about gifted education. In addition to meeting legislators at a Town Hall meeting, I hosted Representative Drew Hansen for a morning in my classroom. That was a real treat! I've emailed him back and forth multiple times since then. I've also run into him on the ferry. He calls out, "Hey, Jan, can you recommend any other books for my kids to read?" It can't hurt to be on a first-name basis with your local state representative.

Once I finished my National Board certification, the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession contacted me to ask how I wanted to serve as a teacher-leader in Washington. They had several suggestions. One was becoming a writer for their blog, Stories from School, which sounded like the perfect opportunity for me. When I interviewed for the position, I said, "I teach gifted students. I will want to write often about issues in gifted education." The editor said that was fine, and they would welcome that perspective.

Great! That job gives me the chance to be an advocate to another audience! (If you want to find my posts, go to the right side of the [Stories from School](#) site and choose me in the "Teacher Leaders Authors" box.)

There is one other amazing way that you can be an advocate for the kids you teach and for gifted kids in general. You can serve on the board of WAETAG. Plan on it taking about 50 hours of volunteer time over the course of a year, but it is some of the richest volunteer time I've ever been involved in. After all, if you get a dozen or so teachers of gifted all in one room for a meeting, you know there are going to be great ideas, great conversations, and whole lot of fun! And, when all is said and done, you accomplish something valuable. What could possibly be better?

In the end, I want you to push past some boundaries you may have set up for yourself. Make a splash! Make an impact! Teach your students, and go beyond.

KinderScreen Model utilizes Quality Picture books, Guided Inquiry, and Creative Production to Nurture High Potential in Young Children

Roger Fisher



The 2013 change in WACs related to highly capable learners requires services for gifted learners K-12. Professionals from around the state are searching for models to identify and serve young gifted children in their K-1 classrooms, and in many cases districts are designing their own programs with great success. One such program, KinderScreen, was written by myself in collaboration with a team of incredible kindergarten teachers in the Evergreen Public Schools. Below is the introduction to the guide. I will be presenting the entire program at the WAETAG Conference this year, and I will share our experience in Evergreen, as well as our results in identifying and serving young gifted learners.

KinderScreen Introduction:

Young children naturally live in the moment. Fueled by imagination and curiosity, they intuitively understand that life is a series of moments to explore and investigate. Children are intrinsically motivated to imagine, create, and wonder as they interact with their environment. Children do not need specific training to be creative. Creativity and inventiveness are hardwired into children's developing minds and personalities, providing educators with a rich source of information about a child's cognitive ability. Children benefit both academically and socially when provided opportunities to create, imagine, and innovate. When teachers provide an open-ended task that emphasizes inquiry, creative production, and verbal reasoning, they engage the whole child.

While imagination, creativity, and wonder are characteristics of childhood, each one also correlates with individual cognitive abilities that are precursors to high ability in traditional academic domains, such as literacy and mathematics.

The intent of the KinderScreen guide is to engage young children in an open-ended creative production task that allows educators to note behaviors associated with high potential and giftedness. The four learning experiences in the KinderScreen guide are each aligned to six sets of specific cognitive indicators associated with giftedness.

Each enrichment lesson is designed around a high quality picture book and includes four phases. The series of lessons each emphasizes an abstract concept for children to think about and discuss, followed by a

creative production challenge, and whole group sharing. It is important to remember that the lessons are designed as a screening tool. It is expected that all children will benefit from the enrichment experiences, but not all will show the advanced cognitive indicators being targeted.

The information collected after all four lessons are complete will be used as one source of data to identify and refer the top 20 percent of kindergarten students to take the CogAT Kindergarten screen in April/May. Using local norms the CogAT screen results will identify the top 10% of kindergartners in each of our 21 schools for targeted enrichment and differentiation as grade 1 students. As 1st graders, students will then be referred for the full CogAT & ITBS testing for placement in district gifted programs.

Thus far the program is working as intended. I hope to see you at WAETAG in October where I can share the work and answer all your questions.

