DEADLINES & UPDATES

HAPPY NEW YEAR, 2014!

Have you made any New Year’s resolutions for this year? What plans do you have to improve gifted services in your school(s) and programs? How many of you plan to continue improvement of concept-based curriculum units? Our first course for the 2014 ten-week Concept-based Curriculum Writing course will be offered this summer. However, the independent study course, “Cooking Up Concept-Based Curriculum,” is always open and available any time of the year.

We received a suggestion to provide a two-day concept-based curriculum writing and sharing workshop this summer. How many specialists would be interested in attending this PD? How far are you willing to travel to attend this training? Please click this link to complete a survey to help us determine if there are enough specialists interested in attending and when, where, and how many of these trainings we could/should provide this summer.

SECOND GRADE CHILD FIND LEA SUMMARY REPORT

DEADLINE: APRIL 20, 2014

The gifted/special education coordinator submits the Second Grade Child Find LEA Summary Report. The deadline for specialists to submit their school reports (the number of students listed in the top two quadrants from each second grade teacher) to the coordinator is much earlier than the deadline above. Coordinators must have all school reports in order to compile the data to submit to the ALSDE. Each school is entered on the report with the total number of students by race/ethnicity. To know which students are referred, second grade teachers must complete the class TABs rating all students in the classroom on each of the ten traits, aptitudes, and behaviors. The six required lessons elicit gifted behaviors and are products to use with referrals. Share the scores of these lessons and the aptitude test with teachers to help them complete the TABs. The gifted specialist should review the TABs characteristics including the “flip sides of the coins” using the TABs PowerPoint (located on Moodle) as teachers complete the class TABs. Be explicit with classroom teachers by pointing out which lessons and aptitude scores correlate to the characteristics. For example, NNAI2 scores correlate to Problem Solving and Reasoning on the TABs. This will help teachers “see” the gifted characteristics and rate students appropriately.

Referrals: Use the three highest scoring items that reflect the strengths of the child. Although multiple items are collected from the same domain (three transformations and two writing samples), only one transformation and one writing sample may be used, if needed. Grades must never be used with referrals for students in Grades K-3.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

HOW TO SCORE

THE TORRANCE TEST FOR CREATIVE THINKING, FIGURAL

January 27, 2014 from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Gordon Persons Building, Auditorium on Plaza Level

In Alabama, one way we identify gifted students is through creativity. When we monitor gifted programs we look at the Gifted Referral Tracking Log for different aptitude assessments. We expect to see the Torrance Test administered to students who demonstrate creativity. Administering the test is not difficult, however, you must be trained on how to score the test. This scoring is very different from intellectual aptitude tests. Therefore, we invite you to join Dr. Sarah Sumners, Assistant Director of the Torrance Center for Creativity and Talent Development, to be trained on how to score the Torrance Test for Creativity Thinking, Figural. Register in STI-PD by the PD number-SESGift0013 or PD Title-Scoreing the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking, Figural.
FOLLOW-UP WEBINARS TO GIFTED REGIONAL TRAININGS

To register and access these webinars, go to STI-PD and search by PD Title- 2013 Gifted Regional Training Follow-Up or PD number-SESGift0010. The following webinars are listed as sessions under this PD Title. To know the specific session topic, look under Additional Session Information located at the bottom of each session box.

- Communication Media: To be rescheduled
- Technology Resources on the Web: March 4, 2014 at 2:30 PM
- Creating & Interpreting Infographics: March 6, 2014 at 2:30 PM
- Scope and Sequence-Cognitive: May 6, 2014 at 2:30 PM
- Scope and Sequence-Affective: May 8, 2014 at 2:30 PM

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION of ALABAMA
February 13-15, 2014
http://eeaa.us/2014-conference-at-beckwith/

The annual conference will be held at Camp Beckwith Camp and Retreat Center near Fairhope, Alabama. This year’s theme is “Beaches, Bays, and Bogs.” This conference is a mix of keynotes, breakout sessions and field trips. Thursday evening keynote is Dean Mosher, artist, historian and storyteller and Friday’s keynote is Dr. George Crozier, former Executive Director of Dauphin Island Sea Lab. Breakout sessions engage participants in content and hands-on activities for Grades K-12. Field trips provide opportunities to experience and apply content and skills from the College and Career ready Standards. Trips include Pontoone Boat Ride through the Delta, Pine Beach trail hike, and Kayaking Weeks Bay. To find out more about this excellent conference or to register, click here.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES
2014 Muhammad Ali Center Peace Garden Grant
http://grants.kidsgardening.org/2014-muhammad-ali-center-peace-garden-grant-0
Deadline: January 17, 2014

The National Gardening Association is proud to announce the 4th year of the Muhammad Ali Center Peace Garden Grant, created in partnership with the Muhammad Ali Center and underwritten by the Yum! Brands Foundation. In an effort to help schools sow the seeds of respect, the Muhammad Ali Center Peace Garden Grant is designed to teach lessons of peace and hunger awareness through garden activities. As a global initiative, national and international youth gardening programs are eligible to participate.

