



GAPAGT Newsletter

Garland Area Parent Association for Gifted and Talented

February 2011

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Email Us:
gapagt@gapagt.org

Visit our blog:
gapagt.blogspot.com

President's Message

Linda Williamson, President, gapagt@gapagt.org



Budget cuts are coming, and every student in Texas public schools will be negatively impacted by this situation.

You have probably heard by now that Dallas ISD is laying off 3100 employees and Arlington ISD is laying off 1100. Dallas ISD administrators are being told to cut 20% off their budgets with no guidelines for how to do it.

Here in Garland Dr. Culwell has affirmed his commitment to K-12. That leaves out the many pre-K programs that help prepare low SES students for their academic careers.

As parents of gifted students we are anxious about how this will impact the magnet schools and the GT programs at the regular campuses.

What can we do?

1. Do what we can to protect Garland ISD. A few weeks ago after I attended the GISD Information Forum, I sent out an email asking you to contact your legislators.

Recently GISD was recognized for having one of the most efficiently run districts in the state. We have a higher rate of student success at a lower cost per capita than other districts that are our size. We spend approximately \$4900 per child, per year, while other districts spend closer to \$6000 per child.

One of the budget proposals is an 'across the board' cut for all districts in the state. While this will force other districts to 'trim the fat', this means that our district, which already 'runs lean', will have to cut valuable programs and eliminate resources that will affect all of our children. This simply would not be fair.

2. Contact your legislators. Make an appointment. Make a phone call. Write a letter. Tell them that while an across the board cut may make the math easy for them, it penalizes us for being preemptively fiscally efficient and responsible.

Go to this link to find your Representative:
<http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/find-your-representative/>

President's Message, cont.

3. Keep up with what's going on in Austin. Although GAPAGT is not affiliated with Texas PTA, they are a good resource for updated reports regarding budget negotiations. Go to www.txpta.org for more information.

4. Talk to your teachers and principals about how you can help facilitate a productive learning environment. If class sizes increase, will teachers need more help in the classroom? Will schools need more money to maintain programs that the district can no longer afford? Now is the time to lend your resources for the collective good of our community.

5. Vote. Send lawmakers a report card with your vote in the next elections. I summarize with a quote from Thomas Jefferson. ". . . whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government; that, whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them right." (as cited in Padover, 1939, p. 88)

On the brighter side of life, GAPAGT continues to bring enriching experiences to our gifted students and their families.

Coming up is our annual family game night. This member's only event is loads of fun! My family looks forward to it every year. If you are not a member please contact Jennifer Smitherman at jennifer.smitherman@gmail.com.

Also read in this issue about SCO-OP, our Saturday morning of fun and learning that includes dismembering and reassembling a computer, Mad Science, hovercraft building, instant challenges and more!

Warm Regards,

Linda

VISIT OUR NEW BLOG!

<http://gapagt.blogspot.com/>

TAGT Parent Conference 2011

The Texas Association for Gifted and Talented (TAGT) held their annual Parent Conference at the Hurst Convention on Saturday, February 19.

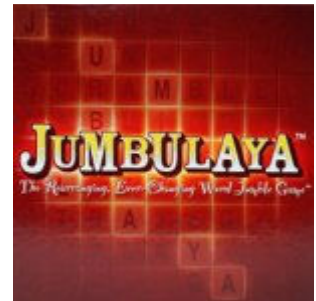
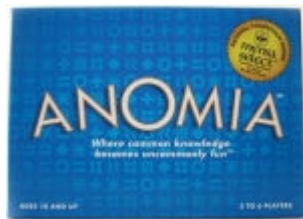
The keynote speaker was Lisa Rivero whose topic "Growing with Intensity" helped explain five areas of "overexcitabilities" in gifted children and how these extreme reactions can be a challenge to parenting. She also took the topic one step further in her breakout session and talked about intensity in gifted teens. Maturity does not mean the same as independence, and parents need to maintain strong communication bonds through the challenging years of adolescence. There were also other breakout sessions on summer programs, perfectionism, online/distance learning options, and homeschooling gifted students.

TAGT Parent Conference, cont.

There were several classes offered entirely in Spanish and opportunities to network over lunch. The vendor fair included booths from area universities offering summer camp options. Many of these camps are listed on our website if you are looking for options this summer.

There were two special announcements made at the opening session. First was a special appearance by Representative Todd Smith of Bedford, who has deep ties to gifted education and serves on the state's Public Education committee. He had encouraging words to say about his support for gifted programs and his plans to be an advocate in the current legislative session.

