Thinking back on my experiences in school as a student, what stands out the most was the annual science and geography fairs. I lived for that time of year! Trips to our local library to build background knowledge, new poster boards to display my learning to an audience, full access to my mom’s prized art supplies, and competing for the coveted medals at the awards ceremonies. It simply couldn’t get any better than that!

Excitement for learning in this way drove my motivation to provide my future students with similar learning experiences: creative, hands-on, minds-on, and student-centered. As an undergraduate education major, I had the opportunity to take a course on creativity. It was then that I first learned about the Creative Problem Solving (CPS) process, and realized this was a promising yet flexible structure that could enhance my future students’ experiences. As a graduate student, I chose to take the course again (yes, I’m happily nerdy) and learned more about Odyssey of the Mind, the Invention Convention, and a host of creative brainstorming strategies.

While working with gifted students at Renzulli Academy in Connecticut, I had the opportunity to teach them the CPS process. This experience further solidified my commitment to providing learning experiences that are creative, hands-on, minds-on, and student-centered. I believe that by fostering a love for learning and creativity, we can help our students develop into lifelong learners and problem solvers.

(continued on page 3)
Things are so different this year.

But when we are forced to make adjustments, we can opt to transform those adjustments into improvements, exercises in creativity, updates, and renewals. It’s a choice – and we’ve chosen to take the high road. This first-time ever fully virtual NCAGT annual conference is going to be awesomely unique! We can’t wait for you to join us for a variety of different types of sessions:

- **Best Lesson/Practice Share** – a brief 10-minute virtual poster session where presenters share ideas with an opportunity for participants to react and ask questions.
- **Hot Topic Round Table** – a 15-minute presentation followed by 30 minutes of audience interaction, discussion, action-planning, collaboration around today’s most pressing issues.
- **TEDx Type Talk** – a multidisciplinary oration, focused on the power of ideas to change lives.

But some things never change.

We still thrive on community. We need opportunities to collaborate and share. We have so many ideas to contribute, but also holes to fill, questions to get answered, and problems to solve. The NCAGT conference has always done that for us. It brings opportunities for serendipitous interactions, fruitful networking, and comfortable companionship with “our people”. We leave the conference full of new thoughts, renewed and rejuvenated, and reminded of our greater common purpose. And all that, my friends, has not changed. We will recreate those connections in a virtual space this year. We hope you will join us.
process in preparation for the annual Invention Convention. As the event drew closer, our classroom may have appeared to be complete chaos to onlookers who walked by our room, but if you stepped inside and listened to the students, there was a different story to be told. I would call it “organized chaos”: students were working diligently all over the room on the final touches for their prototypes, poster boards, and research papers; they were chatting about their inventions; tape, glue, scissors, and colored paper decorated the room. The loud buzz of learning was exhilarating!

Two of our Renzulli Academy students won the school competition and went on to compete at the state level. “Natalia” created a prototype of what she called “Special Needs Shoes” which were designed to help her brother, who was visually impaired, learn to walk, and distinguish his left from right. “Emma’s” invention was a “Flashlight Bracelet Recorder” that audio recorded seeds for creative stories when she woke up in the middle of the night with great ideas! While their end products were high-quality, true learning came from the process of actively seeking out and solving a meaningful problem. The experience also boosted these two particularly shy students’ self-concepts.

The CPS provided my students with a practical, student-centered structure to develop an invention that solved a real-world, ill-defined problem or challenge that was interesting to them. However, the CPS process can be applied to other types of problems in which solutions might not be inventions. For example, solutions could be more abstract or process-oriented such as how to tackle complex school assignments, make friends, or deal with pressures to get perfect grades. It is a flexible process that can be infused into the curriculum for any subject area(s). You can modify it based on the developmental abilities of your students.

The CPS process is an essential pedagogical approach in gifted programming, and the development of both creativity and leadership skills are supported by our 2018 NC AIG Program Standards. For example, Standard 3, Practice d recommends that curriculum “Fosters the development of future-ready skills including critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and leadership” (p. 5). Also, Standard 3.4.3. in the 2019 NAGC PreK-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards states, “Educators use models of inquiry to engage students in critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem-solving strategies, particularly in their domain(s) of talent, both to reveal and address the needs of students with gifts and talents” (p. 11). Lastly, Renzulli (1999) reminded us, one of the goals of gifted education is “to increase society’s reservoirs of persons who will help solve the problems of contemporary civilization” (p. 7). Clearly, creativity is an important component of programming for gifted students.

