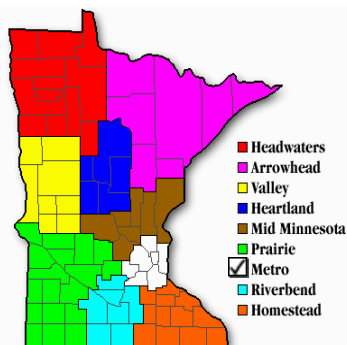




FALL 2008

MetroMEGT

A newsletter of the Metro Chapter of the Minnesota Educators of the Gifted & Talented



GIFTED BOYS



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2008 MEGT Position Paper explores underachievement among gifted boys

by Kathryn Marget

Sugar and spice and everything nice
That's what little girls are made of.



Perhaps the most alarming statistic of all comes from current research on underachievement: *boys make up 90% of extreme underachievers* (Colangelo and Kerr, 2000).

Snips and snails and puppy dog tails
That's what little boys are made of...



As the mother of one of each—a boy and a girl—I can see the appeal of this comparison. Although he has his “everything nice” moments, there really is something more “earthy” and rugged about my son. But regardless of such apparent truths lurking in antiquated nursery rhymes, not all young men fit these stereotypes, nor should they be expected to.

These numbers show that despite our best intentions, many teachers still unconsciously subscribe to male stereotypes and hold unrealistic expectations about how boys should learn and behave in the classroom.

It appears we may have let boys down. If that is the case, what do we need to do to get them back on track?



Education is facing some uncomfortable trends in academic performance among boys. In general, girls are outperforming boys in K-12 education, on tests as well as on report cards. More specifically...

This year's MEGT Position Paper, its 10th, is devoted to these issues. The position paper will address concerns about the current intellectual development and well being of gifted boys. In addition to documenting trends and causes of male underachievement in academic settings, the paper will offer recommendations to help educators turn around underperformance among male students.

- boys are scoring lower than girls on national reading tests;
- boys are dropping out of high school at higher rates;
- boys' college admission numbers are declining; in fact, women now outnumber men in college by a ratio of 4 to 3.



MEGT Workshop

Dec. 12, 2008

**Hamline University
St. Paul**

See Page 2 for details

continued on page 5

Building 21st Century Skills



A workshop for educators of the gifted

Featuring innovative business leaders, dynamic curriculum, technology & future perspectives.

Presented by the Metro Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented

Innovation
Creativity
Problem solving
Cooperation
Critical thinking
Engineering
Computer skills

Friday, December 12th

8 am - 3 pm @ Hamline University, St. Paul

Audience: K-12 teachers, specialists, administrators

Cost: MEGT members \$45, non members \$50 (includes lunch)

Become a member of MEGT for 1 year for \$40

Register before Nov. 30 (checks payable to MEGT)

PLEASE COMPLETE ONE REGISTRATION FORM PER ATTENDEE.

Name _____ Email _____

Position/grade _____ District _____

Phone _____

_____ Payment is included with this registration OR Purchase order # _____

_____ Workshop cost + _____ 1 yr membership (optional) = _____ **total due**

Please enclose payment with your registration.

Send registration forms to Beth Fawley.

1440 49th Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421 or fax 763-528-4437

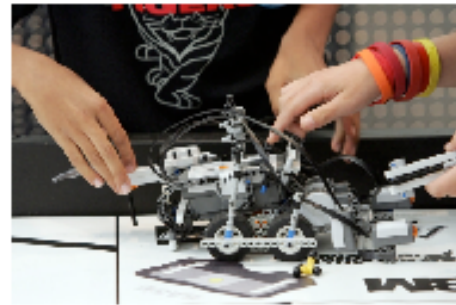
Questions? fawleyb@colheights.k12.mn.us or 763-528-4430

Building 21st Century Skills will feature keynote speakers:



Dr. Earle Kyle - a high-tech product/business development consultant who's dreamed of going to Mars since he read Werner Von Braun's articles on space. A former military/aerospace engineer/physicist with postgraduate work in business administration from the University of Minnesota, his designs have flown on Apollo manned moon missions, Skylab, Orbiting Solar Observatory, Delta rockets, and the SR-71 Blackbird. Earle's extensive resume includes work with chemical/biological warfare sensors, biomedical devices, speech communication systems and NASA. He is president of Minds for Progress (a non-profit corporation promoting space careers for inner-city children).