The second announcement was made by Len AVECILLA, who is the 3rd Vice-President of TAGT. TAGT is developing plans to add a Parent Division to the structure of the state's gifted association and he needed at least 50 signatures to initiate the process. Signers had to already be members of TAGT, so they were still a few short at the end of the day. If you are interested in being a part of this kick-off effort, please contact Len at len.avecilla@gmail.com.



Members Only! GAPAGT Family Game Night

Friday, March 4, 2011 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm
First United Methodist Church of Sachse
1520 Blackburn Rd. Sachse, TX 75048
Lost? Call 972-333-3736

Play the top 5 games from 2010 as well as many old favorites.

Door Prizes: A drawing will be held to give away the new games to lucky winners. Increase your odds – bring the gang.

Bring a snack to share.

Directions: From Garland, head northeast on Lavon/SH 78 toward Wylie. Turn left at Murphy Road. Turn right at Blackburn. Church is on the right.

This event is FREE to members. Invite your friends to join GAPAGT!! Membership is \$20 and will be collected at the door.

Sign up to Teach - **SCOOP** is coming!

Diana Cooley, Programs dcooley@gapagt.org

Our Saturday Co-Op (SCOOP) GT Enrichment Fair is set for April 30th at Austin Academy from 9:30am – 12:30pm. This is an opportunity to provide Outstanding Programs That Inspire Our Next-Gen Students (OPTIONS).

We are looking for **parent** or **community volunteers** to lead a 1-hour enrichment class twice that morning for elementary or middle school gifted students. We can't do it without you, so **sign up by March 31** to lead a class based on your own interests, your child's interests, or choose from the list below.

Class ideas that need someone to be the Co-Op Teacher:

- Chess (beginners, intermediate, advanced)
- Origami
- Lego Robotics
- Chemistry in the Kitchen (cooking classroom available)
- Computers
- Geo-caching
- Science Lab (light, energy, physics, snowmaking)
- Paper Airplane Contest
- Creative Problem Solving
- Musical Mystery Tour
- The Art of Improv
- Money Management
- Get Movin' (Games that work up a sweat!)

What other ideas can you offer from your own experience or the interests of your child? It's a Co-Op so make an offer! Contact Diana Cooley at dcooley@gapagt.org to volunteer.

Meet Author Anthony Horowitz

The Dallas Museum of Art will be hosting several well-known authors this spring as part of the BooksmART series. One of these authors, Anthony Horowitz, of the *Alex Rider* series, will speak on April 17. Click on the following link for more information and ticket prices or call 214-922-1818. <http://www.dallasmuseumofart.org/Events/ArtsLettersLive/BooksmART/index.htm>

Anthony Horowitz
Sunday, April 17, 3:00pm
Horchow Auditorium



Anthony Horowitz is the author of the phenomenally successful Alex Rider series, which centers on a teen superspy involved in treacherous missions across the globe. The ninth and final novel of the series, *Scorpia Rising*, will be coming out in April, 2011. Sent off to boarding school as a child, Horowitz faced mistreatment and humiliation. As an escape, he turned to the glamorous world of James Bond. Drawing on these experiences, Horowitz has been writing professionally since the age of twenty.

Nominate GT Teachers, Parents or Advocates

North Texas has a very strong gifted community. There are probably terrific experienced GT teachers, new GT teachers, parents and administrators/advocates in your district. Get them, and your district, recognized! The Regional Teacher, Parent and Advocate winners are entered in the state competition.

Here's what you need to do:

1. Complete the Nomination Form.
2. Write one page supporting the nominee you are nominating.
3. Try to get 3 letters of recommendation (see each award for directions).
4. Include a resume for the Teacher or Rising Star.
5. Include a personal philosophy page for the Teacher of Rising Star.
6. Complete the TOP of the Selection Criteria Form but do NOT rate the nominee. This is for the scoring committee.

Here are links to the nomination forms:

- [General Information and Nomination Procedures \(PDF\)](#)
- [Outstanding Teacher of the Gifted Award \(PDF\)](#)
- [Outstanding Parent of the Gifted Award \(PDF\)](#)
- [Regional Advocate of the Gifted Award \(PDF\)](#)
- [Rising Star Teacher Award \(PDF\)](#)

You may send them to Mary Chancellor one of the following ways:

- Scan and email to: mchancellor@dentonisd.org (preferred)
- Mail to: Mary Chancellor, Denton ISD, 1212 Bolivar, Denton, TX 76201
- Fax to: 940-382-4908 ATTN: Mary Chancellor

More information is available at www.txgifted.org under the Insights link.

