

# *IAGT Bulletin*

Volume 1, Issue 2, Spring 2002

As the Irving Association for Gifted and Talented (IAGT) nears the end of its first year, we proudly look back at our accomplishments:

- We successfully navigated through the sometimes tedious but always necessary detail work involved in establishing an organization with a foundation solid enough to withstand an ever-changing leadership;
- We hosted two general meetings with leading GT specialists;
- We contributed to the initiation of an informally labeled "GT Phase Two" effort to enhance the services our GT students are receiving.

One of the biggest lessons we have learned is that the IAGT will only be as successful as we, the parents, make it. Unfortunately, we were unable to effectively reach hundreds of gifted children and their families because we lacked IAGT School Liaisons at too many campuses; of the 28 schools in the Irving Independent School District (IISD) we had representatives at less than half of them. Establishing personal relationships with campus administrators is critical to the success of our communication efforts.

We know your lives are saturated with activities, but please try to find a few extra minutes to Serve your gifted child by Becoming active partners in the 2002- 2003 Irving Association for Gifted and Talented.

## **IAGT Contact List**

If you have questions, concerns, or ideas, give us a call:

### **Nimitz Cluster Coordinator**

Glenda Servin (972) 790-5047

### **MacArthur Cluster Coordinator**

Tonya Hilton (972) 258-3184

### **Irving Cluster Coordinator**

### **District Bilingual Liaison**

David Solis (972) 871-0216

### **District Coordinator**

Shannon South (972) 253-7876

### **IISD Director of Gifted and Talented**

Debbie George (972) 273-6130

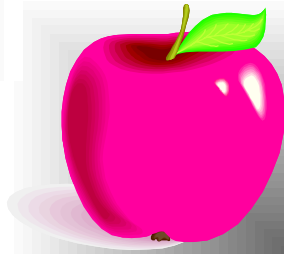
## **NEW IAGT WEBSITE ADDRESS:**

**[www.irvinggt.org](http://www.irvinggt.org)**

**E-mail: [gifted@flash.net](mailto:gifted@flash.net)**

# Teacher Talk!

## Gifted Students Missing an Academic Foundation (and How This Can Be Remedied)



Tara Perkins, 4th grade G/T, Otis Brown Elementary

Many of us feel that a gifted child should acquire the educational basics with ease. Because of this mindset the lessons taught, and usually re-taught, are short and sweet. Many G/T teachers take for granted that the information has already been taught, and at my school it has. This does not necessarily mean that the G/T student has mastered the information.

Repetition has been shown to work well with "regular" students when learning basic math facts and simple spelling rules. Repetition has also been shown to work with G/T kids in regards to learning the facts; they just find this process boring. These kids need to realize that everything we do in the gifted classroom will not always be mind-blowing. Having gaps in your learning is detrimental to continued advancement.

By the time a gifted student is placed in a self-contained classroom, the curriculum is advanced, accelerated and enriched. Children with gaps often feel frustrated and left behind. This problem needs to be fixed quickly, or the gifted class will soon be considered remedial with some enrichment. As a teacher that pushes my students to be the very best they can be, I feel their frustration, as well as my own, daily. I believe the answers are simple. Teri Hyde, the teacher featured in the last IAGT Bulletin, states a valid point concerning reevaluation of gifted students. There is a growing trend among students that are tested early showing a drop in scores every year. This shows that the basic skills are not covered completely and that all teachers of the gifted need to recognize this as a problem. These students must be held accountable for basics as much as regular education.

Reevaluating yearly, and not letting G/T students slide through the basics in a classroom setting will help tremendously, but that is not the key. I believe parents are the biggest factor. Though I have had, for the most part fabulous parents, there is always the exception. I wish I had compiled a list of all the excuses parents have given me to cover their child's gaps. Amazingly, parents/society tend to think it is the teacher's/school's fault for not providing basics.

As teachers we tend to disagree and feel we can help. Parents can:

1. Know what the basics skills are for each grade level. I believe that the school should provide this and a list of

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## Building a Home for Your Gifted Child\*

- **Acceptance and Understanding**
  - ★ Gifted children need to be loved for who they are, not what they do.
    - ⇒ They are children first, gifted second.
- **Guidance**
  - ★ Set limits.
    - ⇒ Is it your agenda or your child's?
    - ⇒ Decide what is negotiable.
  - ★ Our children need balance in life.
    - ⇒ Play at age-appropriate levels.
    - ⇒ Need more time to daydream, do nothing, be alone.

\* Excerpted from the presentation of the same name by Mary Christopher, Assistant Professor, Elementary/Gifted Education and Teacher Certification Officer from Hardin-Simmons University

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## Where We Need You!

The GT Program is a mystery to many people. We need to stay on top of the District's view of a GT program, state mandated criteria, and the educational, social, and psychological needs of the Gifted Child (they are very distinct).

