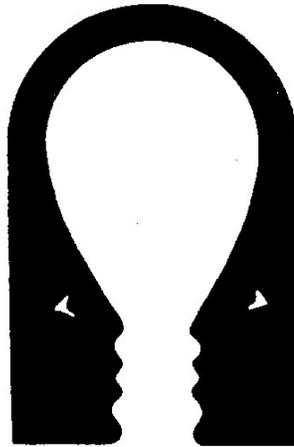


LOCAL CHAPTER



RESOURCE GUIDE

**GEORGIA ASSOCIATION
FOR
GIFTED CHILDREN**

Revised July 2012

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in gifted education and the Georgia Association for Gifted Children (GAGC), the state organization for the advocacy of gifted children.

This *Local Chapter Resource Guide* has been developed to:

- give guidance to parents and educators who want to organize a local chapter in support of gifted education;
- provide suggestions and sample materials that may be helpful at the various stages of a local chapter's development;
- provide an index of resources that may be helpful to local chapters and their members.

ABOUT GAGC

WHAT IS THE GEORGIA ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN?

The *Georgia Association for Gifted Children* (GAGC) is a non-profit organization composed of people like you (educators, parents, business people, and others) who seek to advance all facets of the education and welfare of the gifted — a priceless national resource.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Georgia Association for Gifted Children is to advocate for gifted children and youth by working with educators, parents, policy-makers, and the community to meet the needs of the gifted.

Purpose

1. To promote an awareness of the needs of Georgia's gifted students.
2. To stimulate among educational administrators, teachers, parents, legislators, the business community, and others of the general public a deeper understanding of and interest in the needs of the gifted.
3. To provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas among the members of the organization.
4. To encourage and stimulate the best possible training for gifted educators.
5. To encourage and stimulate research in the area of gifted education, particularly in the State of Georgia.

By-Laws

See web site for most current By-Laws (<http://www.gagc.org/by-laws.asp>)

WHAT DOES GAGC DO?

The *Georgia Association for Gifted Children*

- **provides assistance** to people throughout Georgia who seek to establish a support group for the gifted in their community, as well as, assistance for existing chapters.
- **keeps abreast of proposed legislation** affecting gifted students and shares this information with the membership. GAGC provides opportunities for you to learn the position taken by candidates for state-wide political office on gifted education.
- **maintains communication** with regional and national gifted support organizations.
- **maintains a web site**, www.gagc.org, that contains news about GAGC and local chapter activities, as well as, information affecting gifted education at the local, state, and national levels.
- **sponsors an annual conference** which offers a variety of informative and stimulating program sessions and an opportunity to meet other people who share like interests in gifted children.
- **encourages support for the gifted youth in Georgia**. GAGC recognizes outstanding service by individuals who have contributed to the goal of meeting the needs of our gifted children on a statewide basis. Distinguished service awards are presented at the annual conference. A list of awards and specific criteria may be accessed on the GAGC web site.
- **supports adequate training for gifted program teachers** through contribution to the **Margaret O. Bynum Scholarship Fund**.
- **encourages special recognition of Georgia's gifted youth, their parents and educators** through statewide observance. Each year, GAGC requests that the governor proclaim the last Friday in April as **Gifted Education Day in Georgia**.
- **supports the continuous efforts to have gifted education established as a certified teaching field** in the State of Georgia.
- **offers fund-raising ideas and suggestions** which can be implemented at the local level. GAGC constantly seeks statewide financial support for our gifted youth.

LOCAL CHAPTER AFFILIATION INFORMATION

Definition of “Affiliate Organization/Local Chapter” –

An **Affiliate Organization/Local Chapter** is a nonprofit organization that has paid memberships and elected officers and is governed by a set of by-laws that share the mission of GAGC. Local chapters operate on a voluntary system and work closely with school districts; they may work specifically for one school district or they can be regional organized and serve multiple school districts.

Benefits of Local Chapter Affiliation

- a voice in GAGC
- advocacy for gifted students at the local and state levels
- reduced membership dues for the state association
- reduced registration at the annual conference
- copies of the GAGC brochures upon request
- opportunity to network with other local chapters
- access to resources via GAGC web site/Member Log-in

SOME CONSIDERATIONS WHEN STARTING A LOCAL CHAPTER

Should you join a parent and educators support group? What goes on in such a group?

