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Newsletter

Fall 2006

Do Gifted and Talented Students Have Special Needs? – Highlights of the MCGT Conference
Monday, November 13, 2006, 6:45 – 8:00 PM
RCTC Heintz Center, 1926 Collegeview Dr SE
Rooms HA102 and HA104

Do gifted and talented students have special needs? At the MCGT conference in October, Dr. James Webb gave the keynote speech on this subject. In fact, gifted kids DO have special needs.

Common issues facing gifted and talented individuals include: underachievement, boredom, perfectionism, power struggles, depression, and health and behavioral issues. Join us to learn more.

GATEway board members will also share the information from the session they presented entitled "One Chapter's Experiences Successfully Working Toward Positive Change in a School District". We will finish with discussion and problem-solving.

While the adults meet, students will gather for social time and "Left Brain and Right Brain Challenges". Come at 6:45 to socialize before the formal program begins at 7:00. Park in the east parking lot and go into the first entrance next to the street.

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Ann Monk (1963-2006)



In September, GATEway lost a very active member, Ann Monk. Ann was in her second year on the board of directors. She served as our newsletter editor and was a valued voice on the board. Ann was a dedicated school volunteer as well. She leaves behind her husband, Steve, her daughter, Emily, and many extended family members. We greatly miss Ann's helpfulness, knowledge, and dedication.

Parent Networking Night

Thursday, November 9, 2006, 7:00 – 8:30 PM
Bakers Square North

Would you like to discuss issues relating to educating and parenting gifted children? Are you interested in learning more about gifted education in Rochester? Would you like to meet other GATEway members?

Join us for our social networking nights for adults, held monthly at Bakers Square North. Look for the GATEway logo on a sign at our table. We'll be there from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Drop in whenever you can!

On Thursday, November 9, we will discuss options available to parents as alternatives when a student's academic needs are not being met. Examples include grade skipping, subject acceleration, alternate instruction in accordance with the curriculum review law, home schooling, Minnesota Virtual Academy, Individual Learning Plans, and more. See you there!

Check Your Address Label!

If you're a GATEway member, check your address label for an expiration date. If your membership has expired, please consider renewing using the form on our website.

Status of the Highly Gifted Middle School Program

The district is moving ahead with plans to offer a program for Highly Gifted (HG) middle school students which would group HG students into a separate class for academic subjects at Freidell in fall 2007. Sixth graders would be offered eighth grade level instruction. In December, the district plans to make a formal announcement and to provide information about qualifying for the program.

Additionally, GATEway is urging the district to offer at least ninth grade honors level academics to seventh and eighth graders as long as there are enough students. This could be in a multi-grade 7-8 class if necessary to have enough students to fill a class.

Unfortunately, even this may not happen unless the school board and Randy Nelson, Director of Instructional Services, hear from enough parents who want the program extended to seventh and eighth grade this fall.

If you have a current sixth or seventh grade student who you want enrolled in the Highly Gifted program next year, please contact Randy Nelson as soon as possible. Sending him a formal letter requesting placement for your child in the highly gifted program next year is an option you may wish to consider. Mr. Nelson may be reached at 328-4205 or ranelson@rochester.k12.mn.us. Feel free to contact Margaret Pellegrini (288-3201) or Melissa Amundsen (289-3899) if you have questions or concerns.

“Vote Yes Twice!”

On November 7, Rochester residents will be asked to vote on renewing and increasing the school district's operating referendums. Question #1 will ask voters to renew the District's three existing referendums, which provide \$440.84 per pupil, or roughly \$8.5 million per year. Question #2 will ask voters to approve an additional referendum to increase the District's operating revenue by \$200 per pupil, or roughly \$3.8 million per year.

An increase to the district's budget may enable our district to provide additional programs for our gifted and talented students. Please learn more about this important issue at:

www.rochester.k12.mn.us/school85/referendum.

Update on the Friendly Chemistry Class

The Friendly Chemistry course announced in the previous GATEway newsletter has begun. Instead of being offered through Community Education, it is now being held privately at the home of Margaret Pellegrini.

Seven sixth and seventh graders enjoyed games and hands-on exercises at the first session. The class meets Mondays from 3:00 – 5:30 PM and covers high school level chemistry. Each family is asked to contribute \$40 to defray the cost of materials. Students will have to take a "credit for learning" test to get credit for the course and placement in AP Chemistry in a subsequent year.

