



GAPAGT

Garland Area Parent Association for Gifted and Talented Newsletter

October 2008

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“...many door prizes were given out that night!”

Pool Party Sprinkled with Winners!

Rain or shine, the party must go on! And so it did.

On August 18, GAPAGT hosted our annual Back-to-School Family Pool Party at the Firewheel Clubhouse. Despite the slightly wet weather, we had a good turnout and a great time.

There was plenty of food, fun, and fellowship. Only the kids braved the pool while the adults spent time interacting and networking. There were both new and familiar faces to be seen.

Also, many prizes were given out that night!

- Drawing prizes were won by Mark Alt (right) and Tina Harrison (not pictured). Mark won a spectacular pearl and diamond necklace and bracelet set for his wife, Lisa (above right), and Tina won a basket of gift cards.
- Door prizes were won by Deirdre Constantine (right) and one young winner. Dierdre won two AMC movie passes, and the other winner received a gift certificate for a whole cake!

It certainly was a rewarding night for those attendees!



Mark and Lisa Alt show off the beautiful jewelry won at the party



Big grins from the winners!

President's Message

By Jacki Hulm, President, gapagt@gapagt.org

Welcome to the new school year, and a new year for GAPAGT!

The Board has been hard at work charting our plans for this year, and we look forward to sharing the results with you.

We've already:

- Held our (slightly soggy) Back to School Pool Party,
- With your contributions, replenished our Camp GISD Scholarship Fund after making several awards last year,
- Kicked off our membership drive, and
- Held our first Parent Education program.

And that's just the first two months!

I hope you will be able to join us for the programs and activities this year, and that you will use the information we send you on legislative action and educational tips. Please access the GAPAGT website (www.gapagt.org) to get additional information. Let us know what suggestions you have about how we can help more of our students succeed. We are all very interested in hearing your thoughts, suggestions, and pointers, as sometimes the best resources we have are other parents who have had the same experiences.

If you have not joined GAPAGT yet this year, please consider joining at the Individual, Family, or Patron level. Your continued support will make it possible for us to provide exceptional programs that will help us help our children.

Update on Uniform GPAs

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) met on September 17 to discuss and take a preliminary vote on recommendations for a uniform method to calculate grade point averages (GPAs) for admission to public universities. The vote was postponed after administrators from across the state said they were concerned about the proposed recommendations and urged the board to slow down the process. The current recommendations would give students extra points equally for taking Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses or dual-credit courses. However, students would not earn extra points for honors or Pre-IB courses that prepare them for the AP or IB courses. Without the ability to earn extra points for the higher level classes, students might opt for easier courses so they don't risk getting a lower grade in tougher preparatory classes. Any weighted scores would be adjusted to fit a 4.0 scale.

Lawmakers had hoped a uniform method would level the playing field for students competing to get into the top 10 percent of their class, which earns students automatic acceptance into any public Texas college or university. However, there is much debate on which courses will be included in the calculations and whether the level of rigor is equal among AP, IB, and dual-credit courses. Currently, Garland ISD weights IB courses on a 6.0 scale, AP/Honors courses on a 5.0 scale, and Regular courses on a 4.0 scale. The board is recommending the new rules go into effect beginning with the high school freshman class of 2009.

For further details visit <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/1617.PDF>. Comments regarding when the rules should be implemented will be accepted until **October 19, 2008**.

"...sometimes the best resources we have are other parents who have had the same experiences."

From the Coordinator's Desk

By Linda Phemister, G/T Coordinator, A899@garlandisd.net



Many new and exciting "happenings" are occurring at the Gifted/Talented office this year. First, we are privileged to welcome a new member to our team, Joni Mendez. Joni will serve as the Enrichment Specialist, helping teachers to enhance their teaching skills to better serve highly able students. She also is working closely with the Bilingual Department.

The Gifted/Talented Academy teachers were fortunate to begin their school year by spending a day of professional development with Dr. James Delisle. Dr. Delisle is the author of 14 books and numerous articles related to the social and emotional needs of gifted/talented children. He retired this year from Kent State University, but continues to write and conduct professional development training. Teachers were positively impacted by his presentation.

"This is the largest conference for educators of gifted students in the world."

The Texas Association for the Gifted & Talented (TAGT) will hold their annual conference in Dallas November 13-14, 2008. The conference will be held at the Dallas Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center. This is the largest conference for educators of gifted students in the world. TAGT has developed a new price structure for membership and parents may now join for \$25. The parent membership provides the *Tempo*, a quarterly publication from TAGT, the TAGT e-newsletter, and members-only website access, and e-mail updates. The updates are particularly important in legislative years. We hope many parents take advantage of the new rates and become active members of TAGT.

It is the time of the year for the G/T Office to begin to gear-up for the parent information meetings. Meetings begin in October for high school age students and continue through January for the younger students. Distribution of information regarding meeting times and dates begins soon.