As we endeavor to forge forward through the current era of uncertain times and remote learning, I invite you to perhaps consider a silver lining: Problems are at our students’ doorsteps, awaiting a creative solution. Let’s teach students to embrace them with courage (6 feet away of course!). Let’s empower our students to tackle challenging problems, and enjoy learning in the process!

How to Begin

Select a version of the CPS model that appeals to you and your students. Try it out yourself or with colleagues as a way to experience each step. It will help you guide students through the process.

The version of the CPS I teach to graduate students seeking AIG licensure through the UNC Charlotte AIG Graduate Certificate Program is from the Creative Education Foundation (2020). Originally developed by Alex Osborn and Sydney Parnes, there are currently four stages and about 1-3 steps per stage. At each stage, students utilize their divergent and convergent thinking skills. Divergent thinking involves generating several possible ideas. Convergent thinking involves evaluating those ideas against a set of criteria to select the best idea.
Below is a table that includes the four main stages with suggestions on how to enhance or scaffold each stage in response to different student readiness levels. Importantly, just because students are identified as gifted, does not guarantee that they are experts at identifying or solving problems. Ask students to describe prior experiences with the CPS or related models such as Problem Based Learning (Gallagher, 2009). That will help you differentiate for students.

Also, keep in mind that an essential outcome of teaching the CPS model is that students will generalize what they learned, internalize the steps, and distinguish between problems that need the CPS model versus those that do not. Be sure to contextualize each stage and step that you teach and model using an authentic problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage (Steps)</th>
<th>Enhancements</th>
<th>Scaffolds</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Clarify (explore the vision, gather data, formulate challenges): Students actively seek out or creatively brainstorm possible problems or challenges to tackle, build background knowledge, and then formulate the challenge as a specific question to solve.</td>
<td>▪ Model or encourage students to apply advanced skills and concepts at each step of the Clarify stage. ▪ Expose students to different types of complex problems they could identify within their talent or interest areas at a personal, local, or global level. ▪ Infuse advanced research skills (e.g., writing a synthesis of information from multiple credible sources, interviewing individuals affected by the problem or those who have tried to address the problem in the past). See Gilson and Brigandi (2020) for more ideas about student-led reports and research projects. ▪ Teach students about questions that might need qualitative and/or quantitative data to solve.</td>
<td>▪ Before having individual or small groups of students apply the CPS, model each step of the Clarify stage. ▪ Conduct a think-aloud to model brainstorming of problems. ▪ Provide students with graphic organizers to record background information. ▪ Teach students other related research skills (e.g., identifying valid and credible sources, notetaking). ▪ Show students examples and non-examples of clearly defined problem statements or questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Ideate (explore ideas): Students creatively brainstorm possible ideas in response to the challenge question.</td>
<td>▪ Encourage students to persevere and brainstorm a large number of creative and “outside of the box” ideas! ▪ Students could read about famous inventors or other problem solvers to deepen their understanding of the brainstorming process (including their successes and failures!). Have students reflect on what they learned from these stories.</td>
<td>▪ Teach students the rules of brainstorming (see CEF, 2020). ▪ Teach students a variety of brainstorming strategies (e.g., SCAMPER). Describe the difference between divergent and convergent thinking skills. ▪ Provide students with graphic organizers to document their possible ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Develop (formulate solutions): Students evaluate their possible ideas and select the best solution(s).</td>
<td>▪ Students can take ownership of this stage by selecting specific criteria to evaluate their ideas. Have students create an evaluation matrix (see example in the link below for free CPS Resources). ▪ Encourage students to articulate their reasoning for selecting a specific idea to implement. ▪ Have students seek out an external expert or focus group to provide feedback on their selected idea before implementation.</td>
<td>▪ Model how to evaluate the efficacy of example solution ideas for an authentic problem. As a class, create a list of criteria to evaluate the solution ideas. ▪ Have students work in pairs to evaluate each others’ ideas or example solution ideas. After each student evaluates the ideas independently, have them come together and share their reviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Implement (formulate a plan): Students develop a plan to implement their solution, test it out, and receive feedback.</td>
<td>▪ Students identify an authentic audience who would benefit from their solutions. ▪ Students learn about authentic products or approaches that experts in similar fields use to present or advertise their solutions to an audience. ▪ Students create a feedback form. Provide students with time to reflect on the feedback and make additional adjustments to their solutions as needed. ▪ Seek out competitions, local officials, patent offices, businesses, or other relevant organizations for students to submit their solutions.</td>
<td>▪ Teachers/mentors assist students in creating a sequence of steps to carry out their idea or solution. ▪ Teachers provide scaffolding and modeling as needed for any of the enhancement options. ▪ Teachers can check in with students frequently to provide support as needed.</td>
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(continued on page 5)
Next, I would like to share responses to three commonly asked questions about CPS-based lessons and units of study.

