

FALL NEWSLETTER

NBCT Grant offered

National Board Certified Teachers is offering grant-funded opportunities to those who are nationally certified or to those who are not yet certified, but desire working on a collaborative project. The focus of the grant is to fund “projects which will test the effectiveness of teaching strategies in different types of settings, whether they are different settings within a single school, different levels or types of schools, or different parts of the state,” according to the grant application.

National Board Certified Teachers has a mission, which recognizes that classroom “are the best laboratories of teaching and learning,” therefore it is the mission to initiate action research that improves students’ opportunities to learn.

The research projects, which might be considered for a grant, do not have to include large groups of students, but should test the efficacy of an instructional or behavioral strategy for a single student in a variety of settings.

Another effective form of research would be to compare the effectiveness of a teaching strategy or tool in classrooms that are located in different areas of the state.

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The Greatest Show on Gifted Education

The New Mexico Association for the Gifted had its 13th annual Fall Gifted Institute Oct. 20-21 at New Mexico Highlands University Rio Rancho Center. The theme was Under the Big Top of Talent Development: The Greatest Show on Gifted Education.

The conference was well attended with parents and educators of the gifted coming from all over the state to attend professional development sessions in a variety of topics.

“In this day and age of cuts to education and increasing caseloads, it is nice to be able to take some time away from school and engage in quality professional development with like-minded peers,” said past-president PJ Sedillo. “NMAG has spent the last 13 years providing educators across the state with pertinent professional development that you can take back and use in your classrooms the next day, if you wish.”

Session topics included the cure for perfectionism, gifted 101, information on twice-exceptionalities, Destination Imagination,



San Juan Gifted Association is reorganizing

San Juan Gifted Association, an affiliate of the New Mexico Gifted Association, is working to reorganize its chapter and return to its original focus of supporting educators and parents of the gifted by providing educational opportunities, outreach and professional development.

The organization, which was chartered in 2009, has a mission “to strengthen membership, develop a common voice and broaden communication throughout the state regarding gifted issues,” according to the state bylaws of the New Mexico Association for the Gifted.

The San Juan Chapter began in 2012, presenting annual conferences with a variety of themes. Some of the topics covered include, destination differentiation, channeling creative, tools and technology for the 21st Century student and giftedness and the real world.

The chapter has a desire to continue providing support and educational opportunities to administrators, teachers and parents of the gifted throughout San Juan County.

robotics, college prep for the gifted students, critical thinking and creativity, STEM and STEAM, assistance for mothers raising gifted and talented children and testing and gamification. There also was a student panel, speaking about their giftedness and the educational system.

A theme throughout the conference was about underrepresented populations in gifted education as well as gifted students living in poverty. Dr. Jaime Castellano, of West Palm Beach, Fla., is nationally recognized, leading authority on the identification, assessment, recruitment and retention of low-income, culturally and linguistically different gifted students. He is the author and editor of four books that highlight how to understand gifted students with great abilities from diverse backgrounds. Castellano was the keynote speaker of this year’s conference, and he presented two sessions; one on identifying and



servicing underrepresented populations in gifted education and one on why investing in talent is the smart thing to do.

Castellano reminded educators that “we are there for the best interest of the students,” and to “model and value lifelong learning” for the students.

Castellano said as teachers we should foster student choice and thus make the gifted students responsible for their own learning. “Emphasize student individuality - absolutely allow them to work alone,” he said, adding, “make collaboration available but not mandatory.”

He addressed how important it is to have gifted education in diverse communities, rather than bussing gifted students from poorer neighborhoods to schools outside of their district in order to receive gifted instruction. He also stated that educators need to search out those underrepresented gifted students and be advocates for them and their parents.

As in past years, NMAG accepted nominations for teacher of the year, administrator of the year and advocate of the year. The award recipients were recognized prior to the keynote address at the Inn of Rio Rancho, the sponsor hotel of the event.

Martha Moses was named teacher of the year. She began working as a gifted educator in 2003 and from the beginning, “her primary goals have been to help students understand how much fun learning can be,” according to her biography. She enjoys creating a culture of thinking and curiosity in her classroom. “We set out to explore our world through investigation and collaboration during which the students make magic happen, ask unexpected questions, try new ideas and construct their understanding of our extraordinary world,” Moses said.

Jack Vermillion, principal at SY Jackson in Albuquerque, was named administrator of the year. He has been at SY Jackson for 16 years and said he is proud of his school. “We have a large gifted program with three B-level teachers and two C-level,” Vermillion said. “It is a wonderful school, and the students receive a great education.”

Vermillion was recognized in 2003 as PTA Principal of the Years. He was featured in Reader’s Digest, which highlighted an anti-bullying program and he has been a guest on NBC Nightly News for his school’s Character Counts Program. “My greatest accomplishments are being married 30 years and my two wonderful boys,” Vermillion said.

The advocate of the year was Sheri Clark, who has served as president of the Albuquerque Association of Gifted and Talented Students for the past five years. She was a board member prior to that term. Clark initially became involved in gifted education as an advocate for her two sons. She also wanted to assist other parents in





learning how to support their gifted students and navigate the system. “Sheri believes that meeting the needs of gifted students and helping them live up to their potential makes our entire community stronger,” according to her biography.

In addition to the awards ceremony, keynote address and conference session, there was a meeting to work on updating the Gifted Technical Assistance Manual, and there was a general meeting in which new board members were elected. J Ortiz was elected as president, and PJ Sedillo

will serve as past-president. Geoffrey Moon was elected to serve as president-elect. Anna Gibson will remain as secretary. Steve Heil is the publicity chair and webmaster, while Cory Messenger is the membership chair. Debra Mayeux was elected to serve as the newsletter chair and Hayley Wondra and Raquel Mendoza are the student representatives.



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The projects main purpose should be to ask and answer a question that could help improve teaching and learning.

A final report will be required by every grantee, and they also will be required to share their findings to the entire community of teachers in New Mexico.

The funding specifics are as follows:

- Grants for solo projects (carried out by a single NBCT researcher) will be awarded in amounts up to \$1,000.
- Grants for partner projects (carried out by two NBCTs, or one NBCT and one partner teacher) will be awarded in amounts up to \$2,000.
- Grant funds may be used to reimburse the costs of supplies, materials, books, software, field trips, guest speakers, consultants, data processing, etc. associated with the action research.
- Grant funds may not be used to buy electronic devices costing more than \$500 each.
- Grants funds may not be used for in-state or out-of-state travel, meals, or unrelated expenses.

The deadline to apply for an action research grant is Nov. 29, and they should be submitted electronically to Anita Warriar at wariar_a@aps.edu.

Also contact Warriar for more information and a copy of the application.

