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How Do You Measure Up as an Advocate for Gifted Students?



Dr. Alicia Cotabish
University of Central Arkansas

It is virtually assured that the Javits program will receive \$12 million for fiscal year 2017, the same amount of funding as received in 2016. The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the nation's leading advocates for more funding to support gifted students, applaud the actions by key leaders in Congress who advocate for funding to support the U.S. Department of Education program focused on providing educators with the tools to identify and serve such students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Javits program, like other authorized programs, must be funded each year by Congress. The program was de-funded by Congress in fiscal year 2011.

The Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act (Javits) was originally passed by Congress in 1988 as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to support the development of talent in U.S. schools. In its 29-year history, the Javits program has helped identify thousands of students from under-represented populations who otherwise are left without programs and services they need to succeed. The Javits Act, which is the only federal program dedicated specifically to gifted and talented students, does not fund local gifted education programs. The purpose of the Act is to orchestrate a coordinated program of scientifically-based research, demonstration projects, innovative strategies, and similar activities that build and enhance the ability of elementary and secondary schools to meet the special educational needs of gifted and talented students. In other words, it provides funding to move the field forward. Although the Javits funding has historically been modest, we celebrate the achievement considering the fiscal climate of the nation. Its funding is always a testament to the many advocates, key legislators, and YOU!

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Letter From the President



Dear Members of The Association for the Gifted (TAG),

I am writing to welcome you to the summer TAG Newsletter and to highlight a few important matters. On the heels of a highly successful 2017 CEC Conference in Boston, I am excited to remind everyone of our upcoming TAG Board meeting and conference being organized by some of our TAG leaders: Drs. Julia Roberts (Past President), Tracy Inman (Webmaster) and, Lynette Breedlove (President Elect). The Fall Board meeting will run from October 11 to 14. I look forward to seeing the Board members there and to invite TAG members who might like to attend. Please plan to join The Association for the Gifted on Friday, October 13, for a symposium hosted by The Center for Gifted Studies at Western Kentucky University.

We are already in the process of planning the 2018 TAG Board meeting. Our model for many years has been to move around the USA to sites that want to host the TAG Board. The site leader typically hosts a conference or symposium as a means to offset the TAG Board's travel costs. TAG Board members present at the conference and stay an additional day in order to hold a TAG Board meeting. Over the years, we have been in Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Texas, Virginia, and several other states. If you would like to host the TAG Board sometime in the Fall of 2018, please let me know.

I would like to announce that TAG is gearing up to begin the search process to select the next editor of the *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*. The change in the editorship will commence on January 1, 2019. Over the next few months, the TAG Board will be putting together the information needed for potential applicants to consider before applying. A search committee has been created. It is our goal to provide a fair and transparent search for this important position. Should you have questions, feel free to contact me. We anticipate applications being requested toward the end of 2017, with an offer being made late in the spring of 2018. More details will follow.

As President of TAG, I am keenly interested in the ideas and feedback that TAG members have about the field of gifted education, TAG, CEC, or other important matters. I encourage you to contact me via email at tlcross@wm.edu.

I hope that you enjoy the TAG Newsletter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy L. Cross". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Tracy L. Cross, Ph.D.
President, TAG

Dear TAG Members,

In this issue of *The Update*, please find the lead article titled "How Do You Measure up as an Advocate for Gifted Students?" written by Dr. Alicia Cotabish, an Associate Professor at the University of Central Arkansas.

In the Letter from the President, Dr. Tracy L. Cross, please note information about the search process to select the next editor of the *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*. Dr. Julia Roberts, "Speaking Out" columnist, has written an article about advocacy for gifted education. You will also find abstracts from the articles published in the most recent edition of *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* (JEG). Remember that your membership entitles you to online access to the journal.

Enjoy the summer!

Best regards,
Kimberley L. Chandler
TAG Update Editor

Letter From
the Editor





Speaking Out: **Speak Out Now**

Julia Link Roberts

Why speak out on behalf of gifted children and young people? The simple answer is to ensure that children who are capable of learning at a faster pace and a more complex level than age-mates have opportunities that are appropriately challenging. All forms of advocacy for gifted children are about matching services to the needs of advanced or gifted students.

Each advocacy plan has the goal (often unstated) of matching learning opportunities to the children and young people that will allow them to develop their interests and build their academic background without being limited by their age or the grade in which they are placed. Achievement at advanced levels is very important for learners with the potential for learning at those levels.