**What is my role as the teacher?**

First, for students to feel comfortable stepping outside their comfort zones to engage in creative problem seeking and solving, a teacher can establish a “creativity friendly classroom” (Hébert, 2011). This can be accomplished by welcoming and celebrating students’ creative ideas, listening openly and actively to students, asking questions such as “does anyone else have a different idea?”, allowing the space for students to be creative, and teaching students guidelines for creative brainstorming. For example, when students are brainstorming possible solutions, remind them to defer judgment (i.e., avoid praise and criticism) until after the brainstorming session is over.

Second, determine which teacher role would be most appropriate for your particular students at each stage and step of the CPS process. For example, should you be the “Sage on the Stage”, “Guide on the Side”, or “Meddler in the Middle” (McWilliam, 2009)? If students have limited experience with the CPS model or similar problem-solving models, you might choose to take on the role of “Sage on the Stage” at times and provide direct instruction about creativity, creative behaviors, and diverse creative individuals. Alternatively, as the “Guide on the Side”, you might provide them with resources to discover or learn about these topics and processes independently. The “Meddler in the Middle” is a very interesting concept and alternative pedagogical approach that might align better with the student-centered and challenging nature of the CPS model. As the “Meddler in the Middle,” the teacher seeks out ways to build students’ creative capacity. Importantly, the teacher remains active and engaged with students during the learning process rather than remaining a passive onlooker or dispenser of knowledge (McWilliam, 2009). Encourage students to “stay in the struggle”, actively listen to students, and ask probing questions to inspire them to elaborate their ideas as they are forming them (ex. How does this work? How did you come up with that idea?).

**How do I motivate my students?**

A powerful way to intrinsically motivate your students is to allow them to actively seek out and choose their own problems to solve. The problem they choose will be most motivating to solve if it is cognitively interesting and challenging, and does not involve difficult, frustrating, meaningless, or punishing work to solve. Otherwise, their motivation will decline. The problem they select should also appeal to them on a personal level. In other words, they should have some type of emotional connection to the problem.

Allow students to make authentic choices. A non-example is when we push students to choose the “option” we think they should select. You might also allow students to either work alone, with a partner or a small group; to self-select resources and readings to learn about their selected problems; or to determine how they would like to share their solutions. Another strategy for motivating students is to ensure that there is a match between student readiness and need for independent work and teacher supports. Before introducing the CPS, get to know your students well through informal conversations, interviews, surveys, or interest-a-lyzers.

I would be remiss to say that not all students will enjoy nor are ready to independently apply the CPS model to a unique problem. These students may need additional time, experience, and scaffolding to promote more buy-in. Check in with students frequently during the CPS process to see how they are doing and provide support as needed. While the CPS model can be challenging and a lot of work, problem seeking and solving are vital life skills that students of all ages and backgrounds need to develop. As teachers, we need to also “stay in the struggle!”
How do I find the time to fit the CPS into our already packed curriculum?

If I could wave a magic wand and buy teachers more time, I absolutely would! Instead, here are some vetted approaches that might help:

- Know that it is entirely fine to start small. Try just teaching one stage or step as a mini-lesson to see how it goes.
- Start small with a student or small group of students who are candidates for curriculum compacting (i.e., they have demonstrated mastery of a unit’s standards).
- Try an infusion, or integrated, approach. Infuse the CPS into an existing curriculum unit where it might naturally fit.
- Develop a CPS unit that is interdisciplinary. Doing so will address a larger number of objectives.
- Collaborate with willing colleagues or an AIG specialist. This can also make curriculum writing more fun!

Closing

The types of hands-on, minds-on learning activities students engage in during the CPS process are likely the most memorable school experiences. For some students, it may be THE reason to come to school (face-to-face or remotely) and engage in the absurd such as working through recess or during their free time. Importantly, undiscovered student talents can emerge during the CPS process, prompting teachers to recommend more diverse students for gifted programming.

