



June 13, 2013

Department: From Where I Sit



Get Out the Vote

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It's my turn this issue to [introduce you to the candidates](#) who seek your vote for the NAGC Board of Directors. If you are an individual member of NAGC, you have the opportunity to vote for the leaders who will represent your interests on the NAGC Board of Directors and within Networks over the next few years.

Your "civic" duty on behalf of NAGC has become more important than ever — the dynamic changes in education and on Capitol Hill, along with a continuing challenging fiscal climate, will require tenacity and patience from leaders everywhere and demand tough choices about resources. The NAGC Board is comprised of 13 members, and every voice counts.

Within the next day or two, individual NAGC members will receive an email that provides you with a link to the ballot. It invites you to choose the NAGC president elect for the Board. You also have a chance to vote for Network Leaders within those networks to which you belong. All voting needs to be complete by July 19.

Once you vote, you have an opportunity to get more involved with the NAGC service community. Be sure to review your options for [committee service](#) and how you can best contribute your expertise.

I stand now to encourage you to be an active and engaged member by casting your vote! Read below to learn more about the candidates for the NAGC President Elect or visit the [NAGC website](#).

What's most relevant from your professional background and experience that you think our readers should know?



George Betts



Jaime Castellano



Ken Dickson



Sally Krisel

George Betts: Gifted children and their education has been my passion in life. After I received my doctorate in psychology and counseling in 1972, I served as a counselor and teacher of alternative education at Arvada West High School in Arvada, Colorado, where I discovered how deeply underserved the needs of gifted children are. In response, I created the Autonomous Learner Model for the Gifted and Talented. I also developed the Summer Enrichment Program at the University of Northern Colorado and became the Director of the Center for the Education and Study of Gifted, Talented, and Creative Learners. I served in that capacity for 35 years and am now Professor Emeritus. I also served as a member of the Board of Directors of NAGC for 21 years. My passion for serving the gifted has not diminished.

Jaime Castellano: The most relevant information from my professional background and experience that NAGC members should know is that I have been characterized by others in the field as a scholar, practitioner, and leader. This unique blend of skill and ability has allowed me to be a well-respected scholar, having authored three definitive books on underserved populations. I also have the practical experiences as a teacher of the gifted, gifted education director, principal, and superintendent with implementing state-of-the-art, research-based practices in schools with staff, students, and parents. As a leader in the field, I have served on the NAGC Board of Directors, currently serve as Chair of its Diversity/Equity Committee, participate in the Expert Speakers Bureau, and have keynoted for eight different state affiliates. These collective experiences in gifted education have allowed me to give back to a field of study that, in turn, has allowed my career to flourish beyond expectations.

Ken Dickson: The most relevant includes my commitment to and longevity in our field. They have allowed me to successfully collaborate with hundreds of committed people. Among them are hundreds of K-16 teachers, administrators, authors, researchers, publishers, and most importantly students and their caregivers. I firmly believe that committed people successfully collaborating are NAGC's greatest asset. My commitment began as a gifted education Masters student in the late 1970's at the University of Arkansas - Little Rock where I was motivated to attend my first NAGC Convention in 1980. I have missed two conventions since. This commitment has led to service as a gifted teacher, administrator for gifted programs, NAGC Board member, member of The Association for Gifted Board, and numerous related projects concerning gifted children.

Sally Krisel: Most relevant is the scope of my background in the field. I began my career in the regular classroom where I saw clearly how the special needs of gifted learners often go unmet. I've taught gifted youngsters in grades K-12, and I was project coordinator for the NRC/GT study of gifted students from underserved groups. I have been a local gifted program coordinator and served 10 years as Georgia's State Director. Currently, I am part-time faculty at UGA and direct innovative and advanced programs for a large, diverse school system. Perhaps most importantly, I was blessed with two gifted children, one of them twice exceptional. As a two-term NAGC Board member, I have gained an understanding of the challenges and opportunities we face as an organization.

How do you hope to shape the future direction of NAGC?

George Betts: I hope to focus our organization on the diversified needs of the gifted child. While curriculum differentiation and instruction are essential to the field of gifted education, the social and emotional needs of gifted and talented students must also be addressed. I would work to bring groups and individuals together with this focus in mind. My leadership approach for NAGC would be one of communication, consultation, and collaboration for all with whom I would work. I have a deep and continuing understanding of the field of gifted education, the dynamics of change and growth, and the skills to promote a facilitative environment within NAGC. I would use these skills to continue the efforts of the many Networks in meeting the goals and directions of NAGC.