Members may

- Help educate each other on effective strategies for working with gifted children.
- Share ideas for enjoyable games and activities that stimulate creativity.
- Establish volunteer programs for organizing field trips, after school and weekend classes and other opportunities for gifted children to get together.
- Purchase informational and instructional materials for professionals and parents that can be donated to community and school libraries.
- Coordinate services of community resources (e.g. museums, businesses, mentorship programs, etc.) and those of local colleges and universities.
- Voice support to a school district's administration for the need for an organized program by accelerating and enriching the curriculum.

If there isn't a support organization to join, should you start one? Pat Davies of New York offers the following considerations for starting a group:

1. A core of advocates (two or three) need to plan and conduct a public meeting to establish contact with other people sharing your concerns. (Remember to have a sign-in arrangement requesting: name, address, phone number, specific questions and areas for volunteered help).
2. Invite a speaker – a local administrator who is “pro” gifted education, a professional in the field, the local district gifted education coordinator, or a representative from another group.
3. Select a steering committee with geographic representation to plan and work together in establishing and running the chapter for one year.. This committee will be responsible for:
 - a. drafting goals and objectives,
 - b. drafting local chapter by-laws,
 - c. drafting a list of potential officers,
 - d. projecting a budget,
 - e. establishing dues, and
 - f. planning programs based on expressed interests

4. The agenda for the second meeting should include all steering committee activity. By-laws should be reviewed, revised, and adopted; officers elected (if steering committee will not function for the first year), committee responsibilities described, and volunteers enlisted to serve on them. In addition, dates and programs for future meetings should be established.

STARTING YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER: STEP BY STEP

Phase I — BRAINSTORM

- I. Find a nucleus of parents who share your concern for the needs of gifted children. Meet and share!
- II. Evaluate the needs of your particular community; what is and is not happening for gifted children; set goals and objectives for the chapter.

Phase II — ORGANIZE

- I. Carefully choose a name for your chapter. Make it say exactly what the organization IS.
- II. Write by-laws, set association dues, open bank account, incorporate your local chapter, apply for non-profit/tax exempt status, establish a post office/mail box address, and apply for affiliation with GAGC.
- III. Select an executive board (minimum of three people)
- IV. Set regular association meeting time.
- V. Involve your schools. Present needs to school officials in an organized and professional manner. Talk about needs of gifted children, not your own child... you will meet with more success with this approach! Include school personnel (administration and teachers) in your meetings.
- VI. Plan publicity. Contact radio, TV, newspapers, school information sheets and school building newsletters, PTA, community service organizations.
- VII. Maintain contact with state and area chapter organizations. Affiliate in order to be put on their mailing lists. Encourage members to attend the annual state conference. LOTS of information is available here each year.

Phase III — ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN

- I. Publish a newsletter or create web site to keep members informed about local and state matters; review articles and periodicals; review and preview association meetings.
- II. Get some committees functioning. It is vital to get as many individuals actively involved as possible. Some possibilities might be: Program, Legislation, Membership, Library, Community Resources, School Liaison, Newsletter, Speaker's Bureau. Establish only those committees that will really function and aid the group.
- III. As your organization grows, investigate obtaining a postal permit and bulk mailing rates or create a group List Serve (email list, or social media page.)

SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION INCORPORATE/FORM A NONPROFIT CORPORATION?

Many GAGC affiliate organizations have chosen not to incorporate. GAGC recommends the advice of an attorney and/or accountant be obtained by an organization wishing to incorporate. Such advice will help assure that the affiliate is in compliance with Georgia law and that your organization's goals and intentions are met. The following information regarding nonprofit corporations is provided by the Secretary of the State of Georgia, West Tower, 2 MLK, Jr. Dr., Atlanta, GA 30334-1530, 404.656.2817 at <http://www.sos.state.ga.us/corporations/>.

A nonprofit corporation is a corporation that is formed that does not have a profit motive. In general the nonprofit corporation is formed pursuant to a different state law than a standard for-profit corporation. The corporation is formed for a religious, charitable, educational, literary or scientific purpose. Nonprofit corporations can apply for tax-exempt status at both the federal and state level.

What are the advantages of filing a nonprofit corporation?

Under 501(c)(3) of the Tax Code, if your nonprofit is granted tax-exempt status your corporation will be exempt from payment of federal corporate income taxes. Individual donors can claim a federal income tax deduction of up to 50% of income for donations made to 501(c)(3) groups. In addition, a nonprofit is eligible to receive both public and private grants. Nonprofits also receive the same liability protection as for profit companies, i.e., directors or trustees, officers and members are typically not personally responsible for the debts and liabilities of the corporation.