7th Grade Gifted Girls Conference

Gifted Students Institute

The River Runs Through It!

Keynote by

**Elizabeth Fernandez
Civil Engineer, City of Dallas**

Wednesday, May 4, 2011

10:00am - 2:00pm

SMU Campus

\$45 per student (\$10 free and reduced lunch eligible)

For more information:

website: www.smu.edu/boys

call - 214-768-0123

email - gifted@smu.edu

Registration form at www.smu.edu/gsi

7th Grade Gifted Boys Conference

Gifted Students Institute

The Trinity, DART and more!

Keynote by

Don Raines

WRT Design, Landscape Architect

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

10:00am - 2:00pm

SMU Campus

\$45 per student (\$10 free and reduced lunch eligible)

For more information:

website: www.smu.edu/boys

call - 214-768-0123

email - gifted@smu.edu

Registration form at www.smu.edu/gsi

Come Meet Our Writing Contest Winners!

EVENT: GAPAGT BOOK-SIGNING PARTY
WHEN: Saturday, March 5, 2011
TIME: 10:00 - 11:00 am
PLACE: Granville Arts Center Lobby
300 North Fifth St.
Downtown Garland
(behind the DART Light Rail Station)



Only books that were pre-ordered will be available at the party, but if you would like to order additional copies, it is now available online at <http://www.lulu.com/content/paperback-book/award-winners-collection-2010-2011/10169948>. You can see a complete list of our contest winners on the Archives page at www.gapagt.org.

Planning for 2011-2012: We Need You!

As a parent group concerned about the education and well-being of gifted children, we are continually working to supply you with current and relevant information to support you and your child.

Part of this effort is to allow you the opportunity to become more involved with the direction of GAPAGT.

As someone on the "inside" of the operation, you will have more access to the resources you need and also be able to help make a difference in the lives of GISD GT families.

Our nomination committee has recently been formed, and we would love to speak with you about an opportunity to be a more integral part of GAPAGT.

Planning for 2011-2012, cont.

Several positions are available for 2011-2012, and you only need to be a member to qualify! Go to our [Membership](#) page for details.

OPEN POSITIONS:

President (coordinates the work of committees with leadership and vision)
VP Membership (conducts membership drive and plans Family Game Night)
Secretary (records meeting minutes and maintains Historian's scrapbook)
Communications Chair (maintains e-mail lists and coordinates publicity)

We look forward to sharing with you in the future of GT in Garland ISD! Email us at gapagt@gapagt.org!

Student Scholarships Available

Here is the latest update from www.StudentScholarships.org for February 2011. All of the scholarships below are available to your students.

1. Healthy Lifestyles Scholarship (Deadline: April 30, 2011)

This \$5000 scholarship is open to students currently enrolled as high school students or first-year college students. To be eligible for this award you must be under 25 years of age and answer both of the essay questions.

Website:

http://www.studentscholarships.org/scholarship/8809/healthy_lifestyles_scholarship_scholarship.php

2. Dial My Dentist Scholarship Program (Deadline: May 6, 2011)

This \$1000 scholarship is available to students between the ages of 16 and 21. In the fall of this year (September 2011), the student must be attending College or University full-time.

Website:

http://www.studentscholarships.org/scholarship/9838/dial_my_dentist_scholarship_program_scholarship.php

3. S.S. Scholarship Program (Deadline: June 1, 2011)

This \$1000 scholarship is available to any student that is 21 years or under, as of June 1, 2011.

Website:

<http://www.studentscholarships.org/scholarshipprograms.php>

4. Big Dig Scholarship (Deadline: June 1, 2011)

This \$3000 scholarship is for students who submit an essay that is under 1000 words and are currently in high school or in their first two years of college/university.

Website:

http://www.studentscholarships.org/scholarship/8864/big_dig_scholarships_scholarship.php

Student Scholarships Available, cont.

5. 2011 ICBC Scholarship (Deadline: June 15, 2011)

This \$1000 scholarship is open to students that are between the ages of 17-21 that are residents of the US or Canada. A student can be enrolled or intending on enrolling in any course of study in the fall semester of 2011.

Website:

http://www.studentscholarships.org/scholarship/9839/icbc_scholarship_scholarship.php

TAGT Scholarships for Students

Applications and information regarding scholarships for gifted and talented students can be found in the preliminary copy of *Insights* at www.txgifted.org.

