

S A G E NEWSLETTER

ST. LOUIS ASSOCIATION
FOR
GIFTED EDUCATION

ADVOCATING FOR THE SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN

Missouri State Board was receptive to gifted presentation

by Michelle Ryder

On March 24, 2005, David Welch, Director of Gifted Education, facilitated a presentation on gifted to the Missouri State Board of Education. The goal of the presentation was to put a "face" on gifted education. In order to better understand the needs of gifted students, the Board was given a growth chart showing them the history of gifted education in Missouri "by the numbers."

Shelley Creed, Gifted Education facilitator from Camdenton School District, gave an overview of the history of delivering gifted services in Missouri. Shelley shared the growth of gifted programming over the last two decades. Her school district has effectively implemented extensive teacher training workshops on differentiation. Camdenton, a district serving approximately 4000 students, has experi-

enced expansion and many successes over the years.

Dr. Maurice Overlander, Associate Superintendent from Camdenton School District, discussed gifted education from a central office perspective. He eloquently addressed the possible ramifications of gifted funding being folded into the foundation formula. Dr. Overlander addressed the positive aspects of gifted programming emphasizing the importance of this service.

A small town perspective of gifted education was given by Susan Berti of the Palmyra School District. Being a one teacher gifted program poses unique challenges. One teacher programs represent 67% of gifted servic-

es in the state of Missouri. Susan discussed the challenges of being "the gifted program" and the joys of teaching bright students. Also representing Palmyra was Andrew, an 8th grade gifted student. Andrew spoke to the Board about the importance of gifted services in his education. This well-spoken young man shared examples of curriculum he has studied while receiving gifted instruction.

To emphasize differentiated services of gifted, Michelle Ryder, PEGS Administrator, gave insight into the St. Louis Regional Program for Exceptionally Gifted Students

(PEGS) program. By presenting individual student anec-



Calendar of Events

DATE	PROGRAM	LOCATION	TIME
Friday April 29	Advocacy for Gifted Children Dr. Agnes Meyo	314-601-6358	7:00 p.m.
Mon. thru Fri. July 18-22	College for Kids	South County Education Center	9:30 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.
Weekdays only August 1-10	College for Kids	SLCC-Meramec Campus	9:30 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.
Wednesday August 10	Book Fair	SLCC-Meramec Campus	9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Sun. thru Tues. Oct. 9-11	GAM Conference	Tan-Tar-A	
Wed. thru Sun. Nov. 9-12	NAGC Convention	Louisville, KY	

Check our website at www.giftedsage.com for current information.

GAM - Gifted Association of Missouri

MODESE - Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

NAGC - National Association for Gifted Children

SENG - Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted

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The St. Louis Association for Gifted Education, a non-profit organization, provides resources and support for gifted and talented children as well as promoting programs which meet their social, emotional, and educational needs. Membership (includes SAGE Newsletter and library privileges) is \$20 per year.

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FROM
THE
PRESIDENT

On behalf of the SAGE Board of Directors, we graciously thank all of the attendees

for participating in our bi-annual conference, "Acceleration and Exceptional Children: No Gifted Child Left Behind," hosted by SAGE and Maryville University. It is so exciting to see those involved in the gifted community come together to learn more about gifted education and support each other.

We had a fabulous turnout for this conference and many vendors and exhibitors as well. Not only have I received positive feedback about this conference through the evaluations, but also phone calls and e-mails from individuals all over the state thanking SAGE for providing this service, among many others, to educators, parents and children.

Dr. Susan Assouline from the Belin-Blank Center for Talent Development presented research from "A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students" during the morning keynote address. Research indicates that accelerating students in school is both a cost-effective method of intervention for school districts and academically and socially appropriate for gifted students.

Bart Entrikin, the afternoon keynote presenter, shared his research and experience with "Albert Einstein's Creative Imagination and Thinking Strategy." Adults and even children who were able

to attend were actively engaged in the audience learning creative techniques for enhancing their intelligence and creativity.