To be eligible for the 2014 Muhammad Ali Center Peace Garden, your school or organization must plan to garden in 2014 with at least 15 children between the ages of 3 and 18. Preference will be given to schools within the United States with student body eligible for 50% or more reduced or free lunches. This is a global initiative; all International countries and territories are eligible to apply. The selection of winners is based on the demonstrated relationship between the garden program and peace studies, and nutrition and hunger issues.

Fifty award packages are available. 2014 award winners will receive a gardening package valued over $500.00 including:
- $400.00 in gardening supplies
- $100.00 for soil amendments and plants

For more information or to download the application, click here.

NEWS FROM AAGC
Happy Gifted Education Month, 2014!

The Second Annual Gifted Education Month (GEM) has arrived! Governor Bentley has signed a 2014 Proclamation declaring January as Gifted Education Month in Alabama! You can view the proclamation at www.alabamagifted.org. The theme for Gifted Education Month this year is Gifted Matters in Alabama!

Gifted Education Month provides teachers, parents, administrators, and legislators an opportunity to highlight the importance of gifted education and program services in Alabama. Gifted Education needs to matter in Alabama because gifted education provides a venue for students to reach their full potential by:
- enhancing leadership opportunities
The Alabama Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) gave each fall conference attendee an advocacy toolkit/handbook filled with suggestions and ideas. If you need a GEM Toolkit, please click here. I would like to encourage you to contact your legislators, administrators, media, and newspapers in January to advocate for gifted education’s needs that include:

- raising the Gifted Student Program budget from $1.05 million to 3 million in the upcoming State Legislative Budget. **Next legislative session begins January 13th, 2014.**
- heightening awareness and support for gifted program in Alabama
- partnering and networking with stakeholders, businesses, and community leaders.

Advocating for Alabama gifted students and programs can advance new technologies; increase leadership in business, community, schools, and state leadership; attract new businesses that require innovative individuals; increase the pool of inventors and entrepreneurs; and create productive citizens who will contribute to Alabama’s economy.

AAGC will highlight your gifted education week activities at the fall conference. Please send your GEM ideas to me at bamswaine@aol.com. Please provide a short narrative detailing your event. Let’s successfully demonstrate why gifted matters in Alabama!

The rewards from our hard work last year were great for gifted education to receive funding for the second time ever! More legislators, administrators, businesses, and community leaders understood the needs of gifted education because of our efforts last year. Let’s keep reaching until our mission is accomplished! Gifted education needs your support to be successful again this year!

Gifted does matter in Alabama!

Amy Waine
President of the Alabama Association for Gifted Children
bamswaine@aol.com
@sniarb on Twitter

**BOOK-TEACHER OR STUDENT**

**Robotics with Enchanting and LEGO® NXT:**
A Project Based Introduction to Programming
http://monash-blockbooks.appspot.com/#enchanting

Download this free interactive e-book to learn how to program a LEGO® NXT robot using Enchanting (see Resources section). You'll begin with a series and tutorials and activities, which will teach you how to use the NXT brain, motors and variety of sensors (touch, ultrasonic, sound and light). Then you'll be stepping through the challenges entitled: Velociraptor, Robot Sumo, Bomb Squad, Maze Solver, The Mountaineer and more! (Submitted by Julie Altmark, Hoover City Schools)

**Invent To Learn: Making, Tinkering, and Engineering in the Classroom**
By Sylvia Libow Martínez

From Amazon: “Join the maker movement! There's a technological and creative revolution underway. Amazing new tools, materials and skills turn us all into makers. Using technology to make, repair or customize the things we need brings engineering, design and computer science to the masses. Fortunately for educators, this maker movement overlaps with the natural inclinations of children and the power of learning by doing. The active learner is at the center of the learning process, amplyfing the best traditions of progressive education. This book helps educators bring the exciting opportunities of the maker movement to every classroom.” The book can be ordered as an e-book or paperback. (Submitted by Julie Altmark, Hoover City Schools)
Finding John Galt: People, Politics, and Practice in Gifted Education  

Editor: Dr. Elizabeth Romey

Dr. Elizabeth Romey, former professor of gifted at U.S.A., has just edited a book that went to press last month. This book covers “the significant highlights in the history of gifted education, addressing significant contributors to the field, important political and policy concerns, and programs and practices of note.” You can click the link to order the book from the publisher or click the link to find an e-book seller.

