



[www.mcgt.net](http://www.mcgt.net)

[www.geocities.com/gateroch/](http://www.geocities.com/gateroch/)

# Newsletter

## Summer 2006

### September Social

Thursday, September 21, 2006

6:30–8:00 p.m.

Dessert potluck &

Informational Presentation

RCTC Heintz Center – Commons

Join us to kick off the school year with a fun and informative program for the whole family! From 6:30–7:00 p.m. we will enjoy a dessert potluck where families will have the opportunity to meet each other and get acquainted. From 7:00–8:00 p.m. the parents will meet to learn more about giftedness, GATEway, and our plans for the year. Meanwhile, the children will be supervised in a room with games and activities. **Please join us!**

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### HELP NEEDED:

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

**Programs Chair**

**Newsletter Co-Chair**

**Science Fair Co-Chair** – due to

ongoing family issues, we will need a new Chair/Co-Chair – without one, the Science Fair may not be held

Please consider becoming involved in advocating for your gifted child by joining us on the Board.

If you would be willing to help in any of these areas, please contact GATEway President, Melissa Amundsen at 289-3899 or [mjha225@yahoo.com](mailto:mjha225@yahoo.com).

### GATE Dept. Presentations

7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 28 – Jefferson Elem.

Room to be determined

Thursday, October 12 – Sunset Terrace Elem.

Music Room

Monday, October 16 – Folwell Elementary

Media Center

The GATE department of the Rochester Public School District will be mailing information about these presentations to those families who have been qualified as having a gifted child. Information on these will be in that letter. GATEway has been asked to give a brief presentation on what our organization is, and what we have been doing on behalf of the gifted students in Rochester.

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### School Board Primary

September 12

**School Board Candidates – What is their position on Gifted Education?**

GATEway will be asking that and more of the candidates before the primary. We will be sending a Question and Answer letter to all the candidates asking what their positions are on issues facing our children in school, most specifically on Gifted Education.

Look for those Q&A on our website *after* September 2.

[www.geocities.com/gateroch/](http://www.geocities.com/gateroch/)

# Looking Back, Looking Ahead

By Melissa Amundsen, GATEway President

## In the past year, GATEway has:

- Formed a task force to develop a proposal for comprehensive changes to the Rochester public schools G/T department based on best practices
- Presented the task force proposal to the school board and administration
- Monitored educational funding to ensure it has been used appropriately
- Enhanced communication and collaboration with the Rochester Public School District School Board and administration
- Facilitated opportunities for networking between parents and social contact between students
- Offered educational programs and opportunities for families of gifted students.
- Grown in membership size

## In the next year, GATEway plans to:

- Expand our advocacy with the School Board, Superintendent, and Legislators
- Continue our successful collaboration with the district Gifted Services department
- Assist the district in implementing the highly gifted program and cluster grouping with differentiation
- Educate the public on the needs and characteristics of gifted students and related issues
- Interact with political candidates to ascertain their viewpoints on gifted education and pass on that information to our members
- Enhance educational programs and opportunities for families of gifted students
- Continue to build membership numbers
- Recruit additional board members

# MCGT Invites GATEway Board members to Speak at Annual Conference

Saturday, October 21, 2006

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

O'Shaughnessy Education Center,  
University of St. Thomas, St. Paul  
**Keynote Speaker: Rick Olenchak**

GATEway Board members will present 'How GATEway has worked with the Rochester School District to achieve progress for the G/T Dept.' during a break-out session at the conference. The annual conference of the Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented (MCGT) is an event for parents and gifted kids to attend together. Children in grades K-7 attend classes while their parents attend workshops and view vendor displays. There is also a brief business meeting of the MCGT, which all members can attend. Several families from Rochester have traditionally attended. This is a great opportunity to meet other families with gifted children who are facing many of the same challenges you may have. During the informal lunch, families are able to interact with each other, creating great networking possibilities.

If you have any questions about the conference, please feel free to call GATEway board members – Carol Hartley, 281-5271 or Margaret Pellegrini, 288-3201. They have both attended the conference in the past and can offer more information.

If you are a GATEway member, you are automatically a member of MCGT. Registration forms and more info will be in the MCGT newsletter 'Outlook'. If you don't have a copy of Outlook, information and registration form can be found on the MCGT website: [www.mcgt.net](http://www.mcgt.net).