The imperative for teaching students about the CPS process, including essential thinking skills and processes (ex. divergent/convergent thinking, organizing, researching) is more pressing now than ever as we face seemingly insurmountable personal, community, national, and global challenges. Creative problem seeking and solving are necessary life skills for all students to develop, from Pre-K to postsecondary, so that students are better prepared to handle challenges during times of change.

I hope that this article and the resources listed below will help you encourage students to embrace 21st-century problems, feel empowered to tackle them, and enjoy learning in a new way!

Resources to Learn More

Free CPS Resources: https://bit.ly/2Kc1s3a
Invention Convention: https://inventionconvention.org/home-page/
Odyssey of the Mind: https://www.odysseyofthemind.com
Whee Create: https://wheecreate.wcu.edu

References


From the Division of Advanced Learning & Gifted Education (DALGE) at NCDPI… As our division continues to take on additional program areas and legislated responsibilities, we continue to GROW! We are thrilled to have added two new team members to support the work of our division.

Welcome Aboard, Crissy Brown, State Consultant in Advanced Learning and Gifted Education!

A native of Raleigh, Crissy graduated from Greensboro College with a B.A. in elementary education in 1993. She began her career in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools with time spent in Alamance/Burlington Schools and earning her Master’s in gifted education at Elon. Crissy returned to the Raleigh area, where she has been an AIG teacher for both elementary and middle schools in Wake County for the past 5 years. Additionally, she has been an adjunct instructor with High Point University teaching gifted education classes and has worked as an educational consultant delivering professional development to school districts across the state. Her repertoire includes numerous conference presentations at the state, national, and international level on issues specific to the needs of gifted learners. Crissy is currently pursuing her doctorate in educational leadership from UNC-Wilmington.

Crissy says, “I am thrilled to be joining team DALGE to continue the work of advocating for ALL gifted and advanced learners in North Carolina. I am proud and honored to be a part of the state that sets the bar for gifted advocacy and programming, yet always strives to push the bar even higher to benefit students. I am looking forward to getting to know you, supporting you, and learning from you as we continue this important work.”

Welcome Aboard, DALGE’s newest team member and Program Data Analyst, Mary Elmer Esquivel

Mary joined the Division of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education September 1 as the Program Data Consultant. Her primary responsibility is with Career and College Promise (CCP) and to support capacity development of cross-sector research for the agency. Mary will also be lending her expertise as we analyze data needed for various General Assembly reports. She brings a vast amount of experience in data analytics to this role. Prior to joining the DALGE team, she served as the Senior Data Analyst for the Division of Career and Technical Education (CTE) where she oversaw the redevelopment of the federal CTE reporting indicators under Perkins V. Mary has also worked as a Special Projects Manager within DPI and served as the primary agency contact for course codes and the licensure crosswalk. Prior to joining DPI, Mary served as the Passport Manager within the Office of Global Engagement at NCSU. In addition, Mary served for two years with the Peace Corps in Panama where she conducted socio-economic development research in an indigenous region of Panama. Mary holds a Masters in Natural Resources, Economics, and Management from NC State and a bachelor’s degree from Virginia Tech.

In other news:

Welcome to our new coordinators! Our division continues to adapt and change to meet the needs of our district coordinators responsible for supporting gifted and advanced learners. As a result of the pandemic, this year our annual New Coordinator Orientation took place over three Wednesdays in September – in an
(continued on page 8)
This year, we welcomed an additional twenty or so districts and charter schools with new leaders at the helm.

This Fall, we hosted our 3rd annual AIG Coordinators’ Fall Institute! We were excited to host 115 participants in a virtual format exploring three major themes – our statewide response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state of the NC AIG Program Standards, and our continued focus on statewide efforts around realizing equity and excellence in gifted education.

Coordinators explored the questions “What has worked well?,” “What has been challenging?” and “How do we continue going forward?” as we considered the impact of COVID-19 on gifted programs across our state. We were excited to hear several successes that came to light in this session, including: increased collaboration between departments, different services provided virtually, additional opportunities for on-going professional development, intentional learning activities in place, increased talent development, and offering more service options to more students. We also had lots of discussions about how to learn from these successes during pandemic times to carry them forward, when life returns to “normal” times.

As coordinators shared challenges experienced during this time, lack of student engagement was a primary focus. Rising concerns regarding student engagement are felt in not only our state, but also across the entire nation. By working together we can support one another in finding ways to improve student engagement, and our team is determined to dedicate time and resources to support progress in this area, through exploring this issue further in our Monthly Meet-Up times and bringing together resources that have proven successful thus far. To that end, we are also working on a way to document “Lessons Learned,” to store ideas implemented that have resulted in success. It will be helpful to reflect on strides made so that this information can be used when revising local AIG plans next year.