The class can accommodate up to three more students who are currently in middle school. Students should be taking at least Pre-Algebra to have appropriate math preparation. If you would like your student to take Friendly Chemistry this year, please contact Margaret as soon as possible at 288-3201 or email her at pelsteen@magnaspeed.net.

Legislative and Advocacy Opportunities

GATEway board members are planning an advocacy trip to the state legislature this winter. It is important that we reinforce the need to renew the dedicated gifted and talented funding that was passed in 2005, and to encourage the adoption of a statewide mandate for identification and education of GT students. The group would have appointments with our local legislators and possibly some committee chairs. Some participants may choose to bring their gifted students along to allow the children to express their needs in a more memorable way. Other MCGT chapters are considering joining us to make the day a statewide lobby day. If you are interested in participating in an advocacy trip, please contact Melissa Amundsen at 289-3899 or gateroch@yahoo.com.

In addition, MCGT is forming a committee to decide what the organization's legislative agenda should be. This committee will be meeting in Edina on Saturday, November 18 from 10 AM – noon to discuss possible requests. They would meet again on another Saturday in January to form the final agenda. Most of the work would be done through an email list. If you are interested in participating on this committee, please contact Melissa or MCGT President Teresa Boatman at teresa.boatman@mcqt.net.

School Board Elections

Election Day is Tuesday, November 7! Four school board seats are up for election this year. **Because the school board controls many of the factors that affect our Gifted Services department, GATEway members can help improve gifted and talented education in Rochester by voting for school board members who are in favor of strengthening the GT program.**

GATEway board members formulated several challenging and in-depth questions designed to ascertain each candidate's position on gifted education principles and funding. The questions were:

1. Please describe your vision for an ideal program for gifted students in K-12. Consider the varying levels of giftedness and the needs of each level.
2. What percentage of the district budget do you feel should be spent providing an appropriate education for gifted and talented students, keeping in mind that 15% of

Rochester students are gifted vs. 5% nationally? What percentage is the district currently spending?

3. Given ongoing budget constraints, how would you prioritize gifted education among other district expenses? Do you have ideas for obtaining additional funding or for cost-efficient methods of providing gifted services to our students?

Candidates were not given guidelines for lengths of responses, so quantity does vary widely. Responses have been left entirely unedited except for format. No responses were received from either candidate for Seat 4, Mechelle Severson (incumbent) or Michael Hendrickson.

We would like to thank each candidate for giving their time and thought to these questions, as well as those we asked prior to the primary election in September. Responses to those questions can be found on the GATEway website at www.geocities.com/gateroch.

Diane Hermann Blakley – Seat 2

I would like to start out by thanking all of you for truly educating me in the gifted and talented program. I have learned a lot and have tried to study up on it and will continue to learn more about it, I feel you as a group have come up with some very wonderful ideas and they should be looked at very seriously by the district. You were able to teach me the reasoning for having a School Within a School, I must admit when I first heard this I was not informed and thought we would want to keep our top students spread across the district, but I have changed my mind on this issue and the clustering program made so much sense. Thank you for your time and for all you are doing for your children.

1. I would like to see the clustering of students implemented in the district, it would truly allow the classroom teacher more time with each cluster. I also think the opening of a Highly Gifted School for students using the School Within a School approach makes a lot of sense and should be looked at very seriously by the district. (both Elementary and Middle School). I do not see where this would cost the district much from the budget, but would affect the Gifted Students enormously. The High School level should have Honors programs and also we need to use the Post Secondary options at our local college campuses.

2. I have learned that the district received \$162,000. in state money and that is what the district is using to fund the gifted and talented program, this amounts to roughly .5%. I read where the state approved \$9.00 per student unit, but was not aware that the district put their budgeted gifted money back in the general fund. It is really not adequate funding for this program as we should be encouraging academic growth in all our students.

