

SPAN Meeting Minutes
 October 6, 2016 – 7 PM
 Westwood Media Center

Apryl Henry introduced SPAN as the Synergy/SAGE Parent Action Network. We are also known as the Prior Lake/Savage chapter of the MN Council for the Gifted and Talented (MCGT).

Our Mission: to support and advocate for the needs of gifted children, their parents, and their educators.

For More Information: See MCGT's website at www.mcgt.net and our chapter's website at www.mcgt.net/priorlake for more information about MCGT and our chapter.

Board members:

- Apryl Henry, President
- Julie Mueller, Vice President
- Anne Fry, Treasurer & Webmaster
- Rachel Jensen, Secretary
- Heather Banas, Elementary Representative
- Linda Becker, Elementary Representative
- Stephanie Benson, Elementary Representative
- Becky Smith, Elementary Representative
- Joan Shopbell, Middle School Representative

Our Schedule for 2016/2017 School Year: :

Date	Time	Location	Event
M. Oct. 10	6:30-8pm	PLHS Commons	6 th Annual Synergy/Sage Family Night. STEM-oriented activities (both hands-on and demonstrations), including those sponsored by the robotics team, will be featured.
M Nov. 14	7pm	WW Media Center	Meeting. Speaker Wendy Behrens, Gifted and Talented Education Specialist at the MN Department of Education, will speak on the development of critical thinking skills in gifted kids.
Tu. Jan. 17	7pm	WW Media Center	Meeting. A panel of high-school and middle-school students taking advanced/AP classes will discuss what they wished they would have known in elementary school. They will take questions as well.
Th. Feb. 9	7pm	WW Media Center	Meeting. Showing of <i>2e Twice Exceptional</i> film (http://2emovie.com/) with discussion to follow. Film is 54 minutes in length.
Th. March 9	7pm	WW Media Center	Meeting. Speakers Sandra Mortensen (Guidance Counselor) and Tim Chivarri (Assistant Principal), both from Bloomington's Oak Grove Middle School, will present on the Science and Engineering of Calm - Providing Tools for Parents to bring Mindfulness into their home .

WW: WestWood Elementary School (5370 WestWood Dr. SE; Prior Lake, MN 55372)
TOMS: Twin Oaks Middle School (15860 Fish Point Road; Prior Lake, MN 55372)
PLHS: Prior Lake High School (7575 150th St. West; Savage, MN 55378)

Apryl then announced the registration is live for the MCGT Annual Conference: Sat. Nov. 12 at Robbinsdale Middle School; see more details at www.mcgt.net .

Introduction of Anne Frye, Treasurer

Treasurer's Report for year End 2015/2016 School Year (as of March 22, 2016)

Starting Balance (as of October 2016)	\$1789.67
Income	
Membership dues from MCGT	80.00
Expenses	
Printing	\$6.89
MEGT Memberships	\$40.00
McGT Memberships	\$135.00
Current Balance	\$1687.89

Apryl then introduced our featured speaker: Anne Tyler, MS, LMFT, who will speak on Executive Function and Gifted Kids

Anne Tyler thanked everyone for coming and introduced her topic: Coaching Children and Teens for Better Executive Functioning Skills

A copy of the presentation and handouts are available

Overview of Executive Function (Anne spoke on this topic previously, notes from that meeting are available in our archives)

- Executive skills enable us to manage our emotions and monitor our thoughts in order to work more efficiently and effectively.
 - There are 11 Executive Function Skills

There are two books recommended:

1. *Executive Skills in Children and Adolescents: A Practical Guide to Assessment and Intervention (Second Edition)* by Peg Dawson and Richard Guare
 2. *Smart but Scattered* by Peg Dawson and Richard Guare
- The 11 Skills are broken into two categories: Thinking Skills and Guide Behavior
- EF Skills develop with age and increased demands
 - Deficits are noticed/diagnosed when hit a level of "load" or demand that cannot be managed