Several local experts including psychologists, counselors, educators, and even gifted students presented insightful and well-prepared breakout sessions on various topics. Technology integration, classroom strategies, acceleration, underachievement and dual-diagnosis were just a handful of the many topics.

I learned a wealth of knowledge by planning this conference, which began back in August. First and foremost, community among groups is essential to make an organization or event successful. The members of the Board of Directors of SAGE who were directly involved with planning this conference, as well as Maryville University, were key in making this conference a success.

It is clear from the turnout at this conference and from the legislative report given by Kyna Iman the morning of the conference that the gifted community holds strong in the state of Missouri. The dedication of those in the field of gifted education or those who are impacted by it proves that we will allow No GIFTED Child Left Behind.

As we approach the end of yet another school year, please reflect upon all that you have done to support gifted children and what many others have done in support as well. I hope you enjoy your summer and I look forward to another great year within the gifted education community!

Sincerely,

JAIME RHOADES

Missouri Board

Continued from page 1

notes, the Board began to understand that gifted is not the same for all students and some require very different services.

The Missouri State Board of Education was very

receptive and interested in this topic as demonstrated by the many questions asked. The presenters were asked to dream of what the ideal gifted program would look like if money was not an issue.

Often we are reminded that unlimited funds do not always solve the problem. Gifted students in Missouri are very fortunate to have state-assisted gifted programs. ☀

JOURNAL: Roeper Review
EDITION: Winter 2005, Vol. 27, Issue 2
REVIEWER: Dottie Fundakowski
ARTICLE: *Sensitivity: A Double-Edged
Sword for the Pre-Adolescent Gifted Child*
AUTHOR: Alan L. Edmunds and Gail A.
Edmunds
SECTION: Social and Emotional
Development

Check any list of characteristics of gifted children and you are sure to find heightened or intense sensitivities as a primary indicator. Gifted learners tend to demonstrate sensitivity to the environment, global issues, social inequities, moral and ethical dilemmas, personal and family dynamics, etc. As a result of these sensitivities, gifted students often express compassion for the related circumstances and individuals involved, especially those treated unfairly or inequitably, and certainly for a susceptible and vulnerable environment.

What you are less likely to find in the research on gifted sensitivities is information on how these intense natures are manifested in the pre-adolescent and the adolescent periods, and in particular, how these behaviors can significantly affect the gifted individual.

In the article, *Sensitivity: A Double-Edged Sword for the Pre-Adolescent Gifted Child*, Alan and Gail Edmunds explore the sensitive nature displayed by gifted children and the effects this sensitivity can have on the child. Through a case study of Geoffrey, aged 9, the writers investigate accounts of Geoffrey's home and school experiences and provide insight into the difficulties faced by sensitive gifted individuals when faced with negotiating positive peer relations, teacher interactions, and positive self-worth.

Outward demonstrations of sensitivity and heightened emotionality, especially in males, are not often viewed in a positive way in our culture. In addition, although one would think that sensitive individuals would have an easier time of fitting in and getting along with others, these behaviors might not transfer to actual behaviors, and can result in "low teacher ratings of social acceptance and behavioral conduct."

Through an analysis of four years of Geoffrey's life, the reader gains insight into the intricacies and dilemmas faced by gifted pre-adolescents and adolescents, and implications for educating our sensitive gift-



JOURNAL: Gifted Child Quarterly
EDITION: Fall 2004
REVIEWER: Dr. Sunny Pervil
ARTICLE: *The Case Law on Gifted
Education: A New Look*
AUTHOR: Perry A. Zirkel, Lehigh
University

Zirkel paints a bleak picture of rights and protections for gifted students. Case law in gifted education continues to be minimal and costly. He recommends alternative methods of conflict resolution such as mediation be used.

At present legislation protecting gifted students is just not in place. Parents and educators are encouraged to work together with trust and creativity to provide effective individualized programs. Unfortunately, most of the recent cases are going in favor of the defendant districts. Federal legislation does not provide an entitlement to gifted education. Gifted education does not have the protection that students receive under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act). States that are legislating for an IDEA model by legislating for at minimum an individualized educational entitlement for gifted students are faring better.