Speaking of revising our local AIG plans…while the thought of writing a new Local AIG Plan may not be something even in your peripheral vision right now, the reality is that it’s not too far down the road and before we know it, writing a new Local AIG Plan will be directly in front of us. Before we begin the process, we must first take a look at the current NC AIG Program Standards and determine if any changes need to be made. While we have begun receiving feedback from coordinators about the individual practices and standards, we will soon share draft documents of proposed changes and will solicit feedback from additional trusted partners – like our NCAGT members. Stay tuned for next steps with the revision of the NC AIG Program Standards.

Finally, during our Fall Institute, our team provided a quick review of the Six Critical Actions in our Call to Action for realizing Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education in NC.

- We explored The Comfort Zone graphic- a helpful tool for identifying one’s psychological status regarding comfort with each of the critical actions.
- We completed a role analysis, considering the lens of each of the different roles involved in the implementation of our AIG programs.
- After designating a zone for each role’s current reality (Self, Central Office, Schools), our groups each delved into a different aspect related to the comfort zone graphic.

The team is now disaggregating the data collected to shape the plans for the Winter and Spring Institutes, when we will continue to focus on our efforts leading to equity and excellence in gifted education.

As we close, please remember that if we can ever be of service to you, feel free to contact one of us at NCDPI. We continue to be grateful to each of you for your hard work and your passion for AIG learners.

The NCDPI team

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AG teachers across the state have made remarkable shifts to virtual instructional spaces during this pandemic year. In Guilford, we've tried out some online resources that expand opportunities for our gifted and advanced students to explore asynchronously or in targeted guided lessons. Most of the virtual teaching tools are free or offer limited use before a subscription is required.

ELA Resources

The Starry Night VR Experience – Motion Magic made this fantastic 360-degree short animated VR Journey based on two of Van Gogh’s famous works, The Starry Night and Bedroom in Arles.

Our teachers use this resource with our Arts Unit and found that it sparked exciting discussions on inspiration and the creative conceit. Some teachers found that playing the video twice - once without music and again with volume - opened the door to interesting discussions about interpreting Van Gogh’s works. One teacher even found a set of inexpensive VR goggles at Walmart to use on this video with her students while another teacher chimed in, “My students were simply blown away.”

Word Genius – Expand your classroom’s vocabulary with a Word-of-the-Day, quizzes, trivia questions and much more.

Teachers love signing up on Word Genius to receive daily emails containing the Word-of-the-Day. In turn, students in some classes are given a daily announcement link to a challenge question, for example:

The word of the day is herbary. Which of the following would you not find in an herbary? A) mint B) seaweed C) rosemary D) basil. A sentence using the word in context is also provided after the question.

Students submit their choices and automatically receive the correct answer, and, in some cases, a historical background of the word’s origin. Some teachers find that Word Genius also pairs well with lessons from Caesar’s English.

Math Resources

Bedtime Math – The goal of Bedtime Math is to make math the cool thing to do after school. If you are interested in making math a part of your student’s family routine, then this resource is certainly worth exploring.

One teacher highly recommends this website because it once supplied the bulk of activities for her school’s STEM and math-based after school club.

Teachers who sign-up receive a free email containing problems with real world applications that link to additional activities and other multimedia tools. If you need further proof, one example of the many fun videos you will find on the site is “Everything’s Bigger at Costco.”

Mashup Math – These are free math puzzles available for all ages.

Several of our AG teachers enjoy integrating these puzzles with travel dots from our MathQuest unit as a problem-solving activity. One teacher incorporates these visual puzzles in her daily announcements in various ways from “Figure It Out Fridays” to “Mash Up Math Mondays”. Some teachers choose to use Mashup Math in their school’s Math Club, while others use the puzzles as discussion starters at the beginning of each class.

3-Digits Math Game – Everyone knows 1 + 1 = 2, but did you know DOT + LINE = 6? Calculating takes on a whole new meaning as students learn about the ancient Mayan’s revolutionary base 20 number system which involved the use of shells, dots, and lines.

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Advocacy Brief

Talent Unleashed is Funded by Z Smith Reynolds!!