3. I have listened and I feel your frustration. I also have a child with some learning issues and have had to address them outside the school system where she could get help, as she did not qualify for any help in the district. This is a very expensive endeavor for a family but it is my child and I needed to do it. I came from Jefferson Elementary as PTSA President and we where the home site to the Autism program, these parents also feel that the district falls short. We live with all of these federal and state mandates and many of them tell the district what has to be done. The local voice of the school board is slowly sliding away. I would like to see more local control and would urge you to contact your politicians. I think all of the students in Rochester School system are due a high quality education and I will strive to help achieve it. I have been an advocate for more state funding and for more federal funding. We need our top students to soar, as they are the future. They are the

Diane Hermann Blakley – Seat 2 (continued)

ones that go on to employ others, cure disease, invent, lead, etc. We should also look locally in the business community maybe reaching out to them to work with our top students and in funding some of our

programs that would be of benefit to them, as these students prepare for their life's career. In dealing with the budget, I can only promise you that I will try to be fair and represent all students and families.

Larry Gifford – Seat 2

Question One: Educational Excellence with Education for all is very important. The Rochester Public Schools are very fortunate to have many talented individuals which include teachers, parents, and students to carry the torch for the gifted/talented program. The pressure for these programs has increased and there is a growing sense of appreciation of the complexity of achieving it. Views of how effective learning has shifted from the benefits of diligent drill and practice to focus on students' understanding and application of knowledge. Our society is changing rapidly and we must be in the forefront of having high standards to ensure us that all of the students, no matter who they are or where they live, will have access to Quality Education.

Question Two: The budget amount for this past year was the sum of \$495,745.00. With the 2005 Omnibus K-12 and Early Childhood Education Act, legislation provided funding for Gifted and Talented Programs in

the amount of \$4.00 per the districts adjusted marginal costs of pupil units for Fiscal Year 2006 and \$9.00 for Fiscal Year 2007. In order to obtain more funding we need to be lobbying the Legislature for the additional funding.

Question Three: The GATE Program has remain as one of the First Programs to be cut. How do I know this? As a staff member- teacher, librarian/media specialist- now retired from Rochester Public Schools, I served on the District Budget Committee at two different times and because of dollar shortages had to cut drastically into programs. Again, I repeat that we need to lobby our legislative bodies to obtain more funding.

Thank-You for the opportunity to have this forum and I look forward to working with you on Educational Issues. I would appreciate your vote and support on Nov. 7th.

Fred Daly – Seat 5 (incumbent)

1, My vision of an ideal Gifted Program.

I would see such a program as being housed in a separate building with all the equipment a person could desire. It would be taught by renowned experts in their fields. Obviously this isn't going to be possible or proper in a public school setting.

In a public school setting, I would expect gifted students to share a classroom with their peers. They would study the same subjects but in greater detail and rigor as their level of giftedness allowed.

2, What percent of budget would I allocate and how much is allocated now?

You undoubtedly already know how much the district currently spends on gifted programs.

I would be foolish to promise a certain percent of the budget. It is the board's duty to prioritize the available resources between all competing needs. We will do what we can with what we have available.

3a.. How would I prioritize gifted vs all other expenses?

Gifted students are just as important as any other students and their needs should get equal weight. The reality of state and federal mandates make this difficult but it is my goal.

3b. Additional funding or more cost-efficient methods.

I know of no additional funding that is available. This could be a great project for your organization. You should consider setting up a foundation and soliciting donations.

I think we should change a few rules so all students including gifted can take individual study courses from the best sources in the world. The limitation that such courses must be taught by Minnesota trained teachers is ludicrous. Courses taught by universities are available to home schoolers and should be available to public school kids also. Obviously, the Post Secondary Education Option should be used to maximum extent. Maybe we can get approval to allow gifted students to participate earlier.

Gary Mullen-Schultz – Seat 5

1. This is a very, very complex question, and I'm afraid my answer will not be able to do it justice.

Firstly, it's vital that we test youth frequently to determine where they fall in the gifted and talented spectrum. We must make sure we do not deny such programming to any child needing it.

Currently, for the most part, our GATE programming is a "bolt on" to the standard education curriculum. Offerings are often excellent on their own, but not particularly well integrated into the rest of the student's classes. We must find a way to provide a more holistic method of providing a gifted curriculum, not just gifted offerings, to our youth.

The cluster groups introduced this year are exciting, and it will be important in the upcoming years to track their success. The new William and Mary curriculum offerings are also welcome, and if proven to be successful, should also be made available to a greater number of youth.

I will encourage and promote enhanced GATE programming. As I indicated in my earlier responses a few months ago, my children greatly benefited from our gifted offerings when they were students in the district, and I volunteered in numerous programs. I recognize the value and necessity of GATE, and will be an active sponsor as a school board member.