What steps are necessary in order to form a nonprofit corporation?

The first step in the process is to prepare and file the nonprofit articles of incorporation with the Secretary of State's office. The articles must contain the required language in order to qualify for tax-exempt status. Tax-exempt status must be applied for at both the federal and state levels after the nonprofit articles are filed. To apply at the federal level, a timely filing of form 1023 must be made. The 1023 application must be postmarked within 15 months after the end of the month when your articles were filed. Furthermore, as long as you file on time, the tax-exemption is effective retroactively to the date on which your articles of incorporation were filed. This step must be complied with by one of the principals of the nonprofit corporation.

Does your organization need a federal tax id number?

According to the Internal Revenue Service, an organization will need a Federal Tax Id Number (EIN) only if there are employees and/or others who need to separate themselves from the organization for tax purposes. However, your organization can open a bank account and file taxes using an individual's social security number, if there are no employees. Contact the Internal Revenue Service at <http://www.irs.gov/index.html> for additional information.

Keep in mind that incorporating the organization shields your member's assets and protects from civil liability, as long as you follow the corporate formalities.

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR A CHAPTER ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

- A. Welcome and introduction of leaders (steering committee).
- B. Find out what schools are represented. If possible, plan an "ice breaker," such as go around the table introducing yourselves and telling one concern about gifted/talented education in your local school community and one positive aspect of gifted/talented education in your local school community.
- C. Discuss possible **goals** of a local chapter:
 - 1. Divide into small groups.
 - 2. Provide each group with a large sheet of paper and a marker.
 - 3. Each group should select a recorder.
 - 4. Ask each group to suggest goals for the local chapter. Remind the group that every idea suggested goes down on paper, even if only one person wants it. Encourage the group members to keep their ideas brief so many can be recorded. (You can always get an explanation later if it is needed.)
 - 5. Ask each group to select three of their ideas to share with the large group.
- D. Discuss possible chapter **activities**:
 - 1. Use the same groups or form new groups.
 - 2. Remind the groups of the ground rules from above.
 - 3. Ask each group to list many things a local chapter can do to accomplish goals listed previously.
 - 4. Ask each group to select three ideas to share with the large group.
- E. Discuss possible chapter **programs**:
 - 1. Use the same groups or form new groups.
 - 2. Remind the groups of the ground rules from above.
 - 3. Ask each group to list topics they would like covered at future meetings.
 - 4. Ask each group to select three ideas to share with the large group
- F. Collect the sheets from both activities and save for future reference.
- G. Select a small steering committee that will plan future meetings, begin work on drafting proposed chapter by-laws. and present a list of potential officers for the chapter.
- H. Adjourn at a reasonable time. REMEMBER, you cannot solve all the problems concerning gifted education in one night. Set a beginning and ending time for each meeting and STICK TO IT! Do not allow disgruntled parents to monopolize the meeting by using the group as a place to vent bad experiences. Keep a positive attitude about gifted education.

SAMPLE CHAPTER BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I - NAME

- 1.1 The name of this organization shall be _____.
- 1.2 It shall be a duly affiliated chapter of GEORGIA ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purposes of this association are to serve as a public advocate for the gifted and to disseminate information to parents and interested persons concerning gifted students.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 Membership shall be open to any individual desiring to foster the purposes of this association.
- 3.2 Each member shall be entitled to one vote.
- 3.3 Membership dues are set annually by the board.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

- 4.1 The elected officers of this association shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.
- 4.2 The officers shall be members in good standing who are elected by the membership at the annual meeting to serve a term of one year.

ARTICLE V - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

- 5.1 President: To preside over all meetings and appoint all committees.
- 5.2 Vice-President: To perform the duties of the president in the absence of the president.
- 5.3 Secretary: To record attendance at all meetings, to take the minutes of all meetings, to keep a list of the membership, to conduct the correspondence of the association.
- 5.4 Treasurer: To keep and maintain the financial records of the association.

ARTICLE VI - EXECUTIVE BOARD

- 6.1 The executive board shall consist of the officers of the association and the chairpersons of all standing committees.
- 6.2 Meetings of the executive board shall be held monthly. Special meetings may be called by the president.

ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

- 7.1 Annual meeting: An annual meeting of the chapter shall be held each year at the call of the president or two members of the executive board.
- 7.2 Regular meeting: Regular meetings shall be held a minimum of four times during the year.

ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES

- 8.1 There shall be standing committees as provided for in this article and any special ad hoc committees as authorized by the board.
 1. Publicity committee — shall notify members of upcoming meetings. Submits articles on regular meetings to the local and/or school newspaper.
 2. Program committees shall have the responsibility of planning programs for regular meetings.
 3. Nominating committee — shall present the nominees for officers.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

- 9.1 Amendments to these by-laws may be made at any meeting of the general membership by a two-thirds vote of those present. Notification in writing shall go to each member at least two weeks before the meeting at which the voting is to take place.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR NEW CHAPTERS

- I. Elect officers in May
 - A. Executive officers prepare for coming school year
 - B. Complete *Local Chapter Annual Report*; send to GAGC (Due July 1)
 - C. Participate in leadership training in September
 - D. Send in final rosters/membership and dues in October (No later than December)

- II. Recruit new members
 - A. Submit a news release to local paper
 - B. Send a flyer home with students
 - C. Contact teachers and administrators for names of potentially interested persons
 - D. Display posters in local shopping centers, stores, libraries and schools
 - E. Print a notice in the school district newsletter and/or community flyer
 - F. Make announcements at school functions (PTA, etc.)
 - G. Air announcements on a local radio station
 - H. Create and maintain a website

- III. Make long-term and short-term goals then pursue them. Don't detour.

- IV. Delegate authority.

- V. Make use of every single member — even those who cannot attend. Give each person more than one reason for attending the meeting.

- VI. Involve school people and other community members from the beginning. Many community groups and local businesses have an interest in gifted education.

- VII. Press releases and informational news stories submitted to your local newspaper increase public awareness. Include pictures. Select one of your members as public relations person.

- VIII. Remember that the school is not the "enemy." It represents your best chance of securing appropriate educational opportunities for gifted children.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SPEAKERS FOR CHAPTER PROGRAMS

GAGC President

GAGC Local Chapter Chair

Georgia Department of Education Gifted Education Specialist

Local Gifted Education Coordinator/Supervisor

Local Gifted Education teacher(s)

Gifted Education Coordinators/Supervisors from neighboring districts

National Association for Gifted Children officers, representative, or board member

College/University gifted education instructors

Local doctors who have information on gifted children

Local psychologists who have expertise on gifted children

School board members

Panel of parents of gifted children

Panel of gifted students or alumni of your local gifted program

Legislators — state and local

Writers

Inventors

Your local district: Director of Curriculum
 Elementary/Secondary Principals
 Media Specialists
 Counselor(s)

Business and community leaders

National experts who may be visiting in your state or area

Curriculum Fair

PROGRAM IDEAS

Everything You Have Wanted to Ask About Your Child — But Have Been Afraid To Ask:

Parent-Teacher Conference Guidance Panel — School psychologist, guidance counselor, and teacher or administrator

Advocacy – Why and How

Expert presents the needs of gifted students and suggestions for advocating for the gifted.

Bits 'n Pieces:

Local gifted students share their talents - Original poetry, artwork, music, etc.

Meet the President of the State Association for Gifted:

Invite the president of GAGC to speak

Educational Reform and the Gifted

Panel discussion by school board members, teachers, administrators, and parent representatives, moderated by Gifted Program Coordinator/Supervisor

Open House at Gifted Center(s):

Visit district resource room(s) for the gifted

Curriculum Showcase:

Display of projects resulting from curriculum for the gifted program

Spotlight on High School

Short presentations by secondary students, teachers, and administrators

A Fireside Chat With _____:

Ex: Superintendent of Schools shares his/her views on _____

Junior Great Books Demonstration:

Participants read and discuss a selection to get a feel of this program

So You Have a Budding Scientist — So What?

"Hands-on" techniques from a science consultant. (This could be a science teacher or a scientist from industry.)

The Spotlight is on You:

Brainstorm the bridging of the classroom and community - discuss opportunities for parents and students to have input and impact on community government

Middle School and the Gifted

Students present an evening of entertainment and information as related to gifted education services and opportunities

Administrators Answer Your Questions:

Twenty-one questions concerning education of gifted children presented to school system personnel such as Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and selected principals.

Laying a Foundation for Development of Talent:

Background information on factors that nurture or hinder mental and creative development — coordinator for gifted programs or college instructor.

