

From the President ...

Approximately 50 invited participants representing state departments, state affiliates, school districts, parent groups, and universities were present at The Association for the Gifted's annual symposium in Boston. We had international participation with two of our participants from the Institute of Gifted Children, National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the Ukraine. Our annual symposium focused on policy and legislative issues that affect gifted and talented students. The participants and our membership will have an opportunity to continue the discussion and possibly develop white papers regarding policy, highly qualified effective teachers, response to intervention, and growth models. As you are aware, we are in an election year and have the luxury of time for developing our responses to the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act and other future legislation. Please let me know if you want to become more involved in this important work.

At the symposium, The Association for the Gifted also honored Dr. Margie Kitano, past member of the TAG Board, associate dean of the College of Education and professor of special education at San Diego State University, for her tireless work on the new national teacher education standards and on behalf of gifted students from low-income backgrounds, particularly English language learners. Congratulations, Margie!

TAG also honored Dr. Michael Pyryt, our dear friend and past TAG Board member, who died unexpectedly this year. Michael was a dedicated teacher and a distinguished scholar in the field of gifted education. As a director of the Centre for Gifted Education at the University of Calgary, he was a driving force in the awareness and development of gifted education locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally. He was honored at the symposium, TAG business meeting, and at CEC's Representative Assembly where a resolution was read in his honor.

Two new books were launched at CEC's annual conference: *Using the National Gifted Education Standards for University Teacher Preparation Programs* and *Using the National Gifted Education Standards for PreK-12 Professional Development*. These books, published by Corwin Press, provide practical advice for not only university faculty but also for all professionals in gifted education in PreK-12 settings who are interested in improving the quality of teachers who serve gifted students.

Included in this newsletter is a nomination for vice president of the TAG Board with a term beginning immediately through December 2010. You will vote by checking the box and then stamp and mail the ballot to CEC. We'll announce the new vice president in the next newsletter. Your involvement in TAG is needed!

Susan Johnsen, President
Susan_Johnsen@baylor.edu

CEC-TAG Annual Symposium

Policy and Legislative Issues: Their Effects on Gifted and Talented Students

Susan K. Johnsen

At the annual meeting of the Council for Exceptional Children in Boston, The Association for the Gifted sponsored a symposium that focused on policy and legislative issues affecting gifted and talented students. Dr. Jim Gallagher, senior scientist emeritus of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute; Kim Hymes, director of Policy and Advocacy Services for the Council for Exceptional Children; Dr. Richard Mainzer, associate executive director of Professional Services for the Council of Exceptional Children; and Dr. Gail Ryser, director of Texas State University's Research-Support and Evaluation Center, presented on topics that related to this year's theme.

In his presentation, Dr. Jim Gallagher raised some questions related to advocacy engines and moving gifted education forward. He described the major engines for educational change as legislation, court decisions, administrative rules, and private initiatives. He cited the Javits Act, the Office of Civil Rights, administrative regulations regarding gifted minorities, the CEC-TAG/NAGC teaching education standards, and *A Nation Deceived* as examples. He suggested that professionals and other advocates of gifted education needed to build an educational infrastructure that includes research, curriculum development, technical assistance, demonstration of excellent practices, leadership training, communication, and program evaluation.

Next, Kim Hymes described CEC's legislative strategy in gifted education that included partnering with like-minded organizations such as the National Association for Gifted Children; identifying congressional champions; creating, identifying, and pursuing legislative opportunities; and

engaging CEC's Children and Youth Action Network (CAN). She then described these recent legislative highlights:

- Higher Education Act (expanding the definition of "teaching skills" to include the identification of learning needs of students who are gifted; teacher preparation programs receiving Title II grants needed to include differentiated instruction for students with gifts and talents) and
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind (expand the formula grants to states; emphasize professional development; restore funding of Javits Program; use growth model to address *all* student achievement; respond to twice-exceptional students within Response to Intervention)

She concluded by saying that the gifted education community needed to (a) debunk myths about students with gifts and talents, (b) emphasize that America must meet the educational needs of all students, and (c) make connections of gifted and talented education to global competitiveness.

Dr. Richard Mainzer spoke passionately about Highly Qualified Effective Teachers. He mentioned that less than one tenth of one percent was spent on gifted education. He raised these questions with the group: How do we define what we know about teaching? What do we mean by well prepared? How many teachers will we

need in the future? How many teachers are being prepared? How do we systematize teacher preparation in this field? What can we do to provide resources? He concluded that we need the courage to implement the new CEC-TAG and NAGC teacher education standards.