Fred Rose - Director of Technology & Strategy for Honeywell Inc, USA. He is co-founder of a non-profit, based in Minneapolis: *Innovations in Science and Technology Education* and the *High Tech Kids* network. INSciTE runs science and technology programs in MN, the largest being First Lego League, and has an international exchange program for students involved in technology competitions.



Fred says, "My focus, in both my work with Honeywell, and my non-profit work with INSciTE, is the development of people of all ages to be world class problem solvers, skilled in the use of science and technology, and doing so in a global, collaborative environment."

Metro MEGT is looking for presenters for breakout sessions on:

Robotics
STEM programs in local school districts
Community resources
Teaching thinking skills
Classroom games
Technology applications for the classroom
21st century literacy, science, and math skills

Interested presenters should contact Beth Fawley by November 30.

Newly Elected MetroMEGT Board

PRESIDENT: Kathryn Marget

Gifted Education Coordinator

ISD622 N. St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale Schools

Kathryn has been involved in gifted education for 18 years, serving as a middle school gifted teacher, program director, and district coordinator for school districts in both Colorado and Minnesota. She served on the Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented Board and was inducted into the Colorado Academy for Gifted Educators. She has served as Communications Officer and newsletter editor for *Metro* for the past three years.

VICE PRESIDENT: Beth Fawley

Coordinator for Gifted Services

Columbia Heights Public Schools

Beth coordinates the K-12 gifted program, including elementary cluster classrooms, Pre AP and AP courses, and the AVID program. She supports Destination Imagination and Future Problem Solving teams throughout the district. Beth has presented at conferences for NAGC, MEGT, Confratute, MN School Health Education, and District 916. She serves on the North Metro Summer Academy Board of Directors, and teaches in the Academy as well. Random House Books named her the 2006 Magic Treehouse Educator of the Year, and has since published several teachers guides she has written for the book series.

SECRETARY: Jane Balow

Gifted & Talented Specialist

Prior Lake-Savage School District

Jane has worked as a gifted and talented specialist in two schools for the past eight years. She has served as the MetroMEGT secretary for the past two years.

TREASURER: Mary Crampton

Retired Gifted Educator

Mary is a retired educator from Eden Prairie, where she taught Geography for 20 years and was a Middle School GT Coordinator for the last 9 years. She is currently the treasurer of the Metro branch of MEGT. Mary is a lifetime member of NEA, and a member of the steering committee of the Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE: Sue Feigal-Hitch

Gifted Education Specialist

Forest Hills Elementary, Eden Prairie Schools

Sue Feigal-Hitch has served on the MetroMEGT board for 17 years. She has been president-elect and president of the metro chapter as well as president-elect and president of the state MEGT board. Sue is currently the state representative for MetroMEGT and a conference planner for the state MEGT organization. She has been active in gifted education for more than 28 years. Sue is the coordinator of the Gifted Certificate program at Hamline University and is also an instructor in this program.

Become a Member of MEGT!

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Home Phone

Email Address

School or Business

Please mark your MEGT Region:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arrowhead | <input type="checkbox"/> Headwaters | <input type="checkbox"/> Riverbend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heartland | <input type="checkbox"/> Homestead | <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Metro | <input type="checkbox"/> MidMN | <input type="checkbox"/> Valley |

Memberships are \$40 per year. Half of the fees collected before March 15th of each year are returned to your region as a rebate.

Memberships are renewed annually at the February MEGT conference or at the Education Minnesota Conference in October (*in which case it is a 15-month membership*).

**M
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P**

Please send your check along with this form to the membership chair at the address below. If you have questions, please contact Pam Pearson, Membership Chair.

MEGT Membership Chair

Pam Pearson
1120 Lark St.
Alexandria, MN 56308
ppearson@alexandria.k12.mn.us
MEGT Website: www.megt.org

Gifted Boys, *continued from page 1*



The Data

In his article, "Myths About Boys," Time magazine writer David Von Drehle quotes Christina Hoff Sommers, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute: "More boys than girls are in special-education classes. More boys than girls are prescribed mood-managing drugs. This suggests...that today's schools are built for girls, and boys are becoming misfits. As a result, more boys than girls drop out of high school. Boys don't read as well as girls. And America's prisons are packed with boys and former boys."