# School Board Retreat 6/29/06

## Progress made for G/T Education in Rochester!

Throughout the 2005-2006 school year, GATEway board members were hard at work advocating for improvements to the Gifted Services department of Rochester Public Schools. A GATEway task force developed a proposal and presented it to the district administration in January. The costs of the first year of the proposal were then calculated by the school district and the School Board began considering the individual components of the proposal. On June 29, the School Board met at a retreat to discuss these proposed changes.

Randy Nelson, Director of Instructional Services, made a presentation on behalf of the Gifted Services department. The main points considered for implementation were:

- A Highly Gifted School-Within-A-School (HGSWS) for middle school students
- Cluster grouping with differentiation in the elementary schools
- Introducing the William and Mary curriculum for Language Arts at Kellogg and expanding the offering to all middle schools
- Increasing the rigor in high school AP and Honors courses
- Expanding the high school mentorship program
- Maintaining and expanding the Honors Seminar in the high schools

The School Board gave the green light to create the HGSWS for the school year 2007-2008. The HGSWS will be a program for highly gifted students in the district and will be centralized at one location, most likely Friedell middle school. It is uncertain how many grades will be implemented initially, but at minimum, one section of grade 6 is planned for the first year. GATEway will continue to advocate for grades 6-8 beginning fall 2007, and for the expansion of the program to the elementary grades.

Cluster grouping with differentiation will become the standard at all elementary schools. The School Board was aware of the need for staff development in this area, as clustering will be new to many teachers. GATEway will continue to support the implementation of clustering with differentiation, which is beneficial to students of all ability levels.

The School Board approved the use of the William and Mary language arts curriculum at all middle schools – expanding on what Kellogg is beginning to use this fall. A process will be put in place to continually examine and monitor the level of academic rigor of the Honors and AP classes between and within the high schools. The possibility of expanding the high school mentorship program without increasing costs will be examined and decided at a later date. The School Board decided against allocating additional dollars to expand the Honors Seminar, but it will continue to be offered in high schools with adequate enrollment in the course.

This positive improvement has been the most progress the GATE department has seen in several years, and is a step in the right direction to effectively serve our many gifted students. GATEway board members will continue to advocate for the implementation of the remaining components of the proposal.

GATEway wishes to thank the members of the School Board, Jerry Williams, Randy Nelson, Sandra Soltis, Jill Grunewald and her staff, the members of the GATEway task force, the members of the Gifted Advisory Committee, and the members of the HGSWS task force for all of their hard work and dedication in improving gifted education in the Rochester Public Schools!

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## Informational Sources

These are specifically about differentiation in the classroom, which the GATE Department and GATEway have been advocating for in our schools.

<http://www.educationatlas.com/gifted-education-curriculum-differentiation.html> is a source of many websites that have information on differentiation.

*A Mind at a Time*, Mel Levine. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002 describes and supports the concept of differential learning abilities in students.

## Friendly Chemistry, Community Ed. Classes

Middle school students will be offered an exciting class during this school year, called 'Friendly Chemistry', through Community Education. This engaging version of chemistry teaches high school level chemistry using physically active games and manipulatives. Students need to be able to calculate percentages and ratios from percentages. For example: There is a mixture of red balls, which weigh 12 grams, and blue balls, which weigh 16 grams, that is 27.3% red balls and 72.7% blue balls. What is the ratio of red balls to blue balls?

The class will be taught at Friedell Middle School on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:40 – 4:25. The curriculum has three segments, and the first is "Amazing Atoms" which will be October 2 through December 13. Students who complete all three segments of the course *may* be eligible for High School credit if they pass an appropriate exam that the school district approves. Further details of that exam are being discussed with the school district.

If you would like more information on the curriculum of Friendly Chemistry, visit their website at [www.friendlychemistry.com](http://www.friendlychemistry.com). More information about the class, and registration will be available from Community Education in their fall schedule. If you are interested in teaching some of the classes, or being a substitute, or for other information, contact Margaret Pellegrini at 288-3201 or [pelsteen@magnaspeed.net](mailto:pelsteen@magnaspeed.net).

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## GATEway Board Members

Melissa Amundsen, President  
289-3899 [mjha225@yahoo.com](mailto:mjha225@yahoo.com)

Margaret Pellegrini, Past President,  
Legislative Chair  
288-3201 [pelsteen@magnaspeed.net](mailto:pelsteen@magnaspeed.net)

Ginny Amundson, Treasurer  
289-2357 [ginny\\_amundson@charter.net](mailto:ginny_amundson@charter.net)

Carol Hartley, Secretary  
281-5271 [hartmait@aol.com](mailto:hartmait@aol.com)

Desiree Strom, Membership Chair,  
Chapter Representative  
281-0497 [dsstrom@charter.net](mailto:dsstrom@charter.net)

## Alternative Instruction

Alternative Instruction, previously erroneously referred to as partial home-schooling, is an option for parents to provide academics appropriate for their child in a setting outside of school. This applies to the child whose needs aren't being met by curriculum set too low for their ability, as well as for religious or social conflicts and so on.