- 1st, 4th, 6th, 9th, college, or when the child enters a gifted program
 - Children today have weaker self regulation than children 60 years ago
 - As much as 2 years
 - Attributed to many things – but less independent play and changes in culture are big factors
- EF Skills and School Achievement
 - EF Skills are better predictors of school readiness than IQ for early reading or math
 - EF skills are extremely important for academic success
 - Important for goal achievement
 - How does Giftedness overlap with Executive Dysfunction?
 - Tune out because work not stimulating
 - Low tolerance for tasks that seem irrelevant, repetitive or boring
 - Emotionally intense and engage in power struggles
 - Intensely focused, less flexible
 - Asynchronous Development
 - Gifted kids often do not mature as fast up to age 12 in the area of the brain that controls EF
- Importance of Executive Function Skills
 - Crystallized intelligence v. fluid intelligence
 - Big reactions show EF skill development is needed
 - EF skills do not correlate to IQ
 - EF skills do correlate to fluid intelligence, or creativity, problem solving, etc.
 - Impulse control, concentration, persistence with tasks that are challenging or boring to accomplish goals--crucial skills; when these are lacking, it can be due to lack of EF development

Taking a Look at The Axis of Executive Functioning Skills Development Coaching Goal Development Grid (in PowerPoint presentation)

- Goal: How confident is your child?
- Positive self talk is just as important as teaching your child the steps of what to do
 - Keep them above water (in the Blue or Green Zones)
 - If they can't stay above water (in the Blue or Green Zones), they are having trouble regulating how they feel. Ask yourself where they are on the axis
 - Resiliency happens when we talk about it to improve their self talk
- What gets your child off path? What are struggles for most kids with EF trouble?
 - Fatigue
 - Stress
 - Lack of Exercise

- Setting Good Goals
 - See Second Handout
 - Younger children need a longer time with support
 - Middle school children--less support time BUT they will need help as long as they need help. Do not stop helping because they are older.
 - They should be able to...
 - Remember: if they *don't*, maybe they *can't*
 - Give them as much support as they need. If your 3rd grader needs the support of a Kindergartner, then do it. Take things away on the back end as they get going.
 - 70% of the time kids with EF issues also have anxiety
 - Misbehavior can be anxiety when kids cannot regulate themselves
 - Goals always need an incentive
 - Adds motivation
 - An incentive can be connection with you
 - Expectations should be managed by how impaired your child might be (where they are on the scale)

- EF Skills and School Achievement
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 - How does Giftedness overlap with Executive Dysfunction
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- Being OK in the Blue (feeling good with support)
 - Self talk more important than lack of support
 - Support is ok, even more than others their age
 - Too much independence too fast will increase negative self talk
 - See goals as long term
 - If your child has impulsivity, that makes this a longer process
 - Attention issues also make this harder

- Getting in the Blue and Green and staying there
 - Connection to you should be put first
 - This is your currency now and forever
 - Be ready for the marathon
 - Have a cushion for stress relief

Questions:

Q: In times of change or with trouble, how do we work through that?

A: This is common. Switch goals at those times. Move to the Extra Fun Plan or the Extra Care Plan. Plan to manage stress and anxiety by moving the body more, deep breathing, get outside (all the ways you manage the fight or flight response). Manage self-talk. Plan extra fun activities at this time.

Q: Anxiety can be part of the issue, what are the signs?

A: Observe. Note the Fight or Flight responses. Fight response are obvious. Could have intensities (fight) with explosions, etc.. But some don't have signs, they withdraw and go into the flight mode. What are their triggers?

Always assume anxiety is playing a role if they have EF skills issues. Deal with anxiety first and then work on the steps of skill development. You cannot develop skills in a stress mind.

Check in and see how they feel on the back end.

Q: How do you know if this is EF versus just don't want to do a task?

A: Power struggles are always hard. Have a plan. Deregulation of their struggle takes work. Remain calm, have a plan or a routine, show concern or compassion, give choices. Use the phrase "I can see this is hard, let's see what feels more comfortable for you." Use an incentive for after the struggle is over.

Q: What about the kid who is good at school all day but loses it at home? Is that anxiety?

A: Emotionally sensitive kids hold it together all day. Use anxiety management techniques on them at home to help them manage their feelings.

Q: Can you give some examples of negative and positive self-talk?

A: See Handout

Also See:

Mindset: The New Psychology of Success by Carol S. Dweck

Mindset Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xv2ar6AKvGc>

The Power of Yet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-swZaKN2lc>

Your Fantastic, Elastic Brain Stretch It, Shape It by JoAnn Deak and Sarah Ackerley