Dr. Gail Ryser examined the growth models that have been piloted in eight states. The models fit into three categories: annual growth targets, projection models, and value tables. Annual growth targets used a proficiency score and then examined scores below this score and examined the growth toward the proficiency score. Projection models used prior scores to predict future scores. Value tables identified proficiency as moving from one level to the next even though the levels were below proficiency. She concluded that all of the growth models were focused on including more schools as meeting annual yearly progress and were not intended to assess gifted students. She suggested that (a) tests need to have more advanced ceilings, (b) growth beyond proficiency levels should be incorporated, and (c) accountability models should expand their focus to consider the effects of teachers and programs.

Following these presentations, responses were made by Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, past president of the National Association for Gifted Children and the Jody and Layton Smith

CEC-TAG, continued on p. 2

How to Join TAG

Membership in The Association for the Gifted (TAG) is the best way to boost your own professional skills and become a more informed practitioner. Membership is open to any member of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). You must be a member of CEC to join TAG.

Joining either group is simple. You will find applications on the CEC Web site (<http://www.cec.sped.org>), or you may clip and return the application on p. 2 of this newsletter.

Use the Enclosed Flyer to Invite a Friend to Join CEC-TAG

Enclosed with this newsletter, please find a promotional flyer for CEC-TAG membership. Please take a moment to pass this flyer along to a friend or colleague and personally invite them to join the TAG Division of CEC.

Remember, CEC-TAG is a member-run organization, and your efforts to help the division build its membership are essential to its healthy growth. Thank you for passing this flyer on to others wishing to support gifted children, educational excellence, and diversity.

CEC-TAG, continued from p. 1

Professor of Education at the College of William and Mary; Dr. Del Siegle, president of the National Association of Gifted Children and associate professor and teaching fellow in the NEAG School of Education at the University of Connecticut; Dr. Diane Montgomery, past president of The Association for the Gifted and professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at Oklahoma State University; and Dr. Margie Kitano, associate dean of the College of Education and professor of special education at San Diego State University. Their remarks suggested that (a) current tests needed to be revised to

add ceiling or that alternative tests needed to be developed for identifying the top one percent, (b) we needed to partner with urban schools to reach all children and identify ways that the gifted community can work together, and (c) gifted “advocates” needed to change to “activists.”

In the afternoon, the symposium participants broke into four small groups to identify components that might be used for developing white papers in these areas: highly qualified teachers, response to intervention, growth models, and policy. Results from these groups will be discussed in our next newsletter.

Membership Application

To: CEC
1110 N. Glebe Road, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-5704

TAG Dues
US/Canada: Regular \$25-Student \$10
Overseas: Air Mail \$50-Surface \$35

CEC and TAG Dues. I want to start enjoying the many benefits of membership in CEC and TAG. I am enclosing both CEC and TAG dues.*

TAG Dues Only. I am currently a member of CEC and my CEC ID # is _____. I am enclosing TAG dues only (see prices above).

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

* Please call (888) 232-7733 (toll free) or (703) 620-3660 for information on current CEC dues. Join online at <http://www.cec.sped.org>.

10% TAG Members-Only Discount From Prufrock Press

CEC-TAG members now enjoy a 10% discount on products available from Prufrock Press Inc., the leading publisher supporting the education of gifted and talented children. Use the special CEC-TAG discount code “CECTAG_08” when placing an order online at Prufrock Press’ Web site at <http://www.prufrock.com> and automatically receive this members-only discount. Please note the 10% discount is only available online and it is only available to current CEC-TAG members.

The Association for the Gifted

Susan Johnsen
President

Board Members

- Diane Montgomery
- Elaine Dumas
- Jennifer L. Jolly
- Sherrie Bosserman
- Mary G. Rizza
- Charmaine Shutiva
- Lannie Kanevsky
- Tracy L. Cross
- Ken Dickson
- Del Siegle
- Gloria Taradash
- Tom Southern
- Jennifer Robins
- Sneha Hah-Coltrane
- Karen Rollins

The TAG newsletter is a quarterly publication. If you have news or upcoming events you’d like to share with other TAG members or have a brief article you’d like to have featured in the newsletter, please contact Jennifer Robins at jenniferrobins@mac.com.