RESOURCES

Computer Coding with Students

Enchanting  
http://enchanting.robotclub.ab.ca/tiki-index.php

Many gifted specialists use LEGO Mindstorm robots in their gifted classrooms or sponsor robotic clubs after school. Enchanting is a free and open source tool to allow children an easy-to-understand way to program the robots. It is based on Scratch and BYOB/Snap! (Submitted by Julie Altmark, Hoover City Schools)

Junior United Nations Assembly (JUNA) of Alabama  
www.junaofalabama.com

JUNA is a student-run model of the United Nations Assembly for students in Grades 6-8. “Each delegation, composed of 5-7 students, represents a different nation of their choosing (depending on availability). Guided by their teacher sponsor, students research their nation, identify a problem or issue in that country or elsewhere in the world, and write a resolution that proposes a solution to the issue. Resolutions are presented first in committees and upon passage are presented in General Assembly. Here delegates discuss, question and vote just as they would do in the real United Nations. Students wear the native dress of their country and make a flag to use for recognition in the General Assembly.

JUNA develops skills in public speaking, critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership. Students in grades 7-10 can serve as Secretary General, Vice Presidents, clerks, security council monitors and committee chairmen. One measure of JUNA’s popularity is the number of students who return for second and third years at JUNA and then serve as officers. The problem-solving and leadership skills that students learn at JUNA are skills that they can use for a lifetime.” (Submitted by Veronica Rhodes-Simmons, Birmingham City Schools)

Get the Math  
http://www.thirteen.org/get-the-math/

“Get the Math is about algebra in the real world. See how professionals use math in music, fashion, videogames, restaurants, basketball, and special effects. Then take on interactive challenges related to those careers.” You can preview videos at the Web site before assigning the challenges.

Curriki Geometry Course  
http://www.curriki.org/welcome/resources-curricula/curriki-geometry-course/

Curriki provides free courses and materials for teachers to use with students to teach geometry through project-based learning. These projects are based on “inquiry learning which is academically rigorous: students pose questions, gather & interpret data, ask further questions, and develop & evaluate solutions or build evidence for answers.” Students build the skills and confidence that will help them conquer any mathematical problem and develop 21st-century skills such as communication, collaboration, and teamwork. Students complete learning logs and checklists as they work through the activities and projects. Rubrics are included for evaluating the projects and activities.

Math WebQuests

Grades K-2:  53 webquests  
http://questgarden.com/search/webquest_results.php?curr=currmath&grade=gradek2&Submit=Search

Grades 3-5:  98 webquests  
http://questgarden.com/search/webquest_results.php?curr=currmath&grade=grade35&Submit=Search
Webquests provide real-world application of math skills and content as students work collaboratively to solve problems. This is a great resource to share with classroom teachers to differentiate for high-end learners. These quests are not just for gifted students but provide the real world problem-solving our students need, but can be used with all students for problem-based and project-based learning, depending on the quest. Problem-based learning, which is more advanced than project-based, is what is embedded into many culminating performance tasks of concept-based units. These links are the result of searches by grade level with the most current webquests listed first.

CONTESTS & REAL-WORLD CHALLENGES

US Kids Magazine Cover Contest
Deadline: February 28, 2014
Theme: If I Had A Superpower

Students who are residents of the US between the ages of 3-12 may enter the contest. Participants may create an entry on a contest drawing page found on the cover contest's Web site at http://uskidsmags.com/artcontest. You may also create your entry on an 8.5 x 11-inch sheet of unlined, white paper. All entries must be accompanied by an entry form, which can be found on the Web site. All entry forms must be signed by the entrant's parent/guardian. By signing, parents/guardians grant permission for their children's artwork, first name, and photo to be put online or printed in the magazine. For more information and details of the contest, please visit the Web site.