The statistics seem to support these statements. According to the publication "America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being" put out by a number of federal agencies, including the departments of Justice and Education, "statistics collected over two decades show an alarming decline in the performance of America's boys" (Von Drehle, 2007).

National Assessment of Education Progress scores show boys performing seven percentage points below females in reading in grade four, and nine percentage points in grade eight (NAEP, 2002). By their senior year in high school, boys have fallen nearly 20 points behind their female peers in reading (Von Drehle, 2007). Young males are also foregoing honors and advanced classes. Compared to girls, boys comprise a smaller percentage of those participating in Advanced Placement courses and are outperformed by girls on AP tests (Stall, 2003).

Nationwide, 65% of boys complete high school in four years, compared to 72% of girls. Boys make up two-thirds of special-education students and are 2.5 times more likely to be

given diagnoses of ADHD (Weil, 2008).

As dire as the statistics may seem for boys in general, the trend toward underperformance in gifted boys of color is particularly alarming. As reported in the Indianapolis Star in 2005, only 25% of African American boys graduate from high school in Indianapolis. In Chicago, the percentage is not much higher: only 39% of boys of color graduate (University of Chicago Consortium, 2005).

The news is not all bad, however. The "America's Children" data also shows that boys' math performance is better now than for comparable boys of 1990, and the top 1% of scorers on math and science achievement tests still tend to be male. But when compared with the achievement of girls, boys are woefully underperforming.

The Issues

Stereotypes

Inaccurate assumptions and unrealistic expectations may cause irreparable damage to the motivation and self-concept of a gifted boy, or any boy, who doesn't embody society's image of all that is "male". What happens when a sensitive and intelligent boy would rather read than dig for worms? When a young man's vocabulary and interests alienate him from his peers? When a gifted boy with visual-spatial strengths fails in a rigidly linear classroom? When a creative soul would rather sing than play football?

Research indicates that boys are still being held to rigid stereotypes of masculinity that can affect the development of their talent. Societal pressures and schoolyard expectations of masculinity may cause boys to hide their giftedness and become "closet" intellectuals.



In a keynote speech about Gender and Genius in 2000, Barbara Kerr stated, "Gifted boys learn very early that if they are smart, they had better be smart and athletic; athletic ability makes intelligence acceptable. The non-athletic gifted boy is doomed to social rejection, and is labeled a nerd, unless he discovers a special talent for underachievement." Underachievement becomes a way of asserting independence, strength, and masculinity, particularly in a classroom where girls are excelling and the teacher is also female.

Gifted Boys, continued from page 5

Underachievement

In their work on gender and giftedness, Barbara Kerr and Megan Nicpon named boys' puzzling pattern of congenial refusal to do homework or to complete classroom tasks the "Bartleby Syndrome", after the Melville story in which a young man refuses to work, until he eventually dies from his refusal to engage in the most basic survival needs, such as eating and drinking.

"It is true that many gifted boys seem to suffer a kind of intellectual death in late elementary school, when they learn that it isn't cool to be the best student in class" (Wolfe, 1991).

Kerr attributes "Bartleby Syndrome" to several gender-related explanations: "1. Gentle underachievement of this sort is an easy way for a boy to establish his independence and individuality. 2. It often takes gifted boys a few years in school to understand the costs of high

"It's the way you're supposed to act to survive in our schools: make your whole life revolve around sports, walk tough—don't act too smart. Be a mean machine, and we'll let you get ahead."

*Jello Biafra of the Dead Kennedys
(quoted by Sam Claiborn, 1999)*

achievement. 3. In classrooms where girls are beginning to be more assertive and more bold in their performance, boys may engage in Bartleby-like behaviors as a way of separating themselves from the girls."

According to Kerr, one of the most harmful practices is what she calls kindergarten "redshirting", when parents or schools choose to delay kindergarten for a year in order to allow a boy to mature physically or emotionally. This practice is particularly harmful to gifted boys whose intellectual development craves academic challenge and stimulation. In fact, these young men quickly become

bored with school once they're allowed to attend. Younger, socially "immature" boys whose birthdays fall near the cut-off date for kindergarten entrance are often held back because it's thought they will better relate to peers when they're older. It is more likely that these boys have difficulty relating to peers because the peers are intellectually too *young* for them, rather than too old (Kerr).