We need to be aware of the curriculum, and how it will impact our child's future progress in Middle School where they accrue High School credits that impact their GPA at High School graduation.

We must be in the know about accelerated AP classes, understand the differences in teaching and relating to GT children, and understand the characteristics of this special population and why they have special needs as recognized by the state of Texas.

Glenda Servin  
Nimitz Cluster Coordinator

## What a Great Idea!

### Austin Middle School's "Starry Night Cafe"

Humanities students write poetry which art students illustrate. Parents are treated to an evening of poetry readings, music and art in a coffee bar style setting.

The 8th graders just finished holding auditions for 7th grade GT students interested in reading poetry for the evening. Their fourth annual Starry Night Café event will be held on May 23, 2002.

### Informative GT Websites

[www.a-gifted-child.com](http://www.a-gifted-child.com)

[www.hogiesgifted.org](http://www.hogiesgifted.org)

[www.txgifted.org](http://www.txgifted.org)

[www.gtworld.org](http://www.gtworld.org)

[www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)

[www.irvinggt.org](http://www.irvinggt.org)

### Thanks again Lamar Middle School for the "Study Skills" class.

It has been a major success and we hope it will be available for 6th grade GT students next year.

## Building a Home for Your Gifted Child\*

### • Traditions

★ Role-modeling is important.

⇒ Show the joy and satisfaction you find in your work.

★ Give quantity time, not just quality time.

⇒ Children need their parents during the preschool years, but more so during adolescence.

### • Communication

★ Listen

⇒ Gifted children need to be listened to because they have so much to think about.

⇒ Need to learn how to stop talking long enough to be able to listen.

\* Excerpted from the presentation of the same name by Mary Christopher, Assistant Professor, Elementary/Gifted Education and Teacher Certification Officer from Hardin-Simmons University

## Attention!

We have received numerous e-mail messages from teachers regarding the wonderful things our children are doing; however, to respect the privacy of our gifted children and their families we will not publish their names and schools.

We would like to use this Kudos page to show our appreciation to the teachers, schools, and administrators who deserve recognition for their hard work with our children.

For contributions to our Kudos page or to submit a brief article to be considered for publication in the *IAGT Bulletin*, please contact your Cluster Coordinator or send an e-mail to [gifted@flash.net](mailto:gifted@flash.net)

A gigantic "Thank You" to the core group of parents who helped make the dream of a GT parent association an actuality.

**You folks are the best!**

## IAGT Winter 2002 General Meeting

Our second general meeting of the year ("general" meaning that all 3000 GT students and their families were invited via handouts we delivered to every school) was held at Irving High School on February 25, 2002. Our speaker was GT specialist Mary Christopher, Assistant Professor of Elementary/Gifted Education and Teacher Certification Officer from Hardin-Simmons University.

Mrs. Christopher's topic was "Building a Home for Your Gifted Child". Handouts were provided, and extra copies are available through IAGT. Her relaxed approach and practical parenting tips encouraged parents to ask questions and discuss personal concerns with her both before and after her presentation.

We thank Debbie George for arranging for Mary Christopher's appearance for IAGT, and Carolyn Dowler and Irving High School for providing the space and equipment for our General Meeting.



### Building a Home for Your Gifted Child\*

#### • Stretch

★ Nurture creativity, not often nurtured at school.

⇒ They need a "messy place" at home to be creative.

#### • Time Out

★ Have your own interests

⇒ Don't live vicariously through your child

⇒ Over investment in your child is not good.

\* Excerpted from the presentation of the same name by Mary Christopher, Assistant Professor, Elementary/Gifted Education and Teacher Certification Officer from Hardin-Simmons University

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## Teacher Talk!

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books/publications that would be helpful. If your child lacks these skills, summer remediation would be helpful.

2. Besides daily homework, take 5-10 minutes each evening to review basics ...make it a car/dinner time game. It is amazing how much can be accomplished in a short, focused study session.
3. Form a relationship of trust with the G/T teachers. For the most part, we spend more time with your child and know what areas they need help in.
4. Support the teacher/counselor when we recommend alternative placement. All aspects should be analyzed ... test scores, grades, and observations. We truly only want what is best for your child. Being in G/T classes should not be considered a status; it should be looked at as a different type of educational service.
5. Be aware of the gifted concept. Educate yourself so that you will understand the specific needs/challenges of your child. There are many wonderful publications that can assist you in this area.

We need to work closely together to make the Gifted and Talented program in Irving strong so that we can send prepared, confident students into the world to make some awesome changes.

*Teacher Talk is provided as a forum for the teachers of our Gifted and Talented children.*

### Irving Cluster Report

Parents, we desperately need your help in our efforts to reach out to all the schools in the Irving Cluster (the Irving Cluster had the lowest number of IAGT parent volunteers this year). Many thanks to Lynn Ince for covering the distribution of information at Lively and to Glenda Servin from the Nimitz Cluster who was kind enough to help cover the remainder of the schools in the Irving Cluster.

Next fall we would like to step beyond this year's minimal communication work and set up an IAGT table at Meet the Teacher nights and Open House events. **With your help this can happen.** Please call Shannon South, (972) 253-7876 if you can spare a little time to help out in the 2002-2003 school year.

### MacArthur Cluster Report

A great, big THANK-YOU to the following parent volunteers who actively participated as **School Liaisons** in the MacArthur Cluster:

Kassandra Bell & Kelley Brown

Shaun Jester

Dana Edwards

Sam Houston and Thomas Haley

Brandenburg

WT Hanes and MacArthur

If you are interested in becoming actively involved in your child's gifted education, and your child attends one of MacArthur's feeder schools not mentioned above, PLEASE CONTACT ME! The **School Liaison** role is vital, but not time-consuming. If you have time to make a few phone calls, distribute information, occasionally collect signatures, man a table at your school's open house or other event - - WE NEED YOU! I will be glad to address questions, suggestions, or concerns that you have within the MacArthur cluster GT program. It's an opportunity you shouldn't pass up! Please call Tonya Hilton at 972/258-3184 to make sure your school is represented!

### Nimitz Cluster - A Good Report

Nimitz Cluster schools and parents have been very responsive to IAGT. We are more familiar on the campuses. How great to find so many warm doors. (I have had some contact with other cluster schools and parents as well and find them to be as welcoming.)

A big THANKS TO Nimitz Cluster parents that have come on board to represent their schools in our Cluster Meetings. Meetings are held once a month - the Monday following the District IAGT Board Meeting. We enjoy real GT family time in a relaxed home environment over coffee and snacks. We keep everyone up to date on the District Boards' Agenda and deal with individual campus issues. It is a practical way to reach your campus with the action needed to facilitate cooperation and change.

For example, as your Cluster Coordinator, I represented the IAGT at Lamar's Open House and GT Informational Meetings. Setting up a table gave me the opportunity to pass out membership forms, mission statements, & etc. as well as meet the very interested parents. Middle Schools and High Schools really need this kind of contact for parents needing a venue to connect with us. We need more concerned GT parents for this opportunity. The campus liaisons and committees really give parents a way to put action behind their desires. We can be there on GT field trips, special projects, or any event in which we might be invited to help.

We have School Liaisons at Britain, Brown, Davis, Elliott, Townley, Schulze, Bowie, and Lamar. You are welcome to join their campus committees. As for the other schools in the Nimitz Cluster not mentioned, we need you on your campus. Who knows better than you, the needs of your school?

Everyone is welcome to join our GT family and join us at Cluster Meetings. We are forming campus committees on each campus to support IAGT activities and concerns. Give me a call and I'll connect you with your School Liaison, or sign you up as one. I will also call you for our monthly meeting. **JOIN US! IT'S VERY SATISFYING TO PUT A HANDLE ON THE GT EXPERIENCE AND BE A PART OF THE NEW IAGT ORGANIZATION.**

Nimitz Cluster Coordinator—Glenda Servin  
972-790-5047 or 214-673-4949 (cell)

## IISD Goals for Bilingual Gifted and Talented Program Services:

1. The bilingual GT curriculum should be rigorous and performance expectations should be as high as that for students in the English-monolingual GT program.
2. All advanced academic services should be responsive to the cultural backgrounds of their students.
3. Parents should be informed about gifted education and included in the program planning and implementation.
4. Assessment instruments and procedures should reflect a variety of quantitative and qualitative measures and also rely on information about students' characteristics and behaviors provided by parents, teachers, and others who know them well.
5. Educators in both gifted and bilingual education should be included in the placement decision.
6. Teachers and administrators who provide services for gifted bilingual students should receive training in both gifted and bilingual educational methods.
7. The bilingual GT students' first language should be extended, enhanced, and supported as an integral part of the advanced academic services.

### Looking Ahead: August/September 2002

Parents and families of GT students, please look for IAGT Membership Applications (a new membership is required every school year).

At the beginning of the new school year we will distribute forms to every school for teachers to send home with students (and hope to have them available in classrooms at Meet the Teacher night).

If you don't receive an application soon after school starts, please ask your teachers and campus administrators for help in obtaining one. You may also go to our website at [www.irvinggt.org](http://www.irvinggt.org).

**Irving Association for Gifted and Talented**  
1805 Spanish Trail  
Irving, TX 75060

**Membership Update:** As of April 1, 2002, the IAGT had **232** members.

***Remember: Individually our voices are small, but collectively we will be heard.***