

# Edina Council for Gifted & Talented

[www.ECGT.org](http://www.ECGT.org)

Volume 1, Number 1

October, 2007

The **Edina Council for Gifted & Talented** is a non-profit organization of parents and professionals dedicated to promoting better understanding of gifted and talented children. **ECGT** is an affiliate of the **Minnesota Council for the Gifted & Talented (MCGT)**. When you join **ECGT**, you also become a member of **MCGT**. Part of your membership dues goes to fund their services on the statewide level such as legislation for gifted, etc. For more information, see [www.mcgt.net](http://www.mcgt.net).

**When you join, please designate **EDINA** as your chapter.**

~ See page 2 for information on how to become a member. ~

## Welcome to our first newsletter of the year!

I'm often asked, "What benefit is there to joining ECGT?" To many, I'm sure, it is just another organization that requires more time and energy...and this day and age, we do not have time for anything that stretches us further. However, having been a parent of two gifted children in Edina Public Schools, with little prior knowledge of what that entailed, I am forever indebted to ECGT for the vast resources they provided me on gifted information! There is not a lot of information provided parents on this important concern we share as we navigate through uncharted territory with our children, other than through resources such as ECGT and MCGT (the State affiliate). No parent has the time or energy to take on the task of learning about giftedness on their own. ECGT is where I learned everything! No one can research it all – we have to work as a team! Joining ECGT takes as much or as little time commitment as you are willing to commit, but the payoff is greater than anything else you will ever join. You may want to attend all the meetings, or you may just want to read the information provided on the Yahoo group. You may want to become a Board member or you may want to just pick and choose which meetings interest you. Either way, joining ECGT and therefore MCGT, you will have at your fingertips a valuable resource that will be your best guide in providing you much valued information for the greatest benefit for your gifted child(ren).

I guarantee you that it will be the best investment of \$35 / year you will ever make.

Sincerely,  
Patty Carney-Bradley  
Communication Chair, ECGT

## ECGT Purpose

- To support gifted and talented children and their parents by providing information, a network and activities.
- To encourage the creation and use of community resources and learning opportunities for gifted and talented children.
- To foster an appreciation for academic excellence.
- To inform the general public about the challenges faced by the gifted and talented child.
- To advocate for the programs and funding needed to provide appropriate education for gifted and talented children.

## BOARD MEMBERS, 2007 - 2008

### Chair

Bonnie Guari  
[BGuari@comcast.net](mailto:BGuari@comcast.net)

### Communications

Patty Carney-Bradley  
[pcb@bradleydeike.com](mailto:pcb@bradleydeike.com)

### Vice Chair

*Open*

### Math/Science/Technology

Sue Lee [susanlee@ecae.net](mailto:susanlee@ecae.net)

### Secretary

Amy Kaiser-Weiss  
[Kaiserweiss@earthlink.net](mailto:Kaiserweiss@earthlink.net)

Andrzej Stankiewicz [astanki@att.net](mailto:astanki@att.net)

### Treasurer/ Membership

Allison Gaasedelen  
[Allison@qaas.cc](mailto:Allison@qaas.cc)

### Alternative Options

Ellen Kaiser  
[Ellen100@mac.com](mailto:Ellen100@mac.com)

## ECGT Meetings ~ 2007-8

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the Month

7:00 – 8:30pm (see location listed by event)

**October 9: MATS** (Midwest Academic Talent Search) information will be shared so parents can find out the value of this program and what it offers gifted students.

**MATS deadline is the end of October.**

[EHS Staff Lounge \(across from Fick Auditorium\)](#)

### November 7 - 11: NAGC Conference

**National Gifted Conference ~ Minneapolis**

**November 13: Successful Parent/Teacher Conferencing Techniques for your Gifted Child ~ Advocating for Your Gifted Child!** Panel of experienced parents will share their insights on the types of issues you and your child are experiencing.

[EHS Staff Lounge \(across from Fick Auditorium\)](#)

**December:** (no event)

### January 15: Speaker Event ~

**Dr. Stephen Schroeder-Davis**

**~Middle School Reform~**

[Edina Community Center \(ECC\) ~ Room 350](#)

[\(See his attached article in this issue\)](#)

**Thursday ~ February 7: MCGT CHAT Host Summer Opportunities** - deadlines are looming.

Hear from the kids themselves as to what experiences they have valued.

