

## **SPAN Meeting Minutes Tuesday October 21, 2014 7pm**

Apryl welcomed everyone to the new school year and introduced the board for SPAN.

Lisa Garborg, Co-president

Apryl Henry, Co-president

Julie Mueller, Vice President

Anne Fry, Treasurer and Webmaster

Rachel Jensen, Secretary

Heather Banas, Elementary Representative

Joan Shopbell, Elementary Representative

Becky Smith, Elementary Representative and also one of the district gifted specialists

Apryl then talked about MCGT, the MN Council for the Gifted and Talented. SPAN is the Prior Lake/Savage Chapter of MCGT. The purpose of MCGT, and therefore SPAN, is to support gifted children, their parents, and the teachers who work with gifted students. They also advocate at the state level for gifted issues in education. Their website is <http://mcgt.net> for more information; but, there was also information on how to join MCGT and MCGT resources, including the yahoo group, which were available at the meeting.

Apryl then talked about the MCGT Annual Conference: Saturday November 8, University of St. Thomas Minneapolis Campus – information on the conference provided. Children are welcome to attend classes as well.

Apryl then talked about the future meetings for SPAN. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 13 at 7 p.m. in the Twin Oaks Middle School Media Center. Please note the change in location. Focus of this meeting will be a roundtable discussion on executive function in gifted kids. See <http://mcgt.net/priorlake/about> for a suggested article to read before the meeting.

Additional meetings will be held in the Westwood Elementary Media Center. They are:

Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at 7 p.m. with Kathy Geary, an MCGT Board member who will speak on advocacy for gifted kids.

Thursday February 12, 2015 at 7 p.m. with former high school math teacher and gifted specialist, Katy Hallberg, who will speak on underachievement.

Tuesday March 24, 2015 at 7 p.m. with focus on a roundtable discussion on intensities in gifted kids.

And the final meeting of the year will be on Thursday April 23, 2015 at 7 p.m. This will be a MCGT sponsored CHAT night on sibling relationships.

Apryl then highlighted the upcoming Fourth Annual Synergy/SAGE Family Night which will take place on Monday, November 17, 2014. All families in the district with high-ability students are welcome to join us at Prior Lake High School in the lower-level commons area from 6:30-8:30pm. High School science teachers and their students will have hands-on activities, including Robotics. Please RSVP at <http://mcgt.net/priorlake/about>.

Apryl then mentioned that all of this is on our website, <http://mcgt.net/priorlake/>

Apryl then introduced Chip Sharratt, VP of Patrons of the Arts and Activities (PAA). Chip discussed the need to support non-athletic activities at the high school and middle schools, like Choir, Band, Theater,

Speech, and Robotics. PAA is the booster club for these activities because often budget cuts by the district result in less funding for non-athletic activities. Because of the direct correlation between Arts and STEM, kids develop the tools to be effective and successful in all areas of schooling and then the work world. PAA partners with the Lakefront Music Fest and gets a portion of the revenue generated from that event. Although that is one of our best sources of funding, we need individual partners. See article from the Prior Lake American and Savage Pacer. The next meeting is this Thursday, at the High School. Please consider supporting this organization.

Apryl then introduced Anne Fry to give a treasurers report. Anne mentioned that in her last treasurers report in April we had a balance of \$1584.58. Over the summer we had income, which only comes from MCGT dues and people who designate Prior Lake/Savage as their chapter, of \$160. Spending included \$9.18 for printing and \$40 to sponsor our current school gifted specialists (Becky Smith). That leaves us with a current balance of \$1695.50.

Apryl then introduced Patty Bradley to speak on Gifted 101. Patty's bio is:

[Patty Carney-Bradley](#) is a well-known speaker on the topic of Gifted. She brings both professional and real-world experience to the area of "Gifted". She has taught over 35 years.....the majority of those years with adolescents and the last 15 years working with Gifted students in the Edina Public School system and with the West Metro Intermediate School District 287, which services Gifted students in 13 South & West metro suburbs. Her most practical & passionate experience came as a parent of two identified gifted students in the Edina Public Schools.