A Close Look at MENSA:

Discussion of special interest group for those under 18

Potpourri —What's Your Bag?

Presentation of opportunities available to gifted students

The Future of Gifted Education in Anywhere School District

Panel discussion by local school personnel regarding problem areas and expectations

Open House:

Informal get together at someone's home or a local school

Awards Ceremony:

Recognition of outstanding accomplishments of local gifted students, teachers, or parent volunteers; special entertainment provided by middle or high school students.

Human And Legal Rights Of The Exceptional School Age Child:

Panel discussion of attitudes towards education of the gifted child. Keynote speaker: State Department of Education Specialist; Administrators, teachers, etc.;

75 Ways To Provide Creativity In The Home

Teacher or parent with expertise in field of creativity

You're Making It Happen:

State Legislative Chairperson, Chair of the House (or Senate) Education Committee

Mirror, Mirror:

Local chapter takes a good look at where they have been and where they are going

Social And Emotional Development of the Gifted:

Elementary counselor, social worker and school psychologist train parents in techniques and methods to consider when dealing with the social and emotional development of their gifted child

SUCCESSFULLY MAINTAINING A CHAPTER

- I. Maintain a positive attitude toward the school district.
 - A. Communicate regularly with principals, administrators, counselors, school board members, and gifted program teachers
 - B. Participate in meetings with interested school personnel
 - C. Attend school board meetings and make regular presentations about your activities
 - D. Be supportive to the program coordinator/supervisor, and be helpful in compiling materials
 - E. Volunteer in the gifted program; set up a volunteer pool
 - F. Visit the schools to encourage them to think about program improvements and/or ways to expand the gifted program
 - G. Provide information about the local chapter for parent-teacher conferences
 - H. Feature one, or more, schools at your meetings; invite the principal and contact representative
 - I. Participate in starting a gifted summer program
 - J. Work for legislation for gifted students

- II. Provide services for the members
 - A. Have regular meetings featuring speakers on subjects related to gifted education and of interest to your parents
 - B. Maintain a library of up-to-date materials about the gifted for members to check out
 - C. Provide all members with names, addresses and telephone numbers of key people in the local chapter and local school district program
 - D. Provide a handbook for parents
 - E. Communicate information regarding meetings and local opportunities of interest to gifted children with sample ideas of things parents can do with their children
 - F. Keep members up to date on legislation pertaining to gifted education and education in general
 - G. Support one another
 - H. Participate in volunteer organizations

- III. Provide Activities/Services for gifted children
 - A. Plan special field trips
 - B. Plan ways for those with similar areas of interest to share time together
 - C. Have speakers on topics of interest to gifted children
 - D. Plan parties, picnics, and outings just for fun

- IV. Public Relations
 - A. Submit articles regularly to the local newspaper. Announce every chapter meeting at least one week in advance. Follow up each meeting with an article summarizing what took place at the meeting.
 - B. Encourage local radio and television stations to focus on the issue of gifted education by announcing upcoming events and giving coverage to the local chapter or school district. Air Public Service Announcements for "Gifted Education Day in Georgia."
 - C. Raise money to be used for training volunteer leaders, sending teachers to conferences, and helping the coordinator go to seminars.
 - D. Seek the cooperation of the League of Women Voters, Junior League, etc., in furthering interest in gifted programming.

Instructions for Affiliating with the *Georgia Association for Gifted Children*

GENERAL

A Local Chapter is usually organized around geographic or political boundaries that meet the needs of the local community. The major purpose of the Local Chapter must be to support gifted students and their education. In order for a Local Chapter to affiliate with Georgia Association for Gifted Children, they must:

1. Have elected officers such as President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer OR the chapter may choose to elect a Steering Committee to govern at the onset of the organization.
2. Have an adopted set of By-Laws. These By-Laws must accompany the application for affiliating with Georgia Association for Gifted Children. Any time the By-Laws are amended, an amended copy of the By-Laws must be sent to the GAGC Chair of the Local Chapter Assistance Committee.
3. Complete the Local Chapter Affiliate Application (see Appendix) and forward to:
GAGC, 1579F Monroe Drive, #321, Atlanta, GA 30324.

MEMBERSHIP

Affiliate membership (currently \$10) is less than 50% of the cost of regular membership dues (currently \$25). Local Chapters set their chapter dues to include the GAGC affiliate fee and forward a membership roster and \$10 for each name on the roster to GAGC. Affiliate membership, by way of the Local Chapter, entitles a member to all the benefits of a regular member, as well as, that of the local chapter.