- Awards of up to \$400.00 for summer camps
- Identified gifted seniors may apply for \$2,500.00 university scholarship
- Scholarship deadline: **March 1, 2011**

Note: If you would like to be removed from future mailings click on the following link: <http://www.studentscholarships.org/unsubscribe.php> or send an email to application@studentscholarships.org and we will remove your email immediately.

Emotional Intensity in Gifted Children

This excerpt is from an article by Lesley Kay Sword and is part of a list of articles and resources on the SENGifted.org website.

"Many people seem unaware that intense emotions are part of giftedness and little attention is paid to emotional intensity. Historically the expression of intense feelings has been seen a sign of emotional instability rather than as evidence of a rich inner life. The traditional Western view is of emotions and intellect as separate and contradictory entities, there is however, an inextricable link between emotions and intellect and, combined, they have a profound effect on gifted people. It is emotional intensity that fuels joy in life, passion for learning, the drive for expression of a talent area, the motivation for achievement.

Feeling everything more deeply than others do can both be painful and frightening. Emotionally intense gifted people often feel abnormal. "There must be something wrong with me... maybe I'm crazy... nobody else seems to feel like this." Emotionally intense gifted people often experience intense inner conflict, self-criticism, anxiety and feelings of inferiority. The medical community tends to see these conflicts as symptoms and labels gifted people neurotic. They are however an intrinsic part of being gifted and provide the drive that gifted people have for personal growth and achievement.

It is vitally important that gifted children are taught to see their heightened sensitivity to things that happen in the world as a normal response for them.

Emotional Intensity in Gifted Children, cont.

If this is not made clear to them they may see their own intense experiences as evidence that something is wrong with them. Other children may ridicule a gifted child for reacting strongly to an apparently trivial incident, thereby increasing the child's feeling of being odd. Also sensitivity to society's injustice and hypocrisy can lead many emotionally intense gifted children to feel despair and cynicism at very young ages.

The most important thing we can do to nurture emotionally intense gifted children is to accept their emotions: they need to feel understood and supported. Explain that intense feelings are normal for gifted children. Help them to use their intellect to develop self-awareness and self-acceptance."

Read the complete article at

http://www.sengifted.org/articles_social/Sword_EmotionalIntensityInGiftedChildren.shtml

Mentoring Guidebook Available

One of the most valuable experiences a gifted student can have is working with a mentor who is caring, supportive, and willing to share his/her time and knowledge. With help and guidance, mentees can learn new skills and investigate potential career interests. However, initiating a mentorship can be overwhelming. Where do you start, who do you contact, and most importantly, then what?

Mentorships: A Guidebook, developed by the Davidson Institute for Talent Development, is specifically designed to help parents and students interested in developing a mentorship. The guidebook will help you answer such questions as: Is a mentoring partnership appropriate? How do I locate a mentor? What kind of relationship is most beneficial? What will the connection entail? Ideally, this guidebook is to be used as an information guide to help establish, maintain, and conclude a mentorship. Download the 41-page booklet at

http://print.ditd.org/young_scholars/Guidebooks/Davidson_Guidebook_Mentoring.pdf

2011 High School Orientation Schedule

This information is for 8th grade parents. Mark your calendars for High School Orientation sessions.

Planning for high school is an exciting time for student and parents. In order to better inform you about the course offerings and graduation requirements, meetings have been scheduled for you and your child. You may choose to attend any of the listed sessions.

The sessions will consist of information about high school graduation requirements, athletics, clubs, extracurricular activities, and a question and answer periods. The counselors and other staff members will be available to answer questions.

2011 High School Orientation Schedule, cont.

School Name	Date	Time	Location
Rowlett High School	March 21, 2011	6:30 PM	Auditorium
Sachse High School	March 21, 2011	6:30 PM	Auditorium
Garland High School	March 28, 2011	6:30 PM	Auditorium Commons Gymnasium
Lakeview Centennial High School	March 28, 2011	6:30 PM	Auditorium
Naaman Forest High School	March 28, 2011	6:30 PM	Auditorium Gymnasium
North Garland High School	March 29, 2011	6:00 PM	Cafeteria Auditorium
South Garland High School	March 29, 2011	6:30 PM	Auditorium E. Gymnasium

Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science

"The Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science (TAMS) is a unique residential program for high school-aged Texas students who are high achievers and interested in mathematics and science.



While living in McConnell Hall, students in this two-year program complete a rigorous academic curriculum of college coursework at the University of North Texas (UNT).

Instruction is by regular university faculty. There are no high school courses taught, but students enjoy many of the activities of high school and the company of age mates who are intellectual peers." Go to www.tams.unt.edu for more information.