Learning Preferences

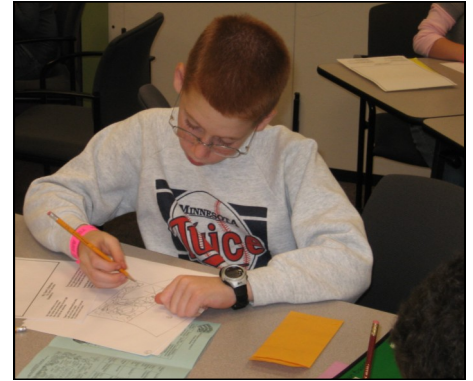
While it's true that many boys do perform perfectly well in traditional school settings, we have to acknowledge that for others it is not ideal, or even appropriate in some cases. Students' learning preferences are often not addressed in the classroom. Boys with no outlet for creativity and activity may become troublemakers when their needs are not met. Because of physiological differences between males and females, many boys need more opportunities to engage in physical activity throughout the day. When denied this outlet, they often become disruptive or withdrawn.

In her book, *Stand Up for Your Gifted Child*, Joan Franklin Smutney says, "Boys in primary and elementary school who have a lot of energy find it difficult to sit still and work quietly. With many high-energy gifted boys, this means the focus moves away from their giftedness and toward dealing with behavior issues" (2001).

Supporters of same-sex classrooms advocate teaching methods based on neuroscientific evidence of the differences between girls and boys. David Chadwell, coordinator of Single-Gender Initiatives at the South Carolina Department of Education, says, "You need to get (boys) up and moving. That's based on the nervous system, that's based on eyes.... You need to engage boys' energy, use it, rather than trying to say No, no, no" (Weil, 2008).

Creativity

Highly creative boys especially experi-



ence discrimination and alienation because of masculine stereotypes. "Most gifted men, no matter how strong their interests in creative arts, languages, humanities or literature, have given up these interests because they do not seem lucrative—or perhaps manly enough" (Colangelo/Kerr 1991).

They may experience role conflict and lower self esteem in environments that do not value academic and artistic achievement. According to Kerr, "Creative boys may need organizations or clubs that are devoted to their talent area or that otherwise provide emotional support as well as intellectual nourishment" (2000). A mentor who discovers and nurtures a boy's talent can be a critical factor in the young man's achievement (Bloom, 1985).

Support

In addition to nurturing talent, mentors also play a role in supporting emotional growth. In *Counseling the Gifted and Talented* (1993), Linda Kreger Silverman makes the point that young gifted boys need early contact with other gifted males so they will not see themselves as different or strange. Being around intellectual peers who share a boy's interests and think and feel as he does may make it easier to develop friendships.

Mentors can also be important to boys with multipotentiality, or outstanding abilities in more than one area. These young men often find themselves experiencing unique difficulties as a result of their many strengths and talents. They may have trouble focusing on col-

continued on page 7

Gifted Boys, continued from page 6

lege goals or settling on a satisfying career when their interests and abilities are so broad. Gifted boys need occupational information and interventions during school that expose them to various career opportunities (Kelly, 1992).

Leadership

Despite society's cultivation of male leaders over the centuries, boys are even renouncing high school leadership positions as girls increasingly take over the reins. Organizations with male leadership enjoy a higher social status than one headed or dominated by females. These social stigmas limit boys' interest in organizations headed by girls. Boys need to be taught there is no shame in following female leaders.

The Recommendations

MEGT's Position Paper on Gifted Boys acknowledges that boys require purposeful academic and affective programming in order to meet their needs, develop potential, and increase achievement. In addition, schools should...

- Provide professional development for teachers in identifying gifted learners to expand their understanding of giftedness beyond verbal skills and achievement, and realize that high ability may be masked by bad behavior.
- Include cognitive readiness as a priority in school entrance recommendations.
- Expand teachers' instructional strategies to address the learning styles of many boys.