ANNUAL REPORT

A Local Chapter affiliated with GAGC must submit an annual report at the conclusion of each school year. This annual report shall include: a list of newly elected officers for the next school year, a list of committee chairs that may be contact people for GAGC activities, a narrative report of the activities of the Local Chapter for the past school year, and projected goals for the next school year. Information provided in this report related to chapter activities is included in the fall issue of the GAGC newsletter in order to assist other chapters with ideas. The *Local Chapter Annual Report* (see Appendix) is due by July 1st and should be mailed to: ***GAGC, 1579F Monroe Drive, #321, Atlanta, GA 30324.***

If you have other questions about Local Chapter affiliation with GAGC, contact the Local Chapter Chair as listed on the GAGC web site (Local Chapter tab) (S)he will be happy to answer your questions or direct you to the appropriate person.

GAGC LOVES LOCAL CHAPTER AFFILIATES!

ADVOCACY

WHY SHOULD GIFTED EDUCATION BE SUPPORTED?

This question is often asked in a confrontational manner by those who believe that gifted individuals do not need special educational provisions. Some sincerely feel that truly gifted children will remain gifted and fulfill their educational needs on their own. Others feel that if teachers are doing their job, the gifted should be able to get by without the special attention that other atypical learners need. The following are some ideas that those who hold such views must be asked to consider.

1. *Gifted learners must be given stimulating educational experiences appropriate to their level of ability if they are to realize their potential.* Giftedness arises from an interaction between innate capabilities and an environment that challenges and stimulates to bring forth high levels of ability and talent. These challenges must be available throughout the individual's lifetime for high levels of actualization of ability and talent to result. According to research on the nature of intelligence and the brain, we either progress or we regress, depending on our participation in stimulation appropriate to our level of development.
2. *Each person has the right to learn and to be provided challenges for learning at the most appropriate level where growth proceeds most effectively.* Our political and social system is based on democratic principles. The school as an extension of those principles must provide an equal educational opportunity for all children to develop to their fullest potential. This means allowing gifted students the opportunity to learn at their level of development. For truly equal opportunity, a variety of learning experiences must be available at many levels.
3. *At present, only slightly more than one-half of the possible gifted learners in the United States are reported to be receiving education appropriate to their needs.* There is physical and psychological pain in being thwarted, discouraged and diminished as a person. To have ability, to feel power you are never allowed to use, can become traumatic. Many researchers consider the gifted as the largest group of underachievers in education.
4. *Traditional education currently does not sufficiently value bright minds.* Gifted children often enter school having already developed many of their basic skills. Almost from the first day they sense isolation, as others consider them different. Schools are not sufficiently individualized or flexible to allow modification in structure and organization. Most schools seek to develop skills that allow participation in society, not the re-creation of that society.
5. *When given the opportunity, gifted students can use their vast amount of knowledge to serve as a background for unlimited learning.* When the needs of the gifted are considered and the educational program is designed to meet these needs, these students make significant gains in achievement, and their sense of competence and well-being is enhanced.
6. *Providing for our finest minds allows both individual and societal needs to be met.* Contributions to society in all areas of human endeavor come in over weighted proportions from this population of individuals. Society needs the gifted adult to play a far more demanding and innovative role than that required of the more typical learner. We need integrated, highly functioning persons to carry out those tasks that will lead all of us to a satisfying, fulfilling future.

BUILDING ADVOCACY

An individual becomes an advocate when (s)he argues for, supports, or defends a cause (s)he believes to be important. Advocacy, as it relates to the needs of gifted and talented students, is an effort to educate the general public, administrators, teachers, and public officials about appropriate education for these able learners. Through advocacy, parents have the ability to set a climate in which society understands that meeting the educational needs of highly able students is worthwhile and necessary. Effective advocacy requires involvement and a commitment. Advocates must be well informed on the topic of gifted education.