There are two different categories of cases. "Gifted Alone" are laws governing services for students identified solely as gifted. These laws focus only at the state level. Their enforcement is based on legislation and regulations that states have established. They also rely on published hearing/review officer and court decisions that apply these regulations.

The "Gifted Plus" category refers to students who are "twice-exceptional." These laws have not been expansive. Again the decisions are going in favor of the districts and seem to lack sensitivity to the complexity involved in students who may be gifted with a disability or who are members of a minority group.

A more detailed description of cases and state laws can be found in the monograph *The Law on Gifted Education*, P. Zirkel, (2003). ❁

ed youth. While the foundation of gifted education may rest on providing an intellectually stimulating environment for the gifted child, "intellectual development does not occur without the influence of emotionality." ❁

Metro Council Updates

by Debbie Green

The February meeting was hosted by Michelle Ryder of the Lindbergh School District and focused on "Acceleration". Dr. Linda Smith, from the Rockwood School District, had participants evaluate their own districts' implementation of the acceleration strategies outlined in the Belin-Blank study, *A Nation Deceived*. After totaling the categories, participants described and defined each area. A significant revelation was that most districts do very little to accelerate highly gifted students, except at the high school level where students have the opportunity to take AP and dual enrollment classes.

Mara Berry and the Hazelwood School District hosted the April Metro Council meeting. The focus of this closing meeting was on "Identification of Underrepresented and Minority Populations for Gifted Programs." Gerry Gremelsbacher, recently retired from the St. Louis Public School district, presented a variety of methods to recruit and identify these students. Everyone agreed this is an area requiring more attention. Following the presentation was a tour of the Galactic Center, which houses the Hazelwood Elementary Gifted Program.

The first meeting of the 2005-2006 school year will be at Maryville University in early September. Exact time and meeting location will be determined later. ☼

No GAPS in SAGE Offerings

by Donna Kerwin

After a highly successful conference last August geared to the population of gifted and talented children in private and parochial schools, the GAPS Committee of SAGE met in the fall to organize another evening of information for teachers. It is always our intent that these sessions be well attended and benefit those in the target audience. However, networking is the primary means of communication after mailings to administrators. So if you did not get the word about this event, let us know!!

On 2/15/05, approximately thirty educators and parents gath-

ered at St. Paul's Lutheran School in Des Peres to learn more about serving the need of the gifted and talented child. In addition to the tables of books available for purchase, two qualified SAGE board members offered presentations - Sheila Glazer emphasized math techniques while Debbie Green showed her challenge crates of curriculum ideas. Both of these educators have had extensive experience in Mehlville and Pattonville, respectively.

It is the intent of SAGE to continue providing information and advocacy support so that those

College For Kids

The College For Kids (CFK) program, run by the St. Louis Community College,



expands to a second location this summer. An abbreviated session will operate July 18-22 at the newly opened South County Education and University Center at the intersection of Lemay Ferry Road and Missouri Bottom Road in South County.

The full-length CFK program will be August 1-10 at the Kirkwood Meramec campus. Classes are open to gifted and talented students completing grades K-8. Classes range from \$50-75 and registration begins May 23.

Contact Janet Turnbough, 314-984-7352, for a complete brochure for either program. ☼

gifted and talented children in this sector be afforded the same attention and differentiation given to the opposite end of the bell shaped educational curve.