2. The district spent approximately \$496,000, which is around 0.3615% of the total district 05-06 budgeted expenditures of \$137,173,601. Interestingly, in 2005 only 0.00029% of the federal K-12 education budget went to gifted and talented programs!

I am uncomfortable specifying a precise percentage of the budget that should provide gifted and talented programming. Clearly, given the relatively high percentage of gifted youth in our district, and our community's demand for excellence, one would expect that our schools would spend more than the average district on such programming. If the second levy referendum passes, and I am personally voting for it, I would expect some of that money be used to enhance our GATE offerings.

3. Again, I am not comfortable designating a specific priority on gifted education in comparison with other necessary programs. What I think is most important in this issue is making an integrated GATE curriculum as mainstream in our district as are well-established "institutions" such as athletics and special education.

Clearly, getting parental involvement is necessary, but not sufficient, to maintain strong and healthy gifted programming. We must continue to encourage their participation and input – but again, more is needed.

I have excellent contacts in the local technical and medical community, and my current Ph. D. studies in Health Informatics at the University of Minnesota provide me with deep insight into the kind of instruction and research that will occur in the four-year university proposed here in Rochester. I believe that we must deepen and extend our ties with Mayo, IBM and the local academic establishments to provide more real-world and challenging offerings.

In summary – I again emphasize that I will be a passionate defender and supporter of gifted and talented programming, understanding well its importance to our students, parents and community.

Daniel O'Neil – Seat 6

1.a. An ideal program would have numerous components, and the board should support June Grunewald and other teachers in program development. In my view such a program would provide adequate training for all teachers in identification and instructional techniques for gifted students. In addition, all parents and community leaders would be given an orientation about the unique learning needs of highly able and talented students. Each student would be given opportunities for individual expression and creative advancement, and there would be programs in place for even world-class talents. Also, there would be training and time devoted to the development of a cadre of teachers for the gifted and talented program (larger than the existing FTE), and there would be state and district

funding for programs to enhance the skills of parents and teachers who work with high-achieving students.

1.b. In my opinion, there must be early education programs in elementary school that cast as broad a net as affordable for the gifted and talented students. These programs should become more specialized and individualized as students develop (and for more highly gifted individuals as funding permits). Finally, there should be programs available at the high school level that both challenge students and serve as a shining example for younger learners. Rochester should come to celebrate the super star learners as we do successful athletes.

2.a. Given many of the legal mandates for other populations, it is difficult to provide even an equitable

Daniel O'Neil – Seat 6 (continued)

share of funding (i.e. 15% based on the number of students in your assessment). However, the funding level in Rochester is far beneath an adequate threshold. In particular, it is my understanding that the numbers of students allowed to participate in programs is significantly restricted due to capacity. Also, based on anecdotal evidence from my sisters' children at Bamber Valley and Mayo High School; there appears to be a more restrictive screening in classification for gifted students in an effort to ration the currently-funded offerings.

2.b. From the reported number of full time equivalent employees (FTE) that are listed on the School District website, there are only a total of 3.0 FTE for elementary; 1.8 for Middle School, and 1.2 for High School. The percentage is less than 5%. While I don't have the financial figures available, it is clearly evident that funding is not in ratio to either state or local populations. Jill Grunewald, Mary Bradley, and the others who provide programs for the gifted are few in numbers and have limited funding compared with the quantity of gifted students in the district. However, I believe that these committed individuals and involved families of our talented students have worked to stretch funding dollars to maximize the benefit to students.

3 a. In my opinion, funding for gifted and talented education is a high priority; however, there are a few critical areas that should be an even greater cause for concern that should be addressed as well. Among these are the unacceptable achievement gap within minority and disadvantaged student groups, and elementary capacity concerns that should be addressed immediately. Assuming that district leadership addresses these concerns, we must make a much larger commitment to individualized instruction for our promising gifted and talented students.

3.b. Our best chance for improving funding for gifted and talented programs is in "Voting Yes Twice" on the Operating Referendum. I spent much of the afternoon of October 18 with Mary Bradley, Mayo High Gifted and Talented Specialist. We discussed needed program enhancements and explained the ballot questions to attendees of the Women's Fall Festival. In addition to direct funding measures, we must call on businesses like Mayo Clinic, IBM, and the Chamber of Commerce to develop and support programs for promising learners. We must also collaborate with universities in the area to ensure adequate training opportunities for teachers in high-performing learning techniques. Finally, we must work with parent groups to develop early identification programs for gifted and talented learners and foster a positive environment for all students.