*Use speaking and listening in teaching reading
Bring more creativity and variety to reading and writing curricula*

Use more technology

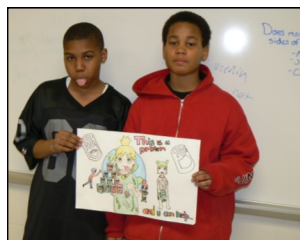
Provide for a greater amount of physical activity in lessons

Use less lecture and more spatial and diagrammatic lessons

Include books high on action and with less focus on affect

Use bibliotherapy to address affective needs

- Alter the structure of the day to accommodate the need for movement.
- Make a variety of co-curricular activities available to interest boys who are not athletes.
- Counsel boys to explore various career and occupation options.
- Offer leadership training.
- Provide boys with mentors who can support them in goal setting.
- Find male role models who represent intellectualness for younger boys.



Read about Boys



BOOKS

Abrahams, and Ahlbrand. *Boy v. Girl?* Free Spirit Publishing, MN: 2002.

Iggulden, H. and C. *The Dangerous Book for Boys.*

James, Abigail Norfleet. *Teaching the Male Brain.* Corwin Press: 2007.

Kerr and Cohn. *Smart Boys.* Great Potential Press: 2001.

Neu and Weinfeld. *Helping Boys Succeed in School.* Prufrock Press: 2007.

Odean, Kathleen. *Great Books for Boys.* Ballantine Books, New York: 1998.

Pollack, William. *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood.*

ARTICLES

Most of these articles may be downloaded from Hoagies Gifted Education Online: www.hoagiesgifted.com

Heydt, Scott. "Dear Diary: don't be alarmed...I'm a boy". *Gifted Child Today.*

Kerr, Barbara. "Gender and Genius". Keynote speech to the National Curriculum Networking Conference. March, 2000.

Kerr, B. and Foley Nicpon, M. "Gender and Giftedness".

Linver, M., Davis-Kean, P., Eccles, J. "Influences of Gender on Academic Achievement".

Piirto, Jane. "Feeling Boys and Thinking Girls: Talented Adolescents and Their Teachers".

Von Drehle, David. "The Myth About Boys". *Time Magazine.* July, 2007

Weil, Elizabeth. "Teaching Boys and Girls Separately." *New York Times.* March, 2008.

OPEN TEACHING POSITIONS FOR SUMMER GIFTED PROGRAMS

Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth

Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth (MITY) is looking for teachers for Explor-School and Expand Your Mind.

1. At **ExplorSchool for current 4th - 6th graders** we're looking for a biology/botany class, or something on animals, field biology (think green), the brain, or classes that combine science with other disciplines. We may also need an art teacher. The spots we have open are afternoon classes.

ExplorSchool information:

Dates: June 15 - June 26, M-F,

Time: 12:45pm-4:00pm, afternoon classes

Location: Capitol Hill Magnet in St. Paul

Pay: \$1,140 per class. Classes also have their own budget which includes supplies, field trips, speakers.

2. At **Expand Your Mind for current 7th - 12th graders** we're also looking for a biology/botany class, field biology (think green), the brain or classes that combine science with other disciplines. We have a spot for one class in Session S and one class in Session B.

Expand Your Mind information:

Dates: Session A, June 15 - June 26, M-F; Session B, July 6 - July 17, M-F

Times: classes run 8:30am - 4:00pm with a midday break for lunch and special events/recreation

Location: Macalester College campus

Pay: \$2,280 per class. Classes have their own budget which includes supplies, field trips, speakers.

Interested teachers can visit our website www.mity.org for information on last year's programs and classes.

Lucienne Taylor

Executive Director

Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth

1600 Grand Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55105

651-696-6591

www.mity.org



North Suburban Summer Academy

The North Suburban Summer Academy is seeking teachers and class proposals for a summer program for high potential students, grades 1-11, who are residents of a thirteen-district consortium.

The Academy seeks to offer courses that will not repeat offerings available during the school year. Courses should be designed to meet the unique needs of the high potential student and are expected to develop the students' skills of leadership, creativity, problem solving, and communication in a challenging, analytical atmosphere. Course objectives should be attained through the use of structured activities, extensive emphasis on higher-level questioning, peer interaction, and critical analysis. Most important of all, the Academy experience should be both challenging and fun!