If you are interested in serving on this committee, please call the hotline as soon as possible. It has been brought to our attention that few of these classes exist, while some are being eliminated due to funding. The old expression that "education for the gifted does not cost, but pays back society as a whole" needs to be circulated!!! What's good for the gifted is ultimately good for all. ☼

Some Thoughts on the April 9th Bi-Annual SAGE Conference

by Jaime Rhoades and Kaye Winterbauer

The April 9th Bi-annual SAGE conference hosted in conjunction with Maryville University divulged a wealth of information about the importance of accelerating and challenging gifted students. Dr. Susan Assouline, one of the authors of “A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America’s Brightest Students,” presented the research that supports accelerating gifted and talented students. Registrants received their own copy of Volumes 1 and 2 of this important research document and Dr. Assouline highlighted several key findings. While there are many reasons why schools may not accelerate, what is important is that “A Nation Deceived” be used to dispel the myths about acceleration and to put a wealth of research in the hands of administrators, school board members, teachers and parents to support the benefits of acceleration. To understand the many varieties of acceleration and its positive impacts, you can request a free copy of “A Nation Deceived,” or download it at:

<http://www.nationdeceived.org>.

Julius Hunter’s presentation on “Readings from Your Groceries” began with Mr. Hunter distributing empty con-

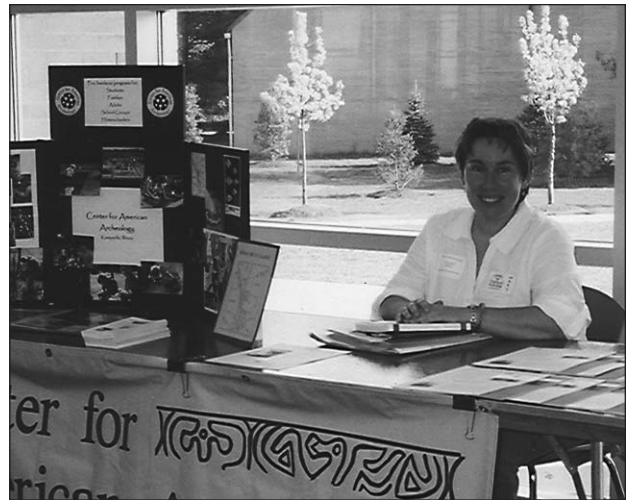
tainers representing various grocery products. He used them to lead a discussion of ways to involve students in investigative learning with everyday objects. The group answered questions such as “how many products can you find on your grocery’s shelves that have intentionally misspelled words like ‘Lite?’” and “why do products have these intentional misspellings?” Mr. Hunter then proceeded to show how the value of ordinary field trips could be enhanced using similar techniques. Mr. Hunter encouraged parents and teachers to begin the learning process before the trip, continue it during the visit, and follow up afterwards. He used as an example having students name both the babies as well as the group names for various animals: e.g., a murder of crows, a coalition of cheetas, etc.

Bart Entrikin, M.S., later followed with a presentation titled “Albert Einstein’s Creative Imagination & Thinking Strategy” and another one on “Brain Based Learning.” In both of his talks, he mentioned the importance of physical movement to mental stimulation, a concept that provides additional support for Mr. Hunter’s belief in the value of

field trips to learning. Mr. Entrikin told of Albert Einstein’s habit of walking up to twenty miles a day to enhance his creative thought processes. He discussed research showing that “stimulation of the body can stimulate the brain,” as well as research demonstrating the “15% greater flow of blood and oxygen to the brain when standing.” It is unfortunate that the PE requirement and recesses are some of the first items cut from the school day when school funding is reduced. Mr. Entrikin then led us in several exercises to help determine where we fall in the right brain/left brain continuum, and talked about the distinctions between right brain “knowers” and left brain “thinkers.” He also discussed whole brain thinking, ways to enhance learning and creativity in imagination.

I have barely scratched the surface of these excellent presentations, and would like to leave you with one of Mr. Entrikin’s quotations from Albert Einstein. “The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.” ☼

Some Images from the April 9th Bi-Annual SAGE Conference



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SAGE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The St. Louis Association for Gifted Education invites you to join or renew your membership to the largest organization in the St. Louis metropolitan area whose aim is to advocate for services which meet the social, emotional, and educational needs of gifted children.

Membership benefits include:

- free use of the lending library and all resources at the SAGE office
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- discount on books at the annual open house
- the *SAGE Newsletter*
- the opportunity to meet with and support those who advocate for gifted children.

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