

January 2008

Upcoming Events

- February Program - **Be on the lookout** for a detailed flyer in your child's backpack later this month as well as a posting on our website and communication through our yahoo group for further details...
- 3rd Annual Educational Resource Fair - **By volunteering what little time you may have you are helping us support this event** which includes many organizations that provide outstanding opportunities and programs for children.

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CHALLENGE Advocacy Network Development Organization

Visit us on the web! www.bataviacando.org

"Imagine the frustration of an athlete who isn't allowed to run, jump, or move. This gives some inkling of the frustration of a bright child denied the chance to challenge her mind. Underachieving gifted students may not display such restlessness as obviously as an athlete would, but this doesn't mean they don't need intellectual stimulation.

It is important that parents and teachers see intellectual development as a requirement for these children, and not merely as an interest, a flair, or a phase they will outgrow..."

Some of My Best Friends Are Books
by Judith Wynn Halsted

Gifted Program Evaluation Committee Recommendation to School Board

Expansion, passion, priority, energy, cautious optimism... all these words describe the January 8th School Board meeting. As promised, this school year continues to be a very pivotal year for gifted education in Batavia. Dr. Wright presented a high level overview of the Challenge Program Evaluation Committee's report, including the committee's conclusions, and a very strong recommendation for enhancement of the Challenge program to the School Board. In a nutshell, there's a lot of work to be done to bring the program up to the minimum NAGC Gifted Education Standards (normal requirements for satisfactory programs).

A full copy of the report can be found on the District's website at the following

...continued on page 2

3rd Annual



Educational Resource Fair

Rotolo Middle School 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Tuesday, February 26th, 2008

This FREE event will allow families to learn about summer and after-school enrichment activities for K-12 students.

Here is just a sampling of the organizations represented: *Ispirare School*

of Music and Expressive Arts

Illinois Math and Science Academy

Northern Illinois University

Northwestern University

Discovery Center Museum

Da Vinci Academy

Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra

Elgin Children's Chorus

First Street Playhouse

Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory

National-Louis University

Waubonsee Community College

Music Education Centers of America

Your help would be greatly appreciated in any number of ways, help with planning now, or for just a few hours the night of the event. Our planning meetings are open to anyone and take place at Barnes & Noble located in Geneva Commons. Please contact caroline@baty-barr.com for more information. Thank you.

Recommendation *...continued*

address: <http://www.bps101.net/depts/curriculum/challenge.html> and the committee's recommendations are provided below:

- The mathematics program should be expanded to five days of instruction for third through fifth grade students.
- An enrichment program and targeted differentiation should occur for students in kindergarten through grade two.
- A replacement language arts program should be created for grades three through eight. The major focus of this program should be reading and writing, but should utilize inquiry-based instruction that incorporates global issues in science and social studies that are of interest to students.
- Identification procedures for the language arts program should consist of multiple criteria that include assessment of reading, writing, and verbal ability. An investigation should be conducted to determine why we have underrepresented populations in our current program. The purpose of this investigation should be to improve the current identification process of math students, as well as create an equitable process for the language arts program. There should be clear and frequent communication to staff and parents regarding identification procedures, program design, and instructional methodology.
- Professional development should be provided to classroom teachers who have students in either program. Topics may include, but are not limited to: characteristics of gifted students, understanding the social-emotional needs of the gifted, strategies for differentiation of instruction, and planning/collaboration time with the Challenge teacher. Challenge teachers should be expected to participate in a minimum number of hours of professional development

each year. Topics should target gaps in their own learning as well as topics to meet the needs of their students.

- Social-emotional guidance and counseling should be available for students based on their needs. Special attention should be given to underachieving gifted students and to those who lack study, time management, organizational, social, and peer relationship skills. Middle and high school students should be given career guidance in choosing a strong career path.
- The following forms of program design and acceleration should be investigated: early admission/entrance into the next learning level, multi age classes, early high school graduation and admission into college, curriculum compacting, flexible grouping, independent study, distance learning, and dual credit classes.
- As expansion occurs, management of the program will become more complex. A full time program coordinator should be assigned to this task. Responsibilities would include, but are not limited to: oversee the program at all schools, liaison between elementary, middle, and high schools, coordination of professional development, mentoring of staff, grant application and management, resource allocation, and liaison with parents and the Regional Office of Education

The School Board's reaction to the presentation was one of great enthusiasm, with an overwhelming response to make an expansion of the Challenge program a priority. An estimated \$250,000 will be necessary to implement this expansion and the School Board will be reviewing the funding that is necessary to make these recommendations a reality within the school budget.

A hearty thank you and congratulations to Dr. Jan Wright and the Challenge Program Evaluation Committee who

2nd Annual 5th Grade District Math Competition

The Second Annual 5th Grade District Math Competition is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 20th. The competition will be held at the Batavia Library. The competition is open to ALL interested 5th Grade Students. Qualifying test will be administered the week of Jan. 14th - please check the backpack for a flyer with details and parent permission slip.

Liz Selander is **seeking parent volunteers to help with practice sessions** to be held on Jan. 29th at 3:30 and Feb. 7th at 3:30. Sample problems and answers will be provided for volunteers, please contact Liz if you can help out: elizabeth.selander@bps101.net

dedicated many, many hours of their time to conduct a thorough review of the Challenge program and a comprehensive report. A thank you also to the teachers, parents, students, and administrators who provided input through surveys and focus group feedback as well.