DATES: Monday, June 15—Thursday, July 2, 2009
**tentative dates planned; may change slightly*

HOURS: 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Other time commitments:

- A 1/2-day workshop on a Saturday in May
- One hour staff meeting each week
- One Extended Day: extended day goes until 2:30 p.m.
- SA Open House, three- hour event

LOCATION: Columbia Heights School District

SALARY: \$1,800.00

DEADLINE: Applications must be submitted by November 21.

To receive an application or to get more information, contact your school district's Academy Representative. District Representatives and contact information can be found on the Academy website:

<http://www.summeracademyonline.com/default.asp>

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Minnesota Educators of the
Gifted and Talented

Engaging the Gifted Mind In a High Tech World

Critical Thinking
Creativity & Innovation
Intuition
Technology
Literacy
Numeracy

**MEGT's 17th Annual
Mid-Winter Conference
Feb. 1 - 3, 2009**

MEGT ANNUAL CONVENTION

**February 1-3, 2009
Cragun's Resort,
Brainerd**

Engaging the Gifted Mind in the High Tech World

Literacy
Critical Thinking
Creative Thinking
Inquiry
Intuition
Use of Technology in
Teaching

Metro Constitution & Bylaws

Proposed Amendment

Currently, *Metro* Board Members are elected annually to serve one-year terms. Board Members are proposing a change to the Constitution and Bylaws that would allow for two-year terms with elections on alternating years. For instance, elections for President and Secretary would be held one year, followed the next spring by elections for Vice President and Treasurer. A similar procedure is in place for the state MEGT organization.

The rationale for this amendment is to provide more continuity to the leadership and to lessen the potential for a complete board turnover each year.

Below is the proposed amendment, on which you will have the opportunity to vote during the *Metro* business meeting at the State Conference in February. The changes would take effect at the next annual election in spring of 2009.

Proposed Amendment to the MEGT Metro Chapter Constitution and ByLaws

Submitted October, 2008

Current Wording

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

B. Officers will be elected annually by the Metro MEGT membership.

Proposed Amendment

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

B. *Officers will be elected by the Metro MEGT membership and serve two-year terms. Terms will be staggered with elections for President and Secretary occurring one year and elections for Vice President and Treasurer occurring on the alternate year.*

Please direct questions and comments to
Kathryn Marget, President.



The MEGT statewide organization is seeking presenters to share their expertise/insights in the challenge of gifted students. Successful presenters, teachers, coordinators, administrators, or parents interested in providing engaging sessions for participants are encouraged to send in proposals. **Proposals that focus on the topics bulleted above will take priority in acceptance.**

Please complete the form on the website and send it to the address at the bottom of this page. **Proposals will be accepted until November 15, 2009**

The Call for Proposals Form can be found on the MEGT website:

www.megt.org

Return proposal by November 15, 2009 to:

Bill Keilty
Spring Lake Park District 16
1415 81st St NE
Spring Lake Park, MN 55432
763-795-6686 (w) 651-485-2108 (c)
bkeilt@district16.org

Don't forget to register to attend the 17th Annual State Conference! Brochure and registration materials on the website now: www.megt.org



Metro MEGT

*A newsletter of the Metro Chapter of the
Minnesota Educators of the Gifted & Talented*

Kathryn Marget
President/Communications Officer
515 Mahtomedi Ave.
Mahtomedi, MN 55115

kmarget@isd622.org

651/407-0824

WWW.MEGT.ORG

MetroMEGT Board Calendar 2008-2009

The MetroMEGT Board of Directors is made up of elected and appointed representatives from across the Metro area—from Anoka to Bloomington and many districts in between. Board members meet monthly to discuss business, to plan events, and to advocate for the needs of gifted learners and those who educate them.

Meetings take place on the second Monday of each month during the school year from 4:15 to 6:30 p.m. Contact a board member for location.

Remaining Board Meetings and Events for 2008-2009 are:

December 8	Board Meeting
December 12	Workshop
January 12	Board Meeting
February 1-3	State Conference
February 2	Board Meeting
March 9	Board Meeting
April 13	Board Meeting
April 30	Spring Banquet
May 11	Board Meeting

2008-2009 Metro Board

PRESIDENT

Kathryn Marget, N. St. Paul/Maplewood
651/407-0824
kmarget@isd622.org

VICE PRESIDENT

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763/528-4430
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