Engineer Girl
http://www.engineergirl.org/17382.aspx
Deadline: March 1, 2014

From the Web site: “The year 2014 marks 50 years since the creation of the National Academy of Engineering (NAE). Much has changed in that half century! At the 1964 World’s Fair in New York, visitors were amazed by color televisions, a prototype of a picture phone, new materials like Mylar®, displays of a space program that promised to put an astronaut on the moon, and demonstrations of huge computers that could draw up a list of events that happened on a given date in history. We now have computers on every desk and some that can fit in our pockets. We have explored the moon and Mars and launched the Hubble space telescope. Our phones can take pictures, connect to the internet, and play music and movies. All these innovations relied on engineering. Think about how engineering has affected your life. How has it improved people’s quality of life? What further needs of society could be addressed by engineering?

In honor of the NAE’s 50th anniversary, we invite you to imagine how engineering might change our lives over the next 50 years, in one of the following areas:
• Nutrition
• Health
• Communication
• Education
• Transportation

It is challenging to imagine what the future will bring, and we think that you are up to the task. In 1500 words or less describe how engineering has addressed one of these five areas of societal need (e.g. Transportation) in the past 50 years and suggest ways that engineering could address this area of need in the next 50 years. Guidelines for length are indicated below.
• Grades 3–5: about 400 to 500 words
• Grades 6–8: about 600 to 800 words
• Grades 9–12: about 1100 to 1500 words

Make sure to review the contest requirements and awards, and submit your essay by March 1, 2014 at 6:00 pm EST.”

FIELD EXPERIENCES

The purpose of the field study experience is to enhance and enrich the content and skills from units of study. The trip becomes an embedded activity within the concept-based curriculum unit. This month’s featured trip is Scholastic’s Global Trek at http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/globaltrek/. This site is set up like Expedia, Orbitz, or Travelocity. Students choose a country to visit virtually. When they “arrive” at
their destination, students are provided with a suggested travel itinerary. Students complete a travel journal of their thoughts and experiences on their journey. Students can create global postcards that demonstrate their comprehension of the country and culture. You can have students create their own postcards using critical thinking to include why this country is unique, what made the trip interesting, and/or why other students should visit this country. The postcards can be printed and displayed. The activity includes a rubric, too.

As with any field trip experience, what before, during, and after experiences have you planned for students to further the studies of the concept-based curriculum? What Essential Understandings will students discover through Essential Questions and/or Scaffolded Questions as they experience the field study?

CONCEPT-BASED CURRICULUM

EUs, EQs, SQs

This month’s featured EUs are related to Leadership and entitled Movers and Shakers!. You would not teach all EUs within one unit but select the EUs that focus on your content. Remember that all SQs may not be used because your students may have the prior knowledge. One EU could take months to teach. Remember that the SQs are listed but the activities to help students answer the questions are not included. What additional scaffolded questions can you add to these EUs? What activities would you include with the questions?

Essential Understandings, Essential Questions, and Scaffolded Questions:

EU: Leaders may bring about changes-positive, negative, or both-some of which are unintended consequences, as a result of their policies.

EQ: How might leaders bring about changes-positive, negative, or both- some of which are unintended consequences- as a result of their policies?

SQ: How might a leader bring about positive change? Negative change?

SQ: Give examples where leaders have brought about positive and negative changes through their policies. Examples: President Franklin Roosevelt and Social Security; President Barach Obama and the Affordable Care Act; President George Bush and the No Child Left Behind Act; Woodrow Wilson and American isolationism; Martin Luther King and non-violent conflict in the Civil Rights Movement.

SQ: What is a consequence?

SQ: Explain “unintended” consequences

SQ: Have you ever experienced unintended consequences from something you or someone else did?

SQ: What is a policy?

SQ: Name some of your classroom policies, school policies, community policies.

SQ: Pick one school policy- such as the discipline policy, the no fighting policy, attendance policy, etc. What are the intended and unintended consequences of this/these policies?

SQ: What are some national policies that have generated unintended consequences?

EU: Strong leaders may emerge as a result of injustice or social upheaval.

EQ: Why might strong leaders emerge as a result of injustice or social upheaval?

SQ: What is injustice?

SQ: Have you ever been the victim or witnessed injustice to another person? How did it feel? What did you do about it?

SQ: How do you know when something is unjust?

SQ: Have you ever been accused of being unjust in your relationships with others?

SQ: Give some examples and non-examples of injustice.

SQ: Give some examples of leaders who emerged because of injustice. Think about strong leaders who led to positive change, and some whose leadership led to negative change.

SQ: What is social upheaval?

SQ: Give some examples (make a timeline?) of social upheavels in this country.

SQ: Give some examples (make an interactive timeline to overlay with the timeline above?) of social upheavals around the world.