THE PROCESS OF ADVOCACY - COMMUNITY & LEGISLATIVE

DO

- Be well-informed; become familiar with Rule 160-4-2-.38 ([www.gadoe/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Asesment/Curriculum-Instruction/Pages/Gifted Education.aspx](http://www.gadoe/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Asesment/Curriculum-Instruction/Pages/Gifted%20Education.aspx)) including eligibility criteria, class size limits, delivery models, etc.
- Review position papers issued by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), see *Suggested Resource* at bottom of page
- Volunteer to be a room parent.
- Visit the principal and volunteer to help.
- Attend parent meetings and become active in the PTA/PTO.
- Attend school board meetings even when gifted education is not the topic.
- Show interest in the total school program.
- Tell school personnel when they do something well.
- Offer your time, skills and/or resources.
- Build trust and goodwill with your school.
- Access the NAGC website (nagc.org) for position papers and current information on gifted
- Educate decision makers by providing articles with important information highlighted.
- Respect decision makers' time - be brief.
- Clearly outline your child's needs; Provide documentation of facts and results
- Contact business and professional leaders.
- Support all educational programs and agencies.
- Network with an organized group of parents with a well-defined purpose.
- Involve teachers, consultants and school staff in your planning.
- Develop people skills of communication - assertiveness, publication, and presentation.
- Remain polite and available.
- Thank decision makers for funds that have been provided.
- Promote the *educational services*, not the labels for individuals.
- Monitor all legislation and policy development that affects gifted education. For example: class size, education reform programs, general education, funding levels, curriculum and textbook selection, teacher certification, etc..
- Make personal contact with your state congressional representative through person-to-person meetings, telephone calls, letters, etc.

- Make your phone call brief, state clearly what you want your state congressional representative to do and be prepared to answer questions.
- Follow up the phone call with a letter - Address your letter to the congressional representative using The Honorable John Doe. In the greeting of your letter, use "Dear Senator Doe" or "Dear Representative Doe"; make your points in the first paragraph and be brief; close with what you want your congressional representative to do, and include your address and phone number.
- Make an appointment for a person-to-person visit and ask how much time you will have. State clearly what you want your state congressional representative to do. For example: vote for or against legislation, sponsor legislation. Rely on the facts and avoid emotional arguments, threats of political influence or demands. Be political - explain the relevance of this issue. Ask for the legislator's view on the subject and how he or she intends to vote. Leave a written statement with your name, address and telephone number.
- Send your congressional representative a thank you note after the decision has been made.
- Keep the lines of communication open, even if a legislator does not support your cause. (S)he may be able to help in the future.

DON'T

- Constantly talk about your child, and quote test and IQ scores.
- Frequently criticize teachers, the principal, and the school system.
- Make the staff dread to see you coming.
- Appear to know all the answers; instead, ask, "How might we resolve this issue?"
- Use your child as an example at the local level.
- Focus on your child alone.
- Threaten decision makers.
- Remind them that you are a taxpayer and voter.
- Tell them they can be voted out of office.

Suggested Resource – National Association for Gifted Position Papers

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) periodically posts/ issues position papers that address issues, policies, and practices that have an impact on the education of gifted and talented students. To access these papers, go to <http://www.nagc.org/positionpapers.aspx>.

PARENTING

WHO ARE THE GIFTED?

Intelligence and *giftedness*, the labels for high intelligence, have been defined in many ways. Terman (1925) used the term intelligence to mean *that which is measured by intelligence tests* - those who score in the upper 2% on such a test could be spoken of as gifted. Witty (1951) believed that giftedness needed no referent to intelligence but could be described as being possessed by those whose performance was consistently remarkable in any potentially valuable area. According to Renzulli (1986), the purpose of special programs and services for high potential students is to *develop* gifted behaviors in well above average ability students. Renzulli maintains that gifted behaviors result from developing creativity and task commitment in high ability students and bringing these behaviors to bear on specific areas of interest and involvement. The Federal definition as reflected in the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (1981) and reflected in most of the state legislation for service to gifted students refers to gifted and talented children as,

“children who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership capacity, or specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capability.” (Sec. 582)

All of the definitions mentioned have two things in common, (1) the reliance on behavior and the measurement of behavior to identify the gifted individual, and (2) the rejection of a unitary concept of intelligence to serve as a base for defining giftedness.

Those who base their definition on a theory of intelligence consider giftedness to be the highest expression of any of seven separate intelligences (Gardner, 1983), or an advanced and accelerated development of functions – cognitive, affective, physical, and intuitive – within the brain acting in an interdependent and integrative manner (Clark, 1988). Either definition recognizes that because of the biological base, intelligence, and therefore, giftedness, is dynamic and interactive, that is, influenced by both the genetic endowment and the environmental opportunities provided. This view of giftedness takes advantage of the data now available on the implications of brain research to learning and development and of the interactive nature of the brain’s functioning.