Jaime Castellano: I hope to shape the future of NAGC in two strategic ways. First, by influencing state and national policy, continuing to build on the tireless work of our Legislative and Advocacy Committee, national office, and Board of Directors. Aligned with our legislative advocacy at the national and state levels, it is incumbent that we strengthen our efforts in working with superintendents and principals as they have the primary responsibility for the day-to-day operations of serving gifted, advanced, and high-ability learners. Offering sessions at our national convention, sharing research that informs procedures, instruction, and identification, and by continuing to expand NAGC's administrator toolbox are ways to continue our efforts on what happens in schools. Secondly, with no federal monetary allocation for gifted education and overall dwindling resources, we must increase our national membership by strategically marketing to a more diverse population in terms of ethnicity, race, geography, and other professional associations.

Ken Dickson: Through quality collaboration, build on successful past and current projects connected to our vision and strategic framework to:

- enhance visioning, trust, transparent communication, creativity, persistence, negotiation, capacity building and compromise throughout NAGC;
- build enduring confidence among our youthful stakeholders with leadership potential to assure their long-term investment in NAGC and their potential to recruit new members;
- grow and diversify our membership;
- provide leadership for all NAGC endeavors, especially those associated with advocacy/legislative processes that are critical to support learners with exceptionalities;

- provide leadership for collaboration with other organizations/partners; support diverse expressions of gifts and talents in children from all backgrounds; and maintain current and forge new relationships with other advocacy groups dedicated to academic, social, and emotional growth of learners.

Sally Krisel: Whether it's in the role of President, Board member, committee volunteer, or committed supporter, I will continue to contribute to NAGC by focusing on our goals of identifying and responding to key trends and issues that are relevant to gifted students, identifying essential partners and developing relationships to create synergy for nurturing high potential youth (NAGC 2010-2015 Vision and Strategic Framework). We've made great strides in this area (e.g., joint conventions and publications with other national organizations, publications on Common Core Standards and gifted students), but we must continue to articulate clearly the needs of gifted students to a variety of audiences in ways that are compelling in their worlds. It is in this way that I believe I can most effectively serve our organization.

What do you find to be the most promising development or educational trend in the world of gifted education that has emerged in the past five years?

George Betts: One of the most promising developments in the field of gifted education is the strong commitment to focusing on closing opportunity discrepancies for low-income and culturally and linguistically diverse gifted students, with enhanced emphasis on the identification and appropriate support of these students, especially emphasizing early access to enrichment opportunities and advanced learning. Two specific areas in which young learners can particularly benefit are literacy and STEM. I find these to be exciting opportunities for enhancing equity in the identification and appropriate educational opportunities of our diverse young gifted learners.

Jaime Castellano: My initial and immediate response to this question had me brainstorming a list of promising developments that included various timely and valuable contributions to the field in the form of publications; an increase in the rigor and complexity of a national curriculum; and the concentrated efforts of trying to influence a legislative agenda that would benefit gifted, advanced, and high-ability learners. After more personal reflection, I decided that although these developments are worthy of consideration, something greater exists that epitomizes who we are as a field, reflecting our collective spirit advocating for a unique sub-group of students who often get the short end of the proverbial stick. I speak of the field's resiliency and ability to persevere. Over the past five years this is what has kept us moving forward. The ability to be resilient and persevere, often in the face of dire adversity, is our legacy. It is what keeps the passion alive in our hearts and in our souls.

Ken Dickson: Identifying one outstanding trend is a compelling notion, as several developments have emerged or are emerging that are inextricably connected and not named yet given their interrelatedness. In that regard, I find emerging promising developments regarding our efforts concerning a more defensible context regarding a theoretical construct that more effectively bridges

general and gifted education – yet retains the necessary structure required for unique learners. Strong voices have brought attention to the equity and excellence gap and the issues on talent vs. giftedness. Voices as strong have brought cogent messages regarding patterns and trends concerning not only gifted capital, but also leadership/social capital for our future. Additionally, we are making commendable strides regarding our ongoing nemesis - diversity in terms of academic relationships to culture and family income as wonderfully delineated in *NAGC'S Unlocking Emergent Talent: Supporting High Achievement of Low-Income, High-Ability Students*.

Sally Krisel: I am excited about the use of technology to engage gifted students and to remove barriers in the acquisition and construction of knowledge. Through technology, we can accelerate or enrich student learning, even in locations where traditional gifted program resources are scarce. The authenticity of using professional-level technology inspires excellence and encourages the development of sophisticated products. Technology allows gifted youngsters to explore individual interests in depth and to connect with other students and adult mentors who share those interests. What a godsend for highly gifted children who all too often suffer from a sense of isolation! Online classes, telementors, email, and other forms of communication coupled with guidance from caring professionals and parents hold great promise for expanding students' learning horizons!