If the advocacy is directed toward policies, that goal focuses on matching services to needs. Remember, needs for gifted children look different; in fact, those needs may be overlooked by educators as the needs are related to strengths. Therefore, they may not look needy. Those needs must be addressed by matching learning opportunities to students' levels of readiness. Policies that are in place allow educational decisions to be made readily.

Advocates may focus on funding for gifted education, policies that allow for multiple types of acceleration or better methods of identification, yet the goal of each of those advocacy messages is to secure services that allow gifted students and students with advanced potential to learn new things every day they are in school.

The key to effective advocacy is knowing your message and communicating with the individuals who will be making the decision related to your goal. It is important to speak out. When you speak out, gifted children and young people win. Remember, no one else may speak out. Just do it!

The key to effective advocacy is knowing your message and communicating with the individuals who will be making the decision related to your goal.

SPEAK OUT NOW

Take a moment and send your Senators and Congressmen this message:

Support the Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act at the \$12,000,000 level in the budget. This funding is the only funding that specifically relates to gifted children and young people. That funding makes possible demonstration research projects and the National Center for Research on Gifted Education. Research supports effective decision-making for gifted students and their opportunities to learn and perform at advanced levels.

Journal for the Education of the Gifted

The *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* (JEG), the official journal of CEC-TAG, offers information and research on the educational and psychological needs of gifted and talented children. Devoted to excellence in educational research and scholarship, the journal acts as a forum for diverse ideas and points of view on gifted education, counseling, and parenting. The June 2017 issue of JEG will be arriving in your mailbox soon. The article abstracts are shared below. Should you be interested in submitting a proposal to the journal, please visit <http://jeg.sagepub.com>. In addition, Dr. Tracy L. Cross, Editor-in-Chief, is always looking for reviewers. Please e-mail the journal at cfgejeg@wm.edu if you would like to be added to the reviewer list.

ABSTRACTS FOR JEG, JUNE 2017, 40(2)

Factors That Contributed to Gifted Students' Success on STEM Pathways: The Role of Race, Personal Interests, and Aspects of High School Experience, Saiying Steenbergen-Hu and Paula Olszewski-Kubilius - In this study, we conducted binary logistic regression on survey data collected from 244 past participants of a Talent Search program who attended regular high schools but supplemented their regular high school education with enriched or accelerated math and science learning activities. The participants completed an online survey 4 to 6 years after high school. This study examined how their demographics, high school experiences, and timing of and reasons for pursuing a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) pathway related to the probability of earning STEM college degrees. This study revealed two factors that were positively and significantly associated with the outcome of earning STEM college degrees: Asian or White ethnicity and students' personal interest in STEM. Findings suggest that students' success in earning STEM degrees may not be fully attributable to their high achievements or abilities, and that their experiences in the Talent Search and supplemental outside-of-school gifted programs helped students intensify their interests in STEM.

Phoenix Rising: An Autoethnographic Account of a Gifted Black Male With Dyslexia, Shawn Anthony Robinson - The purpose of this study was to describe my academic journey as a gifted Black male with dyslexia. The central research question was the following: What were some of the stories along my academic pathway that seem significant? The research design positioned me inside the culture in which I am the topic of examination. The research methodology used for my analysis was autoethnography, which allows personal experiences to be explored through the intersection between narrative inquiry and ethnography. The approach allowed me to fully articulate my lived experiences, which provided a deeper understanding on how the intersectionality of race, dyslexia, and giftedness influenced my identity formation. An analysis of my journey led to the finding that the intersection of identity categories must be attended to, in order to support the learning of students with "triple-identity." The article presents a theoretical model for exploring the intersectionality of those elements

Hold Firm: Gifted Learners Value Standing One's Ground in Disagreements With a Friend, Tanya Chichekian and Bruce M. Shore - Seventy-four students in three different Grade 9 classrooms of high-performing learners from the same suburban, comprehensive secondary school, completed a questionnaire focused on their preferences for a friend to stand by his or her position in case of a disagreement, to maintain their own position themselves, and to modify their own stance. Each group reflected high performance in a different way: International Baccalaureate (n = 27) requiring overall high grades, Enriched French (n = 24) requiring second language proficiency, and Sports Excellence (n = 23) based primarily on athletic ability. The International Baccalaureate students had the highest preference for standing one's position, but were willing to ultimately modify their position. Sports Excellence students had the most friends, but the number of friends was not related to the preferences. Academically very able students seem to enjoy some disagreement with their friends.