Regardless of the definition you choose there is agreement that a gifted individual is someone who demonstrates or has the potential for demonstrating an exceptional level of ability in any one or combination of various forms of expression. For this reason no one sample of behavior, obtained by a test or through an observation, is enough to identify the exceptional ability of an individual. Although a test can certainly give clues that more testing and observation should be sought, a wide range of behaviors must be sampled if proper identification and placement are to be made.

It is also commonly agreed by all those defining giftedness that some type of service beyond that provided in most classrooms must be available if the individual’s exceptional ability is to be developed to its fullest potential and is not to be lost or denied.

Most of the definitions of gifted individuals lead to the observation that they exhibit unique characteristics that can serve as the basis for identification and modifications in curricular planning. When these characteristics are used in educational planning the program is said to be *differentiated*. When a program is planned with a specific gifted student in mind, the program is *individualized*. Differentiation and individualization can include all facets of the curriculum including the content, the process, and the products of instruction. These practices ensure that the needs of the gifted individual will be met.

While there may be many definitions of intelligence and giftedness there are important commonalities that allow appropriate educational experiences to be planned for these unique individuals.

REFERENCES

Clark, B (1988). *Growing Up Gifted*, (3rd Ed.) Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of Mind*. New York: Basic Books.

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Terman, L. (1925). Mental and physical traits of a thousand gifted children. In L. Terman (Ed.), *Genetic studies of genius* (Vol. IV). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Witty, P. (Ed.). (1951). *The Gifted Child*. Boston: Heath.

GENERAL CAUSES OF STRESS AMONG GIFTED CHILDREN

- Parents expecting me to be perfect
- Parents expecting me to have perfect friends
- The pressure to do drugs
- Being made fun of by other kids
- The pressure of grades
- The loss of a friend
- Parents who fight
- Parents who constantly expect me to out do previous achievements
- Having a depressed friend
- Having too much to do
- Teachers expecting too much (because I'm gifted)
- Getting in fights with people
- Feeling like I have to compete or do better than my friends or siblings
- Lack of common interests with others
- People saying dumb or hurtful things
- Not being able to communicate with others effectively
- Kids getting angry at me for knowing the answers
- Brothers and sisters getting on my nerves
- Teachers who embarrass me

APPENDIX



GEORGIA ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

Local Chapter Affiliate Application

Name of Chapter

Date of Application

Elected Officers

President _____
Address _____
Phone(s)/e-mail _____
Day Evening e-mail

Vice-President _____
Address _____
Phone(s)/e-mail _____
Day Evening e-mail

Secretary _____
Address _____
Phone(s)/e-mail _____
Day Evening e-mail

Treasurer _____
Address _____
Phone(s)/e-mail _____
Day Evening e-mail

Attach:

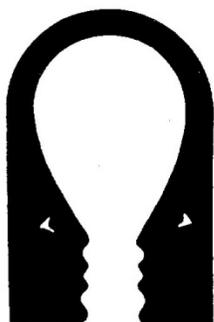
- list any other officers that are a part of your organization
- membership roster (see below)
- copy of your organization's By-Laws

Note: A local chapter can affiliate with the state association at any time during the year. However, if you affiliate mid-year, follow the end of year requirements when that year is over.

Local Chapters that forward their affiliate membership rosters by December 10 will receive one complimentary registration for GAGC's annual conference.

Roster format: If possible, please send the roster as an e-mail attachment to the GAGC Executive Assistant (see GAGC roster) using **Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Access** formatting. To be sure that we have all the necessary information to contact your membership (newsletters, special mailings, etc.), please include the following fields/data:

Last Name, First Name, Street Address, City, State, Zip, Phone; email address (required)



Georgia Association for Gifted Children

Local Chapter Annual Report

Year 20____ - 20____

A) Elected Officers (for next school year)

President _____
Address _____
Phone(s)/e-mail _____
Day Evening e-mail

Vice-President _____
Address _____
Phone(s)/e-mail _____
Day Evening e-mail

Secretary _____
Address _____
Phone(s)/e-mail _____
Day Evening e-mail

Treasurer _____
Address _____
Phone(s)/e-mail _____
Day Evening e-mail

B. Committee Chairs (for next year):

C. Projected Goals (use back of page if necessary):

D. Attach: A narrative report of the activities of your chapter for the past school year