Sandra Soltis – Seat 6

1. First, I view giftedness on a continuum: Bright*, high bright*, gifted, and profoundly gifted; these students may not have the same level/type of giftedness in all areas. For example, a student may be gifted in music and math but not in science and language arts. Therefore, any program has to have flexibility so students can move around (programmatically) in a school/classroom/or small group setting based upon their academic needs and level of giftedness.

I believe that my premise would hold throughout a K-12 experience. However, at the 7-12 levels, all students move from class to class; therefore, scheduling classes that enable a gifted student to take some classes that are advanced and others that are not advanced is considerably easier than at the elementary level.

*These students are typically identified as "high achievers." Personally, I have a problem with the term "high achiever"; right or wrong, I liken it to "over achiever," and I do not agree with that term. I'll save that conversation for a later date!

K-5

From the very beginning of their educational experience, all students need to develop the skills to get along with, associate with, and play with other students of all abilities and diverse backgrounds. Learning these skills at an early age is important and will enable students to become well-rounded older students and adults. These skills are especially critical in our multicultural society and also critical in an ever shrinking world.

Gifted K-5 students should be able to participate in various classes according to their ability and talents; e.g., a gifted third grade student, if qualified, should be able to take 5th grade math and still be part of the student's third grade class. For bright and high bright students (high achievers), their classroom teacher can differentiate lessons for three levels – lower, middle, high. The gifted specialist should provide assistance to the classroom teacher in differentiation for gifted students. We cannot expect teachers to differentiate for "nine" [my exaggeration] different levels. That is totally unrealistic.

Sandra Soltis – Seat 6 (continued)

Teachers do group their students according to ability and interest and switch classes or students in particular subject areas with other teachers. This switching can be for a particular unit or it can be for the entire year.

The caveat is that there has to be a “critical mass” of identified students and teachers to accommodate the flexibility in scheduling for the school or grade level so these flexible groupings can occur.

6-8

Again, gifted 6th grade students should be able to participate in various classes according to their ability and talents. At the 6th grade level, grouping for math officially begins. Based upon testing, a student may be placed in 7th or 8th grade math (pre algebra) or algebra. Profoundly gifted students in math can also access the University of Minnesota Math program (UMTIUMP).

According to State plans, when current 4th graders (might have been last year’s 4th graders) become 8th graders, they are supposed to be ready for algebra. What this will do to placing 6, 7, or 8th grade gifted students in algebra classes or other advanced math classes, I do not know. Will middle school students gifted in math also be accelerated throughout the grades so that they will be ready for math classes beyond algebra? Or, will there be different levels of algebra? I don’t know what is being considered or viable.

For bright and high bright students (high achievers?), their classroom teacher should be trained to differentiate lessons for three levels - lower, middle, high in other subject areas. The gifted specialist should provide assistance to the classroom teacher in differentiation for gifted students. Again, school board members, administrators, and parents cannot expect classroom teachers to differentiate for “nine” [my exaggeration] different levels.

Teacher can and do group their students according to ability and interest and switch classes or students in a particular subject area with another teacher. This switching can be for just a particular unit or it can be for the entire year.

Profoundly Gifted Students K-5 and 6-8

Providing suitable academic experiences for students in this category is another story. Clustering profoundly gifted elementary students at one elementary school or middle school would most likely be necessary; a critical mass of students is needed to make scheduling work or to create a reasonably sized class of profoundly gifted students. Also, such a class would need a reasonable number of students (22-28?) to approach cost neutrality or cost efficiency. Students could have one or two

classes with their highly gifted peers, along with advanced math placement. Then, the profoundly gifted students would have the opportunity to have classes with other students in subjects such as art, music, physical education, social studies, etc.

Currently, Friedell Middle School staff is preparing/training to have a gifted program for highly (profoundly) gifted middle school students. This follows the SWS Task Force Recommendation in winter 2006. Friedell’s program for profoundly gifted students is supposed to start in Fall 2007 with the 6th grade and will subsequently add a grade each year for three years until each grade level has a profoundly gifted section. How this will be ultimately configured and designed, I do not know at this point.

Profoundly gifted middle school students may have to take high school math courses at the nearest high school. Or, they can start the University of Minnesota Math program (UMTIUMP).