[EHS Community Rm \(across from Fick Aud.\)](#)

**March 11: Academic Planning for the High School Years.** For gifted students, the need for early planning should begin in middle school.

**Come if you have someone in grades 6-10.**

[Edina Community Center ECC 350](#)

**April 8: ECGT Event with District Representative** ~ chance for the District to meet with ECGT parents.

[Edina Community Center 351](#)

**May 13: End of Year ~ Social gathering and preview of activities that gifted children might want to consider becoming involved in next academic year.** [EHS Community Room \(across from Fick Auditorium\)](#)

### ~ NOTE from the CHAIR ~

The very best thing that you can do as a parent of a gifted child is to educate yourself. You need to become the "expert" on your own child so that you can be an effective advocate for him or her. Membership in ECGT and MCGT is a start. Where I learned the most about giftedness was by serving on the ECGT board. Being an ECGT board member is akin to being in a "gifted immersion" school. The people that I have worked with have been by far my best teachers on gifted issues.

Yes, I am trying to recruit parents to serve on the ECGT board. One reason is for the effectiveness of ECGT--the organization best serves its membership when the board includes elementary, middle school, and high school parents. Right now the board skews toward middle and high school; in fact, two board members (this includes me) don't even have students in the Edina district any more!

Another reason ECGT needs new board members is for the health of the organization. Board members do "age out" as their students enter and graduate from Edina High School. Without planned parent turnover on the ECGT Board, the organization will become dormant, leaving parents and students without a valuable resource.

I hope I have piqued your interest. The board meets once a month (or so) to plan upcoming programs and discuss current issues. A good deal of our communication is done via email. If you're even a little bit interested, contact me at [BGuari@comcast.net](mailto:BGuari@comcast.net). I'd love to share everything I've learned with you!

**Bonnie Guari**  
Chair, ECGT

#### **How to become an ECGT BOARD MEMBER:**

ECGT is always looking for people interested in taking on a more involved role in advocating for gifted students and supporting parents of gifted children in this District.

If interested in taking on a leadership role with this organization, please [e-mail](mailto:BGuari@comcast.net) Bonnie Guari.

Currently the position of Vice Chair is open and other Board positions will end their term

June, 2008

*Edina families of **GIFTED** students are strongly encouraged to sign up for **MCGT/ECGT** membership!*

*Sign up for **MCGT/ECGT** membership!*

### Here's what you receive with an **MCGT / ECGT** membership:

- Monthly local meetings on pertinent gifted topics for Edina gifted population.
- Access to other parents who share your interests as valuable resource partners.
- **Egroup** access to ask questions, obtain quick responses, and up-to-date resources from other knowledgeable people who share your same concerns and interests via an email chat group. (see next column)
- Membership to the State affiliate (**MCGT**) with connections to a vast wealth of gifted resources from across the metro area and outstate.
- Receive the info-packed newsletter from **MCGT** (**Outlook**) five times a year.
- Information on timely legislative issues that affect gifted education.
- Information on the enormous resources available for gifted children including summer enrichment!
- Connections with other **experienced** gifted parents who share their insights into questions other less-experienced parents might have.
- Learn about giftedness so you can be a strong advocate for your child.
- ECGT serves as the "**voice**" for gifted students in the District.

**If any of these reasons for joining MCGT/ECGT sound helpful to you...**

#### **HERE'S HOW TO JOIN MCGT/ECGT:**

Go to **MCGT's** website: [www.mcgt.net](http://www.mcgt.net).

Designate **Edina** as your chapter affiliate.

Membership is **\$35** / year.

### **Welcome to the ECGT Egroup !**

*~ You choose when and how to stay in touch! ~*

**This is a great new service! Egroup allows ECGT members to communicate with each other and a broader audience via email. This service has become a very helpful and beneficial way to receive vital information, ask questions and obtain resources from other knowledgeable people who share your same concerns and interests.**

**It's simple to use and easy to sign up!**

#### **To join the ECGT Egroup:**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ECGTedina/>

*(This group is for ECGT members only - details will be provided upon sign-up)*

#### **DESCRIPTION**

Official email group for members of the Edina Council for the Gifted and Talented (**ECGT**), a chapter of the Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented (**MCGT**). Moderated, with new subscriptions verified for **ECGT** membership before being approved.

If you request to be subscribed to this group, be sure to include enough information about yourself (e.g., your real name) so that your **ECGT** membership can be verified. This Yahoo Group is for discussion of issues closely related to the concerns of gifted and talented youth by parents, teachers, counselors, and all other members of **ECGT**. No PUBLIC archives are kept, but group members have access to group archives on the Yahoo Groups site.

**Adults are encouraged to use their real names and NOT to refer to minor children by name on the list.**

*Many wonderful upcoming gifted opportunities are NOT shared by the GRT's (Gifted Resource teachers) with Edina families due to an Edina School district policy. For example, anything that charges a fee, or is provided by an outside organization other than the Edina Public Schools cannot be shared without District approval. Your membership with MCGT/ECGT allows you to become a subscriber to the MCGT/ECGT groups list, which automatically sends out email announcements on gifted-related news, parent advice and academic opportunities*

**Dr. Stephen Schroeder-Davis** will be our **January 15 ~ 2008 EVENT SPEAKER** on the thought-provoking and very timely topic of *Middle School Reform*— one of the continuing Strategic Goals of the Edina Schools. He comes to us with a wealth of information on a topic that he has thoroughly researched. Please plan to attend his informative presentation on **January 15** where you will be able to hear his research and ask questions.  
~ A short synopsis is presented here for your information ~

## **Advocating for Gifted Middle School Students**

**Dr. Stephen Schroeder-Davis**

Two years ago, I created a presentation/workshop for the Minnesota Department of Education entitled “Blending Middle School and Gifted Philosophies,” which I have presented to a number of audiences around the state, including the Minnesota Middle School State Conference in both 2005 and 2006. I created the presentation in response to the on-going harm caused by deleterious (mis)interpretations of middle school philosophy as it relates to the needs and characteristics of gifted adolescents, who *should* have the opportunity to thrive in the middle grades but who too often stagnate—or worse—due to the *misapplication* of middle school best practices. Such misapplication is often compounded by ignorance of (and occasionally hostility toward) the concept of giftedness.

### **Giftedness and Middle School Philosophy**

Let me begin with what to some may be a startling premise: *There is nothing within either the literature or philosophy of middle schools that need be injurious to a gifted student.* In fact, when viewed with what I will call an “enlightened eye,” middle school philosophy is entirely supportive of gifted education, *including readiness and flexible grouping and acceleration.* Put another way, if middle school administrators or teachers are indifferent or opposed to appropriately serving gifted students, they are misreading and misapplying middle school philosophy.

### **Grouping**

Despite the fact that middle school literature supports “varied instruction, academic excellence, and developmental responsiveness,” there remains one significant (mal)practice that will undermine academic rigor and relevance for gifted middle school students: the overuse of heterogeneous grouping. Blind adherence to “mixed-ability” grouping continues to inhibit many teachers and administrators from deliberately and purposefully reducing the enormous continuum of readiness within a typical classroom through intentional grouping for instruction.

### **A Modest Proposal**

There are really only two options open to teachers seeking to consistently challenge gifted middle school students: group very deliberately by readiness in a whole group setting, such as an honors, pre-AP, or cluster classes, or rely on flexible (readiness) groups within a mixed-ability classroom. Both methods will require differentiation, as both arrangements still involve extremely heterogeneous classes

One way a middle school could meet the needs of gifted students—and, as a byproduct, all others as well—would be to offer one or more sections of math, science, language arts, and social studies in each grade that was:

1. Accelerated in pace and conceptual rigor
2. Taught by staff who were expert in their content area, pedagogy, and the needs of highly able learners
3. Understood to be for students who were highly capable in the content area AND willing to work hard, as pace and rigor would NOT be compromised for those who could not keep up. Those students would have to be willing to accept a lower grade, devote extra time to study, or transfer to a less demanding course.

**Due to data privacy considerations, the Edina School District cannot share with ECGT the names of families who have students receiving Gifted Education Service. IF you would like to become part of a data base to receive updated current info on gifted issues affecting your child via email, please be sure to sign up for ECGT email ([info@ecgt.org](mailto:info@ecgt.org)) or send your home address and email information to CHAIR Bonnie Guari ~ [BGuari@comcast.net](mailto:BGuari@comcast.net). This list will not be shared and will be used only for passing along ECGT information.**

### **List of Recommended Books for Parents of *Gifted Children***

- *Perfectionism – What’s Bad About Being Too Good?* Adderholdt & Goldberg
- *What to Do When Good Enough Isn’t Good Enough: The Real Deal on Perfectionism: A Guide for Kids*, Tom Greenspon
- *College Planning for Gifted Students*, Sandra Berger
- *Genius Denied*, Jan & Bob Davidson
- *Handbook of Gifted Education*, Colangelo & Davis
- *Education of the Gifted & Talented*, Davis & Rimm
- *When Gifted Kids Don’t Have All the Answers*, Delisle & Galbraith
- *What to Do When Good Enough Isn’t Good Enough: The Real Deal on Perfectionism: A Guide for Kids*, Tom Greenspon
- *Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades*, Sylvia Rimm
- *Re-Forming Gifted Education*, Karen Rogers
- *Infinity and Zebra Stripes: Life with Gifted Children*, Wendy Skinner
- *Managing the Social & Emotional Needs of the Gifted*, Schmitz & Galbraith
- *More Than a Test Score*, Schultz & Delisle

### **Helpful *Gifted Resources***

#### **[www.hoagiesgifted.org](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org)**

**Hoagies' Gifted Education Page** is probably the most complete source of information and support for gifted students, parents and educators. You can find just about anything here, including information on testing, highly gifted, social/emotional, books and other resources, identification, twice-exceptional, etc.

#### **[www.mcgt.net](http://www.mcgt.net)**

The **Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented** is the parent organization of ECGT.

#### **[www.megt.org](http://www.megt.org)**

The **Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented** website includes position papers on responding to the needs of learners at different school levels, diverse gifted learners, and learners in rural settings.

#### **<http://nationdeceived.org>**

A Nation Deceived is the website where you can download the **Templeton National Report on Acceleration**, *A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students*, or request a free copy.

#### **[www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)**

The **National Association for Gifted Children** has information and resources, convention and seminar details, legislation information, news articles about gifted from U.S. and international sources, frequently asked questions, a holiday toy list, a summer program search capability, publications and membership details.

#### **[www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt.html](http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt.html)**

The **National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented**.

#### **[www.sengifted.org](http://www.sengifted.org)**

**SENG, Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted**, is a nonprofit organization "dedicated to fostering environments in which gifted adults and children, in all their diversity, understand and accept themselves and are understood, valued, nurtured, and supported by their families, schools, workplaces and communities." Included are articles, resources, community forums and information about upcoming conferences and SENNG support group facilitation.

**ecae edina center for academic excellence**

**[www.ecae.net](http://www.ecae.net)**

**952-929-9241**

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**ECGT is looking to start a  
GIFTED STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL  
~GSAC~**



Identified Gifted students in grades 6 – 12 are encouraged to participate as advisors to **ECGT**. Since **ECGT** supports gifted issues and is the voice of Gifted in this District, student input is highly valued.

We are looking for two representatives per grade.

If interested, please fill out the form below and return to **Bonnie Guari** by **December 1, 2008** either by email [BGuari@comcast.net](mailto:BGuari@comcast.net) or mail to her at 4705 West 60<sup>th</sup> Street, Edina, MN. 55424

**Name:**

**School:**

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_

**Address:**

**Email address:**

**Phone:**

*Please share why you would be interested in serving on GSAC and ideas you have for gifted students in this District:*

Bonnie Guari, Chair ECGT  
4705 West 60<sup>th</sup> Street  
Edina, MN. 55424

**~ ECGT Volunteer Opportunities ~**

*Please check as many as you are interested in. Checking a particular area indicates that you would like to be contacted for more information.*

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Email Address:**

**Phone:**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chair          | <input type="checkbox"/> Math/Science/Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vice Chair     | <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Options     | <input type="checkbox"/> Fund-Raising       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secretary      | <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary Liaison      | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Board      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treasurer      | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School Liaison   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> High School Liaison     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor Coordinator |

**Please return to: Bonnie Guari, Chair ~ 4705 West 60<sup>th</sup> Street ~ Edina, MN. 55424**