Intervening in Early Written Literacy Development for Gifted Children in Grade 2: Insights From an Action Research Project, Hetty Roessingh and Michelle Bence - This article reports on an action research project undertaken by a team of four Grade 2 teachers who work in a school for gifted learners. Focused on implementing a structured printing and spelling curriculum in addition to providing instructed support for planning, organizing, and vocabulary use for different genres of writing, both qualitative and quantitative data provide insights into the contribution and importance of these five curricular elements on the quality and quantity of written production during 1 school year. Of particular importance is the need for automaticity as this relates to capacity theory and the constraints of working memory. The unique needs as well as strengths of the gifted learner profile are highlighted. The article concludes with a series of unanswered questions for the research community to consider.g.

Fall TAG Symposium

Please plan to join The Association for the Gifted on Friday, October 13, for a symposium hosted by The Center for Gifted Studies at Western Kentucky University. The topic will be how to serve underrepresented children with gifts and talents. For more information, contact Dr. Julia Roberts at julia.roberts@wku.edu.

Effective Advocate continued from page 1

At the local level, gifted and talented programs are often vulnerable to its critics, particularly when school resources shrink. Active advocates are the best protectors of gifted programs. As program administrators and educators of the gifted, we often consider ourselves as active advocates simply by program association. This is not always the case. In order to protect what we have, we must be vigilant in our communication and outreach efforts. Several years ago, I came across this advocacy questionnaire from the California Association for the Gifted. Even as I revisit the questionnaire today, I can see that there is room for improvement and more I can be doing to act on the behalf of gifted students everywhere. I challenge you to take the time to see how you stack up as an advocate for gifted as well.

How Do You Measure Up as a GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) Advocate?

Advocacy takes a variety of forms. Answer "Yes" or "No."

1. If you are a parent of a gifted child or a teacher, do you talk regularly with your child or students about whether or not he or she is happy and challenged in school? The gifted program?
2. If you are a teacher or other educator, do you communicate on a regular basis with parents and administrators to explain how you differentiate curriculum and instruction and why it is important to do so?
3. Have you written a letter, made a phone call, or sent an e-mail or fax to a legislator on behalf of gifted and talented children?
4. Have you made contact with a school board member regarding the gifted and talented program in your district?
5. Have you attended a school board meeting or a GATE Parent (or teacher) advisory committee meeting in support of gifted and talented children?
6. Have you expressed appreciation for your local gifted and talented program to your district superintendent and/or community?
7. Have you expressed support and appreciation to classroom teachers and/or site administrator for the GATE program and activities that have been particularly interesting and challenging?
8. Have you helped to increase community awareness of the needs of the gifted and talented children?
9. Have you jointed an organization that supports gifted and talented education?
10. Have you helped to publicize (in ways including contacting local newspapers and other media) the positive activities or aspects of gifted and talented children?
11. Are you a member of a gifted education affiliate organization?
12. Have you volunteered (beyond your assigned duties) your time on behalf of gifted and talented education?

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13. Have you attended seminars, workshops, or conferences to improve your knowledge of gifted education or shared the information with other teachers, parents, or administrators?
14. Are you knowledgeable about your district's GT program?
15. Do you keep abreast of the state and national trends and issues in the field of gifted education?

Are you an effective advocate? Add up your "yes" replies

- 11-5: Advocacy for gifted is a top priority
- 7-10: Advocacy is a high priority
- 4-6: Advocacy is a priority
- 2-3: Advocacy is a low priority
- 0-1: Advocacy is a very low priority!

Questions adapted from:

California Association for the Gifted. (n.d.). *Advocacy in action: An advocacy handbook related to gifted and talented students* (2nd ed.). Author: Yucaipa, CA.

What Are Your Next Steps?

Now that you know if you are an effective advocate, I encourage you to think of ways to improve your advocacy efforts. More importantly, anticipate questions about meeting the needs of gifted kids, do your homework, and prepare answers. There are many myths that plague the field due to misinformation. Lastly, recognize that all advocacy starts at the local level. Regardless of whether you are a parent, gifted educator, or interested individual, your voice and influence matter.

Society Member Activation Instructions for your SAGE Journals Online (SJO) Account

The electronic version of the Journal for the Education of the Gifted (JEG) is available through SAGE Journals Online (SJO). To activate your account please follow these steps:

1. Go to the SAGE Journals Online site: <https://online.sagepub.com/cgi/activate/basic>.
2. Where it says "Activate Your Online Subscription:" enter your Member ID then select The Association for the Gifted-CEC (TAG-CEC) from the Society drop down menu and click "Submit."
3. On the "Instructions" page be sure to check your personal data. Enter a username and password and click submit to confirm activation. Do not click the Journal Title link until the confirmation process is complete.
4. Once complete, return to the electronic Journal homepage and select the Journal cover for access to the current issue or click "Current Issue."
5. To select an issue from the archive, click "All Issues".
6. To search for articles either click "Search this journal" or use the "Advance Journal Search".