Also to be kept in mind is that some highly gifted students and/or their parents are not interested in attending a school other than their attendance area school. They may choose to take the existing program offerings at the school instead of attending a special school.

The middle schools in Rochester are working to provide more opportunities and higher level classes for qualified students; this effort was started after the Task Force meetings in the winter/spring of 2006.

The desire/concern to keep gifted students at their attendance area middle school is not an AYP (adequate yearly progress) issue; the State and Federal agencies don’t take into account the percentage of students who are scoring at the 98-99th percentiles. Right now, they are concerned about those students who are achieving below grade level. The attendance area schools “just” want to serve their kids.

High school

From what I have been told by parents and school staff, at the high school level, there are sufficient opportunities ranging from Advanced Placement, Honors, PSEO (post secondary options), higher levels of foreign language classes, and mentor assignments, etc. So, gifted high school students have a wider range of opportunities than at lower grade levels. However, the State has (had?) budgeted \$250,000 (not much for the entire state) to be available to districts that wanted to explore the possibility of starting International Baccalaureate Programs.

I guess I would focus more energy at the elementary and middle levels at this point.

Sandra Soltis – Seat 6 (continued)

2. I am not sure of percentages. The District allocates about \$500,000 for gifted education and is spent on 6 FTEs for gifted specialists and training, supplies, etc.

The State allocated \$4.00 per PPU for gifted programming last year, and this year the amount went to \$9.00 per PPU (total student population) which would be about \$144,000. Since our District already expended approximately \$500,000 for gifted education, I believe the amount the State allocated was incorporated into this \$500,000.

The District's allocation does not take into account the cost of accelerated math classes, advanced placement classes, PSEO, honors classes, or other classes, especially at the high school that gifted students would take. Those classes are paid out of money used in staffing.

3. That is a good and very tough question! One has to be realistic and acknowledge that Federal and State money is being directed to programs for low SES (socioeconomic status) and for students who are performing below State and Federal standards. Low SES students bring in compensatory funds to a school. Grants for programs like Reading First are targeted for low performing students.

Grants are tough to find and hard to qualify for. You might have heard about the Jacob Javits grants for gifted programs; I am not sure they are still in existence. When

I looked into these grants a couple of years ago, they were mainly going to colleges and universities for research and training and to state departments of education. Unless a school district was "invited" to partner with a state department of education for some project for gifted education, they were out of luck!

Gifted education is very important, and that is an understatement. As a country, we need to support students whose talents might discover the cure for cancer, Alzheimer's, eliminate our need for fossil fuel, or who might become the next Alfred Lloyd Weber! Our country has a lot more competition in science and math than ever before with China, India, and other countries that are emerging as technology leaders. This has to be a national priority! I think the overall support for high levels of science and math training after Sputnik (years ago) or the Space efforts in the 60s has been dismal.

How can we start here? I think we need to look at how we organize "school" and the school day; not just for the gifted but for all students. There needs to be more creativity and flexibility AND length built into the school day. Those conversations should start among parents (and, I know you have) and educators (and, I know they have) and then the larger community – the scientific community here in Rochester.

This may (probably is) a "copout," but I can add my thoughts to such a conversation; I cannot begin to say that I have the answers to this dilemma.

Annual GATEway Science Fair Save the Date! Friday, February 16, 2007

The annual Science Fair for grades 2 – 6 will be held on Friday, February 16, 2007. Look for registration information in Community Education's winter brochure and on the GATEway website at: www.geocities.com/gateroch.

Volunteers are urgently needed! If you are available to help with planning or with staffing or reviewing on the evening of the Science Fair, or if you are able to offer a corporate donation, please contact Melissa Amundsen at 289-3899 or gateroch@yahoo.com.

We Need You!

The GATEway Board of Directors currently has openings for the following positions:

Programs Chair or Co-Chair
Newsletter Chair or Co-Chair
Committee Members
School Representatives

Please consider becoming involved by joining us on the Board. If you would be willing to help in any of these areas or would like more information, please contact GATEway President, Melissa Amundsen at 289-3899 or gateroch@yahoo.com.

GATEway Board Meeting Dates: November 10 from 12:00 – 2:00 PM; December 8 and January 12 from 9:30 – 11:30 AM; February 9, March 9, and April 13 from 12:00 – 2:00 PM; and May 11 from 9:30 – 11:30 AM. Meetings held in the Edison building. Anyone interested is welcome and encouraged to attend! Contact any board member for more info.