NCAGT has achieved a first! In late November the Board of Directors learned that the Z Smith Reynolds Foundation would fund their grant proposal, titled Talent Unleashed. NCAGT will receive $40,000 under the Reynolds Foundation State-Level Systemic Change initiative to help a group of NC school districts create plans to reduce inequities for gifted students of color and gifted students in poverty. Many members of NCAGT’s new Talent Delayed/Talent Denied Advisory Committee contributed to the grant and several will be involved in its implementation. The grant requires that district teams participate in Talent Unleashed activities, from top level administrators to school principals, to help ensure that changes proposed by district plans are embraced beyond the AIG program. Stay tuned for more!

Multidisciplinary Resources

Brains On – This is an award-winning science podcast for kids and curious adults sponsored by American Public Media.

In our AG Arts Unit, students research influential artists, evaluate artistic images and interpret their creative impact on the world as they relate to a host of topics from science to social justice. Our teachers use Brains On for its extensive podcast library and additional resources to engage gifted students in Socratic seminars and teacher-led discussions. As one teacher explained, “The students get to hear a voice and a perspective other than my own.”

Nearpod – Nearpod is an instructional platform that incorporates engaging hands-on tools to create a robust learning experience for students across all grades.

Our teachers initially used Nearpod as the district’s public facing enrichment model at the beginning of this school year to teach college exploration and SEL lessons during the initial delay of face-to-face instruction. They have since utilized Nearpod and its rich library of standard-aligned lessons to enhance the delivery of our AG units for the virtual setting. Nearpod can launch with virtually any device and operating system which allow our students immediate access to its immersive lessons. Our teachers and students both enjoy using Nearpod on a regular basis because it integrates a variety of interactive tools such as virtual reality, polling, journaling, videos, and game-based quizzes to deliver one seamless learning experience.

Virtual Teaching Tools (continued from page 9)

Many teachers use this resource as part of a fifth grade Beyond Base Ten unit. Students enjoy playing the game and love how it increases their understanding of the properties of operations with multi-digit arithmetic, the significance of place-value and the number system bases while having to think quickly enough to beat the onscreen timer. There is a tutorial and an ancient Mayan history lesson to help students and families grasp the concept before they take on the challenge. Students have the ability to choose between easy and hard all while advancing through multiple levels based on their performance. Many of our teachers also include this resource on their Canvas pages in their “Brain Gym” section as a post lesson enrichment activity.
Gifted education organizations around the US responded to violence against Black Americans with statements of solidarity. The National Association for Gifted Children, the largest US organization serving professionals in gifted education, is providing a model to others on how to move from a statement of support to concerted action.

Gifted education organizations around the US responded to violence against Black Americans with statements of solidarity. A majority of US state and national organizations have posted their statements on their websites, making commitments to improve practice within their own organization and also to redouble their efforts to close the Excellence Gap. The National Association for Gifted Children, the largest US organization serving professionals in gifted education, is providing a model to others on how to move from a statement of support to concerted action.

After publishing Championing Equity and Supporting Social Justice for Black Students in Gifted Education: An Expanded Vision for NAGC, the Board of Directors engaged in several activities to ensure that their words have lasting impact. Included among their efforts are 1) a comprehensive review of organization policies to remove unintentional barriers to involvement and to insert intentional supports to improve diversity of perspective and participation across the organization, and 2) a series of Town Hall meetings with different constituent groups to discuss the implications of the statement, to hear feedback from membership, and to gather ideas from one and all as to how to proceed. NAGC members, look for a Town Hall announcement this month for a meeting in January!

One of the most significant events in gifted education “around the nation” was Duke University’s decision to close the Duke Talent Identification Program. One of the four original Talent Search programs, Duke TIP provided invaluable service to gifted students and their families for over half a century. Duke plans to offer a new form of programming post-pandemic, however it will not follow the influential model originally designed by Julian Stanley as an outgrowth of the Study for Mathematically Precocious Youth (SMPY).

The NAGC Reimagined convention was the highlight of the fall Around the Nation. NC gifted education experts were integral to the successful transition from face-to-face to virtual, and it was clear from the enthusiastic response of attendees that their work was worth the effort! Recorded and live sessions were punctuated by moving keynote presentations by Colin Seale (who is presenting at the NC conference this spring!), Gil Whiting, Jim Delisle, and a fascinating panel comprised of NAGC past presidents.
In Memoriam

Remembering Laurene:
1953–2020

Dr. Laurene Madern lived an amazing life. Throughout the years, Laurene was a staunch supporter and activist for gifted children. Holding many vital positions in NCAGT, she chaired the 2004 NCAGT Conference, Gifted Education: Policy, Practice and Promise. As NCAGT undertook the task of hosting the 2006 NAGC Convention in Charlotte, she was highly productive, enthusiastic, and inspiring as a key player in all of the planning. In one of her emails, she wrote, “The 2006 NAGC Convention is an exciting opportunity for the North Carolina gifted society to demonstrate how ‘gifted’ we are when it comes to serving our children, teachers and parents.”