WAETAG Gives Back

Wendy Clark



Thanks to some very successful fiscal years of growth with our annual conference, WAETAG was able to provide more scholarships this summer to gifted students that were looking for summer enrichment experiences. We received twenty applications and awarded five scholarships totaling \$2274. We would like to thank all of the applicants. As always, it was difficult to decide among so many qualified applicants seeking such worthwhile endeavors.

The recipients of this year's scholarships attended summer enrichment programs through Saturday Academy in Portland, UW Robinson Center in Seattle, and Satori Camp in Spokane. Congratulations, and a job well done, to all five students!

Brian Wong, a ninth-grader in Renton, took a Geometry course through the UW Robinson Center for Young Scholars. He was extremely grateful for the opportunity and stated that he had an amazing experience. Skills he gained through this class will help him give back to his community. He plans to volunteer at his local library to help teach math skills to students in need. We love to hear how you're paying it forward, Brian. Keep up the good work!

Aria Yang, a ninth-grader from Washougal, was awarded a scholarship to attend the Saturday Academy in Portland, OR. She stated, "I had an amazing time in my Saturday Academy classes. Not only did I learn many things, but I also made some very good friends! I had taken two photography classes; one about animal photography, the other about photojournalism. The animal photography taught me more than just how to take a picture of an animal, I also learned about animal behavior and how to predict what an animal might do next. In my photojournalism class, I was able to practice interviewing people I didn't know. Overall I had a wonderful experience in Saturday Academy and I hope to do it next summer!" We're so glad to be able to support kids like you, Aria.

Melissa Mitchell, a ninth-grader in the Northshore School District, took a month-long philosophy course through the UW Robinson Center for Young Scholars called Philosophy of Science: Believing in things we cannot see. Melissa stated, "I am very thankful for the scholarship you've generously provided for me this summer to attend the Philosophy of Science course in the University of Washington Summer Stretch. This course introduced me to a variety of philosophical issues surrounding scientific theories and evidence. I came into this class in hopes of feeding my love for science and ended up learning so much more than what I had expected ... Thank you so much for the enormous gift you have given me and my family. I was ecstatic when I first received your email and there is no way I can truly express how much I appreciate this award knowing what I got out of the experience. It seems like the more I set out to learn, the more I realize how much I don't know and

your support has fueled a strong determination in me to learn more." We love your attitude, Melissa.

Jace Poulsen, an eighth-grader from Jemtegaard Middle School in Washougal, attended a week long TAG camp through Saturday Academy in Portland, OR. He was able to participate in four classes throughout the week. Jace has already taken several steps toward his dream of starting his own business that teaches youth to fly drones. He also hopes to create a team for racing drones, take amazing videos, and develop the use of unmanned aircraft for security. After attending the camp, Jace stated, "It was awesome to be able to 'nerd out' with people that understood me. My four classes were dream tree house design, games and simulations, chemistry for inventors, and African drumming.... My favorite of all the experiments was rocket fuel because it involved aeronautics, which is one of my most favorite topics. Overall it was an amazing camp! This all couldn't have happened without you guys. Thanks so much!" You're very welcome, Jace.

Lucinda Olson, a ninth-grader in the Ferndale School District, attended the Satori Summer Camp at Eastern Washington University. Lucy has many interests and loves to learn. She takes online courses during the school year and felt the WAETAG scholarship was a way she could extend her learning into the summer as well. She was able to attend classes through Satori that are not offered at her school, such as psychology and Middle Eastern studies. Through these courses she was able to learn about intriguing topics while also improving her teamwork skills. She stated, "Overall, I had more fun than I thought I would, and I met tons of new people that I plan on keeping in touch with. I also learned about far many more things than I thought I could in just one week. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to have this amazing experience." It was our pleasure, Lucy.

Make sure to watch for our 2017 summer scholarship announcement in upcoming WAETAG newsletters. We love to help students in their enrichment endeavors!

WAETAG, Fall 2016

WAETAG, 235 Sunset Ave, Wenatchee, WA 98801

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