SQ: Who were some of the leaders who emerged during these times of social upheaval?

SQ: Did these emerging leaders create policies that brought about positive change? Negative change? Both? Give examples.

SQ: Were there unintended consequences of these policies? (Activity: PMI- Make a list of these policies and classify them as positive, negative, or interesting unintended consequences. Defend your answers.)
EU: Leadership may require passion, commitment, resilience, persistence, and a vision for the future in order to bring about lasting change.

EQ: Why might leadership require passion, commitment, resilience, persistence, and a vision for the future in order to bring about lasting change?

SQ: What is passion? What are you passionate about?
SQ: How does being passionate about an idea or an event affect your desire to accomplish something?
SQ: What is commitment? Name several types of commitment. Which one seems to fit with the topic of leadership? Why?
SQ: What is resilience? Give some examples of people you know who are resilient. Explain why you think these people are resilient.
SQ: Has their resilience been a positive or negative quality. How do you know?
SQ: What is persistence? How is it different from commitment?
SQ: When have you been persistent?
SQ: How do you know you were persistent?
SQ: How do you feel when you are persistent about accomplishing something and finally achieve?
SQ: How do you feel when you are persistent and have not or cannot accomplish a task?
SQ: What does persistence in others look like?
SQ: If persistence were a color, what would it be and why?
SQ: What is a vision?
SQ: Do you have a vision for the future for yourself? Explain your vision.
SQ: What is necessary in order for you to accomplish your vision for your future?
SQ: Explain how persistence, resilience, and commitment might help you to accomplish your vision for your future?
SQ: Give examples of others who have accomplished their visions through passion, commitment, and persistence. Explain how each of these elements-passion, commitment, and persistence- helped them to accomplish this vision.
SQ: How do you know when something changes?
SQ: What is the difference in short-term and long-term (lasting) change? Give examples of each.
SQ: Name at least one short term and one long-term change in your school.
SQ: Why do you think some changes are short term, while others are long term?

EU: Leaders may need to undergo great personal sacrifice in order to achieve the greater good.

EQ: Why might leaders need to undergo great personal sacrifice in order to achieve the greater good?

EU: Communication and the ability to connect with others on an emotional level (charisma) affect one’s ability to achieve a position of leadership.

EQ: How might communication and the ability to connect with others on an emotional level (charisma) affect one’s ability to achieve a position of leadership?

Etiquette Culminating Performance Task

Last month we asked you to submit a culminating performance task (CPT) for the Etiquette EUs. The CPT provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate mastery of one or more of the EUs and requires students to “Think Like a Disciplinarian.”

The culminating performance task contains three parts: what, why and how.

- The “what” is the verb(s) analyze, evaluate, investigate or create with the theme, topic, or subject. This sets the stage of what students will be doing for the final activity in the unit.
- The “why” connects the EU or EUs to the final project. This is the EU for which students will demonstrate mastery after completing the project. Sometimes more than one EU is listed or sometimes there are more than one CPT, each with a different EU, for student choice.
- The “how” is the open-ended activity that students will “think like disciplinarians.” Sometimes students may choose the profession and sometimes it is provided for them. In this example, students are required to be “Sociologists.”
The Etiquette CPT in sections:

(What) Students will investigate current etiquette practices through surveys and create projects based on the results of the surveys.

(Why) in order to understand how appropriate etiquette communicates respect for human dignity in diverse situations.

(How) Working as Sociologists for the Limestone County School System, students will survey their home schools about student knowledge and practice of various rules of etiquette (cultural, scholarly, social media, school, classroom, interpersonal, sports, manners, etc.) Students will use the results of the surveys to determine needs in these areas within their schools in order to improve school environments. They will then launch various service learning projects aimed at the identified objective. Examples of projects might be: Videos, blogs, advice columns, brochures, lessons, morning announcements, rallies, etc.

The Etiquette CPT as it would look in your unit:

Students will investigate current etiquette practices through surveys and create projects based on the results of the surveys in order to understand how appropriate etiquette communicates respect for human dignity in diverse situations.

Working as Sociologists for the Limestone County School System, students will survey their home schools about student knowledge and practice of various rules of etiquette (cultural, scholarly, social media, school, classroom, interpersonal, sports, manners, etc.) Students will use the results of the surveys to determine needs in these areas within their schools in order to improve school environments. They will then launch various service learning projects aimed at the identified objective. Examples of projects might be: Videos, blogs, advice columns, brochures, lessons, morning announcements, rallies, etc.