Important G/T Dates

- October 9 IB Information meeting for 8th grade students/parents, 7 pm, Garland HS
- October 14 (repeat) IB Information meeting for 8th grade students/parents, 7 pm, GHS
- October 17 Online registration deadline for December's 7th Grade Duke Talent Search
- October 17 GAPAGT program, "Duke TIP," 7:15 pm, First UMC- Garland (6:30 potluck dinner)
- November 3 Postmark deadline for paper applications for January's 7th Grade Duke Talent Search
- November 21 GAPAGT Program, "Gifted and ADHD + Parent Panel: Living with Labels", 7:15 pm, First UMC- Garland (6:30 potluck dinner).
- November 21 IB and PAE Applications due to counselor's office if applying to Garland HS
- December 1 Online registration deadline for January's 7th Grade Duke Talent Search
- December 1 GISD Magnet Parent Information meetings
- December 4 MST Parent Intro meeting at Watson (for prospective parents)
- December 6 SAT test for 7th Grade Duke Talent Search (pre-register by October 17)
- December 13 ACT test for 7th Grade Duke Talent Search (pre-register by October 17)

See page 5 for additional dates!

Program Plans & Guest Speakers

By Diana Cooley, Programs, dcooley@gapagt.org

The GAPAGT Programs Committee has selected the third Fridays of each month for our guest speaker series this year, and worked out an arrangement with the First United Methodist Church in downtown Garland to host our programs. Our first one was September 19 with Linda Phemister, GISD GT Coordinator, and Edda Venable, Fine Arts Chairman at Garland HS who gave us an overview of gifted education in GISD and the unique Performing Arts Endorsement program.



Our next program will be **Friday, October 17**, and will feature special guest Traci Guidry from the Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP). Duke TIP has been a world leader in identifying academically gifted students and providing innovative programs to support their educational development. Find out more about the 7th grade Talent Search as well as programs for elementary and high school students.

In November, we've invited Jennifer Hood to talk about gifted students who may also be ADD/ADHD. This is an increasingly common diagnosis and parents may wonder how to tell if traits reveal giftedness, a medical condition, or both. Ms. Hood is a GISD parent and teacher who earned her master's degree in gifted education and wrote a thesis on GT/ ADHD/ Both/ Neither. She is currently a Math Instructional Support Teacher for GISD.

At each meeting, we hope to encourage more opportunities for networking with other GT parents by including a **potluck dinner prior to each presentation**. The dinner begins at 6:30 and the speakers will begin at 7:15 pm. What we eat depends on what you bring!

We've also added a **book swap** this year to help you clean out your completed readings for some new titles. We're trading both adult and children's books, so bring whatever you are willing to pass along and go home with some new stories. The book swap will run simultaneously with our potluck dinner and program on the third Fridays of each month.

Knowing how it can sometimes be difficult to attend programs if child care is a concern, we decided to add a separate **Children's Activity Room** for school-age children. We're collecting movies, books, board games, puzzles and other items to help entertain children and have recruited some teachers to help supervise in the Activity Room while the parents are attending the program. If you have items you can donate or would be willing to volunteer to assist the supervisors on a rotating basis, please contact Diana Cooley at dcooley@gapagt.org.

Membership Deadline

By Linda Williams, Membership, thewilliamsons@tx.rr.com

Welcome to a new year with GAPAGT!

In regard to our approved 2008-2009 budget, I would say that the GAPAGT budget falls under the 'shoestring' category! I would like you to especially note that the bulk of our revenue comes from **membership**.

If you have not had an opportunity to submit your new or renewed membership, please do so right away. We need and appreciate your support at the Individual (\$15), Family (\$25), or Patron (\$40) level. Your timely response is helpful to ensure we have funds available to support our planned activities for this year.

Send application and payment to: **GAPAGT P.O. Box 474 Rowlett, TX 75030**

Some Additional G/T Dates



October 9 or 14	Informational meetings featuring the International Baccalaureate Program and the Fine Arts Endorsement – Garland HS Cafeteria @ 7:00pm (identical meetings – select one)
October 16 or 20	Informational meetings featuring Dual Enrollment in High School and College classes, Law and Criminal Justice classes, and Television Production and Broadcasting classes – Lakeview Centennial HS Auditorium @ 6:00pm (identical meetings – select one)
October 13	Informational meeting featuring the North Garland HS Math Science Technology Magnet program – North Garland HS Auditorium @ 6:30pm Note: All students who want to apply for admission to a magnet high school <u>must submit an application, even if you are already in an academy or magnet school.</u> Applications must be completed by November 21, 2008.
December 8	Academy Parent Intro meeting at Kimberlin (for prospective parents)
December 9	MST Parent Intro meeting at Beaver (for prospective parents)
December 11	CC Parent Intro meeting at Vial (for prospective parents)
December 15	Academy Parent Intro meeting at Hillside (for prospective parents)
December 16	Academy Parent Intro meeting at Walnut Glen (for prospective parents)