For example, a student who is gifted in math and reading, and needs more advanced work in those subjects, can have Alternative Instruction. The parent could take the child out of school during those times and provide the instruction for those subjects at those times. This would not work if the parent took the child out of school during Social Studies, or Music, or PE, etc. The Alternative Instruction is only intended to remove the student from the school during the classroom instruction of the same subject that will be alternatively taught.

There are multiple ways that Alternative Instruction can be provided. The parent can provide the academic instruction themselves, they could hire a private tutor, have a group of students and parents who can set up rotations of some sort for instruction.

Alternative Instruction can be a way of providing meaningful instruction to a student who is not progressing academically in school due to curriculum that is too easy. To begin the process of providing this type of instruction for your child, contact the Curriculum and Instruction Office at 285-8957. They will have a form to be filled out, and it can then be filed in the student's school office. The principal and teacher should be part of the process as well.

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Jill Grunewald, District G/T Representative  
281-7334 [jigrunewald@rochester.k12.mn.us](mailto:jigrunewald@rochester.k12.mn.us)

Diane Hanson, Science Fair Consultant  
281-1498 [dianembh@yahoo.com](mailto:dianembh@yahoo.com)

Ann Monk, Newsletter  
282-3626 [the.monks@charter.net](mailto:the.monks@charter.net)

Kaki Kolasa, Publicity  
288-5031 [kakimark@charter.net](mailto:kakimark@charter.net)

## Programs for 2006 – 2007

September 21, 2006, 6:30 – 8:00 PM, RCTC Heintz Center Commons

September Social – *Join us to kick off the school year with a fun and informative program for the whole family! From 6:30 to 7:00 PM we will have a dessert potluck where families have the opportunity to meet each other and get acquainted. From 7:00 to 8:00 PM the parents will have a meeting to learn more about giftedness, GATEway, and our plans for the year. Meanwhile, the children will be supervised in a room with games and activities.*

September 28 at Jefferson Elementary School, October 12 at Sunset Terrace Elementary School, and October 16 at Folwell Elementary School; 7:00 – 8:00 PM

Gifted and Talented Program Information – *Attend one of these sessions to learn more about Rochester Public School's gifted program from the G/Talented staff (identification criteria, gifted curriculum expectations, and other opportunities) and GATEway.*

November 2006, Date and Place to be Announced  
MCGT Conference Highlights and Updates

January 2007, Date and Place to be Announced  
Highly Gifted School Within a School Informational Presentation  
Learn about the new offering for highly gifted students, and how to register

February 16, 2007, RCTC Heintz Center  
GATEway Science Fair for grades 2-6 – *Look for more details in a future GATEway newsletter and in the Community Education brochure!*

March 2007, Date and Place to be Announced  
Summer Opportunities for Gifted Students Informational Presentation  
Learn about some activities, camps etc. that are specifically for gifted children

April 2007, Date and Place to be Announced  
Gifted and Talented Speaker is planned – *Details will be announced as soon as possible*

May 2007, Date and Place to be Announced  
Family Program and Annual Meeting – *The evening will consist a brief meeting with a vote for the next year's officers and a family program.*

Watch for additional information in future GATEway newsletters and on our website. GATEway wishes to thank RCTC for allowing us to present programs using their facilities!

**GATEway Board meetings dates:** September 8, October 13, and 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. See our website for location of the meetings. Anyone interested is welcome and encouraged to attend! [www.geocities.com/gateroch](http://www.geocities.com/gateroch)

*You are cordially invited to GATEway's  
September Social!*

*Who: GATEway families*

*What: A dessert potluck and informational presentation*

*Where: RCTC Heintz Center - Commons Area*

*1926 Collegeview Dr SE (across from Olmsted Hospital)*

*When: Thursday, September 21, 2006, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.*

*See page 1 inside for more details!*

**Important Dates – More Information Inside**

Sept. 8 – Board Meeting

Sept. 21 – Sept. Social

Oct. 13 – Board Meeting

Sept. 28, Oct. 12 & 16 – GATE presentations at schools