She led several projects. For example, in 2009 under her leadership, NCAGT hosted a first State Legislator’s Breakfast at the State House in the Legislator’s Cafeteria in Raleigh. The goal of the meeting was to acquaint our elected officials with pertinent information on the current status of gifted education in our state through dissemination of information and advocacy on behalf of AIG students. In addition, she was instrumental in making the first NCAGT White Paper a reality.

Never one to hesitate or shy away from difficult issues, Laurene was willing to say what needed to be said in order to move forward. The willingness to advocate and stake a position during turbulent times is a quality that few possess. Laurene always took personal risk to advocate for excellence and equity and what was right. She always had a wonderful sense of humor. NCAGT is pleased to be able to celebrate her life.

Wesley Guthrie,
Former NCAGT Executive Director

Dr. Laurene Madern served as NCAGT President for three years 2006–2009
The Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY) supports gifted students no matter where they are.

CTY works with academically advanced elementary, middle, and high school students from across the U.S. and more than 80 countries, providing talent identification testing, challenging year-round online and family academic programs, engaging in-person summer programs, and resources for families. Since its founding in 1979, CTY has reached more than 1.5 million bright young people.

“From its start, CTY has been dedicated to serving the unique needs of academically advanced students and their families,” said Virginia Roach, executive director of CTY. “Our mission matters more than ever in light of the COVID-19 global pandemic and the rapidly shifting educational landscape that has led all of us to become more creative and more dependent upon technology for education.”

CTY offers hundreds of challenging and engaging advanced online and in-person courses for students in grades 2-12, all taught by expert instructors who specialize in teaching advanced concepts to bright students. Courses are designed to enrich and accelerate advanced learners in areas where they show the strongest abilities. CTY is accredited, which is important for students seeking credit or placement from their school.

More than 300 year-round online courses are available in live and independent learning formats. Subject areas include computer science, critical reading, writing, world languages, mathematics, science and engineering, and Advanced Placement. New online options enrolling for spring 2021 include clubs and collaborative, problem-based learning courses in which students interact in small groups with their peers.

CTY’s summer day and residential programs provide academic challenge, discovery, and opportunities to make friends and become part of a community of learners with classmates who share their interests. They offer more than 100 summer courses in subjects including fiction writing, robotics, engineering, math, philosophy, and international relations, which can encourage existing interests or inspire new academic passions.

Students qualify for CTY summer and online programs by enrolling in Talent Search and taking an above-grade-level test, such as the School and College Ability Test (SCAT), the Spatial Test Battery (STB), or SAT.

More information about the tests CTY accepts for students in various grades can be found here.

“Current Duke TIP students may already be qualified to attend CTY, depending on their grade level, test, and existing test scores such as the ACT, PSAT 8/9, or SAT,” said Luke Kasim, director of recruitment for CTY. “CTY is here to serve families who may find themselves suddenly looking for new options.”

Families who do not have above-grade-level test scores that CTY accepts on file can enroll in CTY’s Talent Search and register to take above-grade-level tests including the SCAT, STB, or SAT, depending on their child’s grade. For many families, CTY’s new Online SCAT is the most convenient option for testing, Kasim said.

“In light of the fact that testing centers and test schedules have been affected by COVID-19-related closures, many families right now are choosing to have their child take the Online SCAT from home,” he said. “More than 6,500 students have taken the Online SCAT with us since it launched this spring.”

A nonprofit, CTY awards more than $4.6 million in financial aid annually so that academically talented students from families of limited financial means can participate in programs. In addition, the Center has a variety of resources that are available to all bright students and their families, including family programs that do not require testing, the Bright Now blog and podcast, the CTY Reading List, and a Facebook parents group.

The next session of CTY Online Programs starts as soon as Jan. 18 and the registration deadline is Jan. 5. To help meet the needs of families previously served by Duke TIP, CTY is waiving Talent Search fees and offering a 15% discount on online courses through Jan. 31, 2021. Enter code NCAGT2020 at the time of application.