Advocating for Math and Science

For many years, academically gifted 5th - 8th graders have been able to participate in a competition math and science team at Hillside, Kimberlin and Austin Academy. The teams compete as part of the Texas Math and Science Coaches Association (TMSCA) with other schools from across the metroplex and state, offering a challenging opportunity to grow and develop student skills while earning trophies, ribbons, and medals. Volunteers have primarily funded the team, with support from the sponsoring schools and occasionally from business donations. However, finding consistent teacher sponsors, qualified coaches, and financial support for each interested school to provide a competitive team has become increasingly difficult.

Therefore, GAPAGT formed a committee to develop a proposal asking for support from the school district, which would expand the team to allow qualified students from any school to participate and provide resources for a trained coaching staff. The proposal was submitted to the district in the summer of 2007, and was approved in the budget for 2008-2009.

Plans are currently underway to develop a qualifying test and hire coaches. To be selected for the team, students will need to complete an assessment test scheduled for October 20th and meet qualifying scores. Any 5th-8th grade student interested in trying out for the team should notify the district of their interest through an e-mail to A041@garlandisd.net. For more information, visit the Activities page at www.garlandisdschools.net/austin.

How Parents Can Support Gifted Children – Parent Advocacy

By Linda Kreger Silverman, *ERIC EC Digest #E515, 1992*

<http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/parents.gifted.html>

Gifted children need strong, responsible advocates, and parent groups can make a difference. It takes persistence of large groups of parents to assure that provisions for gifted children are kept firmly in place. Parents of children who are gifted need opportunities to share parenting experiences with each other, and parent groups can provide a place where that can happen.

It is important for parents of any children with special needs to meet with the teachers early in the school year. When parents and teachers work together, appropriate programs can be developed and problems can be caught early. Effective parents stay involved in their children's education and informed about gifted education in general.

Gifted children need parents who are responsive and flexible, who will go to bat for them when they are too young to do so for themselves.

Texas Association for Gifted and Talented Update

By Tracy Weinberg, Associate Director, Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented



Welcome to the start of the new school year. I hope it will be a successful one for you, your children, and your parent group.

TAGT has a busy year ahead. First and foremost is the TAGT Annual Professional Development Conference, November 12-14, 2008, at the Sheraton Dallas. As always, it will be an exciting conference, with over 250 sessions scheduled. You can view a full listing of all conference sessions on our [website](#).

One new part of the conference is free and open to the public. On Wednesday, November 12, the TAGT Exhibit Hall will be open from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Parents and families are invited to come and visit over 100 vendors with educational materials, books, games, and more. I will also be inviting you, as the leaders of the parent affiliate groups, to be a part of this activity. More details will follow in the next month.

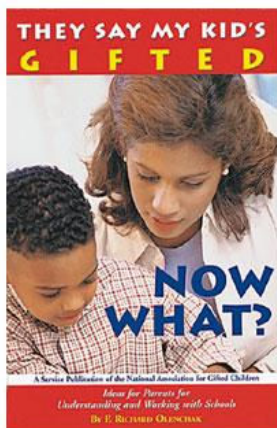
Remember that for every 10 members of your parent affiliate group that join TAGT (or already are current members with valid memberships into 2009); the group will receive one **Full Conference Registration** for the TAGT Annual Professional Development Conference. Reminder that TAGT now offers a Parent membership for only \$25.

You can also mark your calendar for Saturday, February 28, when TAGT will host its annual Parent Conference; this year's conference will be held in the San Antonio area, at Wagner High School in Judson ISD.

Finally, I want to let you know about an important educational study that was released this summer; *High Achieving Students in the Era of No Child Left Behind* was published by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. You can view it [here](#). This study documents that the narrowing of the achievement gap is produced in large part by static test scores of the highest achieving students. This is an important study and one that should be shared with interested parties.

If you have questions, concerns, or need advice, please contact me at tweinberg@txgifted.org.

BOOK REVIEW



They Say My Kid's Gifted: Now What? by [F. Richard Olenchak, Ph.D.](#) acts as a quick, easy-to-use guide for parents of gifted kids. Developed by the National Association for Gifted Children, this book shows parents how to become informed, effective partners when working with schools. The book also offers teachers an excellent resource to recommend to parents seeking more information about gifted education.

This handbook offers a jargon-free introduction to working with schools to help ensure a quality education experience for gifted kids. From understanding identification procedures and choosing a teacher, to ensuring a child's success with a gifted program and curriculum, this book is an essential read for any parent working with schools.

They Say My Kid's Gifted: Now What? also includes an extensive listing of state and national resources. The book is available from Prufrock Press, www.prufrock.com, for \$19.95.