The username and password you create you will use when returning to the site <http://jeg.sagepub.com/>. If you forget your username or password, go to the "Subscribe" tab and look for the link "What to do if you forget your User Name and/or Password" under "Managing your Subscription to Journal for the Education of the Gifted" which will take you to the following link <http://online.sagepub.com/cgi/recnamepwd>. You will be asked to provide some information about yourself. Upon confirmation of the information your username and/or password will be emailed to you.

If you require further assistance, please contact your Society's Member Services Dept. or contact SAGE directly at societymember@sagepub.com.

Join CEC-TAG, the nation's most dynamic professional association devoted to twice-exceptional children, educational excellence, and diversity.

MEMBER BENEFITS

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the leading voice for special and gifted education. CEC-TAG establishes professional standards for teacher preparation for the field, develops initiatives to improve gifted education practice, and ensures that the needs of children and youth with exceptionalities are met in educational legislation.

Become a member of a team of professionals devoted to (a) improving educational opportunities for individuals from all diverse groups with gifts, talents, and/or high potential; (b) sponsoring and fostering activities to develop the field of gifted education; (c) supporting and encouraging specialized professional preparation for educators; and (d) working with organizations, agencies, families, or individuals who are interested in promoting the welfare and education of children and youth.

Member benefits include:

- Four issues of the *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* (JEG) per year (includes online access to current and past issues)
- Six issues of *Teaching Exceptional Children* per year
- Two issues of the online journal *Excellence and Diversity in Gifted Education* (EDGE) per year
- Four issues of *Exceptional Children* per year
- Quarterly newsletters from CEC and from CEC-TAG
- A discounted member rate for all meetings of CEC and TAG
- 30% discount on all CEC products
- 10% discount on Prufrock Press products
- Peer-to-peer support
- A network of colleagues who are leaders in the field of gifted education

To join CEC-TAG, go to <http://cectag.com/membership/> or contact Yara Farah, Membership Chair, at ynfarah@wm.edu.

Call for Proposals – 2018 Wallace Symposium

The University of Iowa Belin-Blank Center and the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth are co-hosting the 2018 Wallace Research Symposium on Talent Development – a premiere scholarly conference in gifted education. The call for papers is open until September 15th.

Find details www.belinblank.org/wallace.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

KIMBERLEY CHANDLER - klchan@wm.edu

Dr. Kimberley Chandler is the Curriculum Director at the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary and a Clinical Assistant Professor. Her professional background includes teaching gifted students in a variety of settings, serving as an administrator of a school district gifted program, and providing professional development for teachers and administrators nationally and internationally. Kimberley has served as the editor and contributing author of numerous curriculum materials from the Center for Gifted Education. She co-authored a CEC-TAG Educational Resource (with Dr. Tamra Stambaugh) titled *Effective Curriculum for Underserved Gifted Students* and is the co-editor (with Cheryl Adams) of the CEC-TAG Educational Resource *Effective Program Models for Gifted Students From Underserved Populations*. Currently Kimberley is the Network Representative on the NAGC Board of Directors, and the editor of the CEC-TAG newsletter *The Update*.

ALICIA COTABISH - acotabish@uca.edu

Dr. Alicia Cotabish is an Associate Professor at the University of Central Arkansas. She is the Past-President of the Arkansas Association of Gifted Education Administrators (AAGEA). She has authored, co-authored, and contributed to 5 books, and a number of journal articles, book chapters, and products focused on K-20 STEM and gifted education. She has delivered more than 200 professional development workshops, presentations, and keynotes at local, state, national, and international venues, and serves as a National Association for Gifted Children Expert Speaker. Her recent research has focused on STEM and gifted education, and examining the effects of virtual coaching on the quality of gifted and teacher candidates using Skype and Bluetooth Bug-in-the-Ear (BIE) technology.

JULIA LINK ROBERTS - julia.roberts@wku.edu

Dr. Julia Link Roberts, Mahurin Professor of Gifted Studies at Western Kentucky University, is Executive Director of the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky and The Center for Gifted Studies. Dr. Roberts is on the Executive Committee of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children and is past-president of The Association for the Gifted. Her writing focuses on differentiation, gifted education, and advocacy. She received the 2011 Acorn Award as the outstanding professor at a Kentucky four-year university, the first NAGC David Belin Advocacy Award, the 2012 NAGC Distinguished Service Award, and the 2011 William T. Nallia Award for innovative leadership from the Kentucky Association for School Administrators.

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