She has also served 4 years on the [MCGT \(MN Council for Gifted & Talented\) Board](#), a State-wide advocacy & support network for gifted parents, teachers & students. After Patty retired in 2006, she and another business partner started a non-profit called [ECAE \(Edina Center for Academic Excellence\)](#) whose mission is to empower and inspire high-potential learners to achieve world-class academic excellence by providing guidance and unique, challenging opportunities in a supportive learning community. Such opportunities include: [NUMATS](#) testing, [Stanford University EPGY](#) online courses, grade acceleration coaching, Mathematical competitions, to name a few. Patty has also been known to give her husband advice on occasion

Patty then began her talk on Gifted 101.

We will look at

What is Giftedness?

Patty asked how many parents in the room were gifted because giftedness runs in families. If you feel uncomfortable with that then how does that make your child feel? Be proud of the label.

How do we recognize it?

What does it mean for us as parents and teachers?

Recognizing giftedness is especially important in middle school, Patty found in her teaching. She saw girls dumb down and boys underachieve to be more attractive to the opposite sex. Therefore she feels that clustering is crucial so they can shine and feel safe sharing their knowledge in class.

Gifted kids are more...

Intense, Persistent, Sensitive, Perceptive, Uncomfortable with Change (because they see the bigger picture)

Let's look at Intensity, when it becomes excessive...

High energy might be labeled hyperactive (ADHD/ADD)

Persistence...nagging

Imagination...not paying attention  
Passion...Oppositional

These labels can effect self esteem, so let's use New Exciting Labels...

Demanding becomes Holds High Standards  
Unpredictable becomes Flexible, Creative  
Loud becomes Enthusiastic  
Argumentative becomes Opinionated, Committed  
Stubborn becomes Assertive  
Impatient becomes Compelling  
Manipulative becomes Charismatic

Gifted Kids are NOT better than...they learn differently, learn faster (4-8 times faster, and on the first time through a new concept), learn at a deeper cognitive level than other students.

Being Born Gifted is a gift and it comes with 2 responsibilities...use it (live up to your potential) and give back (so we can all benefit).

Patty discussed gifted verses high achieving students...which basically boils down to gifted students seek knowledge regardless of grade and high-achieving students are grade oriented.

Patty then discussed myths and truths of gifted students.

Myths include:

- They will succeed no matter what (this is the saddest to Patty because it leads more often than not to underachievement).
- They like school and get good grades (compacting curriculum becomes important to ensure gifted kids do not get bored)
- They are good at everything (only what they love)
- Teachers enjoy having them in class (not always!)
- Gifted students are easy to identify (not when they start underachieving)
- Everything comes easy (they don't know how to not know. What do you do when you don't know? They might think what is wrong with me and feel embarrassed)
- Gifted students have trouble making friends (no more than other kids, but again clustering is important...a group of at least 9 is ideal)

Truths include:

- Giftedness is something you are born with
- Learn 4-8 times faster than the average student
- Generally do not know how to study because they have never had to
- Excel in critical thinking and problem solving
- Gifted student can typically be as well adjusted as other peers (but social skills are taught so as parents we need to instill confidence instead of conceit)

Risk Factors of Gifted Adolescents

- Underachievement
- Perfectionism (Patty referenced *Perfectionism. What's Bad about Being Too Good?* By Miriam Adderholdt, Ph.D. and Jan Goldberg)
- Rejection from Peers (the need to fit in)
- Nonconformity – sometimes in disturbing directions (think Goth phase. But, please seek help if it goes into hurting themselves or others)

- Depression, anxiety, isolation and low self-esteem (Patty recommends the books: *Be the Boss of Your Stress* or *Be the Boss of Your Sleep* by Timothy Culbert. Sleep is important to combat these feelings and limited screen time at night is important to help promote good sleep habits)

### Challenges for Gifted Students

- Parental & societal pressures to achieve (parents can ask did you do your best versus why didn't you do better...focus on personal best versus being the best)
- Increased (and perhaps unrealistic) expectations from parents and teachers that set them up to feel incompetent
- Peer rejection – often due to intellectual difference
- Excessive self-criticism
- Variable frustration & anger
- Social-emotional issues
  - In our society it is not acceptable “to be smart” – especially in adolescence
  - Teenage years are the most difficult socially for gifted students and can have a great impact on self-esteem – positively or negatively. (a good sense of humor is important during these years, for both student and parent)
  - Gifted students are more sensitive – therefore they feel emotional stress of adolescence with greater depth. (don't dismiss their feelings – validate them. Patty recommends the book *How to Talk so Kids Will Listen, How to Listen so Kids Will Talk* by Adele Faber)

Common Characteristic that unites gifted young people...Potential! If appropriately encouraged and guided, students will achieve self-fulfillment and make a major contribution to society and the well-being of the people.