Midwest Academic Talent Search

Has your child in third through eighth grade scored in the 95th percentile on any subject on a standardized test? If so, your child is likely academically gifted, and the standardized, grade-level tests probably do not adequately represent their true potential. Students who score at this level are capable of doing academic work above their grade level, and thus need to be tested above their grade level to reflect their ability. The Midwest Academic Talent Search (MATS), from Northwestern University in Chicago, allows students to take tests designed for higher grades. The results are given in two formats. The student will be ranked with other gifted students in his/her grade, and will also be ranked with the students in the grade level the test was originally designed for.

Students in grades 3-6 can take the eighth grade level Explore test to show how they can do above grade level academics. For the second year, the Explore test will be given in Rochester. Students in grades 6-8 can take the college preparatory ACT or SAT test which is given in most high schools. These tests are directly useful because Jill Grunewald, District Gifted and Talented Coordinator, has used them to qualify students for Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). These test results may potentially be used to qualify students for the Highly Gifted Program. (See article on page 2.)

Registration for the Midwest Academic Talent Search (MATS) is currently open. Online registration continues into January. For more information, visit the MATS website at: www.ctd.northwestern.edu/mats.

What Kids REALLY Need To Succeed: Creating a Safety Net and Launching Pad for Your Teen

Thursday, November 9, 2006 • 6:30 to 8:30 PM
RCTC Heintz Center Commons

Free presentation by Derek Peterson, Institute for
Community & Adolescent Resilience (www.icar-us.com)

Join Derek to explore how individuals, families, schools, faith organizations, and communities can help our youth develop the assets they need to make positive choices and be launched for success. You will be inspired!

Davidson Institute Seeks Extraordinary Achievers to Receive Scholarships

The Davidson Institute for Talent Development is offering high achieving young people across the country the opportunity to be named as 2007 Davidson Fellows, an honor accompanied by a \$50,000, \$25,000 or \$10,000 scholarship in recognition of a significant piece of work in Science, Technology, Mathematics, Music, Literature, Philosophy or Outside the Box.

To be eligible, applicants must be under the age of 18 as of Oct. 1, 2007, and a U.S. citizen or permanent U.S. resident residing in the United States. There is no minimum age for eligibility. The deadline to apply is March 30, 2007. Applicants must submit an original piece of work recognized by experts in the field as significant and it must have the potential to make a positive contribution to society.

The scholarship must be used at an accredited institute of learning. For more information on the Davidson Fellows, or to download an application, please visit: www.DavidsonFellows.org.

GATEway Board Members

Melissa Amundsen, President
289-3899 mjha225@yahoo.com

Margaret Pellegrini, Past President,
Advocacy and Legislative Chair
288-3201 pelsteen@magnaspeed.net

Ginny Amundson, Treasurer
289-2357 ginny_amundson@charter.net

Carol Hartley, Secretary
281-5271 hartmait@aol.com

Desiree Strom, Membership Chair
281-0497 dsstrom@charter.net

Diane Hanson, Science Fair Consultant
281-1498 dianembh@yahoo.com

Kaki Kolasa, Publicity and Communications
288-5031 kakimark@charter.net

Jill Grunewald, District G/T Representative
328-4275 jigrunewald@rochester.k12.mn.us

Colleen Landherr Maddox, RCTC Liaison
280-3113 colleen.landherr@roch.edu

**Do Gifted and Talented Students Have Special Needs?
Highlights of the MCGT Conference
Monday, November 13, 2006, 6:45 – 8:00 PM
RCTC Heintz Center Rooms HA102 and HA104**

Do gifted and talented students have special needs? At the MCGT conference in October, Dr. James Webb gave the keynote speech on this subject. In fact, gifted kids DO have special needs. Common issues facing gifted and talented individuals include: underachievement, boredom, perfectionism, power struggles, depression, and health and behavioral issues. Join us to learn more. While the adults meet, students will gather for social time and “Left Brain and Right Brain Challenges”! **See page 1 inside for more details!**

Upcoming Dates – More Information Inside

Nov. 7 – Election Day Nov. 9 – Parent Discussion Night Nov. 10 – GATEway board meeting
Nov. 13 – Program: Special Needs of Gifted and Talented Students