To learn more about CTY, visit the website, attend a virtual information session, watch a webinar, or email ctyinfo@jhu.edu.
Scholarships

Calling Title I Teachers: Apply for a Javits-Frasier Teacher Scholarship to attend NAGC in Denver, November 2021!

Do you have a colleague in a Title I school who would benefit from knowledge about gifted students and a mentor to guide their way? Would YOU like that experience? Then apply for a Javits-Frasier Teacher Scholarship.

The Javits-Frasier Teacher Scholars program is a unique professional development opportunity for teachers, school counselors/psychologists, and others who work in Title I schools and are passionate about helping all gifted children. The application will open in the spring, so start gathering your information now!

Scholarship winners will receive a complimentary registration for the NAGC Annual Convention along with a travel stipend, including hotel. They will also be assigned a professional mentor from the NAGC leadership community, and a two-year membership to NAGC.

Scholarship Qualifications
- Teachers, school counselors, or school psychologists should apply. Educators from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds are especially encouraged to apply.
- Priority is given to applicants in Title I schools; but teachers from other high-needs environments are encouraged to apply.
- Applicant cannot have previously attended an NAGC Convention.
- Applicant must be new to teaching (1-2 years of experience) and/or new to gifted/talented education.

Help build AIG capacity in NC!

For more information, visit https://www.nagc.org/about-nagc/nagc-awards-scholarships/javits-frasier-scholars-program

Do You Know a Black Gifted Middle or High School Student Who Deserves Recognition? Consider the Dr. Martin D. Jenkins Scholar Award!

The Dr. Martin D. Jenkins Scholar Award is named in honor of Dr. Jenkins, Father of Research on Gifted Black Students, and it is designed to honor the achievements of highly gifted Black students who excel academically in school. Students submit their applications in Fall, 2021, so start planning now!

Award Recipients will receive:
- a $300 scholarship (cash award)
- NAGC convention registration and an invitation to attend a featured session at NAGC during the Annual Conference
- a scholarship covering registration to attend the Gifted Education Research & Resource Institute’s (GER2I) Summer Residential Program at Purdue University (transportation to/from Purdue not included)
- an invitation to participate in the Jenkins Scholar Alumni Network after 1st year in program
- the awardee’s parents will receive 1-year Parent Membership in NAGC and Special Populations Network

Applicants must be a Black student enrolled in a public school in grades 6-12 and must demonstrate at least three of the following:
- Exceptional Test Scores
- Accelerated Schooling
- Exemplary Achievement
- Early Entrance into College, MS Dual Enrollment, HS Joint Enrollment
- Exemplary School Work
- Competition Award

For more information, visit https://www.nagc.org/get-involved/nagc-networks-and-special-interest-groups/networks-special-populations/dr-martin-d
January Newsletter Conference Update

46th Annual Conference Update, NC: Adapting, Growing, Thinking

2020 was a year like no other and we are honored to continue a tradition of bringing gifted educators and parents together. Even though we have adapted our traditional conference, we are growing and changing thinking about what a virtual conference looks like.

Here’s what we mean.

We are rolling out some new features that will allow you to engage in critical conversations among peers with our brand new hot topic round tables AND we cannot wait to share our new signature series.

Come hear our keynote speakers!

**Colin Seale**, Founder and CEO of thinkLaw and author of *Think Like a Lawyer: A Framework for Teaching Critical Thinking to All Students*, has a passion for equity.

**Dr. Jim Delisle**, Distinguished Professor of Education at Kent State University, thinks that gifted is the height of one’s thinking and depth of one’s emotions and is much more than just “being smart”.

**Dr. Brian Housand**, coordinator of the Academically Gifted Program at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and founder of Gifted 360, is a blogger, author, and an advocate for gifted children.

North Carolina 2020 Teacher of the Year, **Maureen Stover**, science teacher at Cumberland International Early College High School and former intelligence officer in the United States Air Force, is an advocate for social and emotional needs of children!

You do not want to miss these inspirational speakers!

Come to learn how to engage gifted learners remotely, support underrepresented populations, and expand your strategy toolbox. We have over 80 sessions to choose from.

Mark your calendars and join us for our annual conference March 4-5. This year we are going virtual. We have different types of registration to fit your budget and your schedule.

Go to Eventbrite to register for the conference @ [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-ncagt-virtual-gifted-conference-registration-119158005803](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-ncagt-virtual-gifted-conference-registration-119158005803). Registration is limited and closes February 19th.

Got questions? Contact us at conference@ncagt.org.