### Recommendations to Maximize Gifted Potential

- The curriculum must be challenging, personally meaningful and rewarding to the students.
- The teacher must understand the fact that the students are intellectually gifted and what that means. (Advocate for your child)
- The instruction must require minimal memorization and drill/practice activity and provide maximal opportunity for inquiry, scientific investigation and creative production.
- When forming class groups, a group with one gifted student must include other gifted students (especially on group projects. Clustering becomes very important here. OR let them do independent work)

### Insights into How Gifted Students Learn Best

- Teachers that understand gifted students
  - Works with affective and cognitive needs of students
- Clustering
  - Benefit from working with “intellectual peers” to challenge them, invigorate them and so they will feel “normal.”
- Differentiated Curriculum
  - Changing the pace, level or kind of instruction in response to the individual learners' needs, styles of learning or interests. (This is extremely complex to do and do well)
- Flexibility (the one thing gifted students wish they had more of from teachers)
  - More options in assignments
  - Compacting material they already know
  - Option to work independently so they can proceed at their own pace
  - Appreciate being involved in the decision-making process

## Suggestions for teaching gifted students

- Cluster gifted students when requesting that the class work in groups
- Let students work independently, if they choose
- Use mastery level pretesting
- Compact curriculum
- Utilize enrichment for students who finish class work early (Do not ask them to “tutor” other students)
- Provide verbal feedback, along with grade, as gifted students feel more confident about the grade when they have the affective affirmation. They need to know they did a good job with something concrete.
- Use independent study contracts with gifted students
  - Set up time to check on student work and understanding.
  - Allow student choice within umbrella topic with what they want to work on independently – student then has ownership.
  - Utilize gifted resource teacher to supervise independent study of student.
  - Parents can also supervise independent study.
  - Student may do a project presentation for the whole class and for grade (display, written or oral report, play, PowerPoint, etc.)

## Parent/Teach with Intention

Be intentional about outcome. Help them through the obstacles.

## Advocate for Gifted Kids

- Have the child’s IQ tested (then you have undisputable proof to start the conversation).
- Educate yourself and others on what giftedness is.
- Provide opportunities for them to explore their passions and interests inside and outside the classroom (especially in the arts! Music and Theater are natural fits for many gifted students)
- Use patience and explanations when dealing with behaviors. (be positive)
- Hold them accountable.
- Role model how you would respond emotionally. (this is very hard for them to do without help)
- Use positive labels when talking about their behaviors.
- Become involved in gifted issues. (see resources)

## MCGT – Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented

- Local affiliates – SPAN
- MCGTdotnet – instant answers to your questions
- [GiftedHomeSchoolEdMaterials@yahoo.com](mailto:GiftedHomeSchoolEdMaterials@yahoo.com) (for buying or selling materials)
- Monthly newsletter
  - Pertinent articles on Gifted Issues
  - Seminars (Fall Conference)
  - Speakers and upcoming events
- The best resource! Affordable and so much information

## All things gifted websites:

- Free Spirit Publishing
- Great Potential Press
- Mindware (brainy toys for kids)
- Hoagies Gifted Education
  - Products

- Materials
- Magazines
- Books
- Mailing Lists
- Message Boards
- Summer Institutes
- Online classes
- Non-profit charities and foundations

#### Additional Opportunities

- Knowledge Masters
- Word Masters
- Quiz Bowl
- Science Fairs
- Academic Triathlon
- Mock Trial
- History Day
- United Nations
- Theater
- Music
- Athletics
- Others???
- MITY
- Robotics
- NUMATS – Northwestern University Midwest Academic Talent Search
  - Summer Courses
- AMC – American Mathematics Competition
- Stanford University EPGY
  - Online classes
  - Onsite classes
- ISD 287
- UMTYMP – University of Minnesota Talented Youth Mathematics Program

Patty then took questions from the audience.

1. Why the term “gifted” and not something else?
  - We all know that everyone has unique gifts and talents, but the gift we are referring to in “gifted” is intellectual gifts. You have no idea how many times this term has been debated! But, it was decided by the MCGT Board that the term gifted is understood by everyone and therefore is easiest to use. Words only have power if you let them and I challenge you to use this word with pride.

Patty then offered to stay and answer other questions if anyone had them since it was getting late.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM