



GIFTED SERVICES GAZETTE

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Gifted Services Coordinator

My name is Dr. Rowe Van Meter and I am the Gifted Services Coordinator for WESD. The Project Potential, GLC, and Flex teachers have been busy planning amazing learning experiences designed to help your child achieve six major outcomes. All gifted students in WESD should strive to become self-directed learners, collaborative workers, complex thinkers, problem solvers, quality producers, and community contributors. Thank you for affording us the opportunity to nurture your child's potential this year. Please keep reading for important news pertaining to gifted education in WESD. A resource for parents from the NAGC about starting the school year can be found on the back as well.

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Sincerely,

Rowe Van Meter, Ed.D

Quarterly Parent Meetings

Gifted Services will hold quarterly parent meetings / family game nights once again this year in order to share important information with you about gifted education and build community among parents and students. All meetings will take place from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the district office located at 4650 W. Sweetwater Ave. (behind ASU West). Snacks will be provided. The entire family is welcome!

Save the Dates:

- **September 15, 2021**
- **November 10, 2021**
- **February 23, 2022**
- **April 20, 2020**

Gifted Testing

The first gifted testing window of the year will open soon. If you would like to refer a child for testing, talk to the teacher of gifted on your campus or complete the screening form from the [Gifted Services webpage](#).



"I've finished my homework for the next seven years!"

AAGT Parent Institute

Each year the Arizona Association for Gifted and Talented holds a Parent Institute in order to provide information of interest to parents of gifted children. A kid's program coincides with the parent presentations in order to create a fun day for all! The theme this year is "Educating the Whole Child." Registration info below.

Date: *Saturday, Sept 25, 2021*

Time: *8:00am-4:00pm*

Location: *Gateway Community College*

*City Center Campus
1245 E Buckeye Rd
Phoenix, AZ 85034*

Cost: *\$25 members / \$35 non-members*

Additional cost for Kids Zone



Visit arizonagifted.org/parent-institute to register, or scan this QR code with a smartphone camera

Starting the School Year on a Positive Note: Five Key Suggestions for Parents

The new school year is on the horizon, and you're already feeling somewhat apprehensive. You know that transitions are a challenge for your gifted child— whether it's a new school, a new grade level, a new teacher, or all of the above. You want to make sure that your child's new teacher understands that your gifted child has learning needs that differ from others. You feel that establishing a close and respectful partnership with your child's teacher early in the year can ease stress and set a structure for a successful year of learning.

In anticipation of meeting the new teacher, you think about questions you want to ask. You start with the obvious: "Are you aware that my child is gifted? What is your experience teaching gifted children? How do you plan on challenging my child this year?" At the same time, you really don't want to come across as one of *those* parents. What's a parent to do?

Here are five key strategies to form a strong relationship with your gifted child's teacher:

1. Share information about how your child thinks and feels, along with any specifics that will help the teacher understand your child's learning needs at school. Respect the process the teacher has structured for seeking information about her students. Bear in mind that the first weeks of school are hectic for teachers, and providing a quick look into your child's world will go a long way toward helping a new teacher connect. Many teachers send surveys, questionnaires, or learner profiles at the start of the school year. Use these tools to inform the teacher about your child.

If your child's teacher does not take this step, consider sending her some information directly. Remember that the teacher is working to learn the ins and outs of every student in the classroom, so you should keep your initial information specific and concise. If you have medical information to share, be sure to include the school nurse in your communication.

2. Approach the partnership with respect. Know that your child's instructor *wants* to be there. Teachers enter the field because they enjoy helping children learn. As parents, this is what we want! Sadly, most teachers enter the classroom with little or no previous experience with gifted children and meager understanding of how to recognize and respond to gifted learners (only a few states require this training in teacher preparation programs). Unless a teacher sought out the training or is a parent of a gifted child, it is likely that you may have more background and understanding of gifted children than the teacher. After introducing your child to the teacher, ask her if she would be open to you sharing information, such as the occasional article or event on gifted education that you feel is relevant. In brief, appreciate that even if she is inexperienced working with gifted children, she is there to know and teach all of her students.

3. Appreciate teachers' attempts to meet the needs of all their students. As the parent of a gifted child, you want your child's teacher to know that you respect the range of learners she works with and that you believe that every student in the class is equally important. This approach will help convey your expectations that *all* children in the classroom deserve to make academic progress every day, including the advanced learners.

Offer support in whatever way you can. Teachers often feel frustrated that their schools have limited resources or services for advanced learners, and they are rarely able to impact the programs offered by their schools or districts. Fortunately, they have great influence over what occurs in their classrooms. Whether your school is cluster grouping, offers pull-out gifted services, or relies solely on its teacher workforce, it is the classroom teachers who have the biggest impact on children's education. Having the support of gifted students' parents helps them build a collaborative and respectful relationship between family and school.

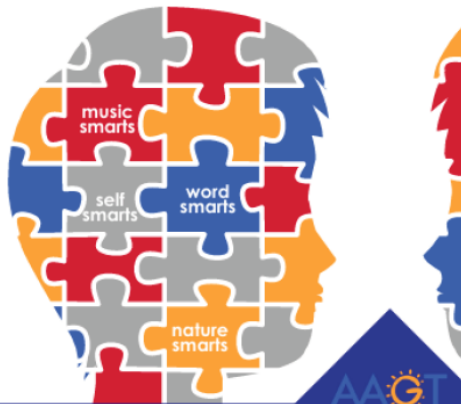
4. Clear communication is critical, but time is a premium for teachers. They also have responsibilities beyond those in the classroom. Understand that teachers do not have a great deal of time for one-on-one meetings, particularly at the beginning of school year and at the end of the grading periods. If a meeting is needed, prepare your notes in advance to keep focused on the issue and use the time to your best advantage. Ask your child's teacher for her preferred contact method, and take advantage of whatever means of communication she has set up (e.g., email, phone, or classroom website). Attend "Back to School Night," "Curriculum Night," and any other opportunity provided to learn about the structures in your child's learning environment.

5. Please don't fuel a fire! Be very careful not to spread misinformation. Far too often, parents become distressed or anxious based

on inaccurate information passed along by other well-intentioned parents. Examples of information that may be inaccurately perceived include changes in the identification process, programming, funding, and/or services offered to gifted children. If you question the validity of news you hear, go to the source that should be sharing that information, such as the teacher, the school principal, or the school or district's gifted coordinator. As stated above, clear communication is critical; it can support, and even build, your school's gifted services when approached in a positive and proactive manner.

The best advice we can offer is to have confidence that your child's teacher is there because she enjoys nurturing the minds of her students. She truly wants to give her best. At times during the school year, she may reach out to you to share information, ask questions, or seek input. Be supportive, be kind, and appreciate her efforts. She is the strongest influence on your child's learning, and she shares your wishes for a productive school year.

This blog post—by Dina Brulles, Ph.D., director of gifted education at Paradise Valley Unified School District and gifted program coordinator at Arizona State University, and Karen L. Brown, gifted program mentor for Paradise Valley School District—is an excerpt from Parenting for High Potential (Summer 2016).



2021 Parent In

Developing the Whole Child

Panel Discussion Topics

- Strategies to Make The Most of Your Child's Gifted Program
- The Importance of Play & Movement at Any Age
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion In Our Schools

6 TED-Talk Style Speakers discussing topics including:

- Social Interaction
- Emotional Regulation
- Parent Education Topics

and more!



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