And to those parents and teachers who attended the School Board meeting to support Dr. Wright and the committee's recommendation, thank you for being there to show your support. We are optimistic about this expansion and ask for your continued support and enthusiasm for gifted education in Batavia throughout this year. Ann Hejna, Gwen Seeley-Joose

IAGC Conference

The Illinois Association for Gifted Children annual convention took place on December 9, 2007. The keynote speaker was Arlene DeVries who spoke on parenting. Two representatives from the Illinois General Assembly spoke on advocacy. The session was participative, involving parents of children with a wide range of abilities and behaviors, from a variety of socio-economic groups and school districts with varied resources and responses to their needs. The messages are clear: Model communication skills with your kids, and aggressively seek action from the legislature.

My favorite points from DeVries:

- Studies have shown there is a strong relationship between home discussion and academic achievement. She emphasized discussion as opposed to taking turns asking and answering questions. Share what's going on in the world, as appropriate, and dig deeper about their experiences.
- Get in the habit of taking an Emotional

Temperature Reading, "On a scale of 1-10, how was your day?" If everyone in the family shares, it opens up conversation and provides opportunity for empathy.

- For praise, consider using the phrase, "I admire the way you...." It speaks to effort rather than result. This is particularly important since things usually come easily for our talented children. Helpful advocacy tips from Illinois General Assembly representatives:

- Remind your state representative of your interests. They will forget about you and your concern if you don't. It's okay to contact them repeatedly.
- Be in touch with your state representative any way that is comfortable for you: email, phone, mail, in-person.
- Do not send identical emails. They are usually discarded. Individualize the recommendation if you want it read.

- Lauren Mastrud

Interschool Council

The second 07-08 Interschool Council meeting was held November 2. Some specific items of interest which were discussed:

- An amendment was officially added to the Bylaws that interest groups that had been recognized by the district, such as CANDO, would have a chair on the interschool council.
- A suggestion was made to put anticipated fundraisers on the district calendar so groups could take each other's efforts into consideration when planning their own fundraisers, making the burden less on parents, and increasing the likelihood of success.
- The early childhood center at Alice Gustafson will be known as the Outdoor Learning Area. Plans are in the works for a remarkable recreational, social, sensory area that encourages both interactive and independent play. The district is currently looking to raise money through grants and fundraisers. For more information, contact Mary Collins at collins8356@sbcglobal.net
- The district has been working on a concept plan for changes to Batavia High School. On the right side of the BPS101.net home page, click on BHS renovations to see a draft site plan and submit a public input form.

Resource Review

Upcoming Events & Dates: For general information on any of these events or to request a different type of resource in future CANDO newsletters, please contact Lauren Mastrud at lsmarder@sbcglobal.net or call 630-406-0147.

Event & Date(s)

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| ■ Young Scholars - Aurora University
www.packerfoundation.org/scholars/ | Winter session: 1/20 – 2/17, 2008

Summer Outdoor Scholars Overnight Camp: 6/23-6/27, 2008 for students entering grades 4 – 8
Lake Geneva campus, Wisconsin |
| ■ Jan. 17: Noon - Batavia Public Library | Author Dr. Stephanie Pace Marshall presentation of her book: <i>The Power to Transform: Leadership That Brings Learning and Schooling to Life</i> . Dr. Marshall is the Founding President and President Emerita of IMSA, the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy. Her book received The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International 2007 Educator's Award. A book signing will follow Dr. Marshall's presentation, and copies of her book will be available for purchase. |
| ■ Jan. 27: 1 - 3 p.m. - I MSA
www.imsa.edu or call 630 907 5028 | IMSA Open House - Summer Program 2008 Preview |
| ■ Jan. 28: 1 - 5 p.m. Fermilab
http://ed.fnal.gov/ffse/openhouse.html | Fermilab Family Open House 1 - 5 p.m. |
| ■ IMSA
847-841-7532 ext 226 | Illinois Math and Science Academy (IMSA) will hold its annual mathematics competition March 5, 2008. Students in grades 6-8 who participate take a bus to and from Rotolo Middle School during the day and enjoy a tour of the campus and facilities. The first practice session is the evening of January 22. |

BFEE Awards CANDO Grant for Virtual Author Visit

The Batavia Foundation for Educational Excellence (BFEE) recently awarded CANDO a grant to purchase a Virtual Author Visit DVD from author Dan Gutman. If you're not familiar with Mr. Gutman, he is a popular juvenile fiction author with a wide variety of



books for various levels of readers. Having written more than seventy books, his most popular titles include *Honus and Me*, *Babe and Me*, *The Million Dollar Kick*, and his *My Weird School* series. His titles are

appropriate for both girls and boys.

This support from the Foundation will enable CANDO to use the DVD for Challenge students through an evening program organized by CANDO. The evening program will offer social and educational enrichment by offering an insight into a day in the life of a successful children's author.

The grant also allowed us to purchase three autographed copies of Mr. Gutman's books, which participants will have a chance to win during the evening program. Watch for more details regarding this upcoming program to be held later this year!

- Ann Hejna